

# OPINION



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## COLUMN

# Election remembered for mudslinging, low blows

**“Voters send message that mudslinging not OK”**

The headline, from our sister paper, The Newmarket Era, could have easily run in The Sun-Tribune, too.

So could much of the analysis piece that ran underneath.

Reporter Chris Simon wrote about “allegations of criminal activity against one (Newmarket) candidate, while a few hopefuls implied some incumbents were corrupt or deceitful.”

Just across the 404, it was a near mirror image here in Whitchurch-Stouffville, Chris.

Allegations. Whispers. Anonymous, nasty emails and viral Facebook posts.

But don't blame that new-fangled social media thing for all of that slung mud and other substances.

The most serious of the allegations were shared Water-gate style.

Old school.

Coffee shop stories so salacious they had to be true.

Right?

Envelopes pushed through our Main Street mail slot in the wee hours. Others mailed out from untraceable addresses.

The anonymous tipsters wanted us to tell the voting public about the sex life of at least one candidate. (Such tales didn't seem to injure the careers or legacies of Pierre Elliott Trudeau or Bill Clinton, did they? Guess we really don't care what leaders do in their spare time.)

There were dated and withdrawn criminal charges.

Stories of misappropriated money with zero backup evidence.

Another source wanted us to tell you about the work histories of two of the candidates.

The expiry date for election signs has long passed, but a couple still stand in my neigh-



**Off The Top**  
with *Jim Mason*

bourhood.

So do the volumes of stories of election sign theft and vandalism that dog most federal, provincial and municipal campaigns.

Fingers were firmly pointed. Video showing signs being removed from a Stouffville home was reportedly obtained but not shared with the media or police.

The media was not immune. Complaints against The Sun-Tribune and other Stouffville outlets were tweeted and posted.

I voted at least three times, apparently, if I believe the stuff said about me. If I sat on a committee with a candidate, worked with one of their family members or shook hands with them, they had my vote(s).

The Sun-Tribune's volunteer Community Links Panel, which hosted eight candidate meetings this fall, was accused of sharing our questions to the mayoral candidates with one of the hopefuls in advance of their meeting.

A very disappointing and totally untrue allegation, unless someone hacked into my laptop the day of the event.

I guess we know how some of the candidates feel right about now.

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

## LETTER OF THE WEEK

### No concerns with Mayor Altmann

*Re: Could our election be followed by byelection?, column by Bernie O'Neill, Oct. 23.*

I have been reading with great interest the comments about our recently elected new mayor, Justin Altmann.

The majority of comments and advice regarding his lack of experience are quite humorous.

Wow, university graduate, farm boy, petting zoo operator and owner of his own business, to boot. And working with his hands out west to earn more money to pay for his campaign.

All he has done is meet people. He has hired and probably fired. He met people in all walks of life and had to deal with all kinds of learning experiences through the ups and downs.

### Is CAO really our new mayor?

Congratulations to Mayor Andrew McNeely. The devastating mayoral election results had me packing my bags and preparing to leave Dodge, then I remembered something that mayor-elect Justin Altmann said in his recent WhiStle Radio interview:

*“I want the consensus of the people. That is the job of the mayor. The mayor is not the true mayor. The true mayor is the CAO of the town who is paid over a \$100,000 a year. Not the mayor who is a physical person who is paid \$43,000 a year. My job is to talk to the people to find out what the people want. The job of the shadow council and the shadow mayor being Andrew McNeely, the treasurer, the fire chief, leisuers – those are the guys who are paid \$100,000-plus to put together a plan on ABC.”*

So with Andrew McNeely being the “true mayor”, I've decided to stick around a while.

DAN WIGMORE  
MUSSELMAN'S LAKE

### Column, mayoral candidates' actions 'sickening'

*Re: Your new mayor will be on steep learning curve, Stouffville, column by Jim Mason, Oct. 30, and \$100M trade centre means 800 jobs for Stouffville, Oct. 31.*

The headline states Mason's stand extremely well: Justin Altmann was not his candidate of choice. In fact his entire article is an attack on a mayor who won.

His wisdom includes: “It won't be as warm and fuzzy as if Richard Bartley or Phil Bannon, both candidates under Emmerson during the past eight years, had won on Monday night.”

Then he continues on to tell the mayor-elect what he should do to run this town. This was not Justin's first attempt, nor his second but his third attempt to be part of the council.

I am sure Altmann will go with the flow and learn very quickly.

By paying his own way, he owes no one favours whatsoever. He is in no one's pocket.

His volunteers, the ones I met and talked with, all believe in him. They are from different walks of life, with different personalities and their own slant on Altmann's agenda and where he is coming from.

We should all wish him the best because he was the best.

I also wish the runners-up the best in the future.

Remember, outgoing Mayor Wayne Emmerson worked at Schell Lumber for many years. No one seemed too worried about him being mayor.

DON BARKER  
STOUFFVILLE

His dedication and drive for his political career in a town that he is passionate about and his ability to bring forth voters who want a younger envisioned mayor to our town was demonstrated on election night.

As if Mason's column did not frustrate me enough, on Friday, merely days after the vote and a day after the non-supportive column, I read your paper's story online on the trade centre being confirmed.

*It took Premier Kathleen Wynne in China to announce Friday what Stouffville feared the most...*

Did you attend the mayoral debate Oct. 16 where candidates and councillors Richard Bartley and Phil Bannon had no idea why Mayor Wayne Emmerson went to China and would not speak to that?

It took Premier Kathleen Wynne in China to announce Friday what Stouffville feared the most, without actually understanding the magnitude of the trade centre.

Bartley and Bannon's refusal to discuss it was deplorable – they should have known about it.

Stouffville residents, go to [www.yiwunorthamerica.com](http://www.yiwunorthamerica.com) and see what is coming to a Main Street near you. The units are on sale for \$123,990. It's been all over the Internet.

Furthermore, when you read more on this, Mayor Wayne Emmerson is charging the town for his flight to China.

This entire thing is sickening to me. I have been a lifetime resident of this town, believing in what Stouffville meant to my family.

And now for Mason to challenge Altmann for his win in the race?

As a Stouffville resident, and one who is informed, I am disgusted.

CATHY MAY  
STOUFFVILLE