

OPINION

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Extending 404 not answer

Re: Hwy. 48 hot spot for collisions, July 18.

I question Phil Bannon's logic in pushing for the extension of Hwy. 404 to save lives.

Extending Hwy. 404 contradicts the province's own smart growth policies, which clearly state commuter and cottager convenience is not a valid reason to expand highways.

One of the myths of highway extensions is that traffic congestion will ease. Yet study after study shows congestion is only reduced temporarily by the construction of new roads. Congestion tends to return within five years.

A University of California study showed that increasing highway mileage by 10 per cent led to a 9-per-cent increase in traffic. Putting money into new roads also diverts it away from investments in public transit.

Adding more highways and increasing the numbers of cars and trucks will not improve either environmental or human health in Ontario.

Cars and trucks are recognized as the dominant source of air pollution. We know air pollution aggravates respiratory problems such as asthma, contributes to lung cancer and damages the developing lungs of children.

And vehicle emissions are one of the largest sources of greenhouse gases, the major cause of global warming.

New highways open up our precious agricultural land and green space to development pressures. And everyone is familiar with the impacts of new development.

More gridlock and car crashes and calls from shortsighted decision makers for highway expansions.

JANET MAY
NETWORK DIRECTOR
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TORONTO

What are we paying for?

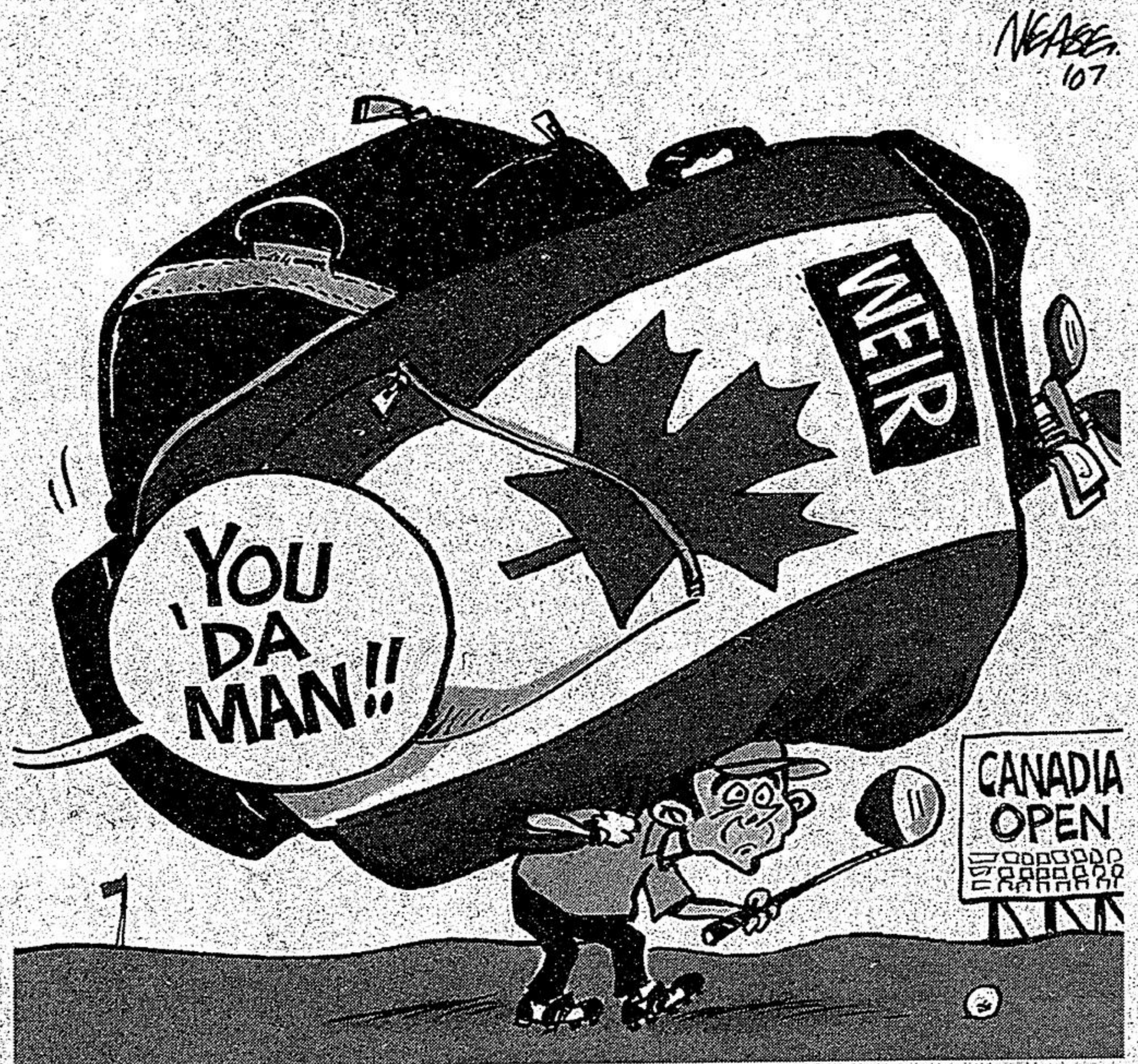
Recently, I had a friendly argument with my neighbour about drinking bottled water, as opposed to tap water.

