

Stouffville Tribune

A Metroland community newspaper
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EDITORIAL

Trips good for local economic picture

More and more municipal politicians are heading abroad these days in a seemingly new trend or mission to drum up local business.

Mayors and civic employees are hoping that trips to other countries will cement permanent relationships for trade and commerce and that these contacts will, in turn, provide economic spin-offs for businesses and industries at home.

Critics of such ventures, however, insist that if politicians don't return home with signatures on contracts and solid promises of business deals, the trips are a waste of taxpayers' money.

But that isn't necessarily true.

Forming trusting relations with officials from other countries, exploring options and talking about benefits for both parties first is a logical and crucial preliminary step.

People, by nature, like to shop around, like to be informed about the product before making major purchases and like to know who they're dealing with first.

Smart shoppers — and that's really what it boils down to — never jump into a business deal with strangers from another country without testing the waters first.

RELATIONSHIP

If these trips can smooth the waters for local business, and form lasting bonds, they are well worth the money — provided politicians keep the focus on economics and ensure the trip is well organized offering as many meetings with the right people as possible.

For instance, Stouffville Mayor Wayne Emmerson recently home from a business trip in China, talked with officials there on a friends first, business second, approach, and came home with glowing reports of major international exposure for his community and its business owners.

Several Stouffville-based industries are already talking about sending employees back to China to educate, promote and sell their products. The relationship has already been established and this now gives them the edge over companies which have not had the same international exposure.

Ironically, Markham Mayor Don Cousens has cancelled a fall trip to Europe, where officials had hoped to scope out the economic prospects in England, Italy and Germany and make contacts that could one day prove lucrative for Markham's industrial community.

According to Cousens, there wasn't enough involvement from the business community. He also felt his time would be better spent at home given the number of local issues that require attention.

Still, a strong economic base makes for a healthy community with money to provide jobs and services people want and expect for their tax dollars.

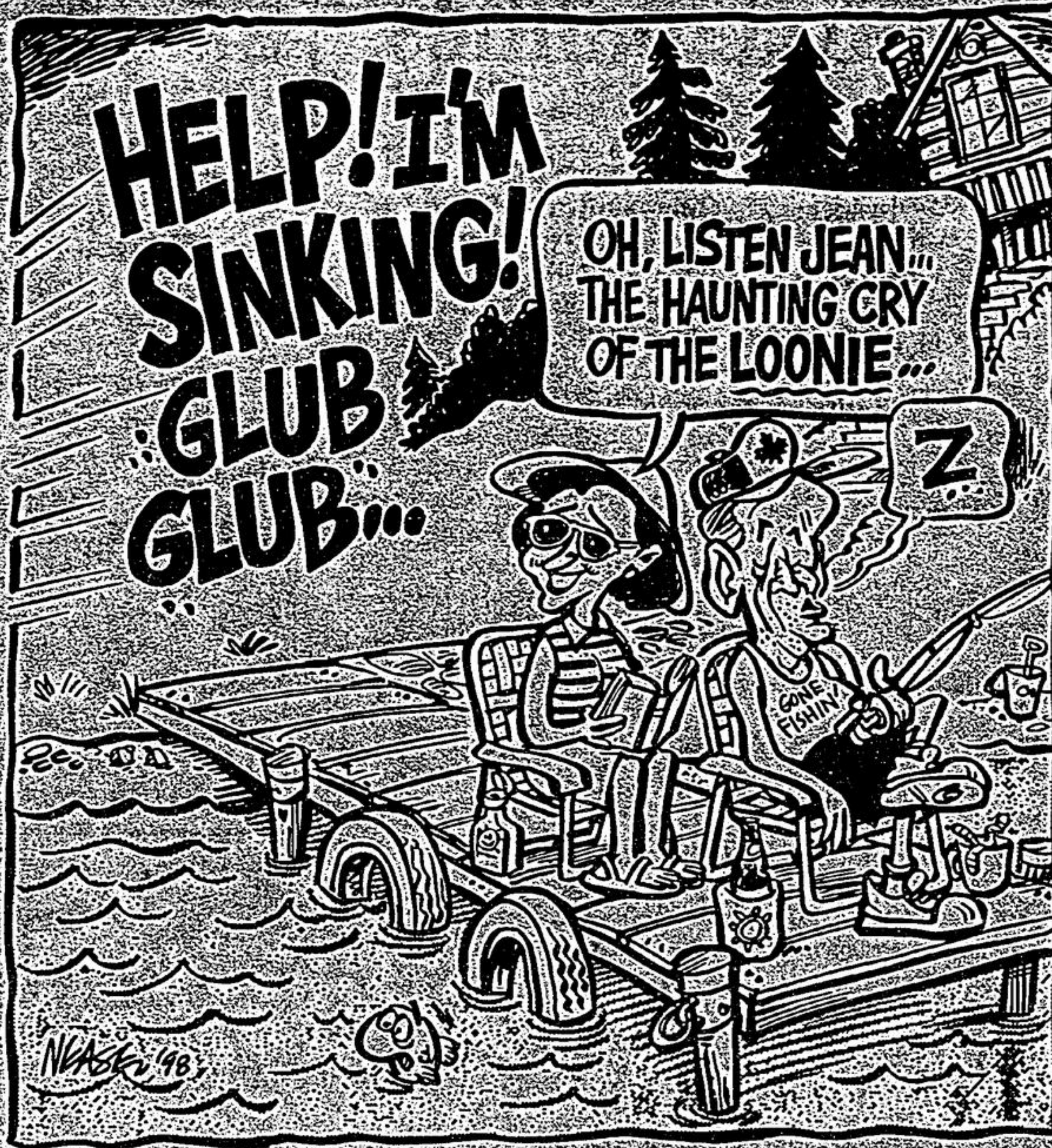
If planned with this focus in mind, these trips are good for all of us.

