

**Stouffville Sun-Tribune**

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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

### Citizens must be involved

Many communities in York Region are under new leadership for the next four years.

New municipal politicians are being sworn in as they take vows to lead our communities with honesty and integrity for the betterment of us, who elected them.

Whitchurch-Stouffville is an exception. The mayor and six councillors were re-elected Oct. 25.

These men and women are responsible for some of the most important decisions affecting our lifestyles, which will shape, over the next four years, how our neighbourhoods will look.

That responsibility must also be shared by us. We have to hold elected officials to their promises and keep them on their collective toes as they debate where and how our tax dollars are spent.

Decisions or initiatives on the environment, transit, roads, growth and recreation are pivotal to a growing number of families that demand more bang for their tax buck. We need to be involved in the budget process and politicians need to make that process more user-friendly and more accessible to us.

For example, do you know how much your town pays its library staff annually? Would you be shocked to know it is likely more than \$1 million, even for some of the smallest communities?

This is just one area of the larger municipal structure and while literacy is a vital component to success, are we getting good return on the way our money is being used in this area today?

These are the types of questions we need to ask our councillors as they take on budgets and set tax rates (hikes) for the next year.

In Georgina, for example, so few people know about how their money is spread around, council is considering taking budget talks on the road or making the process more interactive on the town website. It's a great idea that could have an impact.

While the face of some municipal governments remains the same, others have had quite a slate of new faces, such as in Vaughan and Aurora, where political rifts and personal battles plagued former councils over the past term.

But whether or not your community's government is new, throughout the election campaign, journalists heard people want change in the way municipalities operate.

Make sure you know what your elected officials are doing and, just as importantly, make sure they know you're paying attention and will hold them accountable.

...GAVE HIM A LITTLE MONEY TO DO HIS OWN CHRISTMAS SHOPPING - WE'LL SEE HOW HE DOES!



## Letters to the Editor

### Move New Year's Eve party to another Stouffville park

Re: Stouffville New Year's Eve party cancelled, Nov. 25

My family and I were saddened and surprised the town decided to cancel this year's New Year's Eve festivities in Memorial Park.

We understand construction of the ball diamond prevents a safe venue for the fun-filled family event. But why not "think outside the box" and choose a new venue?

We are lucky enough to have great parks in our town. Choose another location. Maybe this would encourage some of our new neighbourhoods to feel involved in town activities.

There is a great park near our new home. Sunnyridge Avenue and Hoover Park Drive has a large park with an adjacent open field for fireworks, and the town even builds and maintains an ice rink here every winter.

My family and I have enjoyed this event year after year, since our children were small enough to ride in a wagon, to more recent years where we can meet up with friends, classmates and neighbours to enjoy this wonderful event. We would stroll over to a friends home after the fireworks to ring in the new year.

Please Mayor Emerson, make it happen for us.

MARIKE & KEN WILSON  
STOUFFVILLE

### Don't throw candy during Santa Claus parade

Last Saturday, my husband and I, like many other parents, took our children to see the Kinsmen Santa Claus parade in Stouffville.

### HAVE YOUR SAY

► What do you think of these issues or others? E-mail letters to the editor to [jmason@yrmg.com](mailto:jmason@yrmg.com)

We loved the band from Sudbury. We loved the motorized bathtub. We loved the chicken on the boom truck. And, of course, Santa.

We loved a lot of the entries. We thank all the organizers and participants for a mostly enjoyable afternoon.

But it has to be said, I say mostly enjoyable because we felt thoroughly disrespected by a few of the participants giving out candy canes to the kids. Never in my life have I had candy thrown at me.

