

# Comment & Opinions

Thursday, July 10, 1997  
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Send your letters  
to the editor  
to the address below

## EDITORIAL

### Felines running free cause grief

Recently, this newspaper received a complaint about cats. We receive many complaints, but cats are not among our usual coterie of subjects.

A resident called to complain that the number of cats running around town was getting out of hand, despite the best efforts of Animal Control. Cats are harder to catch than dogs, after all.

The complaint came not only because cats were running all over the neighborhood, howling when they went into heat and so on, but also because they are spraying and stinking up houses and entire neighborhoods. There is nothing worse, nor more long-lasting than cats marking their territory.

We agree.

While it has always been the norm to let your cat out on a nightly prow, this practice should be strongly discouraged. Cat owners are being extraordinarily selfish by releasing their animal into our neighborhoods. Cats not spayed or neutered are the absolute worst, and it wouldn't be too much to suggest hefty fines for owners of such befoulers.

Cats should be kept indoors for their own safety. Some may think they are doing them a favor by letting cats follow their instincts to run wild, but such owners are only setting themselves up for grief.



### Golf guide raised both funds and awareness

Dear Editor,  
On behalf of The Lung Association, Metropolitan Toronto and York Region, I would like to thank you for

#### Letters to the Editor

running our 1997 Executive Golf Guide message in your newspaper. As a result of contributions such as yours, we have sold 244 golf guides to date. In addition, you have helped to raise awareness of The Lung Association in your community.

Forty-four percent of the money raised from the sale of each executive golf guide, helps to support Lung Association programs and services.

Thank you once again for your time and support.

**Robin Leibovitz**  
The Lung Association  
Richmond Hill

### Cartoon was punny: Reader

Dear Editor,  
I really enjoyed the cartoon on the editorial page of *The Tribune* of July 3. I trust that the title of the document in Snobelen's hand is an intended pun.

**Roger Glazin**  
Stouffville

### Teachers' federation furious over new publication

Dear Editor,  
'Our Schools', the new publication of the Ministry of Education and Training is yet another example of government propaganda.

Reading this, one develops the distinct impression that all is well with education and that all children will benefit from the "new and improved" education system. Remember Snobelen's speech to his staff (July, 1995) in which he declares the need to "invent a crisis". The "crisis" has happened - a maelstrom at the Ministry - and these are their solutions.

MET staff respond to questions about the need for reform with the need to - reduce secondary school to four years; better prepare our youth for today's world; eliminate the many levels of bureaucracy and so on. Changes have not been methodically well thought out and are happening too fast.

We recall Harris' speech in which he praises Ontario's education system as "top-grade" only weeks after Snobelen's address to teacher federations about "fixing a system that's not working". This system does work and it works well.

No one is disagreeing with change - simply with the speed and the methods.

The Fewer School Boards Act is not only about reducing the number of school boards, it is more about finding ways to cut more money from education to finance the promised 30 per cent tax cut to begin the process of privatizing education.

Centralizing government control over education

will not improve learning for children nor will it make the system better. The "Education Improvement Commission" is a misnomer - perhaps "Education Impoverishing Commission" is more appropriate.

School Councils have existed since June, 1996 and many parent groups across Ontario are still struggling with that mandate. Since parents volunteer for school councils, it is ludicrous for a government to think it can mandate volunteerism. Parents certainly want to be involved in their child's education, but there is no mechanism to "force" that involvement.

Secondary School reform may be "well under way" at the Mowat Block but it is a long way from the classroom. No mention is made that most of the 23,000 responses to the SSR document were negative. How a reduction in the total number of hours per credit will improve learning has not yet been determined.

The MET believes that skills, especially in language, will improve with fewer hours of instruction. Students in Grade seven find that the "new curriculum" is the same as what they have been learning.

Again, Snobelen has "solved the crisis" by dismissing the Common Curriculum, changing a few words and renaming it the Ontario Curriculum. The term "performance standards" simply replaces "outcomes". Perhaps the MET realizes that shuffling the deck chairs provides nothing new, therefore there is no need for teacher training.

If, in fact, there is something new, it is absurd to expect teachers to learn an entire K-8 curriculum in one day. "Where fools rush in..." provides ample warning for educators.

Test results of the recent grade three testing, should indicate that there is a problem because this test was not designed for a grade three level student. Many grade three teachers were shocked by the difficulty of some of the questions.

The Ministry will use this data to "justify" the need for reform and their "new and improved" curriculum. The EQAO is not a parent organization - it is a product of the government.

Lastly, the Ontario College of Teachers. This superfluous body was created by the government to take control over the teacher federations and teacher training.

The article fails to mention that teachers voted overwhelmingly against this organization and yet it was still imposed. Fees are deducted automatically by the employer. The figure of 180,000 surpasses the total number of teachers in the province of Ontario by about 30,000.

Requiring membership by retiring teachers, supervisory officers and anyone holding a teaching certificate, whether they teach or not is automatic and provides more evidence about this government's real agenda.

Enough is enough.

**Cyndie Jacobs**  
Communications Officer, on behalf of the  
Executive of OSSTF, District 11

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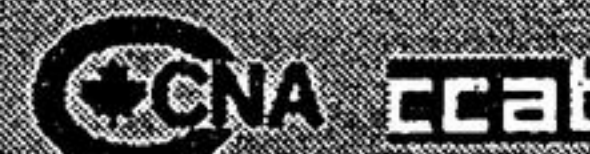
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