

Stouffville Tribune

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

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EDITORIAL

In-fighting won't help Alliance succeed

Hurray for Diane Ablonczy.

Most of you are scratching your heads and wondering who Diane Ablonczy is.

She's the fourth candidate in the race for the Alliance leadership, challenging Stockwell Day, Stephen Harper and Grant Hill.

While the three guys are duking it out over who lied about what covert deal has been made behind the scenes for the leadership bid, Ms. Ablonczy summed up how most Canadians feel about it.

"While these lads are fighting here, Canadians are wondering what role we are going to play as the official Opposition in straightening out the affairs of the nation. We have to have a clear plan to put forward, an alternative to the present government," she said in a televised debate Tuesday night.

Thank you, Ms Ablonczy, thank you.

While Mr. Day, Mr. Harper and Mr. Hill attacked each other's idea of co-operating with the enemy ... apparently that's Joe Clark, Tory leader ... Ms Ablonczy aptly pointed out most Canadians just want to make sure the federal government is accountable to the people.

If we do not have an effective official Opposition, we might as well not have one at all.

That's the status of government today, with the Canadian Alliance in disarray, still trying to mend itself from internal dogfights that saw key players resigning from important posts. There is no one to make the Liberal government accountable.

And that's sad, frankly, considering what a mess the Liberals are in. They, however, have been much more effective at keeping the family skeletons in the closet, with a few sad exceptions such as the mini-leadership race — totally unofficial, of course — that pits key cabinet members against each other for a job that doesn't yet appear to be open.

How sad.

We have a neglectful government in disarray and disharmony, with its internal bickering.

We have a neglectful official Opposition that's in disarray and disharmony, with its internal bickering.

And then there's Joe Clark. Sigh.

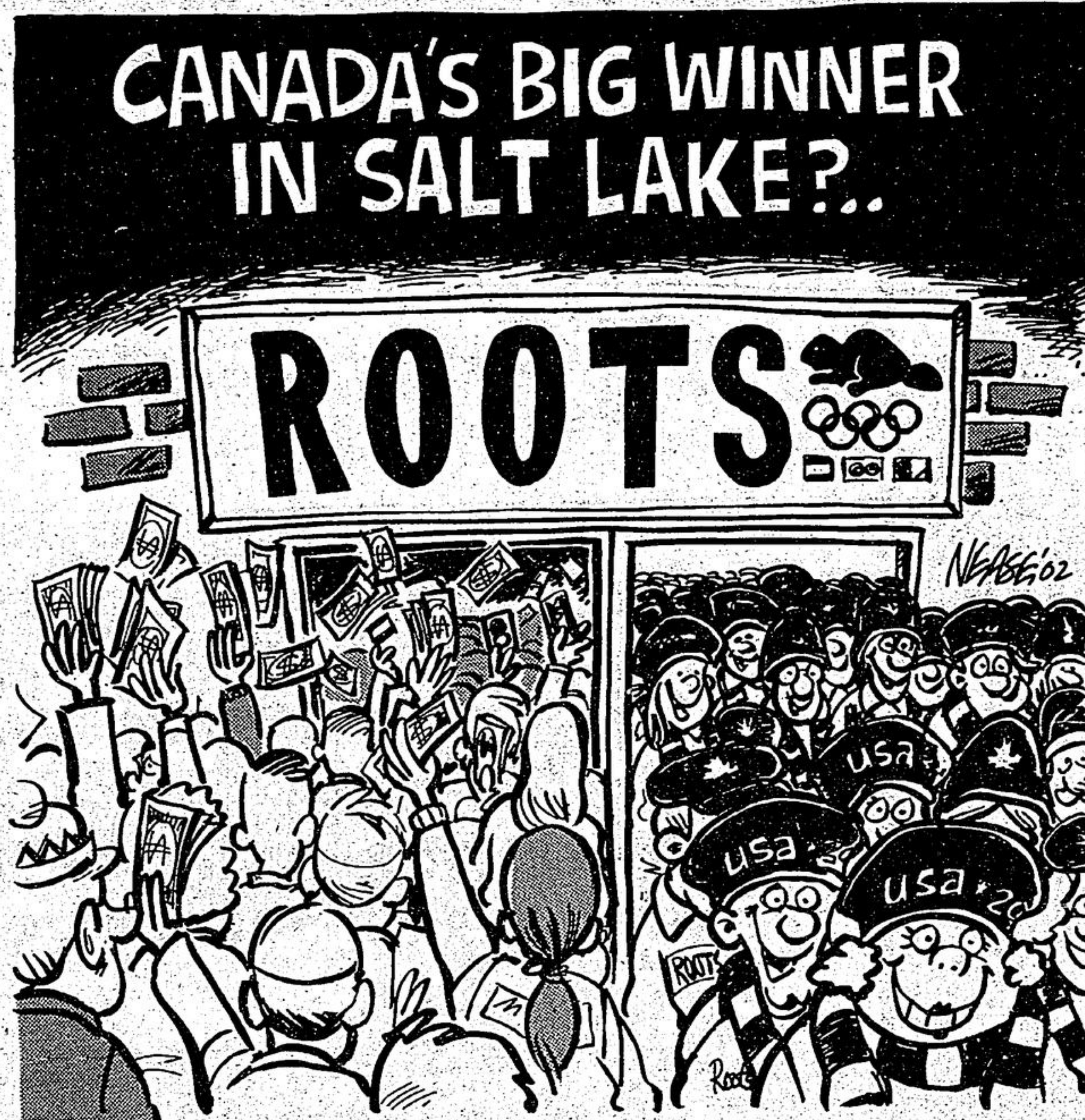
Ms Ablonczy is looking pretty good.

