

Letters to the editor

GDHS principal did not act in concert with teachers' union

Dear editor,

It was with some dismay that I read Roger Morrell's rant about the student protest at GDHS (Nov. 3 letter). Speaking as a GDHS teacher, I would like to give a more lucid account of what occurred. Much of Mr. Morrell's diatribe seems based upon the contents of a letter written by one student and the article that appeared in your newspaper, hardly a solid basis for some of his statements toward GDHS teachers and particularly principal Keith Rupka.

Mr. Morrell extrapolates from Alex Burns' comment that teachers are promoting their own political agenda in the classroom. I'd like to remind Mr. Morrell that although we are professional educators, we're also human, so a very occasional comment might slip out, but I, for one, have a hard time simply ensuring that I cover the new curriculum while using a new assessment model with more students filling the desks in front of me.

Mr. Morrell's ridiculous statements about our principal border on paranoia. To suggest that a principal is in some way acting in concert with teachers' unions to rile up students against the elected government is farcical. First, in Bill 160, principals were removed from teachers' federations. They are clearly now part of management and they are responsible to the director of the Halton District School Board. This situation is gradually eroding much of the goodwill between teachers and administrators that formerly existed in our schools. To suggest that these two groups are nefariously plotting behind closed doors does not reflect a sound grasp of the reality of the current situation.

Just to provide some context to the GDHS student protest, it should

be remembered that previous to our incident, similar protests took place in other boards across Ontario. Principals in those schools came down hard on student participants and meted out up to three days of suspensions. Parents rose up as one and demanded immediate overturning of such punishment. In response, directors of education overruled their principals and withdrew the suspensions, allowing student protesters to return to class.

This was well-documented by the media prior to the GDHS student

protest. Rumours of an impending student action at GDHS had been circulating for a number of days so a superintendent (representing the director of education, Dr. Papke) was on hand to oversee and assist in the handling of such an event. A consequence was determined and administered. Anyone has the right to agree or disagree with the events as they have unfolded but realistically, what would Mr. Morrell have those in authority do, send GDHS sons and daughters off to a government boot camp for reindoctrina-

tion? The students were expressing a democratic right to protest, one that appears to be supported by parents in other boards as evidenced by their ferocious opposition to their children's suspensions.

So you see Mr. Morrell, you can't have it both ways. The elected government has decided to reduce the authority of school boards to such a degree that they truly are just mirroring the will and desires of the people they serve: "I have seen the enemy and the enemy is me."

David Laidlaw, Guelph

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Guide to the Outdoors

Julie Pomeroy

One of the best parts of playing outdoors in the winter is coming in and getting cozy. And for those people who are trying to save energy at home this season by turning the heat down and the lights low; a SNUGGLE DOWN KIT makes a great Christmas gift. Include some fleece socks or slippers, a hot water bottle, a soft, snuggly, flannel night shirt or boxers, candles, a good book and some Sleepy Time tea or add your favourite recipe and the makings for hot chocolate. Enjoy a new CD out this year called "Christmas Crooners" - old fashioned fireside music with classic crooners like Bing Crosby, Gene Autry and Perry Como. Don't miss Montgomery Christmas in Norval - Sat. Nov. 25. Check out the events & the music on the Montgomery page at www.canoe-country.com

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