

# OPINION

*Stouffville*  
**Sun-Tribune**

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Can arts groups afford to use Nineteen on the Park facility?

I know The Sun-Tribune has expressed some frustration, as has the mayor, about lack of input from the arts community regarding our long awaited Nineteen on the Park performance/arts facility.

I would like to suggest that a simple response would be: "Build it and they will come".

However, as a novice concert organizer and promoter (Stars of Stouffville I and II, 'Music in the Park', 'The Stouffville House Concert Series' and 'Guitars in the Gazebo' for the Strawberry Festival) I can say that we work with an extremely limited budget.

It's hard to imagine being able to pay for a hall and see the musicians earn anything for their efforts.

Except for the house concert series, musicians at the other events listed above have performed for free.

Often, sound equipment is donated or loaned and, for the house concerts, generous Stouffville residents donate the use of their homes and provide refreshments.

It is with trepidation then that we consider organizing events for Nineteen on the Park.

Yes, we'd love to use it and it's possible the very successful Stouffville house concert series, organized primarily by Marie-

Lynn Hammond and Lori Jury, will evolve to the point that we can use the new hall.

Meanwhile, it would be of great assistance if a hall manager could be appointed or hired to not only provide oversight to the refurbishing of the old municipal building, but to have an eye to the future for developing funding, etc. so that live music and other arts events can be subsidized through the town and through available arts grants.

Personally, I feel Don Quarles would be an excellent candidate for this position given his experience managing at the Hummingbird Centre and his commitment to and knowledge of the local arts scene.

So, if we're not 'banging the drum' about future use of Nineteen on the Park, please understand that, for us at the grassroots level in the music business, the idea of being able to afford a proper performance space is intimidating.

It is my hope that, with proper leadership and continued support from the town, BIA, corporate sponsors, and elsewhere, we could present concert series at the new hall perhaps in a way similar to the way the very successful Algonquin Theatre is used in Huntsville. Go to [algonquintheatre.ca](http://algonquintheatre.ca) for more information.

Thanks for your support of live music in Stouffville.

BRIAN O'SULLIVAN  
STOUFFVILLE



## Symbiotic relationship among birds, trees

No matter how much I learn about nature, I never cease to be amazed by its mystery and complexity.

That point really struck me in light of a recent study in the journal *Biological Conservation* about the relationship between the hyacinth macaw, the toco toucan and the manduvi tree.

The hyacinth macaw is an endangered bird in central Brazil. It has a reputation for being picky when it comes to choosing a home: it lives almost exclusively in natural hollows in manduvi trees, which don't grow in great numbers in the region. In an effort to help preserve the bird and its habitat, Dr. Marco Pizo and his research team at the Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos explored how the manduvi tree's seed is spread. They found that the toco toucan collects and disperses more than 83 per cent of the seeds.

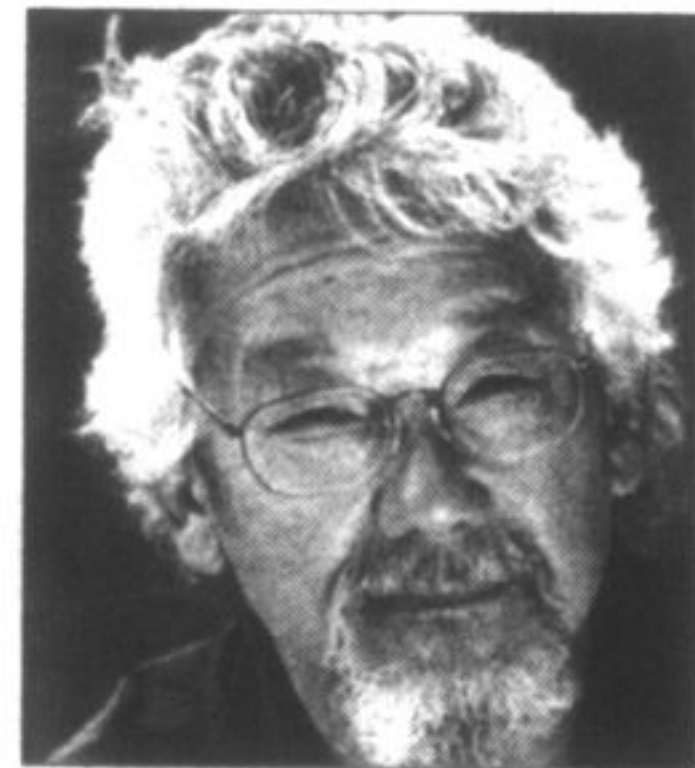
So far, so good. But here's the kicker: The toucan is the macaw's main predator. Besides feeding on

the whole seeds of the manduvi, the toucan also has a big appetite for macaw eggs. The researchers also observed toucans taking over macaw hollows and killing the nestlings.

And so, ironically, the macaw depends on its main predator, the toucan, for its survival.

This fascinating relationship has led to what the report's authors call "a conservation biology puzzle" because "any conservation plan for hyacinth macaws must take into account the toucans, which would not normally be done because of their predator status and because toco toucans are not particularly threatened."

It's a puzzle that illustrates the importance of seeing the big picture when it comes to protecting the environment. Attempting to manage a single species in isolation can't work because nature is just too complex. Take the caribou, an iconic species found throughout Canada. Caribou are in trouble across their expansive range. In British Columbia, populations of



David Suzuki

mountain caribou that inhabit the Interior rainforests have plummeted to an estimated 1,900 individuals from historic levels of about 10,000.

The main threat is the destruction of its old-growth forest habitat by commercial logging, but scientists believe that predators, such as wolves and cougars, may have also played a role in the caribou's decline.

Because of this, the B.C. government has initiated a plan to kill wolves and other predators, in

addition to protecting significant areas of the caribou's habitat. Such "predator control" wildlife management practices are increasingly being proposed or used elsewhere in Canada.

However, because the science of predator-prey interactions is poorly understood, these methods can have severe and unintended consequences. In the case of the hyacinth macaw, killing its main predator would ensure its demise.

We must understand the broader context if we want our wildlife management plans and conservation efforts to succeed.

Governments have been talking about this "ecosystem approach" for some time, but so far they've been slow to follow the talk with action. The official (and somewhat bureaucratic) name for one area off Canada's West Coast even acknowledges this broader-context approach: the Pacific North Coast Integrated Management Area.

This 88,000-square-kilometre marine region next to B.C.'s Great Bear Rainforest encompasses the

central and north coast and Haida Gwaii and is home to a fascinating variety of life, from basking sharks and blue whales to massive kelp forests and glass-sponge reefs.

Although the federal government has committed to using an ecosystem approach for managing the area, it has taken little action to implement the process. Environmental groups, including the David Suzuki Foundation, used World Ocean Day, June 8, to draw attention to this fact and to the lack of marine protected areas in Canada's ocean territories.

Similar to Earth's forests, oceans are complex environments where everything is interconnected. Whether on land or at sea, large population changes (including extinction) in one species can have cascading effects throughout the ecosystem. Good conservation planning requires efforts by local communities and governments at all levels to base decisions on an understanding not just of each species in isolation but of ecosystems as a whole.

### LETTERS POLICY

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