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905-640-2612
Fax 905-640-8778

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ADVERTISING
905-640-2612

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

DISTRIBUTION
905-294-8244

EDITORIAL

Editor
Jim Mason
jmason@yrmg.com

ADVERTISING

Advertising Manager
Stephen Mathieu
smathieu@yrmg.com

Marketing Manager

Mike Banville
mbanville@yrmg.com

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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,
The Sun-Tribune
6290 Main St.
Stouffville, ON
L4A 1G7
jmason@yrmg.com

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6290 Main St.
Stouffville, ON, L4A 1G7
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PUBLISHER **Ian Proudfoot**

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Debra Kelly

BUSINESS
MANAGER
Robert Lazurko

DIRECTOR,
PRODUCTION
Jackie Smart

DIRECTOR,
OPERATIONS
Barry Black

DIRECTOR,
ADVERTISING
Nicole Fletcher

DIRECTOR,
DISTRIBUTION
Tanya Pacheco

Editorial

Town council's greatest hits

We, the media and other taxpayers, are quick to criticize politicians and bureaucrats of all stripes at all levels.

Check out our letters to the editor. It's human nature.

But government also does many things correctly for our benefit. And it, like all of us, deserves a pat on the back when it gets it right.

In Whitchurch-Stouffville, unprecedented growth during the past six years has brought on growing pains, some expected and others not so much.

We knew there would be dirt and noise from the acres of homes, businesses and industries erected on the edges of urban Stouffville.

And the jury is still out on the redevelopment of Stouffville's inner-city gem, Memorial Park.

The renovated ball park is a beauty, but the new toboggan hill and road running through it all remain question marks.

Still, there are many things we like in the new Whitchurch-Stouffville, including:

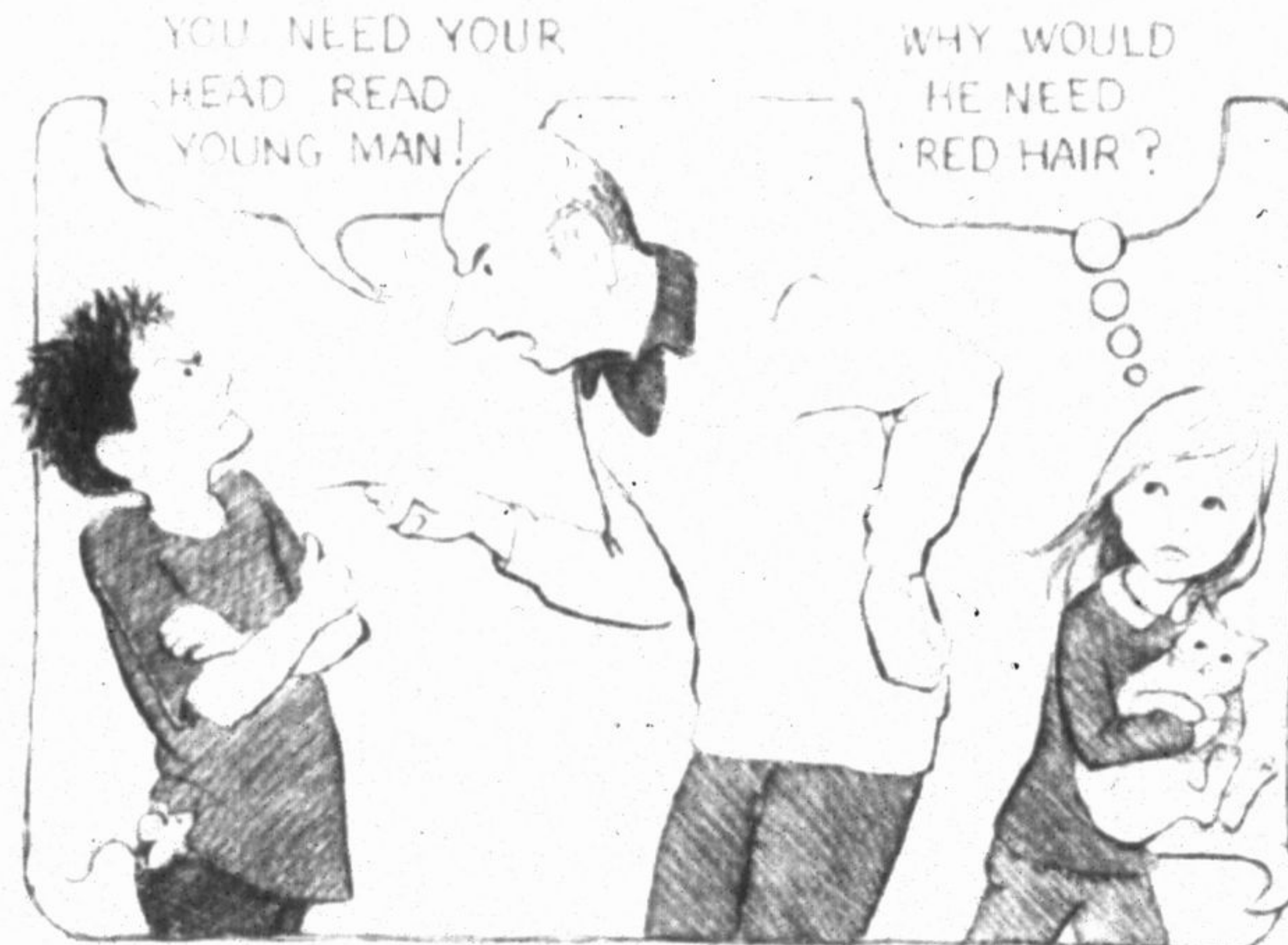
- The widening of Main Street (and eventually Stouffville Road to Hwy. 404) has eased traffic issues and beautified the western entrance to the community.

