

Opinion

Send your letters to the editor to 59 Albert St., Uxbridge L9P 1E5 or fax them to 852-4355

Let's not 'let's pretend we care' anymore

If you have young children you know that they mimic what you say and do - they have keen and unblinded observation skills.

Perhaps as a community we should be looking for a reflection of ourselves in the actions and attitudes of our youth.

Stouffville has many examples of young people working to better the lives of others, just look at the numbers of cheques presented to charities through the efforts of students all year round.

If in Stouffville there is a strong trend for young people to drop the studies of humanities in favor of pre business or law is it because we reward monetary ambition over service? If history is a seldom



Viewpoint

Jo Ann Stevenson

chosen option is it because we don't learn from or consult historians? (A secondary school diploma requires only one history and one geography credit.)

The diploma requires only one physical education credit too - this at a time when the federal government spends millions on Participation advertising. Do as I say, not as I do?

Strong teachers, are televi-

sion, advertising and movie stars. The average North American youth spends twice as many hours in front of a television as is spent in school.

A quiz published in Harper's Magazine was designed to help adults see what kids see when they look into our world. It concludes that they are adept readers, but not of books. Young people are voracious at reading the social symbols emanating from the world in which they will have to make a living.

Here's a sample question, According to television, having fun (in America) means; (a) going blond, (b) drinking Pepsi (c) playing Nintendo, (d) wearing Air Jordans (e) read-

ing Mark Twain.

The illiteracy - read bankruptcy - of our young, the article says, turns out to be our own reflected back with embarrassing force.

When we see kids dropping out, turning to violence or apathy are they merely ignoring what we say, but doing what we do instead?

If we are playing the game "let's pretend we care," it's time to stop.

Clay pipe head not for museum

It hasn't made the headlines, but the fact is, even as you read this, works of art are being systematically destroyed.

Tens of thousands of works of art. Priceless antiquities. Irreplaceable artifacts.

The pieces include sculpture, painted art works and other historical treasures from the native cultures of North America. Cree, Commanche, Navajo and Haida to name a handful.

So far, an estimated 40,000 cultural and artistic treasures have disappeared. American experts say if the plunder continues at this rate, more than 100,000 artifacts will be no more by 1996.

But if the US experts know so much about these grave robbers and site-spoilers why don't they just grab 'em by the scruffs of their scumbag necks and toss them in the slammer? Call in the Marines! Summon the National Guard - Hell, Canada would be glad to donate a couple of squads of mounties to bring these villains to justice.

Well...heh, heh...that's where the situation gets a little complicated.

You see, the perpetrators responsible for destroying this US native heritage...are natives.

And it's all perfectly legal. Sanctioned by the US government, as a matter of fact.

Back in 1991, the US Congress passed a bill called The Native American Graves and Repatriation Act - NAGPRA for short. NAGPRA gives Indian tribes the right to claim possession of cultural artifacts presently sitting in museum display cases and university store rooms all over the United States.

Well, fair enough. Ever since the White Man waded ashore on this continent he's treated the indigenous people like part of the real estate. We killed all their buffalo. We rendered the water undrinkable. We shunted them onto reserves so they wouldn't be in the way of our shopping malls and highway cloverleaves.

And we stole from their dead. Never thought twice about the indignity we were committing when we unleashed teams of university anthropology students to paw over old tombs and scared burial sites.

How would you feel if a platoon of Micmacs descended on your local cemetery and dug up the

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DEBRA WELLS, Director of Advertising
BARRY GOODYEAR, Director of Distribution
VIVIAN O'NEIL, Business Manager
PAMELA NICHOLS, Operations Manager
 Markham 294-2200 (sales 788-7824, classified 294-4331), Stouffville 640-2100, Uxbridge 852-9741
 294-2244 distribution and administration
 9 Hastings St. Markham L3P 1K2
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Basic Black

Arthur Black

grave of your great grandfather? Chipped off a few bone samples to send back to the lab for testing? Wrote learned papers about the cavities in his molars or the gold Mason's ring still dangling from his finger bone?

Well, that's how many Indians have felt for the past 400 years.

So nobody of a charitable mind begrudges the return of Indian artifacts to the Indians themselves. Where the problem comes is what the Indians are doing to those artifacts.

They're re-burying some of them, destroying others by leaving them where they were originally found - exposed to wind and sun and rain and snow.

It makes perfect sense to the Indians. They reason that the ancestors who created the works of art never intended them to end up in a glass case in the Smithsonian.

On the other hand, it drives archaeologists nuts. They see unique physical evidence of past cultures being lost forever.

And who's to say which side is right?

I have an Indian artifact - a clay pipe head. Found it about 15 years ago in a foot of water on the sandy shores of Obonga Lake, north of Thunder Bay. An archaeologist from Lakehead University confirmed its authenticity and suggested I donate it to the university. I asked her why.

"Well we could catalogue it and add it to our collection."

I decided that civilization would not be substantially advanced by the addition of my Indian pipe head to the university collection. And it's reasonable to think that the original owner of my pipe head wouldn't care much one way or the other.

Besides I like it. My Indian pipe head is a nice thing to hold in your hand and stroke while you ponder large questions like the good and the bad of a thing, such as NAGPRA.

Ends barely meet - but worth it

To the Editor,

I just thought I would take the time to write to you and let you know how I felt about your recent editorial.

Your position is one that I wholeheartedly agree with!

I have two daughters who are 10 and six years of age. I have been lucky enough to have been able to be at home with them since day one. We barely make ends meet but it has been more than worth it. Our children are young for such a short period of time and I only wish more parents would give it a try.

Most people know in their hearts that daycare is second best but few will admit this. I feel great empathy for the parent who truly must work just to put food on the table, but there are other parents who feel that the extras are just as important to them and argue that they too must work.

You showed great courage in voicing your opinion and I am sure that you will have many negative reactions to it. I only wish more parents would look past the day to day aspects of life and realize what is truly important. If your editorial causes one person to change their child's sit-

Editor's Mail

uation it will have been worth it.

Your suggestions for alternative ways to spend taxpayers money were very valid. I would

also like to add that families which have one parent staying at home should be able to claim that as a childcare expense, as working parents are able to claim their daycare costs. It makes an awful lot of sense to do things that will encourage parents to stay home when children are young instead of encouraging them to work with bigger and better tax credits.

Julie Richardson Markham

Snow blocks family in

To the Editor,

There is nothing that can stop me from writing this letter when I read Omar Hayani's on Dec. 14.

I have had similar experiences since I moved to Markham three years ago. I still remember the snowy winter of 1992. People were exhausted from shovelling snow almost every other day. Without exception, my whole family spent hours outside performing such a big hard job. Every time when we were happy with how our work was so well done, then came the snow truck that put our effort totally to waste. We were desperate and helpless to see that our driveway was thickly blocked with snow that was much harder to get rid of. Year after year, we encounter the same difficulties during the winter time.

Finally, may I ask if this the kind of service we deserve from our town?

Phyllis Yusuf Unionville

ADAM

by Brian Basset

WHAT'S ON YOUR AGENDA TODAY?
I'M DROPPING NICK OFF AT JULIE'S AND THEN I'M MEETING MIKE FOR LUNCH DOWNTOWN.

IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE THE TWO OF YOU MET FOR LUNCH.
I KNOW. OH, COULD I HAVE SOME MONEY?

JUST PUT IT ON A CHARGE CARD.
THE MONEY'S NOT FOR LUNCH.

IT'S FOR MIKE'S MEDICAL EXPENSES FROM WHEN HE GOT REALLY SICK EATING AT THE LAST RESTAURANT I PICKED.