

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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Editorial

Kick candidate tires before election day

With the municipal election less than a month away, campaigns are heating up in all our communities.

In some cases, five or six candidates are battling it out for a single position. In Vaughan, for example, there are 63 candidates on the ballot this time around, compared to 54 in 2006 and 44 in 2003.

But the question voters must ask is how many of these hopefuls are viable candidates?

Having a choice and exercising your vote is a cornerstone of democracy. Yet equally important is having candidates running for the right reasons — to launch a strong campaign rather than simply being an additional name on the ballot. In many of our communities, we're beginning to encounter some of the latter.

"Why are you calling me? Where did you get my number," one mayoral candidate responded when contacted by a York Region Media Group reporter.

He also mentioned he doesn't really want to run, but is doing so to give voters a choice, rather than see his opponent acclaimed.

Elsewhere, a candidate filed just before the deadline, but is not providing contact information to voters or the media.

Others are being equally shy, refusing to attend debates and not making themselves available for interviews. These "phantom" candidates do little to advance the concept of democracy.

In some ways, being a voter is like buying a new car. You are faced with a myriad of choices and it's incumbent on you to do your research and make the right choice, rather than falling for a slick sales pitch.

All-candidate meetings are planned in all of our communities in the coming weeks. Set aside time to attend one and challenge those seeking your vote on the issues and where they stand. Kick the tires, so to speak.

You can also become better informed by following the races in this newspaper and at yorkregion.com

Municipal terms are now four years. That's a long time to be saddled with a politician who isn't qualified or doesn't represent you, as a taxpayer.

Which one will keep your property taxes in check and spend your hard-earned money wisely? Who will ensure growth occurs in the proper locations and service levels aren't negatively impacted?

While it appears some candidates haven't done their homework, it's vital you do yours.

And no matter what, get out and vote Oct. 25.

MARKHAM FAIR STARTS TODAY



Letters to the Editor

Many came together for candidates meeting

Re: Money matters to Stouffville candidates, Sept. 25.

Last Thursday's all-candidates meeting was a real challenge with so many candidates, but the challenges meant we've pulled together an exceptional program for the citizens of our town.

The meeting has been a tradition of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library for almost 30 years. Elections were every two years in the beginning, then three years and now we have four-year terms.

We have seen growth of our community and the complexity of the tasks our elected officials are responsible for on our behalf has grown.

It's no surprise with the increase in population we have seen an increase in the number of candidates who step forward to offer their service to our town.

Our hope is those who attended the meeting were helped in their decision-making process.

As much as I can now relax with the event behind me this year, as I unwind and pack up my notes, I feel a wave of gratitude wash over me. So many volunteers helped to bring this event to you.

Library board volunteers sorted the question cards. Kathleen Brent, who was a greeter and set-up person on the evening, also contributed a lot of time to set up the library display of candidate flyers and newspaper articles. The display will be maintained until the election, if you'd like to drop into the library.

As part of that display, for the first time, a basic document describing the election process for newcomers

HAVE YOUR SAY

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

has been translated by volunteers into various languages: Carolyn Nordheimer James (French), Fabio Rizi (Italian), Raphael Han (Korean), Hwei-ling Lam (Chinese), Maureen Raman (Tamil) and Aisha Nadeem (Urdu).

Also for the first time, the event was aired live on WhiStle Radio. Its volunteers certainly picked up the ball and ran with it.

Question presenter Stephen Sword helped to provide a smooth question period and, as usual, Stouffville Sun-Tribune editor Jim Mason was a calm, efficient moderator.

