

Stouffville Tribune

A Metroland community newspaper
9 Heritage Rd., Markham, Ont., L3P 1M3

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EDITORIAL

Tax relief is the political rallying cry

Let's set the scene. It's a battle for public support between Canada's defenders of right-wing tax relief and socially conscious support of needy Canadians.

The players appear to be as different as night and day.

In this corner, Stockwell Day, leader of the Canadian Alliance party, is enjoying the benefits of mass publicity following his selection as the first leader of the newly created right-wing party that has its roots in Preston Manning's Reform Party.

As he visits ridings and criss-crosses the nation, garnering support for his party's ideologies and platforms, Day is hearing and responding positively to Canadians' complaints about their tax burdens.

It is music to Day's ears, meshing perfectly with the Alliance's lower-taxation portfolio. He's feeling good about his party and his message.

Day, however, isn't the only one listening to the taxpayers' tune.

In the next corner, Federal Finance Minister Paul Martin said this week his government has to move quickly to provide more tax relief to average Canadians.

As reported by the Torstar Network, Martin told the Canadian Chamber of Commerce this week, "There's no doubt that bringing down taxes for middle-income and low-income Canadians is a priority. I agree there is a need to bring down taxes quickly and we, as a government, have said we're going to do that."

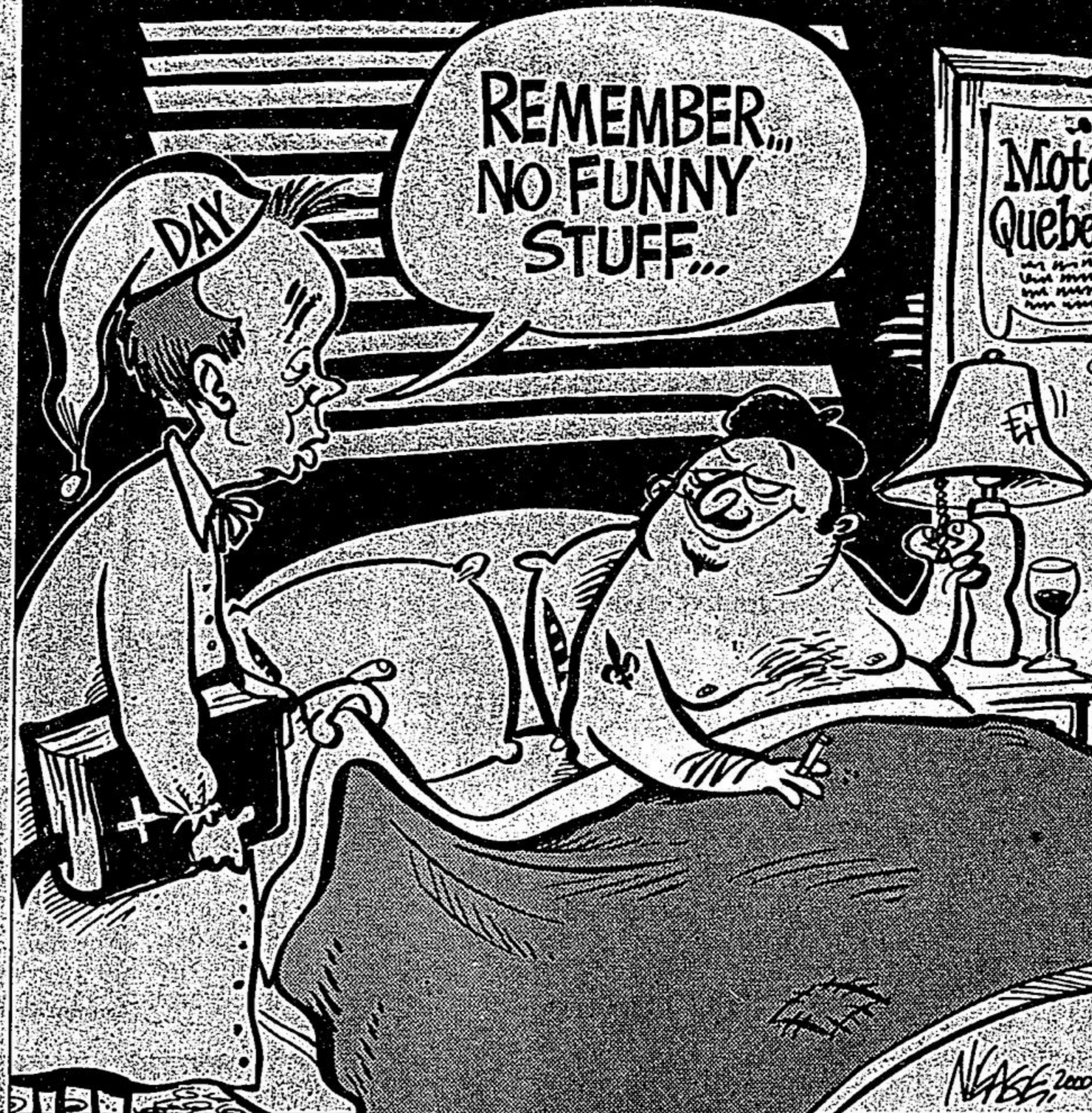
It's an interesting battle and we're sure it's no coincidence that, while Martin is espousing the need for tax relief, his colleagues are, this week, meeting to discuss election platform strategies, trying to find a way to out-manoeuvre Day's call for improved levels of taxation.

The Liberals, of course, must sell to the public a tenuous position — balancing critical tax relief, a Canadian favourite, with appropriate social spending, a Canadian expectation.

