

# OPINION

**Stouffville Sun-Tribune**

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## Editorial

### Campaign of missed opportunities

We will look back on this election as a watershed, on two fronts.

First, it appears Ontarians want their school system the way it is, despite the underlying unfairness that it funds Catholic schools and not other religious schools.

Yes, we are a multicultural society. But we want our children to be together instead of investing money to perpetuate our differences. The parallel Catholic system remains, at least for now, an historic precedent that most of us are willing to tolerate.

While results were not known as of this writing, polls suggested we think our system to elect people to represent us is good enough. Our first-past-the-post system may not be perfect, but it has served us well since the 1800s and brings us some stability in government, even if the smaller parties do not end up with representatives in the legislature. The system keeps fringe elements on the fringes, where it appears we would like them to stay. That being said, this was a disappointing election campaign.

So many concerns, from strains on our health care system to congestion on our roads, from high taxes to low government credibility, were not resolved.

With a governing party labelled as the Liberals for a string of broken promises and the \$30-million grants scandal on the eve of the election, one would think their opponents could make gains.

While John Tory appears to be a good man who wants to serve at the highest level, he and his PC team ran a poor campaign, becoming mired in the faith-based schools funding controversy. Howard Hampton, though an earnest politician, got sidelined by the debate.

Meanwhile Dalton McGuinty, educated in Catholic schools, his wife, a Catholic school teacher, by his side, steadfastly repeated how much we all believed in the "public" school system and how it must not be jeopardized by funding religious schools (other than Catholic schools, of course).

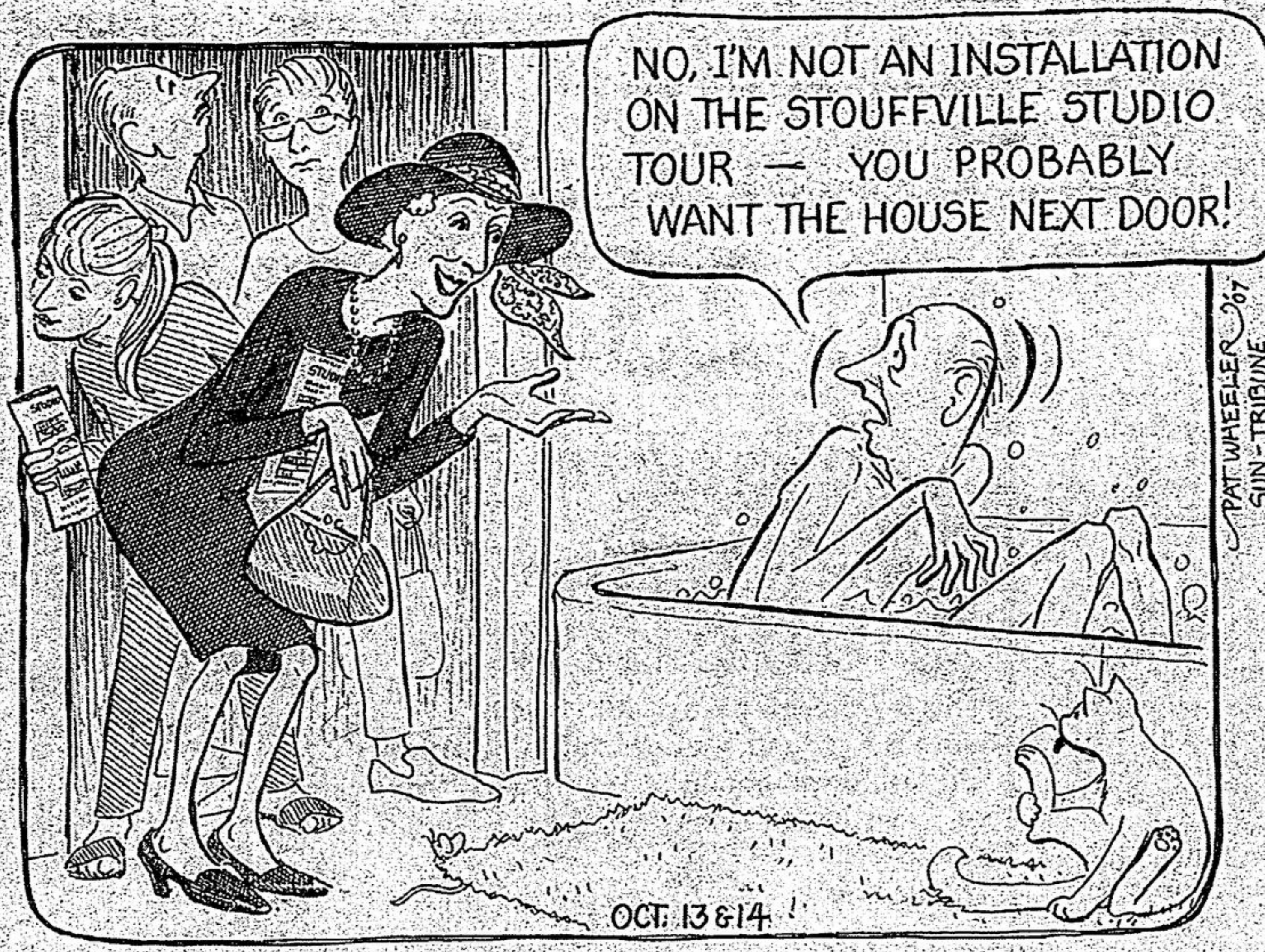
It was a superficial attack by a Liberal leader who again proved he will say anything to get elected. Perhaps more importantly, the PCs' campaign ads and overall message did little more than criticize, without offering a vision of what a Tory regime would be like. The same goes for the NDP.

