

OPINION

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

More reasons to not vote Liberal? Federal gun control legislation

Re: Anyone but McGuinty Liberals after pit bull hearings, law, letter to the editor by Julie King, Sept. 29

After reading Ms King's letter stating she was working hard not to elect Mr. McGuinty and the Liberals, I have to say I have another reason to not vote for them as well.

Ms King elaborates quite succinctly that the Liberals passed a very poor, ill-conceived, politically motivated piece of legislation for political gain.

She further states they exuded arrogance, were biased and had no integrity in the passing of the specific breed legislation, in other words a ban on 'pit bulls'.

The same family of Liberals brought us our current boondoggle known as gun control. This was also rammed through federal Parliament without proper consultation with experts in the firearms field.

As is the case with the dog breed ban, we, as taxpaying citizens, whether you own a firearm or not, have been saddled with an exorbitant cost (\$2 billion, approximately) of a useless law that targets responsible owners just like the dog

breed ban has shown. The Liberals personify arrogance and I, in tandem with Ms King, will work hard to see anyone but the McGuinty Liberals elected this election.

MARK STRAIT
STOUFFVILLE

Don't criticize candidates, election system at fault

Re: Why pay politicians to campaign? editorial Sept. 27

You need not criticize those individuals who have been elected to a local political office and then expand their efforts at further serving their constituents by running on a different level.

Possibly your criticism should be targeted at the time frame and scheduling of provincial and federal elections.

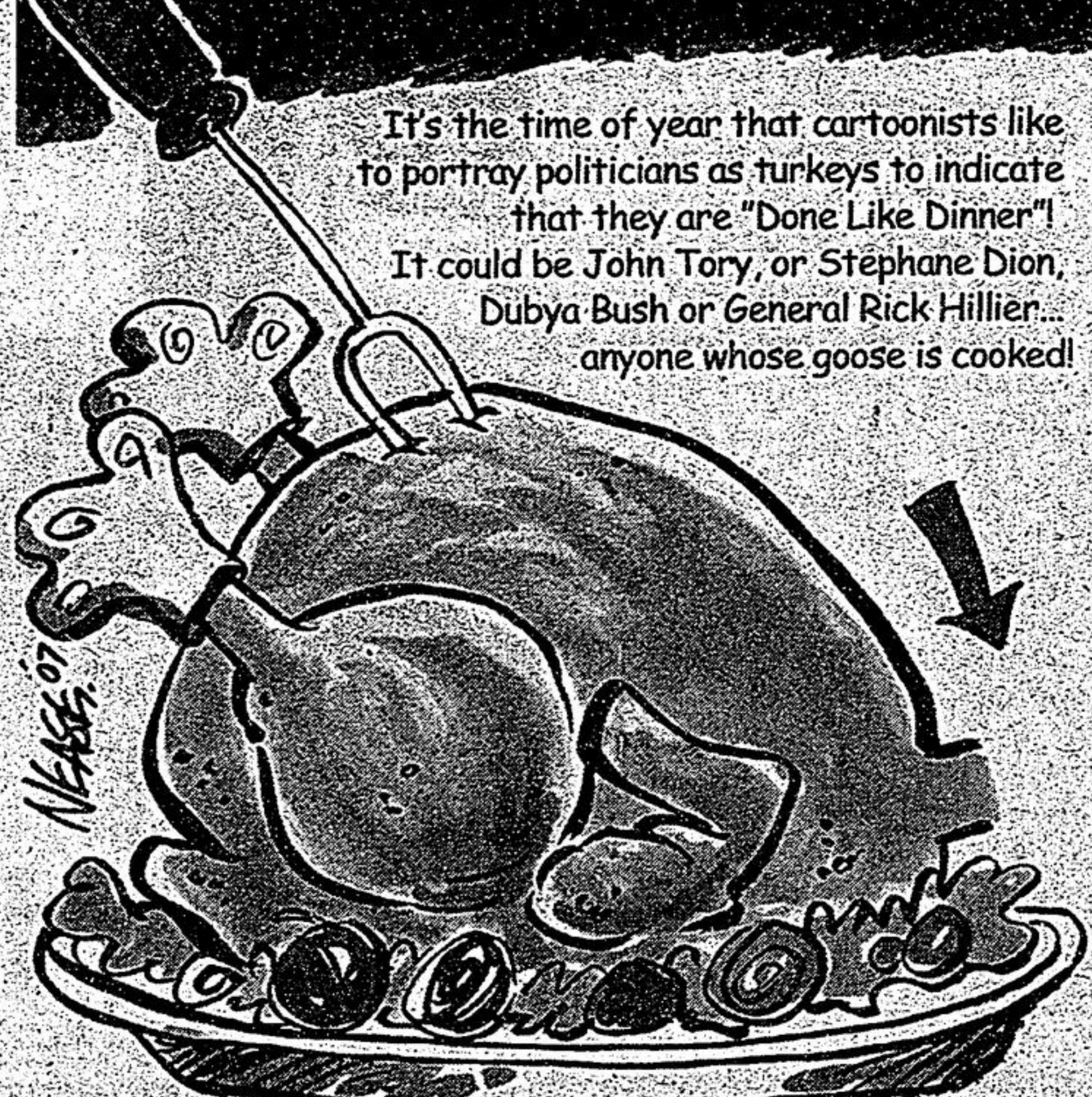
Based on your logic, incumbents who campaign for an additional term should not be paid by the provincial or federal government.

