

# stouffville comment

## Earth Day should be every day

**E**arth Day. Once again we are asked to raise our consciousness about the health of the planet.

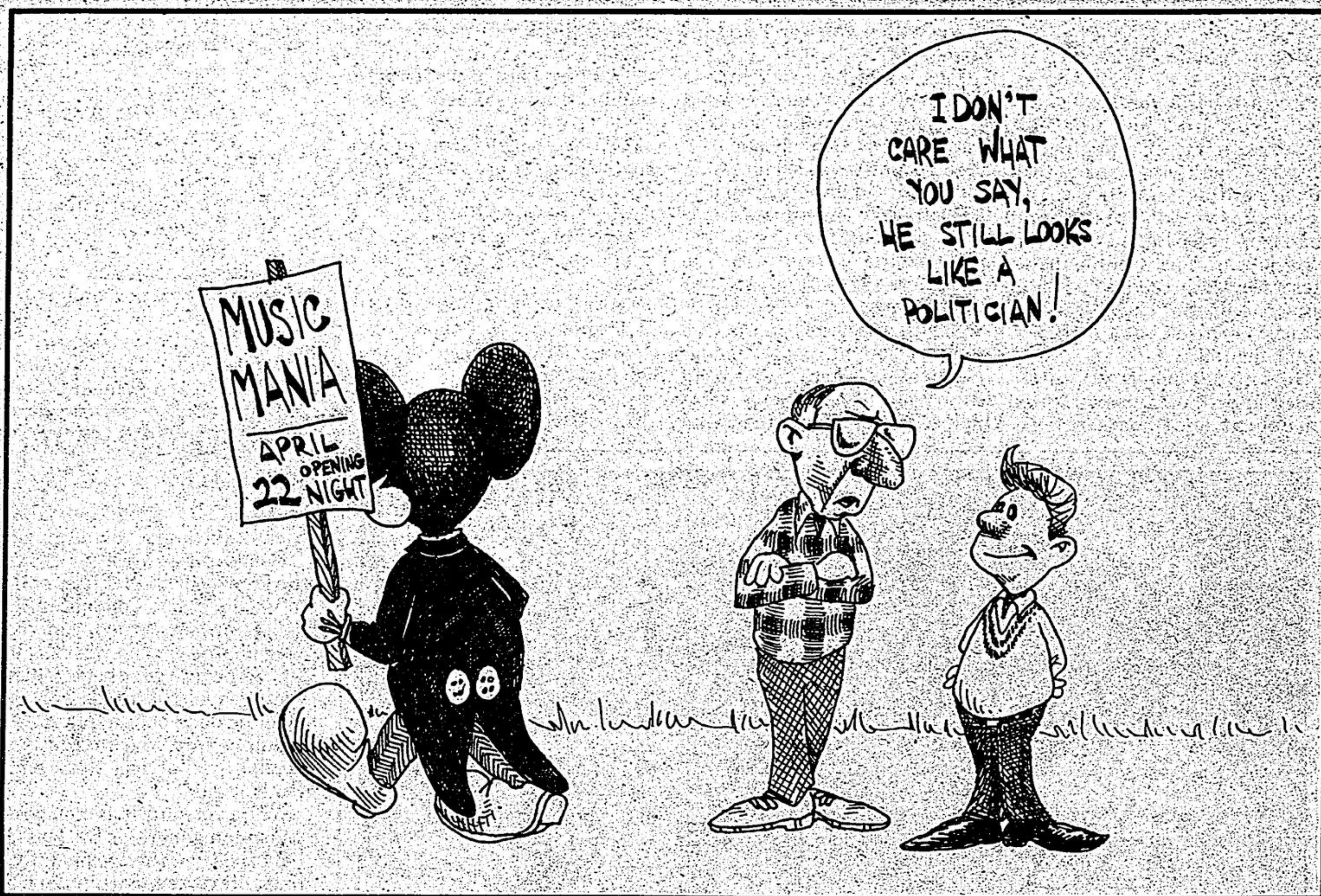
It is shameful that we have to have a day for such reckoning in the first place.

The planet is one of the few things we should be taking as a constant - the others being sunrises, death and taxes.

And it is also shameful that interest in the environment is tapering. It is no longer in vogue.

True, products must still bear an environmental logo, or few will buy them, and people have become ingrained with the notions of recycling, water conservation and nature preservation, but it is a fact that when jobs are at stake, when there is no bread on the table, people simply have more on the minds than the planet.

