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# Comment & Opinions

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to the editor  
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## EDITORIAL

### Spanking okay

Is it right for parents to physically discipline their children? It's one of those questions that will never be unanimously agreed upon, and one, further, that is gaining more and more attention. A children's rights group is fighting a part of the Criminal Code which allows parents to use reasonable physical force when disciplining their children. The group says physical punishment is unconstitutional. Other critics say hitting a child when he or she is behaving unacceptably only teaches children that violence is the best way to solve conflicts.

Up until the mid-1980s most parents didn't hesitate to swat a child on the bottom with the hand (the only acceptable part of the anatomy) if he or she were misbehaving. It was not thought then to be archaic or abusive. It was expected by both kids and their parents that if children stepped over the line they would get a spanking. And perhaps it's for that reason that parents today - many products of childhood spankings - chose to turn that mind-set around, abandoning the practice altogether.

Today, most people who see children out in public yelling, screaming, kicking and bossing their parents around silently wish the parent would give the child a well-deserved smack. In many homes, children seem to run the roost, showing no respect to parents, acting downright rude and, yes, spoiled.

As long as spanking is used reasonably there's nothing wrong with loving parents taking control of bad behaviour with a smack on the bottom.

Abusive parenting is a whole different matter and should be punishable under the Criminal Code. Parents and kids know the difference.



## Thompson not the only truant senator

Dear Editor,  
Canadians have been angry over Senator Andrew Thompson's absence from work. From January to October of last year, this senator attended Parliament for only two days out of 99 Senate sittings.

The Senate has acted to punish Mr. Thompson, first by stripping him of certain perks such as paid travel and having a secretary, and second by taking

away his salary. The trouble, however, is that Mr. Thompson has not been the only senator absent from work. Last year 27 senators missed 40 per cent or more of designated sittings.

For example Senator John Buchanan - a Brian Mulroney appointee - showed up only half the time last year.

We ask readers: what would happen if we were absent half

### LETTERS

the time from our place of work? Unlike senators - who are appointed by the Prime Minister and whose jobs are guaranteed for life - we would be fired.

We at WatchDog Newsletter have a list of the 27 truant senators and their Senate mailing

addresses. We are asking interested people to write to us for the list, and to write to some of the senators to ask them to attend all Senate sittings.

To receive our list of truant senators, please contact us by e-mail at dmurrell@unb.ca or fax us at 506-454-8245.

David Murrell  
WatchDog Newsletter  
Fredericton, N.B.

## Replacing health card impossible

Dear Editor,  
Thank you for your timely editorial entitled 'Cards out fraud' in *The Tribune's* March 3 issue.

I agree that the health care system is being abused due to health card fraud, and applaud the efforts of our current government to put a better system in place.

However, have you tried to get a lost health card replaced?

My daughter's wallet escaped from her purse in a public place, and we have discovered first hand how well the new system is working.

Informing her bank and Bell Telephone of the loss was done with two telephone calls. Replacing her driver's license was accomplished with a quick trip to Aurora. Replacing her health card has

been a nightmare. You cannot replace an existing card by telephone or mail.

Although most doctor's offices post a listing of health card clinics at the local hospital, getting an appointment within six months is impossible. You must attend at a ministry office, in person, during business hours. There are very few of these offices around.

You must go to Barrie or Toronto. Once you have arrived at the office, extremely long line-ups await you and many people give up in frustration.

The reason given for personally attending an office is to obtain photo-identification for your card. The telephone announcement however, indicates that the government has not yet decided if photo iden-

tification will be required down the road. The decision apparently is still up in the air. Until the decision is made, I suggest that lost cards could be replaced by mail, once suitable identification has been produced. We are able to do this for a birth certificate, so why not for a health card?

I believe that a birth certificate would be the document of choice if someone wanted to steal an identity for a passport or credit card approval.

We are now being told to carry our health cards with us in case of a medical emergency.

Until replacing a lost card becomes easier, I recommend that you do not do so; replacing it is just too difficult.

Elaine Stewart  
Gormley

## Why so many Shaw Cable blackouts?

Open letter to Shaw Cable System. What is wrong lately with the cable system? Why are there so many blackouts in Stouffville?

One day last week (it was Thursday, Feb. 19, I think) the blackout lasted from 2:30 a.m. until 2 p.m. - not to mention numerous other days in the last month or so.

The next day was Feb. 25 from 5:30 to 8 p.m. Why don't you put in the local paper when something goes wrong. Even when you phone the cable's customer service, they would not give you an answer! (my experience).

I think there are too many Shaw repair vans roaming the streets of Stouffville.

Is there a possibility to give your subscribers some refund?

Please take this letter into consideration.

J. Deters  
Stouffville

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News  
(905) 640-2100  
Retail sales  
(905) 640-2100  
Classifieds  
(905) 640-2874  
Distribution  
(905) 640-2100  
Fax  
(905) 640-5477  
E-Mail  
thetrib@istar.ca  
6244 Main St.,  
Stouffville, Ont.  
L4A 1E2

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