

# Comment & Opinions

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Send your letters  
to the editor  
to the address below

## EDITORIAL

### Welfare of students not priority in strike

With a ratification vote still to come, it's a little early to start handing out the laurels when it comes to the resolution of the strike by York Region public high school teachers.

To call it a strike even stretches the bounds of definition, since the teachers never walked a picket line, and were in fact only on strike for the last two weeks of the summer.

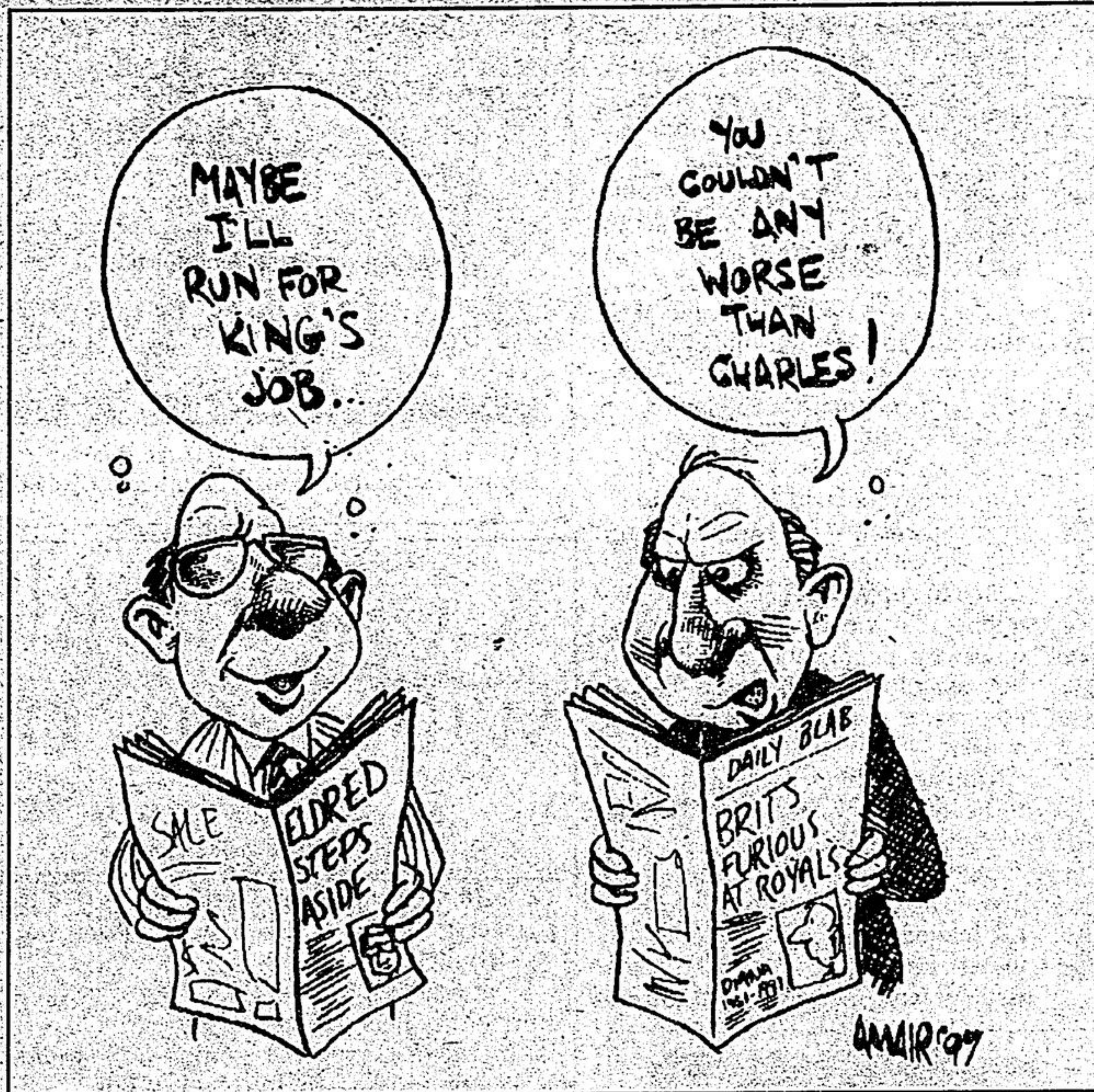
That an agreement was reached early on the first day of school is a credit to provincial mediator Kevin Burkett. Both the York Region Board of Education and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation say it was Burkett who made the deal possible. He did his job superbly, and deserves the congratulations of all York Region students and parents.

