

Sun-Tribune

A Metroland community newspaper
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LETTERS to the EDITOR

Easy to become impaired

Re: Impaired driving charges triple, July 17.

It's sad to think this is the second time I have felt compelled to write about drunk driving. But it's something that refuses to go away.

Two years ago, when I last wrote to the editor, it was about a friend killed in a drunk driving accident. Since then my anger has turned to frustration.

I simply do not understand how people can make such a monumental mistake as getting behind the wheel of a car when they are drunk.

After reading this article, I realized those of us fighting drinking and driving may be a small part of the problem.

Several times, in this article and in my own letter so far, this horrific act has been referred to as "drunk driving". This obviously confuses many people.

I usually can have four or five drinks before I consider myself drunk. However, long before that moment I am impaired and should not even think of driving. It is this concept that seems to be the hardest for anyone to understand.

You do not have to slur words or have trouble standing to be unable to respond quickly enough to trouble on the road.

The bottom line is I beg your readers to think before they act. If you are going out and know you will be drinking, please plan ahead and have a designated driver or money for a cab.

Do not live as if impaired driving accidents only happen to someone else, because I know someone else. His name was Shane and he has been gone for two years. We miss him dearly and it's not something anyone should have to go through.

CARLEY WAYNE
MARKHAM

Bike program helps community

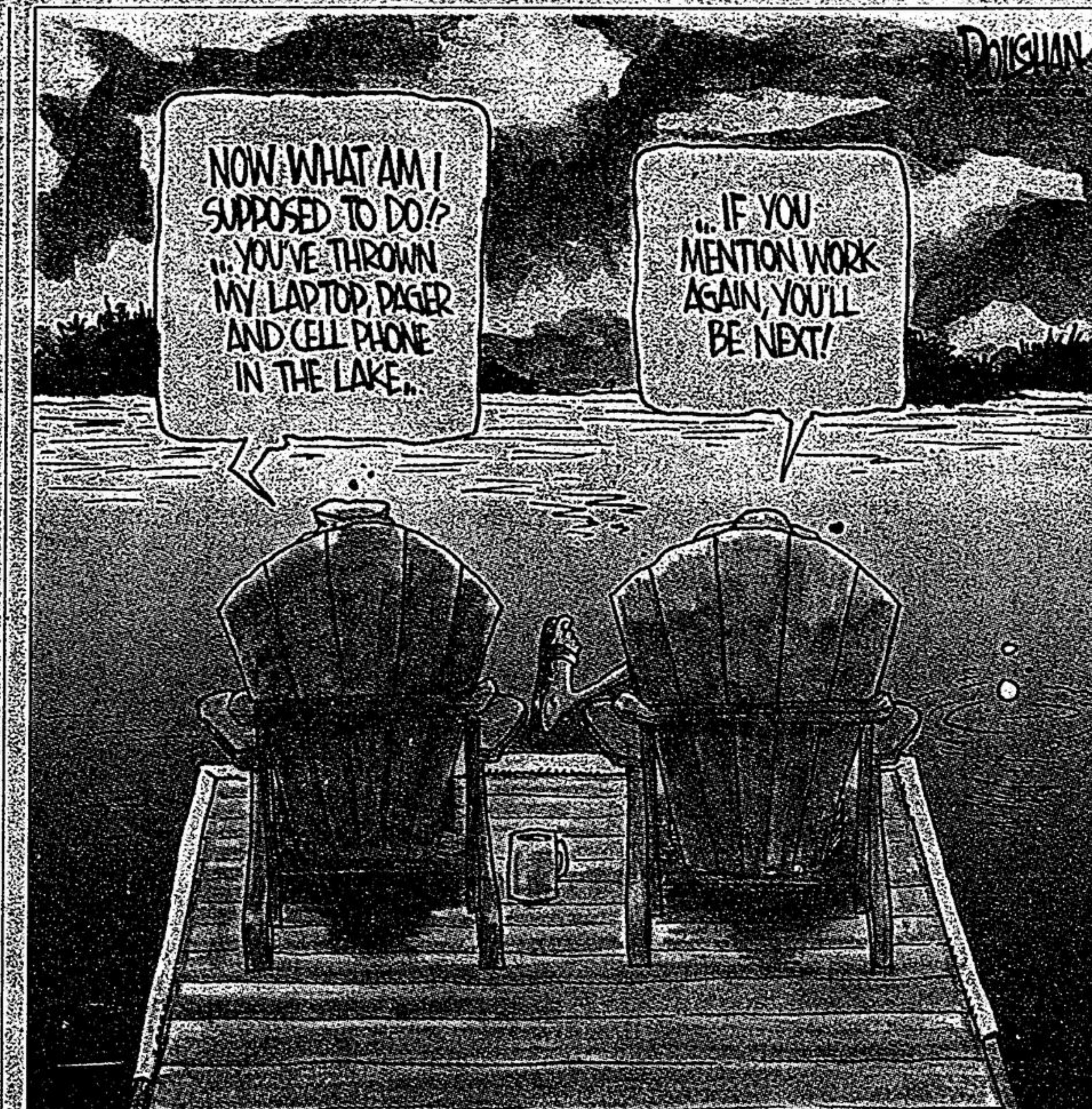
I have lived and worked in the Markham area for 13 years and last year I learned about the Tim Hortons Earn a Bike program. It lets children earn a new bicycle by cleaning up the community for a total of 30 hours.

