

OPINION

Stouffville
Sun-Tribune

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Homolka's lack of remorse makes it difficult to forgive

Re: *Don't Throw Stones at Karla*, letter to the editor by Gord Alton.

While I appreciate the sentiments of Pastor Alton, he misunderstands the anger the Karla Homolka affair has created.

Far from being "judgmental", the families of the victims, and citizens in general, are expressing their outrage over the failure of the justice system, as well as the lack of remorse on the part of Ms Homolka.

There is much to suggest she has not repented for her terrible crimes and without genuine repentance, there can be no forgiveness.

The story from the Bible is used tentatively, as if the story exculpates the woman. It does not. Jesus was pointing out the hypocrisy of the religious officials because of the unjust way they brought her before him; as in where was the man who committed adultery with her?

True forgiveness is realized when the offender objectively conciliates in repentance. Only then can restoration take place and the stones fall to the ground.

CARMELO TROPIANO
UNIONVILLE

Where were green bins at Ribfest event?

When my wife and I attended Ribfest at the Markham Fairgrounds the weather was great and the food and entertainment was equally wonderful.

One thing we did notice was the lack of green box recycling. There were recycling containers for bottles and plastic but none for food left overs, styrofoam, cardboard, paper towels etc.

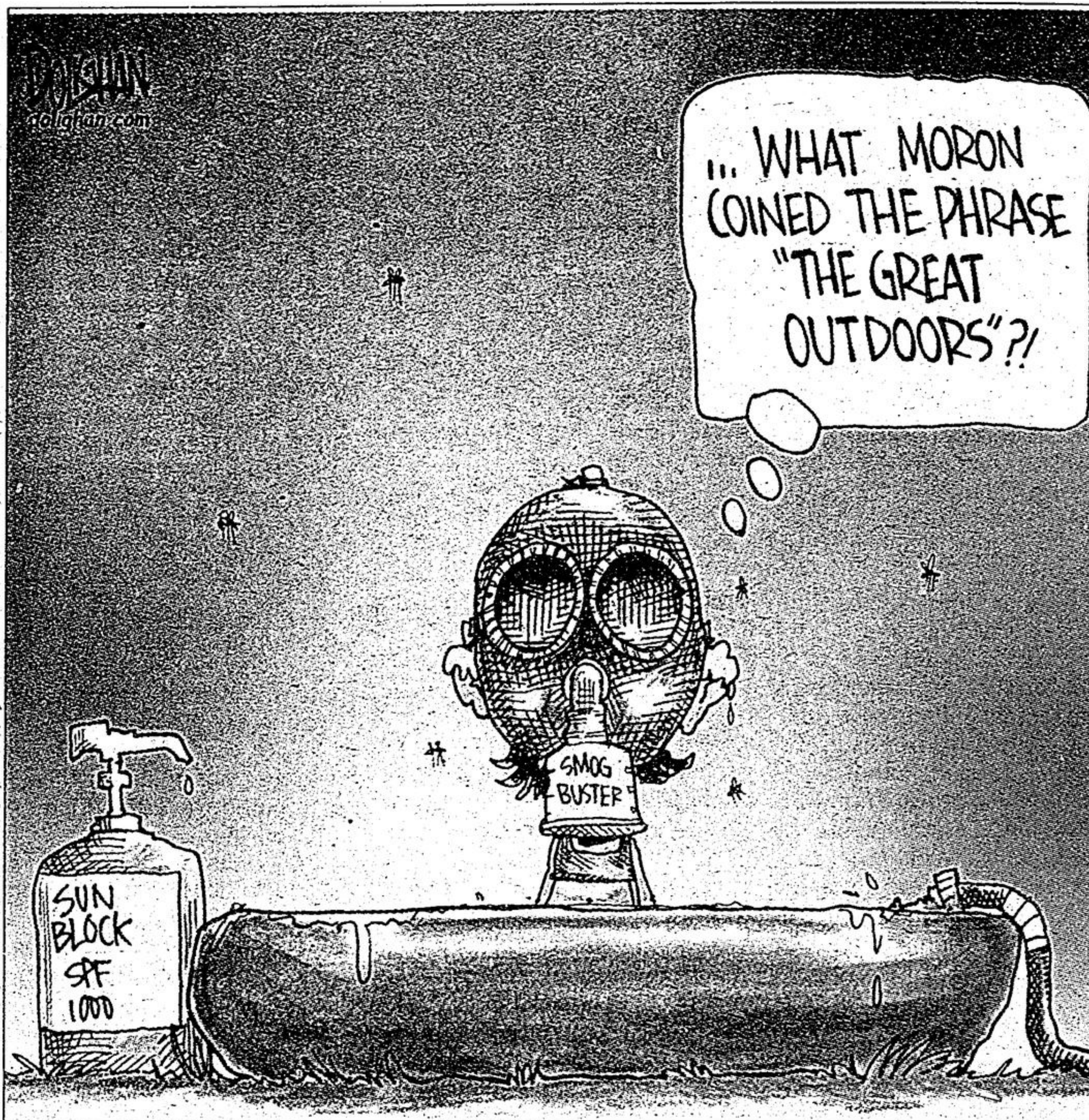
I mentioned this to my friends and they attested to the fact that not everyone would participate and the problems would outweigh the advantages.

