

# stouffville comment

## No reason for postal miscues

Canada Post has really done it this time.

Local businessman Don Jackson has been receiving mail in his Supermailbox that does not belong to him. In fact, it belongs to just about everyone but him.

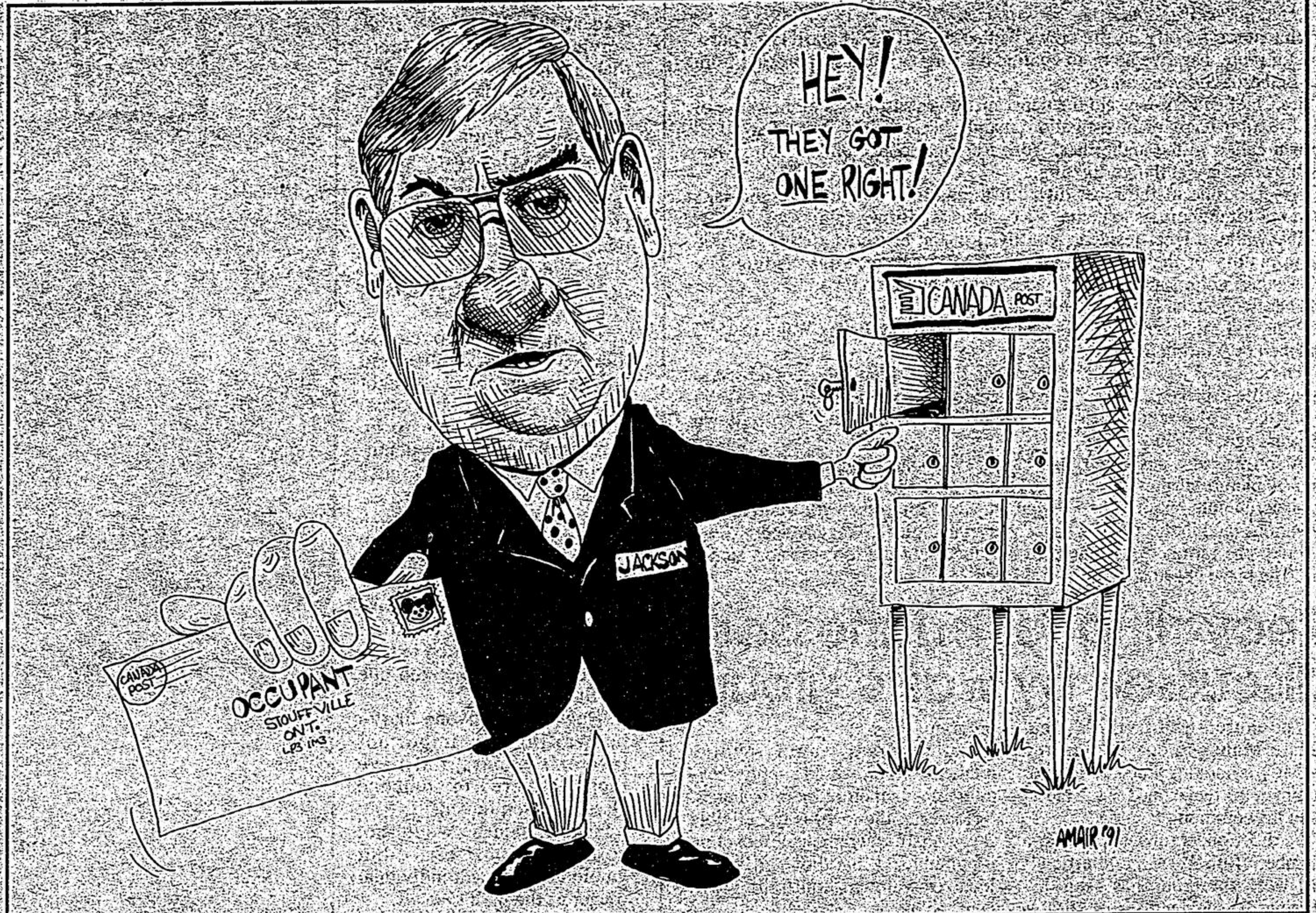
He has received baby bonus cheques, what appears to be letters from lawyers, doctors and other people's important documents.

As he says, "how would you like to be waiting for this mail and it doesn't arrive?" And it is not just other people's mail that share the same box as Jackson, but it is mail from all over town.

The post office prides itself on a 98 per cent delivery rate within two days. Note that the post office says "delivered." Where and to whom they are delivering is not included, obviously.

When the so-called Mulroney Mailboxes came into effect, we were assured they would streamline the entire system, and get rid of the dead wood.

It would appear that the process has backfired. If you've ever wondered why a payment wasn't received, and your credit rating took a dive, you're no longer in the dark.



## Wolves don't make terrific dance partners

Dances with Wolves, that sweeping Western epic, was the overwhelming favorite to take home the hardware from last night's Academy Awards. I suppose I should have called the film's star and director Kevin Costner to tell him that I had seen an omen which he could have interpreted as a positive sign for the saga's success.

