

stouffville comment

Be aware of all issues on Nov. 14

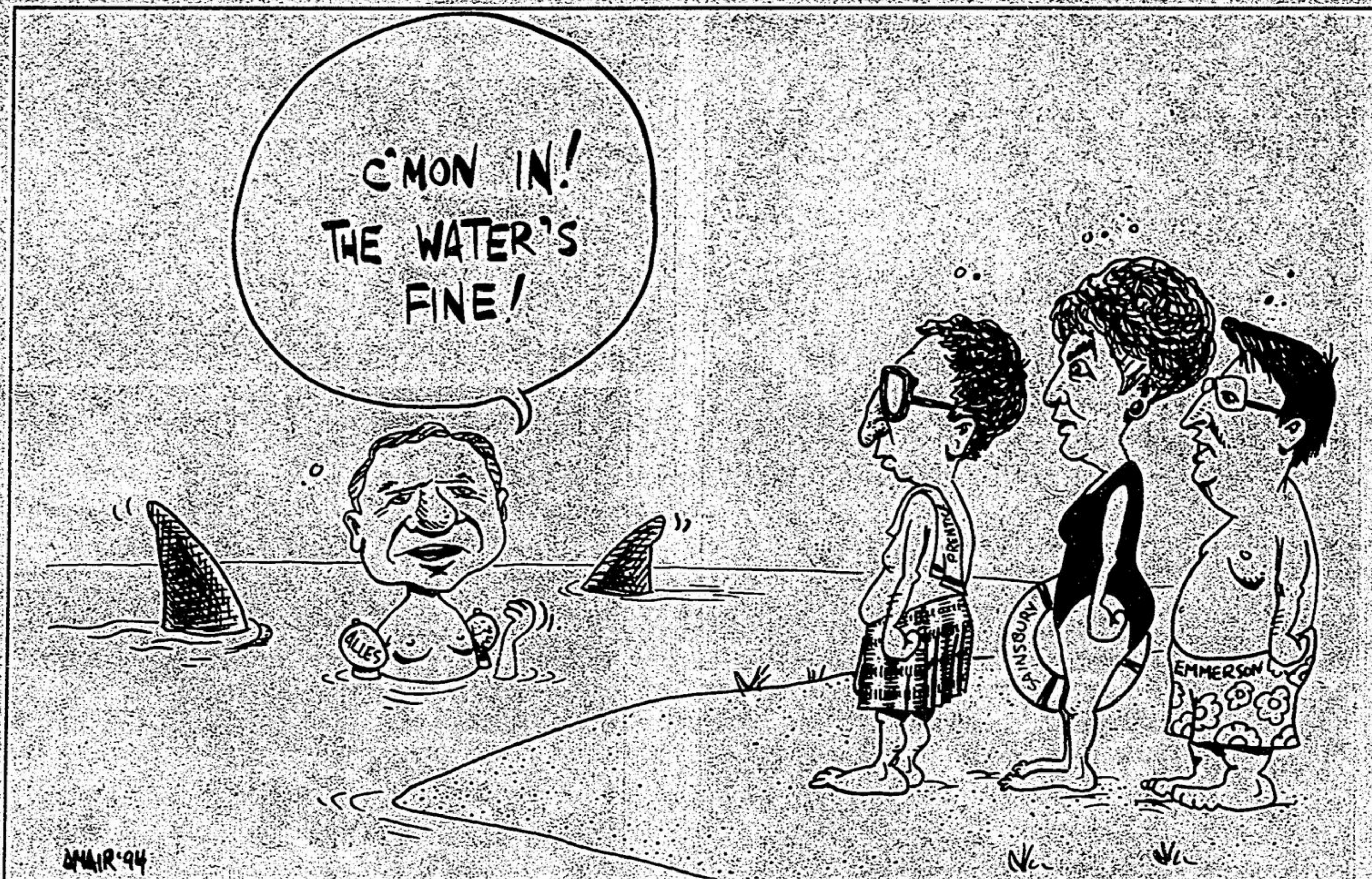
Final ballots are at the printers, and the race is on.

Before the debates, before the candidate meetings and before too many doors are knocked on, it is imperative that voters in this municipality make themselves familiar with not only the candidates, but with the election process itself, the issues, and in many cases, voters should, at the very least, know what ward they are in.

And while much attention is focussed on council and the race for mayor, one aspect of this election cannot be overlooked.

Education takes the largest chunk of the municipal tax bill.

Municipal council is third in the tax pie after the region. Voters must familiarize themselves with all to be able to make an informed decision on Nov. 14.



