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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.

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# OPINION

Stouffville  
**Sun-Tribune**

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## Editorial

### Hydro, eHealth front, centre

If the provincial election was being held today, for whom would you vote?

First off, we're making a huge assumption you're voting Oct. 6.

The last Ontario election, in 2007, featured a record low for voter turnout, with 52.8 per cent of eligible voters going to the polls. The previous low was 54.7 per cent in 1923.

To draw more voters, the province has extended the number of voting days to 29 this year, including provisions for voting by mail.

We're not alone. The city clerk in Cambridge, Ont. said voter turnout is slipping across Canada, the United States, United Kingdom and France. His city is considering hiring a consultant in an attempt to increase voting for the 2014 municipal election.

Voter turnout was 29 per cent in last year's Cambridge vote. That's up from the 22 per cent in 2003, but far short of the 58.3 per cent in 1972.

If you want to encourage voting and/or swing the tide in an election, bring on a hot-button issue.

Simple as that. Just ask then-Conservative leader John Tory who probably lost the last provincial election over his plan to extend public funding to Ontario's faith-based schools.

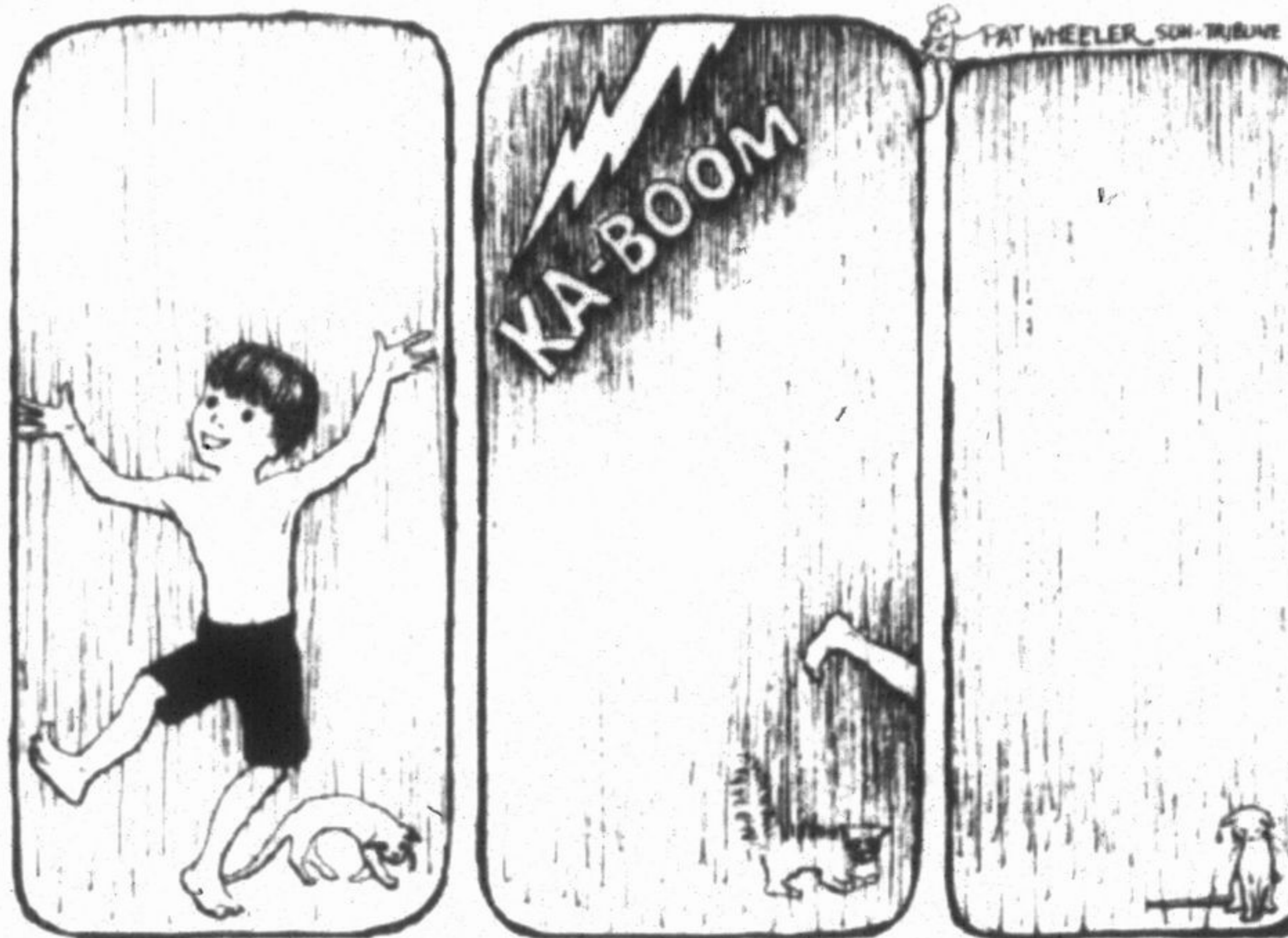
His successor, Tim Hudak, thinks he has the issues to sway voters to, not away from, the Tories this time. And the polls back him up. The Conservatives are at 42 per cent of decided voters compared to the Liberals at 31 per cent, according to Ipsos Reid results released last week.

