

OPINION



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COLUMN

Sage advice for candidates from our 'Hurricane Hazel'

When Fran Sainsbury was mayor of Whitchurch-Stouffville, she often spoke of her admiration for her Mississauga counterpart, Hazel McCallion.

That was back when cell-phones were the size of car batteries and *Dirty Dancing* was playing on your home Betamax machine, baby.

Flash forward to 2014 and Sainsbury won't touch the retiring Hurricane Hazel's 36-year run as a mayor – but she just might outlast her.

Sainsbury has carved out a unique political career across central Ontario herself.

She was a real estate agent in the Beer Store plaza and Whitchurch-Stouffville citizen of the year when first elected Ward 4 councillor here in 1982. Her claim to fame was leading a ratepayers group that shut down the Hwy. 48 landfill site, west of Musselman's Lake.

Sainsbury followed that up with a nine-year stint as mayor, before being unseated by current chief magistrate Wayne Emmerson in 1994.

The Sainsburys moved to Clearview Township, near Collingwood, in 1997 and Fran got the political bug again serving one term as mayor.

Done? Nope. Sainsbury, 78, now lives in Green Briar, near Alliston, and is seeking re-election as Ward 4 (see the trend?) councillor in New Tecumseth.

That's 19 years of late-night meetings, bad coffee and complaints from constituents.

"I love the job," she said this week between campaign appointments. "I love politics. I love the fray. I need a reason to keep reading."

Advice for wannabe municipal politicians from someone who has fought 10 campaigns? Sweat the small stuff.

"It's the day to day that matters," said the admitted problem solver. "That's what people remember."



Off The Top

with *Jim Mason*

Some candidates simply don't research the job they're seeking. Study the plethora of rules, Sainsbury advised.

"You can freeze taxes but you can't cut them," she said. "Once you're in office, you can get a handle on efficiencies. But what are you going to cut, snow plowing?"

More commandments. "Don't make promises. Do your homework. Be on time. Have no conflicts. Be tenacious and never give up."

She's seen many a councillor come and go during 19 years in office.

"Everyone wants the job – until they get it," she said. "Then they say 'what have I done?'"

Sainsbury makes the 75-minute drive back to Stouffville to visit friends, especially in her old Ninth Line/Bethesda Road neighbourhood.

"I hardly recognize the place," she said of the record residential growth. "I saw my first roundabout (in Stouffville). I didn't know which way to go and just hoped I wouldn't get hit."

She has growth back home, too, including almost 2,000 new homes on the horizon.

"(My ward) also boasts a new Tim Hortons where all the arm-chair quarterbacks discuss and save the world," she said.

Some things don't change.

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

LETTER OF THE WEEK

MP Calandra deserved to be emotional when he apologized

Re: Calandra's apology 'concerning' and MP is poster boy for ills in Ottawa, letter to the editor by Isaac Klassen, Oct. 2.

It must be nice to never make a mistake in judgement, Liberal candidate Dr. Jane Philipott, who was quoted in the story, and letter writer. Klassen.

It takes a "big" person to apologize to anyone, let alone in the House of Commons like Mr. Calandra did.

Of course, he was emotional. Wouldn't you be?

Mr. Calandra has done an excellent job representing the Town of Whitchurch

Stouffville federally. If he didn't, our Prime Minister would not have chosen him to be parliamentary secretary.

What have you both done for this town lately that warrants such scorn?

What have you both done for this town lately that warrants such scorn?

Let those who are perfect cast the first stone!!

CAROL DYKEMAN
STOUFFVILLE

Seniors, let your candidates know we need 'real' centre approved

As senior of the year for 2014, I would like to commend the current mayor and council for their vision in including an older adults centre in the library/leisure centre complex.

Many people, especially those new to town, don't realize that Whitchurch-Stouffville doesn't really have a seniors centre. It is the only municipality in York Region without such a facility.

The town has kindly allowed the 55 Plus Club to use Latham Hall, one 2,400-square-foot room, but it is shared with other groups. It is virtually impossible to run targeted programming under these circumstances.

According to the 2011 Census, our 55-plus demographic comprises almost 10,000 people. Whitchurch-Stouffville was the second-fastest growing municipality in Canada. The largest growth in our municipality has been in the ages of 60 to 64 years (63.5 per cent growth), and in the 65 to 69 year bracket (56.19 per cent). Age brackets over 70 are showing between 39 and 44-per-cent growth. The boomer bubble is here.

For those who think seniors just sit and play cards, think again. Boomers are very health-conscious and physical fitness is a priority.

However, seniors centres also offer opportunities for people to socialize with their peers, enjoy recreation, participate in educational seminars to keep their brain sharp, take day trips, as well as offer vocational opportunities such as volunteer work. This is all part of healthy aging.

A "real" seniors centre would have multiple smaller rooms so more than one program can run at a time. It would have soundproofing because many activities, such as line dancing, are noisy, while others, such as yoga, are very quiet.

It would have a kitchen with a commercial dishwasher for large functions, a reception/lobby space to welcome members, advertise

dinners, trips and other activities. It would have activities of interest to men such as table tennis and other active games.

Despite the commitment of council and the solid groundwork laid by town staff, the inclusion of an older adult centre in the library/leisure centre complex is a matter to be decided by the incoming council. This is very much an election issue.

Check with the mayoral candidates and the candidates for council in your ward. It will still be 2017 before the seniors have a home. They have waited a very long time for this.

Make it happen! Seniors, get out, vote and tell the town you matter!

CAROL MORIN
STOUFFVILLE

Shame on skate park vandals

My grandchildren visited the Stouffville skate park recently. I was very shocked to see graffiti on the walls of the bowl and on the top of a picnic table.

The surrounding landscape was littered with water bottles, juice boxes and snack wrappers. This blatant disrespect for public property left me speechless.

There was a public outcry from many families as well as letters written regarding why it was taking so long for their official skate park to be constructed. Many expressed that children were being left out of long-range plans to provide more places to have fun in town. The budget for the park was approximately \$400,000. Many fundraisers, especially organized by the mayor, were conducted to get the park completed.

This vandalism has taken place in only four months of the park's opening. If you are responsible for defacing the skate park, shame on you.

Every time you use this facility, I trust you will feel guilty regarding your disgraceful behaviour.

GAIL ROBERTS
STOUFFVILLE