

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 Lazurko

DIRECTOR
INTERACTIVE MEDIA
& TECHNOLOGY
John Futhey

DIRECTOR, ADVERTISING
& DISTRIBUTION
Barry Black

DIRECTOR, CIRCULATION
SYSTEMS
Lynn Pashko

YORK REGION PRINTING
GENERAL MANAGER
Bob Dean

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Some people just don't get it when it comes to conservation

Re: Clotheslines poll has support in Stouffville, Jan. 26.

Like those who continue to not slow down on icy roads and who still drink and drive, some people just aren't getting it when it comes to drying clothes.

Mother Nature is in trouble, as is evident everywhere.

The old adage, "If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem" applies as much today as it ever did.

Objecting to clotheslines baffles me. I wish I had one, the deluxe kind.

It's the kind that gives clothes lots of space in which to absorb sunlight and dance and flap in a breeze.

My clothes are hung outside on clotheslines that are not the deluxe variety.

They are made from rope and hang from hooks on both sides of my apartment's balcony. They are barely a metre high.

The clothes I hang out on my balcony are never touched by sunlight and seldom catch a breeze.

I'm proud to say I'm a conservationist, in this and other respects.

BARBARA BRASS DUNCAN
STOUFFVILLE

Depressing to even consider destroying piece of our history

Re: Fight on to preserve Stouffville grain elevator, Feb. 7.

I read with interest Hannelore Volpe's article reporting on the fight to preserve Stouffville's grain elevator.

I was moved to tell you how I feel about its potential demolition.

In a word? Depressed.

I sincerely hope GO Transit and town council can find a way to restore and preserve this historical vestige and reminder of Stouffville's past.

Surely, there's some cultural use for this building, perhaps as an agricultural museum, with special displays on the historical roles played by the railway, lumber mills, Mennonite families and, yes, even the old farmers market, in the lives of Stouffville residents.

It would be a great pity to destroy our last agricultural building.

SAL AMENTA
STOUFFVILLE

Would you like to comment on a letter, story or column in The Sun-Tribune? e-mail jmason@yrmg.com



Who the heck is Britney Spears?

Well, it seems we've finally done it. Humanity has finally made its mark, our own little place in history.

Even if we, as a species, snuff ourselves out now, the next hyper-intelligent creature that emerges from the muck or one that finds our little planet drifting through space, will know we were here. Millions of years from now, a scientist with six arms will sift through compressed layers of our collective detritus and ponder the most compelling question about our era: Who the heck was Britney Spears?

You see, it seems we've entered a new epoch: a period of geological time usually reserved for distinguishing between massive periods of change on the planet. In this case, we have moved from the era geologists call the Holocene, which has been this relatively stable period since the last ice age 10,000 to 12,000 years ago, to the Anthro-

cene, a time when human activities have become the dominating force of change on the planet.

Changing epochs is not the same as changing your socks. In scientific terms, this is a big deal. Epochs tend to be delineated by periods of upheaval.

Think ice ages and mass extinctions. When Nobel-prize-winning chemist Dr. Paul Krutzen brought up the idea back in 2000 and again in 2002, it was still considered pretty radical and somewhat impetuous for our little species to have its own epoch.

But a team of scientists writing in a new paper in the journal *GSA Today*, published by the Geological Society of America, now argues it's becoming increasingly difficult to deny humanity's growing influence on a planetary scale. In their paper, they examine the case for change and conclude it's time to accept the obvious, we are in the Anthropocene.

According to the researchers,



David Suzuki

With Faisal Moola

just about every natural process on the planet now bears a human signature.

For example, if you look at the soils, humans are now the dominant force behind changes to physical sedimentation. Dramatic increases in erosion from agriculture, road and urban development and dams have pushed people to be the largest producer of sediment by an order of magnitude over nature.

If you look at the air, humans are rapidly changing the composition of the atmosphere by burning vast amounts of oil, coal and gas.

As a result, carbon dioxide levels are one-third higher now than they were 200 years ago — higher, in fact, than they have been in the past 900,000 years — and they are expected to double this century.

If you look at life on the planet, human activities are causing the extinction of many species, possibly leading to a "major extinction event" that rivals others, such as the demise of the dinosaurs.

Humans are also rapidly replacing vast areas of natural vegetation with agricultural crops. As the researchers point out:

"These effects are permanent, as future evolution will take place from surviving (and frequently anthropogenically relocated) stocks."

If you look at the oceans, sea levels have risen slightly due to melting ice and thermal expan-

sion (water expands as it warms) and these levels are expected to continue to rise through the century. Our oceans are also noticeably more acidic now, again due to the human release of so much carbon into the atmosphere, with "potentially severe effects in both benthic (especially coral reef) and planktonic settings," according to the researchers.

So, there you have it, the case for the Anthropocene. We've done it. We've written our name on the wall. We're the king of the hill, lord of the sandbox. We're now the most powerful force of change on the planet - so much that we actually get our own epoch. A pretty big responsibility for a naked ape that emerged on the plains of Africa only 150,000 years ago.

So what now, little human? What now?

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
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

Ann 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.