

OPINION

Stouffville
Sun-Tribune

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

PUBLISHER Ian Proudfoot

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Debra Kelly

BUSINESS MANAGER
Robert Lazaruk

DIRECTOR
INTERACTIVE MEDIA
& **TECHNOLOGY**
John Futhy

DIRECTOR, ADVERTISING
& **DISTRIBUTION**
Barry Black

DIRECTOR, CIRCULATION
SYSTEMS
Lynn Pashko

YORK REGION PRINTING
GENERAL MANAGER
Bob Dean

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Why no solution on Elm Road?

As a resident of Elm Road, I would like to express my frustration at the continuing traffic problem on our street. I realize the increased volume is a result of the new subdivision that has been built behind us.

I don't understand why traffic is allowed to travel at whatever speed is possible before it reaches a stop sign, assuming the drivers bother to acknowledge the sign. Mix rumbling trucks, screeching tires and no police presence and it's a recipe for big trouble.

Elm is a major route for children who walk to elementary school? Does the fact there are no sidewalks cause anyone concern?

Most frustrating is that this issue was addressed. A study was done, public meetings held and three recommendations made.

As homeowners, we were looking forward to finally being able to open our windows and back out of our driveways.

The decision was made to block off the street and put in temporary barriers. At zero hour, the fire department advised it was not a safe plan so the barriers weren't installed.

What happened to the other alternatives? Is it going to take a tragedy to make a point?

If you feel this is just another "noisy" letter, I invite you to send your little ones to school next month without a parent walking beside them.

For those of you who drop your kids off in the car, I would suggest your speed leaving the school is going to kill someone else's child.

Where are the people who were supposed

to look after this issue? My guess is they live somewhere else and it just doesn't matter.

STAN SPRUNG
STOUFFVILLE

Fines get developers' attention

Re: Tree-clearing by developer irks town, residents, Aug. 16.

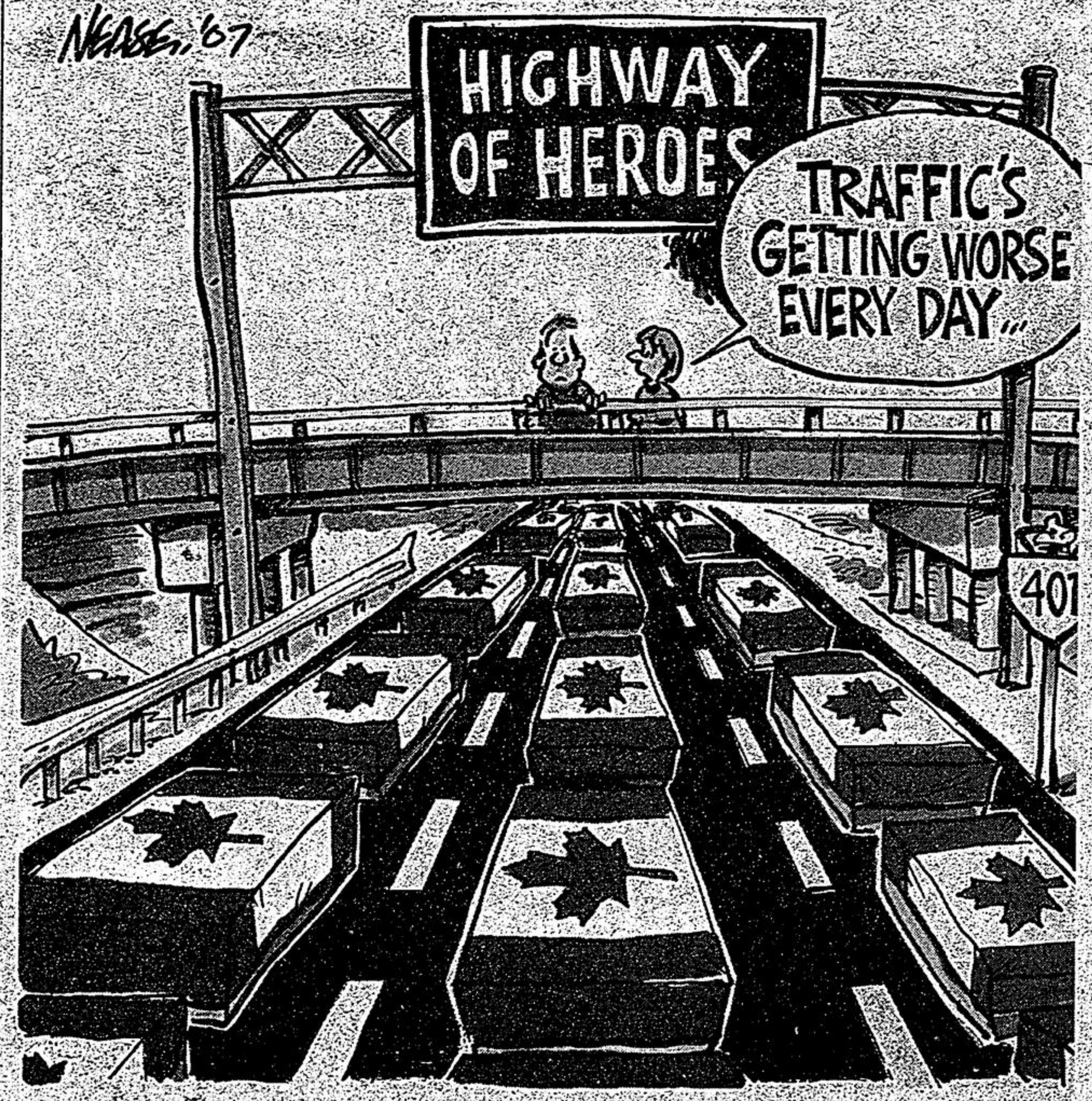
If we value our trees, we need to take steps to protect them. I am pleased council has expressed its anger with Sheriff Corporation for having cut down the trees and hedgerow adjacent to the Novopharm soccer fields. However, I wonder what can be accomplished by speaking to the developer. Isn't it too late to speak to the developer? The trees are gone.

