

Sun-Tribune

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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

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Editorial

Women, minorities deserve better

Our governments look nothing like our country.

Women make up more than half of Canada's population, yet less than a quarter of our MPs are females.

Visible minorities account for 16 per cent of Canada's population, but the Public Policy Forum identifies just 7.8 per cent of MPs as non-white.

This isn't just a problem in federal politics. In Ontario, women won 30 of the 107 seats in the last provincial election and visible minorities currently have just 11 seats. In municipal politics, just 23 per cent of mayors and councillors across the country are women.

Why? Are there systemic barriers keeping women and visible minorities out of government or are they simply less interested in politics?

Newmarket-Aurora MP Lois Brown is tackling the issue as a member of the federal committee for the status of women, whose goals include promoting women in leadership and democracy. It's important to create an awareness of or get girls involved in politics early, Ms Brown said.

But it's the electoral process itself that may be keeping many women and members of visible minorities from getting elected.

Women for Fair Voting is one group advocating for electoral reform to increase female representation in government. It says proportional representation electoral systems result in more women getting elected.

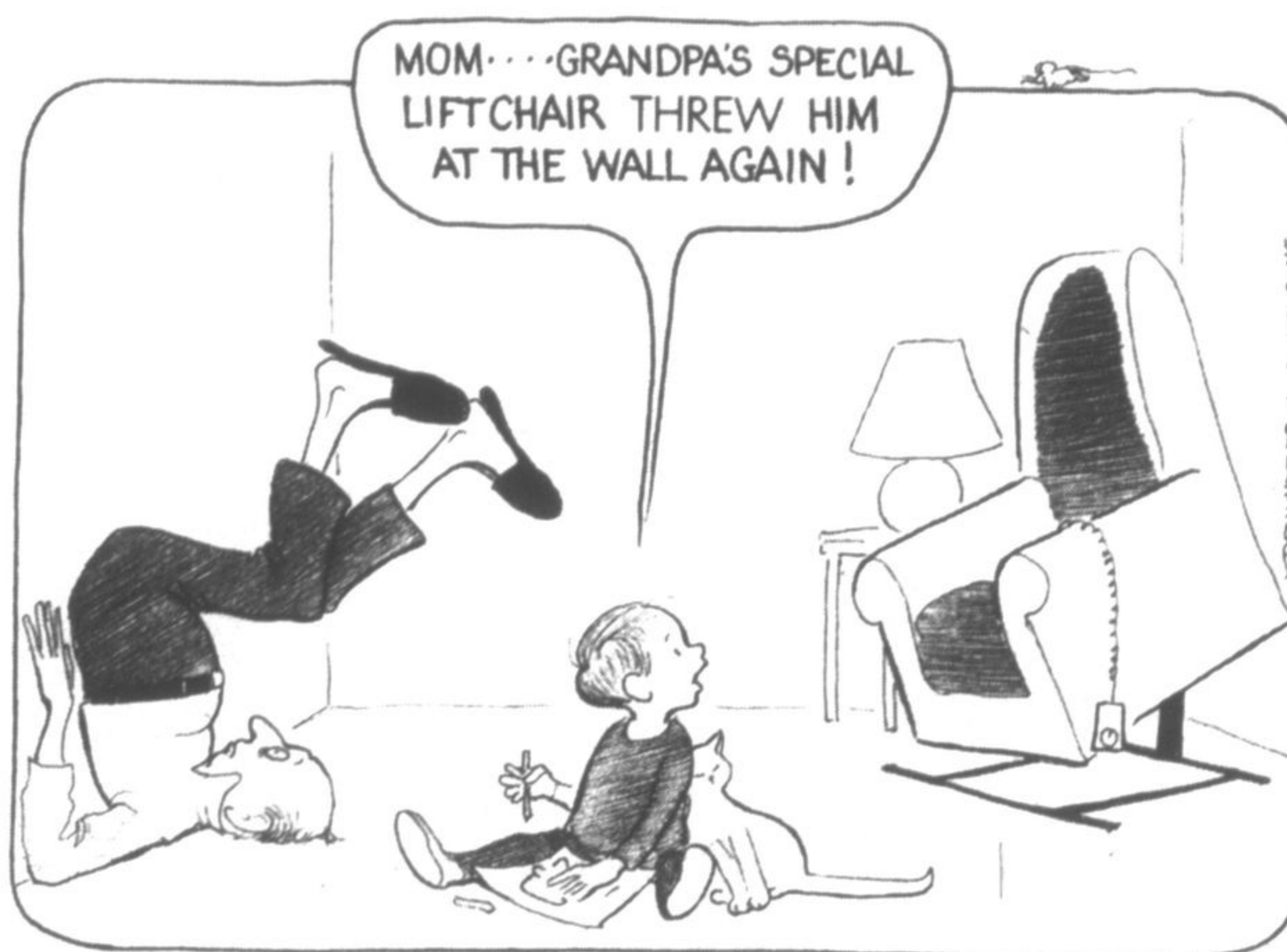
In these systems, parties win seats based on the popular vote, rather than individual riding results. Each party produces a candidates list and the number of candidates from the list who get seats is based on how much of the popular vote the party receives.

