

**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,
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OPINION

Editorial

Don't bring swine flu to work

Will you get the H1N1 vaccination? Mass H1N1 vaccination clinics are being set up across the country, with Health Canada ordering 50 million doses of the vaccine. British Columbia is this country's hot spot for swine flu cases, but in Ontario, as of Oct. 14, 25 deaths were confirmed, with 388 discharged cases and 19 people still in hospital.

Yet against that backdrop, apparently most Ontarians have decided not to get vaccinated. A Canadian Press Harris-Decima public opinion poll this month found only one-third of Canadians plan to roll up their sleeves for a swine flu shot, a decrease from 45 per cent as recently as August.

Confusion and fear are likely causes for this drop in the number of people wanting protection from a disease whose impact can range from mild symptoms to weeks on a ventilator and, yes, even death.

Pregnant women have the most serious dilemma and will want to discuss any risks to themselves and their unborn babies with their doctors.

Health officials stress the vaccine is safe and all Canadians wishing protection from H1N1 should be vaccinated.

Yes, it's true that in 1976, when 40 million people were vaccinated against swine flu in the United States, a few contracted the rare Guillain-Barre syndrome and 30 died. But the rear elimination of dreaded and deadly diseases such as polio, diphtheria and rubella has been accomplished by mass vaccinations, which all carry a tiny percentage of risk.

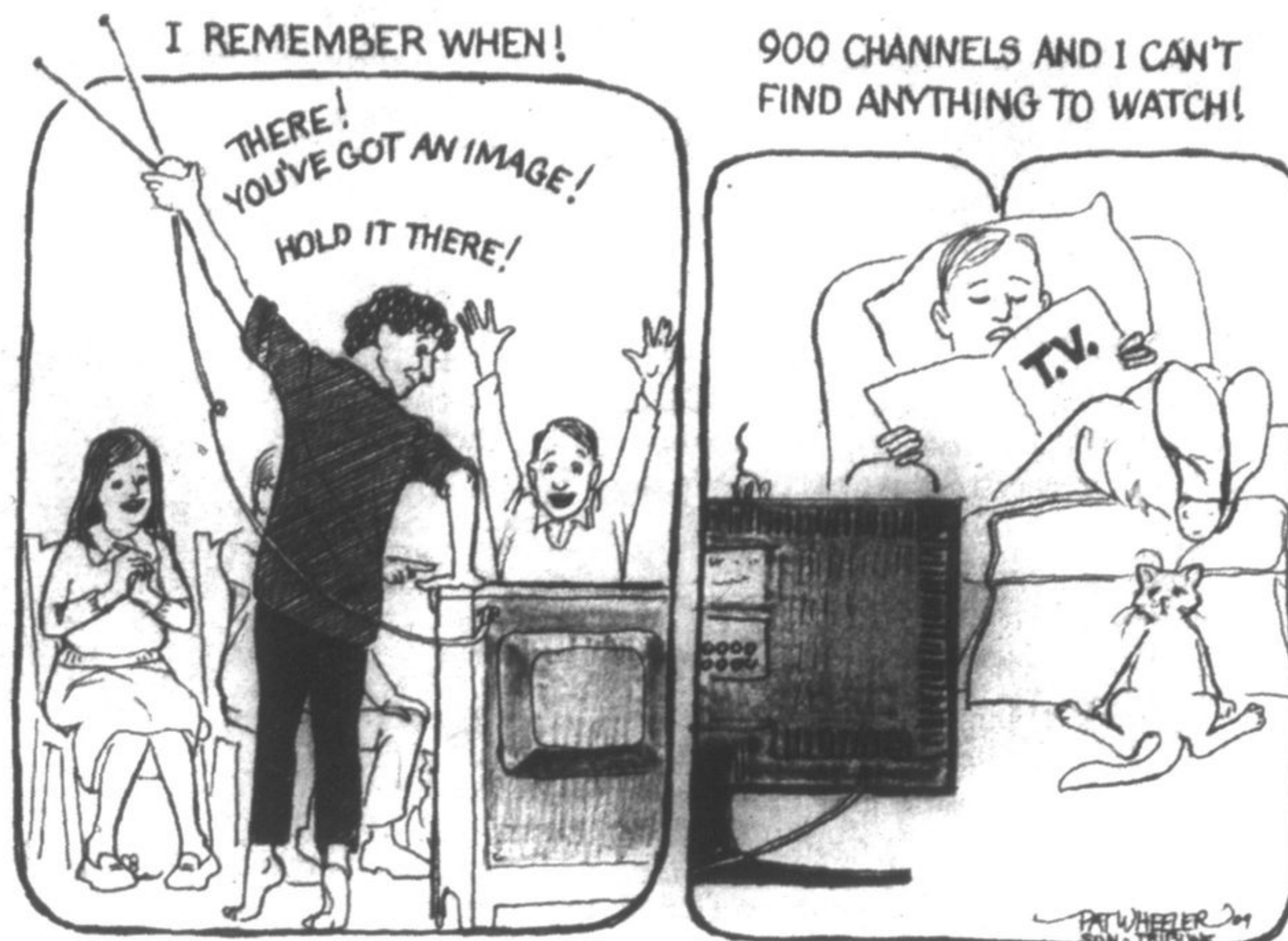
It's a personal decision, but there are other aspects of H1N1 response that aren't personal, but are a collective social responsibility.

