

Stouffville
Sun-Tribune

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Daughter gets message

I was beginning to wonder if our kids understood the real meaning of Remembrance Day and why they should be remembering.

Once every year we talk to them about war, how horrible it is and how many lives were lost. We try to explain that their great-grandparents fought in wars to preserve freedom and ensure the life they live today. My 13-year-old daughter composed a poem that reassures me she has an understanding.

MARK HOPKINS
UNIONVILLE

My Remembrance Day Poem

Why should we remember?
That sad, sad, long ago day.
When hundreds of men and women
gave their lives away.

Why remember? I heard you say.
You don't care, do you?
DO YOU?

I care more now that I know.
There are people who let their lives go.
I lost a great uncle to war.
For me that makes my heart very sore.
Two went to that tragic fight.
Only one came back all right.
You don't understand you told me last night.

You don't understand, do you?
DO YOU?

I didn't understand a while ago.

Then I talked to great Uncle Mo.
He came back from the fight with pride.
While great Uncle Richard died.
Oh how my Grandma cried.
She lost a brother to war.
She wishes war would be no more.
I heard you say it before.
You don't appreciate it, do you?
DO YOU?

I didn't appreciate it either.
All those men and women who died
there.

In Flanders Fields is where they rest.
So it's our turn to do our best.
And preserve what they got for us.
As they fought for us.
I heard you say it just now.
Will you remember?
WILL YOU?

By Michelle Chalmers

Councillor right to oppose bats

Re: Disease fear shelves Ballantrae bat boxes, Oct. 28.

Kudos to Councillor Phil Bannon for putting health concerns first.

It's time to recognize residential growth needs to be factored into decisions such as the Ballantrae Park re-naturalization project.

Bat boxes, raptor poles and snake hibernacula are more appropriate to centres such as Bruce's Mill and not adjacent to an elementary school, day-care centre and residential properties.

HELEN & ALAN THOMPSON
BALLANTRAE



I'm not anti-American, I'm just against Bush politics

Don't mistake U.S. criticism for contempt.

What have you done? What have you done? It's the question I wanted to ask my American friends after the Nov. 2 election. But I already knew the answer. They did everything they could. They just lost.

So now we have four more years of George W. Bush's regressive social, environmental and foreign policies. That certainly doesn't bode well for science, the environment or human rights in America or elsewhere, for that matter.

Do such statements make me anti-American? According to many pundits and politicians weighing in on both sides of the border after the election, it does.

The irony, of course, is that this is exactly the kind of "you're either with us or against us" mentality that drove many of the criticisms of the Bush administration in the first place. In his first term, President Bush forged a path of American unilateralism in the world community. He pushed a "me-first" agenda and was



David Suzuki

willing to trample human rights, science and the environment to do it. Just ask the 5,000 scientists, including 48 Nobel laureates, who signed a statement accusing the Bush administration of "manipulation of the process through which science enters into its decisions."

Yet now, those who dare criticize the choice of the slim majority of American voters who picked Bush are called anti-American.

Well, if being anti-American means opposing the war in Iraq, supporting women's rights

and progressive environmental policies, opposing the missile defense system, supporting stem cell research and of same-sex marriage, then sign me up. But I don't believe it does.

Simply disagreeing with that slim majority of voters does not make a person anti-American. In my youth I received a scholarship from an American university worth more than my father made in a year and it allowed me to attend one of the finest colleges in the world. Later I earned a PhD there and I am forever grateful to Americans for that.

When I returned to Canada, I could not compete with my peers elsewhere in the world because of the poor funding available in Canada at the time. I stayed because I received a large U.S. grant. I will never forget the generosity of the U.S.

But it is precisely because I love America that I am so profoundly disturbed by what is going on there. Unquestioning acceptance of the status quo isn't exactly an American ideal. In fact, it strikes me as decidedly un-American.

So yes, when 52 per cent of Americans vote

for Mr. Bush, I will say I think they made a mistake. And when 11 states vote overwhelmingly to ban gay marriage, I will speak up. Disagreeing with a ban on same-sex marriage is not a matter of being out of touch with "American values." It's a matter of human rights.

Pundits who insist that critics of President Bush are anti-American are really saying if 52 per cent of Americans believe anything then that's what America stands for and everyone else has to respect that.

This is a morally relativistic viewpoint that doesn't even withstand the most basic of scrutiny and Bush administration critics should not be bullied into believing it does.

Those of us who believe 52 per cent of American voters made a mistake Nov. 2 don't hate Americans. On the contrary, we care enough about the people and ideals the country is supposed to represent to be very, very concerned.

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