

**EDUCATION: Book's graphic content concerns Unionville mother**

# Parent wants book pulled by school

BY JENNIFER BROWN  
STAFF WRITER

The chairperson of Unionville High School's council says a book her son read for an independent study course contains graphic material and should be removed from the school library.

Karen Nanninga said she was shocked after she proof read a report her 17-year-old son prepared on the novel *Fade* - one of the Grade 11 student's last assignments as school ended in June.

Written by American Robert Cormier, author of *The Chocolate War* and *I Am The Cheese*, the book is available in most public library systems. In the 1988 book, the 13-year-old son of French-Canadian immigrants discovers he has the unique ability to become invisible. Nanninga said she was particularly offended by passages that refer to the boy witnessing sex between a man and a young girl.

During the scene, the boy describes what is happening as he watches, invisible to the other characters. And in another passage, the boy describes an encounter in which he touches his aunt's breast.

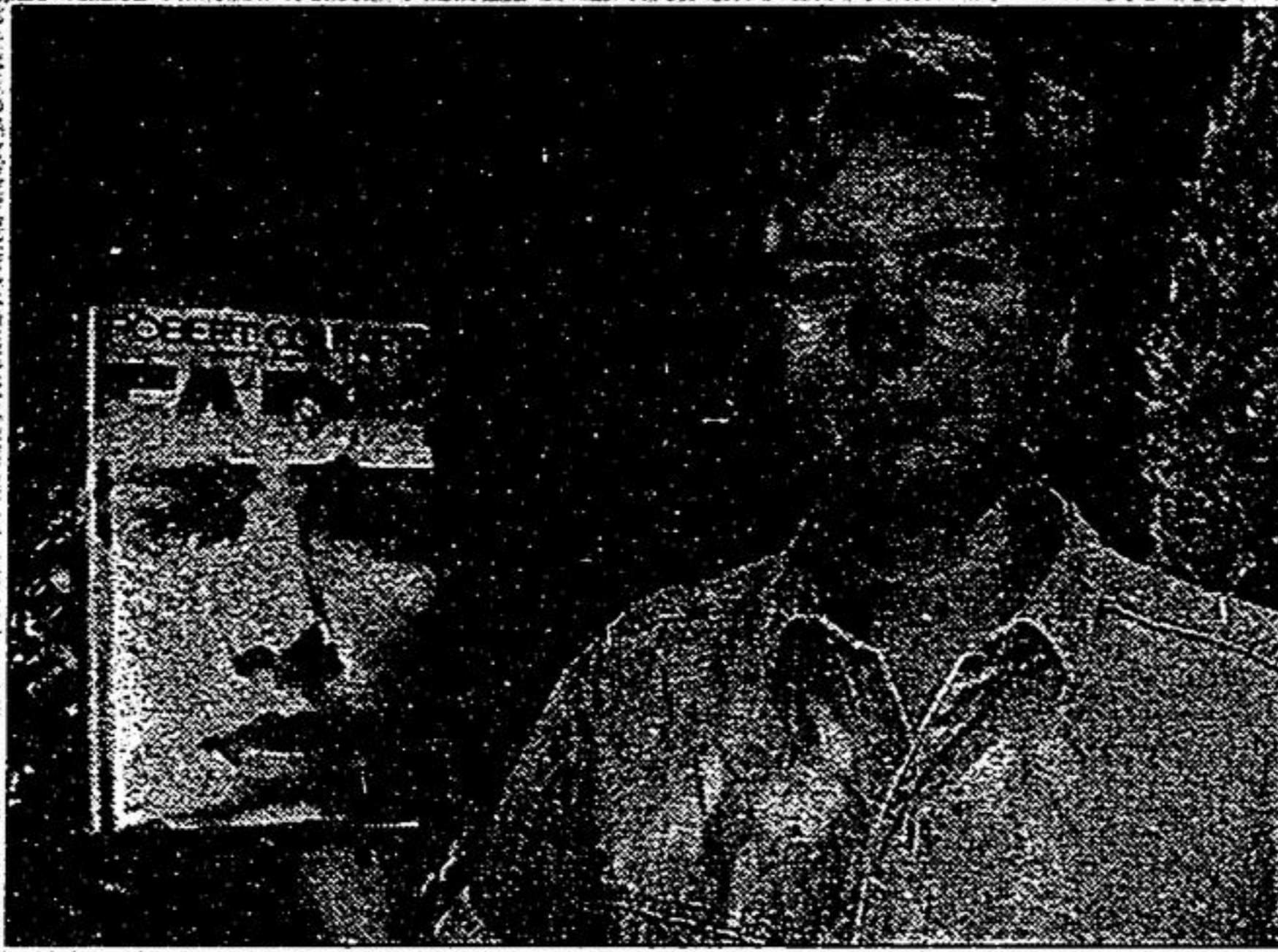
But when Nanninga challenged the school's English department about the book, they told her it was suitable for the chosen age group - students in Grades 9 to 11. "I'm not ready to let this go," Nanninga said. "I'm not willing to let other children read this."

The book was offered as part of an independent study course.

Nanninga said *Fade* was selected by the English department and presented on a cart with other books she finds questionable, all taken from the school library. The book should have at least been red-flagged she said, indicating it contained graphic material. Nanninga also wants all novels provided to students to be approved first at the board level.

Right now, it is up to each individual school to recommend books not made mandatory by the curriculum. Board officials only approve required learning materials, explained superintendent of curriculum Sharon Craigen.

"In an independent unit, materials are not required to be



STAFF PHOTO/SIOERD WITTEVEEN

Karen Nanninga and the book *Fade*, which she finds objectionable for high school students.

read (by the department). A teacher selects a number of novels he or she feels would achieve the outcome of the course. The decision is made at the school by the principal and teacher," said Craigen who said she had not read the book.

Nanninga originally took her complaint to both the school administrators and a superintendent in charge of secondary schools, but she said no action was taken regarding the book. But as school council chairperson, Nanninga said she feels the issue deserves more attention and will be pursuing it further in the fall.

Craigen said she can't recall a book ever being removed from a school following a complaint from a parent.

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