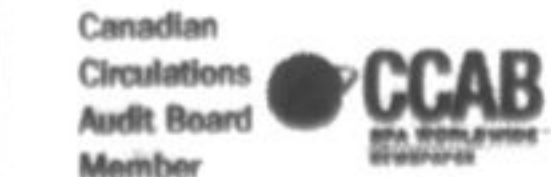


The Sun-Tribune, published every Thursday and Saturday, is a division of the Metroland Media Group Ltd., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Torstar Corporation. Metroland is comprised of 100 community publications across Ontario. The York Region Newspaper Group also includes The Liberal, serving Richmond Hill 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.

**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



# OPINION

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Head injuries hurt kids

Re: Don't force adult riders to wear bike helmets, letter to the editor by G. Scholey, Aug. 1.

I was appalled by this letter. The author argues that if an adult can graduate from university, buy a house and raise a family, then they should also have the right to choose whether or not to wear a bike helmet and to accept the risks of that decision.

But, who will raise your children or pay your mortgage when you are left in the hospital with a traumatic brain injury?

If you don't think that could happen, please take a short drive to Sunnybrook hospital in Toronto and ask to visit a patient in the acquired brain injury ward. Perhaps seeing this patient and speaking with their family would make the decision to place a small piece of plastic on the top of your head that much easier.

Granted, we are surrounded by risks to our safety on a daily basis. But if we are going to allow adults to decide what activities they deem risky enough to warrant use of protective equipment, why stop with bike helmets?

We all recognize and accept the risks of driving on our roadways.

Why not give adults, fully understanding the risks, the option not to wear seat-belts while driving?

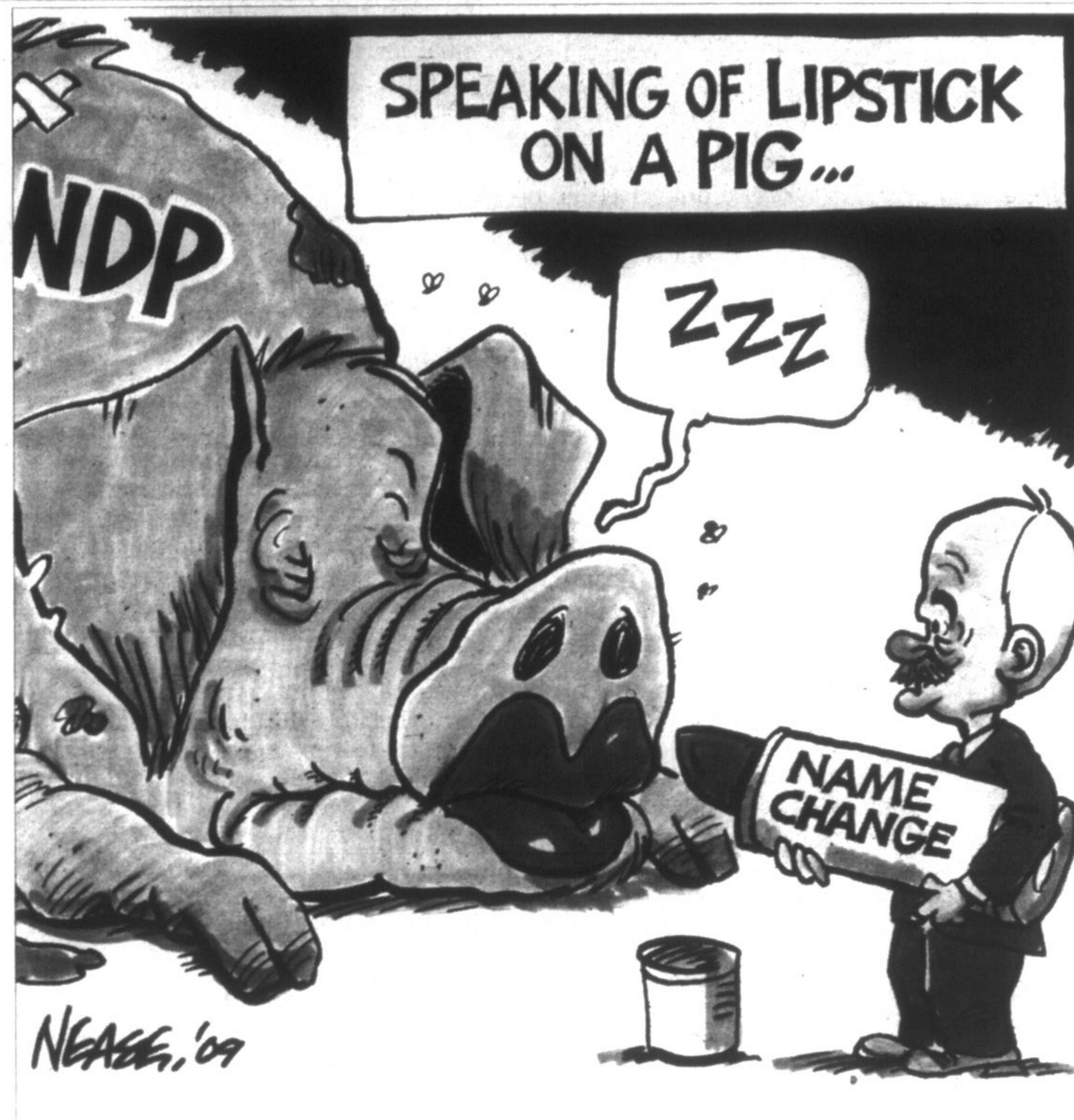
The majority of car accidents are single-vehicle collisions. Therefore, the only people they are hurting are themselves, right? Why not allow adults to operate watercraft without life jackets? If they drown, it's their fault because they knew better, correct?

