

Stouffville Tribune

A Metroland community newspaper
9 Heritage Rd., Markham, ON, L3P 1M3

OPINION

TELEPHONE

(905) 294-2200

FAX: (905) 294-1538

EMAIL: newsroom@econsun.com

Publisher: Ian Proudfoot
General Manager: Alvin Brouwer
Editor in Chief: Brenda Larson
Director of Advertising: Debra Weller

Deputy Editor: Debora Kelly
Editor: Julie Caspersen
Production Director: Cheri Kay
Distribution Director: Barry Goodyear
Online Publishing Manager: Brian Kirlik

Classified Manager: Ann Campbell
Retail Sales Manager: Stephen Mathieu
Inside Sales Manager: Stacey Allen
Business Manager: Margaret Fleming
Office Manager: Vivian O'Neil

LETTERS

In the name of friendship, make sure teen did not die in vain

As the parent of two teenagers, it has been interesting to read the reaction of some parents in regards to vandalism that was done in Stouffville in the wake of the tragic drowning of a high school student.

Some of us (parents), in apparent grief, have taken out our frustration on the police for making what appeared to be an honest mistake during the course of their investigation of the vandalism.

Others want to forgive those responsible because "they are in grief", as if this is a Beverly Hills 90210 episode.

I would be very disappointed in my teenagers if they resorted to this vandalism.

At a time when we should be telling those responsible this type of behaviour is unacceptable under any circumstances, some of us want to make excuses for the behaviour.

To those responsible for the vandalism, I say: Your friend's family needed compassion, understanding, a shoulder to cry on or, perhaps, some privacy.

Instead, you have brought controversy to their family name at the worst of times.

I would like to challenge you.

Get back out there and repair the vandalism you caused.

I don't care if you do it in the dark of night, just do it. I don't care if we ever find out who you are.

Then, rally your friends and, in the name of your lost friend, try to make sure his death was not in vain.

For example, start a program at school that will educate students on the importance of life preservers and on boating safety in general.

Make something positive arise from this tragedy.

Although your behaviour was wrong, you can right it and, in doing so, make it forgivable.

MARTIN J. LENNON
MARKHAM

Woman watched as sister with cancer was dying for a cigarette

My sister-in-law quit smoking after my sister died of lung cancer in February.

She was having a difficult time and said to me, "I'm dying for a cigarette."

As my sister lay dying in the hospital, we would lift her into a wheelchair, put her wig on



Brenda Larson

Tobacco giant's goodwill a dose of preventive medicine

Last week, the president of Imperial Tobacco Canada voiced his support for a Canadian Senate bill calling for a 19-cent-a-pack increase in the price of cigarettes.

The new levy, estimated to be worth approximately \$360 million annually, will be used to fund programs to discourage young people from smoking.

The tobacco giant chief, Bob Bexham, says the company doesn't want underage Canadians to smoke and, thus, strongly supports the bill.

Far be it from me to question Bexham's motives in throwing support behind the bill. Perhaps his company truly believes young Canadians should be discouraged from taking up a filthy habit that kills.

After all, they have enough adults hooked already.

But you have to wonder — it was Bexham's company that aimed its marketing campaigns at young people, contradictory to this supporting role he has now assumed for the Senate bill.

And you have to recognize the Tobacco Manufacturers' Council is thinking about fighting government rules that require cigarette manufacturers to cover half the packages with graphic warnings about the health risks associated with smoking.

So why would Bexham and Imperial Tobacco throw their support behind a bill that will increase the cost of smoking and discourage a new audience of up-and-coming nicotine addicts?

Perhaps Bexham is simply buying goodwill. Preventing young people from smoking, a habit that kills 45,000 Canadians every year, can't be criticized. It's a positive move for an industry that hooks people on a drug that is frighteningly addictive and then doesn't bear the social costs associated with that addiction.

Perhaps it's an image makeover — the big, bad tobacco firm shows some remorse for some of the damage it knows its product can cause. Ahhh, a responsible corporate citizen is born.

Whatever the motive (and I have to think there has to be some kind of business motive at work here), the federal government shouldn't let such a prime opportunity go to waste.

The legislation should be passed, quickly, increase the cost of smokes (perhaps that will give some smokers pause for thought). Get the cash in place for the anti-smoking crusade and work to prevent young people from lighting up in the first place.

