

# OPINION

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## Editorial

### Voters should stick to election issues

Enough already, Ernie Eves. Call the provincial election and put us all out of our misery.

First, it was the spring outbreak of SARS then the blackout that darkened much of the province.

Give the premier credit for his handling of the power outage. He stayed calm and spoke in common terms to residents. He did not finger point, unlike the mayors of New York and Toronto. Ontarians appreciated that, public opinion polls say.

This rise in popularity makes an election call in the next 10 days all the more likely. The latest rumour has an election being called Wednesday for Oct. 2.

But the polls also suggest the Liberals will topple the Conservatives. Mr. Eves has until next June to call an election.

It's not like we haven't been in election mode for the past several months. To make it official, all we need is the drop of the writ and the erection of lawn signs. All systems appear go.

The party leaders, particularly Mr. Eves and Liberal leader Dalton McGuinty, have criss-crossed the province with promise-filled speeches.

What are residents of this region concerned about? Plenty. The effects of growth top the list here in one of the fastest growing areas of North America.

And what services do new and old residents expect for their provincial tax dollar? Health care tops the list.

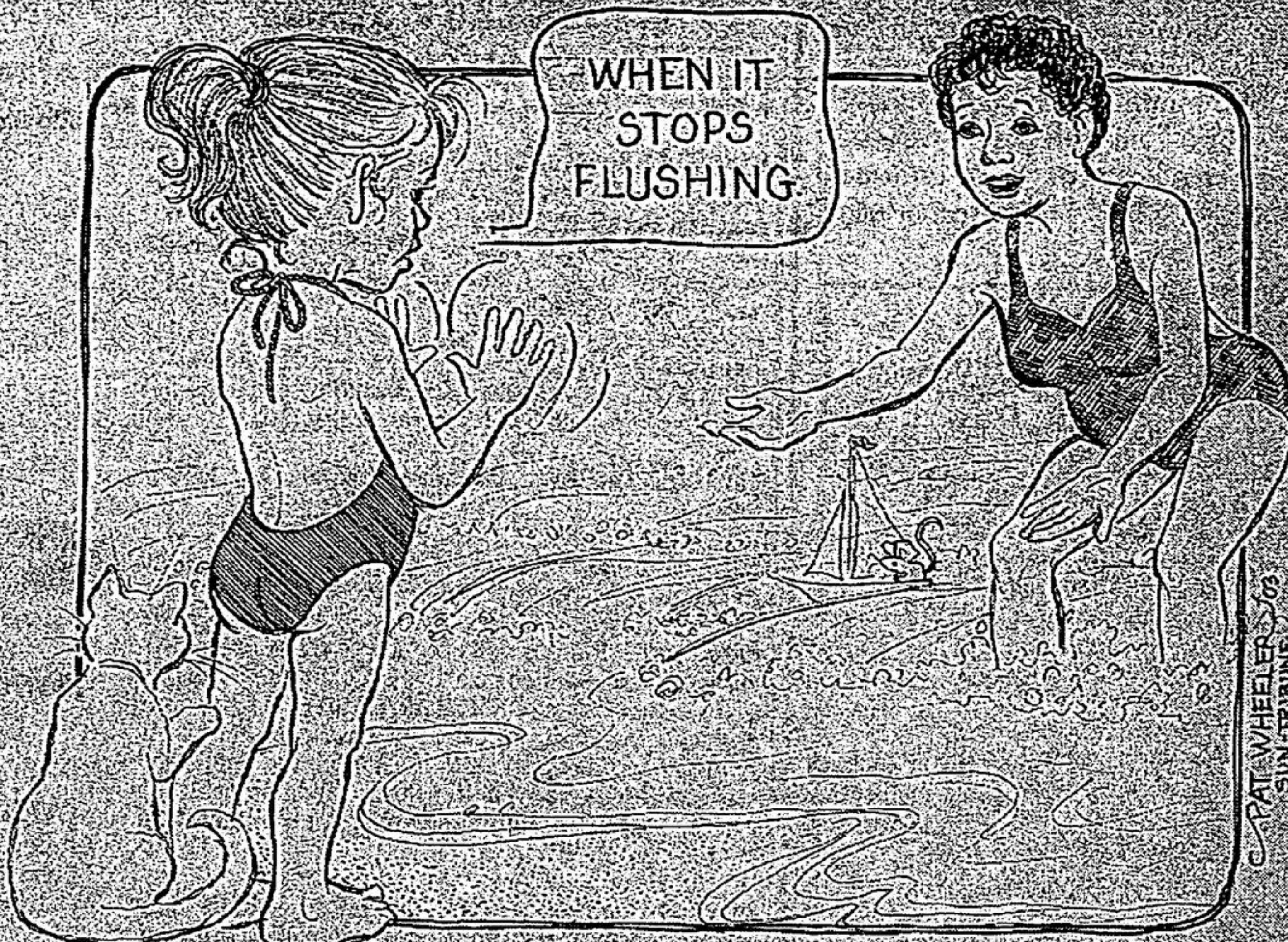
Residents want access to a hospital close to home. They don't want to wait for hours in emergency or be told there are no beds available.

