

## Stouffville Tribune

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# OPINION



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Rick Vanderlinde

## Shadow lurks in my basement; his fate is in David's hands

His name is Shadow and for the time being he lurks in my basement.

How long he'll be doomed to the darkness of my cellar is up to my four-year-old son, David.

Only David knows. Shadow is oblivious.

For those who haven't been caught up in the latest electronic toy craze, Shadow is a toy.

He's the lovable battery operated puppy that speaks, sits, and plays on the command of his owner. He joins Pi-Chu and that rocket dog in the ranks of this year's must-have toys.

Without Shadow under our Christmas tree, we feared the worst. But now Shadow sits in his paper dog house, under the stairs in the basement, waiting for my son to give his first command.

Problem is, David doesn't even know Shadow exists. He forgot about the \$70 voice-activated pup soon after he opened him on Christmas morning.

It didn't take long for my kids to grow bored of most of their Christmas toys. They quickly reverted to what they love to do best — use their imaginations.

It's my fault, really. I convinced my wife to buy him a Shadow because his 6-year-old sister Megan was getting one. I feared sibling jealousy. He would want the over-hyped TV toy too.

But I was wrong. Now Shadow waits. But it's not Shadow's fault. He's just another unwanted Christmas toy. Even my daughter's initial infatuation with her Shadow has languished now that she's realized he's not really just like a real puppy.

It didn't take long for my kids to grow bored of most of their Christmas toys. They quickly reverted to what they love to do best — use their imaginations.

There's nothing like throwing on some old clothes and pretending. I guess it's always been that way.

The TV commercials may make your kids yearn for the latest trinket, but they can't make them play with it.

And it always seems to be the more expensive gadgets that lose their lustre first. I blame it on marketing — those advertising gurus who hook our kids with wild promises of the toy of their dreams.

Evil commercializing capitalists. Then again, I suppose I could always just say no and tell my kids to use their imaginations. But that would mean I wouldn't have that great Hot Wheels Tornado tower to play with.

## LETTERS

### Why were schools in York Region given an extra week of vacation?

Why were our schools not back in session this week?

I suppose two weeks off is not enough of a vacation for our over-extended teachers. Really...why not throw in an extra week for Christmas vacation?

After all, their holiday schedules reflect a mere week off in March and only eight weeks off in the summer. Not to mention PA and sick days.

Though, I guess if I were to whine and bicker constantly about my job (60-plus hours per week, three weeks vacation per year, white-collar career requiring equivalent educational qualifications) I guess I too, would be exhausted enough to require tons of vacation time!

Matter of fact, I'm pretty sure I'd have been granted a permanent vacation a long time ago...such an attitude would have guaranteed me a pink slip quicker than you can say 'bon voyage!'

SHAUNA MARION  
Markham

### Romagnuolo decision raises serious questions about police procedure

I was very confused and frustrated by the judgement of the case — those York and Durham policemen walked out from the court room without any charge after causing Mr. Romagnuolo's death, no matter it's an accident or undue force.

I came from a British colony sharing the same common law base with Canada, I understand that whenever a policeman needs to make a knock-on-door arrest, he should obtain a warrant from the Crown Attorney, unless the suspect is linking with a very serious crime and quick action is needed.

If the latter is the case, the Crown Attorney should be promptly informed as soon as possible.

However, in Mr. Romagnuolo's case, police constable Mike Hoskin was making an arrest with two colleagues without a warrant, and the reason of the arrest was just the personal anger of hearing impolite wordings from a young man.

Mr. Hoskin could use the word "arrest" to

describe their action since he was wearing the police uniform, otherwise, their action could be described as kidnapping.

It's just a difference of knocking on the Romagnuolo door with or without the police uniform.

I wonder whether a policeman could have authority to arrest just because of a citizen being impolite to him?

On the other hand, I don't think the Crown Attorney had been informed about the arrest at that moment.

It was a misconduct of the police officers, and the judge from the court letting those three walk away from any charges has set up a very awful precedent.

From this case, I saw that the SIU is just a paper tiger, it was tied up by its mandate. Instead of looking at cases causing injuries and death, the SIU should be empowered to take care of every complaint to the police officers, to avoid misconduct.

Further, it would be more efficient and powerful if the SIU could operate under the Crown Attorney with slight modification to the existing structure: the SIU needs the power from the Crown Attorney, the SIU needs legal professionals and police professionals for it to go through all the complaints promptly.

An independent authority scrutinizing the daily operation of the police force is a must in a civilized democratic country like Canada.

To the Romagnuolo family, I am sorry that you had lost your loved one, and you could not get prompt justice from the court.

But your case has given us a hint and led us to seriously consider our situation — when we

are celebrating low crime rates, are we really safe at home?

TOM CHAN  
Markham

### By not using leashes, Milne Park dog walkers are breaking the law

I was shocked and appalled by the Milne Park article and pictures which appeared in the Economist & Sun on Thursday, Dec. 28.

When I moved into the Markham area from further up north and discovered this wonderful parkland, where I could walk my dog on leash, I thought how wonderful this area is.

It was not long before I discovered that there were groups of people socializing and dogs running off leash, despite numerous signs advising that DOGS MUST BE KEPT ON LEASH.

Apparently, there is a \$55 fine for this offense. I was attacked, my dog was attacked and these folks just laugh — and of course, will not admit their names.

These people are flagrantly breaking the law. Unfortunately, my dog and I do not walk in the park now. You can imagine my shock when I opened the newspaper and read the article by Sarah Parker.

Considering all the bad press dogs have been receiving lately, perhaps a little public education from your newspaper so that folks can use the parks and not be afraid of being attacked or bitten would be beneficial.

CHRIS WILSON  
Markham

### 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.

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## Stouffville Tribune

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