

## Stouffville Tribune

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9 Heritage Rd., Markham, Ont., L3P 1M3

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### EDITORIAL

## MPPs must address health-care crisis

The drastic provincewide physician shortage appears to have turned the hiring of doctors into a highly competitive sport requiring bait and measured strategy.

The pace of the game increased last week when York Central Hospital president and CEO Frank Lussing, playing offence, took the unprecedented move of urging the Town of Richmond Hill to join his team.

With a \$90-million redevelopment and expansion plan under way, Mr. Lussing made a plea to council for help in attracting doctors.

"We have to find ways of differentiating ourselves with physicians in high demand and who are shopping around for communities and hospitals," he told councillors.

Regional Councillor Brenda Hogg stepped up to the plate, suggesting the town provide houses to lure doctors to town, an incentive common in the United States.

Mr. Lussing will be taking his plea to Vaughan council soon. While the physician shortage affects the entire region, it is particularly dramatic in the north.

Both East Gwillimbury and Georgina have been designated medically underserved areas by the province. The province has agreed to throw some incentive pay into play in a bid to lure physicians to those communities.

But it's a half-hearted attempt at a solution. Residents from every corner of Ontario's fastest growing region — a region where the senior population is expected to balloon by 200 per cent over the next 20 years — deserve proper, efficient medical care now.

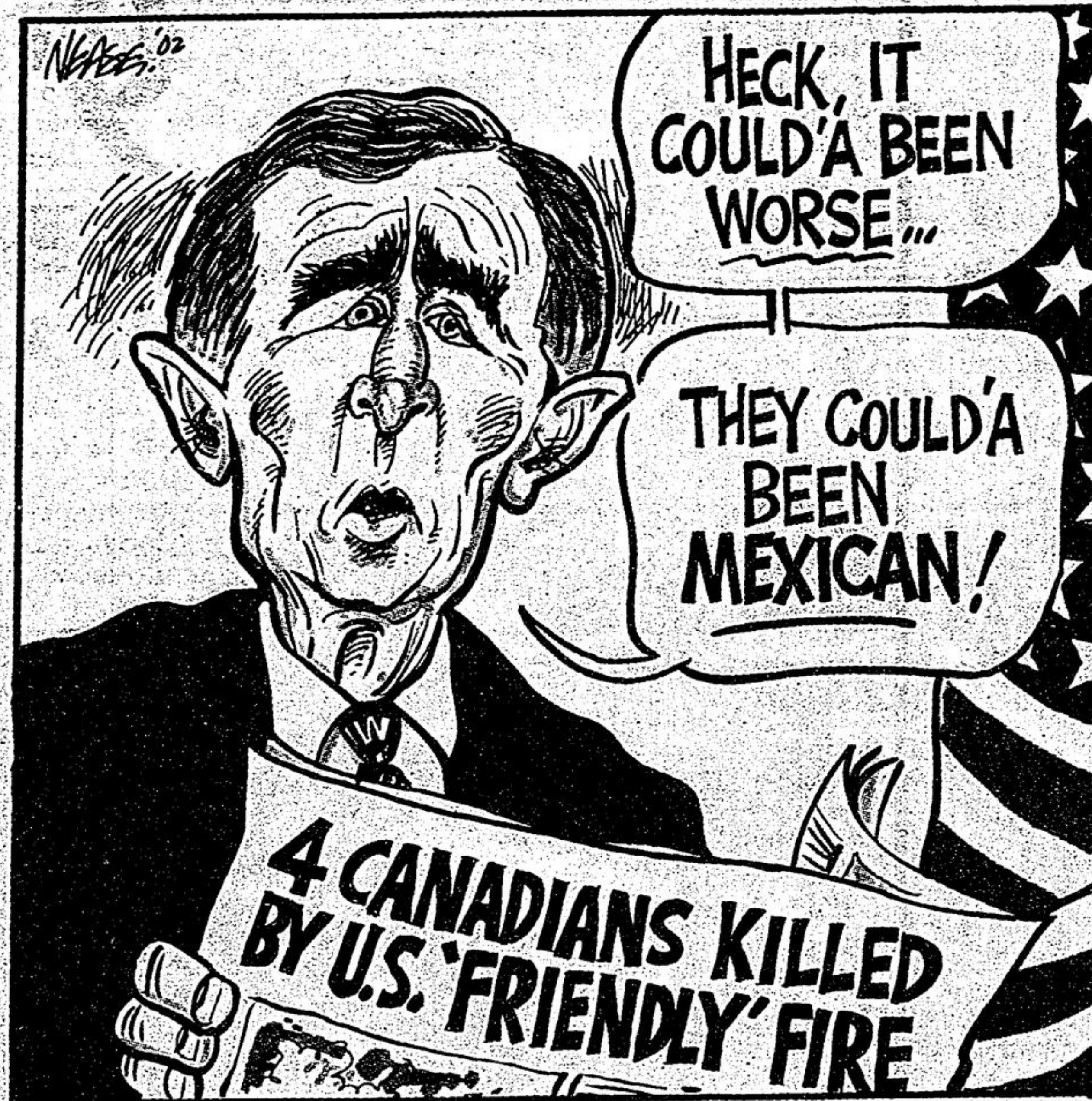
Even if the province agreed today to start taking this issue seriously, it will take years to fix; lowering university tuitions, loosening legislation on foreign doctors practising in Ontario and changing the mindset of young people to lure more students to medical school must take top priority.

