

# OPINION

**Stouffville Sun-Tribune**  
 A Metroland community newspaper  
 6290 Main St.  
 Box 154, Stouffville, ON, L4A 7Z5  
**PUBLISHER Ian Proudfoot**

**EDITOR IN CHIEF**  
 Debora Kelly  
**BUSINESS MANAGER**  
 Robert Lazaruko

**DIRECTOR INTERACTIVE MEDIA & TECHNOLOGY**  
 John Fuithey

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

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

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Forum could shed light on fire?

Re: *Investigators probe fire, July 27.*

Whitchurch-Stouffville lost one of its prime heritage buildings last weekend, likely to a senseless act of vandalism with the burning of the Harper Hoover homestead, a 150-year-old fieldstone home unique to our community and the very symbol of our heritage.

Destroyed by whom?

If it be kids, then they have to be dealt with and made to understand that their actions are not without consequence.

If the culprits are adults, then they should be punished to the fullest extent of the law.

I appeared before council to ask it to facilitate the investigation by calling a public forum and involving all citizens who might have any information about the incident.

Police would be present to take pertinent testimony. We would also discuss what we as a town wish to preserve and how we can best do that beyond the provincial measures, which basically leave it up to a developer's whim.

I promised Mr. Harper I would protect her home and I have failed. I want to know why and I want to know why this council and town have failed to protect one of our essential heritage buildings, since they are ultimately responsible.

I won't be satisfied until this house is recon-

structed on the very spot.

**SILVANA & ADRIAN DE BOER**  
WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

### Punishment should fit crime

Re: *Investigators probe fire, July 27.*

Has anyone else noticed the frequency with which historic homes and properties now owned by developers are accidentally destroyed?

I believe this to be at least the third such property destroyed now available for development.

First was the Markham home accidentally bulldozed by a sub-contractor.

Second was a forest area near Oak Ridges, also accidentally cut down and destroyed and now the historic Harper house in Stouffville is burned to the ground.

The potential fines and penalties levied for this wanton destruction of our heritage is obviously not enough to deter people from doing what they will.

Maybe these acts have all been accidents, but these accidents will continue to occur until the punishment meted out prevents these treasures from being destroyed.

**D. WILKINSON**  
STOUFFVILLE



# Hired guns confuse public about global warming

**A** Gore once told me to get politicians to listen, you have to engage the people first.

The former United States vice-president is attempting to do just that this summer with his critically acclaimed global warming documentary *An Inconvenient Truth*. But he's up against some pretty powerful opponents.

His movie, by most standards, is pretty good.

Rotten Tomatoes, a website that compiles movie reviews from newspapers, TV and the Internet, shows 92 per cent of critics liked it.

A story by the Associated Press on experts who critiqued the science behind the movie found they, too, gave it a thumbs up for accuracy.

Personally, I thought it was brilliant.

But shortly after the Associated Press article came out, other articles started popping up that said Mr. Gore's science was shoddy. People claiming to be experts wrote opinion pieces in newspa-

pers decrying the film. Mr. Gore, and the "theory" of global warming in general. Contrarians, it seemed, were coming out of the woodwork.

What happened?

What happened was a well-funded campaign to discredit the film and carpet bomb North Americans with confusing and contradictory information about the science of global warming. It appears to be having an effect, too.

Polls indicate while the public is very concerned about climate change, they are still confused about the science.

Those who read science journals probably find this public confusion, well, confusing.

While there is plenty of discussion in scientific circles about what precisely a changing climate will mean to people in various parts of the world, there is no debate about the cause of global warming (human activities, mostly burning oil, coal and gas) or about the fact it is already having an effect and those effects will



David Suzuki

become more and more pronounced in coming years.

Yet, there they are in the editorial and opinion pages, supposed experts writing about the grand global warming conspiracy perpetrated by Europeans. Or socialists. Or European socialists.

Those in the know can laugh off such nonsense, but the problem is most people aren't in the know.

Average citizens are busy people and not experts in climate science so, naturally, they tend to defer to people who appear to know what they're talking about.

Unfortunately, masquerading

as an expert in the media is pretty easy. All you need are a few letters after your name and a controversial story to tell. That makes news.

And there's no shortage of public relations people willing to spin a good tale — usually for a tidy profit. Companies pay big bucks to have these spin doctors work their magic and make sure the industry line gets heard.

But even some of public relations' best-known spin doctors are disgusted by what's going on right now over global warming.

Jim Hoggan is one. He's a personal friend who happens to be president of one of western Canada's largest public relations firms, James Hoggan and Associates. And he's so appalled at what he says is deliberate manipulation of public opinion about this issue he has started a website, [desmogblog.com](http://desmogblog.com), to debunk the global warming skeptics.

Jim writes in his blog: "There is a line between public relations and propaganda — or there should be. And there is a difference between

using your skills, in good faith, to help rescue a battered reputation and using them to twist the truth, to sow confusion and doubt on an issue that is critical to human survival.

And it is infuriating, as a public relations professional, to watch my colleagues use their skills, their training and their considerable intellect to poison the international debate on climate change."

Well said, Jim.

His blog makes fascinating reading. It names names and follows the money trail, often leading back to big U.S. conservative organizations and fossil fuel giants.

Jim's making it his mission to expose the liars and frauds and he's doing a pretty good job.

Al Gore was right, the people do have to be engaged before politicians will listen.

But engaging the people sometimes requires clearing the air first.

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

### LETTERS POLICY

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

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

### EDITORIAL

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

**Assistant Editor**  
Rick Vanderlinde  
[rvanderlinde@yrmg.com](mailto:rvanderlinde@yrmg.com)

**INTERACTIVE MEDIA Marketing & Advertising Manager**  
Dawna Andrews  
[dandrews@yrmg.com](mailto:dandrews@yrmg.com)

### ADVERTISING

**Retail Manager**  
Stacey Allen  
[sallen@yrmg.com](mailto:sallen@yrmg.com)

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

**Assistant Classified Manager**  
Bonnie Rondeau  
[brondeau@yrmg.com](mailto:brondeau@yrmg.com)

### New Business Development Manager

Mike Rogerson  
[mrogerson@yrmg.com](mailto:mrogerson@yrmg.com)

**PRODUCTION Team Leader**  
Sherry Day  
[sday@yrmg.com](mailto:sday@yrmg.com)

### EDITORIAL

905-640-2612  
Fax: 905-294-1583

**ADVERTISING**  
905-640-2612/Classified:  
1-800-743-3353/Fax: 905-294-1538

**DISTRIBUTION**  
905-640-2612



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 Torstar 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 Era-Banner (Newmarket/Aurora), Markham Economist & Sun, Georgina Advocate, York Region Business Times, North of the City, [yorkregion.com](http://yorkregion.com) and York Region Printing.