Those Tory themes are sure to include hydro bills. Readers will recall Conservative MPPs holding near identical news conferences on the same spot on Main Street in downtown Stouffville to blast electricity rates and financing this year.

Same for the multi-million-dollar eHealth Ontario debacle. Voters aren't likely to forget the string of problems with the electronic health records agency.

At a Liberal conference in neighbouring Richmond Hill last weekend, Premier Dalton McGuinty mocked Mr. Hudak's headline-grabbing election promise to force prisoners to join work crews and the NDP Leader Andrea Horvath's vow to cap gas prices as short-sighted attempts to score votes.

Hardly big-time issues. But there are plenty of others set to be dredged up, dissected and discussed during the next 10 weeks.



## Letters to the Editor

### Saddened lake community should be proud of response

*Re: Drownings spook lake residents, July 21.*

I was walking by Musselman's Lake at the time of these tragic drownings. I heard all the sirens and listened as the helicopter searched well into the early morning.

More recently, I was in Stouffville when the sound of a siren – a fire truck rushing to its destination – caught me off guard. Suddenly my eyes filled with tears as the visceral memory of that evening surfaced. Many lives here have been deeply touched.

I had just read an article in the Globe and Mail (July 23) before going into town. "New Canadians at higher risk of drowning" was the headline.

Joan Ransberry said something similar in your article about other drownings here: "... they involved people from countries who were not accustomed to being around open bodies of water".

Prevention is key. However, providing information in different languages, as mentioned in the Globe article, is not enough. We are dealing with more than a translation issue. As Ms Ransberry mentioned, "It's cultural."

A while ago, a friend was helping an elementary school teacher try to arrange a field trip to a local pool. The Muslim girls and boys could not participate unless it was strictly all boys or all girls. Our community pools are co-ed.

I found myself wondering if cultural differences contributed to this tragic drowning. Is the segregation of boys and girls stopping them from learning to swim?

Are there similar observances with in other cultures with whom we share

### HAVE YOUR SAY, WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

► What do you think of these issues or others? E-mail letters to the editor to [jmason@yrmg.com](mailto:jmason@yrmg.com)

our lakes and land?

In Canada, we are very safety conscious. Any visit to a less-developed country is an eye-opener, including unsafe vehicles, no seatbelts, helmets, etc. It's a very different approach to injury prevention.

Water safety is easily addressed. Learn-to-swim and basic water safety instruction are achievable. We just have to figure out how to mainstream them. The sadness in the wake of a preventable tragedy like this reaches beyond cultural differences. It affects all of us.

So no, I don't think our lake is haunted. It's just a popular get-away spot for people to enjoy a bit of nature.

It is sad here right now as our community shares in the loss of two young girls who had their lives ahead of them. But we also share a sense of comfort in knowing that we care and tried to help the best we could. I am proud of how our community responded.

M. KEYS  
MUSSELMAN'S LAKE

You can read letters, columns and stories from The Sun-Tribune on [yorkregion.com](http://yorkregion.com)



### Off The Top

with Jim Mason

### No place for romance on roads

I don't get out much. But when I do, I seem to see the craziest things on our roads.

And not just those many motorists who apparently missed the memo that handheld phoning and texting have been illegal in Ontario for nearly two years.

I could fill any kind of quota simply ticketing folks driving by our Main Street office, their minds clearly on the people on the other end of their phones, not the folks about to jaywalk in front of them or that glowing red light ahead.

Hey, I've been known to sip on a cold water or hot coffee on longer-distance trips. If that's illegal, Dalton McGuinty, rip out my cup holder, ban me from the drive-through and throw me in jail.

But, I'm hoping the law is aimed more at the guy in the imported ragtop who passed me on Stouffville Road last month, as he all but made love to his breakfast sandwich.

It was a different kind of action in full view on the way home from Aurora Sunday. The barely dressed couple on the motorcycle took full advantage of every second at what might be the longest red light in York Region history.

Hwy. 48 and Bloomington Road is also a very hectic and complex intersection, with its advanced greens, high speeds and multiple lanes. It's been the scene of too many collisions, including fatals.

The motorbikers didn't care. He reached back and touched her bare thighs. She leaned forward and reciprocated. They bonked helmets.

Cute, if this was a Harlequin romance novel and not blacktop reality.

Their dance of romance on two wheels was only halted by the green light, not someone suggesting they find suitable hotel accommodations.

Jim Mason is editor of The Sun-Tribune.