

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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OPINION

Editorial

Stop playing games, politicians

Who won? Who lost?
Who cares?

Tuesday night's federal leaders debate barely touched on the issues that matter to most Canadian voters.

It was a tightly scripted, predictable mud-slinging fest that did little to engage voters who tuned in with the hope of getting a better idea of where the parties stand on important issues.

Media coverage and party chest-thumping the next day simply focused on who won, who lost, who scored — like it was a sporting event. Who but the hyper-partisan cares? How does that help voters who don't consider sticking to a script and an ability to put your opponents in the worst possible light as leadership qualities?

In fact, most of the campaign coverage has consisted of media running around after the party leaders, rotely repeating their scripted comments, meekly accepting that because they say it, then it must be an issue. Poll after poll are trotted out, as if it matters to anybody but them, pollsters and pundits.

All in all, it wrongly reinforces the idea an election campaign is a leadership popularity contest, rather than an opportunity to have wide-ranging discussions about the issues that interest and concern Canadians.

Yes, we are concerned about the economy. A Harris-Decima poll reports 59 per cent of Canadians think the country is still in a recession. Unemployment is at 8 per cent (it was 6 per cent in 2008), leaving 1.4 million people out there pounding the pavement to find jobs.

But we're also concerned about the massive, crippling debt the government has gifted our children.

And what about the health care system of which we could once be proud?

We're concerned about the state of our communities: Affordable housing is hard to find and poverty rates continue to grow annually.

These issues need to be addressed in a focused and legitimate manner by all parties.

We're asking you not to give up. With only a few more weeks until the May 2 election, there's still time to engage your local candidates. Call, e-mail, drop by campaign offices or attend a local election debate. And you can also help us give you the election coverage you need by sending us your letters, questions and concerns.

Let's look our politicians in the eye and tell them to stop playing the political game and focus on what matters to us.

Stouffville
Sun-Tribune

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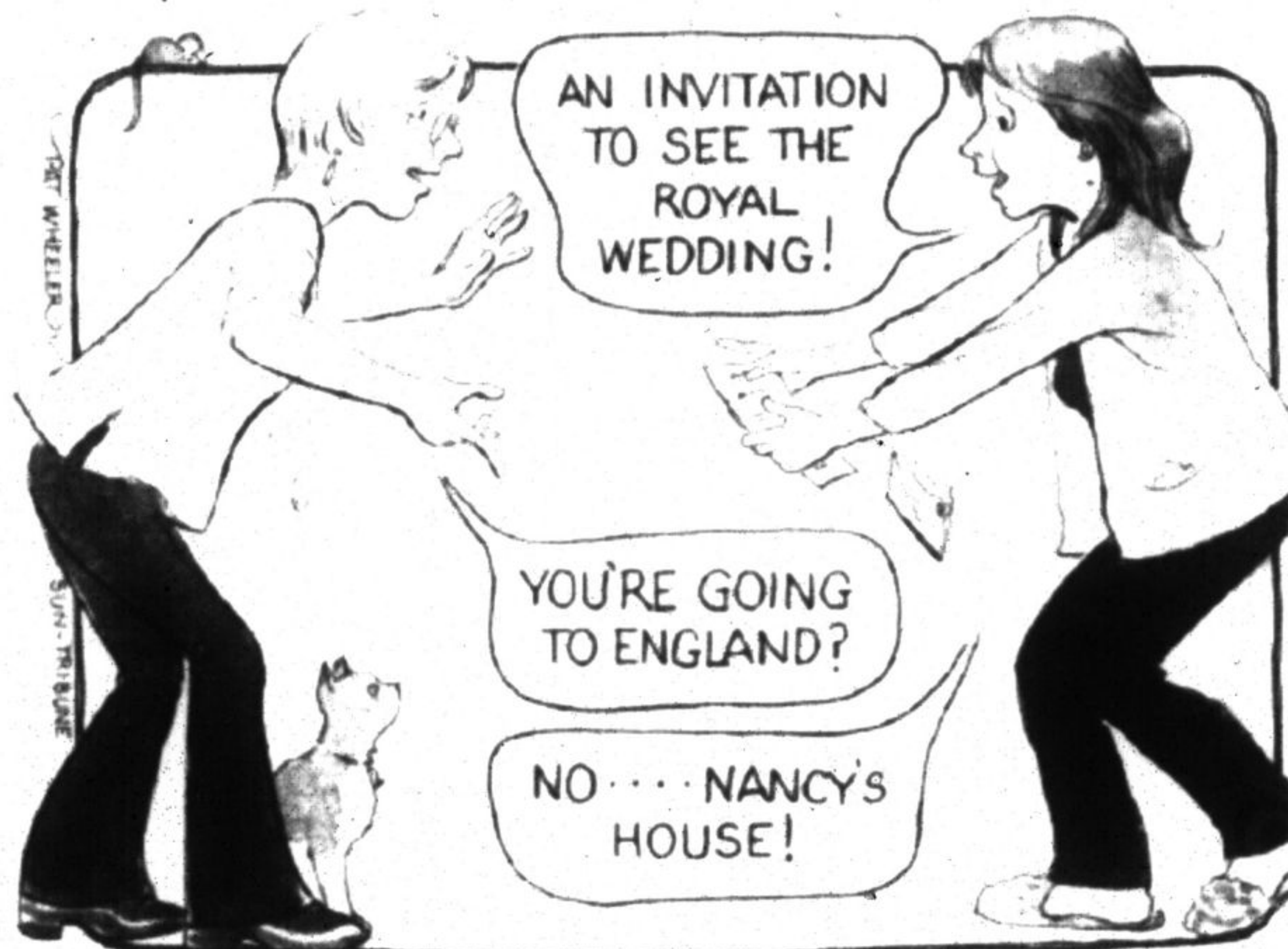
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Letters to the Editor

