

Stouffville
Sun-Tribune

A Metroland community newspaper
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LETTERS to the EDITOR

Help needed planning reunion

Stouffville District Secondary School is celebrating its 50th anniversary with a reunion July 2 and 3, 2004. We are looking for people to help co-ordinate in finding classmates. We also need to find addresses of past or present students who may or may not be living in the Stouffville area. This will help us to invite everyone to the celebration.

Graduates can mail or e-mail the following information: surname, first name, maiden name (if applicable), address and postal code, the years attended and your e-mail address. E-mail to sdss50th@hotmail.com or send to SDSS 50th anniversary and reunion, registration committee, P.O. Box 1328, 6379 Main St., Stouffville, ON, L4A 8A3.

Reunion information and registration forms can be found at www.sdssreunited.ca

THE REGISTRATION COMMITTEE
SDSS 50TH ANNIVERSARY AND REUNION

Community shows intolerance

I am tired of reading letters to the editor filled with intolerance and hate.

Written by residents of a town claiming to have a commitment to diversity, I find these letters particularly appalling.

When it comes to debate on the rights of gays and lesbians, all rules go out the window and land on Markham's perfectly manicured lawns.

By choosing to marginalize a significant group in our society, some people forget gay and lesbian people are doctors, teachers, politicians, mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, friends and neighbours.

In 2000, Mayor Cousens withdrew his support of a sign sponsored by Parents and Friends of Lesbians And Gays that read, "someone you know and love is gay." The sign was right. Like many Canadians, this someone may be in a committed relationship and raising a loving family.

These same-sex couples and their families are entitled to the same recognition in law afforded opposite-sex partnerships and the same respect and dignity.

Canadian marriage law violates section 15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms by failing to recognize same-sex unions and opposite-sex unions as legally equivalent.

The 2001 reports of the Law Commission of Canada and the Canadian Human Rights Commission found our definition of marriage discriminatory.

Those who argue changing the legal definition of marriage infringes on religious freedom fail to note this liberty also includes freedom from religion. The right to adopt one's own belief system is integral to our separation of church and state.

Religious freedom ensures the secularization of state institutions such as civil mar-

riage. Holding a House of Commons vote or a referendum on the issue is as ridiculous as voting on the validity of the once taboo mixed-race marriage.

Canada maintains democracy by protecting the rights of minorities from the sometimes unjust will of the majority, often through court decisions based on the Constitution.

For pluralism to work, we have guaranteed equal rights to everyone regardless of gender, race, disability, religion and, yes, sexual orientation.

Protesters can march all they want, but as Gilles Marchildon, director of Equality for Gays And Lesbians Everywhere Canada, has said, "Equal rights is not a popularity contest."

