

Stouffville Tribune

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

Publisher: **Ian Proudfoot**

General Manager: **Alvin Brouwer**

Editor in Chief: **Brenda Larson**

Director of Advertising: **Debra Weller**

Deputy Editor
Debora Kelly

Editor
Jim Mason

Production Manager
Pam Nichols

Distribution Director
Barry Goodyear

Online Publishing
Manager
Margaret Fleming

Classified Manager
Ann Campbell

Retail Sales Manager
Stephen Mathieu

Inside Sales Manager
Stacy Allen

Business Manager
Rob Lazaruko

Office Manager
Vivian O'Neill

OPINION

TELEPHONE

(905) 294-2200 / (416) 798-7624

FAX: (905) 294-1538

EMAIL: newsroom@econsun.com



Dave Teetzel

Why all the controversy over a job nobody wants?

School board inaugural meetings are usually pretty dull affairs. But York Region's public board had more controversy at its inaugural than in all its meetings in the last term — due, in large part, to the trustee-elect for Whitchurch-Stouffville and East Gwillimbury, who was standing in the hall haranguing the other trustees as they left.

Yes, Bob Burrows knows how to liven up a school board meeting. That probably has a lot to do with why he wasn't at the table with all the other trustees.

Last week, the outgoing board met behind closed doors and ruled Burrows can't be a trustee because he doesn't live in York Region.

Burrows was never asked for his side of the story.

He told us he owns a farm in Durham Region, but lives with his parents in Jackson's Point. This was enough to get the clerk of Whitchurch-Stouffville to OK his nomination papers.

It's worth noting nobody but Burrows ran for the position. So why all the bickering about residency requirements for a job nobody else wants?

Presumably, a trustee is required to live in the region so he will have an active personal interest in the school system. Nobody can deny that Burrows has that.

Back in 1996, Burrows was suspended from his job as a Grade 4 teacher at Holland Landing Public School for five days.

The board consistently denied Burrows' claims his suspension was related to his public criticism of outcome-based learning — a top-priority curriculum initiative that, underneath all the academic rhetoric, meant kids should be able to apply their classroom knowledge in everyday life.

But Burrows released a letter from the superintendent of schools at the time that seemed to support his case.

In 1998, he brought the toxic mould issue to a head when he had a piece of wood from a portable at Holland Landing school tested in a lab, then told everyone it tested positive for *stachybotrys atra*, which has been linked to health problems.

The scientist who conducted the tests later said his findings were wrong, the mould was harmless. He placed a fair amount of the blame for the erroneous findings on the shoulders of one Bob Burrows.

Are you starting to see why the board is so determined to keep this guy out?

But let's not forget, once Burrows got them looking, the board found toxic mould in many of its structures.

No doubt, this guy is abrasive and very fond of grandstanding. Yes, as a trustee, he would get up the noses of the board's staff and his fellow trustees.

This is not necessarily a bad thing.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MPP's prediction would lead to a one group dictating policy

Thornhill MPP Tina Molinari predicted the Liberal government would "correct" the feeling of abandonment by her constituents, by setting up a hotline between the Jewish community in Canada and the prime minister.

In these days of political correctness would it now not be considered fair that a similar line be set up to Palestinians in Canada? It seems to me Canada is headed in the wrong direction here.

Since when is democracy served by the special interests of one group dictating to our elected government what their response to international events should be and how they vote in United Nations resolutions? Would it not serve the interests of the global community to really understand the reasons behind the unrest and address those issues?

I believe most people in Canada, and in the world for that matter, want truth and justice to be served so that we may have true and lasting peace in the Middle East.

It means each individual as well as each government should be searching its conscience for what is really happening in troubled spots in the world.

If injustice has been done to the Palestinians, and it has, it should be recognized and steps taken to redress that wrong. It does not help the evolution of humanity to have wrong perpetuated because of the influ-

ence of special interest groups. We should be on our guard about special privileges given to the vociferous and influential.

Canada has earned its reputation as peacekeepers because it remained impartial in conflicts. With undue influence exerted on our prime minister by a powerful lobby group, Canada can no longer claim to be impartial in this matter. It has chosen to be told how to vote at the UN.

It means Israel can with even more impunity shoot live bullets at youths armed with stones. What are they doing throwing stones? They are protesting occupation, they are protesting house demolitions, land expropriations, illegal arrests, torture, closures, military checkpoints that form the grind of their daily lives. In any other place, they would be called resistance fighters.

Let us be clear we are talking of a military occupation here, a military occupation that has been in place for 33 years — the Israelis are building settlements on land that is not theirs. This is against international law, a nicety the Israelis can safely ignore since the international community does not do anything about it.

In one month 7,000 have been injured and more than 200 killed, nearly all of them Palestinian. Such violence is required to guard against stone throwers? The best way to end the violence is for the Israelis to withdraw from these occupied lands and end the occupation.

BARBARA BAKEWELL
Markham

EDITORIAL

It's a harsh reality but for many people, there's no time left in the day to "do the right thing" by volunteering.

Undoubtedly, volunteering and the good that comes from helping others is suffering because of our fast-paced lifestyles.

Community Home Assistance to Seniors (CHATS), for instance, is desperate to recruit 100 people to help seniors across the region.

The agency uses more than 1,100 volunteers every year to transport the elderly to medical appointments and shopping excursions, deliver its Meals on Wheels program, conduct telephone checks with isolated seniors and organize lunch programs.

However, this holiday season, officials realized their volunteer pool has dwindled, jeopardizing the programs used by 5,300 seniors.

Perhaps it is no longer feasible to expect busy families to find extra time to volunteer.

Yet volunteering and what it brings to a community is too important a resource to allow to fall to the wayside.

As Canadians prepare to mark the International Year of Volunteers next September, there has been recognition a different approach is needed to keep volunteerism alive.

York Region non-profit groups gathered Tuesday to "highlight the achievements of volunteers" and kick start a new era of giving time to others.

Using catch phrases such as "The value of one. The power of many", York Region joins communities across Canada in a project aimed at building on the generosity of people through corporations.

Many corporations across North America are already working volunteerism into their work day to keep the giving spirit alive.

Critics say the very spirit of volunteering — that selfless motivation to make a difference — is lost when people are made to help others.

Forcing high school students to log 40 hours of community service to graduate is the wrong approach, for instance, the critics stress.

Good deeds will become tedious chores, they warn.

Because of the reality of our lifestyle today, many young people don't have parents who are setting the example at home, reinforcing the value of giving to your community by giving of your time.

During 2001, when we honour those who do volunteer, let's also recognize helping others should be valued — at home, at school and at work.

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, Ont., 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)

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/Acton 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.

Phone: (905) 294-2200

Fax: (905) 294-1538

Classified:

1-800-743-3353

Distribution

(905) 294-8244

distribution@econsun.com