

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

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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.

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OPINION

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Editorial

Cottage life has its dangers

Tragic incidents in cottage country are a reminder of how important it is to take all necessary safety precautions when spending time in and around water.

On Sunday, three men died while cliff jumping at the Moon River waterfall near Bala.

The volume of water in the falls was much higher than usual and the current pulled them under.

Yesterday, another person died and a second was declared dead but later revived following an attempt to save a 9-year-old below the Bala Falls.

Unfortunately, although many public agencies frequently warn the public of the potential dangers of cottage life, it often takes incidents such as these to really get people's attention.

Last Friday, John Paul Farrell, 46, died after his boat hit a wave on Loon Lake, knocking off everyone on board.

The popular Stouffville man died a hero.

The boat was pulling his daughter, Abby, 15, a high school student and one of her friends in tubes, while two of Abby's other friends were on board. All of the girls survived.

Mr. Farrell was not wearing a life jacket and while it's unclear if such a device would have helped in his case, it likely wouldn't have hurt.

Whatever the exact cause of the accident, it's clear Mr. Farrell died bravely, trying to ensure the boat, which was still running after everyone was ejected, did not injure the girls.

His funeral is being held today.

Hundreds of people across York Region are remembering the tradesman, hockey referee, slo-pitch player and, most importantly, father and husband.

He was recalled as a good person. A hero with solid values.

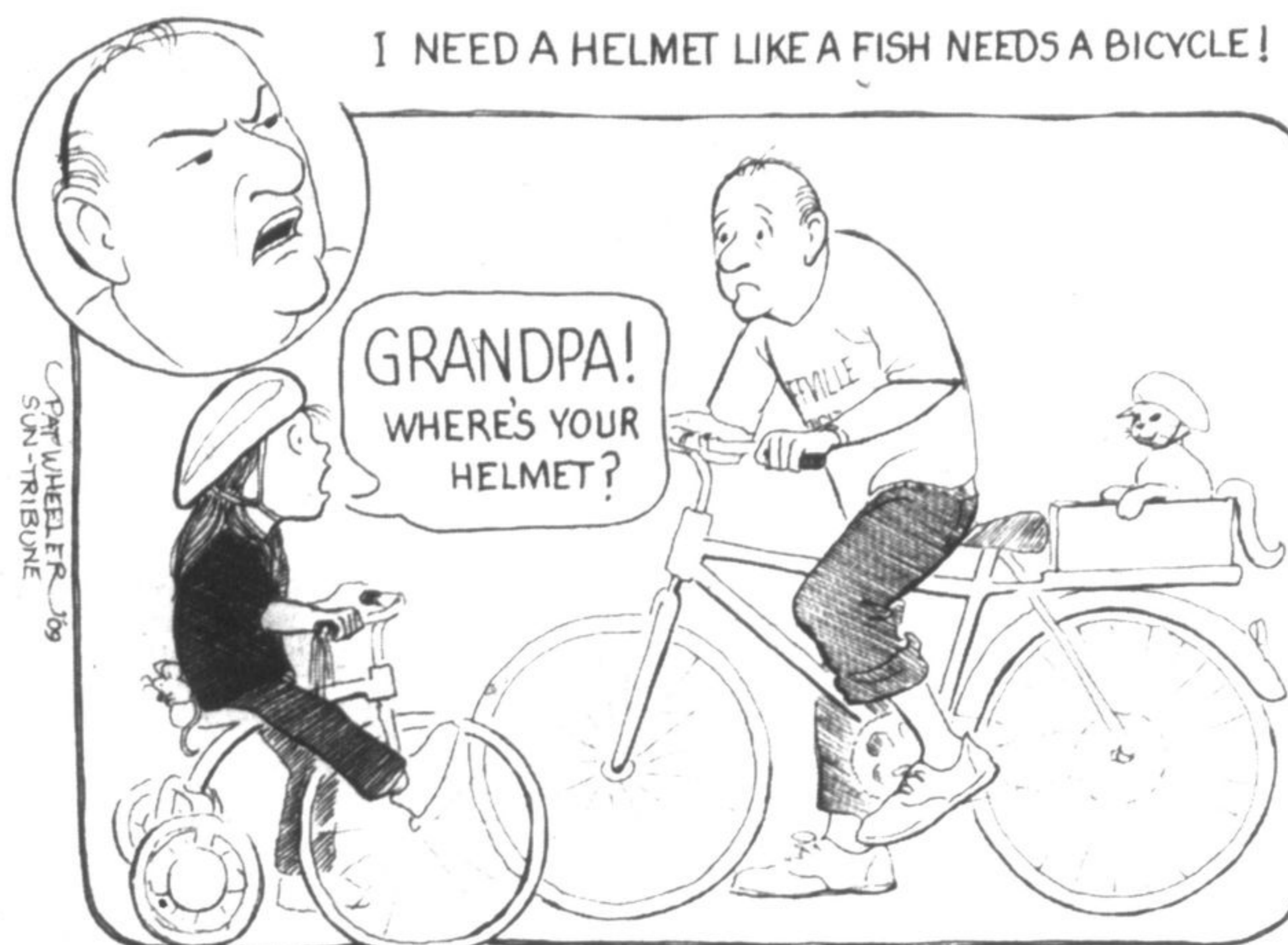
There have been too many tragic deaths involving Whitchurch-Stouffville families this summer.