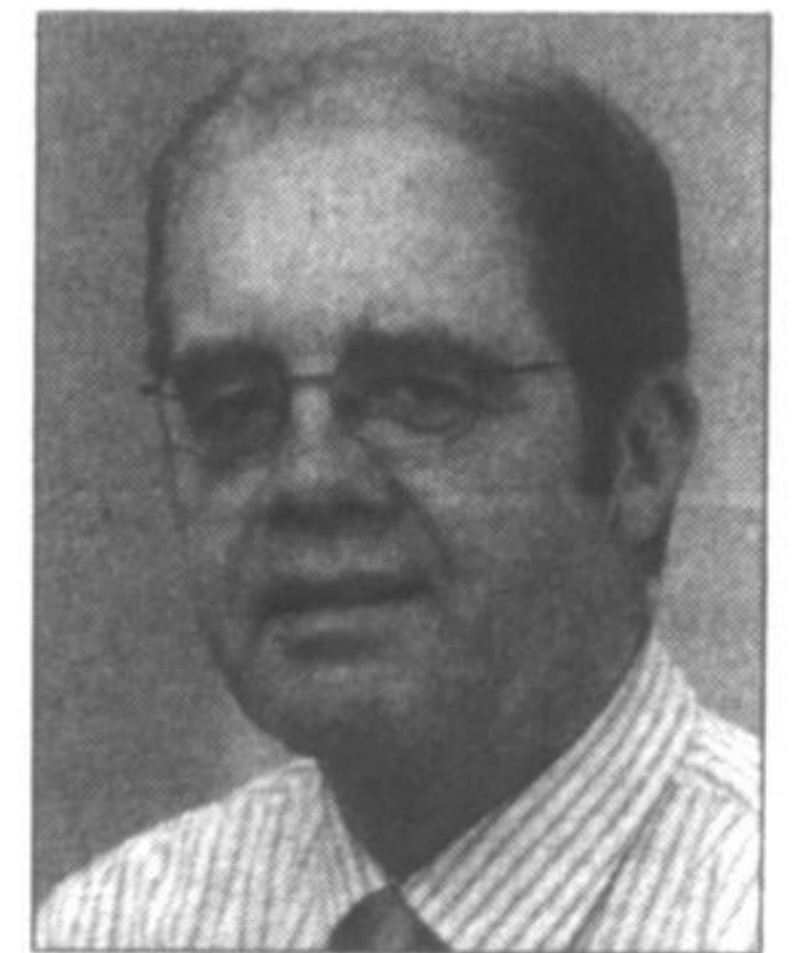
Thanks go to The Sun-Tribune, the event's co-sponsor, for all the promotion, including articles about the meeting and the new twists in the process.

At Stouffville District Secondary School, the caretakers who set up and the students who managed the sound system were wonderful in helping the evening run smoothly.

Finally, a big thanks to all who attended or listened in. It's been a real joint effort to provide this program and I appreciate all the help.

CATHERINE SWORD
CO-ORDINATOR OF PUBLIC SERVICES
WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE
PUBLIC LIBRARY

You can read letters, columns, editorials and stories from The Sun-Tribune on yorkregion.com



Off The Top

with Jim Mason

Can we cut debt, tackle new projects at same time?

Former MPP Bill Ballinger liked to tell a joke about politicians promising all things to all people.

A talented few were so good at sucking and blowing at the same time, they could re-channel Lake Ontario and turn the Stouffville-Uxbridge area into a thriving fresh-water port.

I was reminded of the story during last Thursday's all-candidates meeting at Stouffville District Secondary School.

Most candidates spoke of keeping taxes low and not taking on additional debt. Fair enough.

But almost in the same breath, some spoke of building youth and seniors centres, a curling rink, an addition to the library and a new Latcham Gallery.

Sadly, last week's meeting may have been your only chance to question a group of candidates at one time.

Doubly sad, considering the number of voters we've heard from who were tied up with school barbecues or the Whitchurch-Stouffville Chamber of Commerce's annual business awards dinner last Thursday.

At this printing, there was no news on any other pre-election gatherings. The chamber, which normally hosts a mayoral debate, is instead taking part in a Rogers TV event being recorded in Newmarket this morning.

But, with more than three weeks until election day, there's still time to hold your own neighbourhood meeting. Rent a room in a community centre or school, set a date and inform your neighbours.

Remember to call the candidates.

We do know they have no conflicts, at least when it comes to debate nights.

Jim Mason is editor of The Sun-Tribune.