

Sun-Tribune

905-640-2612
Fax 905-640-8778

EDITORIAL
ADVERTISING
905-640-2612
Classified: 1-800-743-3353
Fax 905-640-8778

DISTRIBUTION
905-640-2612

EDITORIAL
Editor
Jim Mason
jmason@yrmg.com

ADVERTISING
Advertising Manager
Stephen Mathieu
smathieu@yrmg.com

Marketing Manager
Mike Banville
mbanville@yrmg.com

DISTRIBUTION
Systems Manager
Carrie Castaldi
ccastaldi@yrmg.com

Circulation Manager
Tanya Pacheco
tpacheco@yrmg.com

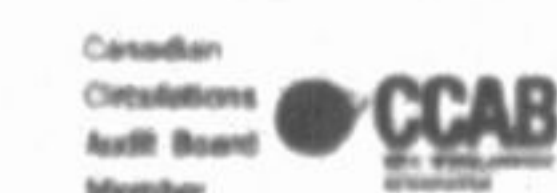
York-Region Media
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LETTERS POLICY

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

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

6290 Main St.
Stouffville, ON L4A 1G7
www.yorkregion.com

PUBLISHER Ian Proudfoot

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Debra Kelly

BUSINESS
MANAGER
Robert Lazaruko

DIRECTOR,
PRODUCTION
Jackie Smart

DIRECTOR,
OPERATIONS
Barry Black

DIRECTOR,
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Nicole Fletcher

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Keep religion out of public schools

Re: Public school board allows religious gatherings. yorkregion.com

I do not agree with the York Region District School Board's decision regarding the accommodation of prayers.

It cites "protecting freedom of religion", but I am not sure from whom — school boards that do not accommodate prayers?

I believe a public school should prepare students to deal with the real material world.

How?
With logic.

Taxpayers and parents agree that logic surely does students good.

Teachers try to explain logic in all classes, including arts, music and physical education.

Spirituality is against logic and does not fit a school's

HAVE YOUR SAY, WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

► What do you think of these issues or others? E-mail letters to the editor to jmason@yrmg.com

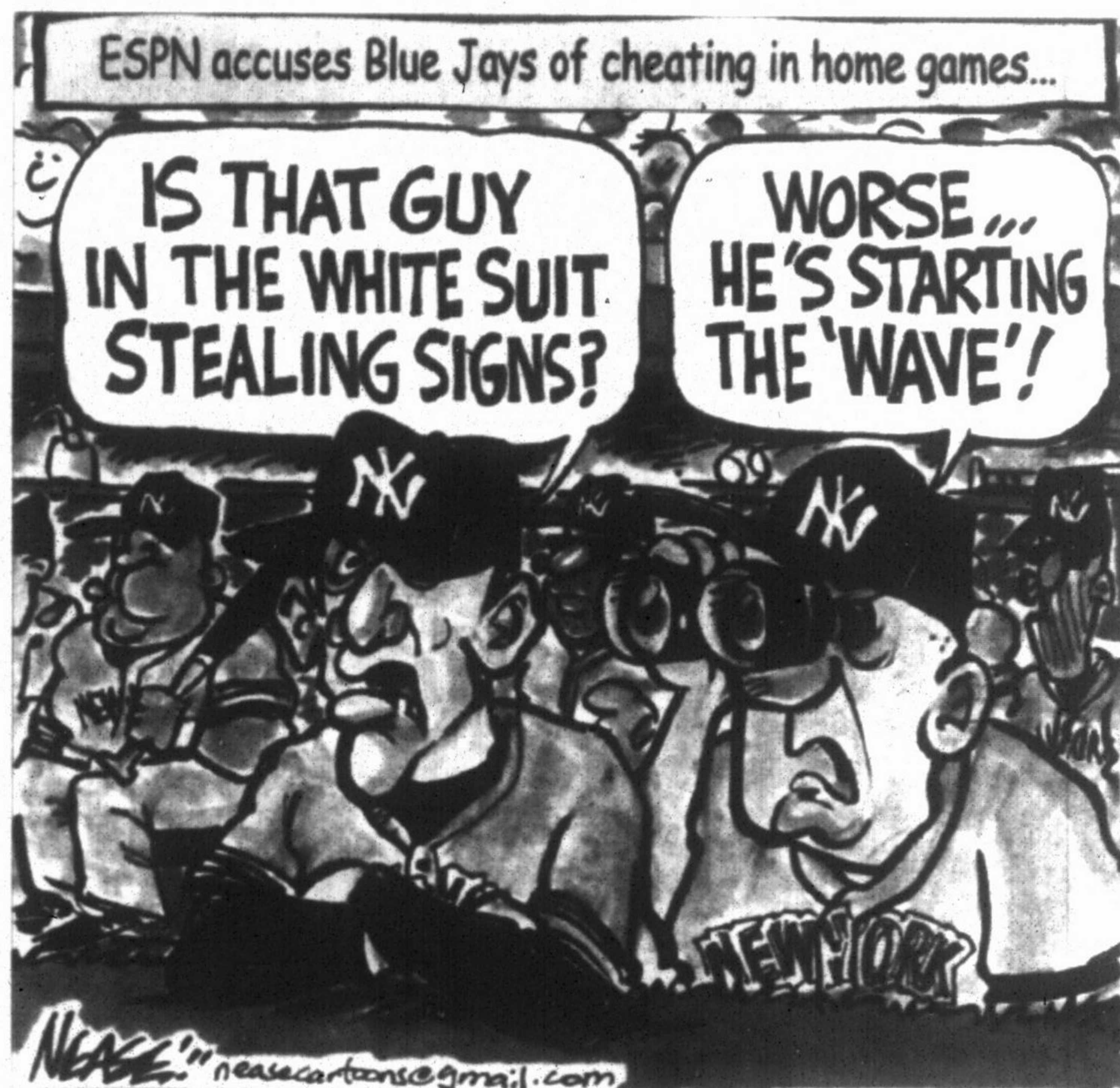
objectives.

