

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.

Letters to the Editor,
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OPINION

**Stouffville
Sun-Tribune**

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Editorial

Censoring your right to know

The credo of any reputable community newspaper is that readers have the right to know important information affecting their lives.

With growing frequency, court publication bans make it difficult for newspapers to fulfill that obligation to the community.

On yorkregion.com, you'll read about a court case involving sexual assault crimes at a restaurant/bar. The courts have imposed a publication ban preventing us from telling you where the restaurant/bar is specifically located, only in "a city in Ontario".

The co-owner of a popular establishment was charged in 2006 and convicted in 2008 after complaints were filed by two female staff, court documents state. He recently lost his appeal on the sex assault charges.

Rarely do the courts and media identify victims of sexual assault. Under section 486 of the Criminal Code, a judge may permanently prohibit the publication of any identifying information about a complainant or witnesses in proceedings related to sexual offences.

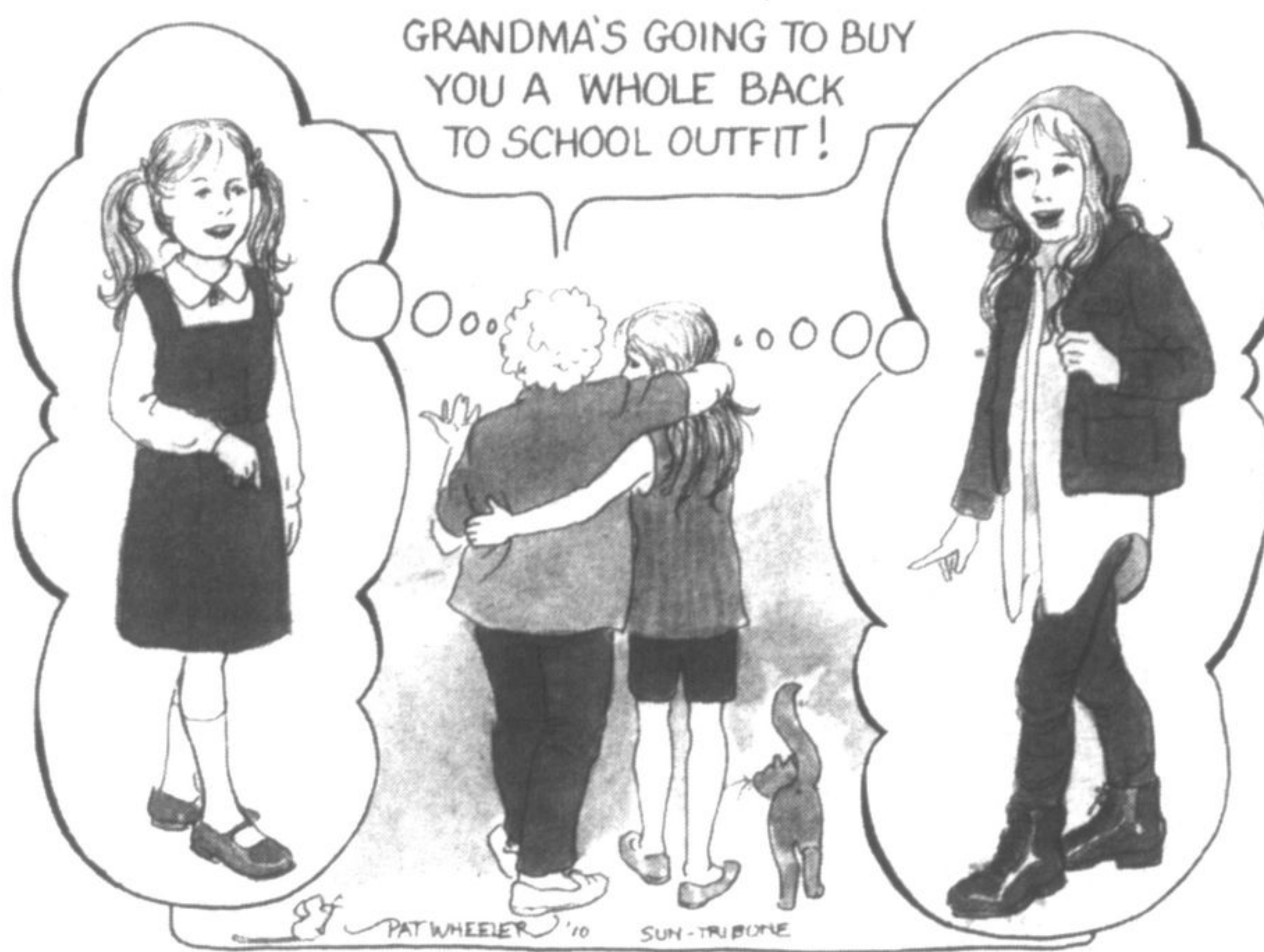
In a ruling April 16, 2008, Justice Peter Howden banned the publication of information identifying these victims. While we do not argue against the protection of the identity of sexual assault victims, the ban on identifying the name of the location of the bar goes too far. In fact, just last month, a judge permitted the name of a bar, Kelsey's, and its location, Ancaster, to be published in a sexual assault case.

