

Stouffville Tribune

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EDITORIAL

Remembering is the least we can do

Sowing the seeds of remembrance has never been as important as it is today.

Those who fought the ravages of Hitler's annihilistic regime, the last great war, the war to end all wars, in the trenches, on the seas, in the air, have grown older. With the passing of time, we also mark their passing, their contributions so firmly a part of our history.

The day will come when the last war hero is buried. We must ensure his stories — and the stories of his comrades — do not fade.

It is critical our children and their children understand the magnitude of our veterans' contribution to the world. That, without their efforts, we would not enjoy the freedoms we enjoy. We would not have the society we have.

If they had not stood firm against the enemy on the beaches of Normandy, in the skies over Europe, in the streets of Italy, in the fields of Holland, we would not be who we are today — proud, free Canadians.

Especially in the face of our new enemy, terrorism, we must understand and embrace our brave history. We can take pride in the efforts of our fathers and grandfathers who answered a call to duty and served us well.

We can demonstrate the same kind of bravery right here, right now, both by celebrating their memory and by continuing to live our lives as they are meant to be lived — enjoying the privileges democracy offers.

Our children must grow to be brave and strong. We can inspire them with stories about their forefathers and the good fight they fought — and won.

It's a valuable lesson to share with children. Take the time in the next few days to explain the importance of remembering, tell them about the poppies, about Flanders Fields and let them hear the words of a war veteran. Attend a Remembrance Day service or reflect quietly with family and friends.

Our future depends on our ability to learn from the past. Our soldiers then — and our soldiers today — provide excellent lessons for us, about bravery, about honour and about defending our rights and freedoms.

It's our duty to keep the torch of remembrance held high in the face of adversity. It's the least we can do.

OPINION



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Criticism of U.S. by Council of Muslims was off-base

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

This column was not speculation about the statement released by the Council of Mosques of the GTA.

It was an opinion that the statement was irresponsible. The public has not had the advantage of reading the original statement but, based on the published elements, I agree with Rick Vanderlinde.

Contrary to letter writer Zafar Bangash's suggestion, the U.S. did not threaten war on Afghanistan nor are they waging it now.

The U.S. requested the Taliban to hand over Osama bin Laden or face the consequences.

President George W. Bush provided plenty of warning so Afghani citizens, who have no control over the Taliban or bin Laden, could get out of the way.

In our society, it is sufficient to have evidence — not irrefutable proof — in order to pursue arrest.

Guilt or innocence is not proven in public prior to arrest, but is the task of the court after arrest.

Authorities are not obliged to publicly reveal their evidence before trial and often don't to avoid compromising the case.

Based on what has been revealed and what bin Laden himself has stated, I believe

he should be arrested along with those who harbour him.

Ironically, Osama bin Laden can expect America to provide him a fairer trial than his own countrymen.

As for the humanitarian aid being provided by America and her allies, name any country that has ever provided aid in any quantity under similar circumstances.

The only way America can get aid to the needy is to drop it from the air so women and children can reach it before the Taliban thugs. I find it amazing that the council's criticism is aimed at the providers and not the Taliban.

Having an opinion is one thing. Issuing statements is entirely another. If the council wants to express sympathy for the Americans who have suffered such terrible pain and loss, then do so without condition.

If the council wants to criticize the actions of America and Canada, then tell us what we should be doing instead.

The Council of Mosques of the GTA could indeed contribute by helping Canadians better comprehend the terrible plight of the Afghan people.

However, unless the council can express unqualified sympathy, offer a better way to stop terrorism, or further educate Canadians about the Middle East, the only responsible statement to make is no statement.

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David Teetzel

Amazing they're on speaking terms

There are at least two reasons to cheer a presentation by builder Mitchell Cohen to York Region's community services and housing committee last week.

Obviously, it might bring some relief to people caught in the housing crunch.

Cohen, of the Daniels Group, proposed developers set aside 25 per cent of all they build as 'affordable', then lease the units to non-profit agencies. In exchange, the region would give developers breaks on development charges, permits and property taxes.

There's no question the plan would meet a serious need in York Region. According to the region's social housing service, up to 4,800 people are on waiting lists for housing. Last year's rental vacancy rate was 0.7 per cent.

The second bit of good news is developers and politicians are talking about co-operating at all.

The protracted arguing over the Oak Ridges Moraine put an obvious strain on relations between the housing industry and government in general.

A couple of years ago, Richmond Hill council was poised to approve a planning amendment that satisfied companies planning to build on the moraine.

It didn't satisfy the public and was voted down.

Then both sides went through a year of expensive and tiresome Ontario Municipal Board hearings, only to have the process stopped and a development freeze dropped on the land. Next we had a pointless mediation process.

Finally, the province pulled off a land swap, plunging the developers into a confrontation with Pickering council.

I can't blame builders if they feel like they've been burned and I'm surprised one would come to government with an offer to help solve the affordable housing problem.

Of course, it was a different developer, he was talking to the region, not the province, and the affordability issue is different from the environment.

But there has been a standoff over rental housing for much longer than over the moraine.

The main reason there's such a shortage of rental housing is the private sector stopped building long ago; shortly after the William Davis government passed rent control legislation.

York Region's developers haven't really complained about the rental deadlock, preferring to devote their full attention to building \$300,000 homes.

Could it be, with a big chunk of the land supply in York Region being taken off the table, the builders have to find a way to make more intensive development viable?

Perhaps, but with a homelessness task force saying the region needs 251,000 housing units, half of them low rent, government faces the same challenge. Since they have a common goal, it's good to see the region and its developers are still on speaking terms.

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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