

OPINION



PUBLISHER *Ian Proudfoot*

GENERAL MANAGER *John Willems*

Stouffville
Sun-Tribune

6290 Main St.
Stouffville, ON L4A 1G7
www.yorkregion.com

Sun-Tribune

905-640-2612
Fax: 905-640-8778
Toll-free: 1-800-743-3353

DISTRIBUTION
905-294-8244

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Debora Kelly
dkelly@yvmg.com

DIRECTOR, BUSINESS
ADMINISTRATION
Robert Lazurko

DIRECTOR,
REGIONAL PRODUCTS
AND CLASSIFIED
Debra Weller

DIRECTOR,
PRODUCTION
Jackie Smart

DIRECTOR,
DISTRIBUTION
Ianva Pacheco

DIRECTOR,
MARKETING AND SALES
DEVELOPMENT
Gord Paolucci

Editor
Jim Mason
jmason@yvmg.com

Advertising Manager
Dave Williams
dwilliams@yvmg.com

Circulation
Co-ordinator
Daphne Lewis

York Region Media
Group community
newspapers

The Sun-Tribune
published every
Thursday and Saturday is a
division of the Metroland
Media Group Ltd., a wholly
owned subsidiary of Torstar
Corporation.

Delivery issues?
For all your delivery
inquiries, please
contact
yrcustomer@yvmg.com

LETTERS POLICY

All submissions must be
less than 400 words and
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.
E-mail: jmason@yvmg.com

Ontario
Press
Council
FBSA
Canadian
Circulation
Audit Board
Member
CCAB

SATURDAY FORUM

Back yard swim school deserves to stay afloat

The Whitchurch-Stouffville committee of adjustment recently rejected an application for a minor variance permitting a back yard swim school on Church Street.

Despite several letters of recommendation and a collection of signatures in support, the committee denied the school the opportunity to continue operating.

An appeal has been launched, town officials confirmed this week.

Andrea James has operated a back yard swim school for six years and has gained a reputation for offering challenging, personalized lessons for all levels. In particular, Mrs. James has a talent for coaxing skittish swimmers into the pool and building confidence with her small group approach.

The issues that ultimately shut down the school began as a complaint made by a resident of Church Street over noise and street traffic concerns.

Objectively speaking, as one who enjoys a large and private back yard, I understand the potential for noise is a valid concern. Practically speaking, however, noise concerns should not be attributed to the operation of a swim school.

I own a pool. I frequently have four or five children swimming in it and I am certain that recreation time is far noisier than instructional time. As someone who pays for back yard swim lessons I have seen children receiving instruction and know it requires listening, dialogue and respect; there is simply no excess noise during lessons.

I would think my neighbourhood is a pretty good test for noise tolerance. We live next to a newborn and across the street from a seniors residence and have received no complaints regarding noise during instructional times or otherwise.

Ironically, neighbours on our street have commented positively when they hear children splashing in the pool. It reminds them that our historic neighbourhood is being shared by a new generation of young families interested in preserving the small town sentiment along with the century homes.

In reality, if one compares other summer programs with Mrs. James'



Tracey Hardie

swimming school, there is more noise to be found on dry land. Outdoor summer camps generate a great deal of noise, but no one complains about the fact this occurs four feet from several downtown yards. Bottom line: a swim school operating with a maximum of five students at a time generates much less noise than recreational swimming or other summer activities involving children.

I understand that in an effort to negate the concerns of a minority of neighbours, Mrs. James requested parents park away from Church Street and refrain from observing lessons. Not a single parent was unwilling to comply to ensure the continuation of the swim school. Given Mrs. James' close proximity to Main Street, inviting parents to peruse the downtown core for 30 minutes I would think is in the town's best interest, particularly during the summer Farmers' Market.

The swim school provided a viable solution for many working parents. Lessons during the summer at the Whitchurch-Stouffville Leisure Centre are quite limited. There was only one viable time slot for my children this year. Mrs. James' school, on the other hand, offered several options and parents did not have to clamber for a lesson spot during 6 a.m. registration.

It would be a shame to lose this home-based swim school as an alternative in future years. As we push towards greater participation in civic activity in light of the upcoming election, take a moment to consider where you stand on the issue of supporting small businesses in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Tracey Hardie is a law student and member of the Stouffville Sun-Tribune's Community Links Panel.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Canada needs more roundabouts

As I sat in my car at the intersection of 16th Avenue and the Don Cousens Parkway, wasting gas and spewing smog into the atmosphere, I thought: "This would be the perfect spot for a roundabout".

Why, I wondered, are York Region, and indeed Ontario, road engineers so loath to use a design that has been successfully used in Britain and the rest of Europe for years?

Roundabouts have many benefits. They ease traffic flow, hugely reduce injuries as they eliminate left turns and virtually eliminate T-bone collisions. They don't fail when the power goes off. They save money.

Consider the cost of buying and installing light standards, the lights themselves and their timing mechanisms, then providing hydro and maintenance — forever!

Perhaps, I thought, Canada doesn't have the space to install them. But in some English villages the roundabout is just a painted circle in the middle of an intersec-

tion.

Perhaps Canadians are too dumb to drive around a circle. But thousands visit Europe every year, rent cars and return home no worse for the experience.
Beats me.