Doing battle with the Furnace From Hell

With much regret, we turned on the furnace last week. Being Scottish both in ancestry and by nature, I always put off spending money until I absolutely must. But when we caught the Fabulous Mrs. Beasley and the cats huddled together for warmth in front of the refrigerator, and when we couldn't get into the bath before shooing away the penguins, I relented and went to the thermostat.

Aside from the fact that paying for heat rankles me in the same way I begrudge putting a stamp on my tax returns, I also had trepidations because we have the Furnace From Hell.

Reluctantly, I turned on the thermostat, and immediately conjured up the furnace demons who instantly began coughing and snorting black smoke and

what I thought looked suspiciously like brimstone. As they began their demon dance of fire, the whole house shook and horrific belching noises came up from the basement. The furnace, now fully possessed, began grumbling very loudly, occasionally mixed with a high-pitched, insane laughter. In the two years we have lived in our home, we have become used to this. However, when the air moving through the pipes began to sound like a funeral dirge, and the Fabulous Mrs. Beasley began to howl, we knew we'd have to call in an expert - the Furnexorcist.

He arrived at the door, black bag in hand, fedora pulled down over his eyes. He descended the basement stairs with solemn authority, but within minutes, came tearing back up, eyes wide,



MINUTE WITH MAIR
andrew mair

filthy and soaked in sweat. "This is going to be a BIG job," he said. I knew what this meant. BIG money. But a sooty tentacle was inching its way up the basement stairs, so it had to be done. After saying a silent prayer, the Furnexorcist went back into the bowels of the house. All was quiet for awhile, then he came charging back up with a look on his face of one who has seen things

no mortal is supposed to see.

"Do you have a plastic bag?" he asked.

"What on earth for?" I asked, unable to fathom what furnace component could be whipped into submission by a flimsy bit of plastic. "I've found the trouble," he said dramatically.

We inched back into the basement, where the once-fierce furnace lay in pieces. Showing me a part that he called the Oscillating Fibrillation Hotometer (or something like that), he reached in and pulled out - are you ready for this? - a bat. He put the thing in the bag, and reached back into the machine. Another bat. Then another. And another. And one

more. Ah, so this was what possessed my furnace. (I could picture the little mammals running around in the engine, shouting out things like, "Impulse power, Mr. Bat!", and "I canny give er any more, captain!" when I turned on the furnace. Seeing that their ship was dying, but secure in the knowledge that they had gone where no bats had gone before, the captain gave the self-destruct order.)

The furnace up and running, I thanked the man, who slipped out into the fog leaving no trace except a bill for \$365, and closed the door. As I did so, I could swear I heard a tiny, maniacal giggle coming from the stove.

Y'all have a nice day now

The other day I was hanging out at a new-fangled check-out in the drug store passing the time of day with a cash register.

"HELLO" it said in bright green, user-friendly electronic letters.

"Hello yourself," I replied. That was about it, conversation-wise, until a human operator came along and punched in some numbers. At this point it reverted to type and demanded money.

First we had talking cars (whatever happened to talking cars?) now we have to endure non-verbal communication from machines at the checkout. I'm still trying to decide whether or not this is a good thing.

I suppose it could catch on with people who like interfacing with anything incapable of answering back, at least until an enterprising lawyer brings a class action suit on behalf of linguistically challenged infants.



KATE'S CORNER

mate objects. It's certainly easier to ignore a well brought up computer than to freeze out one of those pesky greeters waiting to pounce on you the second you step over the threshold of certain well-known chain stores.

Not to mention those eager beavers in white lab coats who lurk amid supermarket displays, waiting to ambush the unwary shopper with samples of chocolate chip cookie or no-calorie substitute cream cheese spread.

Thwarting the determined demonstrator can be tricky, especially on days when there's a huge market posted at the

end of every aisle. If you do find yourself on the receiving end of a sumptuous sausage sample at 8.02 the morning after the night before, however, you will be forced to take evasive action.

The brave simply ignore heartfelt entreaties to nibble on a nacho.

Others sweep by mumbling "No, thank you" and leave the store to the sound of muzak with their shopping only half completed.

There's always the option of caving in and ingesting whatever is preferred, but then you're stuck with a fistful of coupons and a sales pitch for the product in question.

Claiming immunity on religious/sexual/racial grounds is probably your best bet, since even the most determined sales person pales at the thought of intervention by the Human Rights Commission.

Y'all have a nice day now.

Stouffville Tribune

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