

OPINION

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

6290 Main St.
Stouffville, ON L4A 1G7
www.yorkregion.com

PUBLISHER **Ian Proudfoot**

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Debora Kelly

DIRECTOR INTERACTIVE
MEDIA & TECHNOLOGY
John Fuithey

DIRECTOR, ADVERTISING
& DISTRIBUTION
Barry Black

YORK REGION PRINTING
GENERAL MANAGER
Bob Dean

BUSINESS MANAGER
Robert Lazurko

DIRECTOR, CIRCULATION
SYSTEMS
Lynn Pashko

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Good news for Stouffville, but lake needs park

Re: *Students get say in town planning*, May 26.

It's great to have a local council willing to invest time and money to buy land and plan so many local parks and amenities for your community.

This is great investment for Stouffville, to have a public park within a five-minute walk of every home, with great recreational opportunities.

I live in Whitchurch-Stouffville's second largest community, Musselman's Lake.

We have heard from our councillor that our community has the opportunity to rent space at a private business for six months a year for our parkland use.

We'll have to share park space with 6,000 to 8,000 people from all over the GTA during the summer.

Where is the investment in our community?

Why do our kids have to travel away from our community to play at a park now?

If only we had the problems or even a slight possibility of having the opportunities that residents of Stouffville have.

Can we get a skateboard park or splash pad?

How about a jungle gym?

How about a place to call our own where our kids can go to kick a ball around, play catch or even meet one another?

The community of Musselman's Lake asks that you invest in our community, as you are willing to do in Stouffville, council.

The opportunity is there, is the willingness?

MARK CARROLL
CHAIRPERSON

FRIENDS OF MUSSELMAN'S LAKE

Community supports SDSS

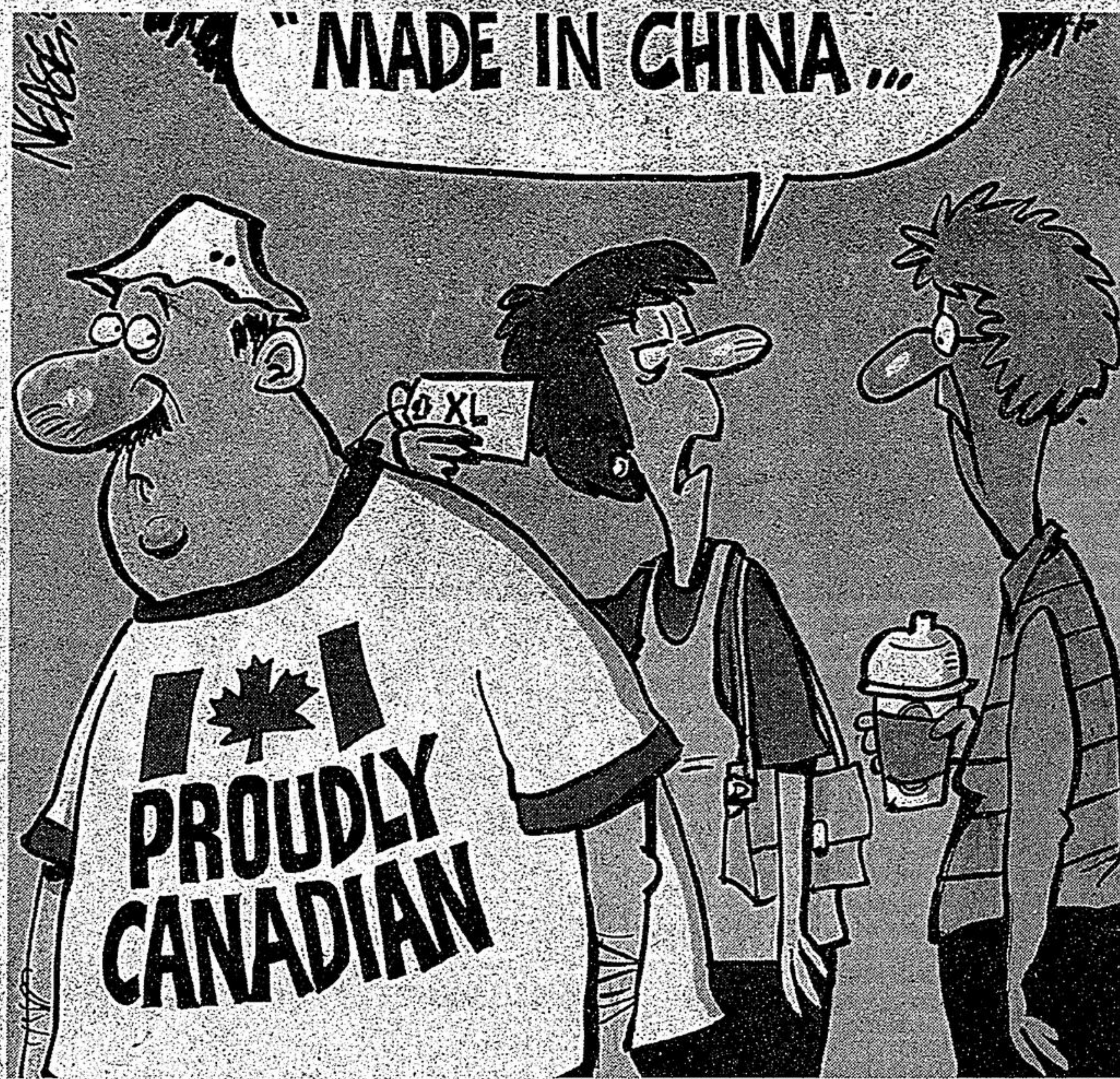
Stouffville District Secondary School thanks the community for its support in making the school closing event so successful.

