

Comment & Opinions

Saturday, May 10 1997
Vol. 13, No. 19

Send your letters
to the editor
to the address below

EDITORIAL

Grill candidates seeking your vote

As we approach the June 2 federal election, it's time for voters to start getting interested in their local candidates.

Much as many people would prefer not to have to think about politics and politicians, this is our only chance in the next four years to have a say in the future of our government and our country.

Politicians are human beings and they can be good, bad and sometimes even dangerous. One need look no further than the Province of Quebec and the revelation that Parti Quebecois Premier Jacques Parizeau would have unilaterally taken his province out of Canada on the basis of the narrowest of Yes side votes in the 1995 referendum.

One person, especially a politician, should not be allowed to indulge in such megalomania at the expense of taxpayers.

It has often been said that if the best person in each riding were elected to the House of Commons, party affiliation being irrelevant, then we would have an excellent government full of principled and free-thinking individuals.

Unfortunately, far too many people blindly vote by party or whichever leader's television commercials they like best. This is no way select a government.

An electorate gets the government it deserves. Some of the rogues who have been voted to public office over the years is simply amazing.

This election, voters have a right to ask a number of hard questions of the candidates who come knocking on their doors. Don't simply take the literature and let the candidate, or the person representing the candidate, run on down to the next door. Ask this person some questions. Find out where they stand on the issues that are important to you.

Also, remind the person seeking your vote that you want them to work for you. After all, it's your money that's paying them.

Bad truckers far outnumbered

Dear Editor,
Just in time!

The following was penned in response to the many letters in the local papers lately about trucks and truckers.

Big Business cried "Just in time" is what we need for delivery purposes.

The retail outlet closed their warehouse "just in time" to downsize and save on expenses.

A new truck fleet was born "just in time" to replace the laid off warehouse people.

The manufacturer closed and demolished his warehouse "just in time" to save his company enormous amounts of property tax.

A new truck stop was built "just in time" to

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accommodate the new mobile warehousing of the trucking industry.

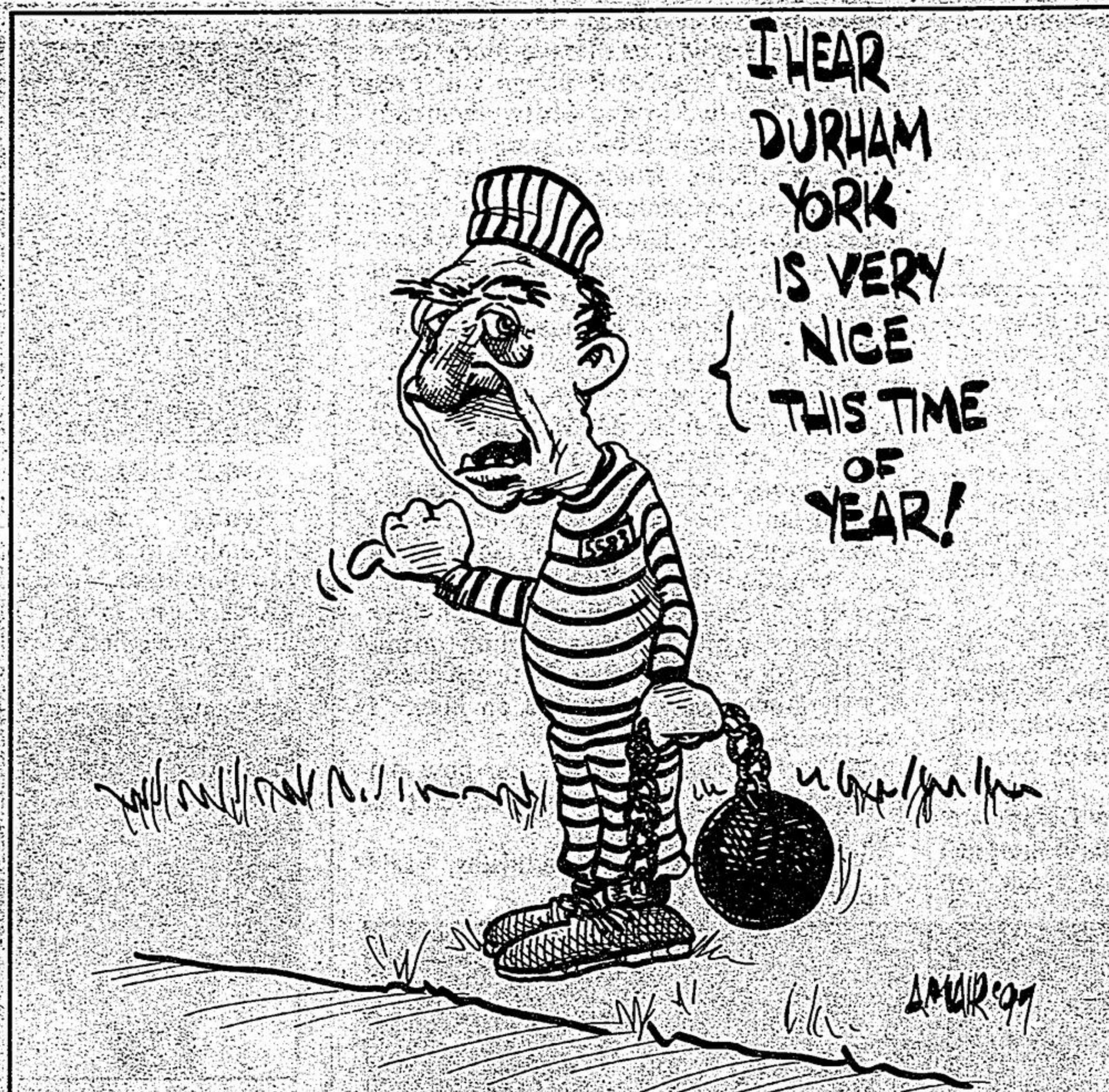
Big business lobbied "just in time" for the heaviest loads in North America.

