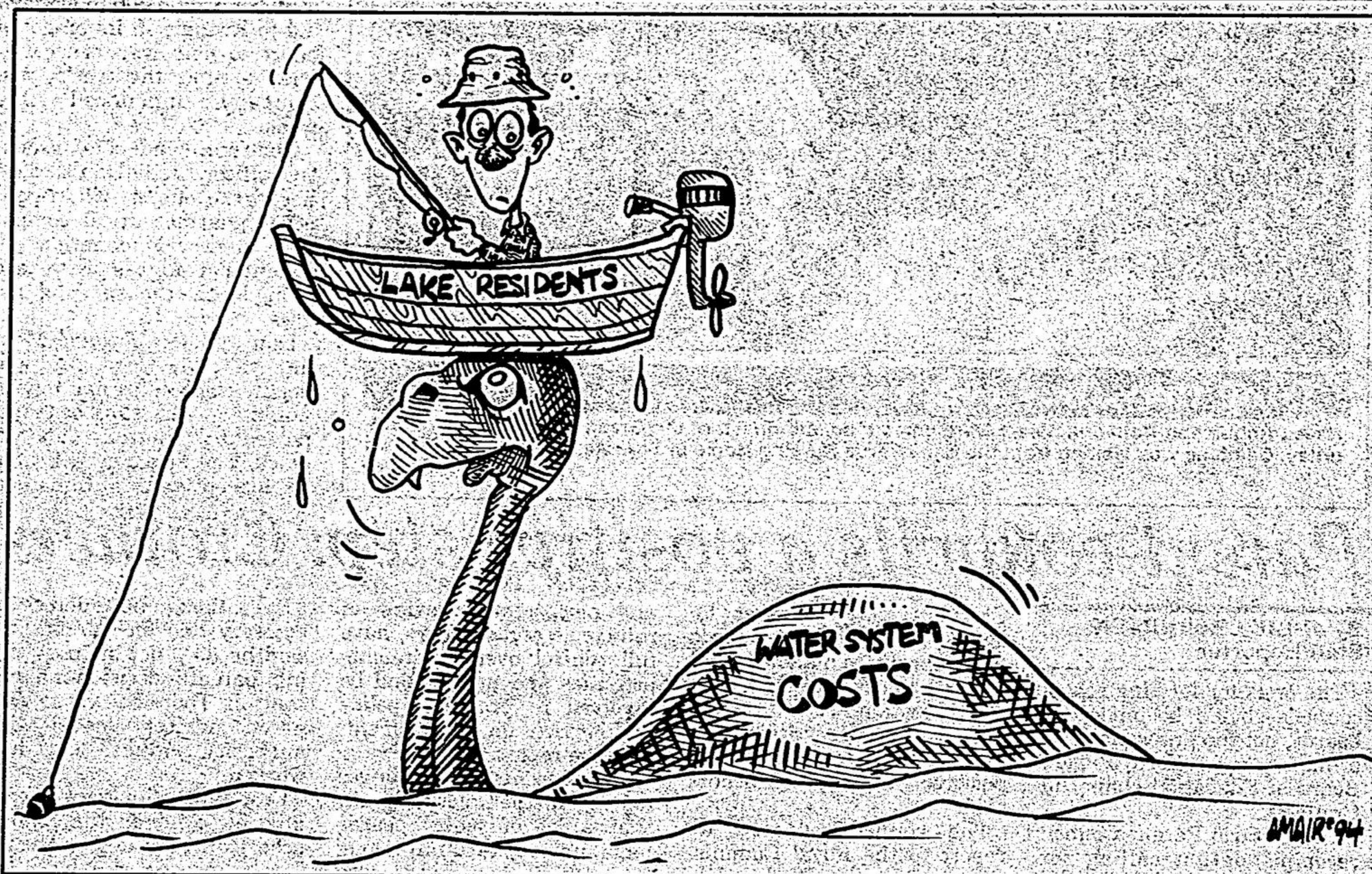


stouffville comment

Indifference sickening in Rwanda

Why does it take thousands to die before action is taken in the hall of government around the world? The Rwandan crisis is just the latest instance where officials have seen a catastrophe in the making and have refused to take action until thousands have perished. The situation was the same in Bosnia, and in Somalia.

It is sickening to view the results of bureaucratic delays from around the world on the front pages of newspapers. Thankfully, there are groups and individuals willing to contribute in the void left by the rest of the world's fence-sitting. Thanks to all the people in this area trying to make a difference.



Spoiled child Quebec wants special treatment

Quebec politicians remind me of that fat-faced little girl I see at the grocery store from time to time who screams and kicks and dances around her mother's cart.

She does this every time she wants something sweet. And it works. Her mother throws that exasperated "stop embarrassing me" look and peels the wrapper off a bright red sucker.

The little girl stuffs it into her mouth and is content for a while. Until she sees something else she wants and the fits begin again.

