

Stouffville Tribune

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LETTERS

Family devastated by house fire thanks community for help

The Toliopoulos family would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude and thanks to all of our family, neighbours and friends for their most generous outpouring of love, kindness and generosity during the recent loss of our home due to fire.

Thank you all so much from the bottom of our hearts.

Special thanks to Barb Amadori, Sharon and Richard Forbes, Maurice and Christine Arsenault, Vaughan and Arta, Judy Royal and the staff of Buttonville Public School.

TOM, MARCIA, LEIGH, JASON AND
LAUREN TOLIOPOULOS
MARKHAM

All wards should have equal access to traffic calming devices

An open letter to Regional Councillor Gord Landon.

I am writing on behalf of Markham's Ward 8 transportation committee. Our final recommendation to do physical traffic calming this year on Highgate Avenue was not followed and instead an education program will be done, which is not, in our opinion, what is needed on this busy and dangerous road.

It was concluded by our committee that Highgate Avenue would get speed humps, as promised last year, as a continuation of the project on Harvest Moon.

A promise was made about six years ago to residents of Lee Avenue and Noble Street to build physical traffic calming on these very busy and dangerous streets, yet to this day nothing has been done.

I also understand that a neighbourhood in Ward 7 will get traffic calming on Highgate Avenue between Brimley and McCowan roads. I say congratulations to them; they have a councillor in Khalid Usman who obviously listens and follows through on their behalf in obtaining funding and having this project completed.

In our committee's opinion, Highgate Avenue between Kennedy Road and Brimley Road is a dangerous road where there is a lot of speeding and infiltration.

Our committee's hard work, town staff time and taxpayers' money has been wasted because we identified this street as the priority project for physical calming and yet the bare

OPINION



Debora Kelly

York Catholic board and teachers put friction behind them

York Region's Catholic school board and its elementary and secondary school teachers did the inconceivable — they shook hands on a one-year collective agreement.

That, in itself, is a feat worthy of admiration in a time when labour strife in the education system is the norm.

But they also did it without drawn-out, acrimonious rounds of 'negotiation.' Wow.

I was not the only one, surely, bracing for another confrontation between teachers and the Harris government.

Premier Mike Harris' crew is spoiling for a school yard brawl. But York Region's separate board teachers refused to come out for recess.

As so many of the province's schools, wounds created by the turmoil, including the strike in the fall of 1997, have not healed. Tension between boards, teachers, parents and the public remains.

The Tories want to take advantage of that, even at the risk of continued friction at our schools. The government wants boards to toe the Bill 160 line and ensure high school teachers spend 1,250 minutes in the classroom every week.

Unions calculated this stipulation would result in at least 3,000 fewer teachers and save \$165 million. They hit the pavement to fight it.

After the failed strike, many boards and unions made deals by including items such as on-call time, mentoring and hall duty in the 1,250 minutes.

Now, the government has introduced legislation clarifying that time must be spent in the classroom — and has nixed work-to-rule campaigns by making extra-curricular activities mandatory. If the rules aren't followed, the province can take over and fire employees.

The gauntlet has been thrown down. The bill passed second reading last week and will likely be law by summer. In the face of all this, the separate board reached a deal. "We have been spending time building relationships with teachers," explains spokesperson Chris Cable. Obviously, it paid off.

The deal includes a 1.5-per-cent grid increase on Aug. 31, 2001; the first raise teachers have seen since 1993. Some teachers will get cash payments of 2 per cent of their salaries this fall.

Yet there is no mention of 1,250 minutes. Cable says the board will work out the issues "to meet the needs of our students and teachers."

"Bottom line: We will comply with legislation," she adds, when pressed.

"Best of all, the threat of a strike has been lifted. We created stability (in our schools) with this contract — a lot of anxieties have been lifted," says Cable.

"This board and its teachers did what parents everywhere are beseeching their educators to do: Put the kids first."

Take a deep bow — and may others follow your example.

minimum will be done. We had placed our trust in our councillor to work on our behalf to take our hard work to final conclusion. Instead we find that Highgate got it instead. In our opinion, the safety and welfare of residents should not be compromised in this way.

Our committee followed the process and, along with town staff, made the hard decision of choosing Highgate as our priority and we genuinely believed our recommendations would be acted upon.

Why go through the process of setting up a citizens committee and then have its recommendation ignored? This makes a mockery of citizen input.

Something should be done to restore our confidence in this committee process. We still believe Highgate should receive traffic calming with speed humps as was done on Highgate. As well, in light of promises kept for residents of Highgate, it seems appropriate traffic calming as promised six years ago should be built on Lee and Noble.

The taxpayers on the east side of Kennedy Road in Ward 8 deserve no less than this.

MICHAEL VISCONTI
UNIONVILLE

Elderly pedestrian's good spirits are contagious

Two years ago, I moved to Elgin Mills Road and Bayview Avenue. I started driving Elgin Mills Road east every morning at approximately 9 a.m.

What has made my day, every day (except for the coldest winter months) since I have travelled that road is seeing an elderly man taking his morning stroll every day for the past two years from Bayview to Leslie Street and

back. He has a smile every time I see him. As I drive by, he just makes me feel alive. He seems to be so happy within himself and so content.

Yet he has a cane and still walks his walk. He is an inspiration to our community and I applaud him. He is what I would call the heart of participation. He does not only walk the distance, but he smiles the whole way.

I have the utmost respect for this elderly gentleman and look forward to seeing him every morning. He truly makes my day.

I wanted everyone to know no one is too old or too young to enjoy the beauty of a day.

This gentleman seems to enjoy every step he takes and the smile is worth more than a thousand words.

PAT REDDICK
RICHMOND HILL

Health-care workers who love their jobs deserve our thanks

Rather than saying anything negative, I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all health-care professionals who, no matter what the circumstance, take time to truly care for the patients in need of care.

In times when it is not only health care and education professionals affected by low budgets and large workloads, I would like to stress that those of you who continue to love your jobs (you know who you are) and care about people are truly, truly appreciated.

Much love and appreciation to those of you who, in spite of your wages and workload, continue to care.

N. GAUER
RICHMOND HILL

LETTERS POLICY

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