

OPINION

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

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

New mayor a sore winner

You would think when someone as public as the new mayor is accepting his new post he would have some consideration for those who ran against him, especially the previous mayor.

Not only did Wayne Emmerson kick Sue Sherban while she was down, by speaking about the "town" not liking some of her decisions, but he did not even congratulate her on a race well run.

Almost every other politician I saw or heard on Rogers Television Monday night spoke nicely about their opponents.

What example does this set as our new mayor? Ms Sherban took three years out of her life to serve us and some of us think she did a great job.

Shame on you for not acknowledging this, Mr. Emmerson.

SUSAN LUFF
STOUFFVILLE

Election no place for personal agenda

Re: Candidate running on one-dimensional platform, letter to the editor, Nov. 11
I cannot believe Tina Vitale of Octagon Medical Services would use the municipal election and a citizen concerned

about the company opening steps from her home, as a platform to run down council candidate.

It is either Ms. Vitale's lack of integrity or her desire to see someone else elected, to ensure her business is approved. It is not because she cares about our town.

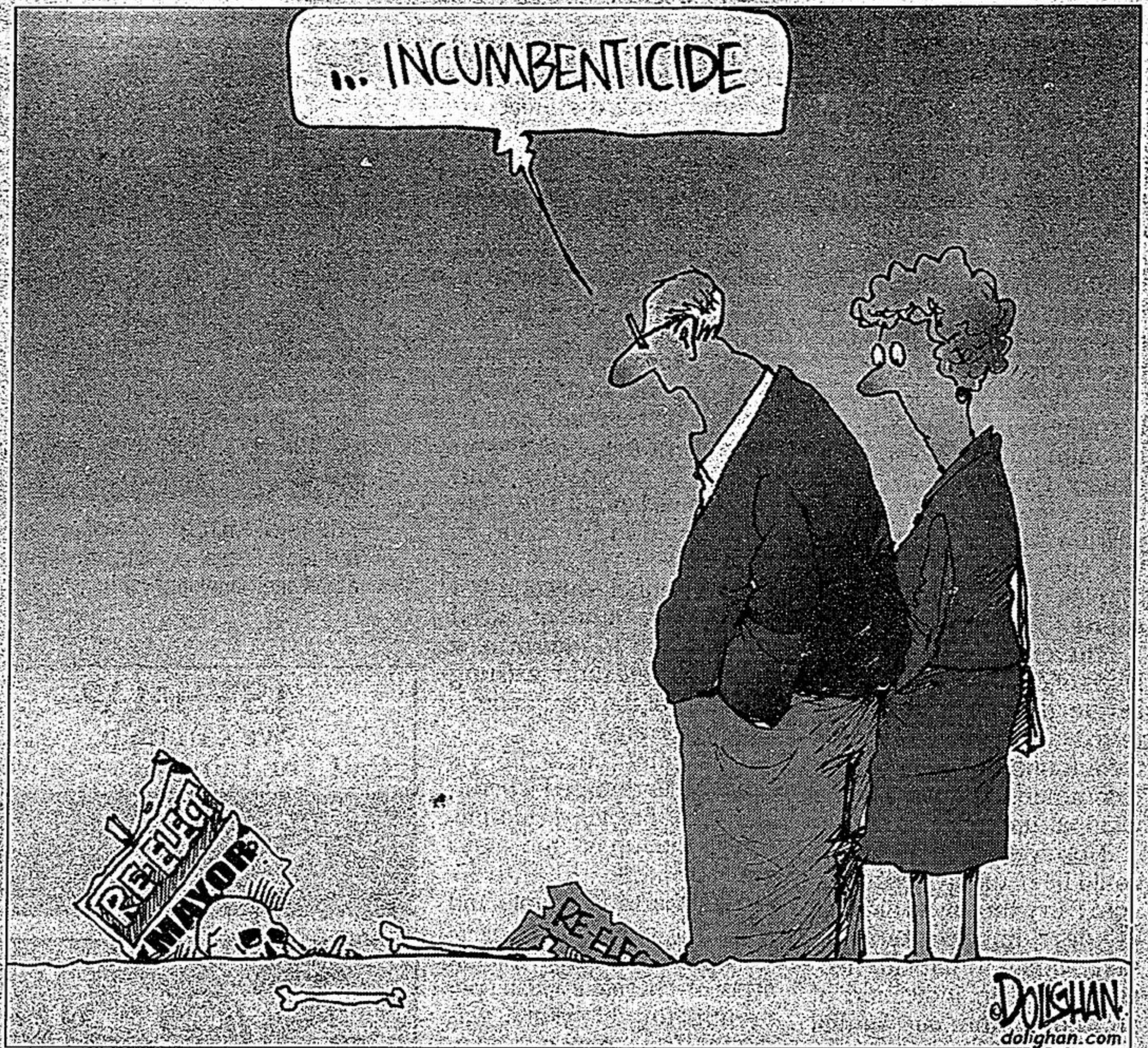
She knows quite well about 100 residents attended the town council meeting to speak out against her business. Let's be clear. She thinks we need a medical waste business, trucking contaminated needles and other contaminated waste to our community, washing it, sterilizing it and shipping it away.

