

OPINION

Stouffville
Sun-Tribune

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Editorial

All federal parties failing miserably

The late American political columnist Stewart Alsop wrote in his 1970s memoir: "A dying man needs to die, as a sleepy man needs to sleep, and there comes a time when it is wrong, as well as useless, to resist."

The same may be said of a dying Parliament. So it comes as good news there are growing indications the increasingly dysfunctional federal Parliament will be dissolved by an early fall election call.

Minority governments have a natural shelf life and this one has definitely reached its best-before date.

All that is going on now is endless game playing, name calling and accusations with none of the parties appearing to give much thought to the public interest or issues genuinely important to Canadians.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper seems to have given up any pretense of national leadership and is content having his government goad the Liberals and antagonize as many interest groups as possible.

From unexplained or seemingly unnecessary arts funding cuts to attacks on the medical profession as unethical because many doctors support safe injection sites for drug addicts, the Conservatives seem content to try to shore up their base of die-hard Reform Party-type right-wingers without a thought for the longer term harm their antics may cause.

Opposition Leader Stéphane Dion, meanwhile, criticizes the Conservative government on nearly all its policy fronts, but scurries away from every opportunity to challenge them in a Parliamentary vote.

He appears to think, too, obsessing about his "green scheme" is a substitute for addressing all other issues that face our country. His ability to provide solid, unwavering leadership continues to dog the Liberals, whose presence this year in Ottawa is shamefully thin.

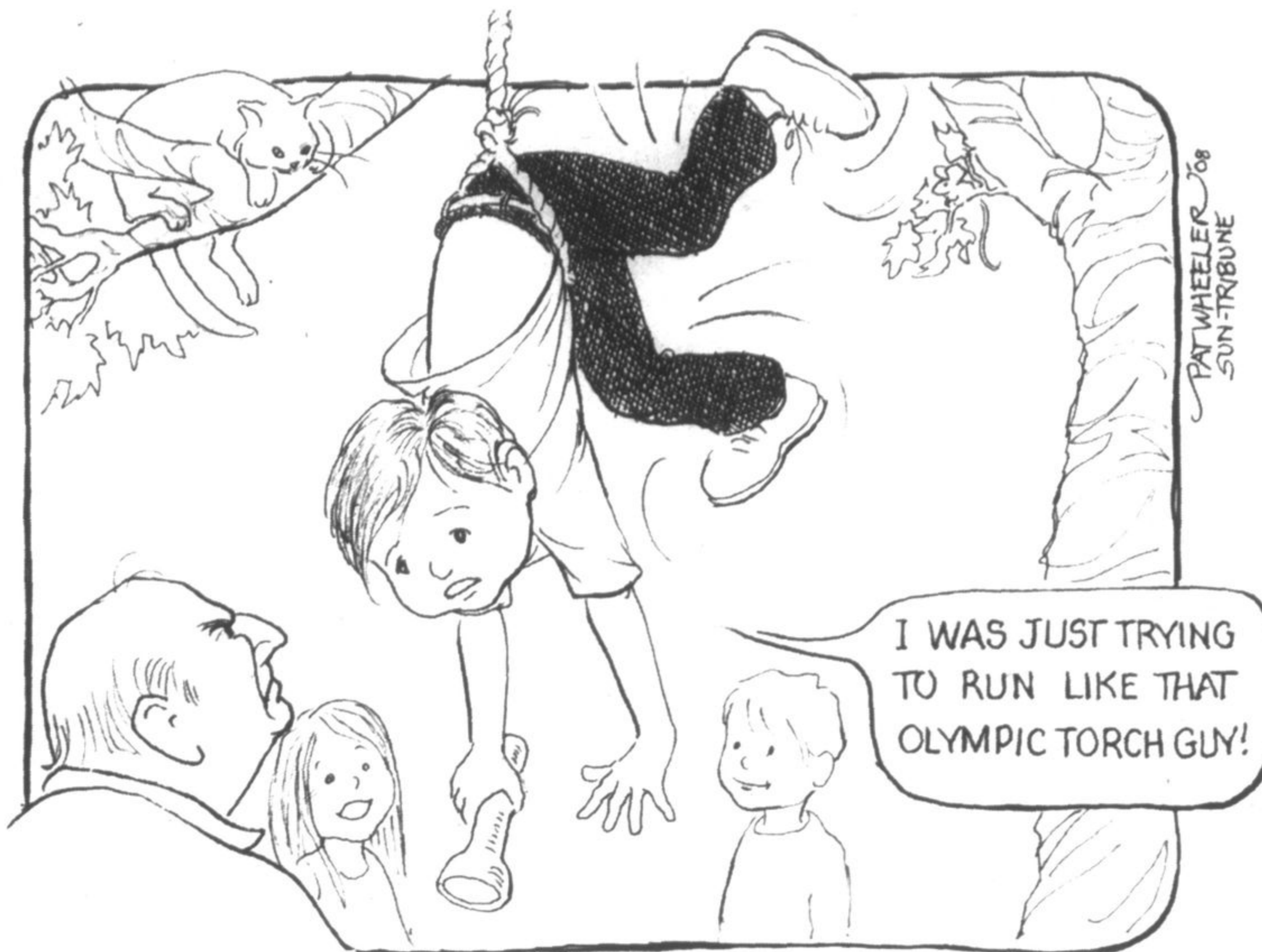
The endlessly glib Jack Layton and his NDP have let themselves become irrelevant and the less said about the separatist Bloc, as usual, the better. Meanwhile, our economy risks heading into the dumpster.