I tried to explain municipal water is safe but that some people use additional filters to eliminate possible contaminants that could come from water pipes.

I use Brita filters in a pitcher that filters 151 litres of water. For one litre of water, it costs five cents for the filter and two cents for a returnable bottle.

I purchased a half-litre bottle of water for \$2 at Markham Theatre in May. The water was Aquafina bottled by Pepsico Inc. with its source in Mississauga. The bottle states that water for Quebec is from the public distribution of Mississauga. So we are paying for the initial filtering, so Pepsico can bottle water and sell it in Quebec.

BRANCO MRACIC
MARKHAM



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If troubled Toronto takes tumble, we all fall with it

It's difficult to work up any sympathy for the City of Toronto.

The city is flailing on the edge of total collapse.

But the people of Toronto deserve what they get for electing a pack of idiots who can't sit still for a photograph, let alone manage a city.

No comedy writer could ever come up with something as absurd as the story of Toronto council.

The city is in the midst of a financial crisis.

Things are so bad, council has to think twice before spending \$1.2 million to bail out Theatre Passe Muraille.

Compare and contrast that to Newmarket council's rejection of the financial demands of the Resurgence Theatre Company, which somehow found the money to carry on.

In politically correct Toronto, of course no one dares question a \$150,000 grant to the gay pride parade.

However, Councillor Michael

Walker did question if they should take a 9-per-cent raise in the midst of a financial emergency. His fellow councillors voted him down — and with some gusto.

And they're keeping their free golf, too.

The province, recognizing the city's financial needs, gave council the power to levy new taxes.

Mayor David Miller pushed hard to tax land transfers and vehicle registrations, thereby allowing him to keep his promise not to raise taxes.

Well, kinda sorta.

But his council rebelled, deciding to wait till after the provincial election in the hope they can strong-arm would-be premiers into coughing up a cash bailout.

Mr. Miller, doing his level best to make predecessor Mel Lastman look like the poster boy for calm and reasoned approaches, threatened to close the Sheppard subway line, cancel bus routes and close pools. (Note that, in the Millerverse, closing pools is preferable to charging user fees as every municipality



Dave Teetzel

in York Region does.)

Hilarious. It would serve them right if they sank into their own quagmire of stupidity.

Except for one thing.

If Toronto goes down, it will take us with it.

A TD Bank report already shows serious cracks in the GTA economy, with 100,000 manufacturing jobs lost since 2002.

The report blames the rising dollar and competition from China, rather than political mismanage-

ment, but the fact remains York will not be immune to a 416 crash.

While Markham, Vaughan, Richmond Hill, Aurora and Newmarket have all built up a business sector to help support our residential areas, we are — like it or not — suburbs.

And if people don't want to do business in Toronto, they won't come here.

If Toronto shuts down the subway it just built, kiss the York Region lines goodbye.

So we have to be concerned about their problems.

I'm not suggesting for a minute the province cut Toronto a cheque.

But we could work with the city on a more reasonable request. Part of Toronto's problems stem from the fact Ontario cities are required to fund social services, historically a provincial responsibility.

This downloading, imposed under the previous Conservative governments, was the source of the much-despised GTA pooling policy.

It would appear many of the accomplishments Premier Dalton

McGuintry will list in this campaign amount to rescinding policies of the previous administration.

But he hasn't undone the disastrous policy of downloading. There's a promise he could make Toronto without offending the rest of Ontario.

Does John Tory want to prove once and for all he is not Mike Harris? Admit downloading was a mistake and fix it.

Not even the NDP wants to talk financial bailouts. But surely Howard Hampton knows social services are a provincial responsibility.

Reversing downloading would not single-handedly save Toronto. City councillors would still have to get their act together to do that.

Maybe some 905 councillors could offer professional development seminars: Realistic Budgeting 101, Saying No to Special Interests, Making Things Work Even If It Doesn't Fit Your Ideology...

Or perhaps we could hold a bake sale.

LETTERS POLICY

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

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