That being said, there is still a long way to go in the trust department between the region's high school teachers and its board. Bitterness will still remain, said union negotiator Jim McQueen in Thursday's Tribune. No kidding.

What we have here is two groups of very intelligent adults behaving very badly. Lost again in these negotiations was the welfare of the students.

Yes, the teachers maintain the key issue was class size and how it would affect the quality of education. That's a noble principle, but what impact would a strike have had on education and those students they care about?

As for the board, it sounds more and more like a beleaguered manufacturer struggling with budget cuts. Administrators and trustees should remember they have the profound responsibility of educating our next generation. They are not making widgets.



## Murphy's Law explains marijuana use

Anything that can go wrong, will. Murphy's Law, right? Wrong. Everybody thinks that's Murphy's Law, but it isn't. It's Finagle's Law. Murphy's Law, first promulgated by a U.S. Air Force engineer in 1949, states, "If there are two or more ways of doing something, and one of those ways can result in a catastrophe, then someone will do it." The fact that Finagle's Law has been swallowed up and re-christened Murphy's Law is a priceless demonstration of Murphy's Law in action. The original Murphy's Law has

spawned a litter of mongrel offspring. There's Murphy's Corollary, which states "Left to themselves, things tend to go from bad to worse." And Murphy's Constant: "Matter will be damaged in direct proportion to its value." Not to forget the Quantized Revision of Murphy's Law: "Everything will go wrong all at once." Well, I hate to make the Murphy waters any muddier, but I'm here to tell you that there was a Canadian Murphy's Law long before the U.S. Air Force version. And our version

was a helluva lot more powerful. As a matter of fact, thanks to our Murphy's Law, thousands of people in Canada have criminal records they otherwise wouldn't have. And they owe it all to Emily F. Murphy of Edmonton, Alberta. Back in the 1920s, Mrs. Murphy was a juvenile court judge and a scribbler of sorts, penning several articles for Maclean's Magazine. She was also an idiot, a flaming racist and a zealot slightly to the right of Attila the Hun. Emily Murphy's pet bugaboo was the demon drug, marijuana. She wrote about it under the pen name Janey Canuck. Some of her pearls of wisdom included the observation that marijuana users were "non-white and non-Christian, wanting only to seduce white women."

responsibility and are immune to pain become raving maniacs, liable to kill or indulge in any form of violence using the most savage cruelty." A gullible Canadian public — and government — bought every word. Mrs. Murphy's incendiary ravings were the single reason marijuana was declared illegal in Canada. "A decision was made without any scientific basis, nor even any real sense of social urgency, placing cannabis on the same basis as the opiate narcotics, and it has remained so to this day." My words? Nope. That's a quote from Justice Gerald LeDain's Royal Commission Report of 1972. Let me leave you with another quote. This one comes from Charlie Mackenzie, retired but not forgotten leader of the regrettably-dormant Canadian Rhino Party, and the chap from whom I poached the story of Emily Murphy. Charlie sez we should look at it this way: "In 1923, marijuana smoking was relatively unknown in Canada... no one outside of a few jazz musicians used it to get stoned. Today, according to the RCMP, five million Canadians use it for no other purpose. If no one smoked it in 1923 when it was legal, and five million smoke it today when it's not, something's gone wrong. Ergo, Murphy's Law." Now that just breaks me up — but somehow I don't think Mrs. Murphy would be amused.



Basic Black  
Arthur Black

### Help us keep Stouffville among top Terry Fox towns

Dear Editor,

When it comes to this community's contribution to cancer research, we are definitely on the map.

Stouffville has been in the top 20 out of a possible 1,153 participating communities in Ontario in the last two years in raising money in the name of Terry Fox.

Your pledge or donations will help us exceed last year's total of \$25,000.

Please join us on Sunday Sept. 14 for this year's edition of the Terry Fox Run for Cancer research.

Registration gets underway at 12:15 p.m. at the Rec Centre, with the official start at 1 p.m.

Participants may complete the 10 km route in whole or in part anytime between 1-4 p.m., by

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walking, running, blading, or cycling.

We are happy to report that many area schools are participating in their own Terry Fox event this year.

We extend a special invitation to parents of these children to join with their families on Sunday to reinforce what they have already learned about Terry Fox. He was a remarkable Canadian.

For more information, please call 640-4705.

Please help us make this year's event, our best ever.

**Sandy Schell Kennedy  
Organizing Committee  
Terry Fox Run for Cancer  
Stouffville**

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(905) 640-2100  
**Fax**  
(905) 640-5477  
**E-Mail**  
theirib@istar.ca  
6244 Main St.,  
Stouffville, Ont.  
L4A 1E2

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**CNA** **OCAB**

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