

Sun-Tribune

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**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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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Words being twisted

Re: Pool could become accessible water park, Jan. 13

I would like to clarify the intent of the save the outdoor pool delegation as it appears to have been twisted by some folks and taking on a political spin that is entirely incorrect.

After reading the article with the quote "the project will consist of closing and replacing the outdoor pool with a multi-feature splash pad...", a group of community residents gathered to save a community asset as it appeared we were losing it to a less-desired option. There was no mention of a pool tank in the article.

The intent of the delegation and the more than 1,200 residents who signed the petition were not to deny anyone access nor to discuss the requirements of a second indoor pool rather just simply a request to preserve a community resource.

I request council and the mayor discontinue misleading, misinforming and misrepresenting the delegation's intent.

senting the delegation's intent.

DAWN VAN-SICKLE
STOUFFVILLE

Name of new school elementary - Watson

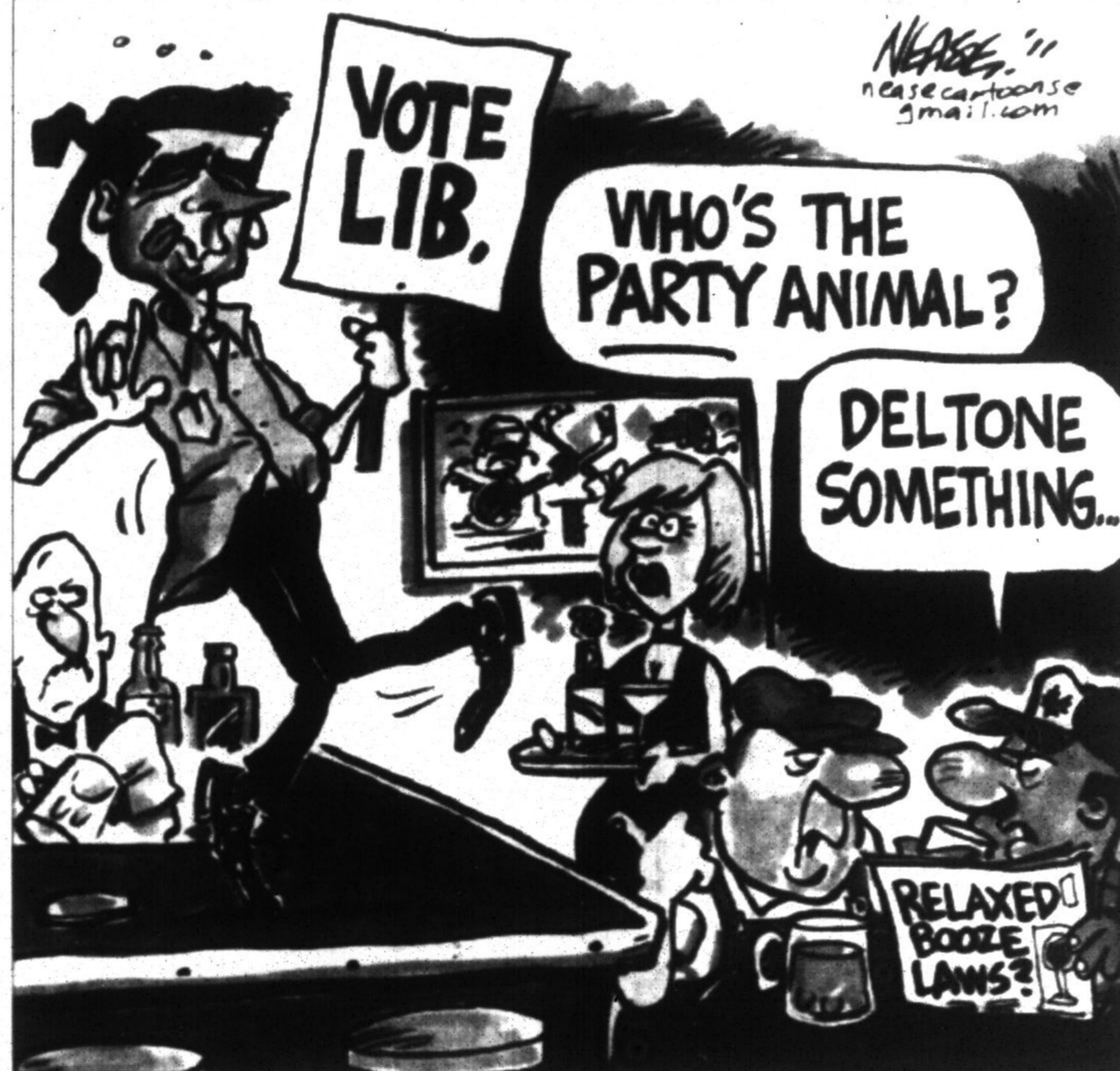
I am submitting the name Cedric Watson School for the school being built on the Tenth Line south of Main Street.