Despite all our personal problems, the fact that we shuffle the environment to the back of our mental closets is terrible. Let's put it in perspective again.



## \$15 hike a lot more than some people think

**T**he town's 4,500 taxpayers will share the burden. That's nothing new and it's certainly not surprising.

Whenever there's a shortfall in government, the taxpayer picks up the tab.

The average Joe, paying more-than-his-average share in a debt-ridden world of over-spending.

Welcome to life.

Whitchurch-Stouffville officials need \$135,000 extra this year to make ends meet, they say.

And about \$100,000 of that will end up under your tires, as work crews attempt patch-up jobs on the town's poorly-constructed rural roadways.

The remaining funds, about

\$35,000, will help administer your money, which keeps the town in business.

Whitchurch-Stouffville politicians approved the hike during a raucous meeting April 6, and setting aside some rude, redneck comments from a few uneducated lackies, people showed they are generally not pleased with the outcome. And rightfully so. I never realized how rightfully so, until a comment was made to me last week.

I had a conversation with one of the town's better-paid staff members regarding this matter and that, when the person said something about the three-per cent local tax hike that made the hairs on my



KIBBLE'S BITS

tracy kibble

neck stand up. The statement carried an unmistakable I'm-so-sick-of-hearing-about-this tone, and was aimed at letting me know how the press blows everything out of proportion. During the conversation this person (I won't reveal the identity for obvious reasons) made a remark that I sincerely hope is not

the attitude of all public employees. This person said: "It seems like a lot (three per cent,) but it's really only \$15 a person."

The comment is not only arrogant and short-sighted, but borders on ignorant and uninformed. Especially since this person's income depends on you.

Yeah, it's only \$15 a person - for the municipal portion of that green giant tax bill. But when you add that \$15 to the \$100 extra the school board wants, and the \$365 extra the region wants and who knows how much extra the province wants, it's a hell of a lot

more than what it seems. And when you add that again to the mortgage, the hydro, the Bell, the groceries, the gas and the million other miscellaneous "not much" \$15 bills taxpayers receive every blood-from-a-stone month of the year it's a hell of a lot more than it seems.

If this comment is the general consensus of what local government officials are thinking, why not raise the taxes by six per cent? That's not much - only \$30 a person. Why not 10 per cent? What's a lousy \$100 a year?

Wisen up, bud.

## A near-dinner disaster averted

**W**e entertained friends a couple of weeks ago and for once I would have been ready on the dot of 7.30 p.m., which was when I thought I'd invited them.

They arrived, however, at 7.23 p.m., apologizing profusely for being late. This was because I'd told the husband what time we were expecting them and he thought I said 7 p.m..

Well, I told myself, men are hopeless about remembering those kind of details. Rather like women and map reading.

Such stereotypical utterances may be deplored by the sexual equality police, but the fact remains that the art of reading maps, in my case at least, falls into the disaster zone between parallel parking and an aptitude for math.

The time between 7.20 p.m. and 7.30 p.m. on this particular evening had been reserved for Building Rome; my husband's



KATE'S CORNER

kate gilderdale

definition of tarting up. When the doorbell rang, I panicked, an unwise move for someone wielding a mascara wand.

I missed my lashes, liberally decorating the rings under my eyes with that indelible stuff that only comes off with sandpaper and Brillo. I tried rubbing it gently, but ended up with an eye-catching series of red blotches smeared with black streaks.

By starting from scratch, I managed to repair the damage and was downstairs, only somewhat dishevelled, by 7.35 p.m. It was our guests' first visit to Chateau Gilderdale, and by that time they were apologizing for

being early while I was beginning to wonder whether I had said 7 p.m. after all.

Not that I mentioned the possibility. My memory isn't what it was and I hate admitting I'm wrong. The dinner turned out wonderfully, in spite of the fact I'd lost the list on which I'd jotted the instructions about when to put in the vegetables and turn on the oven. And the medicinal glass or two of wine I'd sunk to steady my nerves after our unexpectedly early start.

Sometimes I amaze myself, especially in view of the times I've stood in the basement, wondering what I've gone down there for. I can only imagine that for organized people there are no nasty surprises. But no nice ones, either. Like a friendship that can thrive despite the yawning gap between 7.23 p.m. and ready.

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