CHEERS & JEERS

■ **CHEERS** to Cliff Moss and his wife Bertha for working with the Salvation Army in Markham to raise \$25,000 to refurbish a community services van and the sound system in the Salvation Army hall.

■ **JEERS** to our justice system and the Criminal Code for not taking a tougher stance on drunk drivers who kill. Clive Williams, 27, of Whitby was sentenced to five years in prison last week for running over a killing a Markham teenager in Scarborough on Aug. 11, 1996. How is this sentence a deterrent?

OPINION



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Indoor cat more than healthy

Columnist Dave Teetzel hit the nail on the head with his column about cats. I adore cats and all animals.

Since becoming an "indoor" cat owner two years ago, I've never been more vehemently opposed to roaming cats than I am today.

The fact that they are a nuisance in every yard other than their own is secondary.

The real problem is that most outdoor cats only have a quarter of the lifespan of indoor cats.

No wonder, aside from the possibility of exposure to rabies and terrible injuries incurred during fights, the volume of traffic on our roads today makes the question of being hit by a car a "when" instead of an "if."

My cat's vet says she is sickened by the severity of the injuries she treats, day in and day out, simply because of owners who allow their animals to roam.

Most of us no longer live on farms, thus, should keep unsupervised animals indoors.

Cat owners who disagree should be forced to take responsibility for their pets.

My "indoor" cat is not only healthy and safe, he is as content as can be.

The time I spend with him also makes him a real pet, not just a token pet that I see on occasion.

DONNA MARRIN

Millard pond needs attention, too

As a concerned citizen of Stouffville, I am shocked to see the deterioration of the reservoir on Millard St.

The pond is growing over with weeds and the algae is practically covering it.

There used to be many geese, ducks and a pair of swans; a pleasure to watch. This is no longer the case.

The downtown area is the main "clean-up" concern now, but what about our pond? I do hope it is cleaned up too.

I appreciate the additional refuse receptacles placed around the park.

J. HAYWARD
STOUFFVILLE

Tobacco tax hike will only promote smuggling

Senator Colin Kenny's theory is interesting but here is an even more interesting thought.

If they are currently using only \$0.01 from \$100 collected for tobacco education, what are they doing with the rest of the \$99.99 they are collecting in taxes.

Rather than increase the tax again and promote smuggling, use all the current tax for his Bill S-13.

BETH MARR
STOUFFVILLE



Dave Teetzel

Squeegee kids deserve help for better life

When I read last week's story about a crime commission town hall meeting in Thornhill, I scoffed at the idea the province would base its youth crime policies on a consultation with 15 people — most of whom are well distanced from their youth — at a posh country club.

But Premier Mike Harris' recent pronouncements on squeegee kids sound like they were taken straight out of that meeting. I guess you can't say Harris never listens to public opinion.

The gist of the meeting was that the law should be changed so we can lock up squeegee kids or hound them out of the province.

Actually, it went beyond that. One person suggested we round them up and take them to Cherry Beach.

That may have just meant putting them in a run-down area, but I took it as a reference to the Toronto police beating of a youth at Cherry Beach some 20 years ago.

By all means, get those kids off the streets

By the time the sentiment reached Harris' mouth, it had become a call to make it easier to fine beggars who obstruct roadways. But the idea remained that Halifax, Montreal and New York had driven their youth problems to Toronto and now it's time to send them somewhere else.

I don't see how chasing squeegee kids to Winnipeg or Calgary solves anything. Unless Alberta Premier Ralph Klein has changed his opinion of creeps and bums from the east, they aren't any more welcome out there.

More importantly, if there are that many homeless young people resorting to unsolicited windshield cleaning to make a living, the public nuisance aspect is not our main problem.

That's our future, grubbing around on the street. Are Harris and Mel Lastman not worried? Embarrassed? Ashamed?

At the very least, worried about who's going to pay for their pension? I don't like being pestered and intimidated in my car, either.

By all means, get those kids off the streets. But let's find a way to put them in schools, in jobs, in drug treatment centres and counselling if necessary, and, most of all, in homes.

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