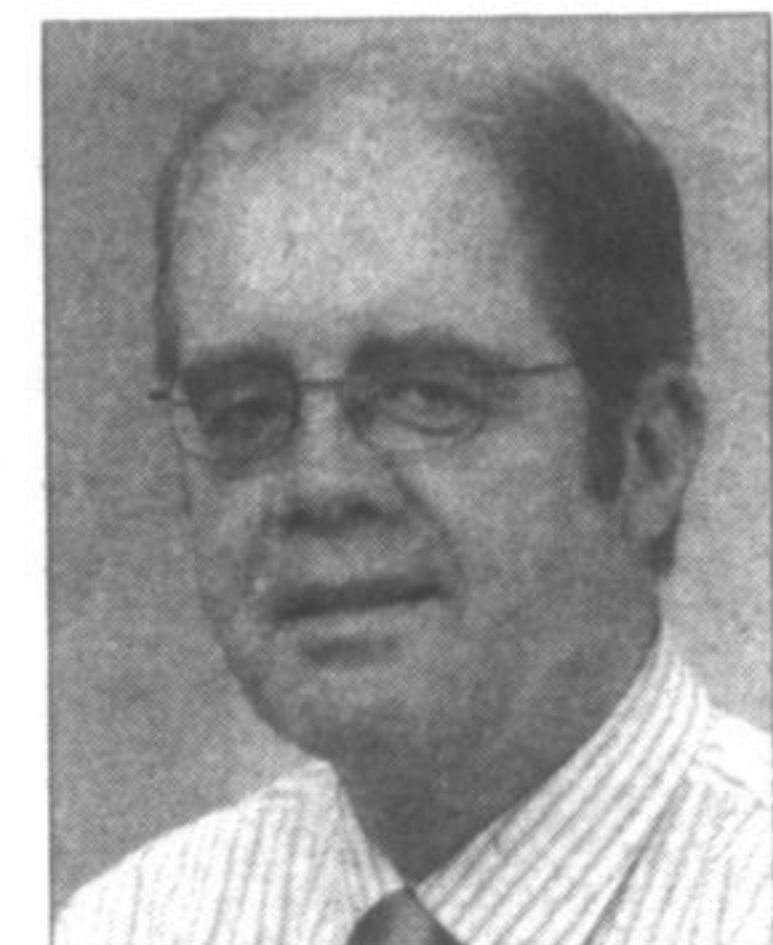
Never in my life have I had to watch children scurry in the street for a candy cane or chocolate ball.

Never in my life have I had candy actually dumped into the gutter at my feet. Yes, actually dumped. Turn the box upside down, shaken for the dregs, at our feet, dumped.

Another boy walked past, arm trailing behind him, dropping candy canes into the gutter at our feet. It wouldn't have taken anything much for him to bend his elbow 90 degrees and at least drop them in the children's lap; we were sitting right at the curb.

We don't go to the parade every year for candy canes, we go for Santa. However, if your entry in the parade is going to give candy to the children, please be respectful enough to pass them into their laps or hands.

L. PATERSON  
BALLANTRAE



Off The Top

with Jim Mason

### High school sports deserve better

It's another of the hidden gems of entertainment in our increasingly suburban community available every week in your neighbourhood. Free of charge.

High school sports get a lot of ink in the local media, for good reason. But how many local fans can say they've seen a rugby, soccer or hockey game? How many could find the gym in Stouffville District Secondary School, on their own?

Exhibit A: Monday afternoon's boys basketball game between Stouffville and Brother Andre of Markham. It's a neighbourhood battle, with many of the players knowing each other from club ball and school wars during the years.

The 100-plus in the stands saw a see-saw game ultimately won by Brother Andre. They also saw Nicholas McEwan, arguably the best hoopster to come out of Stouffville in the last 25 years. The guy can sky, when he's not hitting more three-pointers than your average NBA star. He'd be worth the price of admission alone, if there was one.

Problem? The vast majority of games across the region take place when our population of commuters is at work or travelling home.

I'm probably treading on dangerous ground with the teachers union when I suggest evening games, especially on Friday nights. It's old school, a chance for communities to rally around their teenagers and teachers. A chance for the school board to show off the multi-million-dollar facilities we paid for. It was never more evident than during the brief return of football at Stouffville earlier this century. Rah, rah and all that stuff. Good clean fun.

But it's not going to happen overnight, if ever. Until then, go to yraa.com for the local high school sports schedules. Check out a game, if you can. The public is always welcome.

And there are plenty of good seats available.

Jim Mason is editor of The Sun-Tribune.