

OPINION



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COLUMN

Do you need to brush up your election IQ, Stouffville?

I hope you'll tell me I'm wrong. Again. I'm worried about our collective election IQ, fellow Whitchurch-Stouffvillians.

I'm not concerned when several people call me and ask which ward they live in, even if I don't work in the town clerk's office on Sandiford Drive.

(I look it up for them, just like Kramer in that Seinfeld episode when he received all those calls for Movie Phone.)

Our wards are not marked on our tax bills — excellent point, caller. And the boundaries have recently changed to better reflect our population explosion.

And, save for the throes of an election campaign, how often do you really care which ward you live in? It's not like we have "You are now entering beautiful Ward 3" signs at the border.

That people inquired tells me they're engaged.

But I am worried when people have no clue who is running, especially when we have a potentially exciting five-man race for mayor without an incumbent in sight.

Or so I thought. At the mere mention of the election, our server in a Stouffville eatery assumed Wayne Emmerson was seeking re-election and proceeded to give pointed editorial comment on the mayor's 17-year career in office. Luckily for his tip, there were no members of the Emmerson family in our large party.

Another resident was wise enough to know Emmerson is seeking the chairpersonship of York Region. But, she, too, assumed he was running for mayor, just in case the other mayors and regional councillors of York didn't give him the job after the election.

Wrong again, Stouffville. The roast of the mayor, the bobble heads and the farewell flash mob at his final council meeting this month were sure



Off The Top
 with *Jim Mason*

signs Emmerson is not running. Maybe it's too early.

Our front lawns haven't been wallpapered with candidate signage yet. That will begin next week. Only the regional roads are fair game until Tuesday.

We've had two mayoral (Phil Bannon, Richard Bartley) and one councillor (Michael Humphreys) candidate at our door to date.

We've seen spotty attendance at candidate meetings.

Maybe it's because we're too darn-right boring east of the 404 and north of 19th Avenue.

No Doug Fordian wild card, last-minute candidates for mayor.

No loud voices or wild accusations leveled at last Thursday's all-candidates gathering.

And this isn't Lindsay where a mayoral candidate was charged with criminal harassment last week.

You may have heard, we're trying to get more than half of local voters to the polls this fall. It's all part of our company's regionwide Big 5-0 initiative.

If I was selling pharmaceuticals, Globe and Mail subscriptions or duct-cleaning on commission, I'm not sure I'd be banking on my bonus.

Prove me wrong, Whitchurch-Stouffville. Please and thanks.

Jim Mason is editor of The Sun-Tribune.
 Follow him on Twitter @stouffeditor

LETTER OF THE WEEK

No need to slam pig roasts

Re: Pig roast has no place in society, letter to the editor by Jan Beck, Sept. 18.

I was very shocked and disappointed to see that someone would write such a letter about pig roasts.

My spouse and I had a pig roast last weekend and it was a wonderful event for families and friends to get together and enjoy the wonderful taste of pig roasted over an open fire.

I can only think that Ms Beck is a vegan and does not eat animals or animal by-products. To say that "children seeing a pig on a spit is an outrage" is ridiculous.

We cannot shelter our children to the point they are naïve in society and won't know how to survive if lost in the wilderness. In the wild we must hunt, fish and cook meat over an open fire, there is nothing barbaric about this.

People who eat meat can only hope the animals are treated humanely prior to con-

Democratic right to disagree

Re: Pig roast has no place in society, letter to the editor by Jan Beck, Sept. 18.

I anxiously await The Sun-Tribune's arrival each week; it's a great way to stay connected with what's going on in the community we have called home for more than 20 years.

I almost always find the Letter of the Week fascinating: people offering their opinions on a wide array of topics, some with well informed reasoning and others sadly lacking. But, because of the democracy we sometimes take for granted, those opinions are published and offered to the rest of us to stretch our thinking.

Ms Beck's letter is one such example. She clearly has strong opinions about animal abuse and expresses them in rather graphic terms. Because of democracy and free speech, such opinions can be expressed without fear. And, because of democracy, I can freely counter that I believe the writer's view to be seriously misguided.

Suggesting that roasting a pig in public is even remotely equivalent to "hanging raped and murdered young girls from the trees of India" is in itself, using the writer's own words, "an abominable outrage"! I couldn't disagree more. But, thanks to democracy in action, we can both share such opinions publicly without fear.

We have freedoms in this country we all too often take for granted. Those freedoms have come at the steep price of lost lives in years gone by. Municipal elections are upcoming Oct. 27.

While they may not have world-changing implications, the outcome will affect how our beloved town will be run over the next four years. Be informed. Make your opinion

sumption, but let's face it, it's dead long before it goes on the spit.

Now to compare a pig to children being hung in India is the utmost disturbing and barbaric. Perhaps Ms Beck, you should channel your energy into fighting for the children in India rather than picking on people who enjoy meat and find nothing wrong with a pig roast.

It is people like you who ruin things for others. We used to say the Lord's Prayer in our schools, until people complained. And we used to say Merry Christmas and now it's season's greetings.

If you don't agree with something, don't participate, but don't try and ruin it for others.

I think what the Royal Canadian Legion in Stouffville is doing for its people is a wonderful event that should continue despite the negative people in our society.

DAWN SMITH
 STOUFFVILLE

known. Come out and vote.

DAVE ARMSTRONG
 STOUFFVILLE

P.S. Great job by editor Jim Mason, the library and The Sun-Tribune team at the all-candidates meeting last Thursday. It was well run and informative. Another example of democracy in action. Thanks to all who made it happen and good luck to the candidates who so passionately want to make a difference in our town.

Events should be more inclusive

Events that focus on meat consumption tend to exclude some members of our community. I'm speaking on behalf of our friends who are vegetarian for religious and cultural beliefs and on behalf of our family who is vegetarian for a variety of reasons.

Although it was great to see a fundraiser for Special Olympics, a segment of our town could not or chose not to attend Meat Fest because it was all about meat. Same goes for the supposed day of family fun at the Royal Canadian Legion last weekend.

There are those of us who can't or won't attend an event where the focus is a pig roasting on a spit and there are others who, while not vegetarian, are just conscious of where their food comes from, how it's treated, how it affects the health of the planet, as well as their own health.

With approximately four per cent of our population vegetarian and with more people becoming cognizant of what they are eating, events in our town should welcome people of all beliefs. Events such as the Strawberry Festival are much more well-rounded and inclusive for everyone.

T. AHIER
 STOUFFVILLE