

Opinion

Hydro talks could lead our way to a supercity

They should start talking. Hydro electric commissions around the region may work better together and on March 6 they'll get a chance to discuss that possibility.

On that day, the Whitchurch-Stouffville Hydro Electric Commission and sister utilities in Newmarket, Aurora, Markham, Richmond Hill, Georgina, Vaughan, King and East Gwillimbury will meet, and, we hope, talk about disbanding to form one mega utility to serve all or most of York.

It would be nice to see an honest debate on the issue paving the way to amalgamation, to the forming of a supercity.

Our poll this issue shows support for this idea is stronger than some local lead-



Viewpoint

Jo Ann Stevenson

ers may think. In fact, the regional chair believes in the single city goal, while the Stouffville mayor defies such conclusions.

The commissions should talk about merging because it may be the best way to serve taxpayers.

Their creed should be, as suggested last week by the manager of Whitchurch-Stouffville Hydro, that if amalgamation saves money it will probably happen.

That same logic hasn't spread to the councils within York Region and their reluctance is akin to the ostrich who hid by burying its head in the sand.

Taxpayers will benefit by some sharing of resources, services and by some partnering. They would prefer a home-made plan to one imposed from the province.

We have had little leadership from municipal politicians, even while they watch and wonder at the spectacle happening south of our borders. Toronto is in the midst of change - inevitable change.

The status quo is not affordable. We need to know the advantages of amalgamation, total or partial.

Several residents are still not sure regional government delivered the cost savings it was touted to do in the Davis years.

Regional charities such as Big Brothers and United Way have found they need to hold events in the south where most of the population is in order to attract that involvement.

Will amalgamation alienate ratepayers from the political process?

We need answers and with so little leadership on this, we haven't even formulated the questions.

Looking at the potential of amalgamation is good planning.

Hydro should take the lead.

The Tribune

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Women do have history at sea

Poor David Alan-Williams. All he really wanted was to immerse himself in cold water for a couple of weeks, but he's landed in a vat of hot water instead.

Alan-Williams is a veteran British yachtsman. Next May, he plans to re-enact the discovery of Newfoundland by sailing a replica of a 15th-century sailing ship all the way from Portsmouth, England to St. John's, Newfoundland.

That's what's got him in hot water. Last month, Alan-Williams unveiled the nineteen-man crew he's selected to help him make the voyage. "Man" is the operative word in that sentence — there's nary a woman on deck.

You'd think that wouldn't bother anybody. After all, there

weren't any women crew members on the ships of Cabot, Champlain or Eric the Red. Alas, great umbrage was taken by various feminist members of the British sailing frat/sorority. They denounced the skipper for sex discrimination — and then Alan-Williams really put his foot in it by declaring that women weren't tough enough to endure such a voyage.

David, David, David...where have you been living?

Are you sure that you're the veteran British sailor the newspapers say you are? Your grasp of nautical history is a little shaky.

Haven't you heard of Madame Ching? There's a gal who could have stood the gaff — not to mention your guff. Madame Ching was a Chinese pirate who roamed the seas back in the early 19th century picking off fat galleons and treasure-heavy sloops. She didn't make her captives walk the plank, she added them — and their ships — to her fleet. At one point Madame Ching commanded a flotilla of 1,600 vessels.

How tough was she? Tough enough to knock off the Imperial Fleet of China. The Chinese emperor sent his entire navy under the command of his best Admiral to capture Madame Ching. Madame Ching whipped him so thoroughly that the Admiral committed suicide in disgrace.

About the same time that Madame Ching was ruling the waves by waiving the rules, there was a comely wench named Maria Cobham sailing the very North Atlantic that David Alan-Williams plans to navigate this spring.

Maria was not a Nice Person



Basic Black

Arthur Black

— even by pirates' thuggish standards. She made a habit of stabbing, poisoning and/or whipping any seaman she captured.