The program interested me because I have noticed a deterioration in the cleanliness of the Markham area. As a result I volunteered to assist with the cleanup and supervision of the children.

After two years, I wanted to thank Tim Hortons for its corporate participation and financial support and request it continue to support for this valuable program.

More than ever, the community needs this program to clean up an increasingly littered environment and raise awareness of this issue with our young people.

I regularly clean up my neighborhood



David Suzuki

Time for scientists to use plain language

Science has an image problem. Not that science isn't important. Indeed, science and technology influences our lives more than ever before. The problem is in the way scientific issues are often portrayed and communicated, both to the public and to other scientists.

A common complaint from scientists is the media get everything wrong. They sensationalize. They oversimplify. They draw unwarranted conclusions.

Many scientists want more control over their stories. A recent European survey found 90 per cent of scientists polled believe reporters ought to provide full scientific details in their stories and allow scientists to make changes before they are published.

Of course, most journalists would never accept such demands, nor should they. Scientists should not receive special treatment.

Reporters, on the other hand, complain science stories are often dull, irrelevant or impossible to comprehend. In an analysis published in the journal *Nature*, sociologist Donald Hayes used a formula called the LEX scale to rate readability of journals.

On this scale, the lower the number, the easier something is to read and the more understandable it is. Dr. Hayes found that children's books have a LEX score of about 32 (easy to read).

Newspapers, on average, have a LEX score of zero. Back in the 1940s, science journals also scored about zero. Today, these journals reach LEX scores well into the +30s and beyond, meaning they are very difficult to understand.

In fact, journals today are often so loaded with jargon scientists themselves have trouble reading them.

No single group is at fault for this problem. Most scientists simply don't receive training in communication. Plus, newspaper chains are firing reporters, compressing beats and not giving reporters adequate time and resources to cover science issues.

A new magazine started recently called *Seed*. It attempts to popularize science and technology by focusing on easy-to-understand prose with a dash of sex appeal. Perhaps by making science more hip, we can elevate the general level of scientific awareness in society.

To discuss this topic with others, visit the discussion forum at www.davidsuzuki.org

and inform the town of areas needing attention. Despite this, I often feel I am fighting a losing battle as I see people litter without regard and politicians that don't make this issue a priority.

Tim Hortons' program raises awareness of this issue to citizens who see us in action. People often comment on the importance of the program and are thrilled by the work the children are doing.

My hope is this program will result in people taking better care of their environment and politicians begin to see the environment as a priority in public planning.

ANGELA GRADINI
UNIONVILLE

Why not wait for long-term results?

Re: Modified food chain grows despite protest, July 17.

More than 50 per cent of soybeans produced in Ontario are genetically modified and Monsanto controls it all. My concern is not only the control by one company, but also the consequences of the modifications in our environments and on human health.

Roundup Ready soy is not produced through pollination, as nature normally does.

It's produced by genetic engineering through gene insertion of extra copies of a synthetase enzyme to elevate aromatic

amino acid production in plants and to withstand Roundup sprays.

The synthetase in weeds is suppressed and cannot produce the aromatic amino acids for protein production and growth. Most weeds die and some genotypes survive.

When the resistant weeds flourish, what would farmers do? They could increase the dosage of Roundup to kill the weeds and risk the possibility of killing soy as well.

They could switch to another herbicide and be caught in a vicious circle.

Although soy is almost completely self-pollinated, corn is wind-pollinated. Corn with Bt genes to produce a protein poisonous to corn borers will produce pollen to pollinate neighbours' corn fields with no Bt genes.

While Bt corn is not certified for human consumption, what will happen to us consuming contaminated corn?

The protein poisonous to corn borers could be poisonous to humans since physiologically, humans and corn borers have a lot in common. Cattle are fed with Bt corn and we eat beef.

"So what the hell is the hurry?" as Dr. David Suzuki said. Why couldn't we wait for the outcome of long-term studies before we put food on the table?

RONG H. HO
RICHMOND HILL

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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