

OPINION



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SATURDAY FORUM

Adding online voting a must to increase participation, council

Last week's Sun-Tribune article and editorial accurately captured the resistance to positive change Stouffville needs to improve voter participation.

By simply offering the option of voting from the comfort of home, municipalities like Whitchurch-Stouffville can boost voter turnout.

Known as secure Internet voting, electronic voting or e-voting, the process of participating in elections without leaving the comfort of home is an attractive option for many residents of Ontario municipalities.

Huntsville has recently seen voter turnout increase more than 50 per cent when the online option was offered. In 33 other cases, participation increased 4 to 20 per cent with no reported security breaches.

In this light, some of the councillors' comments are simply a result of FUD – fear, uncertainty and doubt – about a topic that they may not fully understand.

There is no doubt people want to have the option to vote by electronic means as long as the process is fair and secure. Hacking fears are simply not a legitimate argument against e-voting.

By using standard protection such as data encryption, safeguards against unauthorized activity and properly configured systems, Whitchurch-Stouffville will demonstrate it cares about its voters' preferences.

Every year, towns like ours show they are not willing to abandon disabled voters and those who live far from polling stations. People who prefer more convenient voting options can no longer be treated like spoiled children who should just get out there or be excluded because they may simply



Claudiu Popa

not come out.

This is not because residents are apathetic. They may have young families or other urgent matters. Besides, we're almost 1/6th of the way through the 21st century already. Let's get with the program!

Councillors should ask: What's the program? Here is a three-step process:

1. Select the best e-voting system you can afford;
2. Follow a standardized process for evaluating its security;
3. Carefully analyze statistical data to incrementally improve voter satisfaction.

If council is truly worried about electoral fraud, security breaches or privacy issues, then let me help.

Make a commitment to your constituents and I will work with the municipality to ensure you have secure systems, processes and data. Moreover, as part of a new resident e-voting awareness program, I will personally ensure that staff are properly trained and councillors are knowledgeable about the risks associated with e-voting.

Stouffville resident Claudiu Popa is a certified security and privacy professional, author, lecturer and president of a Toronto-based company that specializes in securing financial systems and health care data protection. He can be reached at Claudiu@SecurityandPrivacy.ca or on Twitter

Is there an issue about which you are passionate?
You could be a Saturday Forum contributor and get the chance to have your piece published along with your name and headshot. E-mail your 450-word submission to jmason@yrmg.com

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

More families need United Way's help

Re: United Way plan could bring services home to you, editorial, Aug. 29.

This message is welcome news for people in the Community Living movement who have seen more aging or ailing parents leaving their adult children at the doorsteps of service agencies because they can no longer care for them.

... more aging or ailing parents leaving their adult children at the doorsteps of service agencies because they can no longer care for them.

With aging baby boomers, the number of families desperately needing help with their intellectually disabled children is growing at an alarming rate, so we

HAVE YOUR SAY, STOUFFVILLE

► What do you think of these issues or any others?
E-mail jmason@yrmg.com

must hope that the United Way will help mitigate this serious problem by making more services available at the local level.

It is also to be hoped that MPP Christine Elliott's efforts to promote the work of a cross-party committee in the commons will soon bear fruit.

We need innovative ways of meeting families' dire needs when they arise, particularly through multi-ministry co-operation and funding.

SALVATORE (SAL) AMENTA
STOUFFVILLE

Community backed new women's show

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the

residents, businesses and the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville for their support of the inaugural Women in Business trade show last Saturday.

