

Comment & Opinions

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Send your letters
to the editor
to the address below

EDITORIAL

Remember to support fall drive for food bank

It's getting to be as traditional a part of Thanksgiving as the turkey or the ham. Residents are being asked to support the annual fall food drive to aid the less fortunate in their communities.

But just because you've heard the pleas before, please don't tune them out.

The need is as great as in previous food drive campaigns. In fact, with our rapidly-growing communities, the need is greater than ever before.

With stately homes rising from construction sites like so many mushrooms, it may seem as though all the newcomers are well-heeled and well-off.

Things are not always as they seem.

The kids who go to school without breakfast don't stand apart from their well-fed fellow students. The mom at your office or plant who 'skips' lunch in order to save food in the cupboards for her family doesn't look any different from any other worker. And the worried dad who pays one or two bills this month and lets the others ride so he can go grocery shopping this week probably looks like any other guy.

But they're all hungry.

The fall food drive starts today and continues until Thanksgiving Monday, Oct. 13. When you're out grocery shopping during this time, why not fill just one more grocery bag for the food bank?

If every fortunate family in this community donated one bag of food for the hidden hungry in their neighbourhood, there will be a lot of families truly giving thanks this season.

French Postcard...



STOUFFVILLE TRIBUNE WEEKENDER

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Letters Policy

The Tribune welcomes your letters to the editor. Please keep letters to no more than 300 words. Note that letters may be edited for space, libel, spelling, grammar. While we endeavor to print as many letters as possible, we regret that not all letters may be printed.

Markham Fair belongs to Stouffville, too

Dear Editor,

The Markham Fair banner is welcome on our Main Street.

This fair is a part of Stouffville. It is a regional event. Many fair presidents have been from Stouffville in its 153-year history. The president this year as well as last year have been Stouffville residents.

Many locals are board and committee members. Other "Stouffvillites" are volunteers. Various Stouffville organizations operate booths to supplement their coffers. A host of residents from here are exhibitors in all classes. It is our fair too.

Jean Barkey
Stouffville

Well frustrations forcing me out

Dear Editor,

I support the Brooks/Bains letter in your Sept. 25 issue ("Water hook-up a comedy of errors") and I would like to add the following comments:

I was not in favour of installing the water main, but to support the less fortunate residents who had polluted wells, I was the first to connect. It took me months to get a 'permit' because of the squabbling between the 'little tin soldiers' at the township and/or region.

My eight-foot well water was perfectly okay, but I find that with so much chlorine and chemicals in the town water I feel like I am now drinking out of someone's swimming pool.

To try to adhere to the town's disorganized water connection procedural rules was a task in itself, but to cope with what appeared to be intentional hindrance by the town staff was impossible. The lack of co-operation and inflexibility by a few makes the township appear user unfriendly.

I have always found most employees very much co-operative and helpful, but those who are not, reflect on the entire staff. House cleaning is likely long overdue. Are you listening, candidates?

It is my understanding that a legal opinion has now been acquired and that no resident can be legally forced to connect to the town water. Most of us knew

that but having it in writing from a lawyer is more assuring. I admire the resident who fought back by obtaining that advice and for refusing to connect.

If the 600 remaining residents who have not yet connected had my experience of all the horrendous hassles and road blocks the township personnel cause, they would not even bother to connect. To lend support to these 600, the 200 who connected ought to follow my example of asking the township to disconnect my water again.

I intend to vacate this beautiful area just as soon as I can get my affairs in order to facilitate the sale of my property. The frustration heaped on the Muselman's Lake residents by town hall makes Stouffville an unpleasant environment to live in at this time.

Back to the water problem, common sense tells me that if only a paltry 25 per cent of residents want town water, what kind of vote was conducted to get town water approved by the majority? How about a recount or another vote?

In the upcoming election why not allow a negative-option style voting system so that those voters who don't bother to vote will automatically count as a vote against politicians to cancel the 'yes' votes from the fools who would vote to put them back in office?

Al Yetman, Stouffville

I confess ... I'm a birder

I have a confession to make. The time has come for me to come out of the closet.

It's my duty to alert my faithful readers as to my true nature. I've already told my family.

I've tried to explain it to the few friends I have left. I can only hope that our relationship can, however battered, survive, based on a platform of mutual respect untainted by the poison of judgmental prejudices.

But I'm not sure it can. Not after I tell you that I am a practising ... birdwatcher. It's true. I realize now, looking back, that I have always been a birdwatcher, albeit a furtive one.

As a kid I sucked in my breath as I watched the aerial antics of barn swallows and bats. I marveled at the impossibly elegant, gravity-defying nests of orioles; thrilled to the explosive thunder of a ruffed grouse taking flight from cover just inches ahead of my hiking boots.

I was watching birds, sure, but I wasn't a — you know — birdwatcher per se. I was still normal. Not one of those goofy fanatics you see in tennis shoes and Tilley hats, creeping through raspberry canes with a Peterson's Field Guide in one hand and a pair of Bushnell 7X50s in the other.

True, some of my most vibrant memories seemed to revolve around birds. I remember the otherworldly experience of hiking out on a cliff high on the Niagara Escarpment in southern Ontario and seeing a pair of turkey vultures soaring at eye level, so close that I could see their beady little eyes and red neck wattles.

I remember sitting on a beach on the island of Antigua, tracking white pelicans as they circled lazily high in the sky only to suddenly hurl themselves into steep, kamikaze dives right into the ocean.

They hit the surface with such force it didn't seem possible for them to survive. They did — and surfaced with a crawl of fish more often than not.

Oh, I can see it now — Birds Arc Me! My favourite sight: arrowheads of



Basic Black

Arthur Black

Canada geese etched on a spring sky. My favourite sound: the eerie ululations of an unseen loon at dusk. My favourite smell: roast turkey on Thanksgiving — okay, a little cruel, but you get my point. One way or another, I've been 'birdwatching' for years.

And then, a few years back, I moved to the west coast. We get most of the regulars out here — robins, chickadees, starlings and crows. But there are also bald eagles and great blue herons, stellar jays and rufous-headed towhees. Not to mention eight dozen different kinds of seagulls, none of which I'd ever seen before.

I've arrived in Birdwatcher Heaven. That's why I decided the time has come to 'out' myself.

Mind you, I plan to take it one step at a time. I wouldn't want to make the blunder of British birdwatcher Neil Symmons.

Symmons managed to attract a tawny owl to his garden — no mean feat, considering that he lives in downtown London and tawny owls are notoriously shy. Nonetheless, each evening for 12 straight months, Symmons has gone into his garden at dusk and 'called' his owl. And each night for 12 straight months he's heard the unearthly, unmistakable hoot of a tawny owl answering him.

Symmons' wife Kim was so proud of Neil. She mentioned his evening pastime to her next-door neighbour.

"That's odd," said the neighbour, "my husband Fred spends his evenings out back talking to an owl..."

You guessed it. The two enthusiasts had been 'hooting' to each other every night for a year.

Birdwatching. No one ever said it would be easy.