

Sun-Tribune

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

EDITORIAL
ADVERTISING
905-640-2612

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

DISTRIBUTION
905-640-2612

EDITORIAL
Editor

Jim Mason
jmason@yrmg.com

ADVERTISING
Retail Manager

Mike Banville
mbanville@yrmg.com

DISTRIBUTION
Circulation
Supervisor

Carolyn Norman
cnorman@yrmg.com

PRODUCTION
Manager

Sherry Day
sday@yrmg.com

INTERACTIVE
MEDIA
Marketing
& Advertising
Manager

Dawna Andrews
dandrews@yrmg.com

York Region Media
Group community
newspapers

The Sun-Tribune, published every Thursday and Saturday, is a division of the Metroland Media Group Ltd., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Torstar Corporation. Metroland is comprised of 100 community publications across Ontario. The York Region Newspaper Group also includes The Liberal, serving Richmond Hill and Thornhill, Vaughan Citizen, The Era-Banner (Newmarket/Aurora), Markham Economist & Sun, Georgina Advocate, York Region Business Times, North of the City, yorkregion.com and York Region Printing.

**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

Ontario
Press
Council

Canadian
Circulations
Audit Board
Member

OPINION

**Stouffville
Sun-Tribune**

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

PUBLISHER Ian Proudfoot

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Debra Kelly

BUSINESS
MANAGER
Robert Lazaruko

DIRECTOR,
OPERATIONS
Barry Black

DIRECTOR,
ADVERTISING,
DISTRIBUTION
Nicole Fletcher

DIRECTOR,
REGIONAL PRODUCTS,
CLASSIFIED,
TODAY'S HOMES
Debra Weller

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Nothing to do at lake but ride dirt bikes

Re: Rules of road don't apply to lake dirt-bike drivers, letter to the editor by Peter McNeil, May 1.

Yes, the warm weather has arrived and I'm very proud to say I'm the owner of a dirt bike at Musselman's Lake. I was very upset with the letter to the editor about me and my friends.

I only see the bad stuff in the paper about we dirt bikers. Did you ever think that kids aged 14 to 18 have other things to do at the lake? I have lived here my whole life and never have had problems with people calling the cops about dirt bikers.

Teenagers here get together and ride their toys because we have nothing else to do.

If we didn't ride dirt bikes, we would be sitting at home getting fat, doing drugs or getting into trouble because there is nothing else.

Maybe if there was a park at

the lake that we didn't have to spend \$3 to get in to, we would go there.

The people complaining should try to work something out before wasting the time of police officers, who just tell us to drive more slowly.

Everyone needs to enjoy life. Take the time and think how the teenagers feel, not just yourself.

The complainers are being selfish and we need to take a stand. I would be happy to use my time and money to make them see what's right.

To comment on our parents is even more selfish. If you had kids, I'm pretty sure you would want them to do something and not get into trouble.

I don't see how a little noise hurts anyone. Think back to your own childhood.

We are only trying to live and maybe have a good time.

Take the time to listen to our side. We need to live, too.

CRYSTAL COOK
MUSSELMAN'S LAKE



Will HST's arrival drive up cross-border shopping?

I was born in Toronto but grew up in Sault Ste. Marie which, even though it's in northern Ontario, is also a border city, like Windsor or Sarnia, Niagara Falls or Cornwall.

