

Comment & Opinions

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Send your letters
to the editor
to the address below

EDITORIAL

Blitz aids seniors

Some 160 volunteers took to the phones yesterday to prevent seniors from being ripped off in telephone scams. The one-day blitz Wednesday by community group and business volunteers took aim at the increasing number of telephone frauds seeking to part senior citizens from their money.

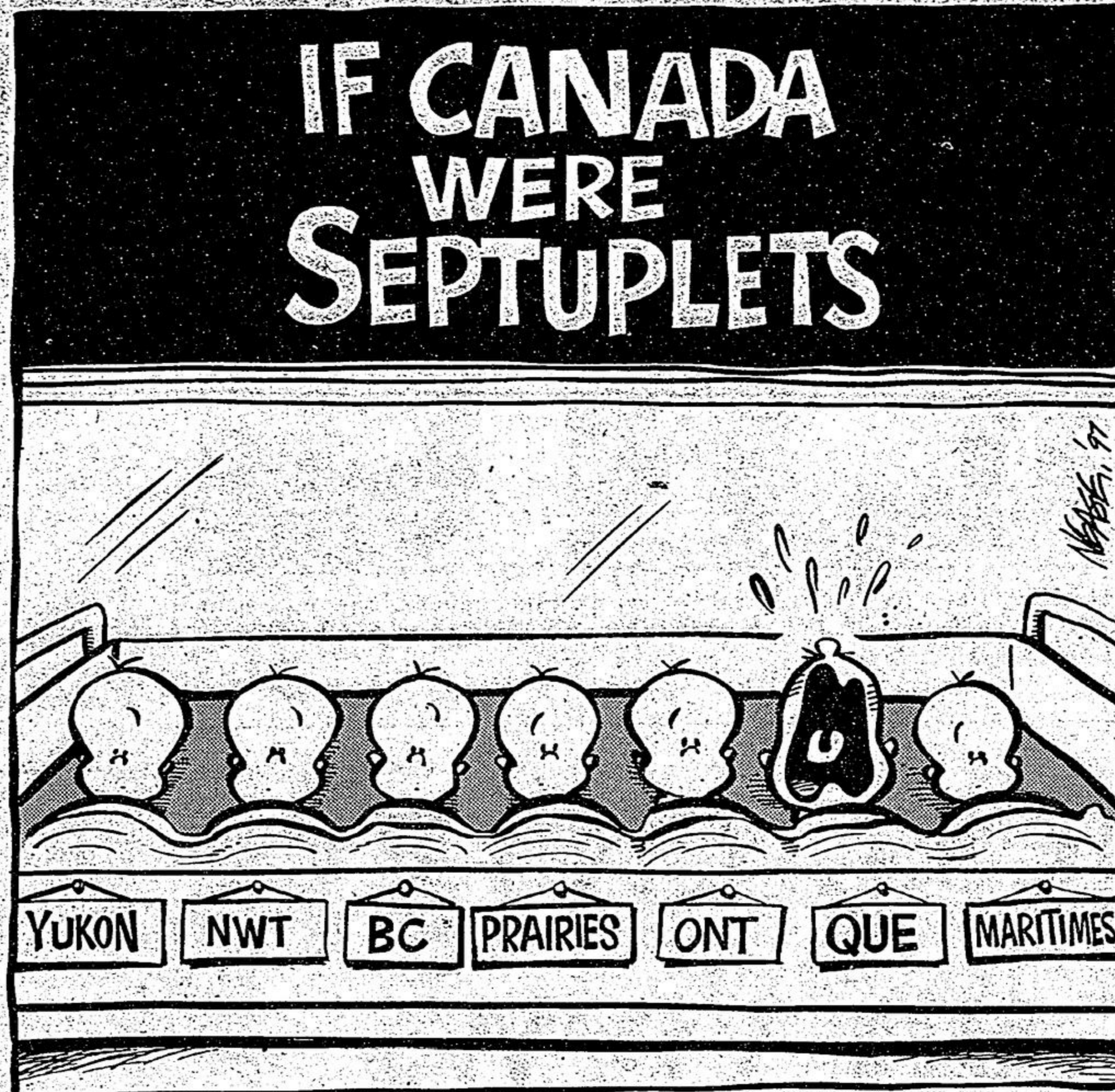
Called 'Hang Up On Fraud' — the phone blitz saw volunteers contact senior citizens to inform them how to avoid becoming victims of phone frauds.

Partners in the blitz, which is co-ordinated by the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations, include the Baycrest Centre for Geriatric Care, the Volunteer Centre of Metro Toronto, the Canadian Direct Marketing Association, Bell Canada, Project PhoneBusters, Scotiabank and the Seniors' Secretariat.

Telephone fraud is expected to cost Ontario seniors \$3.5 million this year alone. Typically, phony telemarketers tell their victims they are eligible to receive valuable prizes if they pay a fee, or ask for a contribution to a non-existent charity. Some intentionally target seniors with their scams.