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.

Write: Letters to the Editor,
9 Heritage Rd.,
Markham, Ont., L3P 1M3
Email: letters@econsun.com

OPINION



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Fire dispatchers not exempt from economic downsizing

Re: Safety is big reason for firefighter reluctance on central dispatch, letter to the editor, Feb. 12

Now that Phil Dawson has brought up the subject of central dispatch, I feel, as a tax-paying citizen, I should have my say.

I believe we pay duly elected regional councillors to make these decisions and not unionized firefighters.

If, as Mr. Dawson states in his letter, they "... see public safety and customer service as priorities", they should be right behind central dispatch with automatic aid as part of the system. This would mean the closest fire station could respond to an emergency, regardless of whether it was in their municipality or not.

This would allow parts of the western area of Markham to have better service. This should not be confused with mutual aid, whereby one department sends another department assistance when requested.

Perhaps Mr. Dawson, as president of Markham Professional Fire Fighters Association (International Association of Fire Fighters, Local 2727), would like to comment on this.

Mr. Dawson should also realize this is the 21st century and downsizing and reassignment to alternate positions are common in the business world. Why should municipal workers be exempt?

Any money saved by reducing the number of dispatchers could be put toward putting more firefighters on the front lines.

R. BECKETT
MARKHAM

Town should have little say on retailers locating in Markham

Re: Influx of restaurants and franchises could ruin Unionville, letter to the editor, Jan. 29.

The reality is franchises and esplanade-like stores will not move to Unionville Main Street if the residents do not support the existing stores by shopping and eating on Main Street.

The community continues to ignore the unique selection found on Main Street and goes to the shopping centres, super-malls and discount stores. The consequence is Main Street will fall prey to the subsidized franchise outlets. That's business.

The Town of Markham should have little say in what retailers are attracted to Markham. The residents' opinions have to be supported by buying patterns that reflect a commitment to our community-based stores and the value found within those stores.

JIM GRICE
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David Teetzel

Olympics bring out worst in everyone, except athletes

Was that really Wayne Gretzky?

That angry man on my TV Monday night, ranting about how the Americans "hate us", repeating phrases like "crock of bull", uttering vague threats of violent pay-back bore little resemblance to the guy who dominated the NHL, not only with his skill but with his class.

Not that he didn't have reason to be angry, after Roman Hamrlik of the Czech Republic slammed his stick into Theo Fleury's spinal column.

But part of me suddenly cared a lot less about our hockey team winning Olympic gold.

We expect cheap shots and sour grapes in your average, run-of-the-mill professional sports championship, but the Olympic Games are supposed to be about something nobler.

Wasn't that supposed to be the point of that kid with the lantern at the opening ceremonies — the youth of the world putting their best efforts forward in a spirit of friendly competition?

But since then, we've seen rigged figure skating judging overcome by endless public whining. The coverage has been all about Canada's medal expectations — and the sneering contempt some of the media have shown toward those who failed to meet those expectations.

When Wayne Gretzky turns into a poor sport, you have to wonder what all this Olympic hype is really about.

Is it about countries pumping megadollars into athletic programs so we can gain vicarious national pride through the accomplishments of a few citizens?

Or is that the impression you get when you don't watch the athletes closely enough?

Because there is something inspiring about knowing Sharon's Veronica Brenner has worked and trained and sacrificed for years for that few seconds she was twisting and turning in the air. And it was wonderful to hear her gushing thankfulness, sharing her moment of glory with coaches, family and everyone who ever touched her career.

Watching Catriona LeMay Doan go from a moment of quiet prayer to blasting around the track at breakneck speed, then celebrating wildly with her beloved husband — that was a lump-in-the-throat moment.

Or did you see Elvis Stojko's face when his marks came in? I saw no defeat; the guy was happy. He fought the good fight, kept the faith and, with nothing more he could do, he was just enjoying the moment.

They're just trying to put all the bad stuff aside and do their personal best in a situation that is far from perfect.

It has become very easy to hate the hype and petty politics of the Olympic Games. But you gotta love the athletes.

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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 (Thursdays only)

Stouffville Tribune, published every 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.

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