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# Comment & Opinions

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to the editor  
to the address below

## EDITORIAL

### Who cares about kids?

Where are the caring, concerned residents who want to safeguard and promote education for their community's youth?

With only two weeks remaining to register for the Nov. 10 municipal election, so far few candidates have shown an interest in becoming school trustees for York Region's two school boards.

In Stouffville, the longtime public school trustee is not running again, and no other candidate has yet registered to fill his seat. For the separate board, only one candidate from Aurora is registered for the seat which now includes Stouffville.

There are several possible reasons why there's not a stampede of people wanting to become school trustees. One is that the provincial government has capped their annual pay at \$5,000, turning the money into an honourarium, not a salary. The province is also tightening rules on who can run as trustee.

Another overriding reason is the myriad and massive changes to trustees' role and the education system in general, resulting in potential (and current) trustees not knowing what their job description will be after election day.

However, the fact remains that the role of the education trustee is perhaps more vital in these days of overwhelming change than ever before. If local people don't step forward as watchdogs of the province's educational decisions, kids in our schools will surely suffer. Only local trustees can know what's truly happening in the schools in their community; can speak out if they see your children's classroom situation deteriorating.

The deadline for filing nomination papers through the town office is Oct. 10. Caring, committed people are needed to run as trustees in our community. It may not be a big-salary job with lots of power, but the future of our children is in your trust.



## STOUFFVILLE TRIBUNE

A Metroland Community Newspaper

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The Tribune welcomes your letters to the editor. Please keep letters to no more than 300 words. Note that letters may be edited for space, label, spelling, grammar. While we endeavor to print as many letters as possible, we regret that not all letters may be printed.

## Water hook-up a 'comedy of errors'

Dear Editor,  
Open letter to Mayor Wayne Emmerson, subject: Community Water Supply in Ballantrae

The purpose of this letter is to express our concern regarding the handling of the new community water supply in Ballantrae and Musselman's Lake.

We have lived in Ballantrae for almost 12 years, and love the area. This is the first time we have felt there was sufficient cause to object

to the workings and decisions of Stouffville Town Council.

However this entire effort has been so poorly organized from beginning to end, and has caused so much confusion and hard feelings, that we felt we had to speak up.

Our own well has always supplied us with clean, plentiful water. We do recognize that there are people in the area, particularly those in Musselman's Lake, who suffer from water quality problems.

In fact the discussion regarding how to deal with this problem has taken place over many years, with limited and poor communication back to the constituents.

There was confusion about the optionality, whether wells had to be capped, how much had to be paid to hook up, etc.

When the matter finally came to a vote, a negative option style was employed, whereby those who did not vote were deemed to be in favour of the scheme. When cable TV companies apply this method they are castigated in the press, but when Stouffville town council uses it, it is called democracy.

Regardless, the work finally got underway in the summer of 1996. It seems to have been successfully completed, but much of the work, especially the cleanup, has been quite shoddy. Concrete driveways and curbs were smashed and not properly repaired, and the resodding effort was very sub-standard, leaving dead grass all over the neighbourhood.

To top it all off, within days of finishing the resodding, work crews descended on the area again and started ripping up lawns to install natural gas piping. There's nothing like a well co-ordinated plan.

This year we were informed that we would have to connect to the community water supply by December 31, 1997. Even though our own water supply was excellent, as good citizens and believing that council actually meant what it said, we proceeded to obtain a permit and engage a contractor to connect the water supply to our house.

The permit cost more than \$300 and the contractor cost more than

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\$1,200. Note that the permit was mandatory even though we were told we had no choice but to hook up (what exactly were they permitting?).

This is all in addition to the frontage fee to the town of almost \$1,300. This adds up to a major expense of over \$2,800 to get something (a water meter and the privilege of paying for our water) that we didn't want in the first place. Neighbours have had similar experiences and have also signed their names to this letter.

Subsequent to our own hook-up, we have discovered that council has:

- Granted an extension for hooking up to July 1998, apparently in response to complaints from those in Musselman's Lake who wanted the water in the first place;
- Granted an exemption to anyone who can prove their water is potable, again in response to complaints.

Well, now we're complaining. We pay significant property taxes to live in what is normally a wonderful area. We believe we deserve better treatment from our elected officials than this comedy of errors.

Would someone from council please provide a rational explanation for this mess, clarify the go-forward situation, and tell us how we are to be compensated for all the money that has been needlessly laid out?

Alan Brooks  
Ruth Brooks  
Tim Bain  
Lila Bain

## Markham Fair banner not welcome on Main

Dear Editor,  
We have lived and operated a business in Stouffville for the past three years and I have finally decided to voice my opinion about an annual event that takes place at this time every year.

The banner that is stretched across Main Street advertising the Markham Fair is almost a slap in the face for the business people of Stouffville.

Do we get the chance to hang a banner across Markham Main Street advertising the Strawberry Festival in Stouffville?

There is no question that every business in Stouffville will suffer when the fair is on. Why should we add insult to injury for the people of Stouffville by blatantly advertising this Markham event?

Maureen Breen  
Stouffville

## More @ Random

Dear Editor,  
I just wanted to take a minute and tell you how much I like the @ Random spot.

It is very creative and of high interest.

Any chance of giving us two to four items each time? Sometimes the most interesting stuff doesn't get a whole column.

Thanks for the creativity.

Ron Boyd  
Stouffville