Employers have the highest responsibility. Employers have a responsibility to let workers know if they have swine flu symptoms — especially if they have been diagnosed by a doctor as having H1N1 — they should not come to work.

Caring employers throughout York Region should let their employees know, if they're sick, don't come to work and spread germs. Those who can work from home should be encouraged to do so.

It may not be life and death to you, but if you bring swine flu to the office, the person in the next cubicle could bring it home to his pregnant wife, elderly parent or sickly baby.

If you haven't got a flu plan at your workplace, ask your boss what the plans are and what responsible actions you should take if you or a family member are diagnosed with H1N1.



Letters to the Editor

Supporting our merchants will keep Stouffville special

My family and I have just celebrated — and I truly mean celebrated — the second anniversary of our move to Stouffville.

From the moment we began looking at potential homes, my wife, children and I felt genuinely welcomed by the people of this community. It is the sense of being part of somewhere special that will make one want to ensure this place continues to be, indeed, special.

The merchants and service providers in Stouffville have been instrumental in instilling these strong sentiments we hold.

From the fantastic women with Welcome Wagon, who were at our home mere days after we took up residence, to the wonderful people at the many restaurants and shops, each of you have made us feel not only welcome but wanted. I know this to be true for so many of my fellow newly minted Stouffvillites, as well.

That is why I am taking the time to write this letter to urge all new residents, and not so new to make conscious efforts to support our local merchants and service providers.

Recently, I was very dismayed with the decisions of many of the new homeowners in my development regarding the installation of property fences.

While a number of qualified companies from the area gave competitive quotes, most chose to go with a firm from Toronto that was a few cents cheaper per running foot.

The net benefit to Stouffville was zero.

No wood, no fasteners, no local workers... In short, nothing.

They came, took and went back to Toronto and left nothing.

I want to thank my neighbours who chose to go local, as well as Ron Schell of Schell Lumber, who graciously extended a discount on all supplies purchased from his operation for the fences in our development.

I urge everyone, new or not, to support our merchants and service providers. The next time you take your kid to the pool for a swim or the arena for a skate or to catch a game, think about who helped make these services and facilities available to you.

It sure wasn't some fly-by-nighter from parts unknown.

LAWRIE YAKABUSKI
STOUFFVILLE

Thanks to residents who appreciated recycling depot

A thank-you to those who used the Stouffville recycling depot during the almost 14 years I volunteered there.

No matter the weather, the depot was open. On a cold and blustery day, a man came in.

"What are you doing on a day like this?" he said. "Why are you here?"

I was there because no matter the weather, residents came by to drop off their recyclables.

