

CBC comic launches Twitter attack at MP

BY SANDRA BOLAN
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“You are blocked from following @PaulCalandra and viewing @PaulCalandra's Tweets. Learn more.”

If you've received this message from the Oak Ridge-Markham MP, you are not alone.

Comedian Mark Critch found out he was blocked by the Conservative MP, who is running for re-election in the newly re-aligned riding of Markham-Stouffville, after he commented on CBC's Rosemary Barton's Twitter feed Aug. 12 after Calandra appeared on a panel she hosted.

“@RosieBarton did a fantastic job keeping @Paul-Calandra honest today. What a slippery tool.”

Within 20 minutes, Critch tweeted he was now blocked by Calandra and couldn't wait for 22 Minutes to start back up. Critch is an anchor and roving reporter for the sketch comedy show.

Critch then decided to launch a Twitter campaign. Tweet at @PaulCalandra “you are a tool” and he will donate \$1, up to a maximum of \$1,500 to Newfoundland and Labrador's Planned Parenthood program.

EDITOR BLOCKED, UNBLOCKED

The Sun-Tribune asked Calandra last Thursday for comment on why he blocks people on Twitter and his thoughts on Critch's “you are a tool” campaign.

Calandra stated via e-mail Friday: “We are into an important campaign and Canadians have a real choice to make in October. I am busy knocking on doors and talking about our plan to create jobs here in Markham-Stouffville and protect Canadians both at home and abroad.”

Despite attempts for further comment on the issue, Calandra did not respond prior to our deadline.

He did appear on the CBC panel show again Friday.

Other people blocked by Calandra on Twitter include parliamentary press gallery reporters Alex Boutilier, Lee Berthiaume, along with TheTye.ca reporter Jeremy Nuttall – and Stouffville Sun-Tribune/yorkregion.com editor-columnist Jim Mason.

Calandra, a Stouffville resident, blocked Mason in 2014.

Calandra called Mason Friday to apologize for blocking him. He called it an error and unblocked him.

Calandra also explained his parameters for blocking people on Twitter, which include people who don't use their own names as their handles, those who make disparaging remarks about his family and those who use profanity.

His Twitter account – @paulcalandra – has more than 5,000 followers. Calandra joined Twitter in 2009.

Critch did not respond to The Sun-Tribune's request for an interview prior to our deadline.



PAUL CALANDRA



STAFF PHOTO/NICK IWANYSHYN

WATER WALK

Jake Seguin cools off at a splash pad on Hoover Park Drive during this week's heat wave. A sunny weekend is being forecast.

Ambassador proud to rep fair at CNE

BY SANDRA BOLAN
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The winner receives a crown and a sash, but don't confuse the Ambassador of the Fairs competition with a beauty pageant.

The annual competition held during the CNE shines a spotlight on the importance of agriculture and the young ambassadors who are proud to uphold the traditions of rural life and farming in Ontario, according to Maral Chouljian, spokesperson for the competition.

Representing Whitchurch-Stouffville and Markham this year is Cassie Ferguson.

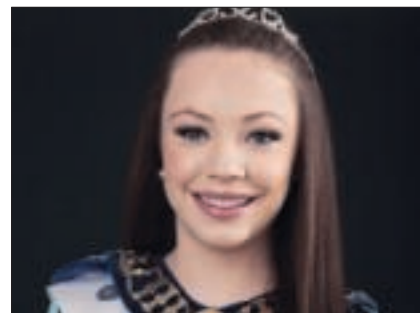
Ferguson, 18, was crowned Markham Fair Ambassador last October.

The Stouffville resident wanted to compete in the ambassador competition after watching her friend, Kaitlyn Francis, win the title in 2013.

Ferguson did not have to participate in a bathing suit competition or talent show in order to earn her title. Instead, the competition was based on questions about the Markham Fair, provincial and community issues, agriculture and hobbies/interests/community involvement/goals, according to the fair's website.

“Someone who is genuine, who wants to help improve the fair,” Ferguson said of the role.

This year's CNE Ambassador of the Fairs competition takes place this weekend.



CASSIE FERGUSON

There are 78 ambassadors, three of whom are male and they represent 75 communities across Ontario, according to Chouljian.

The winner travels around the province promoting and educating the public on Canadian agriculture and receives \$3,500, according to Chouljian.

The top seven contestants receive prizes ranging from \$100 to \$500. There is also a congeniality award, but it does not have a prize.

“I'm real and realistic about going into it. I don't expect to win everything,” Ferguson said, adding, the competition for her is about the experience and making friends.

The same can't be said about Ferguson when it comes to plow matches.

“... I'm pretty good, not to be cocky,” the Durham College sports management student said.

Through York 4-H, Ferguson has been

competing in plow matches since she was about 13 years old.

She typically finishes in the top three.

Ferguson didn't get her start competing by plowing her family's fields. They don't live on a farm. They do have a tractor, but keep it in the garage. The only time she practises is when she competes.

In her first international plow match competition last fall, Ferguson came in first place in her class – junior tractor plowing, mounted. She was the only female in her group of eight competitors.

Ferguson earned 131 of a total 140 points.

“It wasn't perfect but it was pretty high up there,” she said.

“It was pretty cool. I had a feeling the whole day I was going to do well,” she said of the win.

Her dad, Ken, has won three Canadian championships, six Ontario titles and has been the runner-up in the worlds four times.

He now judges and coaches his daughter. But at the International Plowing Match held in Ivy last year, he had to forego his coaching duties as he was judging. Her uncle Jim, Ken's brother, stepped in.

She calls her success “a Ferguson thing.”

While plowing will only ever be a hobby for Ferguson, she does hope to compete for the whole week at an International Plowing Match, as well as go to the worlds.