

OPINION

Stouffville
Sun-Tribune

6290 Main St.
Stouffville, ON. L4A 1G7
www.yorkregion.com

PUBLISHER **Ian Proudfoot**

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Debra Kelly

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Musselman's Lake residents should fight for convenience store

We, at Musselman's Lake, may lose our corner store.

On Tuesday, Whitchurch-Stouffville council will host a public meeting with a developer wanting to change the zoning for the store on the Ninth Line, on the south side of the lake, from commercial to multiple residential.

I'm sorry if the landlord cannot keep the one store rented out, but closing the other for more apartments is irresponsible to a community.

This store is a vital link to the sustainability of the community of Musselman's Lake.

For most of the year, it is the only place within our community where residents can go for those last minutes supplies. Other shops are only open during the summer.

A bag of milk, movies, lottery tickets, bread, whatever, this store seems to have it all.

It is a quick walk for half the community or a healthy walk or bike ride for the rest of us.

Communities need these mom and pop stores. Without them, residents will have to climb in to their cars and leave their communities for the big box stores or grocery stores where you have to walk almost as far to the back of the store for a bag of milk and

a loaf of bread.

This will add travel time for all of us, traffic to the streets and increasing pollution from cars.

Think of the last time you were able to ask your kids to run up to the store and get some supplies, whatever those may be.

Think of having to get in your car and leave your community just because you run out of bread.

How many of us stop on the way home from a long day of work for something? We could lose this by spring.

On Jan. 22 at 7 p.m., we can show our support for our convenience store and persuade council not to change the zoning and keep this store where it is.

For more than 30 years, this spot has been the community store. Let's get together and keep it there.

Call your local councillor or the planning department and voice your concern or show up at the council chambers on Tuesday.

MARK CARROLL

CHAIRPERSON

FRIENDS OF MUSSELMAN'S LAKE

Care to comment on this letter or another issue in Whitchurch-Stouffville? Send letters to the editor to jmason@yrmg.com or 6290 Main St., Stouffville, Ont., L4A 1G7.



It's been a great 30 years, but I'm hanging it up

The jig is up. After 30 years of trying to get it first, fast and right, my days of chasing ambulances, runaway politicians and the truth have drawn to a close. I'm retiring.

My first job, at a fruit market in 1956, paid 25 cents an hour. I thought I was rich. I was 11.

I graduated to washing dishes, waiting tables, life guarding, worm picking, hay tossing and, when I walked up the aisle in 1962, I was thrown into a family business.

A marriage breakup in 1974 sent me back to waiting tables and school. When I graduated from Durham College's journalism program two years later, I had \$9 in the bank, five kids and no job.

A day later, I scored a commission-only job selling aluminum siding. I took a late night flight to Kapuskasing, only to return the next day when my boss was arrested.

With the business owner in handcuffs and a bankruptcy seal across the door, my days selling siding were over. Facing a \$73 overdraft, it took me three days to sign

a one-year contract as a counsellor with the Ministry of Social Services, followed by a second contract with the Durham Region Separate School Board, co-ordinating a regionwide volunteer recruitment program.

Since I was poor, a product of Protestant work ethic, a single mom and wore my heart on my sleeve, I was a good counsellor and, while never a Christian, Catholic or otherwise, I stood proud when placing 1,000 volunteers into 25 schools.

In mid-February 1978, I walked into what is now a Metroland newsroom. On Jan. 30, I'll walk out.

I'm taking a little side trip. Late last week, I had a date with a surgeon. After he mends a broken heart, I'll be fit as a fiddle.

My family and my career in journalism will always define me. In the past 30 years, my five hard-to-raise children became adults, nine grandchildren arrived and my mother died. Seldom did my reporter's cap come off.

Covering Durham Region for 19 years and York Region for the past 11, I have produced thousands of



Joan Ransberry

stories, covering everything from murders to meetings. Some stories won awards, a few ticked off people, but none turned up in court.

A few months ago, Metroland, representing about 140 newspapers, chose me as the reporter of the year. When I took to the stage to accept the Presidents' Award, I realized a job well done matters.

I have been privileged to meet many outstanding people. Besides prime ministers, premiers and presidents, I interviewed a world champion rattlesnake bagger, a man sporting a diamond in every tooth and a bank robber. There have been stories about three-legged

dogs, overpaid call girls, born-again virgins, at-large boa-constrictors, and politicians of every shape, size and stripe.

Most politicians are honest. A few aren't. One thing I noticed: Every time a politician is arrested, the others run for cover, but not before accusing the media of sticking its nose into places it doesn't belong. While all law-breaking politicians claim to be as pure as the driven snow, the only innocent one I covered was an Oshawa councillor charged with fishing out of season.

To bring in the story, I ran with the foxes and hunted with the hounds. It took barbed-wire willpower and tenacity to open some doors. But you got the story.

I've been a hands-on journalist. In the name of news, I rode in a submarine, flew in an air show, soared beneath the clouds in a hot air balloon and was plucked from Lake Ontario by a rescue boat after jumping overboard. I have attended a biker's funeral and accepted an invitation to the after party at the clubhouse, led a camel in a parade,

got trapped beneath a raft while shooting rapids on the Ottawa River, fell face-down in the mud at a train wreck, got struck in the head by a board-wielding scab and was chastised by a judge for covering a crime before reporting it to police.

Reporting was a good fit. With an attention span like a hummingbird, I got as much as I gave.

I have a great deal of respect for the media. Its editors, photographers and reporters play a critical part in preserving democracy.

The people who stay in the media for the long haul are hard-working, talented and caring people who deserve a standing ovation. Even though, my loyalty has always been to the reader, I tip my hat to this ever changing, always improving and community-building industry.

I leave the same as I arrived: in awe of the media and a nosy person.

Joan Ransberry is a YRMG reporter and Whitchurch-Stouffville resident.

LETTERS POLICY

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.

Letters to the Editor,
The Sun-Tribune
6290 Main St.
Stouffville, ON
L4A 1G7
jmason@yrmg.com

EDITORIAL
Editor
Jim Mason
jmason@yrmg.com

INTERACTIVE MEDIA
Marketing & Advertising
Manager
Dawna Andrews
dandrews@yrmg.com

ADVERTISING
Retail Manager
Stacey Allen
sallen@yrmg.com

Classified Manager
Ann Campbell
acampbell@yrmg.com

Assistant Classified
Manager

Bonnie Rondeau
brondeau@yrmg.com

PRODUCTION
Team Leader
Sherry Day
sday@yrmg.com



EDITORIAL
905-640-2612
Fax: 905-640-8778

ADVERTISING
905-640-2612
Classified: 1-800-743-3353
Fax: 905-640-8778

DISTRIBUTION
905-640-2612



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