

Comment & Opinions

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EDITORIAL

Business development recognized for effort

Business development is alive and well and residing in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

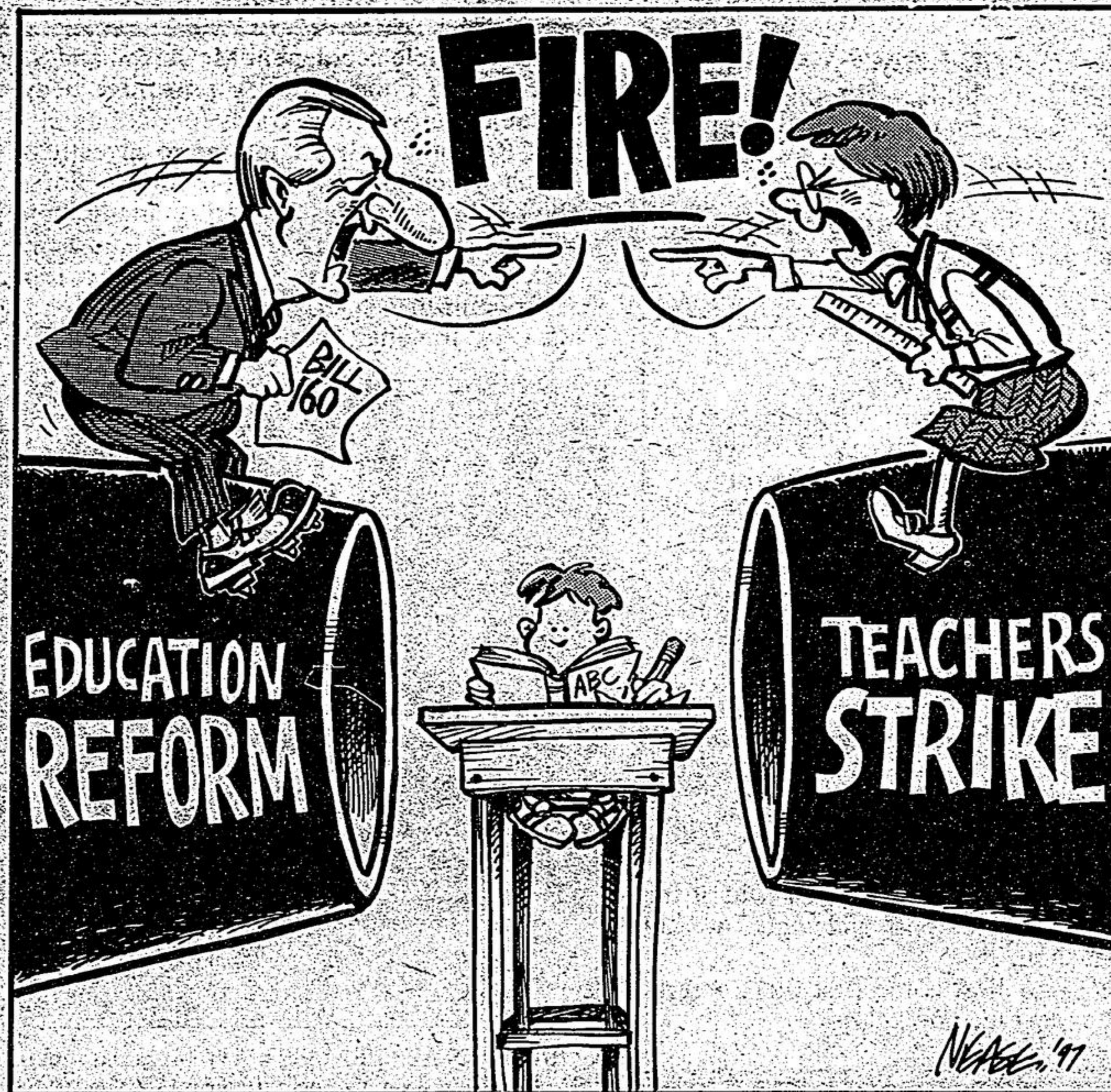
The valiant efforts of the Stouffer Vision Fund were awarded kudos from the Royal Bank this week. The Community Development Award was announced this week. The town's economic development team and the Chamber of Commerce can rightly be proud. It is not even that the fund is a success. If it were not, the fund would still be deserving of this and the other honour it won, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce's Presidents Award. It is deserving because in the face of enormous economic pressures from without, the proponents of this fund have stuck their necks out and tried to make a difference, tried to make the town a better place in which to live and do business.

It takes a certain amount of moxy to stand up and ask the businesses in town to contribute upwards of \$5,000 to get the fund off the ground and then ask again to keep it going.

It appears to be paying off in some measure, and not just in trophies. Last week, the economic development officer, Eric Lismanis, said negotiations have begun to bring a plant to Stouffville which would become its largest employer. Others are looking here as well.

The business community in Canada is recognizing what is trying to be done here.

Local business should also be aware and get involved.



