

# Comment & Opinions

Saturday, May 16, 1998  
Vol. 14, No. 20

The Tribune is a member of the Ontario Press Council

(905) 640-2100  
fax - (905) 640-5477  
e-mail - thetrib@istar.ca

## EDITORIAL

### Self defence an art for oil companies

It would be nice to believe that Thursday's announcement that the province has appointed a gang of "gas busters" to keep an eye on fluctuating gas prices will have the oil companies quaking in their boots.

Somehow, though, we doubt that's the case.

Oil companies and banks are the easiest targets going for politicians, or journalists, looking to cull public sympathy and support.

The oil companies are also pretty good at defending themselves.

Just the mere hint of criticism, or heaven forbid the mention of the word collusion, when it comes to gas prices in Canada and one will be buried under a mountain of press releases and studies from the oil industry.

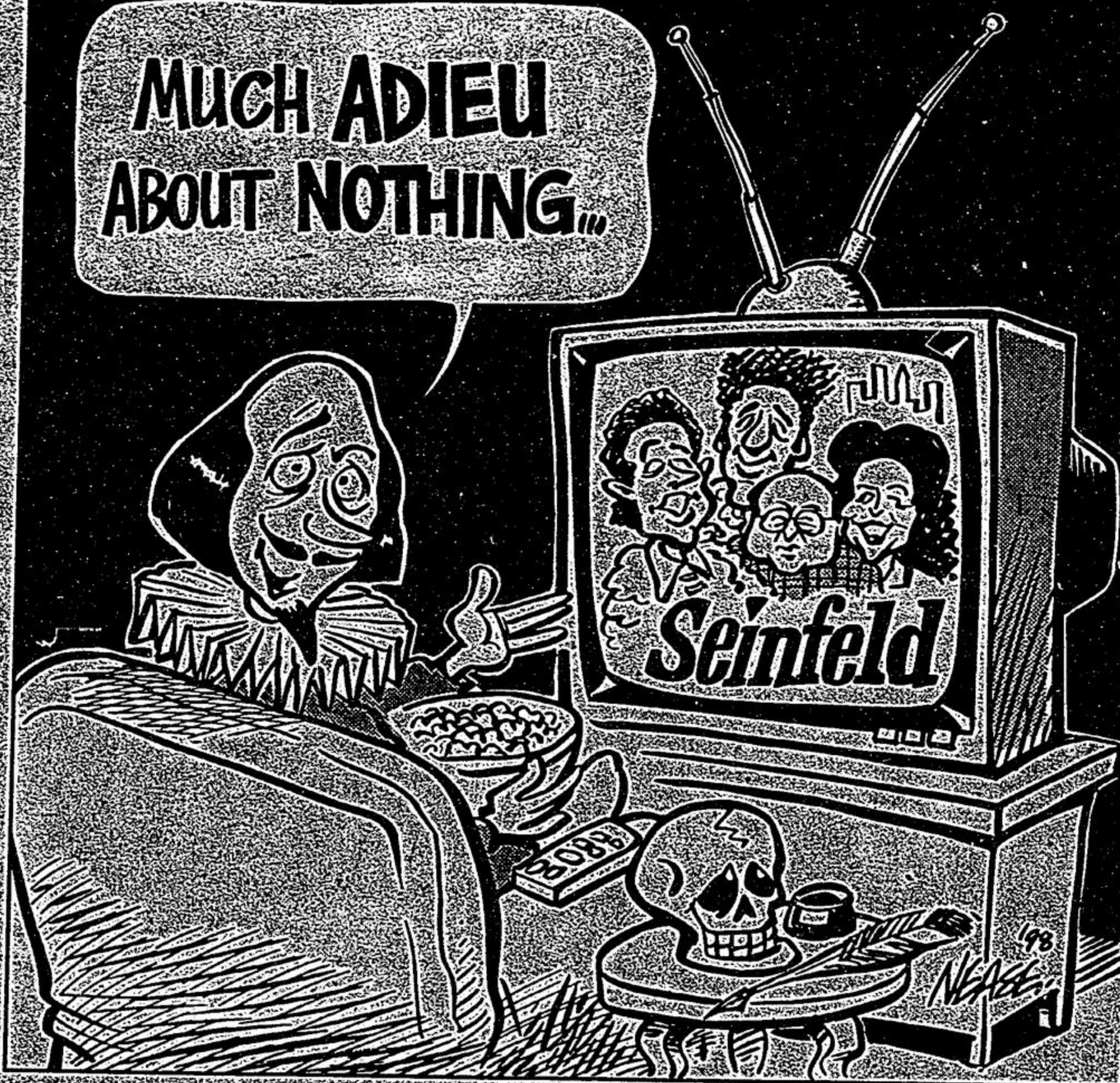
The Petroleum Communication Foundation is one of the major lobby groups for the oil companies and it has stacks of data which prove beyond a doubt that price fixing is not happening in Canada.

All of the data makes sense. When we adjust for inflation and provincial taxes, gas prices are the same, or lower, than 40 years ago, we are told.

However, it's hard to shake the feeling that something strange happens at Canadian gas pumps during the summer.

Sure, it's not a conspiracy, but it's one heck of a coincidence.

MUCH ADIEU ABOUT NOTHING...