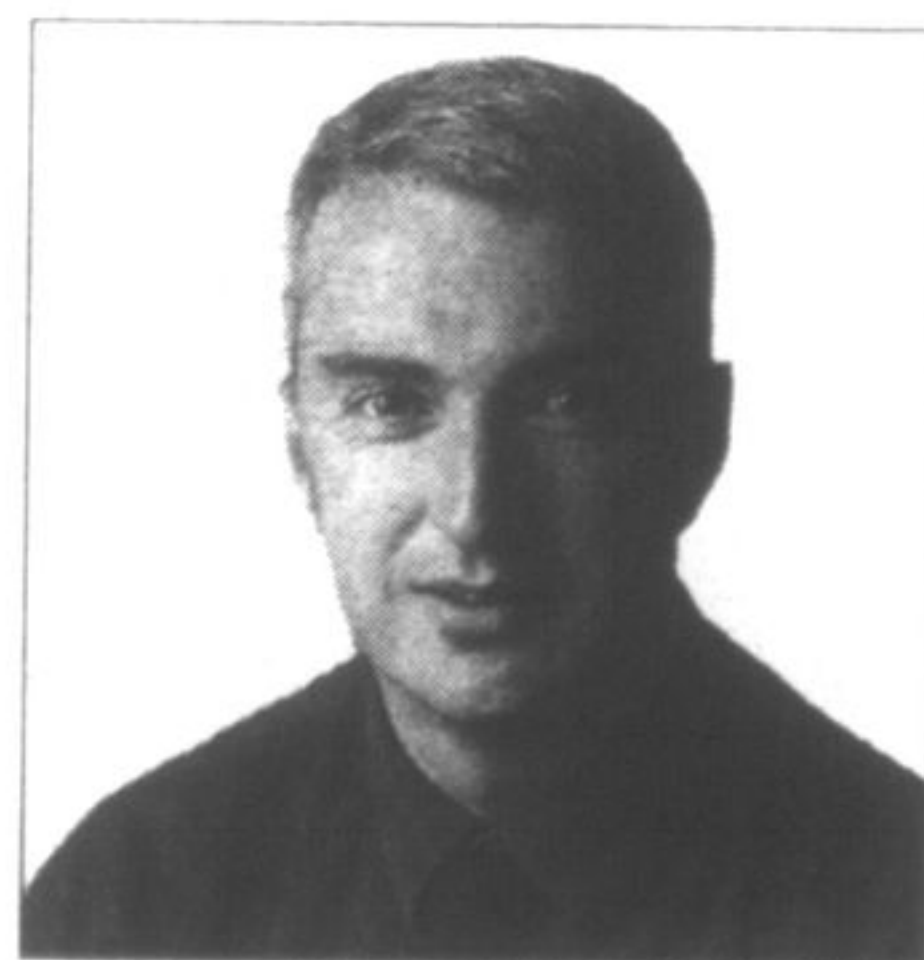
The St. Mary's River separates the Twin Saults, as some of the radio stations on the Michigan side looking for Canadian advertising business like to call them.

The International Bridge connects the two sides and you can get across the ditch, as the locals would say, in a matter of minutes.

The Americans would charge drivers \$2 for the honour of travelling from Canada into the United States using their part of the bridge. Coming back, of course, it was free (translation: paid for by the taxpayers) because that's how we roll here in the Great White North.

We crossed the ditch quite a lot when I was young, in part because my brothers and sisters and I had teeth so crooked you'd think we'd been fathered by Mr. Grinch. And the only orthodontist at the time was on the U.S. side.

Later, I also went to school for a few semesters at Lake Superior State University (after getting a degree in Canada), which used



Bernie O'Neill

to call itself a college but changed the name so there's a U on the end, in part, because it relied heavily on Canadian enrolment and Canadians wanted a university degree, not one that sounded like it came from a community college here in Ontario.

I mention all this as background to say I have personal experience with the highs and lows of the Canadian dollar and how it relates to cross-border shopping and prices of U.S. goods sold in Canada. When you live in a border town, it's a constant topic.

The Canadian dollar has more or less reached parity with the U.S. dollar and was even valued higher earlier this month. It could stay that way for

a while, because of weaknesses seen in the U.S. economy and, in turn, its currency.

So what's going on in Canadian border towns as we speak?

If it's anything like years past, Canadians are driving to the U.S. to shop, in a big way. Lower sales taxes on the U.S. side already make shopping there a bargain for Canadians. Gasoline, milk, clothes and restaurant meals are all usually cheaper.

Gas is about 80 cents a litre. Milk takes advantage of agricultural subsidies. Clothes are taxed at lower rates and often produced in the U.S. Meals are taxed less and get their ingredients from a subsidized U.S. agriculture industry.

With the strong dollar, you'd think virtually every Canadian would visit the U.S. for gas, milk, lunch at Denny's and a new pair of shoes.

But that's not necessarily the case.

My parents, like many in the Canadian Sault, simply refused to shop in the U.S. because they viewed it as hurting their neighbours who ran businesses on the Canadian side and, for that matter, hurting themselves. As gas stations, corner stores and other retail outlets went out of business over the years, along with jobs and

tax revenues, they and others had the pleasure of saying, "I told you so".

We don't have the same challenges here in York Region because we're a good couple of hours away from the U.S. But I still hear of people planning shopping trips to Buffalo or beyond and I'm never quite sure what to make of it.

Part of me says, hey, it's a free country, both here and there. If some of us shop over there and some of them shop over here, it all evens out.

But there's another part of me that thinks shopping is an act of patriotism, meaning both what you buy (was it grown in Ontario?) and where you buy it (am I shopping in York Region, where neighbours live and my taxes go?) come to mind whenever I pull out my wallet.

Unfortunately, I think the harmonized sales tax coming into effect may push more people than normal to the U.S. on shopping trips.

But if you see me at an outlet mall in Buffalo, remember I'll be there for journalistic investigation purposes, and not the great deals on sneakers.

Stouffville resident Bernie O'Neill is a York Region Media Group editor.