As a registered nurse with more than 30 years of experience, this is not a "clean business."

It is not the vision residents of this community have for Gormley and, quite frankly, probably not the place residents are looking to for employment.

What Gormley is to Ms Vitale is a community in which she hoped to quietly start a high-risk business. Residents were not against her business, just not in favour of putting it in a community that does not have sewer systems and relies on well water. We will continue to remind elected officials of the risk posed by Octagon Medical.

BARBARA E. COLLINS
GORMLEY



Stern warning changes climate debate

Sir Nicolas Stern's recent report on the economics of global warming has finally changed the nature of the debate. Instead of being pigeonholed as an environmental problem, global warming can finally be seen for what it really is, an economic one.

The Stern Report was huge. Literally, at 700 pages, but also for the shockwaves it sent around the world.

Mr. Stern is no lightweight. He's a former chief economist with the World Bank.

At his disposal was a team of 20 researchers and academics. And the report they presented, while certainly not the final word on the topic, has finally assigned a dollar figure to the costs of global warming.

That figure is astounding: \$7 trillion US — or between five and 20 per cent of the global economy — wiped out by the beginning of the next century because of prob-

lems brought about by a warmer planet. Global warming, the report states, could cost more than the first two world wars combined and lead to a worldwide depression.

Predictably, some people pounced on the report, saying it was alarmist and inaccurate. Of course, the reality is no one knows how accurate it is.

Creating a report of this kind naturally requires making certain assumptions and even some guesses about future trends.

But it represents a very good estimate that can now be refined over time.

What we mustn't do, however, is get so bogged down in fighting over the details that we fail to see the most important message in the report — that we can't afford not to take serious action.

For years, many politicians and industry lobbyists have painted global warming as an environmental problem — like creating a new park, helping an endangered



David Suzuki

species recover or planting trees. Yes, we need to help the environment, they said, but we have to be careful not to do anything to slow economic growth.

In fact, some went to great lengths to insist tackling global warming would mean "shutting down" the economy. Sure, they lamented, we could do something about the problem, so long as you don't mind living in caves and eat-

ing dirt. Basically, global warming was painted as an either-or environmental problem.

Either you had a robust economy and accepted a hotter planet that might not have as many pretty birds or plants or you had no economy and lived like the Flintstones with lots of fuzzy animals and spotted toads.

According to the standard argument you couldn't have both. Mr. Stern's report shows this is a lie for two reasons.

First, the economic costs, not just the environmental costs, of inaction are actually much higher than adequately dealing with the problem now.

Mr. Stern says measures to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations at levels that will prevent dangerous global warming will cost just 1 per cent of the global GDP.

This means we most certainly can afford to take significant

action. Second, the report shows tackling global warming is not about saving the whales or some such thing; it's about not being stupid.

It's about having the capacity to recognize the health of the world we live in and the health of our people and our economies are intimately connected.

It's about recognizing, although we rarely think about it, the services provided by nature are worth a great deal (of money, if you like to think of it that way).

We can't stop global warming in its tracks, but we can avoid the worst of it.

Fighting the problem certainly has a price, but it's manageable.

These are the lessons of the Stern Report.

Reasons enough to put aside the rhetoric, stop the posturing and not be stupid.

Take the David Suzuki challenge at 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, 6290 Main St., Stouffville, ON L4A 7Z5. jmason@yrng.com

EDITORIAL

Editor
Jim Mason
jmason@yrng.com
Assistant Editor
Rick Vanderlinde
rvanderlinde@yrng.com

INTERACTIVE MEDIA

Marketing & Advertising
Manager
Dawn Andrews
dandrews@yrng.com

ADVERTISING

Retail Manager
Stacey Allen
sallen@yrng.com

Classified Manager
Ann Campbell
acampbell@yrng.com

Assistant Classified Manager
Bonnie Rondeau
brondeau@yrng.com

New Business Development Manager

Mike Rogerson
mrogerson@yrng.com

PRODUCTION

Team Leader
Sherry Day
sdayer@yrng.com

EDITORIAL

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

ADVERTISING

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

DISTRIBUTION

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