

# OPINION

## Living

MAPLE

A monthly supplement of York Region Newspaper Group  
A division of Metroland Printing, Publishing and Distributing  
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### My view



Tina  
Rogers

## Classic community

There's so much going on in Vaughan this month, it's going to be hard to choose what to do. In these limited pages, we can only touch upon the great, giving people, the wonderful places and the upcoming events in Maple and surroundings: and believe me there are plenty of them. We have a jazz concert, Three Tenors and Friends singing in an outdoor concert, a quilt square competition, three new parks being opened and many new programs at Vaughan Public Libraries this month.

Vaughan is a fabulous community, despite its urban growing pains. Whether I get to know about goings-on only because of my work on Maple Living or whether it's just something special about Vaughan, we should all celebrate and appreciate the many great things that we have.

To be involved in the community, in whatever capacity is an honour as well as a great learning experience. With populations growing and anonymity increasing, it can be tempting to hide at home to escape the crowds. However, getting to know neighbours and becoming involved in community activities builds a strong network and enriches our lives. Not everyone can be a friend, but we can build respect for the skills and attributes of others and help them to help us build a greater community.

There are plenty of opportunities too. I meet many talented musicians, singers, artists, artisans and volunteers who desperately want to get involved and give back to the community. Without exception they are not in it for the money, or the glory. All they need is a little support and encouragement, and that may mean five minutes of your time, or a couple of hours a week – whatever you can manage. Funnily enough you find that you get back more than you give.

I moved to Vaughan in 2005. I was amazed at the immediate sense of community in my small village, and that made me want to get involved, to contribute, and to sustain that great feeling. I could be classified as a volunteering addict. I have got to know more people in Vaughan since last November than I met in my five years in Richmond Hill. I haven't changed, I haven't become suddenly friendlier and more outgoing ... so it must be the people here.

I wish you the same warm and welcomed feeling in your immediate neighbourhood. If you look outside your doors, are open-minded to what others may have to offer, or what you can offer yourself, you may be surprised at what will happen.

Comments? Email Tina at [mapleliving@rogers.com](mailto:mapleliving@rogers.com)

## Around Around Town



PHOTO METRO CREATIVE GRAPHICS

Finally. Spring made a chilly arrival last week, and with it came the sun and an explosion of early season flowers, lawns that needed cutting and weeds to be pulled. Ontario's notably changing seasons are always worthy of remark, and these spectacular blooms played their part in thrilling all of Maple. You have to smile.

## YOUR VIEW

### Could you be an art critic?

Maple Living is going to try to get to all of the June events we've written about. But perhaps you can help. Let us know what you thought of the outdoor concert with the three tenors, or how the jazz concert was. If you support the ride for diabetes, tell us what kind of day out it was. If you go to any other events or functions, please write your own reviews.

Your neighbours will appreciate knowing, and so will we!

Email Tina at [mapleliving@rogers.com](mailto:mapleliving@rogers.com)

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## Living ON OUR COVER



PHOTO COURTESY CITY OF VAUGHAN

Andrea Stramaglia, active living co-ordinator for the City of Vaughan, supports young students in their pansy-planting efforts for the Schools in Bloom competition.

### Iconoclast



Chris  
Caldwell

## Global warming heating up

Incremental creep – it's insidious. We tend to accept things that come in small doses over time. Like a constant drip that eventually fills a barrel, there is no concept of long-term implications with a short-term observation. This barrel – our world is about to tip over in a big way. This world problem, global warming, is arguably the single most important topic that I could write about.

Why do we choose to avoid learning or understanding this catastrophic event threatens our children's lives? As a society we postulate and rise up against gun crime and traffic congestion, even the most minor inconveniences. We want to create spring-like conditions all year round by idling our cars to keep them warm or cool, cranking up the air conditioner or heating system at home, or staying in the temperature-controlled mall all day. They all contribute to global warming.

Our nation has a reputation for griping and inaction, but I am confident that Canadians will act on global warming and here's why. The symptoms of climate change have started to hit home. We are experiencing ever-increasing water shortages in some areas and massive flooding in others. Infrastructure, such as sewer systems and roadways, are inadequate to handle intense weather and increasing populations.

Air quality is steadily decreasing. The number of smog days over the previous years has increased three-fold and weather is increasingly less predictable. Glaciers are disappearing around the globe. Polar bears are drowning. Ecosystems are on the verge of collapse. Hurricanes and flooding are threatening the continent. This is grim news for sure, but most of this is our responsibility because of the way we choose to live our lives including supporting a fossil fuel economy. In my mind the most ignorant and selfish thing anyone can do is idle a vehicle on a perfect spring day. It also happens to be against the law but is scarcely enforced in many municipalities.

To paraphrase the sentiments of naturalist David Attenborough, it must be recognized that change is a necessary part of this planet. But the point is it's changing more extremely and swiftly than at any time in the past several million years.

I suppose like most things, this complacent, fat, selfish society will need a slap in the face. I say, the sooner the better, for all of us. My generation may intend on having children and possibly grandchildren, but the last thing I want to hear them say is "Grandfather, you knew it was happening – why did you do nothing?"

*Chris quit corporate life to follow his passion for sustainable communities and urban planning, and is pursuing a masters degree in environmental studies at York University.*