

# Our Opinion

## Lock up repeat sex offenders

An inquest into the death of an 11-year-old Brampton boy raises serious questions about what the federal government should do with dangerous sex offenders.

Christopher Stevenson was taken at knifepoint from a shopping centre in 1988 by Joseph Fredericks, a child rapist with eight convictions.

He was raped and murdered.

Now a coroner's jury is trying to decide what measures could have been taken to avoid such an atrocity.



Viewpoint

Paula Crowell

Fredericks had been released from prison on mandatory supervision.

There has been pressure for a new law, similar to one on the books in Washington state.

There, sex offenders can be detained in prison indefinitely. When a sex offender is released,

police in the area are alerted so they can warn the public.

There's no possible way to protect the public from such criminals all the time, but more can be done to avoid similar tragedies. The federal government should take a long, hard look at locking up repeat sex offenders for good. The expense of keeping them incarcerated would surely be less than the cost of mopping up the woe they cause when they commit crime after crime.

Court and counselling

costs are reason enough to make a change.

In the case of first-time offenders, it would be wise to enact a law that allows the public to be informed when a prisoner is released.

The violation of the offender's rights is more than outweighed by the right of the public to know of a potentially hazardous situation.

## We criticize Brazil yet give in here

An open letter to Premier Bob Rae

I, like you, am appalled by the destruction of the Amazon rain forest. It is easy, however, to be critical of the way developing countries like Brazil treat the environment.

Yet, despite our privileged position, we still give in to the constant pressures to exploit our natural spaces. We have already destroyed 80 per cent of the wetlands and 95 per cent of the forests in Southern Ontario.

Fortunately, some natural spaces still remain. However, these too are threatened and may soon disappear. The lands in the proposed Rouge Valley National/Provincial Park are one of these spaces. The threats are universal: highways, urban sprawl, pollution, waste disposal and deforestation to name a few. The destruction is usually permanent.

The World Wildlife Fund of Canada has designated the Rouge as a critical unprotected natural area. Today we have the opportunity to preserve, protect and promote the Rouge by including all of the approximately 20,000 acres of provincially and federally owned lands within the Rouge Park. A 20,000-acre National/Provincial Park would protect this natural area, which runs from Lake Ontario to the Oak

### Editor's Mail

Ridges Moraine, from current and future threats. Please act now before more of our wetlands, forests, plants and animals are further threatened or destroyed.

It is time for us to lead by example. Let's create and promote a National/Provincial Park that will leave a legacy that we can be proud of.

I truly believe that preserving our environment by creating a natural park of this magnitude is one of the greatest gifts that we can leave the province of Ontario.

Sandra and Peter Balint  
Markham



## Define Canadians by our preference

*Canada is a private joke shared by all Canadians, but we don't like other people getting in on it. Of course it's a nitwit country, of course there are too few of us and we're racially prejudiced, of course we bumble around and we're always cold and we keep building enormous monuments to a Canadian culture that doesn't exist. Of course we keep electing foolish people who make us promises we don't believe they'll deliver. But it's our private joke — we'll laugh at it, but nobody else had better.*

Sean Kelly

Ho hum. Yet another entry in the most popular timewasting pursuit north of the 49th parallel — the ongoing, never-ending party quiz game that asks you to answer the question "What is a Canadian?"

Wake me when it's over. Defining Canadianism is a pastime that's been obsessing folks in these parts for years — ever since that famous boozeup in Charlottetown a century and a quarter ago, when a gaggle of politicians in stovepipe hats got together over a couple of cases of whisky to thumb tack and scotch tape this country together.

The Fathers of Confederation did a fair job of cobbling those early provinces, but they forgot to whip up a world-class national identity for us.


In the 125 years since, scholars and soothsayers, proselytizers and pundits have all had a go at nailing down exactly what it is that makes Canadians neither American nor British nor French.

There have been some dandy definitions, but none of them are ever quite... perfect.

The best definition I ever heard came from Irving Layton. The Montreal poet decreed that a Canadian is any person who goes around asking "What is a Canadian?"

I don't propose to try and

**MARKHAM ECONOMIST AND SUN STOUFFVILLE TRIBUNE UXBRIDGE TRIBUNE**  
Weekender edition  
A Metroland Community Newspaper  
PATRICIA PAPPAS, PUBLISHER  
JO ANN STEVENSON, Editor-in-chief  
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294-8244 distribution and administration  
9 Heritage Rd. Markham L3P 1M2  
FAX Markham 294-1538, Stouffville 640-5477, Uxbridge 852-4355  
The Markham Economist and Sun, Stouffville Tribune and Uxbridge Tribune, published every Wednesday and Saturday is one of the Metroland Printing, Publishing and Distributing group of suburban newspapers which includes: Ajax Pickering News Advertiser, Barrie Advance, Brampton Guardian, Burlington Post, Collingwood Connection, Etobicoke Guardian, The Liberal, Georgetown Independent/Acton Free Press, Kingston This Week, Lindsay This Week, Milton Canadian Champion, Mississauga News, North York Mirror, Oakville Beaver, Orillia Today, Oshawa-Whitby This Week, Peterborough This Week, Scarborough Mirror, The Era Banner.  
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**Basic Black**  
  
Arthur Black

answer the question here today. Life is too short. But I think it's my public duty to announce that there's a whole new data base out there for people who do want to make the attempt.

It's a book by Heather Brazier which I found in the toe of my Christmas stocking. It's called Which Do You Prefer: Chunky or Smooth? The book is 268 pages detailing what Canadians eat, watch, read, buy and do... on an average day.

The contents are enlightening — with occasional excursions into incredible.

Did you know that on an average day, Canadians spend \$9,589,041 on lottery tickets? That 214 of us get divorced? That 223 Canadians give up booze?

That 13,699 of us say 'Chuck it' approximately, and take the day off to go fishing?

On an average day Prime Minister Mulroney receives 274 letters (It doesn't say what percentage of them is X-rated); we drink 55,575,000 cups of coffee and at least one of us gets caught smoking in the washroom on a Canadian airplane.

We might be able to identify Canadians by checking their mouths.

There's definitely a sweet tooth in there. Canadians chomp their way through 274,888 kilograms of chocolate daily.

Which may explain why 28,493 of us start a new diet or weight loss program... on the same average day.

As to the question posed by the title: it's smooth. Canadians prefer smooth to chunky peanut butter by a three to one margin.

Well, we do have a reputation for being somewhat bland...

Which Do You Prefer: Chunky or Smooth? by Heather Brazier, published by Harper Collins.

**ADAM**  
by Brian Basset

EVERYONE, LISTEN UP. I FEEL IT'S ONLY FAIR TO WARN YOU THAT AS OF RIGHT NOW I'M ON ANOTHER ONE OF MY QUICKIE WEIGHT-LOSS ROUTINES.

SO GET USED TO SOME WHINING, MOPING AND PLAIN OLD MOODINESS AROUND HERE FOR THE NEXT 6 WEEKS.

MISERY LOVES COMPANY. LOOK, WE'RE ONLY TALKING 6 WEEKS HERE.

AWWWW—MOM, DAD, DO I HAVE TO EAT THIS?!

COTTAGE CHEESE OVER RICE CAKES?? SICK!!!