

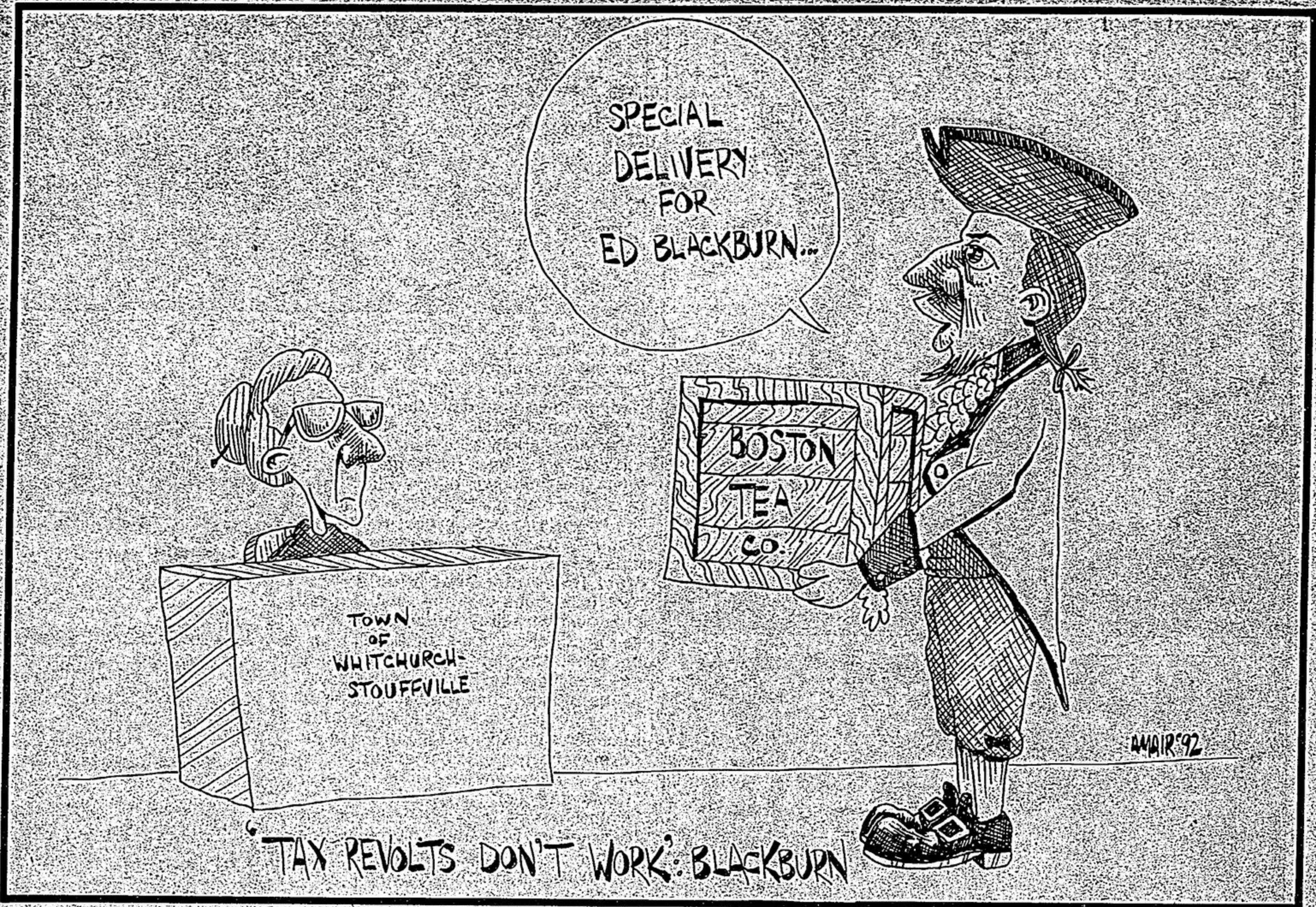
# stouffville comment

## Returning to lake board a compromise

Diplomacy is a large part of democracy.

Such was the case last week as Mayor Fran Sainsbury and councillor Stephen Bellerby found it necessary to backtrack on heated comments made with regard to the Kettle Lake Advisory Board. The pair had resigned and vowed to fold the committee over disputes at the heart of the KLAB's mandate. However, last week, the tune had changed.

