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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

**Stouffville Sun-Tribune**

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## Editorial

### Anyone care election coming?

In just over two months, Whitchurch-Stouffville residents will have the opportunity to elect a new local government.

Municipal election day across Ontario is Oct. 25.

We know that far fewer than half of you who are eligible to vote will do so.

We know interest in municipal politics is right up there with NASCAR auto racing. In both cases, many who do watch just tune in for the crashes.

We know few of you have attended a meeting of Whitchurch-Stouffville council. Sessions are often only taken in by staff and a handful of council watchdogs, including candidates for election.

You probably have attended if a proposal was before council to put a landfill site, human or pet cemetery, water park or stock car track in your back yard. (All have been in front of Whitchurch-Stouffville politicians.)

And you'd probably at least consider attending if council raised your taxes by 15 per cent, sold off a park or reduced garbage pick-up to once a month.

There are real-life issues you should consider before this year's election:

- Is Whitchurch-Stouffville too far in debt? Look for this one to be front and centre on the fall election debate circuit.

Many council candidates think so. They believe the current council built or renovated too many big-ticket items (arenas, park, theatre, fire hall, works yard) during the last four years.

Members of council say-all but a small percentage of the debt will be paid off by developers. It's the cost of growing a once small town. Besides, new and existing residents are asking for the facilities, they say.

- If you wanted to attend a meeting of council, how does 3 p.m. on a Tuesday suit you? That's when roughly half of the meetings are held.

It's convenient to town staff and some councillors, but is it the best time for the community?

We'd like council to return to hosting only evening meetings. It's fairer to residents, the majority of whom work outside of town, and members of council who still hold down day jobs.

Still, does anyone care?

When council re-organized the six wards of Whitchurch-Stouffville - quick, name your ward - there was barely a peep from the electorate.

Who really cares out there?



## Letters to the Editor

### Attack on graduate inaccurate

Re: Story ignored award winners, letter to the editor by Trudi Aprile, Aug. 5, and Town's top grads named, July 22.

Ms Aprile made some hurtful and inaccurate comments regarding our daughter Laura's recent academic success. We would like to set the record straight regarding inaccuracies in her letter and the preceding article.

1. In returning to Grade 12, our daughter took several new courses in which she excelled. Her high average was helped by outstanding marks in these courses.

2. Laura contributed countless hours of community involvement during her entire high school career, including participation in the Markham and Uxbridge community concert bands, volunteering at the OSPCA, taking a leadership role on the Stouffville District Secondary School music council, assisting the music department staff, participating in every optional music ensemble (including one that she instigated) and voluntary tutoring of several younger students. Her typical day started at 7:30 a.m. and went past 5:30 p.m.

3. Being accepted to a top university music program involves participating in a very competitive and demanding auditioning process. Due to the fact she had broken her foot and already missed two months of work, the schedule conflicts of auditioning made taking further time off impossible and made it necessary to temporarily quit her job.

We are very proud of our daughter's accomplishments, which include scholarship offers from three universities.

We appreciate the supportive calls and e-mails from several people in the community who know Laura well and, like us, expressed disbelief that The Sun-Tribune saw fit to publish such a

### HAVE YOUR SAY

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

negative and uninformed attack on a talented and hard-working young person's accomplishments.

ANDREW MAKOWSKI  
& NANCY CROOME  
STOUFFVILLE

### Editorial on courts hypocritical

Re: Censoring your right to know editorial, Aug. 5.

I find it extremely ironic you write an entire editorial castigating the courts for withholding information in court cases when you do precisely the same in your paper.

