

Comment & Opinions

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Send your letters
to the editor
to the address below

EDITORIAL

Be brave; give blood

C'mon. Roll up your sleeve. It won't hurt. Honestly. Now when the Toronto-area Red Cross Blood Centre is at critically low levels, it's time for YOU to give blood. You are, unfortunately, in good company. About 96 per cent of Canadians never give blood, as only about four per cent are regular donors.

You've heard the urgent appeals for blood before, but this time the blood centre which serves 61 hospitals between Toronto and Huntsville, and Oakville to Napanee is so depleted of stores of blood that some hospitals were close to cancelling elective surgery earlier this week. That's YOUR hospitals, the ones you depend on in the event you or your loved one needs a life-saving blood transfusion.

OK, so you hope some other guy is going to give blood this week or that the crisis is over because 675 people turned out to emergency clinics held Monday and Tuesday.

But the crisis is not over. Supplies of some blood types are still critically low and if a major accident takes place — such as the recent bus crash in Quebec which killed more than 40 people — Ontarians may literally die from a lack of blood.

The hours of regular blood clinics have been extended, and Saturday clinics have been established to respond to the crisis.

So let's get to the real reason you have never donated blood. Fear of pain, fear of catching some disease, fear of lineups — these are the excuses which prevent you from giving one bag of blood which your body will replace in a few days. Yet other than the slight prick of the needle, donating doesn't hurt. You can't pick up any disease from the sterile equipment, and even a first-time donation only takes between 60 and 90 minutes of your time.

So be brave. To find out about a clinic close to your home or work, call the Toronto blood centre at (416) 974-9900. You'll save the life of a stranger, or maybe a friend.



LETTERS

Market Street speeder kills Whiskers

Dear Editor,

On Wednesday, Oct. 1 at about 8 p.m. a speeding car on Market Street in Stouffville hit my seven-month-old kitten (Whiskers).

The car did not stop to see if the cat was alive, even though a friend

witnessed this and yelled to him. I feel that this was very thoughtless and uncaring of this person and just wanted them to know that as a result of the incident, my cat died within the hour.

As a parent, I am very concerned

about the speed of vehicles on Market Street. There are many children in this area and they can sometimes dart out just as quickly as a cat. The stop sign is often obscured, and in any event, most vehicles pay little, if any attention to it.

If drivers were a little more conscientious about our speed in residential areas, then perhaps we as a community could avoid a tragedy like this from taking place again.

Nicholas Jones
and Mom

Tribune editorial adding fuel to labour tension

Dear Editor,

Your Sept. 20 editorial entitled "Education reforms should not be stalled" is full of misinformation and misguided comments. It lacks

both critical and judicious thought.

First, by stating Ontario has increased spending from \$8.2 billion since 1986 to "\$13.2 billion for 2.2 million pupils" and should have a

system unequalled, you imply we are spending more than other jurisdictions. In fact, Ontario ranks 6th among the provinces and territories in per pupil expenditures and 46th

when compared to both U.S. states and Canadian provinces. In U.S. dollars, Ontario spends \$5,355 (\$127 above the Canadian average of \$5,228), whereas the U.S. average is \$6,469. In a province with the highest cost of living, and therefore the highest cost of doing business, the reality is that Ontario students are being underfunded in comparison to North American jurisdictions.

Second, you state "Ontario students ranked dead last in Canada" internationally were an even bigger embarrassment in a recent international math and science test. I can only surmise a strong bias against the education system.

Your editorial does absolutely nothing to aid students and educators in improving the system. In fact, they are quite irresponsible.

They only add fuel to an already tense labour situation and provide false data for those who are predisposed to negative attitudes towards educators and the education system.

Steve Bull
Stouffville

Harris: listen to Ontario's future

Open letter to Ontario Premier Mike Harris:

This letter is regarding Bill 160, which will affect every student in Ontario.

The students attending this province's schools will be affected by the cutbacks made by these education cutbacks. Most students will agree that many of our classes are already too large with up to 44 students in some classes, so why make them bigger?

Students already have to share texts and desks and some students even sit on the floor.

Your party does say that the class sizes will be limited in size, but how is this possible when there will be 25,000 more students next year and 10,000 fewer teachers?

You want non-certified teachers to be teaching us just because the previous teachers are too old or too expensive.

How will this be helping our education? Non-qualified people can not possibly offer students a quality education. We are appalled by the statement that Ontario has a lower quality of education, when compared to Alberta and Saskatchewan.

I don't know if you are aware of the fact that Ontario has a higher population of immigrants than the other provinces.

Cutting back on the teachers' prep time will result in not having any time to prepare for our work or conduct extra-curricular activities. Teacher prep time is used for conferencing with students, setting up

labs, working with other teachers, organizing extra-curricular activities and planning new lessons for us. Adding an additional class to every teacher's schedule will mean less teacher-student attention, not more.

If this happens, the educational standards of Ontario will go lower, not higher.

We believe your government is misrepresenting the effects Bill 160.

Why should we trust you, when the past government promises haven't been fulfilled?

We may only be students, but we are aware of what's happening in our schools. We are Ontario's future. Please listen to us.

Anna Panakos and
Navneet Panwar
York Region students

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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, libel, spelling, grammar.

While we endeavor to print as many letters as possible, we regret that not all letters may be printed.