

Sun-Tribune

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

PUBLISHER **Ian Proudfoot**

LETTERS to the EDITOR

Prolific Tory-supporting letter writer deserves ode

Re: Merger opponents misguided, letter to the editor by Kirk Sutherland, Nov. 29

Another great letter from Mr. Sutherland where he lives in some other land. If I disagree he'll insist

I must be a socialist. Oh, how he'll be in all his glory when all are firmly right-wing-Tory.

PERCY BARBER
MARKHAM

Establishing small user fee could help Markham Stouffville Hospital

Re: Hospitals face tough times, Nov. 29

I am 76 and have not been in the hospital one day.

However, that may change, so I would like to take measures to ensure a healthy hospital.

I suggest all Markham and Whitchurch-Stouffville residents pay a small charge up front any time they go to Markham Stouffville Hospital for service. Perhaps \$10 for adults, including seniors, and \$5 for children each visit.

JIM CALDERWOOD
MARKHAM

Stouffville council should consider need for in-house lawyer

Should the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville have its own in-house lawyer?

I believe there are many ways a lawyer could be very valuable to council members and staff and, therefore, to residents.

For example, apparent problems with certain town bylaws may not be with the bylaws themselves, but with their interpretation and enforcement.

A major task for an in-house lawyer would be educating the new council in its municipal role.

All council decisions, and possibly some of its omissions, have legal implications. This includes the spending of public funds.

A second task would be to educate staff and ensure all town documents comply with laws and bylaws.

A third function would be to review and assess town contracts, development proposals and general operations.

My awareness of the need for an in-house lawyer comes from hearings conducted by two council-appointed committees, the

OPINION

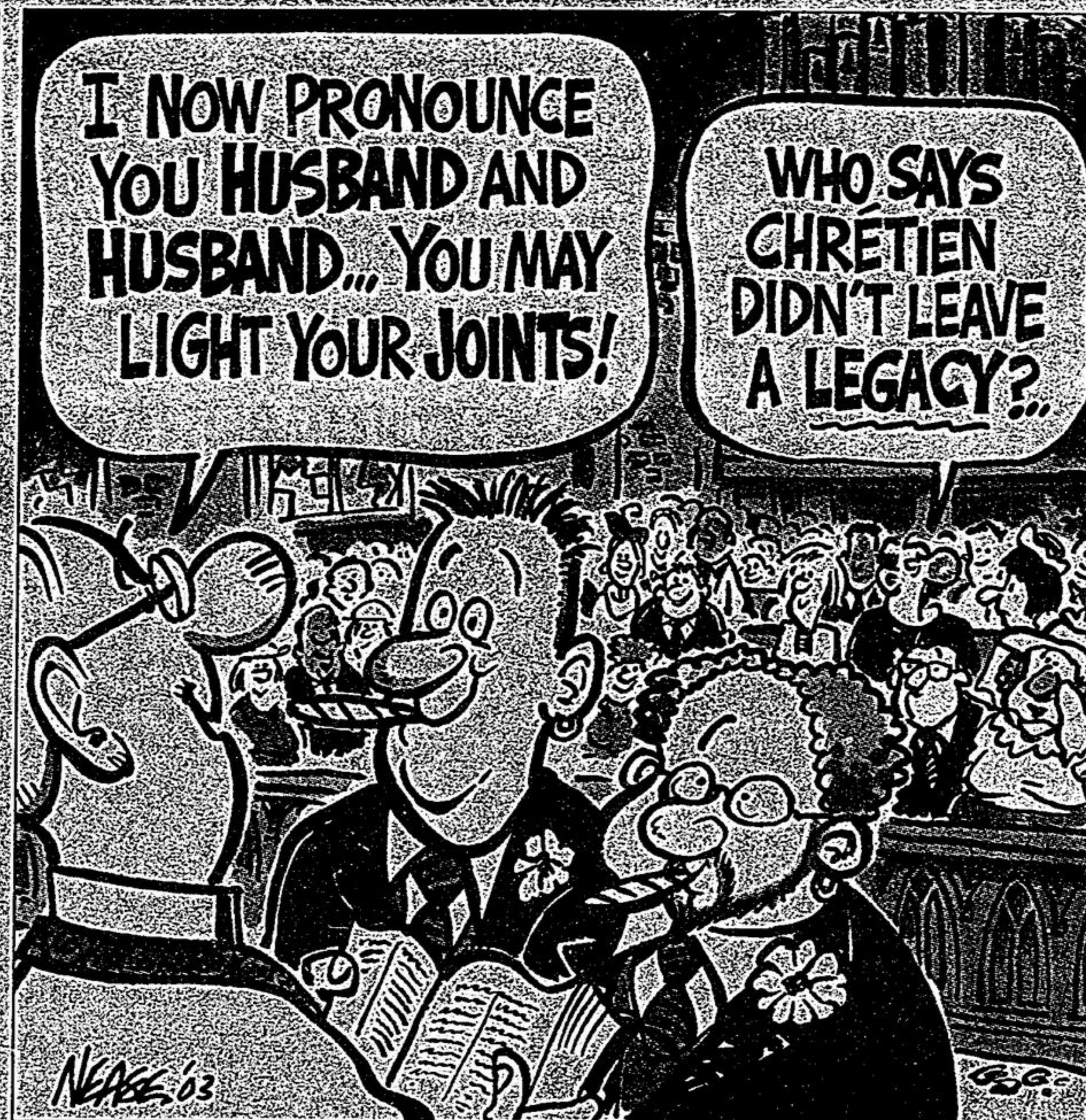
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Air not as anonymous as you might think