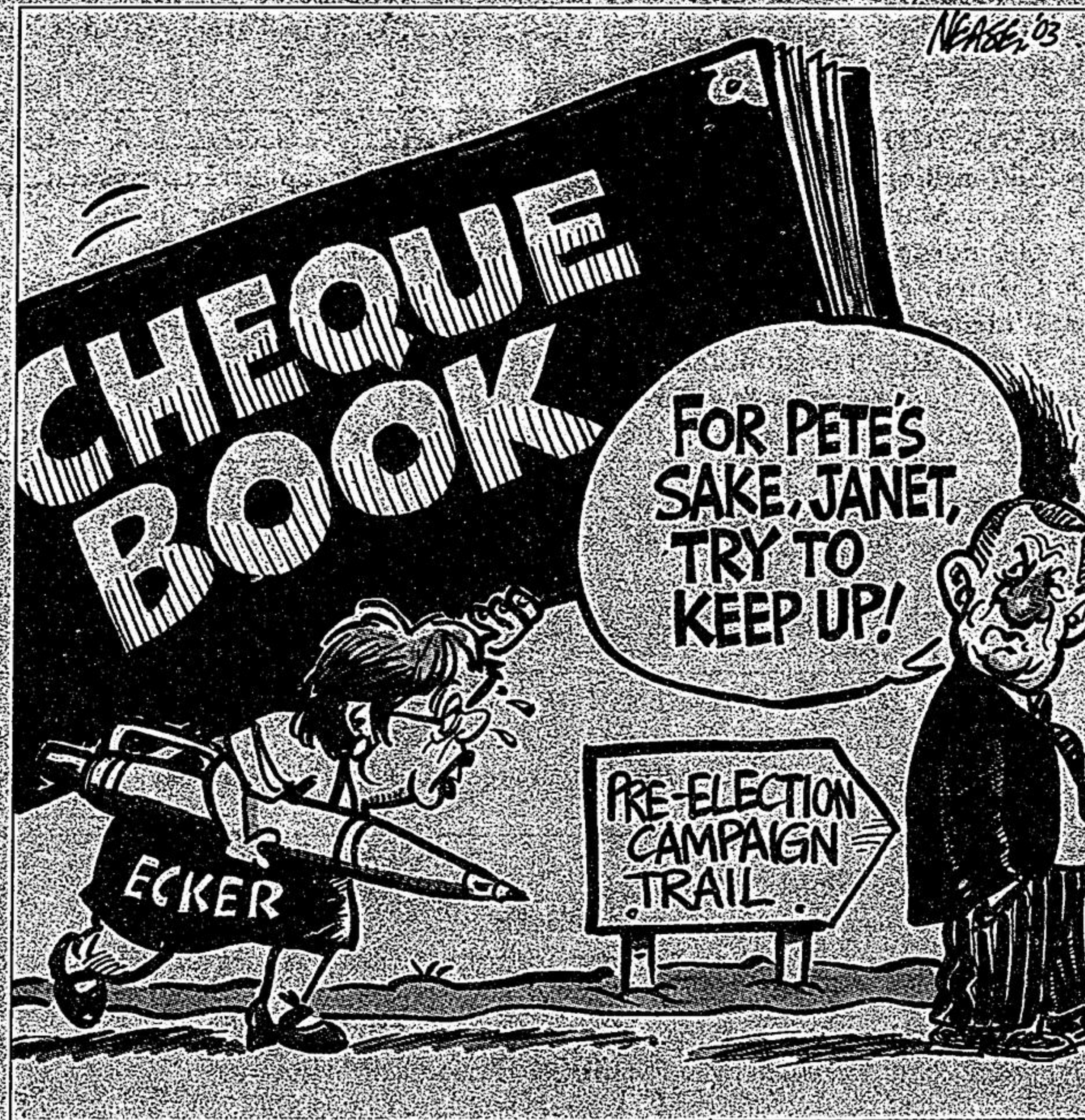
I am not anti-religion; I recognize the beliefs held by many. I am, however, in favour of tolerance. And not all religious interpretations value bigotry and hate over compassion and love. Mine certainly doesn't.

SHEETAL RAWAL
MARKHAM

God doesn't condone hatred

Re: Vote no, Mr. McCallum, letter to the editor by Brenda Di Nallo, Aug. 23.

Ms. Di Nallo makes quite the assumption in her open letter. God is mentioned several times, with great reverence. Unfortunately, Ms. Di Nallo, God doesn't condone hatred. So, where is my God's viewpoint? Or is your God



David Suzuki

Blackout shows need for conservation

A Chinese villager looking at a North American newspaper after the recent blackout could be forgiven for wondering what the fuss was all about.

After all, 1.6 billion people in the world don't have access to electricity at all, so losing it for a couple of days might not seem like such a big deal.

But it is a big deal here.

North Americans are the world's largest consumers of electricity. Our society depends on it to heat and cool our homes, power lights, appliances, televisions, computers and much more.

We depend on it so much when it gets taken away, our cities are crippled.

Without electricity last week, millions of North Americans couldn't do their normal jobs, so they just went home all at once, causing gridlock traffic because the street lights were out.

Do we really need to use so much power?

Watching the news coverage of the blackout was a real eye-opener.

Instead of going home, sitting in an air-conditioned house and watching television, people went out.

Some families sat outside and played games by candlelight; others visited neighbours, went for walks or just talked.

It is sad we are so caught up in our electrified world that we forget the joy and peace of a quiet evening.

Of course, that is not to say we don't need electricity. Indeed, for the most part, it vastly improves our lives. However, because it has always been there when we needed it, we have become complacent about electrical power.

In North America, ever-increasing electrical demand is considered a given. In the United States, per-capita consumption of electricity has increased by 50 per cent in the past 25 years.

We need a new strategy, one that focuses on reducing energy use through efficiency and conservation rather than increasing supply. Consider our homes. Every day, thousands of new homes are being built across the country and almost all of them are instantly obsolete — built to old building standards.

Dr. David Suzuki is a scientist, broadcaster, author, and chairperson of the David Suzuki Foundation. Take the Nature Challenge and learn more at www.davidsuzuki.org

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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