

stouffville comment

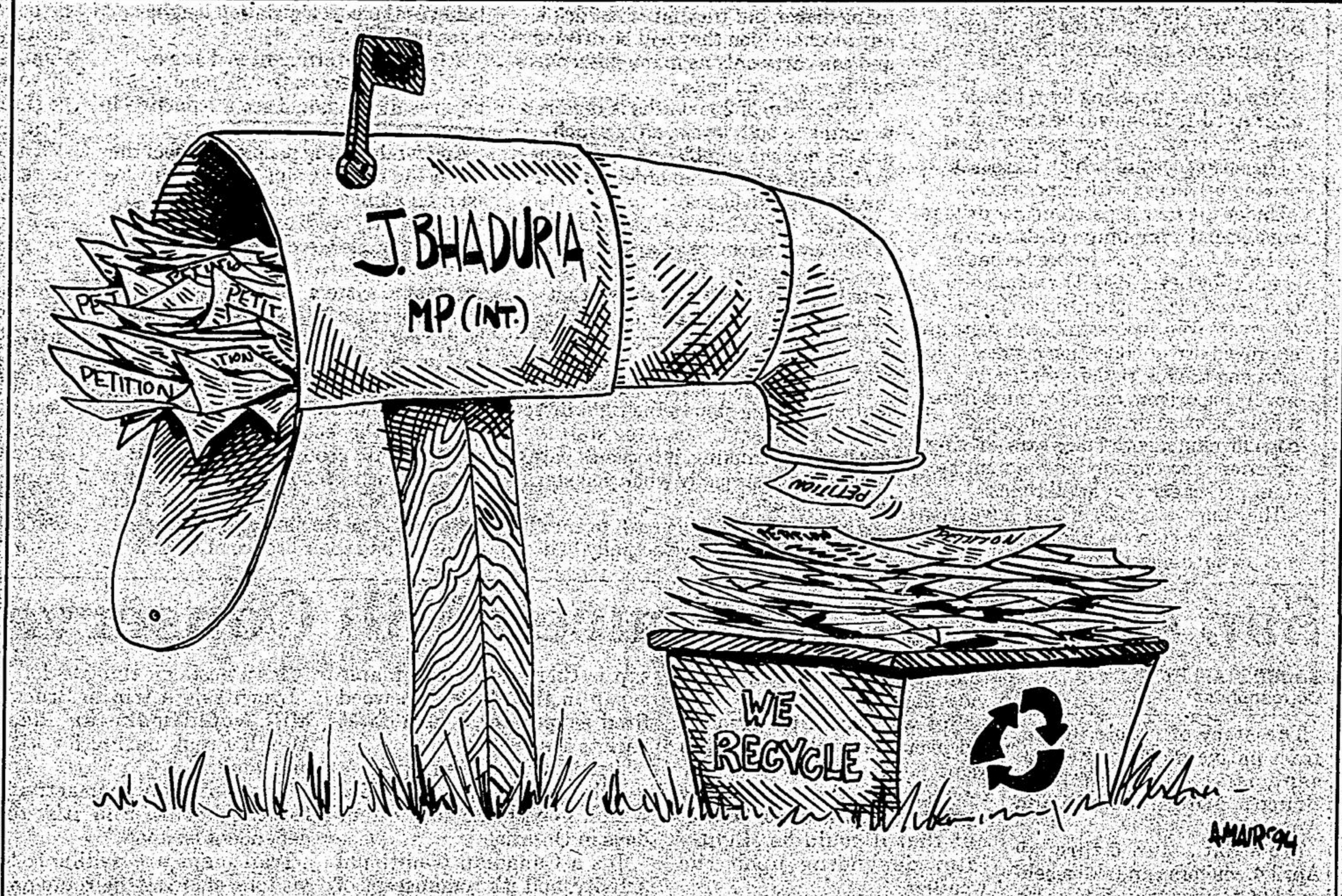
Town staff not liable to inform groups

Town officials must be lauded for standing their ground on the issue of meeting notification. The Town places ads in *The Tribune*, we write stories on upcoming meetings and their impact, and a phone call to Michele Skinner in the clerk's office ends with results. If ratepayer and special interest groups want to be put on the municipality's mailing list, they should have to pay for it.

Ward councillors are also excellent sources of information.

It is not the Town's responsibility to make certain groups are informed directly. There are better ways to spend staff's time.

Through this paper, the councillors and town office, if residents want to know, they will be able to find out.



Bills, bills, bills: all in the name of living well

Just home from picking up the mail.

Top of the stack. Bill number one.

"Oh, look dear a bill to pay."

"Oh, yeah, and lookie here darling, they've changed the entire presentation and appearance. Very progressive. Nice graphics. Isn't that the brightest shade of red you've ever seen? What great public relations."

"Marvellous. Oh, wow, it says here the more we charge, the more we save. Remind me to run out right after dinner and slap something on this baby so we can start saving money immediately. Anyway, listen pumpkin, let me pay this one, it's my turn."

"No, now don't be ridiculous honey, I'll pay the bill this month." "No, no, no. I insist. I'm paying this bill, sweetheart, you pay the next one."

"Okay, if you must."

