

# OPINION

Stouffville  
**Sun-Tribune**

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Bad smell to York board's arts school busing policies

*Re: Legal action possible over busing issue, June 26.*

Thank you, York Region Media Group reporter Teresa Latchford, for keeping in the news the transportation fiasco that the York Region District School Board has created for itself.

School board spokesperson Ross Virgo obviously doesn't get it.

The board has every right to change its policies, but there is a process for doing so and the board did not follow its own documented processes.

Not only that, but the board has not developed fair policies and taxpayers have every right to challenge unfair policies.

The board informed parents all students who live in York Region Transit-serviced areas will now have to take public transit.

Those living outside YRT-serviced areas will be bused to YRT-serviced areas and then be expected to take YRT the rest of the way.

So a kid from Keswick will pay \$200 per year for a yellow school bus to Newmarket and another \$1,200 or so a year to take the YRT from there.

The problem is this policy doesn't hold in all cases. Some kids in the rural areas north of Stouffville will be bused through the YRT zone directly to their school at a cost of

\$200 per year, while other kids in Stouffville will have to pay for the \$1,200 for York Regional Transit.

This is a public school system not a system where some kids get elite status and others don't; where some parents get special cost privileges while others don't.

Something smells here and I have now asked the Minister of Education to look into it.

JENNIE BANGAY  
STOUFFVILLE

### Wildlife corridor needed

I have enjoyed the scenery the green-space created between Hwy. 48 and McCowan Road near 16th Avenue.

I noticed signs of large herbivores using this area and would like to encourage town planners to plan a wildlife corridor that connects this area with the Oak Ridges Moraine to our north.

Appreciation of nature is a recent discovery, so young planners might not see the validity—but they should give themselves time.

I would also like to suggest the planting of inexpensive trees/bushes that have some type of berries or fruit as food for birds and wildlife.

TIM WISE  
MARKHAM



# Technological strides in 50 years quite amazing

Last month, I attended the 50th anniversary of my college graduation. A week later, I celebrated my grandson's graduation from high school. I don't think I was much different from the kids in my grandson's class when I went away to college in 1954 (give or take a few rings and tattoos).

Like them, I was filled with trepidation, but also excitement about testing my physical and intellectual abilities beyond high school. But my how the world has changed in 50 years.

I began my last year of college in 1957. On Oct. 4 that year, the Soviet Union electrified the world by successfully launching a satellite, Sputnik 1, into space.

Little did we dream that out of the ensuing space race between the USSR and the United States would come 24-hour television news channels, cellphones and GPS navigation. In 1958, the only trans-Atlantic phone lines were cables laid on the ocean floor, so phone calls to England had to be

booked hours or sometimes days in advance. I flew from Toronto to a roommate's wedding in San Francisco on a propeller plane that made several stops during the 22-hour trip.

In 1958, scientists were still debating if genetic material was DNA or protein. We didn't know how many chromosomes humans have or that the Y chromosome determines sex and the Green Revolution was yet to come.

Polio was still a problem in North America, smallpox killed hundreds of thousands annually and oral contraceptives, photocopiers, personal computers, colour TV and DVDs didn't exist.

In 1958, parts of the Amazon, Congo and New Guinea had not been explored. We were yet to learn of species extinction, depletion of fish in the oceans, the effects of CFCs on the ozone layer, acid rain, global warming, PCBs and dioxins.

In half a century, our lives have been transformed by scientific, medical and technological advances, as well as a host of



David Suzuki

environmental problems. No one deliberately set out to undermine the planet's life-support systems or tear communities apart, but those have been the consequences of our enormous economic and technological "success" over the past five decades.

Beset by vast problems of wealth discrepancy, environmental issues, poverty, terror, genocide and prejudice, we are trying to weave our way into an uncertain future.

I began speaking out on TV in 1962 because I was shocked by the

lack of understanding of science at a time when science as applied by industry, medicine and the military was having such a profound impact on our lives.

I felt we needed more scientific understanding if we were to make informed decisions about the forces shaping our lives.

Today, thanks to computers and the Internet and television, radio and print media, we have access to more information than humanity has ever had. To my surprise, this access has not equipped us to make better decisions about such matters as climate change, peak oil, marine depletion, species extinction and global pollution. That's largely because we now have access to so much information that we can find support for any prejudice or opinion.

Don't want to believe in evolution? No problem, you can find support for intelligent design and creationism in magazines, on websites and in all kinds of books written by people with PhDs. Want to believe aliens came to Earth and

abducted people? It's easy to find theories about how governments have covered up information on extraterrestrial aliens.

Think human-induced climate change is junk science? Well, if you choose to read only certain national newspapers and magazines and listen only to certain popular commentators on television or radio, you'll never have to change your mind. And so it goes.

The challenge today is there is a huge volume of information out there, much of it biased or deliberately distorted. As I think about my grandson, his hopes and dreams and the immense issues my generation has bequeathed him, I realize what he and all young people need most are the tools of skepticism, critical thinking, the ability to assess the credibility of sources and the humility to realize we all possess beliefs and values that must constantly be reexamined.

With those tools, his generation will certainly leave a better world to its children and grandchildren 50 years from now.

### 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.

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