I don't believe this. With the town embarking on a campaign to reduce waste and increase recycling, this festival presented a wonderful opportunity to educate Markham residents, reduce waste and show out-of-town visitors the commitment the town has to waste reduction and recycling.

Would it have been so difficult to provide green and cardboard recycling bins with one town employee or volunteer at each location to explain the purpose and showcase our Mission Green?

It presented the town with a wonderful opportunity; now it's an opportunity lost. Let's not repeat this mistake at any other events this year.

DAVE STEWART
MARKHAM



Curbing pollution may help in cancer battle

Ever since United States President Richard Nixon declared war on cancer, hundreds of billions of dollars have been spent battling this dread disease.

We routinely hear about "breakthroughs" in cancer treatment as biotech companies tout their newest products. Yet this year, for the first time, cancer has surpassed heart disease as our number 1 killer.

On a recent CBC radio program, cancer experts pointed out the disease is related to old age, so as the proportion of older people increases in the population, cancer rates will climb.

But while progress has been made in detecting, treating and prolonging the life of cancer patients, overall, the experts concluded we are still losing the war.

So, what else is going on? I used to take my daughters fishing off the jetty near our house until one day we noticed lumps at the base of the fins of one of the

flounders. We took it home to cut open the lumps, expecting to find parasites. Instead, we found they were tumours.

Recently, at a talk I gave in Toronto, a veterinarian told me when she started her practice 20 years ago, she would see pets with cancer once or twice a month. Now, she says, she sees one or two a day.

Humans are incredibly inventive creatures and during the past 100 years, technological innovation has transformed the planet.

In 1962, when Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring* about the unexpected effects of pesticides, she pushed the environment into public consciousness and was attacked outrageously by the chemical industry. Today, more pesticides are applied worldwide than when Ms Carson issued her warning.

In fact, we have altered the chemical makeup of the biosphere to such an extent that we cannot escape the toxic debris of



David Suzuki

industrial activity.

Scientific monitoring stations in Antarctica detect pollutants spread on the winds and in water vapour from all parts of the planet. Volatile compounds sprayed on fields in the southern U.S. or Russia evaporate into the atmosphere, circle the globe, precipitate over glaciers or ice sheets and end up concentrated in lake trout caught in Banff and Jasper.

More than 70,000 human-created compounds, most never tested for toxicity or carcinogenicity, are now in use.

But these chemicals don't just disappear.

From the moment of our birth to the last breath we take before death, we suck air deep into our bodies and filter whatever is in it. More than 60 per cent of our body weight is water that must be constantly replenished.

Most of our food is grown in soil, the same soil in which we dump our wastes. We even spray the plants and animals we eat with poisons. Is it any wonder why all our bodies now contain trace amounts of these chemicals?

It takes an enormous effort to pinpoint a deleterious compound. It took years before thalidomide was tracked down as the cause of limb malformations and DES as the cause of reproductive cancers in daughters of women treated with it during pregnancy.

Tests must be carried out on a scale large enough to yield numbers that are statistically significant and each compound must be studied under different conditions

and concentrations.

Such studies are also normally done in isolation. But this is not how these chemicals are used in the real world, where they can combine with dozens of other compounds.

A report published earlier this year in the journal *Environmental Health Perspectives*, for example, found common pesticide Roundup was more than twice as toxic as glyphosate alone, its only supposed "active" ingredient. The pesticide mixture was also linked to potential reproductive problems — something else not attributed to glyphosate alone.

Scientists are reluctant to suggest a polluted world may be an important factor in the epidemic of cancer afflicting us today. But common sense should tell us that many of these compounds have powerful biological effects.

If we stop using the biosphere as a toxic dump, we might actually make better progress in the war against cancer.

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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