That's what Quebec is like - at least its politicians are making the province appear that way. Like a spoiled rotten little child who stamps her feet and screams until she gets what she wants. Only trouble is there's always something else

she wants just around the corner.

Canada's government is her parents; the provinces, her siblings; and Quebec, the spoiled little child.

And now Quebec is getting the attention she wants as federalists and separatists coddle her needs and pander to her every whim.

"Stay in Canada and we will make it worth your while," the federalists say as they stroke Quebec's ego.

"Come with us and we'll give you everything you want - only more than you're getting now," the separatists promise as if leaving the 'family' would be the ultimate freedom.

All the while, Quebec is sucking her thumb and rubbing wounded tears from her eyes, reaching for another candy and

KIBBLE'S
BITS

tracy kibble

hoping to get more toys than everyone else in her family called Canada.

But spoiled children are never satisfied and experienced parents swear it's true. Spoiled children learn to use their temper and their embarrassing fits as a tool to control parents.

Quebec is being like that too.

Parents usually find whacking a spoiled child doesn't do much good in the long run, but that taking away 'privileges'

might work if it's done consistently each time the child acts up.

That's what Canada should try with Quebec in order to stop her endless barrage of special requests.

Here's a few suggestions:

- ◆ Send Quebec to her room and slam the door. Take away her Canadian pension, her provincial transfer payments and her Unemployment Insurance or welfare benefits if she continues her threat to "run away." Give her her share of the national debt, though - a debt she amply contributed to.

- ◆ Explain to Quebec that if she wishes to leave "home" she must end all ties with her family and that includes its currency, citizenship and trade rights

and our health care privileges.

- ◆ Remind Quebec that living on her own is harder than she thinks without mommy and daddy to bail her out. She'll have to get a job and pay the bills - all by herself.

- ◆ Tell Quebec that everyone in this family is special because of their individuality and diversity and that one is no better than anyone else.

And finally, explain to Quebec that her family loves her very much, but that if she can't accept the fact that everyone in the family is to be treated the same than she'll just have to pack her bags and experience life on her own.

Then leave the room and see who comes running with open arms.

I'm ready to throw in the trowel

My award for last week's most descriptive headline goes to the Globe and Mail for "The lawn as polyester leisure suit."

It seems that some people are coming out of the closet and admitting they would welcome an alternative to the boring expanses of pristine, weed-free grass characterizing those neatly crafted landscapes which favor human organization over natural disarray. To me, many weeds are just flowers with an 'in your face' attitude. They insist on thriving despite neglect and they are the antithesis of order and design.

They grow in random natural patterns, they intermingle with other species without regard to appropriate color schemes, they require no mulching or pruning or dividing. They just grow like, well, weeds. Weeds are as welcome in formal gardens as Roberto Baggio at a postmortem on the

KATE'S
CORNER

World Cup held by Italian soccer fans. Their cardinal sin is their lack of neatness.

They have this terrible habit of filling in the bits of earth that are left over when all the serried ranks of color co-ordinated real flowers have been planted or when the lawn police have failed to vigilantly stamp out foreign flora which boldly grow where no weed has grown before.

Mr. Wallethead and I have a basic disagreement about species I regard as wild flowers but which he considers the floral equivalent of the house fly. Rogue dandelions are among

his favorite targets and he uproots them with fierce efficiency and a lethal, two-pronged metal implement whenever they show their bright yellow heads on our lawn.

Dandelions, clover, pansies and the most beautiful yellow and purple species, which aren't in any of my gardening books because they're weeds, seem to grow wild in fields without help from anyone, despite those experts who insist that a 'natural' garden is hard to maintain.

As a foremost expert in the area of 'allowing nature' to take its course, I can assure them that benign neglect can lead to a most interesting garden. The only prerequisites are laid-back neighbors and a willingness not to impose human order on natural chaos. Anyway, as Anon said, "I've had enough of gardening - I'm about ready to throw in the trowel."

Stouffville Tribune

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Canadian Publications Mail Sales Product Agreement #439010

Published every Wednesday by Metroland Printing, Publishing and Distributing at 9 Heritage Rd., Markham, Ontario L3P 1M3 Tel. 294-2200. The Stouffville Tribune, published every Wednesday, at 6244 Main St. Stouffville is one of the Metroland Printing, Publishing and Distributing group of suburban newspapers which includes: Ajax-Pickering News Advertiser, Aurora Banner, Barrie Advance, Brampton Guardian, Burlington Post, Collingwood Connection, Etobicoke Guardian, Georgetown Independent/Acton Free Press, Kingston This Week, Lindsay This Week, Markham Economist & Sun, Midland Express, Milton Canadian Champion, Mississauga News, Newmarket Era Banner, North York Mirror, Northumberland News, Oakville Beaver, Orlino Today, Oshawa Whiby This Week, Peterborough This Week, Richmond Hill/Thornhill/Vaughan Liberal, Scarborough Mirror, and Uxbridge Tribune.

NATIONAL SALES REPRESENTATIVE: Metroland Corporate Sales, 493-1300.

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