

OPINION

Stouffville Sun-Tribune
 A Metroland community newspaper
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Editorial

Celebrate all that's good in Canada, eh?

So, another Canada Day is upon us. But the country is in a different place than it was just a year ago. And you would be hard-pressed to find anyone who would suggest it's a better place. Last year, we just finished electing another Liberal government to power when Canadians celebrated the country's birthday. One year later, that government is hanging on to power through parliamentary strategy and deal making. The situation in Ottawa has become so precarious, some of the country's top CEOs have declared Canada "adrift". The business leaders say Ottawa is "frittering away" economic gains as political policy takes precedence over the economy. On the other end of the spectrum, rocker turned social activist Bob Geldof is slugging Canada for not living up to its promise to give 0.7 per cent of its GDP to foreign aid.

Mr. Geldof gets attention and he has put the heat on Canada. Meanwhile, Canada's health care system continues to lag, spotlighted by a Quebec Supreme Court decision that pointed out the public system isn't helping patients quickly enough. And who could forget the adscam scandal, a political quagmire that proves Canadian governments can be seduced by corruption as easily as the next country?

Oh Canada, your image has taken a hit. No doubt about it.

But those are big picture problems. They're not what the average Canadian will be thinking about tomorrow. And it's not what Canadians should be thinking about when they cheer what most still believe is the best country in the world.

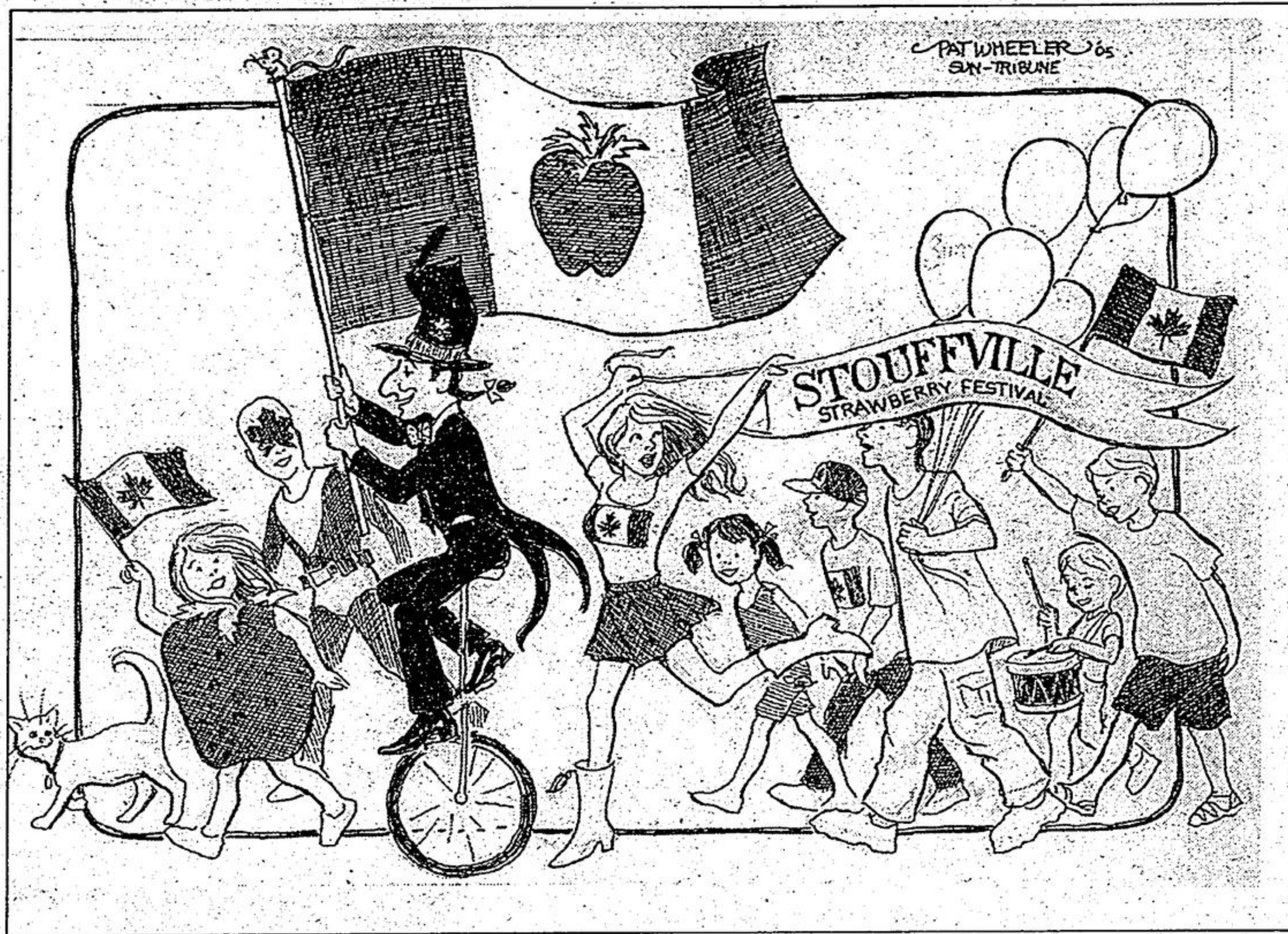
Tomorrow is a day to celebrate Canada's good: its ability to welcome all peoples of the world, its willingness to speak out for the disadvantaged on the world stage.

