

# OPINION

Stouffville  
**Sun-Tribune**  
A Metroland community newspaper  
34 Civic Ave, 3rd floor, Stouffville, ON, L4A 7Z5  
PUBLISHER *Ian Proudfoot*

EDITOR IN CHIEF  
*Debora Kelly*  
BUSINESS MANAGER  
*Robert Lazaruko*  
DIRECTOR PRODUCTION,  
INTERACTIVE MEDIA  
*John Futhy*

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR,  
RETAIL & FLYER SALES  
*Nicole Fletcher*  
ADVERTISING DIRECTOR,  
CLASSIFIED, REAL ESTATE  
& EVENTS MANAGEMENT  
*Gord Paolucci*

DISTRIBUTION DIRECTOR,  
CIRCULATION  
*Barry Black*  
DIRECTOR, CIRCULATION  
SYSTEMS  
*Lynn Pashko*

MARKETING/PARTNERSHIPS  
DIRECTOR  
*Debra Weller*  
YORK REGION PRINTING  
GENERAL MANAGER  
*Bob Dean*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Plow program doesn't work

My husband and I live at the corner of 14th Avenue and Chatelaine Drive in Markham paying the same high taxes all homeowners do. We are both 68 years of age and my husband had bypass surgery.

We are able to shovel snow from our driveway. But it is a health risk for us to shovel the nearly two to three feet of hard, packed snow town plows dump at the end of our driveway.

Under the advice of my husband's heart specialist, we have signed up for a hardship program with the town designed for persons in our situation. The arrangement is for a smaller plow to come and plow out our driveway. This has not happened for the entire winter season. Does such a program actually exist?

Early this week, my husband fell on our street after getting his morning newspaper and hit his neck hard on a curb. He needed to seek medical attention. I called the town to have it send someone out to plow so we could drive to the hospital. We were told when all primary roads were plowed, driveways would be taken care of.

In previous years, we have often had to wait three days for this to be done. This is unacceptable when a medication emergency arises. For my husband to get to the hospital, I went out and shovelled the entire area.

Let's not fill up Markham Stouffville Hospital unnecessarily with patients suffering heart attacks doing what the town should be doing.

DORIS HERMAN  
MARKHAM

### Same-sex stats misused

*Re: Supporting gay marriage could hurt health system, letter, Feb. 19.*

I think statistics have been misused by John Howarth to improperly support a narrow point of view.

Mr. Howarth implies the government's acceptance of a homosexual lifestyle will increase the health costs for AIDS. This is equivalent to saying marriage increases the related health costs of other sexually transmitted diseases.

I believe an increase in the number of permanent lifetime partnerships, and the corresponding reduction of unattached persons, reduces health costs. It reduces the number of partners a person would have over their lifetime and their potential exposure to STDs.

Since Mr. Howarth is interested in reducing the occurrence and cost of AIDS, he should be supporting same-sex marriages.

If Mr. Howarth is concerned with government policy and health costs, he should look at the statistics on the costs associated with health problems brought on by obesity and smoking.

Our health care system costs would benefit more from a general change in lifestyle by a larger portion of the population, than focusing on a small segment of one portion of our populous that he addressed.

Statistics on disease to sexual orientation, race or other life factors should be used for prevention programs and research into cures but not political agendas.

PAUL NAISH  
MARKHAM



## Enacting of Kyoto treaty brings naysayers out of woodwork

If you didn't know what the Kyoto Protocol was all about a few weeks ago, you'd be hard pressed not to know now. The international agreement to reduce the heat-trapping emissions causing global warming has been all over the news since it came into force last week.

Leading up to the big day, I expected to hear from "both sides" of the issue in the media — those who felt the agreement was an important first step to address a huge challenge for humanity and those who felt the targets would be too difficult to achieve in a short timeline.

What I didn't really expect was how the "climate change isn't happening" people crawled out of the woodwork, bleating about myths and conspiracy theories that somehow seemed to involve nutty left-wing scientists, government bureaucrats and the French.

Naively, I had assumed this discussion was largely over, since these people had such little credibility. But there they were, being interviewed on television, in newspapers and on the radio — sometimes right along-



David Suzuki

side legitimate climate scientists or politicians. Over and over, they made bizarre pronouncements about how the science was uncertain and how humanity's hand in global warming could not be proven.