Many York Region residents commute to Toronto for work and pleasure. And while our population has exploded in the past 20 years, our north-south highway system has remained static.

Another highway? More lanes on hwy. 400 and 404? Commuters and the business community, which rely on efficient transportation of goods, deserve more. To ease some of the gridlock, the province has done some good work with GO Transit. The Liberals want growth in southern Ontario to be centred around existing communities instead of simply sprawling north from Lake Ontario.

For example, Newmarket and Barrie could be labelled growth centres and new development would spread from those towns. We'll hear more about such proposals in the coming weeks, if we haven't heard enough already.

Ignore the personal attacks that are sure to be fired from all sides and examine the issues.



## Notebook

with Frank King

### Cliff plans busy retirement

After a 12-year stint, Cliff Dunkeld, one of Whitchurch-Stouffville's biggest community assets, is retiring from council.

Perhaps it's just as well; after telling me what's in his daytimer for the next few months, I'm not sure how he could squeeze in committee meetings, public gatherings and all the other duties of a municipal council member.

"I've only missed one council meeting and I might have gone another term if Wayne (Emerson, who's retiring as mayor) stayed on," he said.

"But my wife is retired and so we thought it was time to move on."

Since moving here from the Claremont area in 1974, Mr. Dunkeld's contributions to the town have almost become legendary.

He's a longtime volunteer with the Whitchurch-Stouffville Softball Association (and still does some umpiring) and the parks and recreation department. He's been involved with the men's bowling league since the 1950s.

On top of that, Mr. Dunkeld, now 71, helped create the Whitchurch-Stouffville Girls Hockey League in 1974 and spent seven years as a volunteer women's softball coach with Seneca College.

All this helped when it came time to pick the town's sports personality of the year in 1978.

But it doesn't end there. Mr. Dunkeld spent nine years on the board of Markham-Stouffville Hospital. As a council appointee, he was on the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum board for six years and three or four years with the Stouffville BIA.

"Pew. Exhausting, isn't it?"

Mr. Dunkeld says he'll miss working with town staff (having worked in municipal government, I know their trials and tribulations), but he won't miss reading all the reports and communications that are part and parcel of a council member's job.

What about all those raucous council meetings, full of controversy and accusations? "People have to have their say," he replies diplomatically. "I guess what bothers me is when people don't see the whole picture."

Mr. Dunkeld's future includes visiting children, grandchildren (nine of 'em) and great-grandchildren, staying involved in softball, lawn bowling in the summer and curling in the winter, plus serving on the occasional town committee.

Thank goodness he's slowing down, eh?

Frank King is assistant editor of the Stouffville Sun-Tribune.

## Letters to the Editor

### Approval of housing projects needs council explanation

As the next municipal election approaches, people continue to express dissatisfaction with Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville policies that affect them personally.

The main issue seems to be the growing number of housing projects bringing with them increased population and urbanization. The public is concerned about water issues, roads, traffic, financial costs and the loss of the town's traditional country environment.

The next council may have its hands full trying to explain to taxpayers how the town reached the present situation and how council plans to deal with their concerns. Being open with the public about the town's past and future may be council's best course.

I submit that the public should also be informed about development plans on the town's information page in the local press. Agenda items for committee or adjustment hearings should be included.

There are other issues the new council may wish to consider. One is financial accountability and another is good employment practices. Perhaps council could also have a complaints secretary so serious concerns of residents could be brought to council's attention, acknowledged and dealt with.

Council may also wish to consider the benefits of good and effective public relations. This might include developing a five-year plan for the town, so

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residents know what lies ahead and what the costs will be.

MARGARET L. MAY  
STOUFFVILLE

### Teacher inspired others

Re: Teacher says bye to Summitview after 23 years, Aug. 7.

It brought a tear to my eye to read about Carole Pridham's retirement after 34 years of teaching.

I walked into her classroom as a Grade 2 student in 1982 and immediately knew I wanted to be a teacher just like her.

I then had the privilege of being her student in a different way, as a co-op student studying her teaching technique nearly 10 years later. I continued on the path she ultimately set for me and realized my dream of becoming a teacher in 1998.

Mrs. Pridham was just one of those teachers who had an innate ability to inspire. I know she inspired me.

I could only hope to exhibit the superior qualities she possessed.

MELISSA WILLIS  
UXBRIDGE

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