A trucker jumped on his brakes jeopardizing his personal safety "just in time" to avoid hitting the car who cut in 10 feet in front of him in heavy traffic.

Business lobbied just in time for multiple trailers.

The trucker died in the wreckage of his jackknifed tractor trailer after slamming on his brakes "just in time" to save the lives of

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Ups and downs on the job

So what's the most boring job you ever had? Mine was 'inventory clerk' for a steel manufacturing company in Montreal. I sat at a paper-strewn desk and processed — i.e. transformed one huge mound of paper into many small mounds of paper — what we called 'flimsies' — records of all the steel that had been sold by whom and on which day and for how much. I did that eight hours a day, five days a week for more months than I care to remember.

But whenever inventory clerking started to get to me I found consolation in the knowledge that things could be worse. I could have a really, really boring job like, oh, say... elevator attendant.

Now there was the ultimate in boring jobs. Can you imagine? Standing in a little cage eight hours a day, jerking a lever while hordes of strangers trooped on and off at every floor? Up and down, up and down, — knowing exactly what you were going to see every time those cursed doors opened, whether it was Fourth Floor Plumbing and Electrical or Basement Men's Shoes and Shoppers Layaway.

No, being an elevator jockey had to be the most boring job in the world. Or so I thought. Right up until I met Maxine Quinn last week. I didn't actually meet Maxine — I phoned her. In her elevator in the Conrad Building in downtown Cincinnati, Ohio.

Maxine's the one and only elevator operator in the Conrad Building. She knows everybody who works there and which floor they work on and usually, a good chunk of their personal life as well. People just seem to open up to Maxine when they step into her elevator.

But then Maxine's not your usual elevator operator.

And this is not your usual elevator either. For one thing, there's a portrait of Elvis on the wall. And a television set playing in the corner. And three chairs. There's also a floor lamp, an electric fan, scads of family photos — and Maxine, the comfortable-looking



Basic Black

Arthur Black

grandmotherly boss of all she surveys in her six-foot-by-six-foot domain.

Maxine, as likely as not, will be talking on the phone when the elevator doors open. She and her elevator-cum-one-room flat have become somewhat famous. A national tabloid has done a feature story on her. Good Morning America sent a camera crew to film Maxine at work. She's also been on national radio — both in the U.S. and in Canada.

The kicker is: Maxine's been operating elevators like this for the past 41 years.

Forty-one years! And she told me on the telephone that she's enjoyed every moment of it!

Well... almost. There was that time the elevator got stuck for three hours with Maxine, five large men and no air conditioning on a swelteringly hot August afternoon. "That wasn't much fun" says Maxine.

And there was that other time when she had to throw two guys off her elevator. Ordered them to get out in the lobby. Told them to use the stairs if they wanted to go into the Conrad Building.

"They were using the 'F-word'", recalls Maxine. "I won't tolerate that kind of language on my elevator."

Other than that, Maxine says it's been a ball. I said, "Come on, Maxine — don't you get a little bored going up and down like a yo-yo for 41 years?"

Maxine didn't appear to understand the question at first. "Bored?" she said. "I've got my television and my telephone in here. I've got friends on every floor of the building. I meet new people every day and I get phone calls from all over the world — even Canada!"

"How could I get bored?" I had to admit she had me there.

STOUFFVILLE TRIBUNE WEEKENDER

A Metro and Community Newspaper

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