

## Editorial

## Board games

"...to trustees, let me say I have worked with many different boards over the years and they're all very different. Some showed great courage and tenacity in their quest to improve student learning. Others, I feared, floundered because their focus wandered to issues that were more political and less about the growth of the students."

—Dusty Papke, Outgoing Director of Education for the Halton District School Board, Wednesday, May 18, 2005.

It doesn't take a genius to figure out which type of board the education director was referring to when he announced his retirement last Wednesday. Dusty Papke and his administration know that the road that lies ahead is going to be rocky thanks to a group of trustees who have successfully wrestled power away from staff. While it may simply be a case of timing, it seems obvious to us why Carla Kisko, superintendent of business services for the board, announced one day after Papke's decision that she, too, is packing her bags and heading to the Toronto District School Board. Who could blame anyone for wanting to leave this board of education?

Before we consider why some trustees felt it necessary to "take back the board", you have to take a look at some of the players.

The chair of the board, Paul Tate, for some bizarre reason felt his own safety was in peril at last week's board meeting. He was so concerned that he discussed his feelings with a deputy police chief.

Both Tate and vice-chair Peggy Russell decided to bring in a court reporter and a lawyer for a May 16 special board meeting. This was the meeting where the sensitive issue of policy governance was to be discussed. Tate and Russell solicited the outside help at a cost of \$10,000 to taxpayers.

Keep in mind folks, this is a school board, not the United Nations. This is the same board where two trustees— Russell and Jennifer Hlusko— accused Debbie Downs of assaulting them. There was a police investigation that cleared Downs of any wrongdoing.

The fact that Tate felt it necessary to talk to the police about his own safety and bring in a court reporter to a board meeting should be enough for the Ministry of Education to step in and take stock of the mess.

Clearly, we have a dysfunctional board.

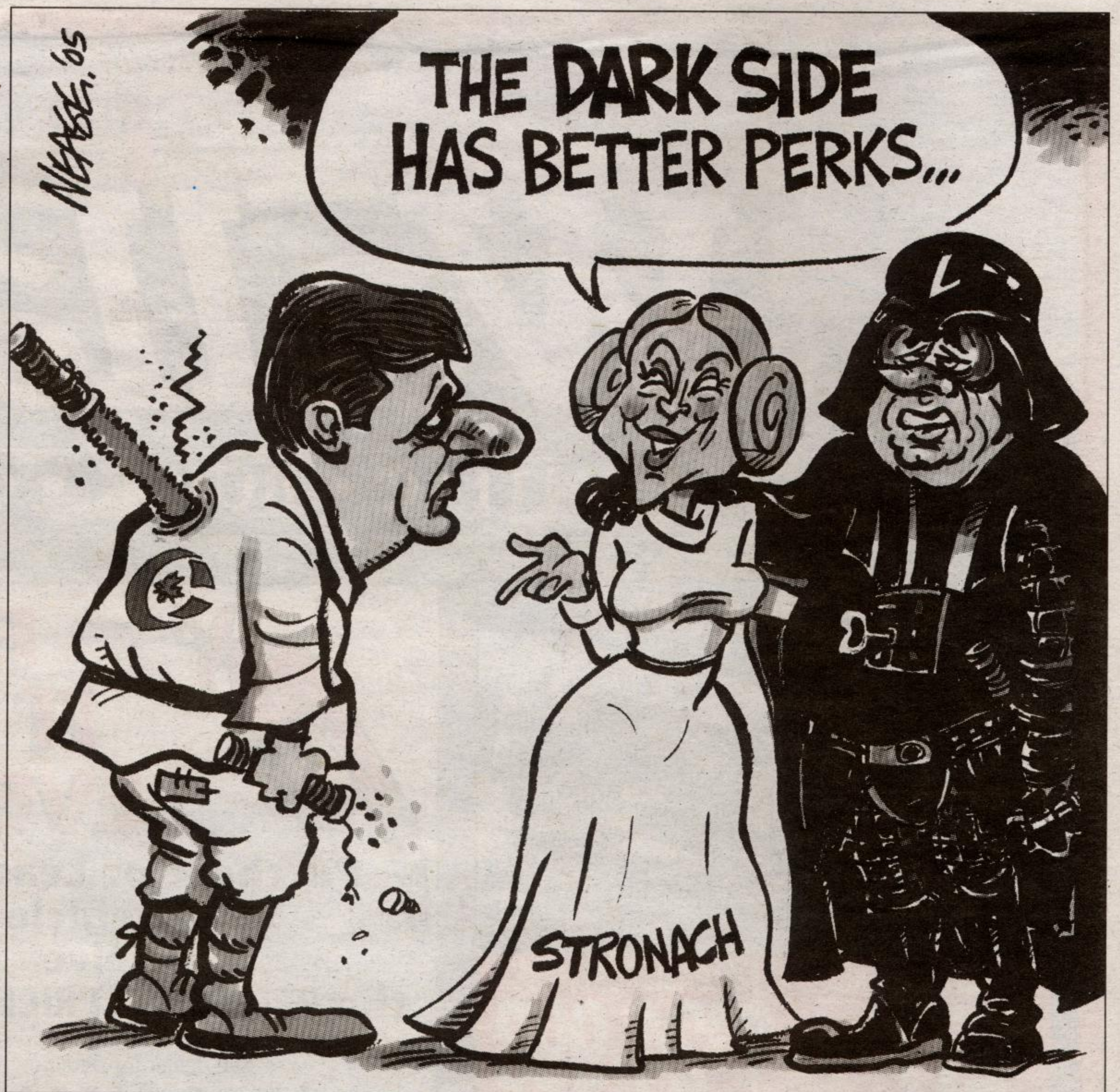
Just a minute, though; Tate doesn't like the word dysfunctional. He has already publicly berated the media for using that word suggesting what the newspaper views as dysfunctional is merely democracy at work. We are not so sure that the trustees who voted against the take-back-the-board group share Tate's belief that this board is, indeed, democratic.