STRATTON HOLLAND
MARKHAM

Minimum wages far less south of border

Re: Groups rally for minimum wage hike, Aug. 15

I have a question for those who are proponents of raising the minimum wage in Ontario.

Do you cross-border shop in the United States to save money because prices are much lower there?

If you do, I hope you can look at yourself in the mirror when you return.

I realize wages are not the only reason prices are cheaper in the U.S., but it's a large part of the issue.

For your information, the minimum wage in New York State is \$7.25 per hour and for Pennsylvania it's \$4.25 per hour.

JOHN KING
NEWMARKET

Proposed pay hike will cost us all

Re: Groups rally for minimum wage hike, Aug. 15

Small businesses are already suffering while paying minimum wage.

Raise those wages and many will fold, but most will need to raise their prices accordingly, so everyone suffers from higher prices. Also consider the hard worker who, after so many years of dedicated service, finally gets a raise to what will soon be the new minimum wage.

Only the government looks at this scenario as being normal because it is not its money being spent.

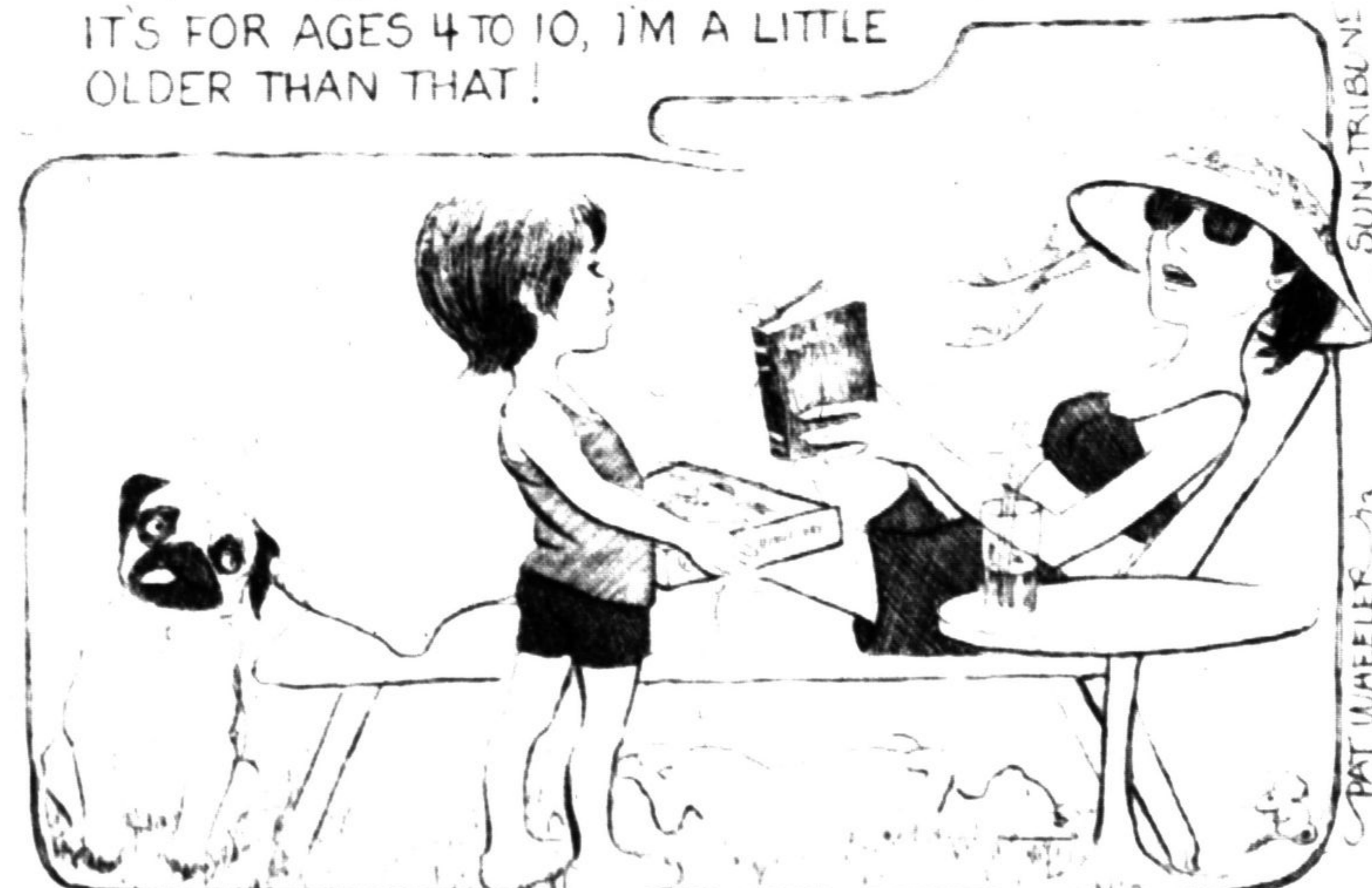
Don't like minimum wages?

Work even harder and/or smarter. The last generation overcame minimum wage by working maximum hours; working 80 hours, which doubles a 40-hour weekly paycheque. Simple math.

No increase in expenses to the business, so no need to raise prices for everyone.

MORI GOLDLIST
RICHMOND HILL

SORRY HONEY... THAT GAME SAYS
IT'S FOR AGES 4 TO 10, I'M A LITTLE
OLDER THAN THAT!



PAT WHEELER
SUN-TRIBUNE