

## Drug treatment court truly inspires

It's not everyday one gets invited into a courtroom.

As journalists, court stories usually involve covering the sentencing of a criminal who has committed a heinous crime.

But the Durham Drug Treatment and Mental Health Court carries with it a different type of sentence – a different type of story.

It's a story of hope. Determination. Rehabilitation.

Watching as one participant, Roxanne (not her real name), graduated from the program, the tears streaming down her face, one couldn't help but be moved. It shows these programs really do work.

Basically, when a participant has been deemed eligible they plead guilty to their charges and are placed on a strict bail or recognizance as they enter the drug treatment court. If they stick with it, they must attend court every Monday, and take part in one-on-one meetings once a week with a treatment provider, group sessions and have regular urine tests.

It's tough, but it's fair and it sure beats jail time. It's trying to end a vicious cycle, where addicts enter the system, go to jail and then re-enter society only to offend again.

Currently, this court funds itself essentially, but it needs federal or provincial funding. It would make a world of difference to a dedicated team of individuals who want to make a difference.

It's clear the federal government has funded these courts in the past, with seven out of the 11 of them in Canada currently operating with government money. So why can't Oshawa get some much-needed help?

The reason is because Oshawa is too close to Toronto and Ottawa.

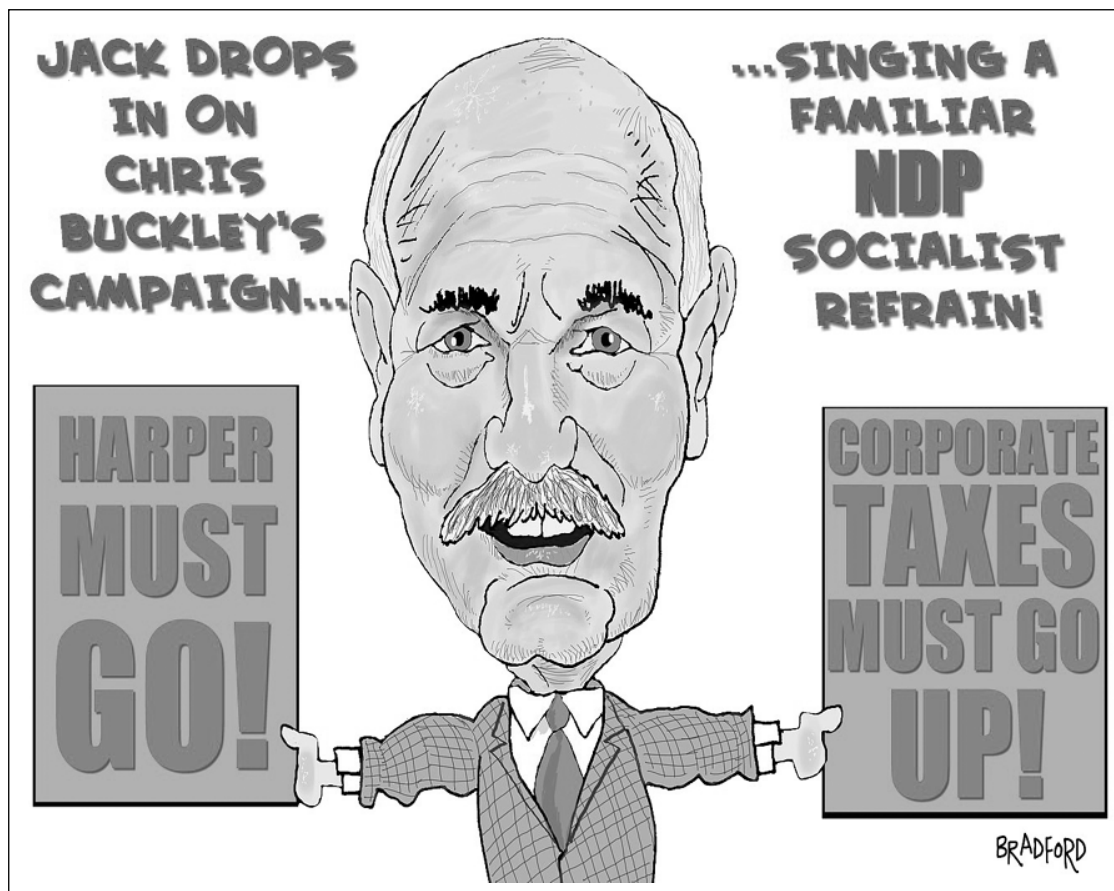
But the truth of the matter is this court provides a service to a community – our community. If it had funding, drug treatment court could take on far more than seven participants, which is the maximum number now.

This would lead to far more success stories.

Roxanne genuinely felt gratitude towards the judge, police officers, attorneys and counsellors that have helped her through her journey, helped her get clean.

Roxanne's story isn't the first, and it certainly won't be the last.

With the proper funding more 'Roxanne's' could enter back into society as contributing members of the community, instead of being victims of the system.



## Letters to the Editor

### Canadians don't want an election

Dear Editor,

It would be nice, even polite, for the opposition leaders to consult with ordinary Canadians (one of the main responsibilities of our elected officials) before rejecting the elected Conservative government's budget so swiftly.

This is not about an individual party and petty partisan politics. It is about respecting the taxpayer and

their hard-earned dollars.

I believe most people don't want an election and I would think the opposition leaders feel the same way.

Could someone remind me why the 'free' vote is not more common in the House of Commons?

Mark Paton

### Election hoopla begins

Dear Editor,

So, we are in to another federal election hoopla once again.

On May 2 I will dutifully trudge to the poll, enter the polling booth and mark my 'X' for the candidate of my choice, as I have since I was old enough to vote.

That was back in 1945 when the Liberals, led by Mackenzie King, were re-elected, defeating the newly renamed Progressive Conservative Party led by John Bracken.

In school I had been taught that in Canada we have a democratic government 'of the people, for the people, by the people.'

In recent years I've come to the realization that while some of the MPs we elect play a role in minor decisions made by government, it is the cabinet that plays a leading role in making major decisions.

Members of the cabinet are the targets of intense lobbying by the Canadian Council of Chief Executives (CCCE), a non-partisan organization made up of about 150 chief executive officers of leading Canadian enterprises. They maintain a force of several thousand lobbyists in Ottawa who meet with and entertain government representatives, their aids, senior civil servants and their advisors.

### Politicians need to change focus

Dear Editor,

Since elections have begun for me, I am very tired of hearing every single politician promise to attack poverty and tax the wealthy and the companies that are wealthy and never seeing that promise come true.

All of these politicians make all these wild promises just to get elected and then they find out that they cannot do it.

We have been hearing for the last 35 years that the

politicians are going to eliminate poverty and one of the ways to do this is to eliminate some of the tax breaks that the wealthy have.

I have never seen one single party cut taxes for the wealthy.

Most wealthy people and companies would like to keep their wealth. Wouldn't you? There has to be something else to focus on in an election. I do not know what it is, do you?

Ron Horner

## Letters to the Editor

The Oshawa Express publishes every Wednesday in the City of Oshawa. Send us your comments, letters to the editor, suggestions. We'd like to hear from you.

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