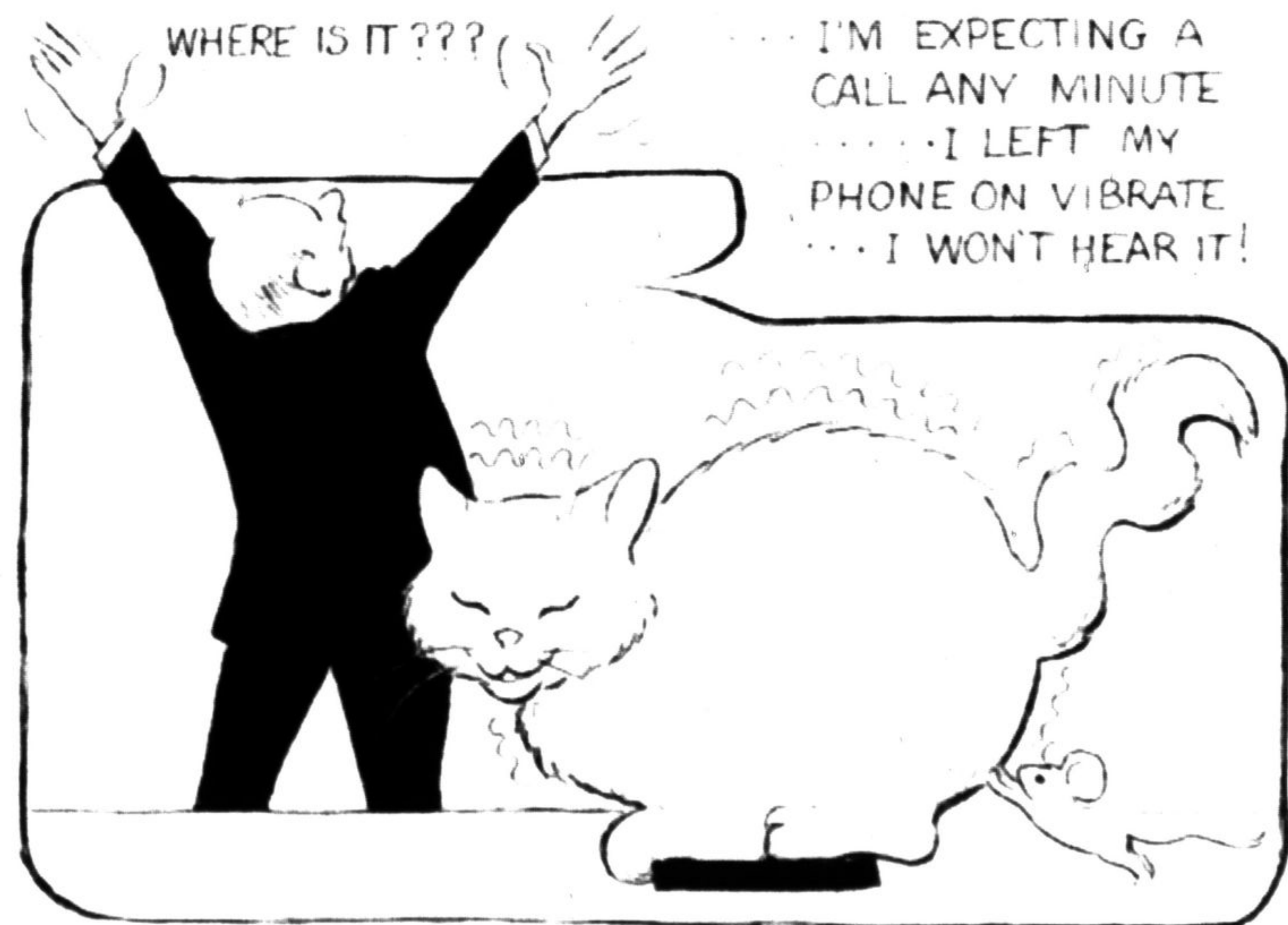
The show was a tremendous success. Despite the rain, more than 300 attendees came out to the Lebovic Centre for Arts & Entertainment – Nineteen on the Park.

They showed their support and we were able to achieve our goal of showcasing women in business in Stouffville and the surrounding area to our community.

We had more than 40 local vendors demonstrating a wide range of products and services including photography, fitness, furniture refinishing, food, travel, dental and children's accessories.

For more information on the Women in Business trade show, visit www.facebook.com/WomeninBusinessTS

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