The point is injuries do not solely impact the injured. They can dramatically impact the survivors as well. Let's think about the spouse who will spend the rest of their lives without their partner and the child who will grow up without their mother or father.

As parents, we would not even think of putting our children into the car without a seat-belt. Why? Because despite the low probability of an accident, we want to give them the best odds of surviving, should one occur.

We need to understand, however, that our children can also be harmed when something happens to the adult. I pray you will consider this the next time you take your children out for a bike ride. And I pray you will also take 30 seconds to secure your chin-strap.

S. BALDRY  
STOUFFVILLE



## G8 moves on climate change, but is it enough?

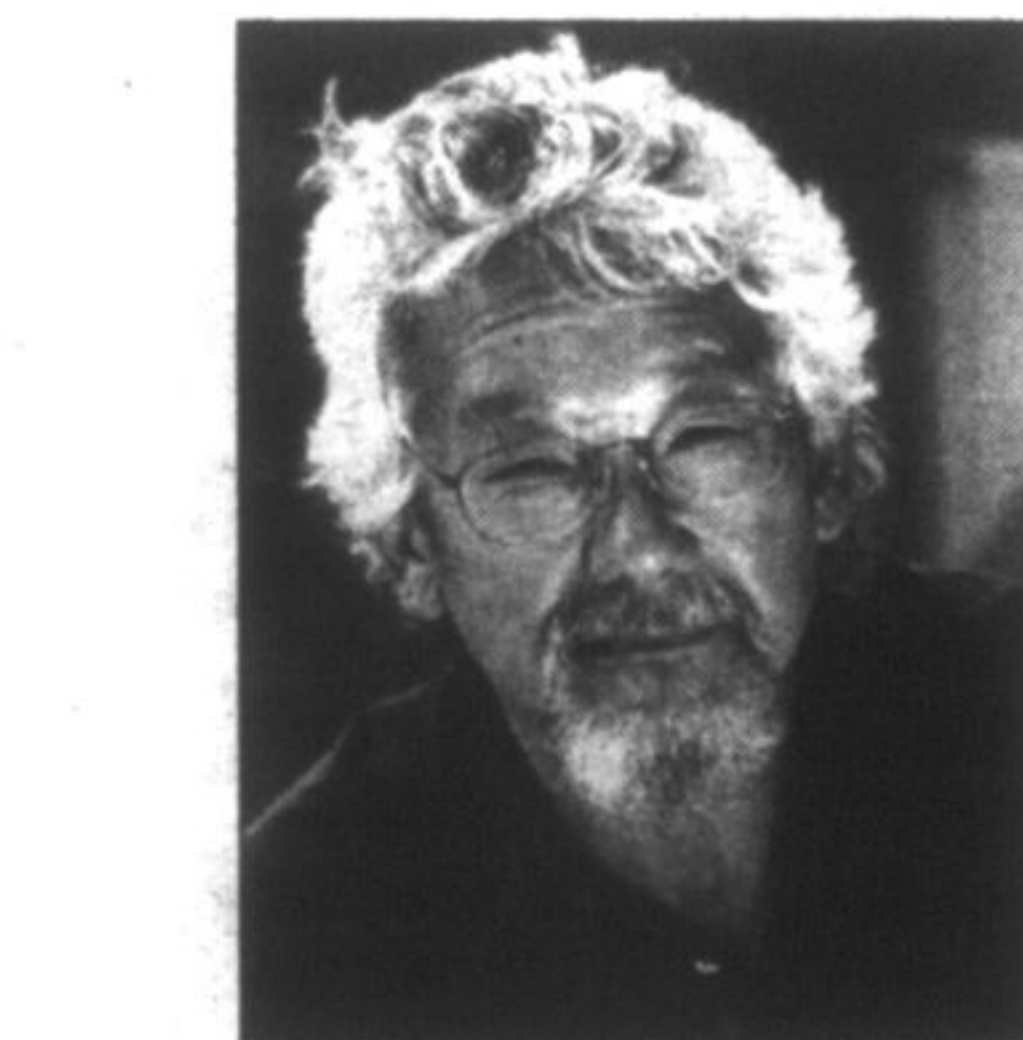
The world's richest countries appear to be taking climate change seriously. At their recent meeting in L'Aquila, Italy, G8 countries agreed that global warming should not exceed two degrees Celsius, on average, over the pre-industrial temperature. The European Union, along with more than 100 other countries, heeded the advice of climate scientists some time ago in committing not to breach the threshold - but it took this meeting to get Canada, the U.S., and Russia on board.