What York Region residents need is a strong-minded political advocate to assertively take this issue to Premier Ernie Eves and make him listen and comprehend the magnitude of this crisis.

According to the Ontario Medical Association, the province is in an all-out recruitment war to get doctors.

While many communities in York Region were beginning to win the battle, without the province's help, we'll lose the game.

# OPINION



Dave Teetzel

## I'll turn off TV, just as soon as playoffs are over

Sorry to inform you so late, but this is official TV Turnoff Week.

The Adbusters Foundation is encouraging everyone to try a week without television. It officially kicked off the campaign April 18 by purchasing 30 seconds of air time on CNN's Wolf Blitzer Reports and leaving the screen black.

More than 1 million people watched, undoubtedly making a statement about how addicted we are to our TV sets.

I'm one of the worst, although I did attempt a one-week TV fast in January. I didn't quite make it because a friend (who professes to never, ever, ever watch the tube) phoned and told me, "Turn on The Fifth Estate right now. You gotta see this!"

So, aside from 10 minutes of CBC information programming, I have endured a week without television.

It didn't kill me.

However, not watching TV during the playoffs takes more commitment than I can muster, even if my beloved Sabres are out of contention.

C.J. Penney is one of two York Region contacts for TV Turnoff Week. He has been spreading the word in Georgina.

While he admits some people don't see the point, those who are opting out of TV are filling their time with outdoor activities, hobbies, reading, even finding part-time jobs.

"Our media culture grows more and more unbalanced from reality each day and I think people are beginning to realize it. This is only day two of the event and... the response has been showing fairly quickly," he states.

That's encouraging.

Much of the obesity fretted about recently in medical journals can be pinned on the couch potato lifestyle. At least mine can. But I question if the physical effects are the worst part of long-term TV addiction.

On its website, Adbusters notes by the time a child graduates from his school, he or she will see 350,000 commercials, 100,000 alcohol ads and a daily barrage of sex and violence.

There is an ongoing debate about whether this stuff rots young minds, but some of it is intended to.

For example, many cartoon shows are really prolonged advertisements for such dubious products as Pokemon.

In the ever-widening cable universe, there's a Family Channel but not a family hour.

Once upon a time, you knew every TV channel was safe for kids until 9 p.m. Today, you know certain channels run children's programming 24-7 and others... well, viewer beware.

Of course, that's only a problem if you are a viewer. The solution posed by the Adbusters folks is to stop viewing.

A few more 6-1 Leaf losses and I might just try it.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### Cabinet-snubbing Frank Klees a legend in his own mind

Re: Klees snubs cabinet offer, April 16.

Is it just me or are others getting tired of Frank Klees continually getting headlines for things he might have done but never really did? Too bad the marketplace doesn't recognize the value he sees in himself. Talk about being a legend in your own mind.

JOE MAYO  
UNIONVILLE

#### Noisy chimes as bad as water torture for neighbours

Why is it that with the advent of spring, newly installed wind chimes in the neighborhood, gong, crash, and make enough god awful noise to nearly wake the dead?

The owners of these chimes seem to disappear after installation, leaving the rest of the community to tolerate the racket — which, in my opinion, comes a close second to a well-known water torture technique employed during the Second World War.

Remember, people, when you are away, inside the house, or at the cottage, your neighbours still have to listen to these things. Have some consideration for others; not everyone appreciates wind chimes.

NICK BACON  
MARKHAM

#### Hydro deregulation seems to stick it to Ontario taxpayers

Am I the only one who is miffed by what is happening with the deregulation of hydro?

Don't get me wrong; I am all for free enterprise and open markets. But how the Ontario government is handling the deregulation does not appear to be in anyone's best interest, except for stock brokers and Hydro executives.

Today I received my Markham Hydro Distribution Inc. bill as well as a glossy brochure explaining about the opening of the market, why rates are going up and about a new "proxy tax" called the "Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PIL)" charge appearing on all our bills.

The PIL is to be used to pay off the utility's debt. This month it's nearly a 40 per cent increase in the fixed "customer service" charge. Starting May 1, after markets are supposed to open, it will be changed to a 0.7 cent per kwh usage charge. That's a \$15.87 charge in my case.

Next, the brochure says the government expects Markham Hydro Distribution Inc. to make a profit and as such needs to raise rates.

As a customer of Ontario Hydro I have helped build its assets through fees and taxes. Now the Ontario government wants to sell its parts, keep the proceeds and make the public foot the bill for the debt.

When it looks like a tax, smells like a tax and sounds like tax — well, you know what it is.

RANDY HOCKIN  
UNIONVILLE

### 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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9 Heritage Rd.,  
Markham, Ont., L3P 1M3  
Email: letters@econsun.com

## Stouffville Tribune

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

Classified:  
1-800-743-3353

Distribution  
(905) 294-8244

distribution@econsun.com