

Stouffville Tribune

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

Publisher: **Jan Proudfoot**

General Manager: **Alvin Brouwer**

Editor in Chief: **Brenda Larson**

Director of Advertising: **Debra Weller**

Deputy Editor
Debra 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'Neil

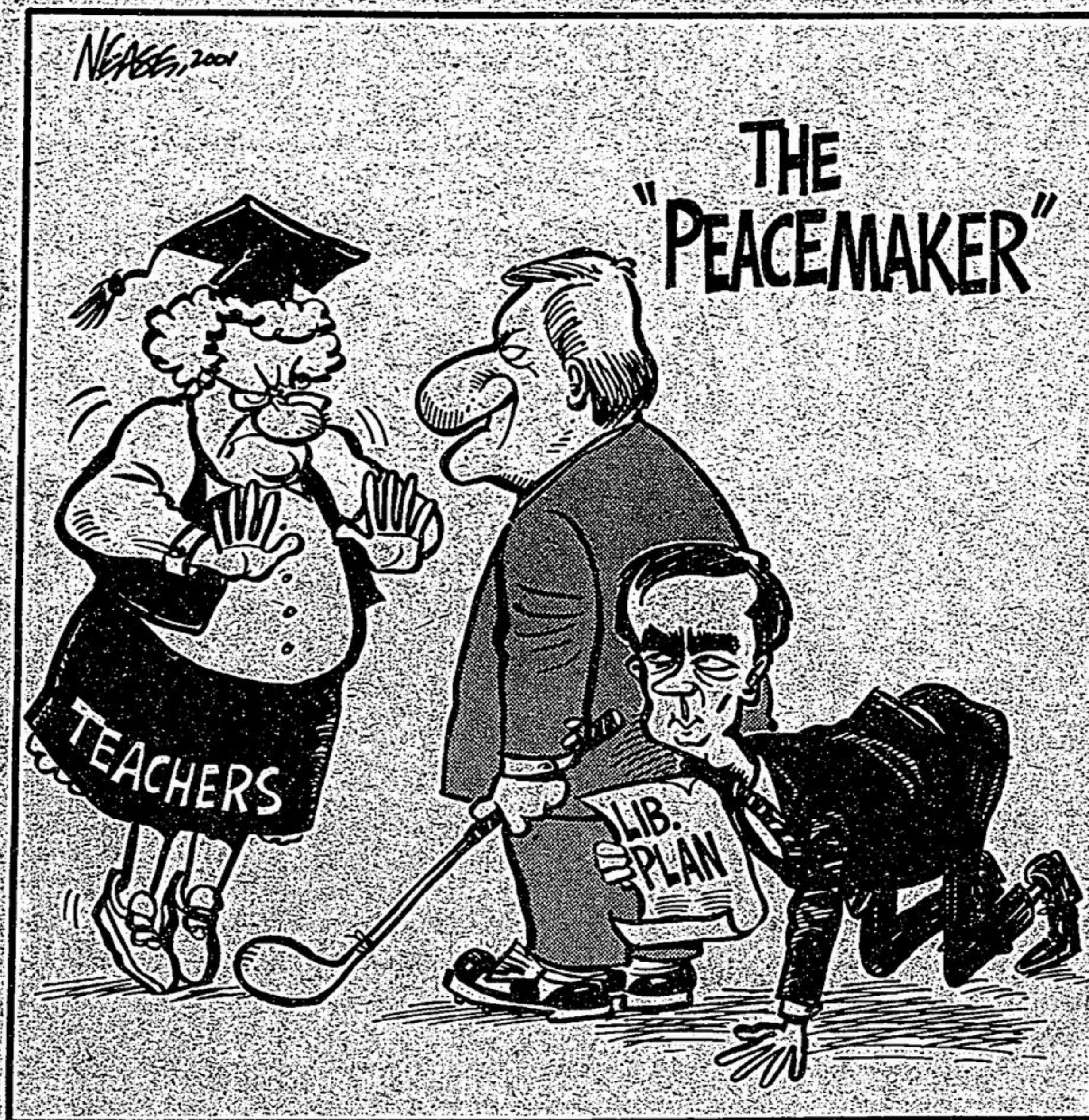
OPINION

TELEPHONE

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

FAX: (905) 294-1538

EMAIL: newsroom@econsun.com



Dave Teetzel

*Despite legislation,
parents may not have
the input they want*

It appears as though parents will have a meaningful say in the running of Ontario schools, after the provincial government passed legislation requiring principals to consult with school councils.

The key word in that sentence is "appears".

Make no mistake, the law passed just before Queen's Park took its Christmas break requires principals to discuss such significant issues as how to implement the new code of conduct, the recommendations of the Education Quality and Accountability Office (the standardized test guys) and even the criteria to be used in hiring principals and vice-principals.

The council makes its recommendations, then the principal must explain how that advice was used to make the final decision.

From 1996, when school councils were introduced, until now, principals were under no legal obligation to discuss serious issues with the community.

But, in most cases, they have been doing so, because that's the smart way to run a school these days. They don't need a law to force them.