The reason for the limit is simple. Scientific research shows that the impacts of climate change would be dramatic if average global temperatures were to rise above this level. Crop yields would decline, many more of the world's plants and animals would be at risk of extinction, water availability would decrease significantly for many human populations, violent storms would become more frequent and oceans would rise more quickly.

The threat of sea-level rise is so serious that 43 island states have set 1.5 degrees as their "dangerous" threshold.

Scientists predict an increase of two degrees would raise ocean levels high enough to swamp many of these island nations.

A pledge by the world's most prosper-



David Suzuki  
with Faisal Moola

ous countries to limit warming to two degrees is a step forward, but it's a small step. To succeed, nations must reduce greenhouse gas emissions sharply over the next decade and continue to reduce them until at least 2050. Action from everybody - governments, industry, and individuals - is essential.

Even if nations fulfill their promises, it won't be enough. According to a recent article in Nature, "Halfway to Copenhagen, no way to 2°C", emission-reduction commitments by the world's industrialized countries are inadequate. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change found that to stay below two degrees, industrialized countries

must reduce emissions by 25 to 40 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020. But the Nature article calculated that the collective commitments of industrialized countries add up to only 10 to 16 per cent. The research showed that, even if all countries met their targets, there would be "virtually no chance of limiting warming to 2°C."

The Nature article also concluded that pledges by developing countries are inadequate. This, too, can be laid at the feet of the world's industrialized countries.

Wealthy nations filled the atmosphere with greenhouse gases over the course of their development and so they agreed at the United Nations talks in Bali in December 2007 to provide clean technologies and financial resources so that developing nations could grow sustainably.

But rich countries have yet to agree on how to deliver that support.

Reducing poverty is often the first priority for developing nations and many remain reluctant to make commitments to curb emissions until they get support from industrialized countries.

The head of the UN's climate program, Yvo de Boer, said it would be "like jumping out of a plane and being assured that you are going to get a parachute on the way down".

All is not lost, though. There may be little time before the decisive Copenhagen conference in December, but countries can still work to solve the climate crisis.

A G20 meeting in Pittsburgh in September is expected to result in financial commitments for developing countries to adapt to climate change and tackle emissions. Three more UN negotiations are scheduled before Copenhagen.

The discouraging part is Canada's interpretation of the G8 commitments. The ink wasn't yet dry on the final agreement at L'Aquila when Environment Minister Jim Prentice said Canada did not have to change its position to meet the two degree commitment.

With the longest marine coastline of any country and an economy that still depends on climate-sensitive activities such as agriculture, fisheries, forestry and tourism, Canada is particularly vulnerable to global warming.

How can any Canadian leader claim to be working for the future well-being of citizens while stalling on hard targets and deep reductions?

Given that Canada is considered the worst performer in the G8 on climate change and has the weakest 2020 target, the minister should take another hard look at the science.