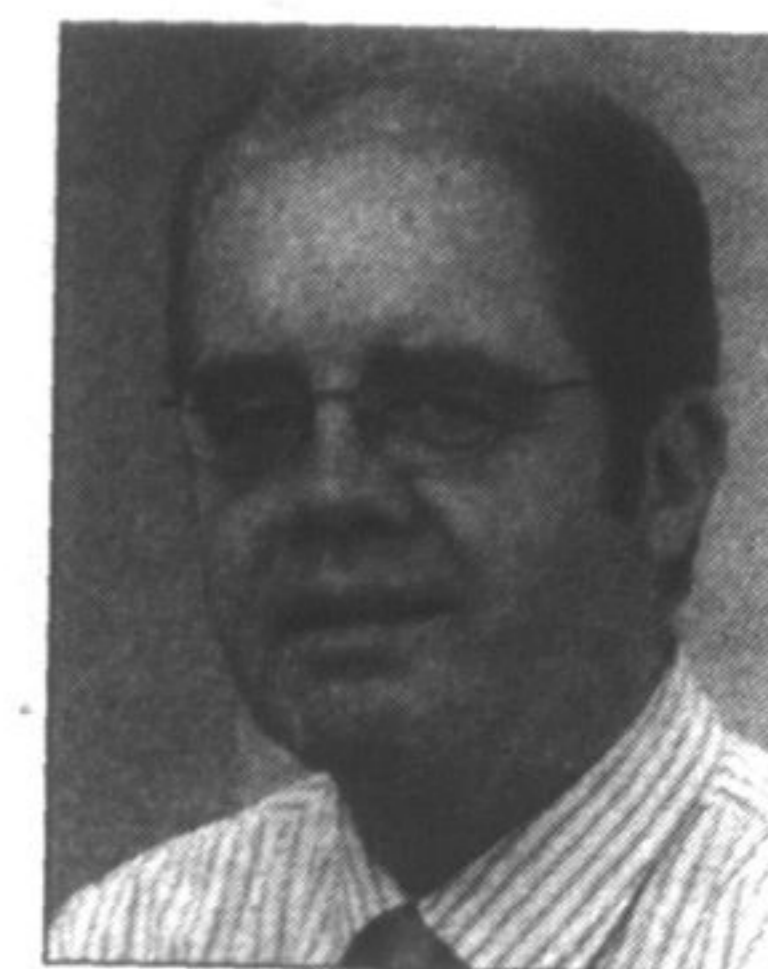
Thanks to those who appreciated us enough to give us \$20 one day. We turned it into hot drinks for the volunteers.

Others dropped off cookies and candies. I was handed cups of coffee, muffins, honey, jam, chili sauce, maple syrup and thank you cards.

With the depot closed, I've had to find things to do with my time.

I won't miss the cold days in the unheated depot.

DOROTHY WAGG
STOUFFVILLE



Off The Top

with Jim Mason

Sex, drugs, monkeys and the gift of life

There were lots of questions about sex.

And other queries about monkeys, needles, the family dentist, my collection of tattoos and piercings and time misspent in Africa. And more delving into my sex life.

Not some phone-in show on Showcase to follow Kenny vs Spenny or my latest appearance on Dr. Phil. I was donating the gift of life.

Leaving a pint behind at the blood donor clinic at Latcham Hall in Stouffville this month.

If we're still in confessional mode, I hadn't done it in 10 years. Donate blood, that is. I got out of the Friday-night donation routine.

I attempted a donation one night, but couldn't give up two hours of waiting and donating time.

You can now donate by appointment, Canadian Blood Services told me over the phone. It's a lot like getting the oil changed in the SUV, but with a lot more questions.

And that's understandable, given this country's history of tainted blood. Add AIDS and HIV to the mix and this isn't your parents donating blood in 1965, kids.

Either someone has done an amazing job of public relations training with staffers or I hit the jackpot at the last clinic.

Gone was the CSI-like grilling I wrote about in the late 1990s. By the end of that clinic, I was ready to admit to being paid with drugs to have sex in prison with an ex-prostitute freshly back from a malaria-infested country. A chimpanzee may have been involved.

The folks at Latcham Hall were professional, yet friendly and caring. The background music was a nice touch. The cookies and juice served up by the Richardson Lodge Masons hit the spot. If they had turned down the lights a tad, I could have got in my daily nap.

I'll be back, appointment in hand.
Jim Mason is editor of The Sun-Tribune.