If we want developers to understand that preservation of our environment is important to this community, we need to take real steps to protect trees, whether it is a mature tree downtown, a woodlot on the moraine, or a hedgerow adjacent to a soccer field.

I do not believe speaking to developers or adopting a tree policy will get the job done. What is required is a tree preservation bylaw with teeth, in the form of substantial fines for those who destroy trees without a permit.

Halton Region has a tree bylaw. It charged a developer with 11 counts of destroying trees in contravention of it and the Forestry Act. The court ordered the developer to replant the trees at a cost of \$122,000 and pay a \$33,000 fine. I bet Halton got the developer's attention.

DEAN HORNER
STOUFFVILLE



Classification determines conservation efforts

Are you a lumper or a splitter? Well, that depends on how you define a species. And how we define species has direct implications on our ability to protect them.

This spring, scientists celebrated the 300th birthday of Swedish biologist Carl Linnaeus, one of the true giants of biology and the father of taxonomy — the classification of living things.

Before Dr. Linnaeus' time, species were described according to phrase names, actual descriptions of plants or animals, which could be entire sentences or even paragraphs long. You can imagine how complicated and confusing such a system would be.

Dr. Linnaeus changed all that by naming and classifying the diversity of life on Earth according to a hierarchical system of kingdoms, classes, orders and so on down to species and sometimes varieties.

Although it has changed and expanded over the years, modern biologists still use a similar system of classification.

Dr. Linnaeus would likely have approved of the additions, as he himself was constantly updating and changing his own work based on new information.

Two of the greatest changes to the study of taxonomy have been the discovery of evolution and the use of DNA analysis to further refine our classification of species.

But with these new ways of understanding life come new challenges.

While Dr. Linnaeus thought all species were created by God exactly as they were and needed only to be discovered by man, we now know that species evolve over time.

In fact, given the right conditions and time, a single species can actually branch off to become several entirely new species. And with modern DNA analysis, we are able to determine the genetic distance between species. For example, we now know that chimpanzees are our closest living relatives.

But, as was pointed out recently in a special edition of the journal



David Suzuki

with Faisal Moola

Nature, these classification issues pose real problems for conservation efforts.

At what point does variation within a species become significant enough that we have to accept we are dealing with more than one unique species? Right now, there is no consistent standard in the scientific community.

Butterfly taxonomists, for example, tend to lump their specialty together, categorizing

relatively few butterflies as unique species and instead choosing to differentiate them by subspecies.

Ant taxonomists, on the other hand, tend to split their specialty into many different unique species and relatively few subspecies.

This inconsistency makes it more difficult to decide where to place our conservation priorities. Most conservation efforts are based on species lists — Canada's Species at Risk Act (SARA), for example.

And although SARA has provisions to protect species, subspecies and distinct populations, there is little agreement among scientists where one of these ends and another begins. Depending on who studies a creature, it could potentially be classified into any one of these groups.

Yet in the real world, being classified as a unique species means you will get more attention from the public and from conservation agencies.

For example, one well-known conservation plan is to focus on biodiversity hotspots — those areas

that have the greatest number of unique species. But how were these species differentiated in the first place?

One way to avoid such problems is to take the conservation focus away from species and instead look at things from an ecosystem level.

By protecting entire ecosystems, you not only protect the species that are a part of it, but also the services the ecosystem provides, such as water filtration and climate protection.

However we proceed, it is clear that looking at species alone is not sufficient to provide us with the information we need to decide conservation priorities.

And unless we have greater clarity, it's all too easy for discussions about conservation to break down into semantics and posturing.

And that does neither the species, nor those trying to protect them, any good at all.

Take the Nature Challenge and learn more 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 1G7
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

Anni Campbell
acampbell@yrmg.com

Assistant Classified

Manager
Bonnie Rondeau
brondeau@yrmg.com

PRODUCTION

Team Leader
Sherry Day
sday@yrmg.com



EDITORIAL
905-640-2612
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 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 and York Region Printing.