

# Comment & Opinions

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EDITORIAL

## Ambulance service must be left alone

The Tory government at Queen's Park says the cost of providing ambulances will not go up when municipalities assume control of the services next year.

But Stouffville-Uxbridge ambulance service operator Pete Carell fears provincial downloading may result in higher ambulance fees.

An average ambulance trip costs \$345 dollars, with the province subsidizing all but \$45.

Concerns were raised recently when US-based Rural/Metro Corp. bought seven, private ambulance services in Ontario, including the Lindsay service. The fear that Stouffville-Uxbridge was next and that higher ambulance fees would follow has been discussed.

The fragmentation of ambulance service is a step backward, Carell told The Tribune. And he's right. The desecration of services to the municipalities should not include ambulances. It will amount to a two-tiered system, one that many seniors and others in our area could ill-afford. In the United States, where such systems exist, so many problems occur that centralization is beginning to take place to alleviate the inadequacies.

Health care - all aspects of health care - must remain the domain of the major government bodies. Their efforts to trim costs could cost lives in this instance.

## MPs can be like cars, gassy and prone to rust

Here's why elections are a whole lot like buying a car:

Circle the appropriate word or phrase in the following sentences to see what I mean.

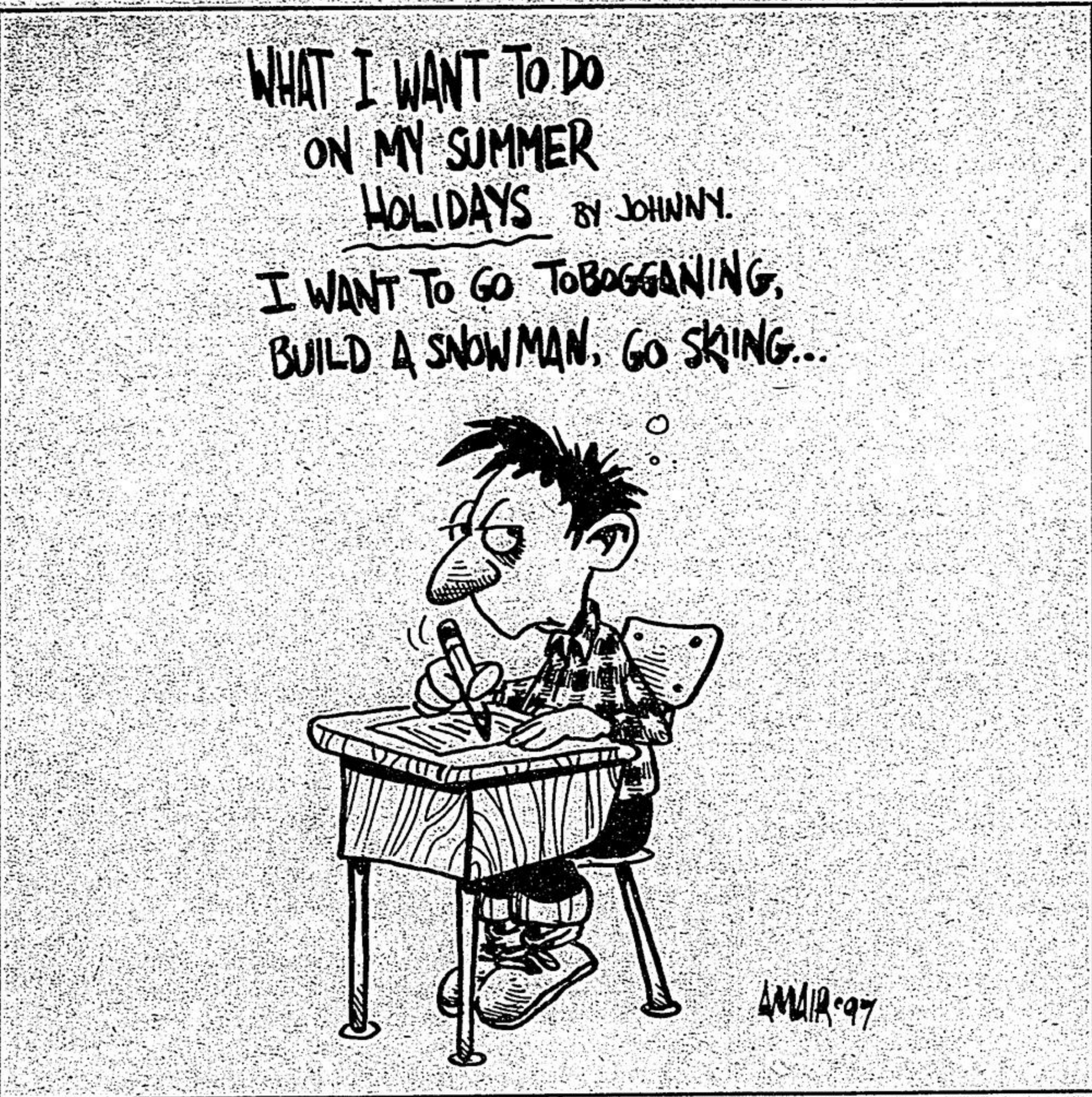
Things seem to be going well enough with your (car/MP), and in fact, you hardly pay any attention to (it/him or her). But after four or five years, something doesn't seem right.