Yep, I'm a reformed smoker (the worst kind, as you know) and I understand how difficult it is to quit: once you're hooked.

If Ottawa had provided me with the right information and prevented me from smoking by making it more difficult to buy them, my choices may have been different.

and take her to the doughnut shop in the lobby where she was allowed to smoke.

This was her dying wish.

How addictive is nicotine? To die for.

DAISY EDWARDS
MARKHAM

Council's vision for greenspace must be shared with residents

Re: Fitness centre approved despite traffic objections, April 8.

I would like to address some comments made by Councillor Sue Sherban in your newspaper.

"I'm beginning to believe that anyone who's against the project is against recreation," Sherban said during the announcement of the added fitness centre to the pool/library complex.

This comment demonstrates she does not understand the issues, proper urban planning and fiscal responsibility and accountability.

Choosing the best location to best serve all Whitchurch-Stouffville and choosing the best design and facility combination would have achieved those goals.

Taxpayers will not be getting the best bang for our dollars. We have a right to question council's decisions, as well as the poor answers given to our questions.

Like most Canadians, I believe in recreation. I was raised by parents who believed in family recreation, fitness and culture, and who put their beliefs into practice. In addition to ballet, swimming, dance and music classes, my parents would take four children downhill skiing, camping or sailing across Canada and the United States.

I did not play hockey, but does it mean I am

against hockey? No. So, am I against having a swimming pool? No.

I, with other residents, fought to preserve the tennis court in Memorial Park from being destroyed by council, which was looking at building the skateboarding facility over it and from unnecessary damages to its surface because it was allowed to be used as a beer garden site.

Am I against skate boarding? No. It is easy to imagine the impact such a facility would have next to a lawn bowling facility or on small Memorial Park itself. Also, why destroy an existing facility to accommodate another one?

I believe in recreation, culture, sport and fitness. Sherban's over-simplification and inaccurate characterization of the issues should be reconsidered. The financial issues should and could be better addressed and answered.

Council should be protecting our downtown park, not giving approval to build on it or pave over it. The new parkland to be acquired through the new subdivision should not take any open space away from the existing park. If it wasn't for the efforts of some residents, there would also be a 150-car parking lot by the creek in addition to the recently built road.

Bad planning has a domino effect. The outdoor pool is another park facility that should not be destroyed to make place for another road, this one being the planned extension of Park Drive to the new facility. Nothing can replace a community outdoor pool in the summer, not even an indoor one.

I challenge Sherban and the rest of council to fully disclose their vision and the plans for the existing parkland (Memorial and Franklin parks).

JEANNE MAJOR
STOUFFVILLE

LETTERS POLICY

Stouffville Tribune welcomes your letters. All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The newspaper reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space.

Write: Letters to the Editor, 9 Heritage Rd., Markham, ON, L3P 1M3

Email: letters@econsun.com

Stouffville Tribune

Serving the community since 1888



Canadian Circulations Audit Board Member



Ontario Press Council

Canadian Publications Mail Product Sales Agreement #1403419
Subscription rates by mail: 1 year - \$69.55 (tuesdays only)

Phone: (905) 294-2200

Fax: (905) 294-1538

Classified:

1-800-743-3353

Distribution:

(905) 294-8244

Stouffville Tribune, published every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, is one of the Metroland Printing, Publishing and Distributing Ltd. group of newspapers, which includes the Ajax/Pickering News Advertiser, Alliston Herald/Courier, Barrie Advance, Barry's Bay This Week, Bolton Enterprise, Brampton Guardian, Burlington Shopping News, Burlington Post, City Parent, Collingwood/Wasaga Connection, East York Mirror, Erin Advocate/Country Routes, Etobicoke Guardian, Flamborough Post, Georgetown Independent/Action Free Press, Kingston This Week, Lindsay This Week, Midland/Penetanguishene Mirror, Milton Canadian Champion, Milton Shopping News, Mississauga News, Newmarket Aurora, Georgina Era-Banner, Northumberland News, North York Mirror, Oakville Beaver, Oakville Shopping News, Orillia Today, Oshawa/Whitby/Clarington/Port Perry This Week, Peterborough This Week, Richmond Hill/Thornhill/Vaughan Liberal, Scarborough Mirror, Stouffville Tribune, Today's Seniors, Uxbridge Tribune and City of York Guardian.