

# Comment & Opinions

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EDITORIAL

## Food banks need help right now

It's sad that families in one of the best countries in the world to live have to depend on food banks; sadder still that the shelves are nearly bare in some of the wealthiest communities in Canada.

Food banks in Markham and Stouffville have nearly run out of food, while the Uxbridge food bank could also do with more donations.

The situation is so severe, that some food banks literally cannot wait until the traditional Thanksgiving food drive; they need food supplies right now to serve the hundreds of families who depend on the extra groceries to make it through another month.

Many community activists don't believe in food banks and fear they make low-income families dependent on food hand-outs.

But philosophic concerns aside, it's heartbreaking for adults — and especially children — to be hungry and desperate enough to turn to food banks.

To find that their local food bank might not even have enough to give them is deplorable.

Please don't wait until the season of thanksgiving and sharing. Share a few bags of non-perishable grocery items now with your less-fortunate fellow citizens.

As sure as cold winter follows summer, a few more of your neighbours might fall on hard times before Thanksgiving. You might never learn who they are — but they'll be thankful you shared.



PAT WHEELER '97

## Reporter left in the cold at politician school

I know I expected at least one smoke-filled room. Sour pollsters with clipboards. And maybe bankers in suits, flicking cigars.

It was a school for politicians. One day for some of your ambitious and likeable neighbours to meet the experts who know how to turn ambition and likeability into a winning campaign this fall.

Not that politicians need much schooling — Mel Lastman and John Snobelen both dropped out, and no one laughs at them. If anything, it made them better



### Viewpoint

Mike Adler

communicators with the public.

This school was arranged by the Ontario Tories at a Markham hotel Aug. 23, but I didn't have an invite. "It's an intimate gathering," explained a Conservative party rep named Doug Brewer the

afternoon before. "We want to enable frank discussion."

Most of that frank discussion, I later understood, was about you, the municipal voter. And some of it (this is flattering, actually) was about me, the newspaper reporter.

They didn't let me in last Saturday morning, but I know these things because I flipped through one of the big, white conference binders in the hallway at the hotel. There were 95 or so politicians and campaign managers attending

the event. "I'd be surprised if there were more than a handful of people here who didn't vote Conservative," said Ontario party president Peter Van Loan, satisfied the group of would-be mayors, councilors and school trustees was the largest ever.

I, on the other hand, was stuck there on the wrong side of the doors early on that Saturday morning, and I wasn't getting a drop of the hotel's gorgeous coffee.

Here's how to win an election: Pick a message, something people care about. Make sure no one can steal your message. Make sure you look good saying it. Say it a lot. Ask yourself: "Will this message appeal to the groups I need to form my winning coalition?"

Don't know who'd vote for you? Make a "targeting plan," the lecture outline suggested. If your main opponent is an executive whose company was successfully sued for not having a sexual harassment policy, said the outline, then target women voters. If your candidate is Chinese, target Chinese voters.

And don't forget the media: "Develop a relationship with journalists," the guide said. "Seek headlines that can be used in your paid advertising — this provides validity for your paid message," it added helpfully, underlining for emphasis.

"Name recognition is basically what it's about," explained Blair McCreadie, the campaign school organizer and an expert politician at the age of 22.

A spokesperson said the Ontario Liberals don't have anything quite so formal for their friendly municipal candidates, although last time those in the Metro area got together, "just to sort of co-ordinate" their campaigns.

Manuals are available, added a senior party manager, who didn't want names mentioned. "I'm shy," he said.

So am I. It's natural around some politicians.

## Fearless crew takes on Lake Ontario

To my long list of non-accomplishments I can now add sailing.

Whenever the 's' word came up on previous occasions, I ran rapidly through the repertoire of reasons I would rather *not* be sailing. Last week, however, my luck ran out when an edict arrived from a friend of Mr. Wallethead's inviting us to join him and his partner on her yacht for an evening cruise on Lake Ontario.

Although I would normally have declined, inherent snobbery overcame well-founded doubts vis-a-vis my seapersonship when I learned that the conveyance in question was moored at the Royal Canadian Yacht Club, or the RCYC as we insiders call it. With the delivery of the tidings that there was a dress code in effect, however, I knew I was in trouble.

The code went beyond mere coverage of the obvious to outlaw any suggestion of denim, collarless shirts or early Woolco grunge, thus effectively narrowing my choices down to two: the frock I wore for my descent into dotage party, or a recently purchased pair of palazzo pants with matching crochet top. The pants won, since they looked marginally less geeky than the



### Kate's Corner

Kate Gilderdale

frock when paired with the requisite footwear. This latter sartorial requirement was the second piece of bad news because, even though Mr. Wallethead assured me running shoes would be fine, I don't possess running shoes. What on earth would I need them for?

In the end, I was obliged to splurge \$3.99, plus GST at the Bi-Way for a pristine pair of snow white canvas shoes with laces, which put me depressingly in mind of the gymnastic gear I was obliged to wear at St. Mary's Convent Grammar School. I was tempted by a pair of slip-ons, but the profligate outlay involved (\$5.99) forced me to revert to my nerd of the north mode.

When we got to the dock, we were surrounded by posh people, effortlessly attired in amusing little outfits by Armani or colour-co-ordinated sportswear from Eddie Bauer's autumn collection. Somehow, I made it past the

clothing police and onto the launch, which conveyed our party across the water to the exclusive environs of the athletically and financially gifted.

My significant other bravely offered to help sail the yacht. I wisely adopted the role of the little woman, passing the cheese plate around without dropping it while studiously avoiding ropes, sails and other nautical elements. This turned out to be a good plan, since our captain did not stand for any nonsense and expected her crew to be as fearfully competent as she was.

Fortunately, she did not seem to object to this guest, whose idea of a nice sail on the lake consisted of draping myself over the front (bow?) and languidly ingesting grapes in both solid and liquid form whilst admiring a splendid view of the skyline. By the time we hove in sight of our mooring, we were the best of friends and planning to meet for movies at the Carlton when the sailing season was over and prior to the start of the skiing season.

Not that it makes any difference to your correspondent, of course, but on the other hand, I'll bet I could give my captain a run for her money when it comes to the slow bicycle race.

## STOUFFVILLE TRIBUNE

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