As for the few who want to run the school as their own private kingdom, they'll probably do the bare minimum the law requires and the parents won't feel any more empowered.

And although the areas of responsibility outlined in the legislation are significant, are they really the priorities of most parent councils?

Remember, for example, York Region schools have had a zero-tolerance policy on school violence for years. We have a strict discipline program for problem kids. The code of conduct issue isn't really a crisis here.

So what are parents' real concerns? Parents would like their children's class sizes to reflect those discussed by the province.

But that's a matter of provincial funding and school board decisions.

They want their children to have extra-curricular activities. But sorry, there's nothing a parent council can do about it. The only people who can force the issue are at Queen's Park.

Parents want their children to have adequate classroom supplies, computers and recreation equipment.

At last, here's an area where the parent council can make a difference. They can ensure schools have lots of equipment by raising funds.

Bake sales, walkathons, all sorts of creative fundraising will help solve that problem.

Don't get me wrong. I'm all for parents having a clearly defined role in the running of their local school. But the more the education system is micro-managed by Queen's Park, the less power the community has.

EDITORIAL

Ontario has approved legislation allowing for the creation of private universities in the province.

In York Region, the decision should be cause for celebration. It means a plan to build a private university at the heart of a proposed community of 30,000 residents in Queensville can finally proceed.

Aurora resident Dr. Bette Stephenson, former education minister in the Bill Davis Tory government, has been the driving force behind the university project, an institution that would offer degrees in humanities, engineering, science and computer science.

Stephenson says she doesn't anticipate cutting the ribbon in short order — it's more realistic, she says, to look 10 years down the road.

While the private university will not receive a dime in public funding from the province, and rightly so, it poses a threat to the public institutions on a couple of fronts.

First of all, there's the question of money — the key question: If the private university's foundation team is successful in drawing key supporters who believe in its mission, there is a negative impact on existing public institutions.

Second, there's the question of competition. Ontario's 17 public universities, competing among themselves for financial support of the private sector (beyond their public funding), will find the race for dollars faster and more vigorous than before — the race just got larger.

In selling their virtues, Ontario's public institutions will have to out-run the private university, will have to offer a comparable level of education, a comparable complement of qualified instructors, a comparable hiring success rate upon graduation. The public institutions will have to offer a guarantee to students.

This is, of course, an unknown quantity today. We don't know if the Queensville foundation can offer the same level of education opportunities that University of Toronto offers, or that York offers, or that Queen's offers.

We don't know if students will be willing to share the cost of education by paying what could be higher tuition fees.

We don't know if the Queensville Project's key players can build the foundation they need to guarantee the success of a private university.

What we do know is it presents an alternative to the existing system. And when businesses are forced to compete for market share, quality and customer service improves.

It's a great project for residents of York Region to embrace.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unionville resident's take on how the national debt began

Over the past eight or nine decades, thousands of our fellow citizens have worn many of our uniforms in many countries, in an effort to establish peace or to help maintain it. These citizens have created a good name for Canada.

Over these same years, thousands of citizens at home have supported those overseas with the items they required. The government financed these efforts by putting in place infrastructures, often turning to the citizens at home to finance these infrastructures. Citizens responded without question: they purchased Savings Bonds, War Bonds, Victory Bonds and Government Bonds.

Collectively, this is our national debt. Seventy-five percent of the debt is owned by Canadians who invested their savings in Canadian bonds to provide additional income for them in their retirement years.

So, the interest paid on the national debt is paid mostly to Canadians and provides a source of purchasing power to Canadian citizens that helps to maintain our standard of living.

In past years, in November, our government would float a new bond issue and set an interest rate acceptable to the public. At this time, a prime concern to the government was to set an interest rate as low as it felt the market would accept. As a bond matured, most investors "rolled over" the monies from the

matured bond into the new bond.

A government that does not need to borrow can pay off a matured bond. This would put millions of dollars in the hands of ordinary citizens, most of whom would be looking for a safe investment. What an opportunity for avaricious types to "con" unwary people and garner a big harvest.

After several years of paying off matured bonds, the public could be saturated with cash, which could result in:

1. The bond market could be severely damaged.
2. Inflation could increase to double-digit figures.
3. The public's savings for retirement could be devastated.
4. The financial markets could be zooming higher.
5. Elderly voters will be pestered in many, many ways to part with their money.

The previous scenario sets up additional concerns:

1. If, when a bond matures and the government issues a cheque for the face value plus interest, will the cheque be issued with a 17 percent deduction for income tax? If so, the bond holder will be paid \$83 for each \$100 bond.

2. Will the bond-holder be required to cash in, or will a secure depository be designed to absorb all the excess cash, and will it be guaranteed secure by the government? Will the monies be available to the individual as a retirement income?

KNOCK KNOCK, BARK BARK, RING RING... This is intended as a wake-up call.

ERIC SCHOFIELD
Unionville

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

CCAB

Canadian Circulations
Audit Board Member

OPC

Ontario Press Council

Canadian Publications Mail Product Sales Agreement #1403419
Subscription rates by mail: 1 year - \$69.55 (weekdays 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/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/Unionville 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