

## Stouffville Tribune

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# OPINION

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Dave Teetzel

## Let's concentrate on Day's policies, not his religious beliefs

A couple of months ago, the cover of Maclean's magazine featured a picture of Alliance leader Stockwell Day and a headline reading, "How scary?"

Very scary.

Not Day, himself. But it scares me this story and many others have focused not so much on Alliance policies as on Day's religious beliefs.

Pundits predict a repressive tide of social conservatism will hit the nation if a practising Bible-believing Christian becomes prime minister. One columnist went so far as to suggest Day wouldn't care about environmental protection since he believes the world will be destroyed when Jesus comes back anyway.

On the other hand, people I know at church have told me they will vote for Day because he is a Christian.

Are we going back to the days when religious discrimination ruled at the ballot box, when only a member of the Orange Order could be elected mayor of Toronto?

I was embarrassed a few months ago when the American media made a big deal about Democratic vice-presidential candidate Joseph Lieberman being the first practising Jew to run for that office — as if that was all he brought to the table. From what I've seen of the American campaign, Lieberman is more impressive than either of the presidential candidates — not to mention all of the Canadian party leaders.

But the political pundits tried to reduce him to a simple label. Still, nobody in the American media suggested Lieberman shouldn't be elected because of his religious beliefs.

I've never been impressed with the way faith is used as a campaign tool in American politics; the way candidates seem obligated to make a public show of being religious.

If that's what Stockwell Day was doing, I'd be against it.

But Day isn't the one who's raising the issue. It's his opponents and the media who are talking about it.

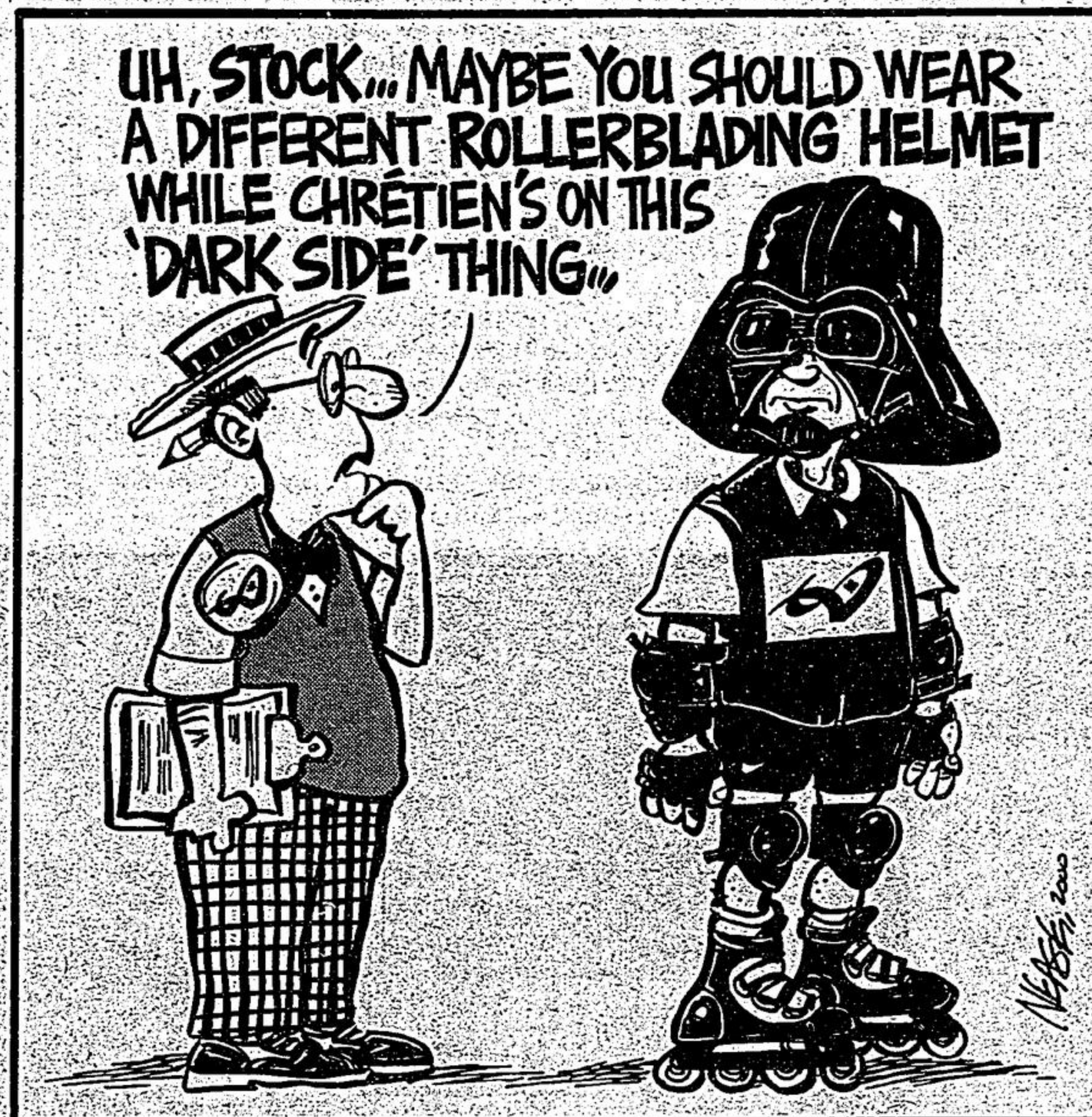
Sure, he went on 100 Huntley Street and talked about his beliefs, but he did so because he was personally invited on to the show.