It's unfortunate the distrust exhibited by many of the trustees clouded the issue of policy governance.

It was certainly a contentious enough issue that needed to be revisited. Some trustees felt they were merely rubber-stamping everything the administration did. As Tate put it: "The way it happens now we are informed, but not asked to judge. We need to be able to judge."

Regardless of the intentions of the trustees who sought more power, the public must be wondering about the motivations of the individuals entrusted with the education of their children.

We hope by the time the next municipal election comes around that there will be fresh faces at the board that will be able to work together in a way that is meaningful to the students. In the meantime, we wish the administration and all the trustees much luck in their endeavour to provide quality education.



## Letters to the editor....

## Provincial needle bill must be passed

Dear editor,

As a worker in a retirement home and also a member of a health and safety committee, I care deeply for the residents and my co-workers, therefore their safety is very important to me.

My concern at the moment is the safety of needles used as well as disposal of used needles in our community

hospitals, resident and nursing homes or even in our great outdoors.

We need to pass Bill 179 which is an act to reduce the risks of needle sticks (medical needles) injuries. Your community needs the health care workers and we need your help to pass this bill.

If you possibly can, please write to your MPP. Help us

everyone.

Eva Gallant, Norval

## Transit needed

Dear editor,

Our facilities and retail shops would find greater numbers of visitations if a transit service was available. Inevitably, we will have a public transit system in Georgetown. To those fearful of that I say sell your houses now.

To those in the real world, I say the longer we wait, the greater the problem of initial implementation becomes while the current lack of transit services remains an undressed and growing problem. Opinions aside, I am curious to see the results of a professional study done on this issue.

Michael Xanthios,  
Georgetown

## Girl Guides appreciated help

Dear editor,

On May 7 the 6th Pineview Guides, 1st Pineview Brownies and 12th Pineview Sparks sold cookies inside Wal-Mart at Georgetown Market Place.

We'd like to extend our most sincere appreciation to Wal-Mart for allowing us to fund-raise in their store. Thanks to their help, we were able to sell more than eight cases of Girl Guide cookies.

Let's see about making this an annual event.

Thanks again for your help.

6th Guides, 1st Brownies,  
12th Sparks, Georgetown

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