

Sun-Tribune

A Metroland community newspaper
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PUBLISHER **Ian Proudfoot**

LETTERS to the EDITOR

Hospital parking a ripoff

On behalf of all hospital users and visitors, I wish to put voice to the many complaints I have heard about the new system of pre-paid parking at Markham Stouffville Hospital.

No matter how you look at it, pre-paid parking is a ripoff, particularly in this setting.

Everyone reading this letter knows trying to predict the time needed for a medical appointment is a gamble.

The wait times vary so widely, attempting to guess and pay for parking beforehand is similar to purchasing a lottery ticket.

Should the patient become lucky and be seen quickly, they are out the \$8 they paid in anticipation of a long wait.

When visiting a patient, the length of the visit is unknown as well. Visitors could arrive planning on a long visit with an old friend, only to find out the patient has been recently discharged or their condition has changed and visitors are not allowed.

On the flip side, a family member may arrive planning to quickly drop something off. Should they find their loved one in deteriorating condition or wishing to be accompanied to a test, they may decide to stay much longer, prompting a return trip to the parking lot to purchase additional 'coverage'.

Many, many people resent having to trek into the hospital for change, then return to the parking lot to buy a ticket.

I have also heard complaints of payment terminals refusing valid credit cards.

I simply can't imagine what kind of ill will this is creating toward the hospital. I only know the complaints staff must field.

I suggest the hospital, a place I support in every other way, picks a new plan for parking payment. And the sooner, the better.

DIANNE DILLER
MARKHAM

Ban ketchup from schools

The Toronto Star recently published pictures of Premier Dalton McGuinty visiting two schools in the Greater Toronto Area. Mr. McGuinty was promoting healthy meals for students.

On the tables in the lunch rooms, right in front of the premier, were bottles of ketchup.

If the premier was serious about children's diets, he would ban ketchup from school cafeterias and fast food outlets.

There is no way a young child would eat a slice of tomato, even though it contains lycopene, an antioxidant that may fight cancer. So ketchup is saturated with sugar to mask its acidic taste. No wonder children love it.

As a diabetic, I am well aware of the problems with sugar. Children consuming too much may some day pay the price with obesity or, worse, an exhausted pancreas

and diabetes.

I have watched mothers in eating establishments teaching babies the art of dipping French fries into ketchup, purely for the sugary taste.

As Ontario's health minister, it is incumbent upon George Smitherman to educate Education Minister Gerard Kennedy about the danger of ketchup in school dining areas.

J. SHAW
MARKHAM

Eggstravaganza successful

On behalf of Whitchurch District Guides and Brownies, I want to thank everyone who participated in our third annual Eggstravaganza.

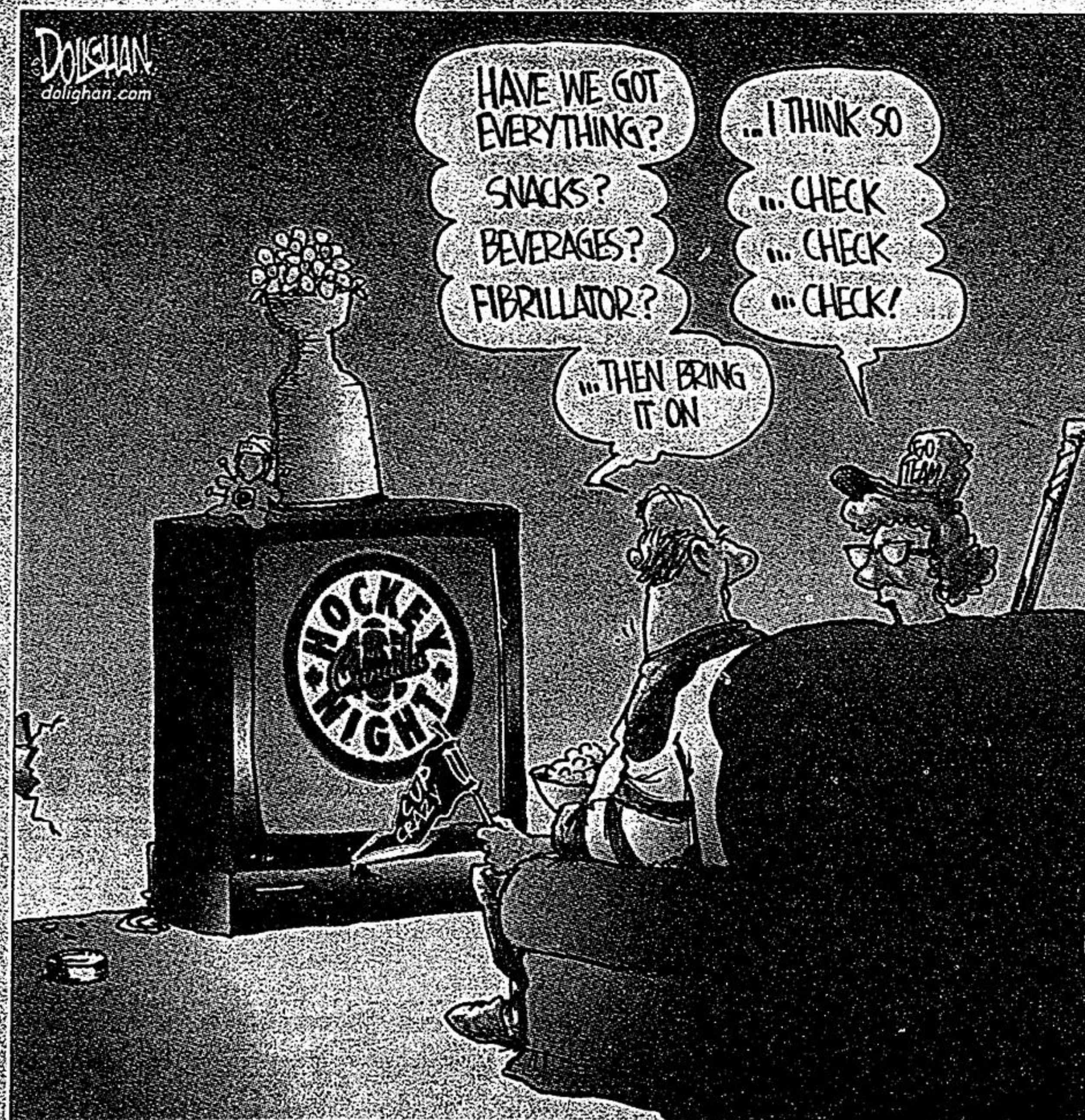
We had a record turnout this year. Although the weather was a little chilly, more than 100 children collected about 3,500 chocolate foil eggs in Felcher Park and many stayed to participate in the scavenger hunt.