So, I don't think Day is bringing his faith into his campaigning — only his non-campaigning.

He has refused to campaign on Sunday and, therefore, wasn't available for comment on the day Jean Chretien called the election.

I, for one, have been able to survive with one fewer party leader giving sound bites on the evening news one day a week.

Day's beliefs about tax cuts and health care need to be picked over with a fine-tooth comb. But his private beliefs have no place on the political agenda.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Kennedy speech ties in with protecting the Oak Ridges Moraine

Last month Robert F. Kennedy Jr. delivered an awesome speech in York Region entitled *The Politics of Water* to a packed audience.

Kennedy's passionate dedication to worldwide environmental stewardship has afforded him first-hand knowledge of the disastrous correlation between industrial and commercial pollution and irreparable long-term health and environmental consequences.

This inevitably occurs where strong conservation laws are either lacking or not enforced by the government.

One of Kennedy's ongoing projects is to restore all North American rivers (waterways) to their previous ecological state. His foundation has successfully achieved this miracle in the Hudson River and beyond.

Our natural resources (air, water, forests, endangered species, fish, etc.) belongs to all of us equally. In fact, we are "borrowing" them from our children and future generations.

It is undoubtedly our collective duty and responsibility to preserve, in its entirety, our god-given jewel, The Oak Ridges Moraine. Its demise is for the short-term personal gain of a relative few, who will undoubtedly fill their pockets with "raped" wealth to take to their graves.

However, the majority of the GTA now, and in the future, will be denied the basic require-

ment of life — a safe, healthy, natural supply of drinking water.

Surely, our unconditional love for our children and grandchildren obliges us all, to ensure that we leave our land in a better condition than in which we inherited it.

Please remember, without health we are nothing. Our children surely deserve a better legacy.

JOYCE RIETTIE  
UNIONVILLE

### Jack Heath should have a say on Main Street Markham affairs

Re: J. Shaw's letter of Oct. 28 titled, "Decision doesn't reflect opinion."

I was disappointed to see that the *Economist & Sun/Tribune* would print an unfavourable letter about an individual presently running for re-election as councillor. Especially since there are factual errors in the letter.

Jack Heath not only still lives in Ward 5, he also runs a business located in Markham.

Jack is a member of the Main Street Markham Vision Committee because Ward 5 borders on the east side of Main Street Markham, and therefore he should have a say in what is planned for that street. Jack probably attends more public meetings than any councillor in Markham.

JIM GRICE  
MARKHAM

## EDITORIAL

In Whitchurch-Stouffville, residents have expressed concerns about the impact of gravel pits on the local environment, including water supplies.

In Markham, Erin Shapero was motivated to run for municipal office because of the dwindling green space in her community.

In Richmond Hill, residents have adopted the Oak Ridges Moraine as an environment worth protecting, even if it means filling public meetings with supporters and calling in MPPs and their supporters for help.

We're seeing a resurgence of the green movement, most assuredly, and it has found a receptive home in York Region.

It's clear there's much public concern about our community's green future.

While it's hard to argue York Region needed to — and continues to need to — find funding for programs and services for residents without over-taxing beleaguered ratepayers, it's important to note some of those residents have expressed their opposition to too much growth.

They want to see the green space. They want neighbourhood parks. They want trees and views and room to breathe.

But they also want to pay a reasonable level of taxes for the services they receive — whether it's accessibility to the local soccer pitch or room in the after-school swim class, it's important to York Region residents.

This year, the Oak Ridges Moraine was the focal point of public attention on the environment.

The voices, you see, are growing louder when it comes to protecting the environment. There are more activists asking politicians what they intend to do about preserving our natural heritage, about saving our green spaces.

And it wouldn't hurt any voter to ask the these questions of municipal and federal candidates:

- How do you rate York Region's environmental record?
- What have you personally done to protect York Region's environment?
- In light of the Adams Mine situation, what would you say is our best option for waste management in York Region?
- Do you accept campaign donations from developers?

These questions, at best, will identify people who are worthy candidates for office. At least, it will allow each resident to determine if a particular candidate deserves our support.

## LETTERS POLICY

Stouffville Tribune welcomes your letters. All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The newspaper reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space.

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## Stouffville Tribune

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