As of 2003, the top 10 nations in the world in terms of female representation in government used proportional representation systems. Canada ranked 36th and is down to 46th today — behind both Afghanistan and Iraq.

Endorsing proportional representation system doesn't mean candidates should be elected simply because of their gender or colour of their skin. Skills, experience and capabilities are still important qualifications.

Our governments need to determine why women and minority groups are less represented in the political process by asking them directly, then take action on the most common answers.

Based on results from other countries, one thing the status of women committee should be recommending is a switch to a proportional representation system.



Letters to the Editor

Clipper complex critics should build perfect rink - in Uxbridge

Re: Stouffville's new arena no winner: visitor, letter to the editor by Cheryl Parker Feb. 20, and Rink users unimpressed, letter to the editor by Denise Kovac, Feb. 27.

Cheryl Parker of Uxbridge said she could only see three quarters of a game at the Stouffville Clippers Sports Complex.

Did she arrive after the first period or go to the Stouffville Arena by mistake?

Denise Kovac's comments are very similar.

Bottom line, if you are seated on either side of any rink and the play is along the boards in front of you, there is no way you can see the puck.

If and when the Township of Uxbridge decides to build a new arena, it won't need architects or consultants. I'm sure Ms Parker and Ms Kovac could design the perfect arena.

I have three words for Cheryl Parker: stay in Uxbridge.

GERRY MCGUCKIN
STOUFFVILLE

Protect pets from coyotes

Re: Wild side, photograph, March 11.

It is nice to see the wildlife Elizabeth Johnston caught on camera near the Aurora Road and railway tracks is well and thriving in our forests.

Last summer, we saw two coyotes in the York Regional Forest between Kennedy Road and Warden Avenue. The animal in the photograph may have been one of those two.

Several friends have reported a pack of coyotes in the regional forest between Ninth Line and Hwy. 48 during the past year.

A pack of coyotes was roaming

HAVE YOUR SAY, STOUFFVILLE

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

through Ballantrae Golf and Country Club in the middle of the night, letting out their distinct howl last January.

A word of warning to those who use these forests or live near them: small cats and dogs are a coyote's delightful dinner.

It would be wise to keep your pets on a good leash or under close control while in these areas. With the coming of spring, coyotes love to add to their diet of squirrels and mice.

ROSS CAISTER
STOUFFVILLE

'Momentous occasion' missed

On March 11, Canada finally announced its ratification of the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, a historic moment if there ever was one.

No pictures, not even a word in the Toronto Star. No mention that night on the CBC national news. Little or no coverage to be seen or heard anywhere of this announcement in New York by the Canadian government.

This momentous occasion barely created a ripple in the media, let alone a splash.

Evidently, it has left Canada speechless.

SAL AMENTA
STOUFFVILLE



Off The Top

with Jim Mason

Taking attendance for all of us

There's a rule, written or otherwise, that reads after accepting a job we should show up regularly.

Especially if we want to get paid and continue to be employed.

Sure, most of us have used a sick day or two during the years. And vacation time is there to be blown through to recharge the batteries and reconnect with family.

Which brings us to reporter Sandra Bolan's story in last Thursday's Sun-Tribune on attendance by the mayor and councillors who make up town council.

In the last 3-1/2 years, councillors have turned in a wide array of attendance. Some numbers were on the verge of shocking.

Granted, some councillors have day jobs, making it sometimes awkward answering to two bosses. Then again, they knew this when they ran for office.

Didn't they? I recall a flustered and freshly elected councillor in the 1990s asking me if I knew council sometimes met during the day. Yes, I did. He didn't.

Perhaps we should keep attendance figures for taxpayers and candidates, too?

It's easy to slam a council decision or eviscerate a councillor from the two minutes of wisdom you picked up from one of your cronies at Country Style or Tim Hortons this morning.

We know few care about municipal politics unless council is opening a nuclear plant or strip club in their back yard. Thus, the rows of empty seats at most meetings.

And how many council hopefuls have attended council and committee meetings before throwing their hat in the ring? It's a good question when a candidate lands on your doorstep this fall.

Voters get to decide in Oct. 25's election if it's really important.

Jim Mason is editor of The Sun-Tribune.