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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

Outdoor pool needs revisiting

Does the rejection of an application for a \$2.8-million grant to help pay for an outdoor water park in Stouffville Memorial Park change things up for Whitchurch-Stouffville council? It should.

The municipality was notified of the federal government's decision last month. No reason was provided as to why the application was denied.

In February, the town applied for a \$2.8-million grant from the federal government's enabling accessibility fund to help pay for a \$4.7-million water feature, which included an outdoor tank pool and water park, to be built adjacent to the Lebovic Leisure Centre in the downtown park.

That was after some heavy lobbying by users of the old outdoor pool in the same park. Now abandoned, the outdoor pool hasn't operated since the summer of 2010.

Expect the lobbying to ramp up again.

James Moffatt, who was a vocal member of the Save the Outdoor Pool committee, last week expressed his disappointment with the mayor and councillors because "all hopes of this water facility were banking on this grant".

He wants the town to look at fixing the old pool. But that's costly, too — between \$820,000 and \$980,000 — because the pool would have to be brought up to code.

A new tank pool is estimated to cost \$900,000.

At the same time in the same park, the indoor pool at the Lebovic Leisure Centre is very well used.

The facility has also seen its registration almost double, from 2,826 in 2002 to 4,612 last year.

At least one councillor thought it was too small when it opened. There's talk again of building a second indoor pool, probably at the Stouffville Clippers Sports Complex.

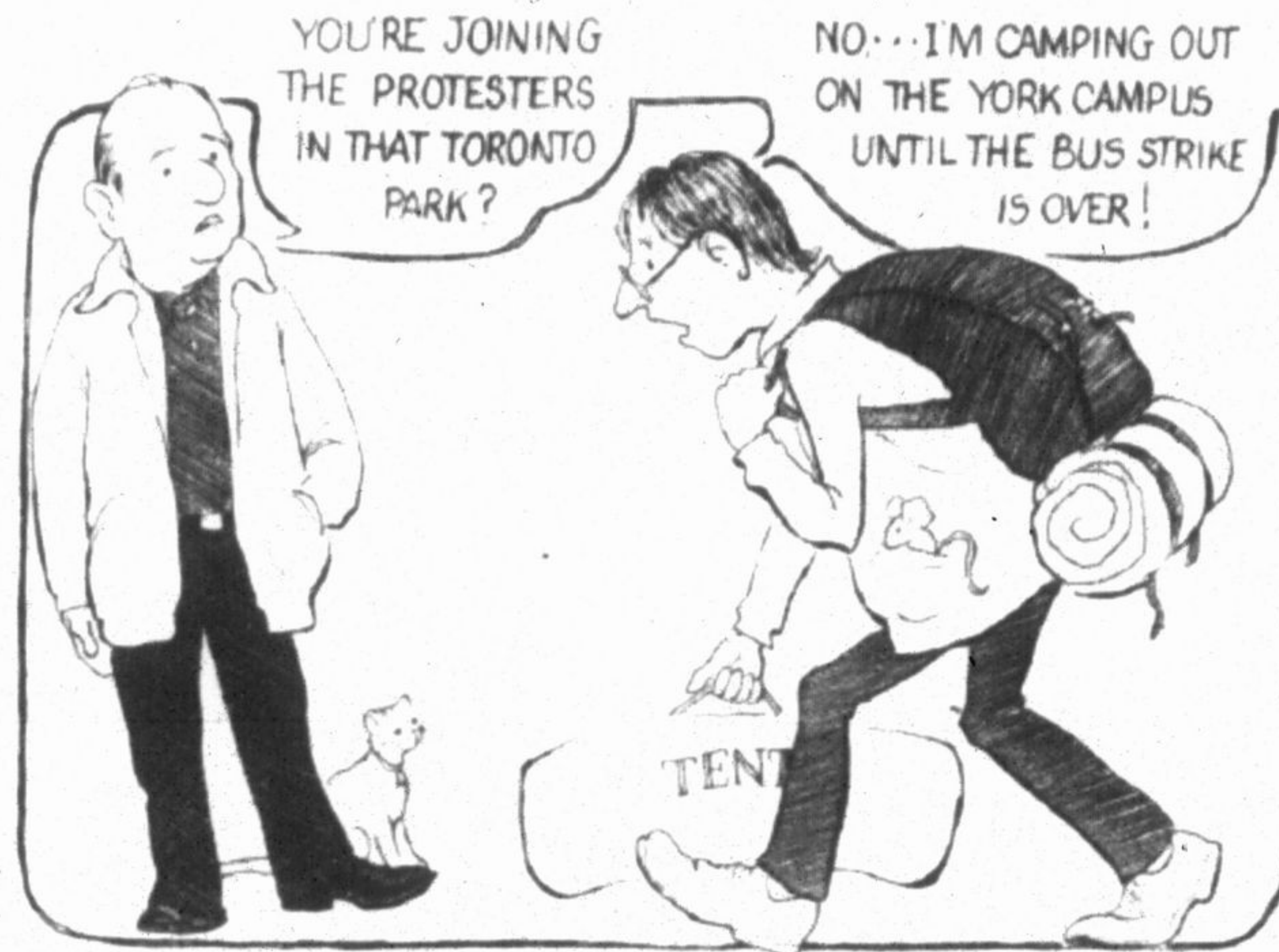
A report to council from the municipality's leisure services department regarding various go-forward options is expected some time next month.

