

## Stouffville Tribune

A Metroland community newspaper  
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# OPINION

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Tracy Kibble

## Education is the goal of alternative lifestyle materials

When I first learned books about gay lifestyles would be available in my children's school library, my knee-jerk reaction was to raise a negative eyebrow.

Why confuse young children about life when today's crazy social pace throws enough complications for our young minds to absorb?

Why introduce books into the school system when educators know touchy subjects, such as sex education and gay lifestyles, will ruffle more than a few feathers?

York Region Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario president David Clegg said the move is reflective of society and its ever-changing diversity.

"Our intent is to recognize this group in society exists... to reflect that in materials is a way of enhancing understanding," Clegg said earlier this month.

The province, on the other hand, is washing its hands of the whole notion, acknowledging the matter is too touchy to legislate.

"A decision of such a sensitive nature should be a decision made between parents and the individual boards," Education Minister Janet Ecker said.

The first book, *Asha's Mums*, is written by a lesbian couple, Rosamund Elwin and Michele Paulse, and is already on parenting shelves in public libraries.

The story is about a teacher who asks a student why two mommies signed a consent form for a trip. When the girl explains she has two moms, the teacher gets angry and tells her she can't go on the trip if her form isn't properly signed by one mom.

The "moms" go to school to talk to the teacher after their daughter comes home in tears. One classmate tells the girl her father says it's bad to have two moms living together. Her teacher then tells the class different families are not wrong "if they're nice to you and you like them."

The other, *Tiger Flowers*, by Patricia Quinlan, is about a family that finds consolation after a young boy's loving uncle dies of AIDS.

It shows young readers wonderful, loving people can die of AIDS and other serious illnesses and how to deal with the grief by remembering the fun things about the person.

These books don't try to romanticize alternative lifestyles. They teach children to be open-minded instead of judgmental; tolerant instead of racist; and understanding instead of ignorant.

They teach children people in the world have different ways of life, differing opinions, views and insights.

They teach people to value others for what's inside and not how they look or live.

And in light of the staggering tragedies that have shattered so many lives of late, how can that be wrong?

## LETTERS

### Why is Stouffville mayor still criticizing library/pool opponents?

Two and half years have passed and all the controversy over the Whitchurch-Stouffville library/pool project in a corn field (South Park) is history.

A recent headline, *Battle scars from the library/pool wars* (Stouffville Sun), has been enough for me to express my opinion.

Many personal insults have come from Mayor Wayne Emmerson toward residents of Stouffville and members of RIG (Residents Information Group) of which I was a founding member.

RIG was set up under the law and functioned under the law.

It drew support from thousands of Whitchurch-Stouffville residents, who opposed the library moving from Main Street and the pool/library moving to Burkholder Avenue.

Members of RIG challenged council to no avail. RIG members attended a Toronto and Region Conservation Authority meeting and challenged the town's plan for a parking lot in Franklin Park.

The result was a change of plans as the authority, not the town, owned the land.

Why is the mayor continuing his attack on RIG and the people who wanted council to hear their views regarding the project?

One day, residents might know who initiated the talks and the demands put on Joseph Lebovic to give up the 17 acres in the deal, and the costs so far.

We have not been told the costs of developing the sports fields at the complex. Another \$2 million?

Many people firmly believe this will finish up as a \$10-million expenditure from the town's reserve funds.

RIG ended its operations June 30, 2001 when it cancelled its charter, as advertised in the local press.

The directors of RIG proudly distributed the surplus funds to local churches and non-profit organizations.

At the grand opening of the library/pool project, the mayor continued the insults directed at the RIG people. Why?

It's regrettable that our local press has to continue reporting on this matter, but it has a job to do.

The past is history in the minds of many in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

The building is open. "Let's all move on," was a comment in an editorial I agree and RIG has.

The taxpayers of our municipality will be looking to our local press to publish an accurate financial statement as to the operations of the library/leisure centre next year and the following year, which will no doubt be an election year.

Good news is always best news.

DAVID PROBERT  
WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

### Thanks to all who contributed to Markhaven Grandma's Run

On behalf of the board and staff of the Markhaven Foundation and Markhaven Inc., I wish to take this opportunity to thank the people of Markham for their support of our event, Grandma's Run.

It was an overwhelming success, raising \$47,000 for our building fund campaign.

It was a fun event and hundreds of people from various neighbourhoods came out to show their love and affection for the seniors who call Markhaven home.

We also want to thank our honorary Grandma, Viola Durant, for allowing us to use her as a living symbol of what grandmas mean to all of us.

We salute, too, the volunteers who made this event a success.

And we thank the Town of Markham employees who helped in so many ways and

were courteous in responding to our requests.

HARRY JAMES  
CHAIRPERSON

THE MARKHAVEN FOUNDATION

### Editorial cartoon on terrorist bombings showed bad taste

Re: editorial cartoon, Sept. 20

This cartoon, on the terrorist acts in the U.S., was in extremely bad taste. I find it hard to believe that editors and the publisher approved this cartoon for print.

Even my 13-year-old son commented that it was wrong because of all the people who lost their lives.

JANE BARROW  
STOUFFVILLE

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Your opinion is important to us on our letters to the editor pages and on our website.

We invite you to join the ongoing discussions at yorkregion.com and you're welcome to launch your own discussion there, too.

The site serves readers of the York Region Newspaper Group, which includes The Economist & Sun, Stouffville Tribune, Richmond Hill/Thornhill Liberal, Vaughan Citizen, Newmarket/Aurora Era-Banner, Georgina Advocate and Stouffville Sun.

## 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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