

OPINION

PUBLISHER: IAN PROUDFOOT

TELEPHONE: 905-640-2612 • FAX: 905-640-8778
 Email: jmason@ymg.com website: www.yorkregion.com

Editorial

Where will invasive rules end?

The government has no business in the bedrooms of the nation," former prime minister Pierre Trudeau once said. Yet it seems for Ontario's ruling Liberals, our basements are another matter.

Forcing homeowners to install temperature-limiting valves on their water heaters to reduce incidents of child burns is a clear example of government overstepping its bounds.

We absolutely support the idea of protecting children from potential dangers.

Yet prior to the legislation enacted in September, limiting the temperature of water to 49 C or about 120 F, all a homeowner had to do to ensure this was turned down the thermostat on his water heater.

But provincial Liberals feel the need to police mom and dad. So why stop with temperature meters when there's so much more to regulate? After all, it's not just hot water taps that cause burns.

According to the Canadian Hospitals and Injury Reporting and Prevention Program (CHIRPP), burns from hot range elements and oven doors, boiling water and steam and hot cooking oil, food and beverages all contribute to emergency room visits.

A review of the program's database found 34.3 per cent of children under two were burned by a hot solid object. Most burns were caused by youngsters touching or falling against hot oven doors, wood stoves and radiators.

Do we govern temperatures in these appliances as well?

And what about outside the home? A separate CHIRPP study found accidental falls and traffic accidents top the list of leading causes of injury-related hospitalizations among children.

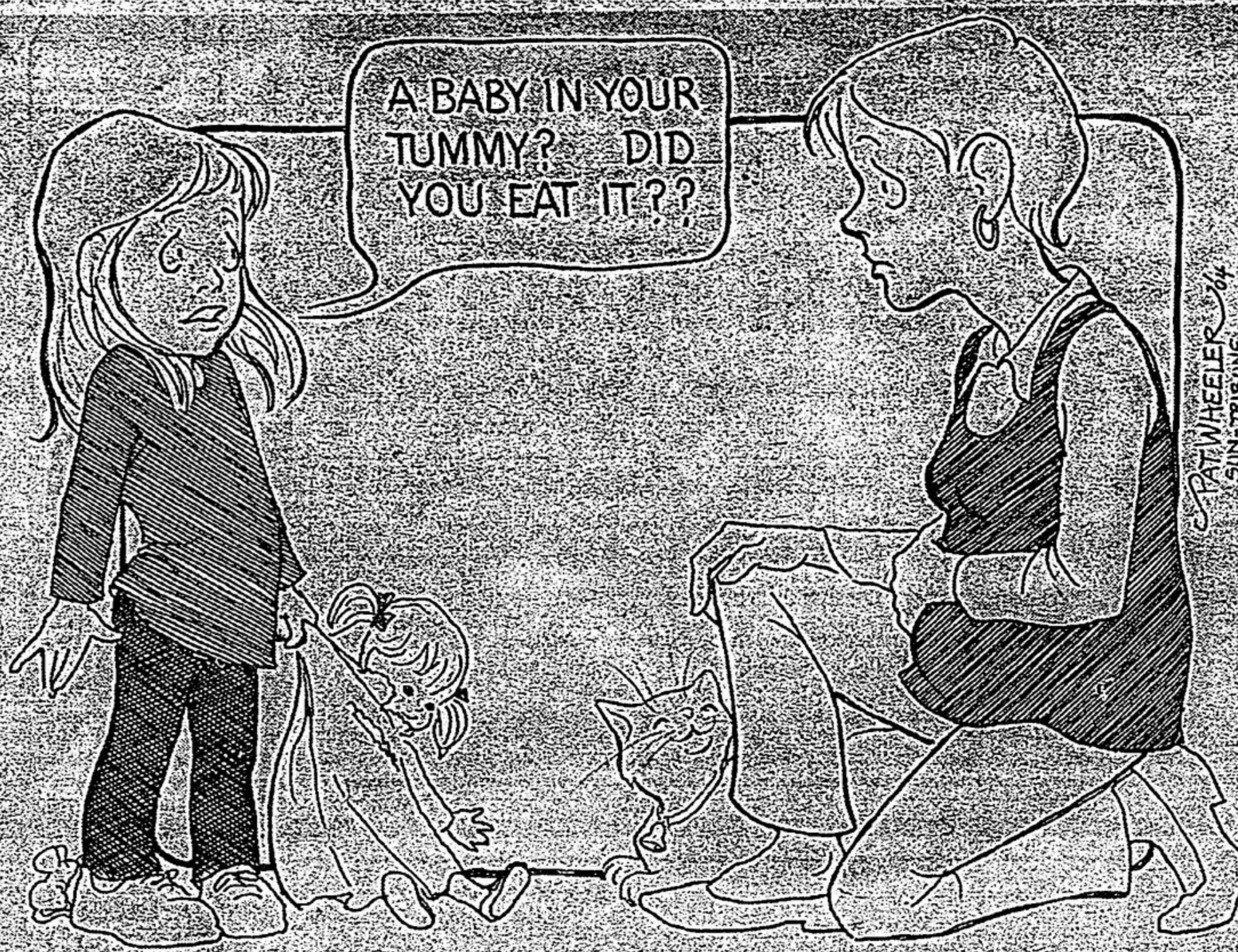
Conspiracy theorists, who have decried other planned initiatives such as smart cards complete with biometric information, would no doubt be quick to question where all this will lead.

