

OPINION

Stouffville
Sun-Tribune

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Another restaurant welcome on Main Street, Unionville

Re: Eatery doesn't fit bylaw, March 5.
Regarding opposition by some to a restaurant in the former church at Fred Varley and Main Street, Unionville, I suggest people expand their thinking beyond purely retail as a suitable use for the site.

Another upscale restaurant can only enhance Main Street's appeal as a dining destination and would result in additional pedestrian traffic of people with money to spend at other businesses.

The owner has already made a huge investment in building improvements and should be given a chance to proceed with his proposal.

I understand why local restaurateurs would be opposed, but I would welcome another restaurant to add to the choices when I stroll over to Main, as I regularly do.

It benefits no one for such a beautiful building at such a prime location to stay empty.

FRANK DITTMANN
UNIONVILLE

Tired of poor public transit

Open letter to the Toronto Transit Commission and York Region Transit.
I think it's ridiculous we are paying

more for less to ride public transit.

It's bad enough people using this "transportation opportunity" couldn't manage \$1.25, \$1.50 and \$2.25, but fares were bumped even more.

You have some nerve asking \$2.25 for the service you provide. You deserve 50 cents and a smack in the head.

I don't have a car or car pool, so I rely on public transportation.

We rely on transit to be on time and bring us to our destination safely.

We rely on drivers to be polite and respectful even when they are feeling crummy.

However, I have been late for school and other events more than 20 times this year. I'm on time and you are not. So, do your job, drivers: be on time and be polite.

I used to be polite and say please and thank you, hello and have a nice day, but now I just don't care.

Why should I say thank you for coming not five or 10 minutes late, but an hour?

Why should I say thank you when I "ding" for my stop and get let off in a puddle of water, mud or mountain of snow?

Why should I say, "May I please have a transfer" if you don't even acknowledge me with words or eye contact?

Why should I pay your salary?

TIFFANY BEAUMONT
MARKHAM



Am I wasting my time trying to educate public?

Am I wasting my time? Good question. I spent the first half of my life working as a scientist.

But, as I came to recognize the vast and complicated array of social and ethical issues emerging from scientific and technological advances, I decided to step back, examine these issues from a broader perspective and help bring them to the public's attention.

My belief was these issues were set to profoundly change humanity's role in the world and our relationships with each other.

I believed informing people about issues such as cloning, organ transplants, genetic engineering and environmental pollution would not only increase people's understanding of these issues, but whet their appetites to learn more about science and how it affects their lives.

In the end, they would have better information from which to make decisions.

It's a pretty basic assumption, but one that proved difficult to test and measure because so many variables are involved.

However, a new analysis of 200 studies



David Suzuki

from 40 countries presented at a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science has found, regardless of age, nationality or education, the more people know about science, the more favourably they will view science in general.

That's a good start but we still have a long way to go bring about a broader education of science issues.

I often find myself being interviewed by members of the media and realizing they don't have a clue what I'm talking about.

It can be frustrating, but I can't really blame individual journalists. Reporters are

asked to have some level of knowledge about everything, a very difficult task indeed.

Plus, in an effort to reduce costs, most newsrooms do not have reporters on staff who specialize in science issues.

Compounding the problem is the fact scientists don't receive much training in communicating their work and what it means to the average person.

Many scientists are also afraid to simplify or "dumb down" their messages for a lay audience for fear some of the nuances of their work may be lost or their peers may disapprove.

Plus, while there may be a shortage of scientists with good communications skills, there's no shortage of well-financed people with vested interests in certain areas who have the time and money to ensure their message is heard, regardless of its accuracy.

An unfortunate result of this is a general confusion about scientific issues such as climate change or stem cell research.

People end up receiving so many messages they don't know what to believe.

When that happens, trust and respect

for science, in general, declines.

Of course, this is not to say we should take the results of every new study as gospel — quite the opposite.

In fact, having a good understanding of science will help people realize the discipline proceeds incrementally and measures only small bits of the world at a time.

There are inherent weaknesses with such a system, but it can be a very powerful tool.

In fact, science and technology are arguably the most powerful forces shaping society today.

That's why science education, broad dissemination of scientific findings and thoughtful analyses of issues arising from science and technology are so important.

In order for us to make the best decisions about our future, we need to have access to the best available information.

It's good to know I haven't been wasting my time. But it's also a bit daunting to consider how much work we still have to do.

Take the Nature Challenge and learn more at 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.

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