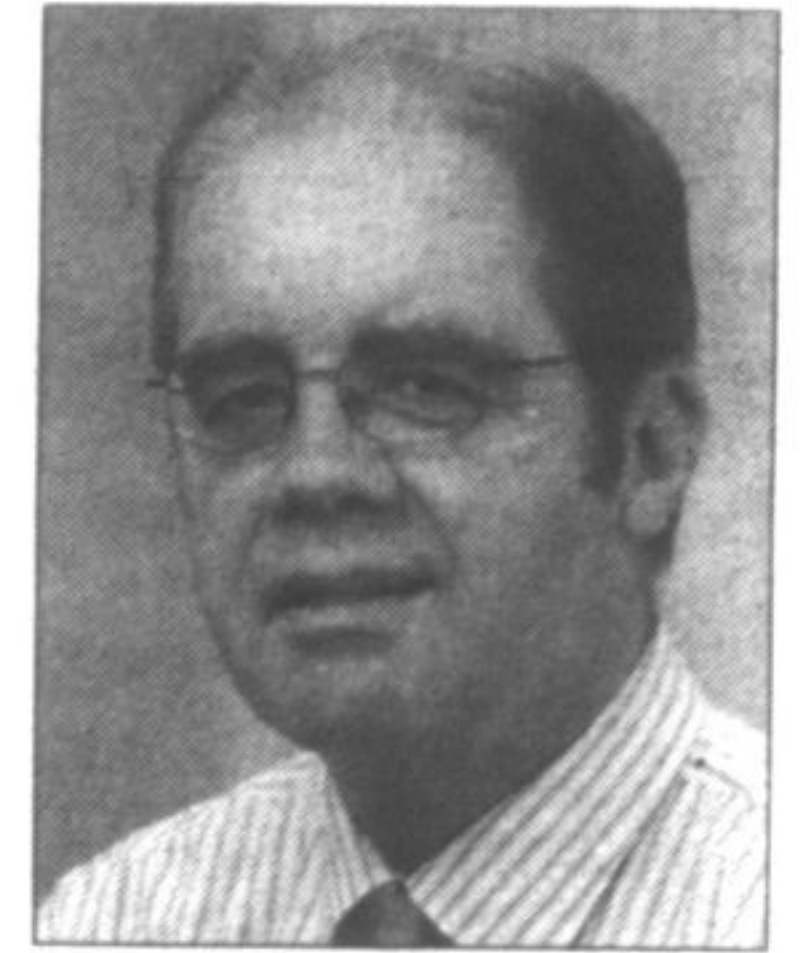
To quote the first paragraph of the editorial: "The credo of any reputable community newspaper is that readers have the right to know important information affecting their lives."

I have frequently noticed this "reputable community newspaper," very seldom, if ever, reports the names of our neighbours who get in trouble with the law.

There have been countless cases where the names of drunk drivers, marijuana grow-op owners, drug dealers and others criminals have never been identified by your paper. Do we not have the "right to know" who these people are? These low-lives certainly affect our lives.

In future, Mr. Editor, please practise what you are preaching. We do have the right - and the need - to know who is living among us.

D.R. WILKINSON  
STOUFFVILLE



### Off The Top

with Jim Mason

### To name, or not name

Big-city GTA TV, radio and print reporters jockeyed for position on Main Street across from what was then Stouffville Missionary Church in 1993 for a York Regional Police news conference, announcing an Uxbridge man had been charged with sexually assaulting two eight-year-old boys in the church.

Two years later, when Donald MacNaughton was found guilty, our reporter was the lone media person in the courtroom.

Innocent or guilty, was that fair to the victims and the accused?

Unfortunately, it's all too common for people to jump to the conclusion if someone is charged with a crime, then he must be guilty and a "criminal". But that's not always the case, obviously.

If our newspaper names someone accused of a crime, our policy is to follow the case through to its conclusion: guilty or innocent.

Why don't we publish articles for every charge laid, with the names of every person charged?

York police laid 10,847 charges last year. It's virtually impossible for us to follow all of the accused through the justice system.

So, we use our best judgment not only in choosing which crime cases are of highest public interest, but also in selecting which cases we can follow to the end.

Typically, the cases in which we name people charged - if not banned from doing so by the courts or Criminal Code - are major crimes, such as homicides, sexual assault, fraud and theft.

We'll name the accused if he's a public figure, too.

The cases can stretch over several months, if not years, as they travel through the system.

Our policy isn't legislated by government or the courts, but it's commonly used and it's fair, in our opinion.

Jim Mason is editor of The Sun-Tribune.