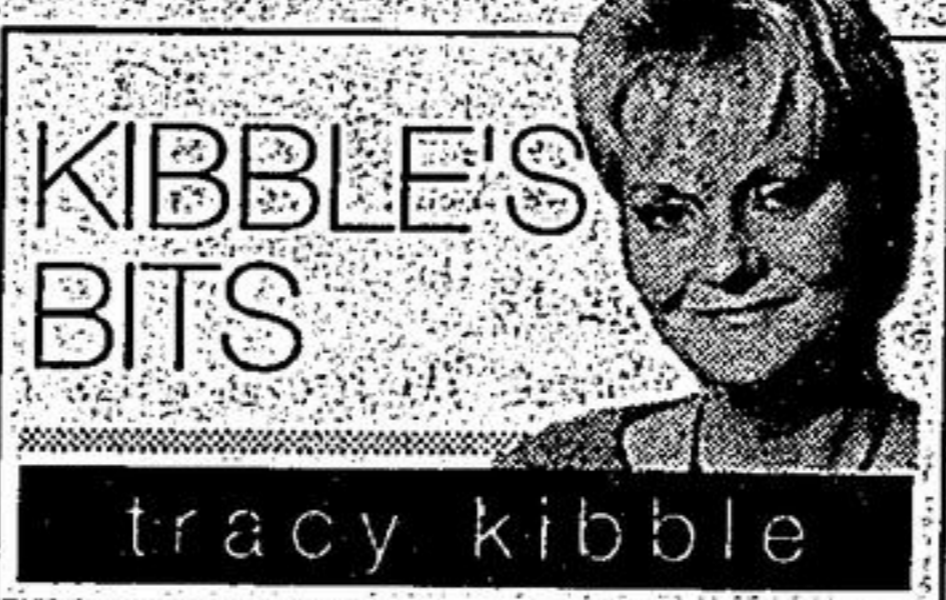
Bill number two.

"Oh gracious, I wondered when they were going to send this bill. Will you look at that. Discounts all around this month, hon. More savings. Remind me to sign us up."

"Gees, we owe less this month than I thought we would. I'll pay this one, okay?"

"Well, as long as you're not overextending, dear. I don't want you to feel under pressure."

"Don't be foolish, peaches. Consider it done."



KIBBLE'S BITS
tracy kibble

Bill number three.

"These little rascals raised the fee again, did you notice that darlin'?"

"Oh, yeah, how do you like that. My, my. Those naughty corporate beggars really want to suck us dry this month, eh?"

"Oh, well. All in the name of living well, sweetie. Could you squeeze that on your roster this payday, though?"

Pause.

"Me? You've only offered to pay one bill so far, haven't you pumpkin?"

"Only one in the last few days, you mean lovey. You seem to have quite a bit of extra cash on you these days if I'm not mistaken."

"Now listen here cupcake. I pay my fair share around here. Do you think the snow gets shovelled outside by itself? Don't I do my share of the cooking, cleaning and vacuuming, or is that not enough for the lady of the house?"

"Well, excuse me Mr. Mom. And I suppose you think I come home and plop down on my

tush all night while you run around the joint like super maid, do you?"

"Look, if it's a problem for you to pick up this one, I'll get it, okay? After all, I'm used to it."

"Well of all the nerve. Let me tell you a few things, buster."

"Oh, look hon, here's a birthday card from your mother, isn't that sweet?"

"Is there any money in it?"

Rest of stack:

- Offer to win \$10 million by ordering magazines.
- Pizza flyer.
- Really bad Laurentian newspaper.
- Flyers.
- Flyers.

Is it kindness or a sales pitch?

Here you are, in the terminally turgid 90s, trying not to insult anyone while doing your best to cope with the budget, lookism, sexism and systemic discrimination.

Suddenly and without warning, along comes a jolly, power-of-positive-thinking Californian, and adds random acts of kindness to the list of things designed to send you over the edge, especially when you don't feel in the mood to be touchingly grateful.

Apparently the perpetrators of the newest form of altruism are amazed to discover that gestures such as handing out flowers to perfect strangers have an unerring tendency to go down like a lead balloon with the intended beneficiaries.

But be honest, wouldn't you seriously wonder about someone who came up to you brandishing a rose or a carnation and tried to



KATE'S CORNER

insist you take it? Isn't that what the Moonies and Hari Krishna were famous for?

My first reaction, cynic that I am, would be to wonder what someone was trying to sell me. My second reaction would be, I'd prefer a large cheque or, at the very least, a large gun and tonic.

A driving force behind this movement is an unfortunate desire to spread relentless goodwill among one's fellow persons. So you're walking along, having a delicious bad mood day, and along comes a cheerleader determined to help you snap out of it.

The only way to stop this roller-

coaster of mindless enthusiasm is to cite discrimination against people with allergies to flowers, or sombre souls with Eeyore complexes, whose greatest joy in life is being depressed.

Benevolent bonhomie is all very well in its place, but it can go too far. Consider the movie *Addams Family Values*, where misfit offspring are sentenced to a day in the Harmony Hut, watching *The Sound of Music* and a host of similarly uplifting Disney epics.

All this because they refused to join in and be inexorably filled with the milk of human kindness and understanding. I leave you with these pearls of wisdom from Phyllis McGinley's poem, written in 1940 and entitled *Song against Sweetness and Light*:

"O, merry is the optimist with the troops of courage leaguering, But a dour trend in any friend is somehow less fatiguing."

Stouffville Tribune

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