

Stouffville Tribune

A Metroland community newspaper
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OPINION

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Tracy Kibble

Good parents need to establish and enforce rules for their kids

I remember looking out the window at the "cool" kids who would congregate in front of the town hall on weeknights, smoke cigarettes, use the "F" word as a conversation staple and talk about sex, drugs and fights.

They fascinated me because my parents would never have allowed me to hang around town after dark on any night, let alone a school night.

They fascinated me because, together, they were ultimately stronger, more independent and confident than I or any of my friends. They crossed the line — they were the town rebels. They represented something mysterious, naughty and forbidden.

And they fascinated me because, as any 11-year-old would agree, they discussed the juicy, sexual antics of a number of people, who, mysteriously, were always absent from their group.

I could absorb all the talk from the safety of my own well-positioned room. My house fronted the main street of my small hometown and stood beside my parents' general store.

I remember thinking how lucky these cool kids were — my father had a different word for them — to hang around after dark while I was forced to complete homework, practise music lessons, memorize my speech or help my baby brother get ready for bed.

At the time, I never thought how horrified my parents would be if I started to hang around with kids who, apparently, could do anything they wanted at any given time and never get into trouble. No rules.

But good parents know rules are integral and, although often bemoaned by our children, are the most important gift we can give.

One of my biggest fears is that my own son or daughter will come home one day with a friend who I know, in my gut, is up to no good. Someone with attitude but no manners, and someone who would take advantage of an unsuspecting kind heart.

But we've all heard stories about family battles over a friend parents suggest is a bad influence.

We've heard how kids are drawn even closer to questionable characters when a parent puts his foot down with demands to stay away from "bad friends."

I used to think my dad was such a dweeb for not seeing the many positive qualities of some of my friends — qualities I envied or tried to emulate.

Looking back, however, he was usually right about many of my friends and their qualities.

Peer pressure is like a drug for teenagers and bad friends, the pushers. Parents need to stick their necks out to keep kids clean and keep bad friends away.



LETTERS

Despite U.S. campaign, bin Laden's guilt yet to be established

Re: Irresponsible statements no help to local Muslims; a column by Rick Vanderlinde, Oct. 13

Rick Vanderlinde appears unaware of some basic facts surrounding the Sept. 11 attacks; otherwise he would not have indulged in speculation about the statement released by the Council of Mosques of the Greater Toronto Area.

Following threats of war by the U.S. and Britain, at least 7.5 million Afghans, one-third of Afghanistan's population, were forced to abandon their homes.

Since the launch of air strikes, many civilians have been killed — 200 in the village of Karam alone on Oct. 10, according to the British news agency Reuters.

As for cynicism about the U.S. food drops, the packets dropped so far would feed very few of the 7.5 million refugees for one day. Considering the vast majority are women and children, such food packets do not reach the most needy.

Just because the Taliban spokesman also agrees with this analysis does not automatically invalidate it. Regarding doubts about Osama bin Laden's guilt, even such leading legal experts as British barrister Geoffrey Robertson, have questioned the evidence.

Writing in the Guardian (Oct. 5), he said the evidence against Osama is not sufficient to secure even an extradition, much less conviction in a court of law.

Surely the allegations against Osama and his alleged accomplices cannot be taken as irrefutable proof of their guilt? When questioned about this, FBI director Robert Mueller was forced to admit on CNN on Sept. 27 that the legal identity of the perpetrators of the Sept. 11 attacks may never be fully established.

In the face of such contradictions, how can Vanderlinde be so sure of Osama's guilt? Let me finally add that Muslims in Canada have no doubt that the Sept. 11 attacks were a reprehensible terrorist act.

But it is imperative to establish the true identity of the perpetrators before unleashing a war against another country in which innocent civilians are bound to suffer, as they have in Afghanistan.

ZAFAR BANGASH
PRESIDENT, ISLAMIC SOCIETY OF YORK REGION

Keep peanuts out of Halloween treats so all can enjoy the fun

The trick of Halloween giving is to make the treat nut-free.

Halloween is one of the true highlights of the year for children. However, for those children with severe allergic reactions to peanuts, it can be a nightmare.

Imagine the letdown and disappointment of carrying home your big bag of loot only to be told that most of it has to be thrown away.

Your treat choices can easily contribute to a happy night. Please consider giving treats that do not contain nuts.

Just check the contents label before buying.

B. WILSON
UNIONVILLE

Differing opinions on Afghanistan bombing allowed in Canada

Re: Time for Canadians to choose sides in U.S.-led war on terrorism; letter to the editor, Oct. 20

One of the greatest hallmarks of a democracy is freedom of speech. This a right, not a privilege, of every Canadian. However, letter-writer Paul Spence seems to think otherwise.

Does raising a different voice make one less Canadian? Or does echoing those of others make one more? The answers are self-evident.

What is unclear, however, is why Mr. Spence thinks Canadians should leave their chosen country because they think differently. Did he ever look generations back at his own family tree? Where would he be if one of his ancestors

did not emigrate to Canada? Whether by choice or birth, all Canadians have equal rights and are entitled to equal privileges.

Yes, the U.S. is our biggest trading partner, but that does not mean we have to follow every step it takes.

If anything, our military involvement in U.S.-led campaigns, starting with the war in former Yugoslavia, has tarnished, and will continue to tarnish, our distinguished peacekeeping reputation.

We love this country and we cherish her as much as anyone else. We hope we could develop according to our own values in the shadows of the mighty, benign "elephant" and stand up "strong and free" among nations.

YI YANG
UNIONVILLE

Keep used ink jet cartridges out of landfill sites — recycle them

Canadians send 30 million ink jet cartridges to landfill sites every year. Whitchurch-Stouffville residents can help alleviate this tide of garbage by recycling their cartridges.

That is why the Whitchurch-Stouffville recycling depot is now accepting ink jet and laser jet cartridges. The depot is on Burkholder Street, across from the outdoor pool.

For those who don't know, we also accept a range of other materials, from corrugated cardboard to paper to glass to type 1 and 2 plastic.

JIM PRIEBE
PRESIDENT, WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE
RECYCLING GROUP

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

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 (Thursdays only)

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