In 1925, I started at Stouffville Public School with Mr. Watson as principal. He remained as such until 1956 when one of his former students, Lorne Boadway, took over the position.

Cedric was raised on a 50-acre farm on Tenth Line south of 19th Avenue. Later, he bought property at the corner of Main Street and Tenth Line and grew crops. It became the first housing development in the east end, the Watson Subdivision.

I've always had great respect for Mr. Watson as a man and teacher.

FLOYD FORSYTH
STOUFFVILLE



Hockey goalies, smokers always under attack

The summer between Grade 7 and 8, a friend of mine got his hands on some cigarettes and he and I and another kid went up into an ancient tree fort we used to hang out in on a vacant lot and smoked.

I took one puff, choked, then finally inhaled. The pleasant sensation people talked about? It was as if someone had fired a flame-thrower into my lungs. My head spun and I almost puked.

So this is what smoking is all about, I told myself. Think I'll pass.

It didn't really occur to me that maybe it gets easier to smoke the more you do it — just that this was one god-awful experience and one of the great mysteries of adult behaviour that seemed to be prevalent in those days on my street — right up there with drinking Black Label beer or growing big honkin' sideburns.

It was August and I was trying out for a hockey team and there was a try-out later that afternoon.

I was so concerned my dad would smell smoke on me on the way to the rink I went home and took a shower.

"Why are you showering before hockey?" my father said, stepping into the washroom to see what was up.

"Well, I, uh, before hockey? I have a hockey practice? Oh, BEFORE my hockey practice. Ya, well, um..."

I was a goalie and I guess he was



Bernie O'Neill

learning goalies are weird.

At the practice, which featured a lot of AAA players perfecting their slap shots, a puck came up under my blocker and broke a bone in my hand.

My trip home included a stopover at the hospital for x-rays and a cast.

"Good thing you took that shower before your practice," my mother said, approvingly, as if any smart young hockey player would be aware a broken hand was a possibility or that I had this premonition that my hand was about to be broken and my hockey career was about to have a setback.

But at least the skin under my cast would be nice and clean and less stinky than it would have been had I not showered my pathetic self, a supposed athlete who smoked at age 13 and took a mid-afternoon shower to hide it from

his parents.

Did I ever feel bad about the whole thing. We were Catholics and it was as if God had paid me back for my behaviour, in quick fashion, with a busted hand, the same one that had held the cigarette.

Despite this traumatic introduction to smoking, that one might think would scare me off cigarettes for life, I did actually smoke when I was off at university. I couldn't really tell you why, other than that people I thought were cool smoked. I liked them and wanted to be their friends, so I smoked, too.

I also quit when I was still in my 20s and feel thankful I was able to do so.

I wouldn't want to be a smoker today. Similar to the goalie in a hockey game, they are a minority that seems to be under constant attack.

Over the years we've seen them lose their privileges bit by bit, butt by butt.

I can remember, after I had quit smoking, seeing hospital patients standing outside in winter in their odd hospital gowns, IVs at their sides. I could only think, "Can they not provide a room for these poor people to smoke? I mean, they're addicted. And now they're ill. Where's the compassion?"

Smoking was eventually banned in workplaces and public buildings, restaurants and bars. Recently it became illegal to smoke in a car that had anyone 16 or younger as a passenger.

The region is now pushing ever tougher anti-smoking laws that would prohibit smoking near soccer fields or ball diamonds, walking trails or bus stops, or even outdoor uncovered restaurant patios.

Part of me thinks that this is going too far and that someone smoking outdoors only harms himself. But smokers seem to lose at every turn and I'm sure these bylaws will pass.

(Whitchurch-Stouffville council rejected the regional request Tuesday. Instead, it will send letters to groups that use its sports fields, asking them to refrain from smoking.)

Eventually some politician will want to stop you from smoking a cigar on your own porch. And then they'll want to stop you from eating red meat or putting salt on your food or riding a motorcycle or going downhill skiing or playing hockey or doing anything else that adds spice to your life but where you might do harm to yourself.

It used to be fashionable to stand up for the principle that government should not be butting into our lives, unless what we are doing is really hurting others. That way of thinking has gone up in smoke.

Stouffville resident Bernie O'Neill is a York Region Media Group editor