## Airwaves reach point of Celtic Overload

May the God of the Tundra forgive me May the Frigid Furies who guard the spirit of the Great White North have mercy on my soul. I am about to utter the starkest of Canadian heresies.

Here it is: I've heard enough of Stan Rogers.

There I said it.

Not that I don't admire the man. He was a fine writer of songs with a wonderful ringing voice and a mesmerizing presence in concert, not to mention on cassette, LP and CD.

It's just that I've...heard enough of him. For a while.

And that goes for the Barra Macleans, the Rankins, the Irish Rovers, most of Sarah McGlaughlin — for any musical group within ten feet of a fiddle, a bodhran or a penny whistle.

It's Celtic Overload that I'm suffering

from. Every time I turn on the radio I hear Celtic music.

I'd like, just for a while, to hear something — anything — else.

And before you accuse me of petty nationalism or outright racism, allow me to present my own, impeccably plaid Celtic credentials.

The name is Black. I hail from the heather-clad hills and misty lochs of Clan Gregor. As my uncle Ian so elegantly put it, years ago "Fear not my boy — you come from a long Lowland line of porridge-eaters, deer poachers, and sheep molesters."

"Celtic." It's certainly a venerable word. The first references appeared in Ancient Greek and Roman times, when the word was used to describe the barbarian hordes of what would one day become Western Europe.



### Basic Black

Arthur Black

Julius Caesar refined the term, using it to refer specifically to the barbarian hordes of middle Gaul — in other words, much of what became modern-day France and Germany.

Somehow, in the intervening two millennia, the term came to describe the barbarian hordes who spoke a guttural family of languages including Welsh, Gaelic and Breton.

And there's at least one expert who thinks the whole notion of "Celtishness" — bagpipes, shillelaghs, tartans and leprechauns — is a crock. As flat as a pint

of day-old Guinness.

Simon James, an archeologist at Durham University in England, maintains that use of the label "Celtic" is historically unfounded. He says it was part of a very simple and attractive picture that our ancestors invented for themselves — pleasant, but essentially bogus.

James claims we've put the cart before the horse, that we've created a mythical Celtic culture and romantically superimposed it onto what he maintains were essentially mere "fringe communities" of ancient Britons.

And I'm sure I don't need to tell you that Professor James has to be very, careful which pub he chooses to have a pint in.

I don't know whether James is on to something or not — but I do know that anyone — archeologist or barfly — wants to think very carefully before telling Celts that they're a crock. Anyone — archeologist or barfly — attacks any culture's identity at their peril.

This is a lesson that Ralph Benmergu knows far better than I do.

You know Ralph — the guy who hosted the hapless Friday night CBC TV show a few years back. The critics roasted poor Ralph unmercifully. Finally, he bailed from the Friday Night slot in a hail of bad reviews and slim ratings. But he's still with the CBC.

Nowadays, Ralph fronts a daytime talk show on the tube.

Recently, the topic for discussion was "Celtic Music: Enough Already."

Apparently not. The phone lines lit up, the studio audience hissed and Ralph was forced to retreat once again. Last week on the show, Ralph was apologizing all over the place.

And rightly so. The Celts have a long history of honourable behaviour.

Benmergu... that's a Highland Scots clan, isn't it?

## Tribune headline shameful

Dear Editor:

Aren't you ashamed to put "Killer Dog" of a child as headlines?

E. Von Enckevort

### Leash law needed

Dear Editor:

Re: Letter to the editor, "Intelligent owners keep dogs on leash" written by Mrs. P. Diaz.

I could not agree with her more. I heard of the recent move by the town to restrict number of dog licenses given per household. It does not strike me as an effective measure to control irresponsible owners and their dogs. It only takes one dog to injure (and kill, heaven forbid) people and damage property. It is not three dogs on leash but one loose dog which can give an entire dog owners' community a bad name.

I have one neighbour who always walks her dog without a leash.

Unfortunately, it now becomes the dog's routine to run into my backyard and eliminate itself right at my doorstep. The

owner never cleans up after the dog nor does she care what the dog is doing in other people's property.

One day, the dog attacked my cat which was peacefully sitting in my backyard. I finally told her to keep her dog on a leash, but she pretended as if she heard nothing.

Yes, I still have to keep on picking up after her dog. In my observation, people who keep their dog on a leash seem almost always stoop and scoop. It is very hard to deny ownership of dropping when it comes out from the other end of leash! On the other hand, those that let their dogs run around have a tendency of leaving a bio-hazard on the street corner (and your doorstep).

When I lived in a town which has a leash law, I never experienced a dog problem nor heard of a dog attack. What Stouffville actually need is not a restriction of dog licenses but a plain old leash law.

Mrs. E. Hall  
Stouffville

## LETTERS

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A Metroland Community Newspaper

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General Manager

Andrew Mair  
Editor-in-Chief  
Tracy Kibble  
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Debra Weller  
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Pamela Nichols  
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### about us

News (905) 640-2100  
Retail sales (905) 640-2100  
Classifieds 1-800-743-3353  
Distribution (905) 640-2100  
Fax (905) 640-5477  
E-Mail thetrib@istar.ca

6244 Main St.,  
Stouffville, Ont.  
L4A 1E2

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While we endeavor to print as many letters as possible, we regret that not all letters may be printed.