

Stouffville Tribune

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LETTERS

Politicians should just collect taxes and stay off my property

Action is being taken to protect residents of Musselman's Lake and Ballantrae against the deadly E. coli bacteria. Is this news?

Over the years I have come to avoid reading or listening to the news in any format other than the local papers because the media tends to beat every story to death and the politicians use every opportunity to get their names in print.

The story on the front page of Saturday's Tribune is yet another example. The article tells us how the Town of Stouffville is going to save us from ourselves once again.

Apparently, the people of Ballantrae and Musselman's Lake need this constant intervention in our lives in order to keep us all safe. I've lived at The Lake for 17 years. I was here before paved roads and municipal water and I've paid for both.

I stayed for the strong sense of community I've seen eroded over the years. This sense of community stemmed from our cottage atmosphere in which we all pulled together to look after our little area.

The town did little or nothing for us so we had to do for ourselves. Our playgrounds are paid for and built by us with our own money and hands. Our lake and beachfronts are maintained out of our own pockets.

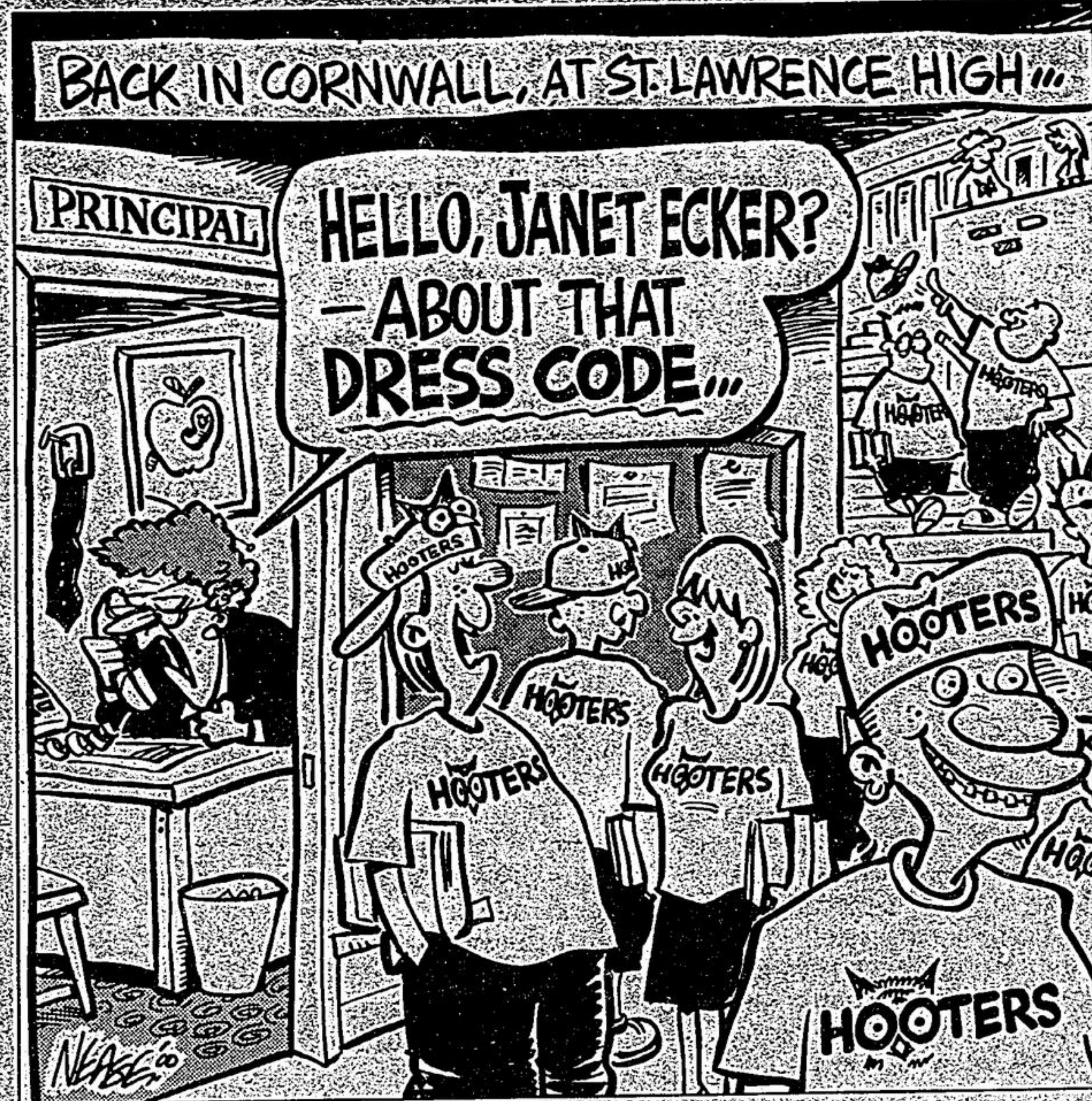
Years ago, the suggestion was made we should have a communal water system. The residents turned that proposal down unanimously. We somehow managed to get that system in, at great expense to the current residents, a number of years later. Of course this has paved the way for large new developments.

