

stouffville comment

Bloc seeks to destroy

The televised debates in the this election have left at least one thing clear: that Lucien Bouchard has no business being in a Canadian political debate. In fact, that he wishes to collect a salary as a Canadian MP while frantically working to dissolve this country is an affront to democracy itself.

While many are saying that the Bloc Quebecois candidates have as much right to run as any other party, the rest of the country is certainly at a distinct disadvantage in not being able to vote against them. So we end up with a lopsided balance in the House of Commons.

The next government should restrict the rights of fringe parties by passing a law stating that one-agenda groups must run in more than one province. Bouchard's party is democracy by blackmail.

He knows he will take away dozens of valuable seats, and likely force the hand of a minority government.

In effect, he will be as powerful as the government. And while it may be ultimately democratic, it is not just.



You have to wait..patiently..for the politics

There are several Whitchurch-Stouffville council meetings that come to mind when one thinks of the words: heated, argumentative, explosive or out-of-control.

There are a few more that come to mind, but not as vividly when one thinks of nothing in particular, in fact, when thinking is altogether not on the agenda.

Through meeting after meeting a reporter gets to know just when to start counting sheep and when to poise his two-for-the-price-of-one Bic fine tip.

I'm sure there are some politicians out there who would swear us media slugs get the two mixed up from time to time.

I've learned -- and I'm not a patient woman -- that I must sit

through a lot of nothings, before a gem leaps off the page.

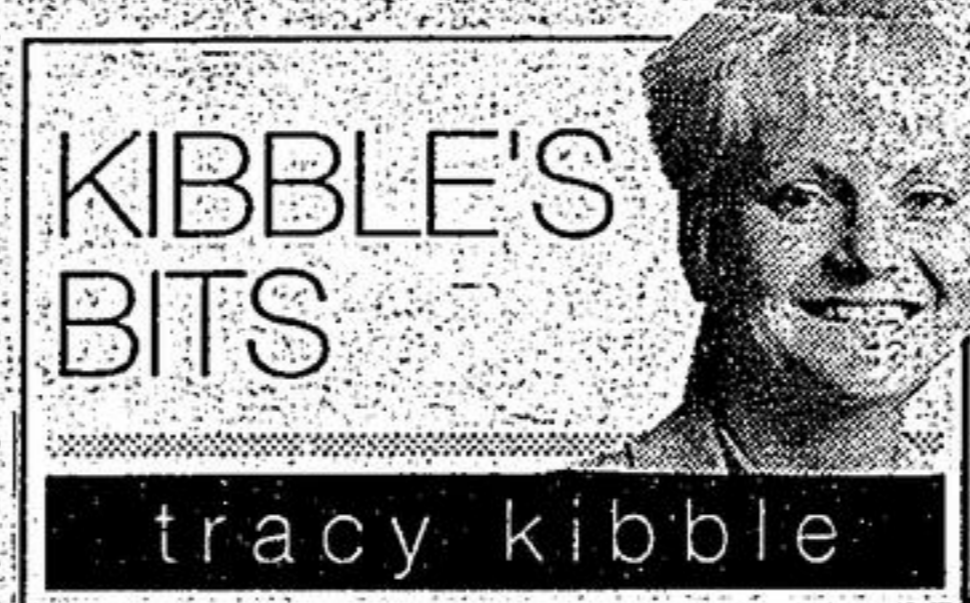
I have come to appreciate those few powerful (and so minimal) council debates packed and backed by solid factual knowledge and which ring of strong intellectual conversation.

Gotta love those cheap shots, too.

I have also learned to endure -- although grinding my teeth has become a nasty Tuesday habit -- those few discussions when one wonders... well, just wonders.

Take for instance, council's annual discussion about which days they will meet to decide how to spend your money which you haven't sealed with a kiss and sent in yet.

During this annual ritual, councillors get out their tiny cal-



tracy kibble

endar books, lick their fingers and flip through the pages looking thoughtful and busy.

"Oh no, I can't attend those days," one councillor says.

Something about a dog, a ribbon and a library card is mentioned.

I have contemplated putting down my pen and yelling at the top of my lungs: Pick a day, be there, discuss away and let's get

on with it...uh hum, please?

But, of course that would be completely out of line and completely out of order and completely boorish, even for me.

I'm just some reporter. What do I know about organization?

So I sit there and clench my fists, draw funny faces and write up a quick grocery list.

"Well, I just can't make that meeting. I'm scheduled to floss my teeth that day and anyway I have a job," someone is heard mumbling as he looks around the table for approval.

"I can't make it either for that day. I'm pickling eggs that very morning and this takes precision and timing. I just can't put it off," someone else is heard

remarking as I try to recall if my husband likes mustard or mayonnaise with his salami on a bun.

This can sometimes go on for hours at a time -- me not listening, politicians not thinking, both of us doing nothing for money.

But then there are those rub-your-hands-together newspaper-type meetings where councillors yell at each other. People pack the chamber like a netted load of sandwich tuna in hopes to catch a glimpse of some real hometown mudslinging. Glasses come off, ties are loosened, temple veins pop, audiences smile and someone cracks the seal on a EverFresh juice pack.

Why would anyone want to be PM?

If Jean Chretien is being 'sold' to Quebec voters as superannuated and facially challenged, surely the Tory camp can find a way to capitalize on Kim Campbell's permanent bad hair day.

Flogging the motley crew who aspire to the prime office of Canada relies more on style than substance, judging by some of the ad strategies laid down by the 'experts.'

Their first assumption would seem to be that their audience is as thick as two short planks. Most of us, they reason, would not be able to figure out by ourselves that looking like the back of a bus is not necessarily an indication of intellectual dwarfism.

Would Chretien stand a chance at election time if he hadn't invested in that nice denim shirt? Has Audrey McLaughlin put paid to her party's aspirations by wearing the wrong kind of trous-



kate gidordale

er suit?

It's obvious from her photographs and videos that Kim Campbell does, but which brand? I'd just like to know so that I can be sure never to use it on my hair.

I might vote for her, though, if she happened to present the party platform that most closely represented my political leanings. Radical concept, eh?

If looks and image are what we're voting for, it's hard to see a clear winner.

Preston Manning, while more willing than most to challenge the status quo, is unlikely to be invited to abandon politics for

Hollywood should he fail to click with the voters.

I don't think Lucien Bouchard should give up his day job either. And while Mel Hurtig is quite cute, comparatively speaking, he's hardly high profile enough to hit the jackpot this time around.

Wanting to be prime minister in the first place seems something of an aberration to me. Why would any normal person subject herself to the nasty, invasive scrutiny which is the lot of the career politician?

When you're not kissing battalions of bawling babies, you're faced with the press conference. This ritual, as Emery Kelen so acutely observed, is a politician's way of being informative without saying anything.

"Should he accidentally say something, he has at his side a press officer who immediately explains it away by 'clarifying' it." I think I'll stick to writing.

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