

Sun-Tribune

A Metroland community newspaper
34 Civic Ave., Stouffville, ON L4A 7Z5

PUBLISHER **Ian Proudfoot**

LETTERS to the EDITOR

Stop decriminalization of pot

A new plague is coming upon us. No, it isn't SARS or West Nile virus, it is marijuana.

The propagandist would have us believe pot is an innocent and pleasurable diversion when in truth, all the dangers to health and safety are being swept under the rug.

Marijuana inhibits brain function, endangers fetal development and puts drivers on the road whose blood level of intoxicants can not be measured with present technology.

Furthermore, decriminalization of marijuana to save youth from criminal records eliminates a deterrent to turning cars into lethal weapons in the hands of youth high on pot.

All this seems to be happening with the full knowledge and blessing of our federal Liberal government.

The government must be aware this could further deteriorate our relationship with the United States and create difficulties in trade relations and border crossings.

We are also told that to make up for the decriminalization of possession of marijuana, more severe penalties will be sought for trafficking. Why have such measures not been in place already? Why this ploy to make us swallow a poison pill?

Prime Minister Jean Chretien, save us from this plague, please.

RALPH GARBE
UNIONVILLE

Group helped limit porn viewing

Re: Cops want jail terms for child porn offenders, April 27.

While I thoroughly enjoyed this article, I must make one minor note.

My grassroots organization, Citizens For The Protection of Children, did, indeed, lobby the Ohio House of Representatives and Senate for tighter cyber porn laws as they applied to taxpayer-funded American public libraries.

However, a distinction must be made between pornography, which is legal to view in the U.S., and child pornography, which is not.

Our organization was effective in enacting a law that reduced state funding to libraries that would not implement stringent Internet-use guidelines for children and to those libraries that staunchly but erroneously deemed the viewing of child pornography in libraries a first amendment right of free speech and unfettered access to all of patrons, including children.

Our success in Ohio gained the attention of Senator John McCain (R-Arizona), who invited my organization to Washington, DC in 1998, where we spoke to his subcommittee in favour of his bill to protect children from online predators. This bill passed a year later. Grassroots organizations will always have

a powerful impact on local and national government as long as their members are committed to the cause and willing to spend long hours and much out-of-pocket expenses doing research, travelling and contacting those in positions of authority and power.

The most effective grassroots lobbying targets weak and ineffective laws by financially hurting industries and institutions that support the flagrant misuse of taxpayer money and the desensitization and abuse of our most valuable resource, our children.

JULIE ANDERSEN
NEWMARKET

Kudos to local health officials

Re: Sharks and SARS push panic buttons, column by Debora Kelly, May 1

Did public health officials in York Region, Toronto and Ontario cause undue anxiety and panic in the community regarding the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome? Absolutely not.

While it is true, the common flu, tobacco use and automobile accidents kill more Canadian than SARS, a great deal of money is spent to educate the public on how to protect itself from these hazards.

If the public thought any less of the severity of the SARS outbreak, more people might not have taken quarantines seriously enough, leading to more illness and, certain-

ly, more quarantines.

The World Health Organization surely did overreact to the situation in Toronto. Public health officials did not.

The raising of the red flag on the front pages of newspapers, newscasts and daily press briefings could very well be the reason only several hundred were infected rather than several thousand.

Kudos and congratulations to doctors Kassam, Basur, D' Cunha and Young for their tireless work.

