

Opinion

Bingo! It'll be regulated

Alarmed at the fact the percentage of proceeds going to charities from bingo games is declining, the Ontario government has introduced a bill to regulate charitable gaming activity in Ontario.

The proposed act will provide for the regulation of bingo halls, suppliers and employees, record-keeping and reporting to facilitate auditing.

Greg Sorbara, the minister of consumer and commercial relations, says the main concern of the government is that "many charitable organizations have increasingly lost control over the conduct and management of gaming events which are designed to raise funds for them." The result is the intended beneficiaries may not be the primary beneficiaries of the proceeds.

Gross wagering for bingo in Ontario currently amounts to about \$800 million annually, up from \$80 million estimated in 1975, so Queen's Park is not dealing in penny ante. In 1985 only about 20 per cent of money wagered in bingo games was retained by the charitable organizations. It has declined further but no figures are available. The government says bingo games are proliferating, making it harder and harder for charities to raise money by this method.

No one likes government regulation especially for a game enjoyed so thoroughly by senior citizens. But obviously other people were muscling in on proceeds meant mainly for charities. Some more regulation is needed.

The problems occur when anti-gambling forces raid innocent bingo games, such as one which saw senior citizens paying pennies to play in Guelph recently. Apologies were tendered but the red faces are remembered. People really resent government interference in a harmless recreational activity.

Mr. Sorbara's attempt to regulate the game so charities once again have control and collect the lion's share of the proceeds is welcomed so long as it doesn't cut down on the enjoyment so many get from bingo.—H.C.

Reform no craps game

To say that nothing has changed in Canada is to profoundly misunderstand the failure of the Meech Lake Accord.

When the original Meech Lake Accord was reached three years ago, the news was sprung upon the country following a closed-door meeting with all the premiers and the Prime Minister. There was absolutely no understanding at the time, except among a small group of insiders, of what had been discussed and what the Accord was all about.

For many months to come, Canadians were kept on the outside looking in while politicians burned up telephone lines with private chats and public warnings that the country would breakup if the Accord didn't go through.

The rhetoric became more threatening as the new premiers of Manitoba, New Brunswick and Newfoundland announced their reluctance to go along with the original Accord. The federal government stated repeatedly that rejection of the Meech Lake Accord would spell disaster for the country.

As the constitutional clock ticked away, the public got caught in the doomsday scenario predicted by its political leaders. Quebecers increasingly believed that a rejection of the Accord was rejection of Quebec by English Canada. In other parts of the country, there was a feeling that ratification of the Accord would be submitting to the interests of Quebec against the good of the nation as a whole.

Perception replaced fact at an alarming rate, and stirred regional resentments from coast-to-coast.

So the question begs, what have we learned from all this?

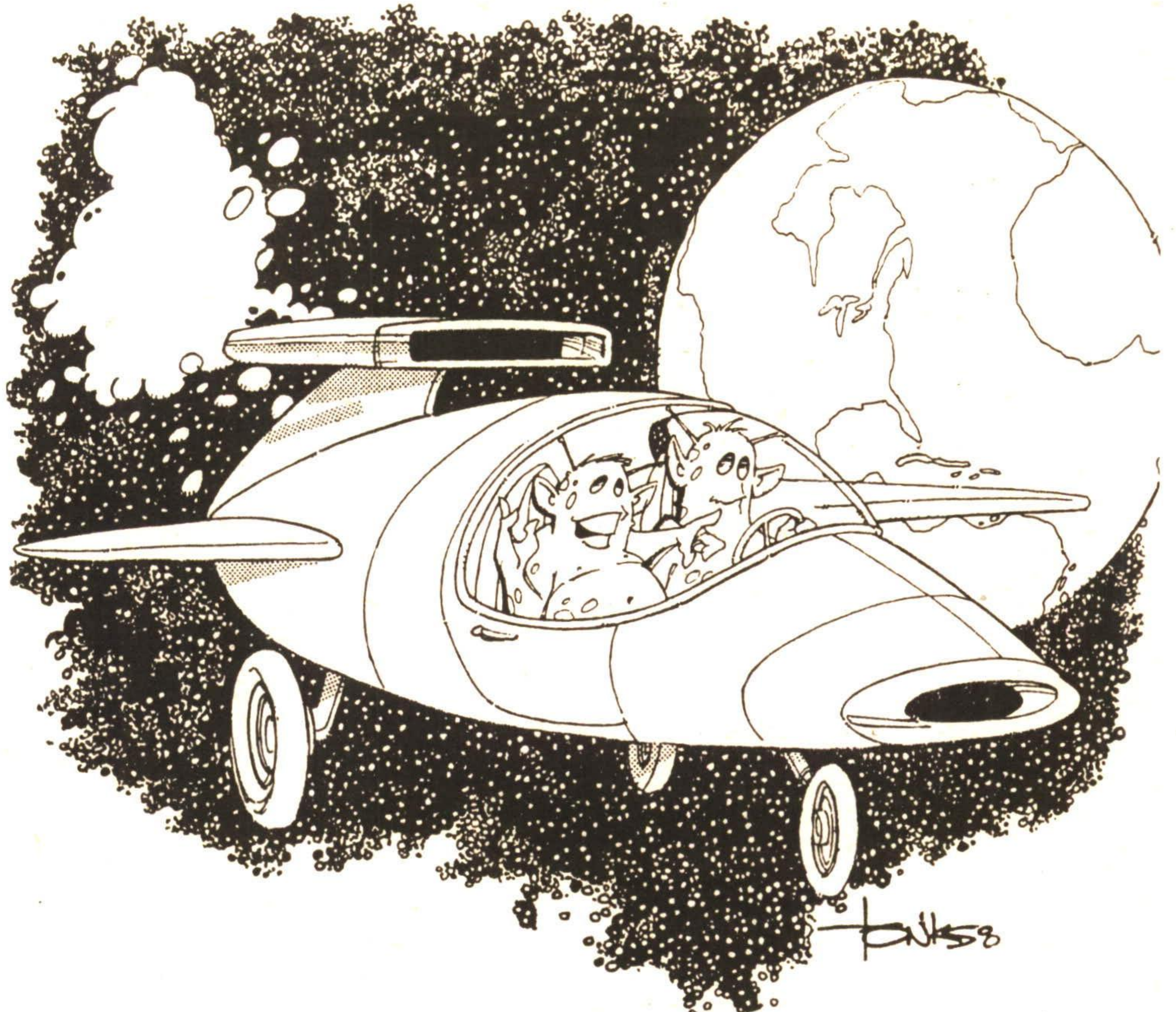
For starters, our political leaders, and especially the federal government, should learn that it must never again put the country through such turmoil as was guaranteed by public exclusion from process. They should learn that constitutional reform is closer to brain surgery than it is to cutting beef in a butcher shop. They must learn that it requires more than deal-making and high pressure tactics to gain public endorsement and support.