Criticism is necessary, but so is the alternative we are being offered. It wasn't clear what a John Tory Ontario would be like.

While the race is over, we cannot let key issues die: the doctor shortage, care for the elderly, commuter chaos, runaway growth.

It's a long list on which the province could be doing a far better job.

We must remind the Liberals we have not re-elected them because of the great work they have done, but because of the weak campaigns of their opponents.



## Off The Top

with Jim Mason

### Our little Main St. resting up from celebrity buzz

Take a breather, Main Street. Maybe even another long weekend.

You deserve the rest.

The last two months couldn't have been easy for the old girl. Yonge Street in Toronto hasn't seen this much high-profile action.

First, it was Brad May and his cavalcade of friends, family and fans carting the Stanley Cup along the main drag. Traffic jammed up like the flea market was back in full fashion again.

Early last month, the CBS movie *The Russell Girl* took over shops and stopped traffic. Joan of Arcadia/Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants star Amber Tamblyn dined on a made-for-TV patio.

Last week, it was Ontario Progressive Conservative leader John Tory walking the street and popping in on shoppers, diners and merchants.

Not bad, for a downtown core to which many a Stouffvillian is ambivalent.

It looks nice, with a few exceptions, and the merchants are friendly. But, not everyone frequents it, instead taking short cuts and self-made detours.

Our office had a front-row seat for all the hoopla. Mr. Tory stopped by with his charming wife, Barbara, handlers and a few dozen media types.

Ms Tamblyn didn't pop in for an interview, but members of the movie crew worked right outside our front windows.

And, as if on cue, Brad May's Corvette stopped out front, too.

Others don't notice.

"You just moved your offices back downtown, eh," long-timers say.

"About 16 months ago," I reply.

"Really? I guess I don't go down there as much as I used to," comes the reply.

The grocery store, hardware stores and video outlets have moved west on Main, but there's still plenty of action.

Three banks, several fine eateries, a large furniture store and boutiques are some of the highlights. And that's before 19 on the Park, the much-anticipated arts centre, opens next year.

*Jim Mason is editor of The Sun-Tribune.*

## Letters to the Editor

### Mean-spirited Bannon not worthy of riding's support

Re: *Sherban's defection doesn't bother Bannon, Oct. 4*

I read with dismay, your article quoting Conservative candidate Phil Bannon's remarks about former mayor Sue Sherban: "She doesn't have any support in the community" and "She was mayor for only one term. You can fool them once, but not twice". To my knowledge Mrs. Sherban does not hold and was not running for any elected office.

Mr. Bannon's unwarranted, sneering, mean-spirited attack clearly demonstrates that he is not worthy to represent the citizens of this riding.

MARGARET GRANT  
STOUFFVILLE

### Will small groups be able to afford Stouffville's arts centre?

Susan Brown, who is known to many in Stouffville for her beautiful voice and music at various churches and shows, will be performing a concert at the Dundalk Olde Town Hall Oct. 26 at 8 p.m.

The evening includes a dinner at the United Church before the concert.

Of particular interest to the folks in Stouffville may be the similarities of the town hall building in the respective towns:

- both built in 1900 era
- both closed up in the 1950s.

Dundalk's hall re-opened in 2000 at a cost of about \$150,000. Patrons and donors paid for the seats. It is run by a volunteer board of manage-

ment.

Patrons fill the theatre for a show each month. Sometimes the show is for a week or weekend.

Sometimes it's for local theatre and other times for the likes of John McDermott, Mark Curtis or the Beckett family. Tickets usually cost \$10 or \$15.

The cost to rent theatre is \$350. The cost for a private school to rent Markham Theatre is prohibitive to small groups using it. Will small groups be able to afford Stouffville's theatre/arts centre?

DENNIS SEELEY  
WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

### Alice in Wonderland opinions useless

Re: *Anyone bu McGuinty Liberals after pit bull hearing; law, Sept. 29 and More reasons to not vote Liberal? Federal gun control legislation, Oct. 6.*

I believe The Sun-Tribune has done a disservice to not only the newspaper but to its readership by publishing the letters.

These opinions are nothing more than that. They provide no back-up data and are meant to confuse. Hopefully, your readership will see through your obvious political support.

Why not run an article on the number of dog attacks before and after the pit bull hearings and resultant legislation? What does federal gun control legislation have to do with an Ontario provincial election? The icing on the cake was blaming the election system when politicians have two jobs at the same time. In the real world, this is called conflict of interest. To me these are Alice in Wonderland opinions and hopefully represent a small percentage of our population.

ART WOODRUFF  
STOUFFVILLE

## 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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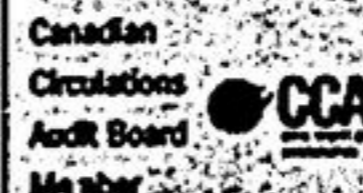
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