There were lots of full baskets and happy faces at the end of the hunt. As a bonus, our mini fire truck was filled to the brim with food and cash donations for the Whitchurch-Stouffville Food Bank.

Thanks to everyone who helped plan this successful event. Your time and energy were appreciated by all.

SHARON BURDETTE
2ND BALLANTRAE BROWNIES

OPINION



Residents deserve flower boxes

Re: Town flower program insult to taxpayers, letter to the editor, April 10.

Markham is comprised of Main Street Markham, Main Street Unionville, Yonge Street Unionville and, of course, Denison Street in Milliken Mills.

The residents of these communities all pay municipal taxes and services provided by the town are available to all residents.

When flower baskets and planters are placed around the town, Milliken must be included so the baskets and planters may be enjoyed and admired by all.

Kudos to councillors Alex Chu and Khalid Usman, whose representation at council ensures Milliken Mills receives the same services as Markham, Unionville and Thornhill. Markham is a character community, which means inclusivity.

TESSA BENN-IRELAND
MARKHAM

Main Street not dismal

Re: Betting on Main Street, Economist & Sun, April 6.

When I read this profile on Leslie Patterson, owner of Heritage Champions betting shop on Main Street Markham, I had to put the paper down and calm my anger.

I operate a fairly new retail store in Markham village and when I am asked to describe our street, dismal (the adjective used by Mrs. Patterson) is not the word.

I live in Unionville, but I wanted to open my store in Markham village, where there is truly a small town feel. Since I have been here I have had just that experience. Not a dismal one.

Mrs. Patterson chose to set up business in Markham village, so how dismal can it really be?

Whatever issues she has with Markham Mayor Don Cousens, they don't need to spill on to our street.

As a fellow BIA member, I ask her to 'place a bet' on Markham village. Get involved and make a difference.

TRACY XAVIER
LIL ONES
MARKHAM

Veterinarian showed sensitivity

I want to express my deepest appreciation to Dr. Leslie Brangers of Village Animal Clinic for the way she handled the passing on of my beloved dog, Becky.

Even though it has been devastating to me and my family, she always held out hope and cared for my baby.

At last it was time for my Becky to be put to sleep and Dr. Brangers handled it with such love and care I find it consoling.

PEGGIE FORBES
MARKHAM

Dalai Lama tool of U.S., Britain

Re: Dalai Lama's visit welcomed, letter to the editor, April 17.

As a Chinese Canadian who has lived in this country for more than 12 years, I am angered by Suresh Patel's letter and the prime minister's decision to meet the Dalai Lama.

Is the Dalai Lama just a religious person? No, absolutely not. He won the Nobel Prize, but this does not mean he is that great.

It is a shame the Nobel Peace committee has been used for dirty political purposes by some Westerners.

The same is true for the Dalai Lama, who has been used to serve the United States and Britain. Should Canada blindly follow? I don't think so.

Prime Minister Paul Martin's meeting with the Dalai Lama is for election purposes, but it risks insulting Chinese Canadian communities. The meeting has nothing to do with democracy.

Before I came to Canada, I worked in Tibet for about five years. I got along with very well with local Tibetan Chinese. The Chinese government invested billion of dollars in Tibet to develop education, the economy and to maintain Tibetan culture.

And, to my knowledge, few Tibetans think the Dalai Lama is their spiritual leader.

PETER MA
MARKHAM

LETTERS POLICY

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

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