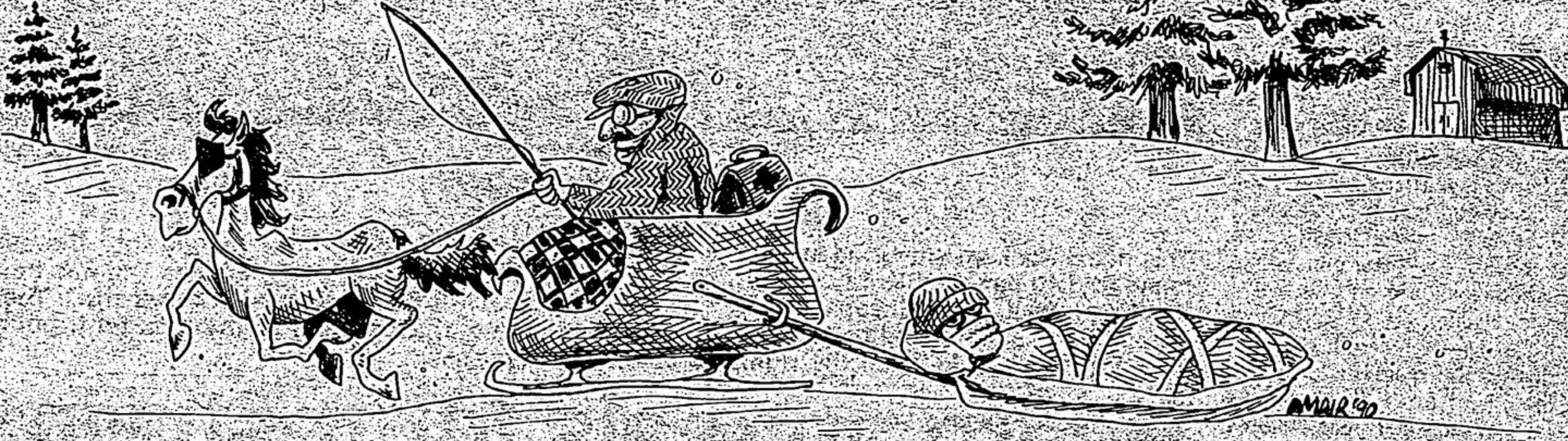


Comment Page



Once upon a time, this was the best way to get to the hospital...



... the year was 1990.

NEWS ITEM: Ninth Line from Stouffville to new hospital will not be improved.

No-fault bid FAIR?

Debate over the provincial government's proposed no-fault insurance plan is heating up at the municipal level.

Whitchurch-Stouffville Town Council is playing the game intelligently however, waiting to hear both sides in the debate before stating its position on the issue.

From here, the rhetoric on each side of the debate is impressive.

York-Durham MPP Bill Ballinger would have us believe the Liberal no-fault plan is the best thing that could happen to motorists.

The group calling itself Fair Action in Insurance Reform (FAIR) however, says the government proposal will spell the end of comprehensive and practical car insurance as we know it.

And both teams are gearing up for a final assault as the proposal makes its way through Queen's Park.

But while this battle rages, the average car owner continues to grapple with rising premiums.

There's no doubt change is required to make the system more practical and affordable.

The remaining question is whether or not the motorists will win in the end.

Spring renovation was a nightmare

Despite tax deadlines, leaky boots and clogged eavestroughs, spring is my favourite season by miles.

The only problem with this time of year is that it brings out man's primitive drive to improve and restore.

Spring is when a whole army of keen homeowners believe they can renovate their homes without suffering a nervous breakdown, or discovering that the estimate they were given didn't include options like interior drywall and waterproof windows.

And it is possible, but not without careful planning, as we learned from bitter experience five years ago.

After perusing various pamphlets on how to select the artiste who would transform



kate's corner

kate gilderdale

Chateau Gilderdale into the next centre spread for Architectural Digest, we came up with a shortlist of three likely contenders for the job. And chose the wrong one.

Ron was the sort of young man your mother would have loved you to bring home. He looked as if he had the Right Intentions.

He wore a sober but well-cut suit with a quietly tasteful tie, and his hair was clean, neatly brushed and didn't dangle over the collar of his beautifully laundered shirt.

Ron was so sincere, we hardly bothered to look at his credentials.

He was a man who cared. He was also significantly cheaper than his rivals, and that should have warned us.

But we blithely signed on the dotted line, and unknowingly plunged ourselves into six months of living hell. "How long will it take?" we asked. "Four to six weeks," said a smilingly confident Ron.

For the first three or four days, he had one man working hard to remove walls and roofing so that the actual renovations could begin.

If we thought it a little strange that he had to borrow some basic

tools from us to do the job, his rapid progress lulled us into a false sense of security. When he left, however, there was an ominous lack of activity for almost two weeks.

Suddenly Ron, who had been at our beck and call unceasingly while we pondered our choice of builder, was nowhere to be found.

When we did get through to him he couldn't understand why the carpenter hadn't shown up. He'd get right back to us. A week later a sad-eyed, defeated looking man arrived and announced he was the carpenter.

John made Eeyore seem optimistic. He did show up daily, which was just as well, because what he took three months to do could have been done by lesser mortals in three weeks.

He expressed grave doubts as to the viability of the project. Then he became quite unpleasant because his cheques from Ron either weren't coming in, or

were bouncing wildly.

He started demanding money from us, which we'd already paid to Ron.

In the meantime, the owner of the dumpster in our driveway politely informed me that he planned to empty its entire contents onto our property before removing it, because Ron's last three cheques to him had bounced.

The house became a crisis centre, where I fielded calls from irate lumber merchants, dry wallers and other tradespeople who were after Ron's blood.

Since we live on Main Street, I was also constantly giving bulletins on the latest disaster to fascinated passersby. The job did get finished eventually, but my hair went quite red with stress.

They say time heals all wounds, but it'll be a long time before we venture into another round of renovation wars on Main Street West.

Stouffville/Uxbridge Tribune

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Editor's mail

People have a right to know

Dear Editor,
An open letter to Ross Stevenson, Durham MP.

On Oct. 5, 1989, Transport Minister Benoit Bouchard stated in the House of Commons:

"We have immediately started discussions and I am quite confident that we will reach an agreement to transfer the (VIA) line Havelock-Toronto to the GO Transit system in Ontario."

Quite clearly that was intended to deflect the certain pressure that was being brought to bear by the association.

On Oct. 21, 1989, Ontario Trans-

portation Minister Bill Wrye stated: "I want to categorically deny there were any secret, open or up-front negotiations about taking over the Toronto-Havelock run. There have been none, and are none."

Mr. Bouchard continued the ruse when, at a Conservative fundraiser he said "You ask me on Jan. 15 whether a train is still running."

Well, Mr. Stevenson, we're asking: Is it right for a member of parliament, let alone a cabinet minister, to distort the truth and intentionally mislead Canadians?

A request was made several

weeks ago to bring this issue to the attention of the House of Commons, a request which you refused.

MPs have a responsibility. Mr. Stevenson, a responsibility you have chosen to ignore. Governments are supposed to help the people, not stand in their way.

The people of Durham have a right to know.

Dave Lester,
Executive Director,
Toronto-Peterborough
Havelock Line
Passenger Association