- The new signage program that continues to recognize our rural hamlets. The new blue signs that will eventually dot the entire town are well done. (Thank former councillor Margot Marshall for initiating this program during the 1980s.)

- The Stouffville Clippers Sports Complex. The twin-rink facility on Weldon Road took some heat (some of it anonymously) when it opened last year. But it gets solid reviews from first-time visitors, including a North American-wide design competition that honoured it this fall.

- Downtown Stouffville remains a work in progress, but there are solid signs, with the opening of new higher-end retail shops during recent years. The municipality has pumped thousands of dollars and staff time into the downtown core. There's more work to be done, but councillors can't force store owners to make improvements or rent out their spaces. Private business is at play here, too.

- Purchasing the former Cook Canada building and renovating it into the new municipal offices was a no-brainer. Renting doesn't make sense when you can pay off a purchase this quickly. Taxpayers will look back on this a shrewd investment of their money.



Letters to the Editor

Town giving residents choices

Re: Why did council approve second car wash?, letter to the editor by Mark Milne, Sept. 29.

Council approved a second car wash - which we have been working on for more than three years - for the same reasons it approved a second doctor, dentist, lawyer, accountant, bank, food store, drug store, restaurant, hairdresser, video store, doughnut shop, jeweller, gas station, convenience store, car dealership etc, etc.

Common sense says a society without a choice would probably not be a pleasant place to live.

GRAHAM HOAD
STOUFFVILLE

Little light at life event

On a recent Sunday afternoon, I stood on the northeast corner of Hwy. 7 and McCowan Road in Markham for an hour holding a sign during the Life Chain event across the GTA.

I noticed many things. Some passersby applauded us, some did discouraging things with their fingers and many were just curious, a little confused and even a little embarrassed at being shown the message of the event.

The bus driver just shook his head in disgust. All of that is fine; glad you thought about it for a moment.

I noticed the people standing with me. My beloved wife, that big friendly Irishman who is the priest at St. Mark's Church in Stouffville and a few people I actually knew. That is interesting in itself, as many were strangers to me.

But I did notice the signs my fellows were holding. Many seemed dark in nature. Many right-to-lifers would say "yes, but the words are true".

I would agree the words on the signs

HAVE YOUR SAY

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

are true, though in a different way than some. But I found no hope, no help, no light in the signs.

Two young men came up to my wife and started talking. Yes, you guessed it; one of them had a very upset, pregnant girlfriend. My wife pointed them to the Markham Crisis Pregnancy Centre.

Offering some light in a dark time.

So Life Chain organizers, please hear this. The signs need to offer the truth and more light. When we are in a dark place - we need hope.

I saw little light at the event and it saddened me.

RON BOYD
STOUFFVILLE

Election signs litter landscape

Why was it that the Liberal winner, Helena Jaczek, still had to take her election signs down in the Ballantrae area last week? Election day was Oct. 6.

And why hadn't the town done anything about it?

I hate election time. Not because I had to listen to Tim Hudak repeat himself every day, but because of the litter, I mean election signs that are often left to blow in the wind.

Thanks for the trash, Ms Jaczek. One last question: why the hell are candidates still wasting their money on signs?

Welcome to 2011 and don't be scared.

NICK HOCHER
WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE



Off The Top

with Jim Mason

The other side of Eldred King

In the Superman comics, Clark Kent wears the superhero suit under his everyday dress.

Eldred King could relate. The former mayor of Whitchurch-Stouffville and chairperson of York Region had his own alter ego.

Mr. King died Friday following a lengthy battle with stomach cancer. He was 84. His funeral was held yesterday.

This town was a shadow of its current self 30 years ago. Still, being the combined mayor and CAO was no small task, especially when you were only part time.

That was Eldred King.

He was a cattle farmer the rest of the day, driving a pickup truck and sporting his trademark striped overalls.

At a council meeting or in his main-floor office in what's now the Lebovic Centre for Arts & Entertainment - Nineteen on the Park, there was no hint of the mayor's other job. He always styled freshly pressed Harry Rosen suits over Oxfords polished to a gleam.

He did double duty for an amazing 32 years before retiring from political office in 1997. Few can match that longevity in elected or appointed office.

Journalists and politicians are often at odds over how and why stories are written. Mr. King and this then young editor fit that profile during the early 1980s here.

In his retirement, we saw each other in a different light. At the Stouffville Arena he saw built as mayor, he was happy to be just another minor hockey grandpa.

Sharing a pew on Sunday morning, wearing the Harry Rosens, he was always quick with a kind word and a firm handshake.

Or driving through our subdivision, en route to check on his cattle near Goodwood, a friendly wave always came out of the overalls.

Rest in peace, Eldred.

Jim Mason is editor of The Sun-Tribune.