A special thank you to the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, the Stouffville Lions Club and our business community for their contributions.

We look forward to seeing you at the opening of our new school, Oct. 24.

ARLENE SMITH, PRINCIPAL
JOHN RELPH, CHAIRPERSON
SCHOOL COUNCIL

STOUFFVILLE DISTRICT
SECONDARY SCHOOL



We should keep eye on transgenic crops

Did you know genetically modified or transgenic crops are now commonplace on North American farms? According to a recent survey in the United States, the majority of Americans have no idea just how pervasive this technology has become. In fact, North Americans have been eating transgenic foods and using products made from their crops for more than a decade. So, what kind of effect, for better or for worse, are these crops having on the environment?

One of the major concerns many ecologists had a decade ago was transgenic organisms could inadvertently disrupt ecosystems by harming other organisms.

Some transgenic crops, for example, have been engineered to resist certain types of herbicide. This allows farmers to liberally spray their fields with the herbicide, knowing it won't harm their target crop.

These concerns were apparently warranted, as farm-scale evaluations

two years ago in the United Kingdom of some transgenic crops found vigorous application of herbicides was also damaging to the diversity of other lifeforms around farms.

That's because many of the weeds killed by the herbicides were important for butterflies and bees. Populations of these beneficial pollinators on the test farms fell, possibly having other, more wide-ranging implications up the food chain for birds and mammals.

Another common type of transgenic crop has an insecticide "built-in." These crops have been genetically engineered to produce an insecticidal toxin that wards off pests.

One of the most well-known has been engineered using a certain kind of bacterium called Bt.

The advantage, in theory, is Bt crops do not need to be sprayed with an insecticide to kill pests and, thus, could be potentially cheaper and more environmentally friendly than their contemporary non-transgenic counterparts.



David Suzuki

Concerns were raised, however, when lab tests showed pollen from Bt crops could be potentially harmful to non-target insects, making them grow more slowly or reproduce less often.

However, a new meta-analysis of the effects of Bt cotton and Bt maize on non-target insects in the field has found these types of crops appear, at least on the surface, to be less harmful to insects than farming methods that use insecticides.

This report, recently published in

the journal *Science*, looked at 42 field experiments and found fields of Bt cotton and maize contained more non-pest insects than those using insecticides to control pests.

Of course, insecticide-free control fields still had the greatest number of insects overall. The authors point out further studies to examine the impact on specific species of insects, rather than just all invertebrates, are essential to better understand the environmental impact of these crops.

Disturbingly, the researchers had to resort to obtaining much of their information on Bt crops through the United States Freedom of Information Act, because the companies that produced them did not publicly disclose it. The researchers also note the debate around transgenic crops has been a heated and emotional one. "However, in the case of GM crops, scientific analyses have also been deficient. In particular, many experiments used to test the environmental safety of GM crops were poorly replicated, were of short duration; and/or

assessed only a few of the possible response variables. Much could be learned and perhaps some debates settled if there were credible quantitative analyses of the numerous experiments that have contrasted the ecological impact if GM crops with those of control treatments involving non-GM varieties."

Transgenic crops are not simple products such as widgets, iPods or even automobiles. They are living organisms that can interact with other creatures in the environment in myriad ways. Nature is complicated.

When you modify an organism at a genetic level, it shouldn't surprise anyone that the results are also complicated, and often unexpected.

Transgenic crops are, in many ways, radically new and should be subject to the greatest of scientific scrutiny, not suppressed by proprietary concerns.

Take the Suzuki challenge at david Suzuki.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

EDITORIAL
Editor
Jim Mason
jmason@yrmg.com

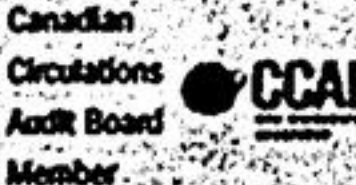
INTERACTIVE MEDIA
Marketing & Advertising Manager
Dawna Andrews
dandrews@yrmg.com

ADVERTISING
Retail Manager
Stacey Allen
sallen@yrmg.com

Classified Manager
Ann Campbell
acampbell@yrmg.com

PRODUCTION
Team Leader
Sherry Day
sday@yrmg.com

Distribution Manager
Megan Pike
mpike@yrmg.com



EDITORIAL
905-640-2672
Fax: 905-640-8778

ADVERTISING
905-640-2612
Classified: 1-800-743-3353
Fax: 905-640-8778

DISTRIBUTION
905-640-2612



A York Region Media Group community newspaper. The Sun-Tribune, published every Thursday and Saturday, is a division of the Metroland Media Group Ltd., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Torstar Corporation. Metroland is comprised of 100 community publications across Ontario. The York Region Media 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 and York Region Printing.