After all, they are not sitting in parliament.

Congratulations to all candidates who place their names on the ballot at any level of government — at any time.

JIM GRICE
MARKHAM

MAKE YOUR OWN THANKSGIVING TOON



It's the time of year that cartoonists like to portray politicians as turkeys to indicate that they are "Done Like Dinner"! It could be John Tory, or Stephane Dion, Dubya Bush or General Rick Hillier... anyone whose goose is cooked!



Just cut out the head of your choosing, and attach it to the bird above. Voila! A custom editorial cartoon to stick on the fridge this holiday weekend! Have fun, and Happy Thanksgiving!

Incidents reminder harmony a work in progress

It was a disturbing study in contrasts between what should be and what is, or perhaps between what is and what appears to be.

I was at the York Regional Police station in Markham last Thursday, as its community room was dedicated in memory of Kamil Sadiq, founder of the Canadian Federation of Intercultural Friendship, who died a year ago.

I knew Mr. Sadiq from our newspapers Community Links panel, a citizens group that discusses local issues.

He was devoted to promoting understanding between the diverse cultures in York Region and I could count on him to expand my own perspective. He never asked people to compromise their beliefs or opinions to fit in, but to express them in a respectful way that would, ultimately, help us all understand how much we have in common.

At Thursday evening's ceremony, Mr. Sadiq's son, Aamir, read a letter from Sherill Kazan Alvarez, presi-

dent of the World Council of Peoples of the United Nations, praising his vision of spreading enlightenment. She also characterized Markham as a model of harmony that could be exported to the rest of the world.

It was touching and nobody deserves the honour more.

But at the same time, I was painfully aware the exact opposite view of York Region was being projected throughout the GTA. A few miles north of us in Georgina, an apparently racially motivated clash Sept. 15 culminated in a car crash that left a young man in a coma.

The incident, which is being investigated as a hate crime, has been associated with a phenomenon known as "nipper tipping", pushing Asian anglers into the lake, although the victim is not Asian.

If that wasn't bad enough, unknown to the crowd at the Markham station, York police were also investigating an ugly vandalism incident in Keswick, in which several cars were spraypainted with swastikas and slogans attacking



Dave Teetzel

Jews and homosexuals.

I have no doubt that, were Mr. Sadiq still alive, he would be in Georgina right now.

I know because he was one of the first to go to Thornhill when similar anti-Semitic vandalism hit that community a few years ago.

Indeed, even while he was suffering from cancer, Mr. Sadiq went to Whitchurch-Stouffville and East Gwillimbury councils, convincing them to be the first towns in York Region to declare themselves diverse communities.

He knew the cultural diversity that is part of the fabric of life in

Markham and Richmond Hill will soon be the reality in what is now small town York Region and it was best to lay the groundwork.

He never made it to Georgina, which leaves the rest of us to carry on his legacy.

Now, I suspect the reality of York Region lies somewhere between the glowing picture painted by the UN letter and the scare-mongering headlines in the daily newspapers.

Markham, in particular, has done a great deal to promote understanding between different cultural groups. But there was a racist graffiti incident, not so different from what happened in Keswick, in 2005.

I live in Georgina and — like Mayor Rob Grossi — I have never heard the term "nipper tipping" until it surfaced in the Toronto Star.

I do recall a former police reporter being flabbergasted when he heard a Georgina resident use the term "nipper" to describe his neighbour (who was Vietnamese).

But I don't think attacking people for kicks is either common or

tolerated in Georgina, or anywhere else for that matter.

The fact of the matter is this stuff shouldn't happen, but it can — anywhere.

The Canadian Jewish Congress has condemned the hate crimes in Georgina. But condemning blatant acts of bigotry is easy.

The Chinese Canadian National Council met with Mr. Grossi Tuesday. But politicians won't solve this either.

The provincial campaign has been dominated by statements about how educating all children together promotes understanding. It probably does, but that's not the whole solution either.

Cliche as it may sound, we all have to be part of the solution. We could all help if we followed the lifestyle modelled by Kamil Sadiq: be who you are, say what you believe, respect everyone else and look for common ground.

Easy to say, hard to do. But I know at least one man who did it pretty well.

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. Letters to the Editor, The Sun-Tribune, 6290 Main St., Stouffville, ON L4A 1G7. jmason@yrmg.com

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