You're just not happy with the way (it/he or she) is performing. In fact, you've been doing some reading, and the whole (line of cars/party) doesn't seem to do it for you anymore. (It/he or she) makes funny noises,

and (don't/doesn't) seem to work very well anymore. And it seems like you don't have much power.

So, one day, when (the writ drops/the interest rates drop) you decide to look for a new (car/MP). The time is right for a change, you decide.

You spend the next month reading up on (new cars/candidates). You happen to notice that (brochures/campaign literature) make some pretty impressive claims. You are naturally skeptical because you (weren't born yesterday/weren't born yesterday). You investigate your (car/candidate) further by (going to a dealer/going to



### Minute with Mair

Andrew Mair

an all candidates meeting). Looking around at the (vehicles/signs) you note that (cars/candidates) come mainly in red, blue, green, but rarely orange.

Upon entering the building, you are quickly (assaulted/assaulted) by a (candidate/salesperson). They shake your hand and ask you your name. This is called a "no pressure" friendliness tactic. You tell the (candi-

date/ salesperson) what you want from your (car/government), and they are quick to respond and tell you they have exactly what you're looking for.

You're given a coffee, told to sit down and then bombarded with a raft of facts and figures. All the while, you have developed the sinking suspicion that you're being fed a line - one that's been rehearsed and practised on a thousand others just like you. And it's a line you've heard many times before. The (car/campaign) you see, runs on gas.

You can't help thinking that this person who is speaking in circles around you doesn't really want to be your friend - there's something in this relationship for them that they're not telling you about.

The cynic in you thinks they are being nice to you because they will be soon receiving a big fat (commission/pension).

You get the same treatment and the same feeling from the other (dealers/ candidates) you visit.

Finally, you've made up your mind and go to the (bank/polls). You eagerly anticipate (picking up the car/election night results). Late that day, you get the (car/MP) you wanted, hopefully, you think, the one of your dreams - the one that will make a real difference in your life.

The following morning, you wake up with a sense that things may truly be different. With a new (car/government) in the (garage/House of Commons) you greet the day with a new pride in your (purchase/country).

Around the water cooler that day, the talk is all about (your new car/your new MP). The conversation lasts five minutes. Very little mention is made of it again. That is, until about four years later when people begin remarking, "Isn't it time (you/we) got rid of that old (junker/leech)?"

You begin to think about it, and at this point realize you have a couple of options: 1) (Trade in/oust) the damn (rustbucket/troughfeeder) or, 2) hang on to (it/he or she) for a few more years, figuring you've gotten a lot of mileage out of (it/he or she) and (it/he or she) has served you well. Sure, you think, there may be a few loose bolts under the hood, but (what car/person) doesn't? Then again, you may simply opt to ditch (it/he or she) on the (scrapheap/unemployment line).

Bottom line is: When it comes to (buying a car/electing a government) the same golden rule applies - know (what/who) you're (buying/electing). Otherwise, you'll be sure to be stuck with a lemon.

## High price to be paid for teenage pregnancies

Dear Editor,

Having just completed a Grade 12 high school assignment which focused on the troubling issue of teenage pregnancies, I felt compelled to write to the editor, and hopefully enlighten a few of my peers.

- 1.) One million teenagers a year become pregnant.
- That's roughly one in four.
- 2.) One in six teenaged mothers have been treated for drug or alcohol addiction.
- 3.) Fewer than five per cent of unmarried teenagers place their children up for adoption.
- 4.) In Ontario alone, over a 20 year period the direct costs associated with

### LETTERS

teenage pregnancies is approximately \$58 million dollars per year.

These are just a few of the frightening facts I've learned and think maybe it's time we all started taking the proper precautions.

The key to prevention is awareness. We may be teenagers and we should be allowed to make a few mistakes, but it seems as we're making quite a few of them.

Rachel O'Hearn

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