This continued insistence on proof, even in the face of overwhelming evidence, is simply bizarre. To say that we don't know enough about climate change to prompt action is to say that the entire discipline of science, as we know it, should not be trusted. Uncertainty is inherent in the scientific process. Currently, the vast majority of scientific evidence tells us that human activities are causing climate

change and that it could have very serious consequences if we don't do something about it. Of course, the science could all be wrong, but I wouldn't bet our future on it.

Anyone who wants to know the real story on the current state of climate science should simply pick up a science journal. Or, to cut to the chase, read a short article by the University of California's Naomi Oreskes, published in the journal *Science* in December. Her analysis of all 928 peer-reviewed climate studies published between 1993 and 2003 found not a single one disagreed with the general scientific consensus position on climate change.

Yet in spite of this, and in spite of the thousands of climate scientists who are working directly on this issue and are very concerned about it, from whom did we hear as Kyoto approached? A handful of pundits peddling warmed-over opinion articles and half-baked interviews. Yes, good dialogue, discussion and debate are vital to journalism, democracy and science. But they have to be informed dialogue, not conspiracy theories. And that is exactly what these people are serving up.

Of course, part of the problem is that journalism is fueled by conflict, so reporters will often dredge up a crusty commentator to make sure a story is "balanced". That may make for great TV drama, but it's giving industry and politicians an excuse to drag their heels on taking action. And heel dragging is hardly prudent in light of the science.

Our climate is a very complicated system. We don't know everything about how it works, but we're learning more each day. What we do know tells us that, by dumping vast quantities of emissions into the atmosphere, we are disrupting our climate in ways that may make it increasingly inhospitable.

The Kyoto Protocol, by itself, won't stop this from happening, but it's the first step towards an energy economy that could.

That won't stop some people from bleating their conspiracy theories and claims that everything is going to be just fine. Given how disturbing the real science is, I sincerely wish they were right.

Take the Nature Challenge and learn more at [www.davidsuzuki.org](http://www.davidsuzuki.org).

### LETTERS POLICY

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

Letters to the Editor  
The Sun-Tribune  
34 Civic Ave.  
Box 154  
Stouffville, ON  
L4A 7Z5  
[jmason@yrg.com](mailto:jmason@yrg.com)

### EDITORIAL

Editor  
*Jim Mason*  
[jmason@yrg.com](mailto:jmason@yrg.com)

### ADMINISTRATION

Office Manager  
*Vivian O'Neil*  
[vonell@yrg.com](mailto:vonell@yrg.com)

### EVENTS MANAGEMENT

Shows  
*Shows@yrg.com*

### PRODUCTION

Manager  
*Pam Nichols*  
[pnichols@yrg.com](mailto:pnichols@yrg.com)

### ADVERTISING

Classified Manager  
*Ann Campbell*  
[acampbell@yrg.com](mailto:acampbell@yrg.com)

### Retail Manager

*Stacey Allen*  
[sallen@yrg.com](mailto:sallen@yrg.com)

### Managing Director, New

Business & Flyer Sales  
*Dawna Andrews*  
[dandrews@yrg.com](mailto:dandrews@yrg.com)

### New Business Manager

*Steve Kane*  
[skane@yrg.com](mailto:skane@yrg.com)

### Managing Director,

Real Estate  
*Mike Rogerson*  
[mrogerson@yrg.com](mailto:mrogerson@yrg.com)

### EDITORIAL

905-640-2612  
Fax: 905-640-8778

### ADVERTISING

905-640-2612/Classified:  
1-800-743-3353/Fax: 905-853-1765

### DISTRIBUTION

905-294-8244

Canadian Circulations **CCED** Ontario Press Council **OPC**  
Audit Board Member

### Sun-Tribune

A York Region Newspaper Group community newspaper  
The Sun-Tribune, published every Thursday and Saturday, is a member of the Metroland Printing, Publishing and Distributing Ltd., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Forstar Corporation. Metroland is comprised of 70 community publications across Ontario. The York Region Newspaper Group includes The Liberal, serving Richmond Hill and Thornhill, Vaughan Citizen, The Economist & Sun (Markham), The Era-Banner (Newmarket/Aurora), Stouffville Sun-Tribune, Georgina Advocate, York Region Business Times, North of the City, [yorkregion.com](http://yorkregion.com) and York Region Printing.