

Southern
Sun-Tribune

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LETTERS to the EDITOR

Candidate should remain on leave

Open letter to York Regional Chair Bill Fisch.

You will recall I wrote to you in December 2002, expressing my concerns regarding the inappropriate partisan actions of the medical officer of health for York Region, Dr. Helena Jaczek.

I note Dr. Jaczek has returned to her position effective June 2, following a leave of absence.

As Dr. Jaczek was determined to use her professional taxpayer-funded position to campaign as the Liberal candidate in Oak Ridges for the upcoming provincial election, the leave of absence was quite obviously the correct decision.

I ask you what has changed as of June 2?

Dr. Jaczek is still the Liberal candidate, with a website that is clearly partisan in nature and uses her professional position to bolster her candidacy. Furthermore, she boasts of participating in partisan activities with current Liberal MPPs prior to her nomination as the Liberal candidate.

Again, I question her ability or her desire to even attempt to separate her professional responsibilities from her partisan ambitions.

We are facing serious challenges in the health care field that require decisions made in the best interest of York Region citizens.

Past performance indicates we can expect media-seeking pronouncements designed to further Dr. Jaczek's personal partisan ambitions.

York Region's medical officer of health must be non-partisan and should be an example of ethics and integrity in government. I urge you in the strongest possible terms, to put the interests of York Region ahead of Dr. Jaczek's ambitions.

Her leave of absence should continue until such time as the provincial election is concluded.

FRED TUPNELL

CHAIRPERSON
SIMCOE YORK DISTRICT HEALTH COUNCIL

When are high costs a problem?

At a Toronto smog summit in June 2001, Federal Environment Minister David Anderson pledged to add four chemicals, nitrogen and sulfur oxides, volatile organic compounds and ammonia, to Ottawa's list of toxic emissions.

This was supposed to allow Mr. Anderson to force cuts on the five coal-burning hydro plants in Ontario. The pledge by Mr. Anderson has never been implemented.

Experts say it would take \$2.5 to \$5 billion to convert the five plants to natural gas and an estimated \$1 billion yearly for each plant in added fuel costs. If the five plants are con-

verted to gas, property owners will surely pay more to heat their homes due to the extra demand for natural gas.

After the conversion, 77 per cent of sulfur dioxide, a compound of smog, and 81 per cent of carbon dioxide that drives global warming, along with 77 per cent of mercury, will still arrive from other sources.

In fact, up to 50 per cent of Ontario's smog comes from the coal-fired plants in the heavily industrialized Ohio valley.

Canada went on to sign the Kyoto Accord, the United States did not.

Was the high cost the reason the Peterson Liberals and NDP government of Bob Rae failed to convert the plants? Cost did not appear to be a problem when these governments ran up a \$11.2 billion deficit, costing taxpayers \$17,000 each day to service.

**J. SHAW
MARKHAM**

Big Pipe solution to everything

The Big Pipe has been on its way from Markham to Whitchurch-Stouffville for as long as I can remember.

I remember my early days in town. We would get overflows from time to time, usually during a big storm. The rainwater from the roofs of some houses was added to the overburdened pipes removing Stouffville "leftovers." This, on occasion, found its way into



David Suzuki

World's children need our help

We in North America naturally fear for the welfare of our children.

Like other parents around the world, we are concerned about their safety, about disease and injury. But unlike other regions, almost all of our children will survive past the age of five.

Every year, more than 10 million children under that age die. Most die from preventable illnesses and, remarkably, the situation is getting worse, not better.

Medical experts writing in a current series of reports for the medical journal *The Lancet* describe the health of the world's children as "abysmal."

Worldwide mortality for children had been falling by 2.5 per cent per year from 1960 to 1990. But in the years since, that has been reduced by more than half.

The disparity between rich and poor nations is growing. In 1990, industrialized nations had a childhood (under the age of five) death rate of less than 1 per cent, compared to 18 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa.

Immediate causes of death vary from region to region. Overall, 33 per cent are due to neonatal (post-birth) problems such as infection, 22 per cent are from diarrhea, 21 per cent are from pneumonia, 9 per cent from malaria, 3 per cent from AIDS and 1 per cent from measles.

In spite of promises by the United Nations to reduce child deaths 60 per cent by 2015, funding for child health programs has actually dropped to its lowest levels since 1995.

Attempts to reduce death rates cannot use a simple blanket approach if they are to be effective. They need to be based on sound science and good data. Both of which require money.

When North Americans are reaching record levels of obesity, it is absurd more than half of all childhood deaths are spurred by hunger. It is equally absurd that in today's globalized world, where you can buy a Coke practically anywhere, children are still denied basic medical care.

**BOB LEWIS
BLOOMINGTON**

Dr. David Suzuki is a scientist, broadcaster, author, and chairperson of the David Suzuki Foundation.

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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