

# OPINION



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York Region Media  
Group community  
newspapers  
The Sun-Tribune,  
published every  
Thursday, is a  
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Media Group Ltd., a wholly-  
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## COLUMN

### Carrier kids went on to deliver in sports, TV, medicine, clergy

**I** wish I'd kept the tattered clipboard that lived in the back of my '86 Jimmy.

Since I was the only employee at the old Stouffville Sun with such a ride, I was asked/appointed to help organize and administer the delivery of the paper. We had previously relied on Canada Post.

My old golf buddy, the late Eddie Luther of CFRB helicopter traffic reportage fame, and I recruited 20 kids, carved the map of Stouffville into workable routes and flew by the seats of our ink-stained trousers.

Literally hot off our presses in Uxbridge, that ink was barely dry when I hit the carriers' steps.

That old school clipboard was my GPS, taking me on a one-hour journey through the back streets and neighbourhoods of Stouffville — back when there were about 10,000 of us living in the former village.

Press breakdowns, breaking news and bad breaks in the weather would occasionally snarl the process.

The up side was getting to know so many of the carriers and their families.

I got out of the delivery business before the new millennium and never really thought much of it.

The Human Kebab brought me back.

Better known as Jason Parsons, he's a rising Canadian music star, one half of the band USS that sold out the Richmond Hill theatre last weekend.

"My first boss," he messaged me as we tried to set up an interview this fall.

That got me thinking and longing for the names on that old clipboard. From memory, it's an amazing and eclectic group. Many are parents themselves now, well into their 30s.

Here are some other all-time carrier all-stars:

- Doug Richardson, a cancer survivor and one-time cancer researcher who is now director of imaging at a centre at Harvard University in Boston.



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

- Mike Sullivan, who starred with the Stouffville Spirit, earned a hockey scholarship to Clarkson University and was drafted by the Los Angeles Kings. He works in sales in Calgary.

- Scott Clubine, formerly at EastRidge Evangelical Missionary Church in Stouffville, is now lead pastor at Hillside Church in Mount Albert.

- Tomas Street, creator and head writer of a family show, Kids Town.

There are more, including the Neale sisters and the entire Snooks family.

Sure, there were bad apples in the bunch.

The kids who whined about homework and the sniffles and said they couldn't spare an hour to deliver. The few who dumped their papers in the park or hid them in their bedroom closet.

At least one ended up in jail. "Hey, man, you fired me," said a burly guy who looked straight from The Sopranos.

He was obviously taking full advantage of the liquor licence at a local event.

"It's OK, I was a lousy deliverer," he said. "Why did it take you so long?"

A tip? It was the kids with the supportive, yet firm moms and/or dads who made the A team.

They got the job done. Then and now.

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

## LETTER OF THE WEEK

### Forgiveness for food bank thieves

*Re: Food bank thieves drive across graves, Nov. 6*

My mother's final resting place on this earth is within a few metres of the west side of Churchill Church, home of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Food Bank.

When I read the article, my first thought was, "I am glad I am not the ultimate judge of such actions." Still, I despair and cannot understand it.

I have known Jim and Joan Doble for more than 40 years. Their unrelenting Christian dedication and service to Churchill is more than just being "good people".

The volunteers of the food bank are a blessing for many in our community. The need for a heat supply is real.

I speak to whoever took this: You do not have to wait for us to rally and replenish the furnace oil so you may have an endless supply. There are many people in our com-

munity who have the discernment of true need, the means and willingness to help you out.

I grew up in the immediate area and am still moments away from Churchill and the cemetery. My mother's grave as well as my grandparents' adjacent sites were not desecrated by your action. It has been a couple of weeks now so it may be difficult to see, but others in the vicinity may also have been driven over.

Although the infrastructure of natural gas is at hand, this is not economically viable for the church or the food bank. If anyone has an idea of how to fortify or safeguard this fuel tank, I invite you to come forward with a solution.

As for the acts of driving over grave sites to enable one to steal from a church, I am obliged to forgive. I hope the perpetrators will genuinely seek God's forgiveness.

**RICHARD (TERRY) FORFAR**  
BALLANTRAE

### Oh baby, candidates out of touch

*Re: Third time's charming for new mayor, Oct. 30.*

I was rather alarmed to open my paper and read Whitchurch-Stouffville mayor-elect Justin Altmann likens winning the election to giving birth.

Does Altmann know men don't give birth and that even to hint so in any analogy is stupidity of the highest degree?

Just how much tequila had he drank when he delivered this interview? Where is this coming from? Last time I checked, Mr. Altmann doesn't have any children.

I was ready to move on, only to be reminded of how out-of-touch male politicians can be when mayoral candidate Richard Bartley responded to a question about running in the next election by saying that's like asking a woman who just gave birth if she wants another kid.

Seriously. Let's get something on the record: running for mayor is nothing like giving birth. I think town council should get some pre-natal classes. Maybe they could watch a few videos of live births just so we can be clear what giving birth is really like.

It's really unfortunate there's no women on council to put the seven men in their place.

Mayoral candidate Phil Bannon refused to talk to The Sun-Tribune after the election. That's really a shame because I'm dying to hear how his campaign was like giving birth.

I really hope for the town's sake the seven Caucasian males representing it can speak to all issues a little more intelligently the next four years, but I'm not holding my breath.

**SIMON MARTIN**  
STOUFFVILLE

### Lots of questions for new mayor

*Re: Third time's charming for new mayor and New mayor will be on steep learning curve, column by Jim Mason, Oct. 30.*

I would like to make a few comments on the election of our new mayor, Justin Altmann.

First, his statement that he made no promises during his campaign and that he wants us in Stouffville to have our own identity, whatever that means, and he doesn't want us to become Markham.

What I would like to know is — how is he going to deal with those who are already here, and how is he going to interact with them? Does that mean he will be rolling up the welcome mat to any group who does not fit into his demographic identity?

Second, I don't think it was a well-thought-out response to a rather delicate topic, but as a rookie mayor, this could be expected.

As the editor of our paper said, there is a lot for a rookie mayor without council experience to learn. To that, I say better him than me.

Mr. Mayor, I think you are going to have to bite the bullet, cough up a well meaning apology, and get on with the job of being mayor, because if you don't, it will be dogging you for years to come. Was that quote really correct when it comes to implementing your campaign promises, because you said you didn't make any?

Is it fair to conclude then, you got elected because you are a born-and-bred Stouffvillite and you have a pretty face? We, the residents of Whitchurch-Stouffville expect a lot of good policies from our mayor.

Plenty of questions, so if you have the time, or care to respond, I will be looking, and listening.

**GIL FRANCIS**  
STOUFFVILLE