The manufacturing sector, under which 80 per cent of York businesses fall, continues to feel the sting of a U.S. economic slow-down, our international relations and world role are getting frayed from lack of careful thought and aboriginals are becoming increasingly frustrated by lack of progress.

While a recent survey shows a slim majority of Canadians think the Conservatives are doing a good job with the economy, most other areas get failing grades.

In short, the country is increasingly adrift while everyone in this Parliament is content to play partisan games instead of focusing on anything that really matters to the people paying the bills.

An election — the sooner, the better — would clear the air.



Off The Top

with Jim Mason

A little knowledge served up with your madness

Heading downtown for a little madness tonight?

Moonlight Madness that is, as in the bargain festival that merchants in the Stouffville Business Improvement Area put on every August.

This isn't Mardi Gras, but there will probably be a few sightings of pyjama-clad people.

This is wholesome family entertainment.

Jumping castles, guitar bands and ice cream cones kind of fun.

But, beyond the good deals from local merchants, you can also pick up information on your hometown.

Think you know this place? Maybe not.

This isn't the Stouffville of the 1980s. Back then, there were women's institutes, Friday night square dances and livestock auctions.

The single arena pad was a barn and the only swimming pool was outdoors.

Fast forward 25 years and the inventory of facilities and community groups has had a major makeover.

Sure, there are still standbys, including the Masonic lodge, Canadian Cancer Society and the Music Mania variety show.

But, we've also added a swim team, municipal transit and a partnership with a community in Tanzania.

A curling club could be next. All of the above will be featured at a community information fair being run in conjunction with Moonlight Madness tonight.

You can talk to representatives from 7 to 10 p.m. in Civic Square.

That's right in front of Nineteen on the Park, the municipal arts centre under construction in the heart of downtown.

Another one to add to the inventory.

See you there.

Jim Mason is editor of the Stouffville Sun-Tribune.

Letters to the Editor

Donations make difference for kids

Re: Kids will benefit from \$20,000 challenge, June 28.

The Jennifer Ashleigh Children's Charity exceeded its goal for Richard's Challenge with the help of some wonderful donors.

Thanks to everyone who responded to our request for assistance with our funding shortfall. We received more than \$34,000 in donations and, together with Richard's \$20,000 in matching funds, we have a grand total of \$53,000.

An amazing donation of \$15,000 from Don and Maris Anderson in Stouffville put us over the top.

Our most sincere thanks goes to Richard Muir and the Muir family for their generous support to the children of our charity. They have been long-time supporters of our charity and really stepped up to the plate this time when the need arose.

A parent recently wrote to us, "I want to take this moment to thank you for making a huge difference in the quality of my own life and my son's life. As a single mom with a disabled child, life has been challenging, but, recently, when I suffered from complicated health issues, the extra respite care your charity provided made a world of difference. I was able to get treatment I needed while my son was in trusted care that also helped with his developmental needs."

It was so nice to be able to hire an experienced respite worker who could help with Eric's autism and behavioral program. I can't thank you enough for helping me get through a tough time. It's so wonderful to know caring donors can make such a difference. I can only hope to one day help in this way as well. My son and I thank you."

HAVE YOUR SAY, WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

► What do you think of this issue or others?
E-mail letters to the editor to jmason@yrmg.com

The challenge that remains, however, is that this relief will last about three months before the waiting list starts to build again. This is the trend that we have been experiencing lately.

We are actively looking at new sources of funding; workplace donations, grants, other groups and individuals to help us raise funds. If you can offer assistance in any way, please call our office at 852-1799 x26 or e-mail generalmail@jenash.org

What we are experiencing is part of the natural cycle of growth for the charity, as more and more families become aware of us. We are working hard to meet those needs.

The good news is donors continue to tell us they give to JACC because we are unique, provide a necessary service to families and can do it quickly and with no barriers.

Thank you for answering our call for help. Your donations are appreciated more than you will ever know. And to quote our founder, Norm Clements, "You will always get more than you give".

JANE SLEEP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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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