Ironically, despite the sweeping ban in this appeals case, all its details, including the names of the victims, were initially published online. On being contacted by our court reporter, the court of appeals acknowledged an error had been made and the document was removed. The re-issued document contained the full publication ban.

With every ruling, a precedent is set. It is crucial your right to know what crimes are happening and where in your community are not shrouded in mystery.

An independent and impartial judiciary is one of the bedrocks of our democratic system. So, too, is the tenet of the open court, which not only helps to ensure all are treated equally before the law, but satisfies the public need for justice in individual cases and enhances public confidence in the judicial process itself.

It is recognized that without the media, the public would not be informed about what happens in our courts. There has to be a better balance between protecting the rights of victims and citizens right to know what occurs in the judicial system.



Letters to the Editor

Story ignored award winners

Re: Town's top grads named, July 22.

I was very disturbed to read your article on the 2010 graduates of Stouffville District Secondary School.

Both Wesley Graham and Sug-eetha Nithianathan are extremely hard-working students and deserving of these accolades. Both of these young people are very involved in school activities, as well as holding down part-time jobs.

One student, however, received her average after repeating her year. She also states she quit her job to focus on her marks.

It is not so difficult raising your marks when you have already gone through the course once and you do not have to work at a part-time job.

She should be commended for receiving her high average, but too many hard-working and deserving students were not acknowledged by you.

Sadly, you missed acknowledging the students who took the awards at graduation. Awards for volunteering, being a role model and leadership that speak volumes as to what type of outstanding young people they are.

Do you realize most of these award winners were also top scholars, many of whom held more than one part-time job?

They volunteered their time at school as well as in their community? They also completed their grade 12 only once and they also held honour-roll status all through high school.

SDSS works very hard to acknowledge students successes in all areas not just academics. It is unfortunate

HAVE YOUR SAY

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

you did not acknowledge these wonderful students and their successes, but chose to acknowledge only a high-academic average.

TRUDI APRILE
STOUFFVILLE

Put signs on your lawn

We have a civic election coming in October and candidates are now contacting residents to ask permission to put signs on their lawns.

Consider accepting a candidate's sign. And I will even say consider doing it for more than one candidate.

I certainly do not agree with every candidate and every plank in their platforms.

So, why would I like to assist people to be heard when I do not agree with them?

Simple. I might be wrong and what they have to say might be good to hear.

And I have this nagging apprehension that one day a big someone is going to say only persons who agree with them should be heard.

Too many children are buried in foreign lands because too many agreed with the big someone.

Besides, think how much fun it would be for your kids and what a lesson you could teach them about why Canada is a good place.

RON BOYD
STOUFFVILLE



Off The Top

with Jim Mason

Harry wrote the book on old school

Fitting that Harry Bowes was Whitchurch-Stouffville's public school board trustee for 29 years.

As politicians go, he was older than old school.

Mr. Bowes died Tuesday. Younger politicians will be elected in October's municipal election. None will match Harry's stamina. Few will put in the hours or show the commitment he did.

Being in local politics wasn't a part-time job for the former pharmacist and Second World War veteran. It was a calling and a commitment.

Many politicians, especially during election years, glad-hand at community events. Harry would be pouring coffee at the legion, answering the phone at the policing centre or running a fundraising event at a school fair.

He was my councillor for two terms, which coincided with a battle between residents and a developer over the look of a neighbouring subdivision.

Harry gave us frequent updates, often on our doorsteps or back yards. I was cutting the grass one morning, unaware Harry was in our yard and about to tap me on the shoulder. I nearly jumped over the fence, the mower kept cutting and Harry kept talking, unaware of what he had just done.

Harry phoned me two years ago to nicely tell me I would be driving him to the school that was opening in his name that week. Offended? No, I was honoured. We had a great morning, watching the kids greet the namesake of their new school.

Political newcomers should go to school on the Harry Bowes approach. Get involved. Return calls, keep commitments and attend meetings.

Miss you, Harry.
Jim Mason is editor of The Sun-Tribune.