The town wants to forcibly cap our wells, no doubt at our expense once again. This will save us from the same fate as the people of Walkerton. From the reports I've read, I never saw any mention of the rural residents on wells having a problem. The trouble in Walkerton appears to have been the result of drinking water from a municipally managed source.

In light of this, perhaps Stouffville Mayor Wayne Emmerson, plumber Tom Winters and Councillor Judy Scala should be pushing for us to cap our municipally managed water source and only drink water from the sources we control.

While I thank those people who don't live or participate in our community for showing such concern for our well being, I would like to

OPINION



respectfully suggest that, until they see fit to roll up their sleeves and work with us, they stay off of my property and stick to collecting my tax dollars.

BRUCE FORBES
MUSSELMAN'S LAKE

Making excuses for teen graffiti erects barrier to adulthood

Rick Vanderlinde's column *Would you charge grief-stricken teens with vandalism?*, May 27, reminded me of Hans Christian Andersen's story about the emperor's new clothes.

In the tale, court officials outdid each other, raving about the splendour of the emperor's clothes. Nobody dared to admit they saw no clothes, fearing that doing so would make them look less clever than the rest and unfit for office.

Vanderlinde's concern seems to be that of appearing less benevolent than the principal and the mother when dealing with the question of how to respond to teens who express their grief by vandalizing the town. How can one possibly go wrong when opting for something as good and noble as benevolence? Plenty of ways.

Teens face many obstacles in growing up; one of the worst among them is that of being treated as half-wits who do not have enough sense to know what they are doing. Having their vandalism excused on account of their grief-obscured judgment leaves the teens with two options: a loss of self respect for acting in a mindless fashion or a loss of respect for any sucker who believes they did, indeed, not know what they were doing.

Coming up with excuses for the vandalism

may appear benevolent, but it shows neither respect for the teens nor foresight for the future.

Teens do turn into adults, whether they actually grow up or not. There are already plenty of immature adults with poor impulse control. Benevolence would be better spent by thinking ahead and preparing for the next generation, rather than infantilising 17-year-olds and keeping them in the roles of kids.

I would recommend the teens be required to clean up the mess, all \$6,000 worth of it, and be advised to hire and finance an expert to do the job for them after they discover that cleaning up is a lot more demanding than messing. Those who come up with excuses for the teens shouldn't bask too much in the glory of their own compassion.

Shielding the teens from bearing the consequences of their behaviour is a case of failing to provide the necessities of a civilized life.

DR. MARGARETE WOLFRAM
MARKHAM

Tribune's advance publicity attracted helpers to pond clean-up

Due to the advance publicity by the Stouffville Tribune, the Rotary Club work day at Lehman's Pond was a huge success.

Both the large and small pond were cleaned of debris and the turtle nest constructed.

Special thanks should go to Ralph Toninger of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority for his energy and expertise and to John Hutchinson, Jim Rehill, Joe Sweeney, Karl Liske and many others who assisted the Rotary members.

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Rick Vanderlinde

Backroom deals leave questions about justice system

Sometimes justice is done, or perhaps undone, behind closed doors.

And when the wheels of justice turn away from the eyes of public scrutiny, we never really know which is the case.

That's the problem with the backroom plea bargain — only the dealmakers are allowed to judge whether their decision was in the public's best interest.

Often, it isn't. The most obvious example of that is the infamous "deal with the devil" — Karla Homolka's manslaughter plea in exchange for damaging testimony against her school-girl-killing ex-husband Paul Bernardo.

The Homolka deal was just one of hundreds made every year with bad guys so the good guys can convict the "bigger bad guy."

Closer to home, York Regional Police and Newmarket's Crown attorney's office made such a deal in the \$500,000 fraud case against former Newmarket recreation director Bill Andrews.

They nailed Andrews, but let a man who some say is a bigger crook get away in the process.

Because Andrews' partner in crime was never charged with anything, his identity remains unknown to the public. We know him only as the "accomplice", even though the courts acknowledge he and Andrews each stole about \$150,000 from the Town of Newmarket.

The police refuse to say who he is, or even if this mystery man has a criminal record. They just smile with that, "Trust us, we know what we're doing", look in their eyes.

Maybe so, but an anonymous caller who revealed the accomplice's identity to me, doesn't think so.

"They can't let this guy get away with it," the caller said. "He's the real crook; he set the whole thing up. He's a career criminal... he's into loan sharking, theft, credit card fraud."

All this information may have been made up, for all I know. It could have come from an Andrews sympathizer, someone trying to lessen the disgraced gambling addict's culpability.

The point is, we'll never know. When I asked fraud squad investigator Kevan O'Grady if the accomplice was "walking", the veteran cop, paused and said the town's insurance company may sue the crook for the stolen money.

That, of course, means he'll pay them back with money he stole from taxpayers. And there'll be no criminal conviction. Nifty deal.

Still, a civil lawsuit against the accomplice would reveal his identity to the community. But that will only happen if the insurance company actually files a claim with the courts.

If the accomplice brokers another deal before a claim is filed, he'll continue to lurk among us in total anonymity.

LETTERS POLICY

Stouffville Tribune welcomes your letters. All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The newspaper reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space.

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