Most of us generally don't think about the air we breathe. Why would we? It's always there, all around us. Besides, it's invisible, at least most of the time.

And that's the problem. Because we don't think about it and because it just seems so big, we treat our air like a dumping ground for waste. We feel anonymous in our atmosphere as we might in a huge, unknown city.

But air is also extraordinarily intimate. Fifteen times or more each minute, we unconsciously draw about a half-litre of air deep into our lungs, filter it, absorb some into our bodies, keeping some and then exhale the rest to pass on to our neighbours. Without a constant source of fresh air, we'd die in just a few minutes.

Yet, even with millions of people breathing, our cities never run out of fresh air because it is always moving and not just a little. A Greek philosopher once said, "You cannot step twice into the same river," his point being the waters are constantly flowing.

The same could be said of air. In just one week, the air you are breathing now could be halfway around the world. It's part of a global system that connects the atmosphere to all living things.

This connection means whatever we put into the air could end up in our neighbours' back yards — or in their lungs — even if they're half a world away. When fire broke out at Chernobyl, it was the Swedes who announced the accident because they detected a sudden radiation spike over Sweden.

Pollutants that can make us sick are not the only things we are dumping into our air. We are also dumping tons of carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases into the atmosphere that are increasing the Earth's natural ability to absorb heat from the sun.

Gases such as carbon dioxide may not have as immediate of an impact on us as does, say, ozone. But while ozone lasts only a few weeks in the atmosphere, greenhouse gases can last a few decades to a few centuries.

Atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations, for example (largely from burning oil, coal and gas), have increased by 31 per cent in the past 200 years. Such a large increase is now having a noticeable effect on the Earth's climate and concerns about what this will mean for the future are growing. An article in *Science* describes climate change as "a truly global issue, one that may prove to be humanity's greatest challenge."

What we must remember is this is a problem of our own making and it is not insurmountable. We are not so small that we cannot have an effect on something as large as the air itself. Nor are we so big that we cannot change.

Take the Nature Challenge and learn more at www.davidsuzuki.org

LETTERS POLICY

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

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committee of adjustment and property standards committee. Neither reports to council.

According to a bylaw, members of the property standards committee are not eligible to be on another local board.

However, for the past three years, the same three people have sat on both committees.

Was the property standards bylaw brought to the attention of the new council when the appointments were made?

The term "local board" of a "local municipality" (i.e. single tier or lower tier) is defined in section the Municipal Act and Municipal Affairs Act.

It includes a board, committee, commission and authority.

Confusion may occur if legal and colloquial terms are interchanged.

However, the act says a "local board" does not include a public library board, since it is governed by the Public Libraries Act.

This is another area where confusion can exist if provincial laws are not brought to the attention of council.

Should council be aware of its accountability and liability?

MARGARET L. MAY
STOUFFVILLE

Stolen vehicle wake-up call for Stouffville resident

On Dec. 3, I woke up to face an empty space where my car once stood.

It was an eight-year-old Neon, parked in a well-lit lot right outside our windows in a townhouse complex on the Ninth Line in Stouffville.

The saddest part is I believed Stouffville was still free of such crimes. Perhaps we are now country too close to the city.

Anyway, if anyone sees an abandoned black 1995 Neon, licence plate A6BJ-391, please call police.

WITOLD BOROZYNSKI
STOUFFVILLE

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