Students should have freedom of religion, but not in public schools, because spirituality is a completely personal issue.

Based on the same idea, I also do not agree with publicly funded Catholic schools.

BEN NIU
RICHMOND HILL

You can read letters, columns and stories from The Sun-Tribune on yorkregion.com



Cycling infrastructure paying dividends

Most arguments against bike lanes are absurd. Consider this: We have wide roads everywhere to accommodate cars, most of which carry only one person.

On either side of many of those roads, we have pedestrian sidewalks. In most large urban areas, we also have bus lanes and transit systems, such as subways and rapid transit.

When cyclists ride on roads, drivers often get annoyed. If they ride on sidewalks, pedestrians rightly get angry.

Human-powered transportation will only get more popular as gas prices rise and the negative consequences of our car-centric culture increase.

We should be doing everything we can to discourage single-occupant automobile use while encouraging public transit and the pedestrian and pedal-powered movement.

In many North American cities, including Vancouver, where I live, commuters scream bloody murder if it takes them an extra two minutes to get to their destination by car.

The reality is drivers are slowed more by increases in car traffic than



David Suzuki

by bike lanes.

According to the Globe and Mail, a study by Stantec Consulting Ltd. found traffic delays because of bike lanes in Vancouver were mostly imagined.

Drivers surveyed thought it took them five minutes longer to travel along a street with a new bike lane. But the study showed it actually took from five seconds less to just a minute and 37 seconds more.

There's also the argument that slowing down car traffic is a good thing. In some European cities, planners are finding making life more difficult for drivers while providing incentives for people to take transit, walk or cycle creates numerous

benefits — from reducing pollution and smog-related health problems to cutting greenhouse gas emissions and making cities safer and friendlier.

In Zurich, Switzerland, planners have added traffic lights, including some that transit operators can change in their favour, increased the time of red lights and decreased the greens, removed pedestrian underpasses, slowed speed limits, reduced parking and banned cars from many streets.

In Vancouver, the Stantec study found businesses along new downtown bike routes initially experienced minor decreases in sales, but numerous strategies were available to overcome the declines.

In the long run, most cities that have improved cycling and pedestrian infrastructure have seen benefits for area businesses.

Building bike lanes also has economic spinoffs, according to a study from the Political Economy Research Institute in Amherst, Massachusetts, titled *Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure: A National Study of Employment Impacts*.

Researchers found bicycling infrastructure creates the most jobs for a

given level of spending.

For every \$1 million spent, cycling projects created an average of 11.4 jobs in the state where the project was located, pedestrian-only projects created about 10 jobs and multi-use trails created about 9.6 jobs.

*When cyclists ride on roads, drivers often get annoyed.
If they ride on sidewalks, pedestrians rightly get angry.*

Infrastructure combining road construction with pedestrian and bicycle facilities created slightly fewer jobs for the same amount of spending and road-only projects created the least, with 7.8 jobs per \$1 million.

One of the main reasons is more of the money for road-building goes to materials and equipment, whereas with bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, more goes to wages.

Written with contributions from David Suzuki Foundation editorial and communications specialist Ian Hanington. Learn more at david Suzuki.org