Municipal election coming up fast

The leaves may be falling, but things are still springing up out of lawns — most noticeably, election signs.

It is hard to believe the passage of time. It seems like weeks ago that we were going to the polls to elect our municipal government, when in fact, three years have drifted by.

Municipal politics is a strange bird. The people who run for office are normally civic-minded individuals who care for the community they call home so much they would sacrifice most of the spare time, and a good deal of the rest of their time, to ensuring the garbage gets picked up, that Resident A doesn't put his fence too close to Resident B, and that our roads will only cause a minimal amount of damage to our suspensions.

In the newspaper business, we relish a good town election. It brings about all sorts of good copy, not to mention the mounting election fever that culminates in an evening of number-watching, coffee drinking and late-night deadlines trying to sort the victors from the losers.

The lead-up to an election is almost as much fun. Debates, the raising of issues, and watching the political machinery kick itself into high gear are the fodder for our media gristmill in the weeks and months leading up to the big day.

However, we often have to clarify our position on elections. Some people believe they can use the media to further their political agenda. That won't be happening here. For the record, here's our policy on elections.

■ If a candidate puts an ad in the paper that is his or her business. An ad is not an endorsement by this paper. An endorsement, if one is given, will appear on this editorial page.

■ We will attempt to give every candidate the same coverage. That means a candidate profile will be approximately the same length, concerned with the same



Minute with Mair

Andrew Mair

subjects, etc.

■ We will not print letters endorsing a favourite candidate of yours. If you wish to get such a message out, buy an ad. We simply do not have the space to run these sorts of endorsements.

■ By the same token, we will not be running any letters slamming a candidate in favour of another. If a candidate makes a statement that you wish to comment on, or if the candidate has done something wrong, we may consider it.

■ We won't cover campaign openings, single candidate photo opportunities or press conferences. We simply do not have the space. Once a candidate has registered with the municipality, we will contact them for a photo and brief interview.

■ Our job is to inform voters of the issues, to inform readers of who is running in which ward, and the results of the election.

Democracy is very important to us at this newspaper and so is fairness. These few simple rules are set out to ensure fairness in fostering the democratic process. We are not so concerned with who is elected but that you, the voter, is given every opportunity to make an informed and wise decision. And to urge you to vote.

Even 'old' girls just want to have fun

Old girls just want to have fun.

Witness the last weekend in September, when I was transported to a secret destination by three wonderful friends. We were celebrating the birthday that wouldn't die and their collective gift to me was an all-expenses paid weekend of wine, no men and song in St. Catharines.

We arrived at the scenic Holiday Inn, whimsically located on a kind of traffic island within spitting distance of the QEW, and offering panoramic views of Toys 'R' Us, Costco and Canadian Tire.

My companions' original plan had been to shack up at one of those lovely, olde worlde B & Bs, where a log fire roars in the grate, the old stone patio is bedecked with tubs of superbly co-ordinated flowers and gingerbread trim adorns the gables.

Unfortunately — or fortunately — depending on your point of view, they had reckoned without the Niagara Grape and Wine Festival, which meant that accommodation was as hard to come by as a sighting of Mike Harris engrossed in a good book.

During this splendidly Bacchanalian affair, the natives of the region, along with legions of folks from away, spend

10 days celebrating the joys of the fermented grape in a manner of cheerful abandon rarely seen in this fair, but upstanding province.

Strangely, for a group of superannuated ladies who are not averse to a soupçon of liquid refreshment with lunch, we had never heard of the festival until now.

Our eyes were happily opened on Friday night as we repaired to the event tent and sampled a wondrous selection of Ontario wines, to the accompaniment of live blues music.

At the end of the evening, we hailed a cab and went back to nirvana-by-the-truck-stop where we fell into our beds, exhausted from our noble efforts to support a vital local industry.

Arising, refreshed, at 10.30, we ambled out and watched part of the fantastic parade which is a highlight of the festival, before walking to Montebello Park to sample more wine, listen to the

steel band and admire the antics of fellow revellers.

These ranged from toddlers taking their first, wobbly steps to handbag-wielding grannies, dancing merrily to the Macarena. From there we took a bus tour of two wineries (purely for educational purposes, of course) in the company of our charming tour guide. In the evening we dined at Wellington Court, where the uniform excellence of the food was matched by attentive service and a delightful ambiance.

The following day we checked out of our comfortable room and took a self-guided tour of about half a dozen wineries. We were impressed by the knowledge and enthusiasm of the people we met, and enchanted by the beauty of the Niagara escarpment.

After an early dinner masquerading as a late lunch at a lakeside restaurant, we headed reluctantly for home. It was then that we came out of the shower and exercised our lungs on an eclectic musical selection which ranged from 'It's a Long Way to Tipperary' to 'Girls Just Want to Have Fun'.

I may never be famous, but with friends like Hilary, Linda and Lynn, I'll always be rich.



Kate's Corner

Kate Gilderdale

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