Markham MPP David Tsubouchi, Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, is a keen supporter of the blitz, noting that Ontario is making it clear to unscrupulous operators that scams preying on seniors will not be tolerated.

This 'Hang Up On Fraud' awareness campaign is a good example of business working in partnership with government and community groups to protect citizens.



Realistic Barbie could benefit society

'Come on Barbie,
Let's go party.'
~ Litigious Aqua song lyric

As the festive season approaches, I am following with some interest the revolution of the toy industry, and in particular that icon of the pre-teen female set, the Barbie doll.

It is at great personal risk that I choose this topic, for that corporate megalith of the toy world, Mattel Inc., is on the litigation warpath.

Mattel has an army of lawyers

scouring the nation for illegal use of the Barbie image and name, and so far has launched at least three suits. One suit charges the band Aqua for copyright infringement for the above lyrics to its hit song, while another is against an artist who feels Mattel's recent efforts to bring Barbie into the '90s have not gone far enough.

In his work, this artist makes Barbie a vehicle for social comment, displaying such creations as Hooker Barbie and Bag Lady Barbie, complete with accessories. This, he says, is more



Minute with Mair

Andrew Mair

true-to-life than the bubble-headed bleach blonde we knew from childhood. Mattel, needless to say, is not amused.

Mattel's own efforts to bring Barbie screaming and kicking her sparkly high heels into the '90s have included

giving her a number of careers, such as Pet Doctor Barbie, Dentist Barbie and Teacher Barbie.

As well, she is due for some cosmetic surgery in the near future. Her ample bosom will be reduced, that waspish waist is being filled out, and in general, Barbie will be receiving more realistic proportions all around. But how will this play with the kids?

My niece wants a Barbie for Christmas. Doesn't care what kind — just a Barbie. When I asked why, she said, "Cause she's pretty."

I wonder if she would think the new Barbie was as beautiful. After all, women have been brought up with Barbie as their model of what is pretty or what should be sought after in life for two generations now. A good-looking, hunky boyfriend, a 42-inch bust with an 18 inch waist, blonde hair and a pink camper van were what many young girls thought were in store for them in later life.

After much deliberations in the toy store aisles, I decided on Paleontologist Barbie (I am not making this up), for its obvious nod to the sciences and higher education.

She comes with tools for digging, a pith helmet and a water canteen. She also comes, to my disappointment, with two dinosaurs. Not bones, mind you, but full colour, fleshed-out beasts.

Accuracy is obviously not Mattel's strong suit. Yet they have an obvious impact on the youth of today. They would be wise to take a page from the book of that artist they are pursuing in the courts. They could accomplish a great deal of social good with dolls like Single Mom Barbie, UN Delegate Barbie, Addictions Counsellor Barbie, Politician Barbie...

AIDS committee grateful for support

Dear Editor,

On Oct. 26, 1997 an auction sale was held in Newmarket to support the work of the AIDS Committee of York Region and the Gay Services Committee of York Region.

Both committees would like to take the opportunity to thank the many people and organizations who contributed to this event and helped to make it such a successful fundraising endeavour.

Many thanks to Shawn Turner, Administrator, for arranging the use

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of the room at the Newmarket Health Services Centre, and to the following businesses and individuals who were so generous in their donations and support: Starbucks Coffee, Cassidy's Flowers and Gifts, What's in Store, Chapters, Red Devil Barbecue and Tavern, The Pineapple Inn and Bakeshop, the Curtain Club, G.L.A.S., The Hum-

mingbird Centre, Fabutan Sun Tan Studio and Mr. Greek Restaurant.

Thanks also to Roy Robson, artist, Nicole Davis, Susan Dean R.M.T., Claude Lainesse, R.M.T., Rani Johnson, Reflexology and Trager therapist, Wafik Raouf, Trager therapist, Svengali Spa and Hair Studio, Cathy Preston, Tai Chi instructor and Reiki therapist, Cafe en Passant, The Corner House, Benjamin Moore Paints, Susan Ball, R.M.T., Newmarket Optical Centre and Brian Wilkinson.

The Mission of the AIDS Committee of York Region is to provide support, education and access to dignified care for people living with HIV/AIDS and those affected by HIV/AIDS. The Gay Services Committee of York Region works towards making York Region comfortable for the gay, lesbian and bisexual community.

Thank you to all who participated to help us realize those goals.

Catherine White for The AIDS Committee of York Region

Coverage aided event

Dear Editor,

On behalf of the Stouffville Chapter, Heart & Stroke Foundation, I wish to express our thanks to you for the extensive coverage you gave us for our "Cooking With Bonnie Stern" evening which was held at Angie's Eatery. We feel that one of the reasons for the success of the evening was your newspaper articles.

We appreciate the support you have shown our organization and your willingness to cover our events is very greatly appreciated.

Linda Milling, Secretary
Heart & Stroke Foundation, Stouffville Chapter

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