

**Sun-Tribune**

A Metroland community newspaper  
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# OPINION

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## LETTERS to the EDITOR

### Unfortunate public pays for election pamphlets

Government pamphlets have been mailed to our homes in the mail and government commercials have started to appear on TV.

This is a sure sign the Tories are softening up the public for a fall election.

The government pamphlet on electricity in Ontario had little value in educating the public on conservation.

It contained a picture of the premier and was really a promotional ad for the Tories.

It is unfortunate the public had to pay for this flyer through its taxes. Lower rates for our home energy would be of much more interest.

The huge expense of releasing the budget at Magna International is another example of how the Tories are tossing money around carelessly.

More than \$200,000 was spent for this "photo op" for the Conservatives. It was a media event and we paid for it.

This shows the thin character of the province. Instead of wasting taxpayers' money on these "info" ads and stunts, it would make more sense to direct the funds toward conservation, pollution control, public health care or education.

We do not need propaganda ads.

**JIM JACKSON**  
AURORA

### MP Wilfert reneging on support of gay community

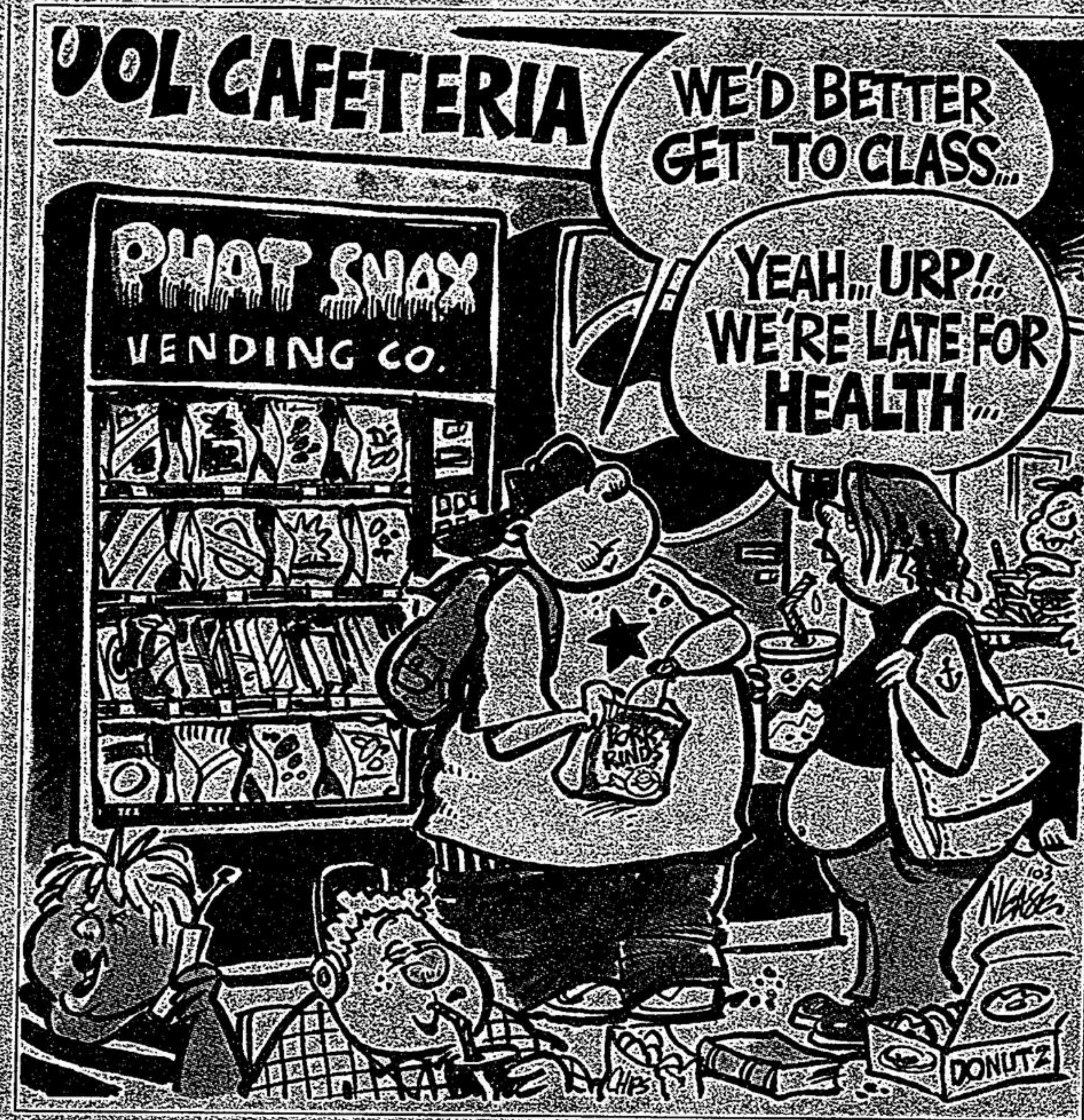
An open letter to Oak Ridges MP Bryon Wilfert.