Assuming the grant is gone, council should give serious consideration to abandoning the outdoor pool project and sinking its money into another indoor facility.

This is Canada. As nice as it is to swim outside, the outdoor pool was open for three months a year. We're talking a large investment for a short time period.

Is an indoor/outdoor pool, as seen at hotels in Ontario, a possibility for Whitchurch-Stouffville?

Over to you, councillors.



Letters to the Editor

Dairy farmer, right to choose your food deserves support

Michael Schmidt, a farmer in the Owen Sound area who has fought for years for the right to sell unpasteurized milk to informed and willing consumers, is currently on a hunger strike in a desperate effort to call attention to people's right to choose what they eat and drink.

My understanding is he will end his strike if Premier Dalton McGuinty agrees to meet with him. I have written a letter to Mr. McGuinty, asking him to honour Mr. Schmidt's request and listen to what he has to say.

Everything I have heard about Mr. Schmidt makes me think he is a thoughtful and honourable person and I think he deserves the respect of being able to tell the premier about his conviction, which is clearly of such vital importance to him that he is willing to risk his health, even his life, to defend it.

I, too, have long hoped one day I would be able to taste unpasteurized milk again, an easily available food during my childhood in Europe.

I truly believe the North American paranoia about any kind of microbe has done far more harm than good (antibiotic resistant bacteria and hospital superbugs being some of the scariest examples of this) and, based on current research evidence, it seems now abundantly clear it is time to abandon it.

Additionally, I feel that I and anyone else should have the right to make an informed and free choice whether I want my food treated by certain processing methods or not.

Of course, public health is an important concern and, of course, a farm such as Mr. Schmidt's should be

HAVE YOUR SAY, STOUFFVILLE

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

regularly inspected and tested — just as any other farm — to ensure his products are safe and healthful.

But in light of the inhumane and dangerous methods used by many large farming operations and many instances of contamination at such operations, it seems ludicrous to single out one farmer who wants to do something different and has taken due diligence to ensure he does it safely.

If you would like to contact Mr. McGuinty about this, he can be reached in the following ways:

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You can read letters, columns and stories from The Sun-Tribune on yorkregion.com



Off The Top

with Jim Mason

Bazaars deliver us back in time

The basements are lined with tables, covered with handmade items, home preserves and that catch-all, "kick-knacks".

The prices are reasonable, the causes most worthy, the coffee's hot and the kind words bottomless. The sweetest smell of all time, fresh baking, hangs in the air.

Greetings from your home town church bazaars.

'Tis the season.

There was one at St. James Presbyterian Saturday, Christ Church Anglican and Stouffville United will both hold theirs Nov. 12.

The following Saturday, it's EastRidge's turn as it hosts a sale in aid of the Stouffville Igoma Partnership.

There are twists, updates if you will, in the formats. Some are now called markets. Some of the crafts are more works of art than home-crafts.

There are auctions — pies for the Presbyterians and quilts at the United Church. Used books are big. So are children's areas and tea rooms.

They are all a throwback to a slower-paced Stouffville, when many of those mainline churches that dot our street corners were packed every Sunday. Church attendance in Canada has gone from 70 per cent of the population to 20 during the last 60 years. Nationally, churches are closing.

Unless you've been serving five years somewhere, you've noticed Stouffville has changed. A ton.

It's now more multicultural small city than the former WASPY small town. Not that there's anything wrong with that. It was inevitable. A little thing called progress paved its way.

Will the church bazaar survive through this century like it did the last? How about churches that host them?

Stay tuned.

Jim Mason is editor of The Sun-Tribune and an elder at St. James