Last week, driving out to Port Perry, I glanced off to my left to see a most impressive sight.

A lone wolf was loping along the rolling hills parallel to Highway 47. He wasn't especially large, but like the wolf in the aforementioned picture, he had two white socks on his front paws.

He ambled along at a good pace, and when he encountered a farmer's fence, he made a sharp left and ran off into the trees. This was my first encounter with wildlife of this sort since coming to southern Ontario.

It was not, however, my first dance with a wolf.

Back in my university days, I was often strapped for cash. And while that much has not changed, I at least now own a car. But back then, I would usually make the 160-kilometre journey back to my parent's house to get some laundry done on the weekends. And I would make it any way I could. This usually amounted to bumming a ride off more fortunate students, or else I would hitchhike. (A nasty practice, really, and one I don't not highly endorse as a means of transportation.)

One cold November Friday, I was standing about 500 yards from a gas station near Espanola, thumbing for my next ride. I leaned against a telephone pole for about half an hour without much success. Then I heard some yipping and snapping off my starboard side. I turned to see three enormous timber wolves



gamboling across the field toward me.

They jumped and yapped and were obviously oblivious to my presence until they were about 100 feet from me. They continued to play until the largest wolf spotted me. At once, all three stood like stones and stared at me with bright yellow eyes.

The smaller animals were of your normal wolfen variety, brown coats mottled with black and white patches, but the largest of the trio was snow white and stood at least four feet at the shoulder.

Of course, he looked to be about 80 feet at the shoulder to me. I froze as the group nervously approached me, heads down, muzzles twitching.

"This is it. This is the end. What a way to go," I said aloud, throwing my hands up in resignation as the three made their way to the telephone pole. Just as the white wolf inched to within a dozen feet of me, (I could hear him breathing!) a pick-up truck pulled over on the other side of the road. The wolves backed off. The driver rolled down his window, and in amazement, shouted, "Hey, are them wolves?"

"Yes!" I screamed, praising all things holy for my salvation.

"Well, you'd better hope you get a ride real soon!" he returned and drove off laughing.

I stood dumbfounded for a minute. Then I got mad. Completely forgetting about the critters behind me, I began

screaming and swearing and I tossed my laundry bag after him so that it burst and spilled my shorts all over the highway.

The wolves, thinking they'd come across some loony who, at best, would likely upset their stomachs, fled into the forest.

At that moment an OPP officer pulled up.

"I'm not supposed to do this, but it looks like you could use a ride."

I wailed with joy, gathered up my scanties and hopped in the cruiser.

I wanted the officer to chase after the clown in the pick-up and charge him with failing to remain at the scene of a feeding frenzy, but he laughed it off, saying that wolves meant me no harm.

True as this might be, you won't see me with my furthest digit stuck out anymore. As far as I'm concerned, that's an open invitation to a dance with wolves.

## Stouffville/Uxbridge Tribune

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## Honesty is now my best excuse

"I am prevented from coming in consequence of a subsequent engagement." Oscar Wilde

An amusing excuse, but one that's unlikely to endear you to your friends.

We all find ourselves making excuses periodically, but, unlike other skills, this is one that doesn't seem to improve with practice. I once worked for a man who was notorious for his extra-curricular dalliances. Since we shared an office, it was hard to avoid overhearing numerous phone calls in which he explained to his spouse that he had to stay late "for a client meeting."

Charles got his comeuppance on his wedding anniversary. Nothing, I heard him assure his wife smugly that morning, would stand in the way of their planned celebration. At 4:55, the sales director called him in and said the company was presenting an advertising plan to a major client that very evening, and Charles's presence at the event was crucial.

There ensued a long and humiliating telephone conversation of which I heard both sides, on account of the



unaccustomed ferocity of his wife's response. He went to the meeting and she, I later learned, to her lawyer. Although most of us aren't in Charles's league, few people are immune to reliance on the occasional little white lie.

Creative excuses abounded at school, when the question of the whereabouts of one's homework arose. Although I sometimes managed to complete my weekend homework between 5 a.m. and 8 a.m. on Monday, sleeping in left me two alternatives: a painful confession or an excuse which, the more I worked on it, the more I began to believe it myself.

Simplicity, I found, worked best. Every morning we would drop our homework off on our teacher's shelf before going into

class. I recall one occasion when, my homework still untouched, I assured my French teacher I had handed it in that very morning.

After due consideration, she nodded. "I remember seeing it," she said. "I wonder where on earth I put it." If I felt the guilt, I should have, I don't remember it; all I can recall is an overwhelming sense of relief, followed by irritation at my teacher's carelessness.

Since one of the first things we teach our children is the importance of honesty, it takes a lot of verbal back-pedaling to explain our own, often murky, motives when they catch us out in a lie. What's worse, the truth often comes out later on when they, trained to be truthful, broadcast it at a horribly inopportune moment.

Nowadays I'm a lot more honest than I used to be. My new-found frankness however, owes less to the pursuit of self-improvement than to the fact that I find it increasingly difficult to recall the reasons I gave for being unavailable for that scintillating Tupperware party in the first place.