In newspaper articles, you have indicated you intend to vote no on the parliamentary free vote on equal marriage rights for same-sex couples.

We wish to remind you of your response to our letter of July 19, 2002, in which you stated, "For the record, I have supported same sex benefits both when I was on Richmond Hill council and in Parliament."

Former prime minister Pierre Trudeau stated the state has no business in the bedrooms of the nation. I agree with his view, but if a significant social policy decision is to be made, it must include a full public discussion, as well.

Mr. Wilfert, what has happened to the support you have always offered? The justice committee's cross-Canada hearings on same-sex marriage gave ample opportunity for all to contribute to this discussion and, as a result of those hearings, our prime minister is recommending the right to equal access to marriage be enshrined in law.



What we must all remember is the issue is not one of religious freedom or forcing churches to marry same-sex couples, since churches already have the right to refuse to marry on many and varied grounds.

This is an issue of equality under the law for all Canadians. We are a secular society. We made our choice in 1867 to become a Confederation based on the democratic traditions of the constitutional monarchy.

Allowing religion to enter into play alienates and divides our country based on a set of values not all Canadians hold.

As an MP, you have the duty of not only listening to a constituency, but also of speaking for those who may not have the voice or the numbers to do so in your constituency.

Voters have entrusted you to not only uphold the ideals of the majority, but to protect the minority from their tyranny.

It is in this spirit we urge you to reconsider your approach to this issue and seek to build a bridge of understanding.

Recognize marriage is a valued and worthwhile institution for both same-sex and opposite-sex couples.

To solemnize both equally will strengthen bonds between people. That is what marriage is about.

**IAN A MCCALUM**  
& **CHERYL COOKE HARRINGTON**  
CO-CHAIRPERSONS, PRIDE YORK REGION

### Development still eating up valuable agricultural land

I came across some 1989 letters to the editor on "uncontrolled and indiscriminate growth" in Markham.

It seems to me little has changed as far as development is concerned, except to say developers now rule the roost.

We are slowly being eaten up by such projects as Cornell to the south and Lebovic homes south of Stouffville.

Will this ever end? I think not, unless the Ontario government puts a stop to the use of prime agricultural land for housing.

On the retail side, why does Stouffville need two huge grocery stores, three fast food outlets, two dollar stores, four doughnut shops and three video outlets?

Because of this, traffic through Stouffville is now horrendous, with traffic lights at every intersection.

So, I have a word to the wise: slow down, everybody. That means drivers, developers and members of Whitchurch-Stouffville council.

**MARIAN DISSETTE**  
STOUFFVILLE

David Suzuki

### Oil industry looking for free ride

After the federal government adopted the Kyoto Protocol last December, Canadians could be forgiven for thinking the issue had been solved, that the country was united in its quest to reduce the emissions responsible for climate change.

Unfortunately, that assumption would be wrong.

Groups that lobbied against the climate treaty, such as the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, simply changed course and are now trying to ensure industry targets are marshmallow soft, even if it means sticking it to taxpayers.

CAPP lobbied hard against the Kyoto treaty, making outrageous claims about how reducing greenhouse gas pollution would cripple Canada's economy and send us spiralling back into the Stone Age.

Of course, few people really believed their claims, but the association, Alberta Premier Ralph Klein and companies such as Imperial Oil are very influential. They want to make sure the oil industry has to do as little as possible to meet Kyoto. Their efforts appear to be working.

The purpose of Kyoto is to reduce the emissions causing climate change. It's just the start of much bigger reductions necessary to prevent global warming from seriously disrupting our environment, economy and quality of life.

Canada has agreed to reduce emissions to 6 per cent below 1990 levels by 2012. The problem is the petroleum industry has increased emissions by 50 per cent since 1990.

Recently, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien sent a letter to the association, indicating the industry will only be required to reduce emissions intensity, not actual emissions.

If the petroleum industry is allowed to increase emissions and the country's goal is to decrease emissions overall, other sectors will have to take up the petroleum industry's slack.

Prime Minister Chrétien did the right thing by adopting Kyoto, but the petroleum lobby has just begun the fight to make sure the industry gets away with ever increasing pollution levels.

We cannot afford to give the petroleum sector a free ride at the expense of the rest of Canadian society.

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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