And we are not alone.

The three men who died in Moon River, Vladimir Tsimfer, 31, Vladimir Sirghii, 22, and Peter Ludian, 21, were not the first to jump from the cliffs at the falls.

However frequent rain the past month may have made the conditions poor for swimming near the falls.

Hopefully, these sad incidents in Ontario cottage country will remind people of the importance of water safety.



Letters to the Editor

Landfill unsettles residents near Stouffville-area airport

Re: Billionaire owners mum on airport, July 25.

Kudos to Keely Grasser on a well-written article on the Markham Airport.

Just a few thoughts on the article if I may.

I live approximately one kilometre to the east of the airport, just south of Stouffville, and have since it opened about 1962. The airport and obvious air traffic have been no problem during the past 47 years.

In fact, I received my pilot's licence there and was a flight instructor in the early 1970s.

Three years ago, the airport property became a landfill site.

That is where my problem lies.

Allan Rubin says he is setting up for a possible runway expansion.

Sir, have you not heard of the Pickering airport project that already owns part of your former property?

Stop dreaming.

Who gave him the right to do as he pleases at the expense of his neighbours?

He says he has analytical reports for the fill dropped on his property.

I would like to see just one such report. I have analytical reports from the federal government on the water from my well that, for the past three years, has been deemed undrinkable.

Those reports are available for publication anytime.

For three years, I have been subjected to dust and noise to the point my back deck has been a virtual dust bowl.

Any calls to Mr. Rubin's office have been ignored. That would be in direct contradiction to his statement he is sensitive to his neighbours.

During the one call I did get through to him, I was sworn at and hung up on.

HAVE YOUR SAY

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

Mr. Rubin states it's human nature to be upset because of all the "crashes and accidents and things like that".

No one is upset because of the airport, just the landfill operation.

As for his statement about farming 30 per cent of the land, get serious. I've never seen an airplane pulling a plough.

As for the Town of Markham, you just dropped the ball.

You had the landfill stopped for a while a year ago and then let it start up again. What happened?

Let's hope Bill Wiles' comment about restoring the land to its original state is, in fact, a reality in the near future.

HERB HOOVER
MARKHAM

We can all do our part for the environment

I would like to remind everyone about our planet and how we are affecting it.

Everyone can make a difference when it comes to the environment.