And one has to question if this is completely about safety or if reducing energy use also factors into the equation.

The province says it's serious about Ontarians cutting back energy use. At least that would be easy to enforce.

New legislation could be enacted allowing the use of those controversial infrared cameras on police choppers to determine how hot our homes are.

It's not just for pot houses anymore.



Letters to the Editor

Other sources for flu shots

Re: Why no flu shots for Stouffville? letter, Oct. 21.

I applaud Alasdair Campbell's wisdom in knowing the importance of getting his flu shot. I encourage all healthy adults and children over the age of six months to get their flu shot every year.

Influenza is a serious respiratory illness and even healthy young people can become very sick and develop serious complications. This is an illness you do not want to get and experts agree getting your flu shot is the best way to prevent that.

I must, however, speak to Mr. Campbell's concern about community flu clinics not being offered in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Great care is put into choosing a clinic schedule that makes the vaccine most available to the most residents within a defined budget and resources.

Clinic locations are usually targeted to areas of higher population or by geographic area, such as the north.

The province provides flu vaccine to local health units to distribute to the community. In York Region, this is done in several ways:

- Family physicians and walk-in clinics: The majority of flu shots are administered by family physicians. Last year, Health Services provided more than 290,000 flu shots to local doctors.

- Community flu clinics: In comparison, 12,000 flu shots were administered through our clinics last season. This year, York Region health

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Write: Letters to the Editor, 34 Civic Ave., P.O. Box 154, Stouffville, L4A 7Z5, e-mail jmason@ymg.com

services has scheduled 26 community flu clinics in 13 locations across the region from Oct. 13 through Dec. 8. Hearing public concern, we will certainly consider placing one in Whitchurch-Stouffville next year.

- Workplace clinics: Many local workplaces organize flu clinics for their employees through health and safety initiatives, with support from our health services workplace wellness program.

- Local pharmacies: In addition to the above, some pharmacies offer scheduled flu clinics.

Many thanks to Mr. Campbell for heightening awareness of the importance of getting your flu shot and getting it now, from any one of the sources listed above.

For more information on influenza, the community flu clinics or other health-related matters, contact Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653 or visit www.york.ca

DR. K. HELENA JACZEK
 COMMISSIONER OF YORK REGION HEALTH SERVICES AND MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH



Off The Top

with Jim Mason

Big time change on horizon

Like snowstorms on the winter horizon, we know development is headed for Stouffville.

Land on the outskirts has been scraped of all things growing. Billboards and designer sales pavilions promote the new homes that will soon rise up where corn and soybeans grew last summer.

We know it's coming. We just don't know the impact.

Some residents talk of it in excited breath. There's the power centre and its mega chain stores proposed for Hwy. 48 south of Ringwood and the shopping and job opportunities sure to come with it.

Talk of a theatre for the performing arts has been re-sparked.

A shiny new high school will be built behind Sobeys. With minor hockey players on a waiting list and ice time fully rented, there is immediate need for a third arena — with proper seating, sound and heating, town council.

In other words, the town is due for a remodelling job no home decorating TV show has ever seen.

That's the good news. The dark side is a tad more nebulous.

But it's definitely a topic of much discussion. Funny, folks stayed away from meetings in droves in the late 1990s when the next phase of Stouffville was being mapped out.

Now, it's cool.

Over chicken wings and imported beers, Stouffville talked about its future at the Orange and Black Ball, a charity event at the Markham Fairgrounds Saturday.

Oldtimers, 45-year-old Stouffville lifers, dated the irreversible growth back to the 1970s when land was broken south of Summitview Public School for new two-stories.

Relative newcomers spoke of moving to this hidden gem of a small town, a combination of Mayberry RFD and Dawson's Creek.

All agreed it would never be the same, but no one could pin it down any more.

It will soon play out in front of all of them.

Jim Mason is editor of the Stouffville Sun-Tribune.

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34 Civic Ave., 3rd Floor, Stouffville, Ontario L4A 7Z5

Phone: 905-640-2612 • Fax: 905-640-8778
 Classified: 1-800-743-3353 • Distribution: 905-294-8244
 Website: www.yorkregion.com • Email: jmason@ymg.com

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