RON HENDRIX
MARKHAM

Chinese should support business

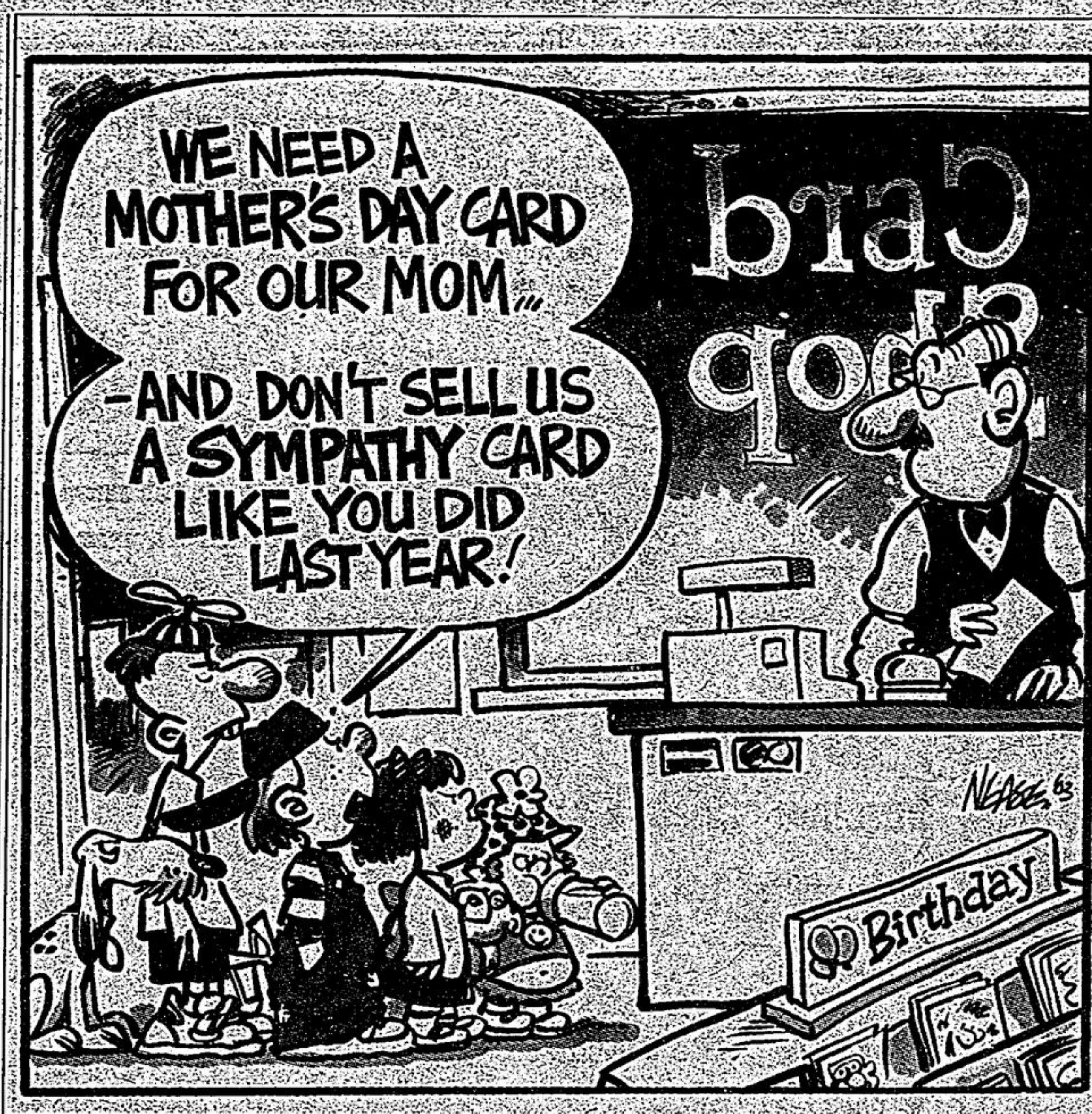
Re: Chinese not supporting businesses, letter to the editor by Frank Vetere, May 3

My son, his wife, two young children and I frequently eat at a large, Chinese buffet-style restaurant at Warden Avenue and Hwy. 401. The food is excellent, the price is right and the children love it.

We, and perhaps a dozen or so other non-Chinese customers, tend to stick out a bit.

It is difficult to get a table at this restaurant, especially on a Saturday evening, unless you make reservations. There is usually a long lineup when we leave.

We thought it was time to go back last night and were quite surprised to see the restaurant was less than half full and there



was no lineup when we left.

The dozen or so non-Asian customers were there but not the Chinese — at least, not in their usual numbers.

Now is the time for the Chinese community to rally around the flag; the Greater Toronto Area needs its support.

ROBERT KNAPPER
MARKHAM

Judge lacked guts in porn case

Re: Cops want jail terms for child porn offenders, April 27.

Much praise should go to police officers who search out and usually find criminals.

It is at this stage our unjust justice system fails miserably. A recent example is the meager house arrest sentence to a convicted child porn offender.

All of the excuses the presiding judge gave sound like so much sour grapes.

Judges, please acquire some guts — never mind precedents that have little bearing on the case at hand — and give us some justice that makes sense.

FRED POMBIERE
BRADFORD

Yellow Brick House big help

Last year I had no money and was unemployed; my son and I ended up at Yellow Brick House, a York Region shelter for abused women and children.

I want to acknowledge and thank the staff and volunteers of Yellow Brick House, Reta's Place and Outreach Services.

I can't imagine what would have happened to us had these services and living angels not been available.

The support and counselling we received and continue to receive have allowed us to begin rebuilding our lives. You have given us hope, guided us, encouraged and supported us. We are thankful for every one of you.

I also want to thank all the businesses and residents who generously donate money, clothing, food, Christmas gifts, furniture and other items to these organizations.

Please know every donation and every act of kindness touches someone deeply.

SANDRA MACKENZIE
MARKHAM

Claiming SARS patent worrisome

A Toronto newspaper recently reported Canadian scientists are joining the rush to claim a SARS gene patent. It is occurrences like this that make me sad and afraid to be a Canadian and part of the human race.

I hope our scientists get the patent and then allow free access to its information. If not, then I'm concerned SARS will be kept alive in order to turn a profit.

DAVID KATES
UNIONVILLE

LETTERS POLICY

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

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