

York Region Media Group community newspapers

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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.

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# OPINION

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Misled voters should recall council over raises

Re: Stouffville council gives self 43% raise, Nov. 16.

I, too, think the council's vote to award themselves a pay-raise seems quite undemocratic.

Running for election a year ago, they knew what the salary was.

An increase in recompense was not raised as an election issue.

Then, suddenly, at the end of the first year of a four year term, they declare they are worth considerably more.

Paying the salaries of these grafters, we, the taxpayers, were not democratically consulted.

There should have been a town-hall meeting called with all councillors present to justify their position on this issue and to respond to their employer's (i.e the citizens')

### HAVE YOUR SAY, WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

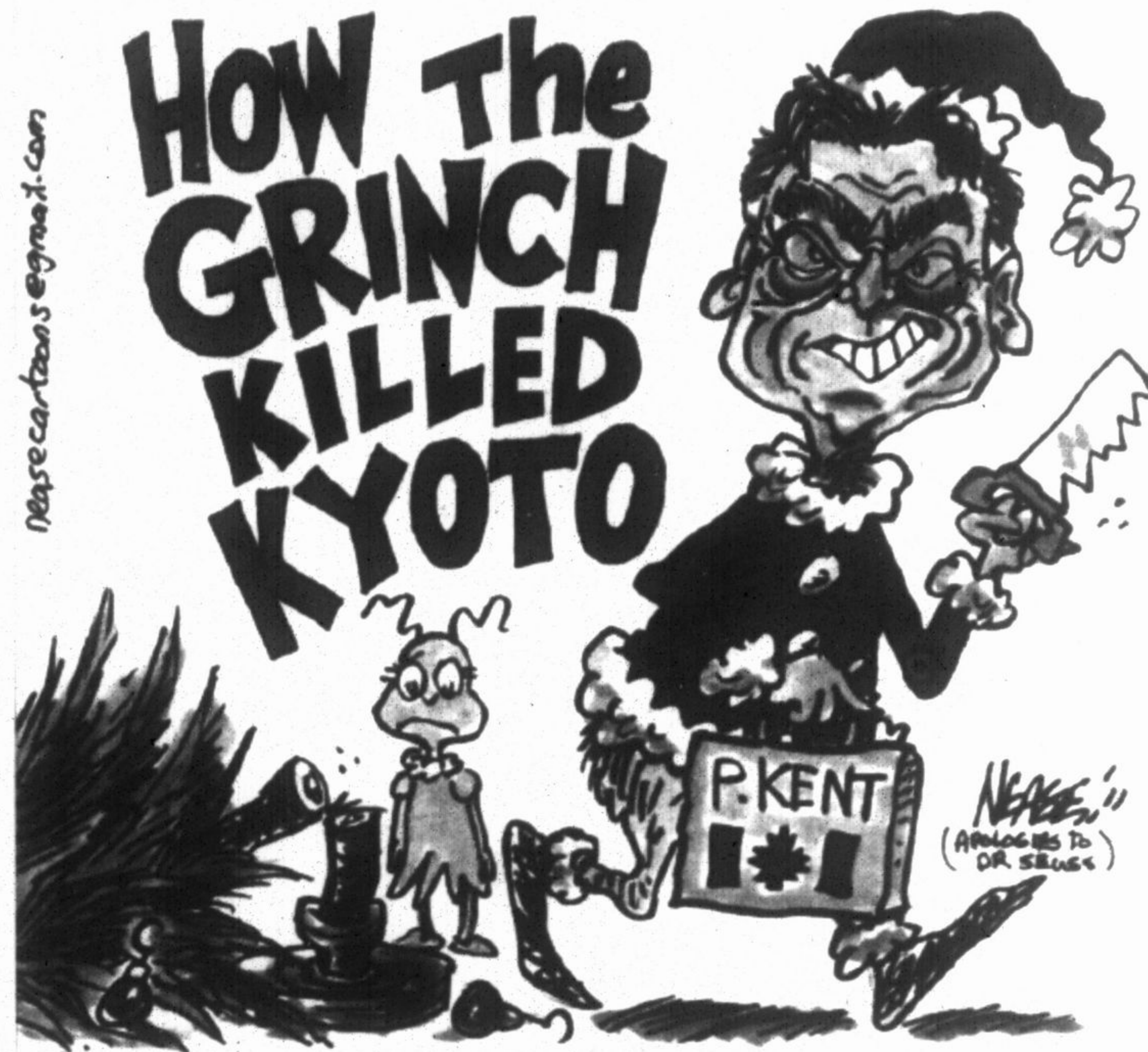
► What do you think of these issues or others? E-mail letters to the editor to jmason@yrmg.com