Small crowd for amazing show

We attended a wonderful concert by the Classical Cabaret at the Lebovic Centre for Arts and Entertainment - Nineteen on the Park April 3.

The sad thing was there were only about a dozen people there. Ticket prices were about one third of what you would pay in Toronto, plus the parking was free.

I only hope they will come back sometime and more people will take advantage of this wonderful opportunity to hear this amazing talent.

GLADYS CYBRUCH
STOUFFVILLE

Tales from our traffic circles

Spring is here, so now we can use our brand new Tenth Line to its full potential. Unfortunately, there are too many people who back on to the road who think it was widened to give them more driveway parking.

More important than that, however, is the fact few residents seem to know how to use a traffic circle or roundabout. To simplify, you yield in and signal out. That means you look left, and if no one is in the circle, you cautiously keep going.

You don't stop and look both ways (that blows the whole idea of "yield"). If you are in the circle, you have the right of way. You don't stop to let traffic in, they are yielding to you.

On top of that, Canadians seem to have lost the ability to use their turn signals. What the big deal is I do not know. It is such a small effort for a potential big return (no accident). Once you are in the circle, you put on your right signal to exit.

I cannot count the number of times I have sat, stopped, let's say southbound, waiting for a line of traffic in the circle to cross in front of me and every one

has exited to the north without signaling. I can't go, I'm yielding.

Eventually the circle clears and I yield in and then signal right to exit, and then have to swerve to avoid the car parked on someone's auxiliary driveway.

ROBERT GREENWOOD
STOUFFVILLE

Prayer breakfast talks hockey

We would like to say thank you to the Stouffville Spirit for the entertaining and excellent playoff hockey they provided for our community this year. Your performance and effort gave us a rallying point and the spirit of Stouffville, as a community was alive and well and enjoyed by hundreds at the arena and hundreds more who read about it.

Our eighth annual Community of Whitchurch-Stouffville Prayer Breakfast hopes to have special appeal to you, the vibrant hockey community of all ages in Stouffville and all residents.

Our speaker is Mike Gartner, a Hockey Hall of Famer, a big-time scorer and member of several NHL teams, including the Toronto Maple Leafs. Mr. Gartner was introduced to the Christian faith during his playing days. He is involved with Hockey Ministries International, Teen Ranch and his local church here in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Great music will be provided by Stouffville's Lloyd Knight.

A full breakfast will be provided at Station Creek Golf Club, 12657 Woodbine Ave., May 19 at 7 a.m. The program will be from 7:30 a.m. until 9 a.m. sharp. Tickets are \$20 from myself (905-642-3632), Ann Pride (905-640-3361), any committee member or Candlelight and Memories on Main Street.

DENNIS SEELEY
WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE



Off The Top

with Jim Mason

All signs point to Huntsville

I'm a big fan of downtown Stouffville.

And not only because I've worked in the heart of it for much of the last 29 years. It just feels like home. Back in 1982, our downtown core had one traffic light, which interestingly enough wasn't even at an intersection.

It was much more Mayberry, R.F.D., than Yorkville T.O., with hardware stores, an IGA, clothing shops and many of the retailers you still shop at. All we wanted for was Barney Fife and an empty jail cell.

Things change. Regional malls open and expand. Big box power centres are found on the outskirts of even the smallest towns now, most sporting an eerily similar menu of national cellphone sellers, sub shops, dollar stores and some of our land's largest retail giants.

Downtowns stay. Some shrink and crumble at their edges. Some reinvent themselves (see the much-ballyhooed Unionville and Port Perry).

Our family was in downtown Huntsville (Ontario, not Alabama) last weekend for the first time in 13 years. It was a magnificent setting, with water rushing under the bridge, birds chirping and the first spring sun drenching the main drag — just down Brunel Road from the spectacular GB gift of an arena that's so in the news.

Huntsville has done something downtown Stouffville has been told to do since the 1980s — get rid of backlit signs in favour of wooden signage that's flat to a store's facade. Simply, it's a classy, throw-back look that still has plenty of variety and colour.

To our town's credit, it, too, is moving in this direction, with resistance from some quarters. Lit signs remain and new businesses take advantage of grandfathering, leaving us with a mix of both worlds.

Downtown Stouffville is doing cool things, including Stouffvilicious, the Park Drive farmers market and music on Main. If we need another good idea, all signs point to Huntsville.

Jim Mason is editor of The Sun-Tribune.