Finally, they must never forget that a proper process requires trust in the general public, and that an honest approach whereby the nation is included in the process, not left out to watch and worry, is the best course of action.

Certainly the hard lessons of Meech have just begun. But one lesson should have been self-evident: a roll of the dice was no way to deal with such a matter.

Constitutional reform is not a craps game.

—Terry O'Shaughnessy,
Canadian Federation of Independent Business



"...LETS PULL IN TO PLANET EARTH, I CAN TURN IN THE RECYCLABLES...!!"

'Family Pursuit,' a reunion game

By JANET DUVAL

It's the time of year for family reunions. From Bronte Creek Park in the south of Halton, to Terra Cotta Conservation Area in the north, families are gathering with cousins, uncles and grandparents for picnics and old-fashioned fun in the outdoors.

If you're planning such an event, it's a good occasion to help children become more aware of their roots, especially if they rarely see their relatives, as happens so often now that families live miles or even provinces apart.

Here's one way to help them learn more about each other—a "Family Pursuit" game that's entertaining for all.

When the sandwiches and watermelon are finished, and the children are tired from races and games of tag, gather them round. Ask the questions that family members should know, but too often don't.

Here are a few. Remember, it's the process that's important, not "who got it first." Allow time for friendly discussion of each question. Older ones who know most of the answers might hold back until younger ones have had a chance to guess.

Of everyone here, who was the biggest baby at birth? (Mothers will ALWAYS know!)

Who was the smallest baby?

How many people here have the same birthday?

Where did Grandpa and Grandma meet?

What did they wear at their wedding?

How many here were born outside Ontario?

Where was grandfather born? Grandmother? Was it in a hospital?

Of everyone here, who walked (or walks!) the farthest to school?

Who has been farthest north, anywhere in the world?

Who has travelled the farthest south?

Name all the dogs that have belonged to our families.

What was Grandpa's (or Grandma's) first car? First job?

Your family will come up with lots of other questions. Try to think of the special accomplishments or funny events that happened to particular family members. For example, who was ill for their entire honeymoon, who picked off all the flowers in the neighbor's backyard one summer day, or who scored an overtime goal to win the junior championship in 1956?

Family ties are precious. Share a little fun and nostalgia this summer, and give your children valuable knowledge of people whose lives are so closely linked with theirs.

Adoptive families are needed

Adoptive families are urgently needed for several children in the care of Halton Children's Aid Society.

Craig and Matthew are half-brothers, ages 11 and 13, who want to be adopted together. Energetic boys, they love sports and the outdoors—camping is a favorite activity. Both of them like school and are doing fine; they get along well with their peers. They are generally co-operative and willing to help out around the house.

When asked, Craig and Matthew say they'd like "kind, loving and caring parents who would care about us when we got hurt," and "a family that doesn't yell too much." They are also hoping for "a dad who likes sports."

Although both boys realize they will never be able to live with their mother, they would like to maintain some kind of ongoing contact with her.

Alanna is mature

Alanna is nine, and has recently been diagnosed as having Tourette's Syndrome, a medical condition that causes uncontrollable tics and facial contortions. She is now on medication and the tics are decreasing.

Alanna is mature for her age, and loves to swim and be outdoors. She is a reserved child who takes a while to warm up to new people, particularly adults. Because of her medical problems, she has had some difficulties in school but will be entering a regular grade five class in the fall. She has been in a Play Therapy program for some time and will need to continue therapy after being adopted.

If you feel that your family might be the right one for Craig and Matthew or Alanna, please call Shirley Hynd at 844-8211.

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