concerns.

Living in a democracy, 'hoi polloi, has a right to input into issues. In these circumstances, would that the voters, having been misled, had the right of recall.

KATHLEEN GLAZIN  
STOUFFVILLE

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## Freedom of speech doesn't cover lying

**D**id you hear that Peter Van Loan is resigning? Don't say you heard it from me, but yup, the York Simcoe MP and Government House Leader is packing his bags in Ottawa and heading home to the farm in Georgina as we speak!

Everybody is talking about it, so it must be true!

Apparently, he went too far even for Stephen Harper when he stood in the House of Commons last week and had the temerity to declare that it's absolutely legit to propagate lies.

Uh-huh, that's right, even our all-is-fair-in-love-and-politics prime minister knows it's time to draw a line in the sand when one of his top dogs publicly and unconditionally defends lying like a rug.

STOP! What you just read is all a big fat lie.

Mr. Van Loan isn't resigning. And Prime Minister Harper is just fine with that.

I can't lie, even in the name of what Mr. Van Loan calls freedom of speech.

Because the reality is anybody



Debora Kelly

with a pinky finger's worth of integrity in her body knows what the federal Conservatives are condoning — actually, let's say embracing — is lying.

And it's wrong. Wrong. Wrong. To dismiss or accept this as more dirty politicking — for which the Conservatives are particularly renowned, but all the parties do to some extent — belittles every Canadian who values honesty and integrity.

There were no excuses made, no pretense that an overly eager young acolyte crossed the line, no promises it will never happen again.

The cat was let out of the bag when Mr. Van Loan stood in the House to fess up, without a hint of contrition, that the Conservatives are indeed responsible for a series of polling phone calls to constituents in Liberal Irwin Cotler's Montreal riding over the past couple of weeks saying the MP may resign.

"To say that one cannot speculate on his future," the inaptly titled Honourable Mr. Van Loan so patiently explained, "that that form of freedom of speech should forever be suppressed, is to me an overreach that is far too great."

He is daring us with absolutely unmitigated gall to accept that lying is the new freedom of speech.

I won't do it. Is anybody seriously still buying the Conservatives' pathetic go-to excuse that the Liberals were worse?

I'm proud of our country and its global renown for tolerance and respect of freedoms and rights.

But now, I feel shame — Lord knows, I can't expect Mr. Van Loan and his Conservatives to — that a hard-fought-for freedom has become a pitiful excuse for a lack of ethics, all

in the name of maintaining political power.

This behaviour isn't new for the Conservatives; in fact, years ago, Harper adviser Tom Flanagan infamously said: "It doesn't have to be true, it just has to be plausible..."

But here we are, a mere six months after they won their long-sought majority mandate, albeit with the support of only 30 per cent of eligible voters, watching the Conservatives set astonishingly new standards for just how low government can go.

Don't tell me I'm naive or unrealistic to expect our politicians to have ethics and lead with honesty and integrity.

Mr. Van Loan's dishonourable actions — and the prime minister's sanction of them — only reaffirm the prevailing belief government is crooked and filled with sleazy politicians consumed with self interest.

Is it any wonder so many people — and the vast majority of our youth — want nothing to do with politics and politicians?

If you, too, don't agree that lying is the new freedom of speech, for goodness' sake, stand up and say so.