It's also a time to remember that Canada is still a place people from around the world long to live, despite our current domestic issues.

So, forget the naysayer headlines tomorrow. Think about the good things this country still has to offer. There's still reason to celebrate; deep down every Canadian knows that, no matter where their political beliefs lie.

Next year at this time, Canadians may be looking back on a better year.

Much of that has to do with Canada's citizens, not just its leaders.



Letters to the Editor

Parkview decision more costly than failed tattoo parlour bylaw

Re: Failed tattoo parlour cost \$14,400, June 16.
 To print the cost of Whitchurch-Stouffville council seeking a bylaw is a bit unusual. If it had passed and not been rejected, would the cost have been mentioned?

One gets the impression that only bylaws that pass council are worthy and representative of the constituency. If you really want the pulse of the constituency, then have a referendum.

This, of course, cannot be the norm. The decision to not allow Stouffville's Parkview home certain tax incentives was costly. It cost non-profit organizations and many public groups and individuals. Why don't you print that amount?

By the way, even though it did not pass council, we still would spend the money to try again.

DAN DWYER
 STOUFFVILLE

Old, new friends came through for Stouffville family

Re: Cancer hits home even during a championship, Jim Mason's column, May 19.

This is a letter of thanks and appreciation to all of our friends who organized the amazing fundraising banquet on behalf of our family.

Thank you to our friends who arranged the donation of the hall, to all those who donated the merchandise for the silent and live auctions and the band, which was wonderful. Everything was absolutely amazing.

Thank you to friends who worked tirelessly all evening at the door and running the auctions and

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bar. Thank you to our friends who prepared all of the food for the buffet.

Thank you to all of our friends, both old and new, who came to this wonderful party.

It is quite amazing to know we touched so many lives in one way or another.

Thanks to all of you for your support and friendship during this time.

THE MADIGAN FAMILY
 STOUFFVILLE

Baptist church children helping families in war-torn countries

Vivian Baptist Church would like to thank everyone for their generous support of the Sunday school children's June 11 yard and bake sale.

We are pleased to report they raised \$588 for boxes of basic hygiene supplies for Operation Fresh Start, a program of EuroAid.

The money will be used to buy seven family boxes, six single mother boxes, three senior boxes and three baby boxes. The program helps people left in poverty in the aftermath of wars such as those in the former republic of Yugoslavia.

GINNY OKUM
 WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE



Off The Top

with Jim Mason

Our festival grew from humble stock

They'll be wolfing down prime rib and berries and riding the Tilt-A-Whirl, hopefully without incident, in Memorial Park tonight.

Candy floss and fireworks for a nightcap tomorrow.

Pancakes in the park Saturday morning and chardonnay and a side of live rock 'n' roll that afternoon in Civic Square.

More berries with your Sunday church service.

Greetings from the Whitchurch-Stouffville Strawberry Festival.

It's our 21st annual long weekend festival of delights gastronomic and otherwise.

It's right up there with the Kinsmen Santa Claus parade as must-do events in the home town, folks.

Weather permitting, Main Street will be curb-to-curb Saturday with vendors hawking antiques, crafts and cold water and those who buy the same.

The grandstand should be filled with the home team plays in the pee-wee boys' elimination fastpitch tournament.

Organizers have laid out an impressive schedule of events, tweaking a successful formula over the last few years.

It hasn't always been this way. Flash back to the early 1980s, when the Canada Day weekend in Stouffville was a fledgling slo-pitch tourney, accented by a food booth and a few crafters. That was it.

But thanks to festival pioneers like Ged Stonehouse, Bill Kamps, Jim Heidema and Jim Kidd, it grew into the Ontario Bicentennial celebrations of 1984 and on into the berry bash we know and love in the 21st century.

There are no guarantees for long-term survival in festival land. Next door, in Uxbridge, the Spring Waters Day that dwarfed our festival sank.

While locals fret over the potential loss of small town values with so much growth on Stouffville's horizon, the Strawberry Festival can live on.

One only has to look south, down Hwy. 48 and Kennedy Road to the Markham Village Music Festival and Unionville Festival held this spring, to see the roots of Ontario festival country alive and well in suburbia.

See you at the festival. Dig in.
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