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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

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Streets tell stories

Re: *What's behind a street name? Plenty*, March 24

The informative article on street names had good information on many of their origins.

I have often asked that the bylaw include the reasons for naming the streets, so others may easily look them up rather than dig through books, maps and family histories. Sometimes the connections are unclear to new residents. I think I will clip and save this one.

Some of the old maps I have date back to the first village lots David Gibson laid out for Abraham Stouffer. Although the names were not part of the survey, the location and dimensions are set out.

Main Street, as we call it now, has had various names. It started out being the Townline. This would be because it divided the townships of Whitchurch and Markham. If you lived on the south side you lived in Markham Township. Living on

the north side you were part of Whitchurch. This did not change until we were incorporated as a village in 1877.

In 1854, George McPhillips surveyed for development and divided Main Street into lots. Names at that time had Main as the Plank Road.

Well, yes, Edward Wheeler, the lumber mill guy, provided planks for the improvement of the road. He also contributed to the plank road going to Ringwood and, finally, through Scarborough to Kingston Road.

Some names have changed over time. Lloyd Street or Lloyd Avenue. When did that happen? George Street was Park Street, leading to the old arena. We could not have Park Drive and Park Street.

Some may even recall Main Street was called Hwy. 47.

I often wonder if the children walking to school or studying local history ever think about the names or see the signs.

FRED ROBBINS  
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## Hey, sisters, speak out before bras get burned

It's enough to make me want to burn my bra. Why, oh, why, do some men think they have the right to tell women what they can or can't do with their bodies?

In the United States, women's private parts are on the public agenda, thanks to some Republican candidates vying for the party's presidential nomination, senators, state legislators and pundits.

Contraception, abortion and vaginas are centre stage in the social conservative bid to grab women by the hair and drag them and their rights back into the cave — a topic my sister and I discussed when I recently visited New York City, her home for more than a decade.

I acted the smug Canadian, appalled that a woman's right to make decisions affecting her body and life were actually up for debate in America, the country where she is raising her little U.S. citizens.

"This just wouldn't happen in Canada," I asserted.

Presidential candidate Rick Santorum opposes birth control and abortion, even in cases of incest and rape, while Mitt Romney is targeting family



Debora Kelly

planning programs.

Their Senate cohorts argue women's contraceptives shouldn't be covered by health insurance if employers oppose birth control.

Meanwhile, radio host Rush Limbaugh labelled a student a "slut" and "prostitute" for testifying at a congressional panel for insurance coverage of birth control.

Republican legislators in Texas and Virginia want women to undergo invasive vaginal probes before getting abortions, while the Oklahoma Senate gave the legal right of "personhood" to embryos at conception.

A few outnumbered female legislators are pointing out the offensiveness — or is it ludicrousness — of the attack on women's rights. In Oklahoma, one proposed a "spilled semen" amendment that would make it an offence against unborn children for a man to ejaculate anywhere but into a vagina. In Virginia, another said rectal exams should be a requirement before men get Viagra.

The sombre reality is some women have lost the ability to make life-altering choices, even though the majority of North American women use or have used birth control, regardless of religion. The vast majority of men and women believe in contraception, even if that means not denying it to those choosing to use it.

My false sense of security and smugness vanished shortly after returning home to learn Conservative backbencher Stephen Woodworth will argue in Parliament this month that fetuses should be legally defined as human beings.

He insists he's acting as a private member, while his government insists it has no intention of reopening the abortion debate.

But Markham letter writer Greg Han-

nah insists it's the Harper government's sneaky back-door way of doing exactly that, following in the path of several states where the pill has effectively been outlawed and doctors can be charged with murder for performing abortions.

"Where is the outrage from the ladies," he asks.

He reminds today's young women it was only in the 1960s and '70s that birth control and abortion were illegal and difficult to obtain. It wasn't that long ago either when it was legal to pay a woman less than a man for the same job.

"I, a baby boomer male, should not be re-fighting this battle for your body on your behalf," he writes. "You need to speak up now and speak loudly. You should not be allowing anyone with a penis to decide what you can and cannot do with your body."

Thank you, Mr. Hannah, for encouraging me to speak out and I call on all York Region women to do the same. Tell your MP and the prime minister exactly where you stand on this issue, before any bras have to be burned.

Debora Kelly is editor in chief of the York Region Media Group.