Both the mayor and Bellerby realized that the board is of some value, and that dismantling it was not only being seen as going back on campaign promises, but insensitive in the wake of the recent ruling by the Ministry of Natural Resources with respect to a boat ban on local lakes. Some may view this as a flip-flop in the face of adversity by the councillor and mayor, but it is more likely a make-up after a hasty and heated debate.



## Santa and my father were best of friends

My dad and Santa Claus were the very best of friends when I was growing up.

My father seemed to know exactly which foods Santa liked and where he was at every minute - at least on Christmas Eve.

For instance, I know Santa Claus enjoys the odd icy-cold beer at each stop on his great trek through the sky.

My dad told me so. He would explain, matter-of-factly, that Santa would be good and thirsty by the time he made his way from busy Metro Toronto into rural Pefferlaw.

In light of this discovery, my brother and I would always leave

a bottle of Labatt's Blue and a sandwich out on a dinner tray, and every Christmas morning the bottle would be empty.

If my dad's theory was right - my dad is always right - Santa would have been good and crooked by the time he reached our Pefferlaw house.

Maybe that's why he enters people's homes via the fireplace. Maybe the jolly old elf never actually planned it that way - he just gets so smashed that he falls down the chimney as he's trying to get out of his toy-packed sleigh.

I mean, if every child from here to Mississauga leaves the pudgy St. Nick a brewsky at every stop, he'd be quite lit by the time he



tracy kibble

made it back to the North Pole. I could just see poor ole Santa up there teetering on the rooftop - one leg wedged in the sleigh between a Tonka half-ton truck and a Rollerbaby - the other trying to balance on a slippery shingle at a 40 degree angle right next to the chimney. One belch

and down he would go.

We didn't have a chimney though, and dad said Santa knew that and would just park out in the driveway.

I remember running to the door just before bedtime to ensure my parents remembered to leave the door unlocked.

Dad said he could get in anyway, so I assumed he gave Santa a key.

Dad also knew when Santa was out of a particular toy. If my brother or I would request some ridiculously expensive thing, my father would shake his head and

inform us that Santa was all out of those this year.

I used to imagine Santa phoning dad up from his workshop - long distance - to let him know which toys he still had in stock. How else would he know?

Christmas morning my brother and I would rush downstairs, stack our gifts and see who had the biggest pile.

Funny how dad always looked so surprised when we proudly announced what Santa had left us this year.

Guess he didn't know him that well after all.

## Christmas comes earlier and earlier

Christmas comes, but once a year is enough. Anon.

Anon was obviously a woman. How many men do you know who rush around buying cards and gifts, making goodies, and ensuring that stockings are stuffed and presents are wrapped? No doubt there are some male paragons out there, but they keep a pretty low profile.

This year, with unusual efficiency, I have already written my cards. Now all I have to do is buy stamps.

Every day, meanwhile, the mail brings greetings from someone I've overlooked. Last week I unearthed some unused cards from Christmases past, the ones I bought to send at the last minute, but didn't quite get around to writing.

My pleasure turned to consternation when I found they came with those nasty 'Greet More' envelopes, covered in red squares



KATE'S CORNER

for the postal code, to make mailing more convenient.

By the time you've written the address in microscopic script at the top and left the bottom untouched because you don't know the postal code anyway, they bear an uncanny resemblance to a dog's breakfast. Your attempt to look classy has failed, even before the recipient has had an opportunity to admire your fine taste in cards.

After all this effort, I'm ready for a fortnight in the Bahamas, but it turns out this is just the beginning of the descent into chaos. Shopping can be fun, if you start in July. Christmas week

expeditions put one in mind of the morning after the night before. Larger stores exude a battle-scarred air, as beleaguered sales clerks totter aimlessly around their 'have a nice day' and 'you're welcome' sounding a trifle mechanical.

Parents will find that the cool toys have gone - all that's left is math is tough Barbie. Uncles, dads and brothers, meanwhile, will once again be the luckless recipients of loud ties or sludge green socks. Which is why I have started earlier this year in a concerted effort to search out those perfect gifts that will not make people wince as they search desperately for words of heartfelt gratitude. It's just going to take a bit of gentle persuasion to convince the old man how stunning he looks in a Hawaiian shirt and matching boxers.

\*With profuse apologies to Sandra's husband.

## Stouffville Tribune

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