

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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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Look beyond our stars when naming buildings

Re: Who should we honour at school?; editorial, Sept 3.

Your piece got me thinking about the entire topic of naming public buildings in honour of "notable" people.

In considering naming a public building, just who is notable and (if possible) local?

Most often, the nominees are: a high-profile politician, sports hero or other "star" whose professional accomplishments have caught our attention.

All too often though, it seems to me, that notoriety and popularity comes at the expense of others whose accomplishments, while at first glance may seem basic, are in fact very substantial.

As a resident and business owner in Whitchurch-Stouffville, I have come to know many local people who I consider extraordinary.

They range from a single parent who raised three children (none of whom got into trouble) and now, as adult professionals,

HAVE YOUR SAY, WHITCHURCH- STOUFFVILLE

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

are themselves contributing to society.

I can also think of the third-generation farmer, who, as a fine steward of the land, has passed the family farm on to the next generation to continue growing food locally.

I would like to challenge all of those responsible for naming public facilities to cast their thoughts a little wider and to recognize some of our citizens who are out there doing many seemingly small things but that have very significant and positive outcomes for us all.

KEN PRENTICE
STOUFFVILLE



Keep hands clean, fingers out of nose during virus battle

H1N1 — or swine flu, as they unabashedly call it in unpolitically correct New York City — has caused my sister, who has always had fastidious Felix Unger-like tendencies when it comes to germs, to cross the line into the territory of the infamously germaphobic Howard Hughes.

She isn't wearing Kleenex boxes on her feet — yet — but "Wash your hands" is her greeting to all who enter her home, as she protectively holds her 11-week-old son against her chest.

A trip to the amusement park in Central Park last week with her, the baby and my four-year-old twin nieces was somewhat akin to touring a toxic waste disposal site; thankfully, though, without the gas masks and chemical biohazard body suits.

The hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes were speedily whipped out and rubbed over little hands that had come into contact, however briefly, with any publicly shared surface. That would be about every 60 seconds.

The twins, recovering from lingering colds, were admirably up-to-date on the latest in disease-prevention etiquette. When they coughed, they did so into their upper arms, rather than their hands, to prevent adding their bugs



Deborah Kelly

to those aforementioned germ-ridden surfaces.

Sharing their toys at the playground is no longer permitted — to their initial confusion and, now, righteous delight.

I tease my sister, but, in all seriousness, her common sense is admirable. In fact, if more of us were like her, the reach of H1N1 during this flu season would be greatly reduced.

She, like many of you with young children, is particularly concerned about the impact of the return of school on her children's health. The headlines, here and in New York, trumpet a swine

flu story daily, detailing how the virus is targeting younger and healthier people than is normal.

With a new baby who has already had a frightening bout with a serious respiratory virus, my sister's aggressive precautions are understandable.

H1N1 is spread mostly through coughing, sneezing and contaminated surfaces.

Ontario's chief medical officer, Dr. Arlene King, has said while "nobody knows for certain" how H1N1 will hit us this winter, it will likely be similar to the situation in the southern hemisphere, where winter is ending.

The severity of H1N1 in Australia and South America appears only "slightly worse" than the regular flu season.

While reports of severe illness and deaths due to H1N1 are scary, there is no need to panic.

Look, there's my sister, still going out in public with her children, unencumbered by surgical masks and latex gloves.

But basic precautions such as the ones she so diligently practises are crucial for all of us to adopt.

And, please, parents, if your children are sick, don't send them to school. Start making daycare arrangements now for that eventuality. I urge schools to be vig-

ilant in enforcing this precaution — call parents to retrieve children and send older ones home.

Adults, don't go to work sick and employers, do all you can to support this precaution.

If I may, as I have in this space before, let me urge the demise of our habit of handshaking (eeuuuwww, I see you there, picking your nose in the car!).

And when the H1N1 flu shot is available, expected late this fall, get one.

For more details, visit www.health.gov.on.ca/en/ccom/flu/

If I may, as I have in this space before, let me urge the demise of our habit of handshaking (eeuuuwww, I see you there, picking your nose in the car!).

A nod, smile, squeeze of the arm, pat on the back, courtly bow or even curtsy are more respectful and courteous gestures in our modern-day era of community-acquired global infections.