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COLUMNS

Easter Bunny left lessons with his eggs this year

Don't get me wrong. I love the Easter Bunny. Rabbits of all makes and models, actually.

Bugs Bunny. Roger Rabbit. And especially Bunny Rabbit from the old Captain Kangaroo TV show.

(We are even housing a rescued rabbit named Paisley – at our home, not the office.)

And you have to appreciate the spirit of Wayne Rose, the Stouffville man who donned a bunny suit on Good Friday eve and attempted to hand out candies to the local kiddies.

Rose, who we hadn't met before this Easter escapade, just wanted to spread some cheer. He told us he has health issues, including a current battle with cancer that has robbed him of considerable weight and strength.

Rose meant no harm. All good.

But as anyone who has had children in the school system during the 21st century knows, you can't just walk into a public school any longer. Or even hop up to the front door, rabbit costume or not.

(Ask our photographers about trying to take photographs at an elementary school track and field meet or determining which students in a school play we have permission to shoot photos of. It's not 1983 any longer.)

The bunny suit stirred up a media storm, largely of the social variety, that started with York Regional Police looking for the big rabbit via Twitter. In the two weeks that followed, people weighed in on all sides of the situation, largely on that beautiful tool called Facebook.

Sorry, Twitter. Facebook is the new party line. (Don't know what that was? Ask the grandparents.)

Where residents would once pick up the phone, or later fire off an email, with a question or a comment, they can now instantly critique



Off The Top

with *Jim Mason*

from the comfort of their iPhone SE.

The technology is far from new. In fact, the kids long left Facebook, like the family CD collection, to their parents a long time ago for cooler means of communicating.

But it's instant. And in the case of a threat or other emergency, it's a superb way to get the word out in the neighbourhood.

It's also unfiltered and unedited. So, on top of spirited debate, you can get everything from misinformation to veiled threats. People then pile on and before you know it, semi-true stories are legendary.

It's easy to see why many people, especially those in the public eye, steer clear.

But Facebook, unlike the commentary section of many media websites, is not anonymous. Your name, photograph and places of employment and education are usually listed.

And when it comes to the safety of their children, parents know few boundaries. Understood.

Bottom line? No one is facing police charge. There were zero injuries.

We hope Wayne Rose maintains his holiday spirit. And we've all learned a little something.

Happy belated Easter.

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

Main Street's major makeover

Piece by piece, a new look's in store for Stouffville's Main Street.

And while the domino effect is, in our opinion, the correct way of achieving the desired result, this won't transpire without distress. For it will be more than laying a brand new hardtop over an age-old cracked top, as we and some others had hoped. The construction juggernaut will supplant almost everything in its path, both above and below the surface.

While those looking far into the future may find the proposal exciting, populace concerned with the present are undoubtedly pervaded with anxiety.

And little wonder.

For all they need do is recall the many months of chaos in the neighbouring village of Markham where business was reduced to a trickle. Or Davis Drive in Newmarket, unquestionably a commercial disaster.

How any in either area survived remains a mystery. Those who did, however, are now reaping the benefits as Stouffville shopkeepers will when work here is complete.

At one time or another every town in Ontario must suffer through this kind of carnage. Stouffville's last experience was 61 years ago, a nightmarish recollection we and others would prefer to forget. Why the melancholy? We'll try and explain.

Much of our mid-town was established on a parcel of land that could best be described as a swamp. However, back in horse-and-buggy days this didn't matter all that much. A few sink holes here and there posed no problem for trustworthy steeds. And carriages were high enough to evade the muck and mire.



Roaming Around

with *Jim Thomas*

Not so in 1955. Quick-sand proved a major obstacle, particularly in sections near Stouffer Street and O'Brien Avenue.

At O'Brien and Main, we vividly recall one construction truck almost totally immersed with only the cab and front wheels visible. The driver escaped but his vehicle may still be there – somewhere.

While we don't wish to inflate the tendered bids on the estimated \$10.6 million project, we also feel it only fair that servicers know the hurdles they could face.

While this is indeed a bold undertaking by the current council, Rob Flindall, director of public works and a graduate engineer, says current town fathers are simply taking up where the previous council left off.

"A plan was put together back in 2008 and 2009 and we'll be building on that," he said.

The initial start, beginning this summer, will extend from the Tenth Line to Stouffer Street; then from Stouffer to Park Drive; from Park to Albert Street and finally from Albert to the Ninth Line.

There's more involved that just road re-construction, explains Flindall. Included will be sewer and water mains, sidewalks and street lighting. "It's huge,"

he said.

Since this section of Main Street is a town road, there's no guarantee of financial assistance from either the province or the region, the works director stated, but the council remains hopeful some monetary help will come our way.

As for road closures, Flindall said this may temporarily occur, but every effort will be made to keep traffic moving.

So project plans are completely transparent, a 14-member committee will be established to forward recommendations and accept proposals from the general public.

Prayers at breakfast

Whitchurch-Stouffville's 14th annual Community Christian Prayer Breakfast is set for 7 a.m. on May 19 at Station Creek Golf Club in Gormley.

This year's focus is on "Enriching and Strengthening the Family in the 21st Century".

Guest speakers are David and Linda Halse of Oshawa.

Special music will be provided by soloist Quisha Wint.

Tickets are available at Candlelight and Memories, 6198 Main St., or from Dennis Seeley, 905-642-3632.

Sound of spring

The Men of Note, Stouffville's celebrated male voice choir, will take to the stage for their annual spring concert at Christ Church Anglican, 254 Sunset Blvd., May 14.

Show time is 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$20 from Card's Appliances, Barthau Jewellers and at the door.

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