When we head to the federal polls, likely next spring, we'll have to sift through the Liberals' best-of-all-worlds promises to find the truth that best suits our needs as Canadians — that is, the tax relief that will allow us to allocate our own dollars to best meet the needs of our families in our demanding economic climate.

OPINION

News Item: FORMER BLOC MPs JOIN ALLIANCE...



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Scarpitti's emotional tribute to his dad touched many citizens

He stood there at the church podium and in a clear voice that only faltered and trembled with emotion at the end, talked about his father.

He narrated how a young man of 22 came to Canada from Italy about a decade after the Second World War, how hard this man worked with his hands to bring up a family in a strange land.

He talked about the family's move to Markham in a place called Bakersdale, which at the time was considered so remote that relatives who visited had to stay the night before going back home. The family was one of the first settlers of the area, his brother, he was told, was the first baby born there.

He reminisced about his boyhood when he and his brother were driven by their father to places like New York and spent most of their spare time with him.

He painted a picture in words of a family with a devoted father and mother who brought up two sons through love and hard work.

I was deeply touched by Regional Councillor Frank Scarpitti's homage to his father.

Unknowingly, he spoke not only of his father and his family, he actually touched on the struggles of immigrant families in Canada

— how men like his father toiled for their families and their communities to build a home far away from the land of their birth, away from the security of relatives and old friends.

I believe Scarpitti was not aware that he was talking of the values that his father brought with him from his country of origin — love for hard work, strong family ties, perseverance and integrity.

He was not aware when he talked about his father's pride in comparing the size of the tomatoes in his garden to those of his friends that he was demonstrating how simple things could be a source of happiness for people like his father.

He mentioned how he thought his mother was a hero who stayed and cared for her husband day and night during his long period of illness. He was actually expressing the deep love and devotion between his parents.

As I listened to Scarpitti talk about his father, I could see in my mind the Markham cornfields at the time his family settled in the area and the Markham of today, the technology capital of Canada. His father's labour is part of what this town is today.

I join this son in saluting his father for his part in building the Markham community, but most especially for contributing two able sons of whom Canada is surely proud.

ROSALINA BUSTAMANTE
THORNHILL



David Teetzel

Lessons in how to stretch good news a political mile

If you say nothing else about the current regime at Queen's Park, you have to admit they know how to make a little good news go a long, long way.

On Monday, Transportation Minister David Turnbull was in Newmarket to announce the province will extend Hwy. 404 to Green Lane (the northern border of Newmarket) and will widen the highway to six lanes from Major Mackenzie Drive north to Aurora Road.

All in all, the project will cost \$37-million.

Hooray for the province. This is good news.

It was also good news in March 1998 when we first heard about the plan from Newmarket Mayor Tom Taylor.

The 404 extension was part of a deal that had the province spending \$12 million to extend Hwy. 404, in return for York Region assuming a dangerous stretch of Hwy. 9 from Hwy. 400 to Bathurst Street and spending \$12 million to widen and improve it.

That's not quite the same as the province handing the region \$12 million free and clear, but since two necessary highway improvement projects will be carried out, everybody wins.

The deal to extend 404 to Green Lane was formally announced in June 1998.

And it was good news. The highway widening was announced last September, complete with a schedule that matches the one announced Monday, although no funding was set aside for it at that time.

But it was still good news. We reported in July that the road would be widened to six lanes from Major Mack to Bloomington.

So on Monday, we learned officially that the widening would extend one more exit to Aurora Road.

I hope they cleared this with the people in Aurora, who didn't consider the widening of Bathurst Street to be good news and scared York Region councillors into throwing their construction schedule into havoc last week.

But with the possible exception of those folks, most would agree improvements to Hwy. 404 is good news.

And they were announced with all the fanfare befitting good news. The accompanying press release included words of wisdom from all four of York Region's MPPs, even though only York North's Julia Munro actually attended the press conference.

But those other MPPs will undoubtedly have plenty of opportunities to make good news announcements.

Remember, this is a province that has been known to announce the same health care grants three times, a province that believes in spreading good news around again and again and again.

But for the record, you can only build a road once.

LETTERS POLICY

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Serving the community since 1888



Canadian Circulations Audit Board Member



Ontario Press Council

Canadian Publications Mail Product Sales Agreement #1403419

Subscription rates by mail: 1 year - \$69.55 (Tuesdays only)

Stouffville Tribune, published every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, is one of the Metroland Printing, Publishing and Distributing Ltd. group of newspapers, which includes the Ajax/Pickering News Advertiser, Alliston Herald/Courier, Barrie Advance, Barry's Bay This Week, Bolton Enterprise, Brampton Guardian, Burlington Shopping News, Burlington Post, City Parent, Collingwood/Wasaga Connection, East York Mirror, Erin Advocate/Country/Routes, Etobicoke Guardian, Flamborough Post, Georgetown Independent/Acton Free Press, Kingston This Week, Lindsay This Week, Midland/Penetanguishene Mirror, Milton Canadian Champion, Milton Shopping News, Mississauga News, Newmarket-Aurora, Georgina Era-Banner, Northumberland News, North York Mirror, Oakville Beaver, Oakville Shopping News, Orillia Today, Oshawa/Whitby/Clarington/Port Perry This Week, Peterborough This Week, Richmond Hill/Thornhill/Vaughan Liberal, Scarborough Mirror, Stouffville Tribune, Today's Seniors, Uxbridge Tribune and City of York Guardian.

Phone: (905) 294-2200
Fax: (905) 294-1538

Classified:
1-800-743-3353

Distribution
(905) 294-8244