

## 2014 NEWSMAKERS

# Two elections, one boy made headlines

Sun-Tribune reporter Sandra Bolan recaps some of the big stories she wrote about during 2014.

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Two elections just four months apart.

While Oak Ridges-Markham residents decided to stay the course and re-elect Helena Jaczek for a third term as MPP, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville residents voted for change at the municipal level.

The provincial election was triggered in May by the NDP's refusal to support the Liberal budget.

The door knocking and electioneering lasted 40 days.

It had a voter turnout of 47.2 per cent in Oak Ridges-Markham, although the numbers still remain unofficial, according to Elections Ontario's website. Voter turnout was 42.7 in the previous election.

The municipal election campaigning started 10 months before you could cast a ballot but it didn't pick up much steam until the last couple of months, when Justin Altmann decided to make the wholesale trade centre a campaign issue.

By the time election day, Oct. 27, rolled around, there were almost 30 candidates vying for seven seats.

Along with a new mayor (Wayne Emmerson did not seek re-election), residents voted in four new councillors — Maurice Smith (Ward 2), Hugo Kroon (Ward 3), Rick Upton (Ward 4) and Iain Lovatt (Ward 5) and re-elected two incumbents — Ken Ferdinands (Ward 1) and Rob Hargrave (Ward 6).

The Sun-Tribune's Links Panel spent more than a year to organize and host 10 candidate meetings in two months, trying to get 50 per cent of eligible voters to the polls. Forty-five per cent of voters cast a ballot, up from 43.96 per cent in 2010.

- with files from Sean Pearce

## Political fight went to Twittersphere

Paul Calandra did not like the way the municipality handled a Rogers' cell tower application and let the town and its residents know.

"Due to the lack of leadership on this matter, I am prepared to request that the process be delayed in order to hold a proper consultation with town residents and businesses," the Oak Ridges-Markham MP and Stouffville resident said in a March media release.

"I always thought all levels of politicians worked together on issues and kept the mud slinging out of the press. In all my years as mayor, I have never had a MP or MPP send out a press release like this before," then-mayor Wayne Emmerson wrote in an email to Calandra, which he forwarded to The Sun-Tribune.

The municipality is only a commenting agency when it comes to cell towers, which fall under federal jurisdiction, according to a Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville staff report.

"People elect them [councillors] to have a comment," Calandra told The Sun-Tribune at the time.

Calandra held his own public meeting on the matter, which had about 150 people in attendance.

The dispute between Calandra and Emmerson did not end there.

In May, Calandra posted snippets of email exchanges he had with Emmerson in March and April regarding the cell tower on Twitter.

Emmerson is not on Twitter.

Calandra said he posted the emails online because he wanted residents to see it all.

## Lightning strikes, nurse responds

A lightning bolt struck a golfer's hand and exited out his right foot during a fast moving, mid-June thunderstorm.

But he survived, thanks to the efforts of a fellow golfer, who also happened to be a nurse.

Chris Burden, 28, performed chest compressions on the 60-year-old Richmond Hill man, whom he found laying in grass that was burned all around him, at Warden Avenue's Bethesda Grange Golf Course in the Rolling Hills golf complex.

"I could see that he was dead. I could see it in his face he was ashen and purple," Burden said.

The man had burn marks on his face and shirt and his hat and glasses were torn and melted. He had black hands, with lacerations and sheered skin.

The 56-degree club the man was holding acted as the conductor as the group of golfers approached the 18th green.

"We heard thunder and then a horn from the course," Burden said. "We kept yelling at people to get off the course, but some people weren't. When we got inside (the strike) hit, it shook the building, it was one of the brightest lights I've seen. Then we heard men yelling for us to call 911."

The man's three golfing buddies, who ranged in age from 51 to 56, were in stable condition following the incident.

Burden is a nurse at Markham Stouffville Hospital.

- with files from Jeremy Grimaldi

## Murder conviction being appealed

Paul Kenyon was convicted of killing his girlfriend Marion Deacon.

It took the jury four hours to deliberate the charge this past April. It was the first local murder trial in decades.

The 46-year-old mother of three girls



SUN-TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

Then mayor Wayne Emmerson (centre) received a Queen's Diamond Jubilee medal from MP Paul Calandra (left) at Nineteen on the Park in 2012. Their relationship was colder in 2014, including critical quotes and tweets volleyed by both Stouffville residents at each other.

died March 7, 2010 of multiple blows to the head with a baseball bat.

Local firefighters who responded to an early morning call that the Deacon family home was on fire found her body. Kenyon was also in the home but escaped. Neighbours called 911.

Deacon sustained her injuries in the late hours of March 6 and remained alive anywhere from 30 minutes to six hours, the court heard through expert testimony.

Kenyon's defense team claimed his drug dealer and another man were inside Deacon's Doner Street home, near Stouffville Road and Hwy. 404, when she arrived from her waitress job at Aurora's King Henry Arms.

The defense claimed a fight broke out and one of the men hit Deacon about the head, killing her.

Deacon was sentenced to life in prison but will be eligible for parole in 15 years. He is appealing the conviction.

Kenyon's first trial ended in a mistrial in April 2012 when he and his lawyer, Ken Murray, parted ways.

## Lions are Citizen(s) of Year

The Stouffville Lions Club was named The Sun-Tribune's 2014 Whitchurch-Stouffville Citizen(s) of the Year.

"I believe a community is stronger when we have a strong Lions club and we do have that," according to former mayor Emmerson, who nominated the 76-year-old organization.

The citizen of the year award is for people who don't stand out in a crowd, but are always around and involved. The selfless.

The volunteer organization has 24 members ranging in age from 40 to 87.

One of the group's largest annual projects is the Christmas hampers, which provides gifts and food vouchers to about 60 struggling families.

The Lions also host an annual beef barbecue right before the start of the Strawberry Festival, a rubber ducky derby during the

festival, Christmas light tours and senior kindergarten eye exams.

The Lions' contribution to the community over the years also includes Main Street's gazebo and train station, Memorial Park's picnic pavilion, the piano at the Lebovic Centre for Arts and Entertainment - Nineteen on the Park, fitness equipment for Stouffville District Secondary School students, furnishings in a room at Markham Stouffville Hospital and financial sponsorships of local sports teams.

## Little Luca inspires community

On May 19, 21-month-old Luca Gennuso fell into his home's back yard pool, which was under construction. He nearly drowned.

Luca suffered severe brain damage and remained in the hospital for several months.

He is now home and requires extensive therapy, which is not covered by insurance.

The community of Whitchurch-Stouffville has rallied around the Gennuso family and a number of fundraisers have been held in his honour, to help the family pay for his care.

To date, more than \$88,000 has been raised, according to <http://lucaswilltolive.com>

## Trade centre questions persist

It is not the Pacific Mall nor is it a Costco.

There will not be 400 trucks a day going in and out of the proposed wholesale trade centre.

It will, however, employ 800 local people and provide \$1 million in taxes, as well as spin-off benefits to current retailers and restaurateurs, according to Corebridge Development representatives.

Corebridge, along with JIUDU Market Investment Management Ltd is developing the North America Yiwu Trading Centre in the former Southwire cable plant at Main and Mostar streets.

The plan to construct the trading centre has been in the works for most of 2014. There