

COLUMNS

Stouffville mayoral reunion that almost happened

It was as if a mayoral reunion was being held but the dates on the invitations got messed up. Barely.

In less than a week, former mayors Sue Sherban and Wayne Emmerson returned to the spotlight back here in the town they once led.

Sherban was speaking to the town budget during and after a public session last week in the Municipal Offices.

(All that was missing from the list of surviving mayors of this burgh was the tireless Fran Sainsbury, who unbelievably is serving on council in her third Ontario municipality, New Tecumseth. She was probably busy in a council meeting.)

Emmerson, now chair of York Region for the past year, was talking about budgets and other stuff at a chamber of commerce breakfast meeting at Meadowbrook golf club Monday.

The constant in both rooms was the man who inherited their chain of office, current mayor Justin Altmann.

That all three were almost together is news enough. Hopefully, wounds have healed from previous elections that pitted members of the trio against each other. In short, Emmerson defeated Sherban in 2006 and 2010. Altmann was also a candidate in 2010.

Election losses in a small community are painful and so public.

You can see it in the faces and actions of the defeated, especially incumbents.

They might as well wear a Mike Tyson-style tattoo, advertising their loss for all to see in the aisles of Metro and their neighbourhood church.

It takes some ego to let your name stand on the ballot for your friends, neighbours and enemies to judge.

That ego can take a big-time beating should things not go your way on election night.

Reporter Sandra Bolan covered both events of the past



Off The Top

with *Jim Mason*

week. Excerpts from Emmerson's speech and her post-breakie interview are in today's paper.

Sherban's rant against the town tax hike was covered last week. (Shameless plug: you can read all Sun-Tribune stories – and columns – on yorkregion.com). Our Facebook friends especially liked the ex-mayor and councillor's quote: "Young people can't afford to live here as it is. Our families are moving to Uxbridge and Mount Albert." Whether it was on house prices or tax levels, folks weighed in.

Emmerson already shipped out late last year, but picked a different location, buying and renovating a lakefront beauty in Georgina.

He didn't leave due to the taxes, quickly noting of the nine municipalities in his kingdom, Whitchurch-Stouffville residents pay the fourth lowest taxes in York Region. He also had praise for the town council that replaced the group he shepherded for many years.

Praise indeed for all of the above and all others who have run and will run for office.

In an era of 24/7 online criticism and cynicism, running for office and holding your position is no walk in Memorial Park.

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

Sign a song for Syrian refugees

With committee approval, a community concert will be held Sunday evening, May 1 at Stouffville District Secondary School.

The event, featuring area vocal and instrumental talent, will serve as a fundraiser by Stouffville Cares, in its bid to bring Syrian refugees to town. To date, sufficient donations have been received to accommodate at least one family.

A letter of intent, submitted to the York Region District School Board, has been warmly received by board chairperson Anna DeBartolo and Whitchurch-Stouffville trustee Loralea Carruthers.

"Sounds amazing," replied DeBartolo, "congratulations on this initiative."

"A wonderful project," agreed Carruthers. "If the committee requires any assistance from an educational perspective for the new families, please don't hesitate to reach out. I'll be glad to help any way I can."

Because of the concert's charitable spirit, the board has been asked to waive its customary school rental fee. A decision on this is expected soon.

While the proposal was initiated only last week, community support has been totally positive. The Stouffville Cares board meets tonight.

Gadgetry here to stay

When it comes to knowledge related to modern-day technology, my school-class registration would be something below kindergarten.

Not only do I not have the know-how, the desire to acquire it on a scale of 10 is less than one.

Our Chevy Cruze is a prime example. After two



Roaming Around

with *Jim Thomas*

years' driving, I'm still finding instrumental gadgets I didn't know existed. And while their uses are explicitly explained in the owner's manual, I've yet to read it.

After two years'

driving, I'm

still finding

instrumental gadgets

I didn't know existed

Take the pending March 13 switch to daylight saving time. The hands on the car's clock must be forwarded one hour. But how? I haven't a clue. So a mechanic at Giles Chevrolet will do it for me.

The same goes for other quirks. Fortunately, someone's always available to assist without first probing my auto IQ.

My personal computer is or can be another horrific headache. While I'm acquainted with its simple operation such as locating the on/off switch, the screen appearance of a warning signal sends me into orbit. So much so, I instantly brace myself for an explosion.

However, far exceeding any of the above perplexing problems is the popularity of hand-held devices.

All of these mechanisms

boggle my mind.

In an effort to learn more, I, with the help of a friend, did an in-depth study, (sort of), into each. This is what we learned.

The current trend is to own two or three types of technologies. But by far the most popular is the smartphone, mainly because of its style and the fact it can do five different things.

Their cost ranges from \$250 to \$1,100. Others include: the portable computer, \$500 to \$3,000; the tablet PC, \$600 average; BlackBerry, \$200 to \$600; cell phones, \$150; Apple iPad, \$500 to \$900; game units, \$150 to \$350 and the ereader, \$100 to \$400.

While I don't currently own any of the above, I'm seriously considering moving into the 21st technological century and making a purchase. Although leaning towards an investment in a smartphone, I wished to learn more before owning something that might only sit on a shelf.

So who should I ask?

Why students attending Glad Park Public School of course, boys and girls I see five days a week as their crossing guard. In doing so, I've discovered them not only extremely knowledgeable, but willing to share their expertise with someone totally oblivious to what they were talking about. I'm impressed.

However, being exceedingly frugal when it comes to expending nest-egg cash, I keep asking myself: Is this technology here to stay or a fad that's gone tomorrow?

Whether riding the subway on a Monday morning or seated in Tim Hortons on a Thursday night, the answer is obvious. This gadgetry is here to stay.

Jim Thomas is a Stouffville resident who has written for area newspapers for more than 65 years.