

OPINION

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Board didn't flip-flop on buses

Re: Board in pickle over busing equity, editorial, Sept. 4.

We share the view that to truly support any regional program, arts or sports, the board should provide busing because the public transit alternative is still largely not a reasonable one for most. This ultimately is a question of good policy.

However, the fact is while students in the Arts York program were promised busing, those at the new Bill Crothers sports school in Markham were not.

Arts York students and parents had a reasonable expectation busing would be provided for the duration of the program, as it had been for some 20 years. This is not a question of policy, but one of fairness.

Herein is the real equity issue.

It was our view the board frustrated our reasonable expectation in a manner that violated our legal rights. Parents, therefore, initiated legal proceedings, on behalf of the affected community, to redress what we believe was the result of an unfair process. Wisely, the board settled with us.

This is why Arts York has busing. There was a settlement of a legal action, not a "flip-flop" and to sensationalize it as such inflames the situation.

JACQUES I. AMELARD
STOUFFVILLE

Parents should be proud of son who returned missing cellphone

My family and I were out for a bike ride last weekend in Stouffville. When we reached home, I realized my cellphone was missing.

In desperation, we got back on our bikes and retraced our steps to try and find it. We went back into all the places we had visited asking if anyone had handed in a cellphone.

After a few hours of searching we went home unable to find the phone and coming to terms with the fact it was gone.

A knock at the front door that night reassured me there are kind and honest people in the world.

The woman at our door was telling me how her son found my phone while riding his bike near Tim Hortons on Hoover Park Drive.

And, after opening the phone, he recognized my picture and told his mom he thought he knew to whom it belonged.

I was so relieved to have it back. As you know, many people carry their lives in their purses. Well, mine was on my phone.

I wanted to find an appropriate way to say thank you and to tell the parents how proud they should be of their son.

THE NAVARANJAN FAMILY
STOUFFVILLE

NEASE, '08



Elders have more to teach than so-called idols

Now that I'm in my 70s, I look back at the world of my childhood, with its shared phone lines, ice boxes, radio soap operas and no TV and it seems like an ancient, lost civilization.

And yet, ideas and values I learned as a child seem every bit as important for today's youth, for whom rappers, billionaires and movie stars are role models.

When I was a boy, my father was a bigger-than-life figure, a wonderful storyteller who enchanted people with his outgoing personality.

He was my hero. He took me camping and fishing and instilled in me a love of nature and the outdoors. When he came home from work, he always asked me what I had learned in school and, as I recounted my lessons, he seemed genuinely interested, often amplifying my information or correcting me. I loved those sessions and I now realize he was reinforcing my education by making me recount what I

had learned.

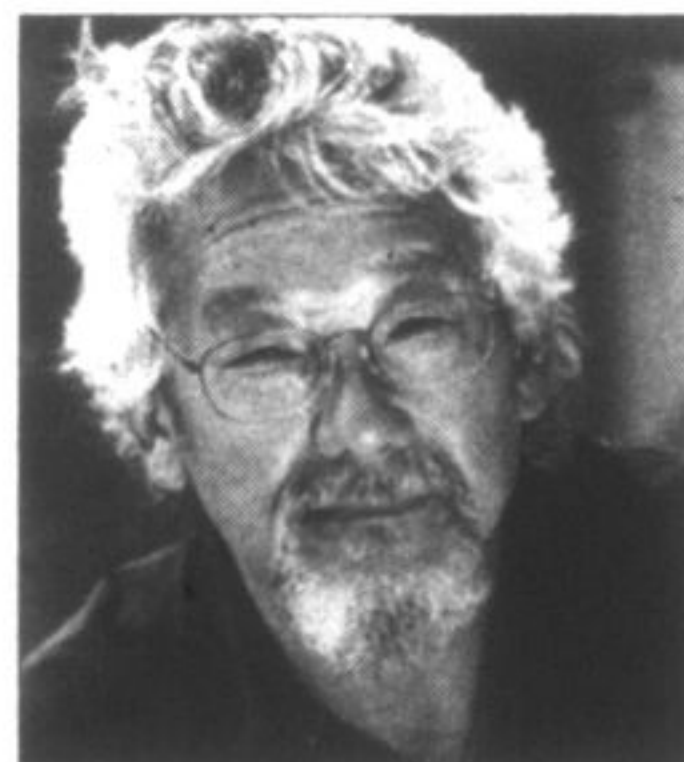
Dad was my biggest booster, but he was also my harshest critic. When I began in TV, he followed everything I did. More than once when he couldn't follow my narrative, he would call and bawl me out: "If I can't understand what you are saying, how do you expect someone who doesn't know you at all to follow your ideas?"

To this day, I think of my father as my audience whenever I prepare a script or write a book.

My mother was the rock solid foundation of the family. She was the first up in the morning and the last to bed at night. But, unlike dad, she did it quietly. I only understood how important she was as she developed Alzheimer's disease and I watched dad struggle to fill her shoes. I begged him to allow me to hire help for him, but he declined.

"She gave her all for me," he said, "and it's my turn to pay her back."

Both of my parents are now dead and, in my own dotage, I



David Suzuki

think about the important lessons I want to pass on to my children and grandchildren – and I realize they are the same lessons I got from dad. I can't help thinking they are not quaint ideas from the past but very modern ones we need desperately today.

"Respect your elders," he told me.

"But dad," I protested, "Mr. Saita is a fool."

"David," dad remonstrated, "he

has lived a long life and has had experiences and thought about a lot of things you haven't. I know he seems opinionated and stupid but, if you listen, even he can teach you something."

"To do well in Canada as a Japanese-Canadian," he said, "you have to work 10 times harder, you must be able to get up and speak extemporaneously and you must be able to dance."

Fortunately, hard work was never an obstacle for me and I entered oratorical contests for which dad drilled me in the art of public speaking. I never understood the dancing part and was not successful in that area.

"Whatever you do, do it with gusto. Don't do it in a sloppy, half-hearted way but enthusiastically, whether it's scrubbing the floors, picking cherries or playing basketball. That's how you get the most out of life."

"We all need money for the necessities in life, but you don't run

after it as if money makes you a bigger or better man. If someone flashes his fancy new clothes or big car, pity him, because he has gone down the wrong road."

"Live within your means." This important lesson is embodied in the familiar expression, "Save some for a rainy day."

"You must stand up for what you believe in, but be prepared for people to be angry and to disagree. If you want to be liked by everyone, then you will stand for nothing."

"You are what you do, not what you say." Kids have a different way of saying this in their taunt, "All talk and no action."

My mother also taught me useful homilies such as, "Always clean up your own mess," "Be kind to animals," and "Share; don't be greedy."

Today's youth are bombarded with news about the antics of Lindsay Lohan, Amy Winehouse and Jay-Z and look to them for inspiration, but that's all the more reason to listen to the words of our elders.

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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