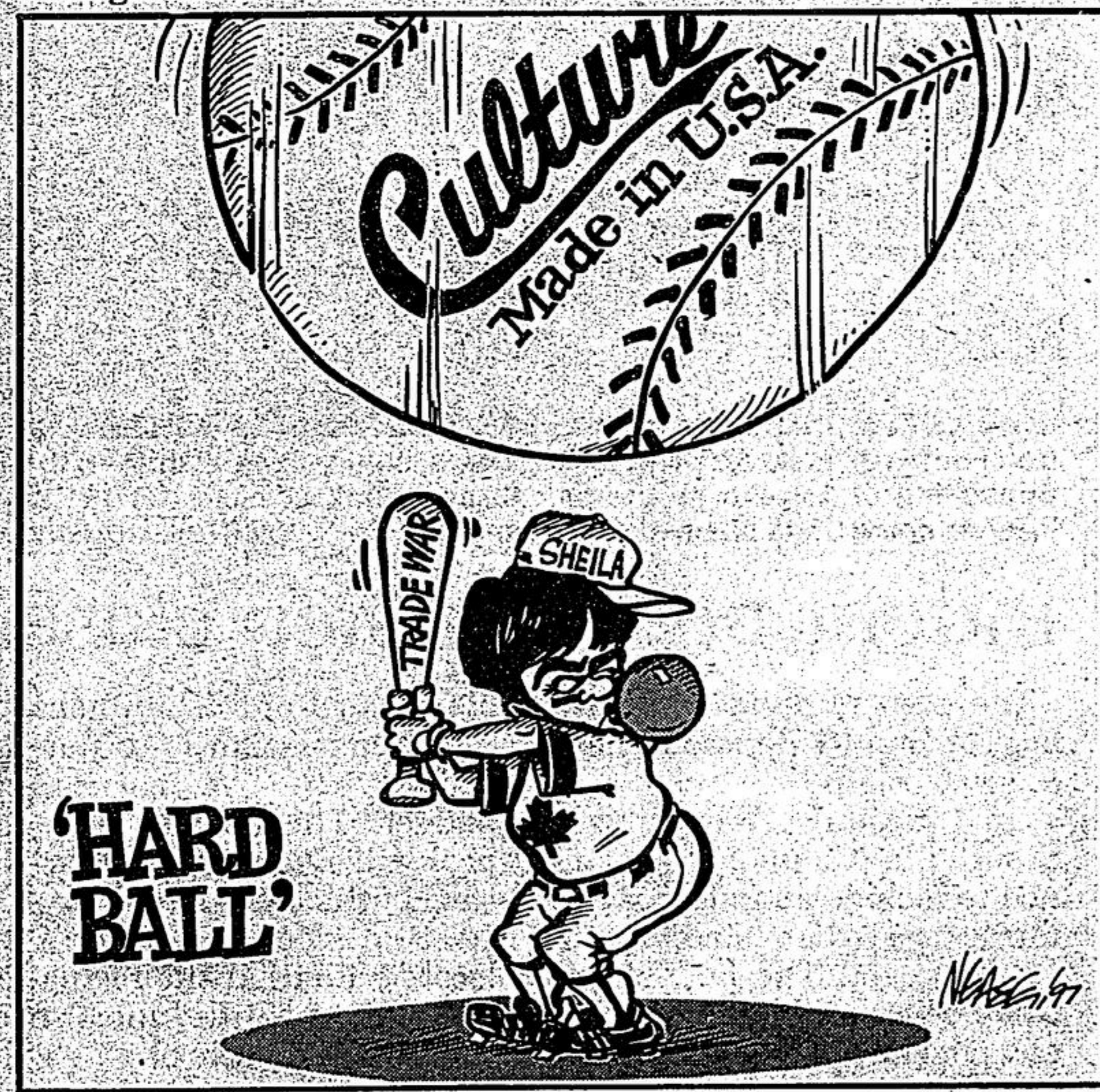
I'd like to report that justice caught up with Maria the Pirate and that she finished her career at the end of a rope or languishing in some dungeon as a permanent guest of Her Majesty — I'd like to, but I can't. Fact is, Maria Cobham plied her murderous trade for 20 years, amassed a huge fortune and retired to a lavish chateau in France.

That was not the case for Anne Bonney and Mary Read, two women who served in the crew of another pirate known as Calico Jack. Thing is, nobody aboard knew they were women — they both disguised themselves as men.

Fate caught up with Anne and Mary off the coast of Jamaica in 1720. Their ship was trapped and boarded by sailors of the British Navy. Anne and Mary fought like banshees for hours but were eventually disarmed and arrested. The rest of their crew were strung up. The court pardoned Mary and Anne — because they were both pregnant.

So I guess somebody knew there were women on board.

You've got to wonder if they would have considered David Alan-Williams tough enough to sail with any of them.



Editor's mail

Parents are the primary educators

Dear Editor,

It would be difficult for me to believe that Andrew Mair, the author of a recent and bitterly vitriolic editorial on the topic of the school curriculum, has any children of his own. How else could he be so brutally dismissive of the legitimate interest of parents in what their children learn at school?

Mair seems to think we should leave the question of educating our children entirely up to the "professionals". Parents should only have a "supporting role". And since a "supporting role" seems to encompass no ability to influence the curriculum, I, for one, fail to see what practical meaning that "role" could have.

Why shouldn't parents exercise influence over the curriculum? Mair's reasoning boils down to this: they're too stupid to know what's good for their own children. The State knows better. For anyone with more than a passing acquaintance with fascism, this line of thought ought to be pretty chilling. Any school that is deaf to the voice of parents is (although perhaps Mair's

idea of an educational utopia) nowhere I want my children to be.

One of the most amazing things of all is Mair's rationale for allowing our children to read books steeped in foul language and violence. He says there is mayhem in school parking lots. Foul language peppers the daily speech of most teenagers. I can only conclude that he thinks, therefore, that inculcating anything great or noble in our children is a complete waste of time since the world has already gone to the dogs.

We've all got to recognize that parents, not teachers are the primary educators of children. Education is, at bottom, a parental, not a professional, responsibility. The buck cannot be passed. Only those parents who find the television more engaging than bedtime stories would, I think, beg to differ.

As far as I'm concerned, if Snobelen wants parents to have a larger role in the education system, more power to him.

Scott McLaren
Markham