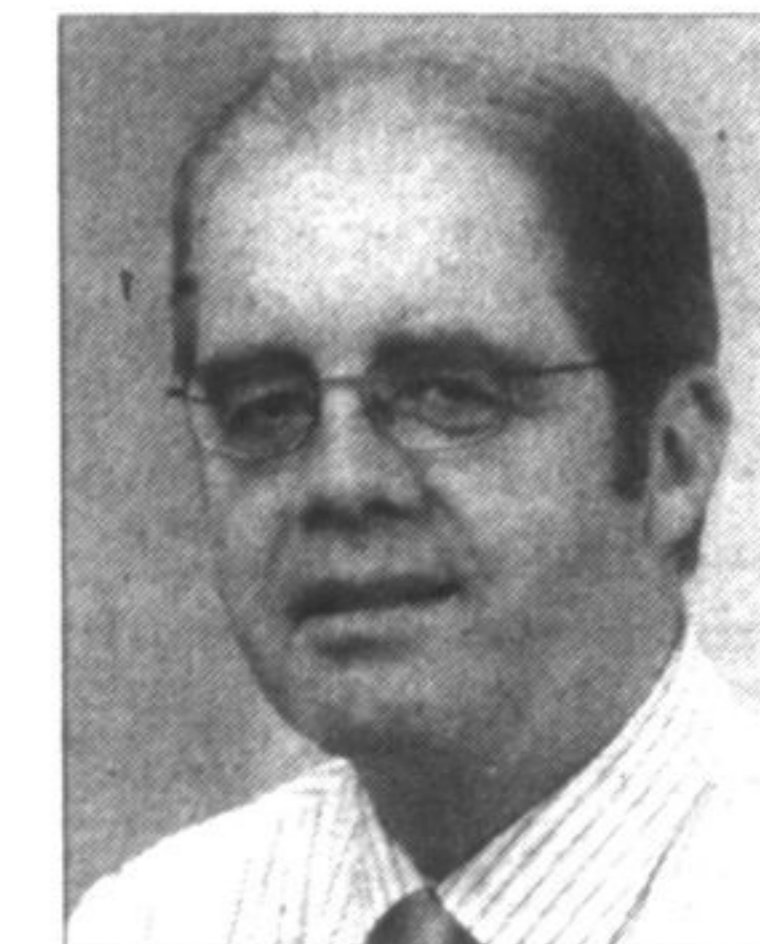
Please do not litter and try to recycle.

Pick up after your dogs. Help keep our lakes, ponds and parks clean.

I may be 12 years old, but I know what we are doing to our planet.

A suggestion? Let's have another green-up, clean-up day in the fall.

MICHELLE USLING
STOUFFVILLE



Off The Top

with Jim Mason

Remembering July of 2009 for wrong reasons

It's been a summer to forget in Whitchurch-Stouffville. And it has nothing to do with sad weather.

It's also been one to remember. Remembering friends and neighbours, if not relatives, who died unexpectedly in July.

Too many funerals for folks far too young.

J.P. Farrell is the latest. The 46-year-old father of two died near the family cottage Friday. He was thrown from the boat he was driving. Two passengers and the two people the boat was pulling on tubes survived.

Mr. Farrell died trying to save the others. His funeral is today.

A 16-year-old from Toronto died July 19 when an ATV rear-ended his mini bike near Bloomington Road and Ninth Line. He wasn't wearing a helmet. The survivor was charged with impaired driving causing death and dangerous driving.

Two days earlier, hundreds attended the funeral of 19-year-old Matthew Benincasa who died when his truck left the Tenth Line and struck a utility pole near his family's Bethesda Road home. He was not wearing a seat-belt.

As Matthew was mourned, friends admitted to not always buckling up. Others spoke of that new danger zone, texting while driving.

We can all be more careful. The kids riding bikes at full speed down the sidewalk downtown can. Same for the sometimes speedy electric scooters. And the folks who think they're in the X Games as they blast through our trail system.

We can make complete stops, cross at the traffic lights, obey the speed limit and wear the legislated safety gear.

We don't need to repeat July of 2009, Stouffville.

Jim Mason is editor of The Sun-Tribune.