

Stouffville Tribune

A Metroland community newspaper
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EDITORIAL

Education survey should open door to improved dialogue

The provincial government wants to know what parents think about Ontario's education system. What a great idea.

The survey, which will be distributed to 4.2 million households at a cost of \$700,000, will seek parental input on a variety of issues, such as the quality of education, school safety, setting priorities and parental concerns.

Results of the four-page questionnaire will be made public in spring and will be used to help the government set long-term priorities for education.

Once the limitations of the survey are acknowledged — perhaps that its results may be so general in nature, they may not accurately reflect parental concerns in specific communities — the undertaking must be applauded.

It's a direct line of communication to the stakeholders in the system, parents who can speak on behalf of the children they have attending Ontario schools.

Certainly, public school board chairperson Bill Crothers supports the idea.

"In the past, school boards may not have been able to accurately assess how (parents) felt about the system but that's not the case now," he said, adding the questionnaire may increase parental familiarity with the system and the challenges teachers are facing.

It's the opening of a door to improved dialogue.

Ironically, one teachers' union believes it's another opportunity for the government to bash teachers, as parents are encouraged to pinpoint what they believe are problems in the system.

"This is just another way for the government to attack teachers in a public forum," Julie Pauletig, president of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association, said.

We would suggest teachers' unions should be welcoming the survey, as they have insisted during the Harris government's tenure that the province has not been listening to what parents want from the education system.

In the final analysis, the province has a responsibility to parents to ensure quality education for all students.

If the province isn't aware of parental opinion on the system, it cannot promise to deliver that quality.

OPINION

-AND THE NUMBER ONE REASON WHY THE WORLD SHOULD BAN HUMAN CLONING...



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Bin Laden cartoon was foolhardy, irresponsible

Re: Editorial cartoon, Nov. 22

The cartoon depicting Quebec Premier Bernard Landry as Osama bin Laden is disgusting and disheartening.

To link bin Laden to any sense of the comedic surely can be classified as foolhardy and irresponsible.

I would be shocked and saddened if mine is the only response to this cartoon. At the very least, an apology should be printed in your next issue.

It's the right thing to do.

JUDI GOULD
STOUFFVILLE

Simple act of buying tickets can lead to gambling addiction

Re: Gambling, troubling trend among youth, Nov. 22

With the large variety of lottery tickets and Scratch and Win game cards available in convenience stores nowadays, it is no wonder so many teenagers are becoming addicted to gambling.

The simple act of purchasing tickets and cards could gradually lead to severe cases of addiction and grave consequences.

It is appalling more than 65 per cent of the youth population wastes its money on game cards, with some even losing more

than \$200.

Now that we know the statistics, the question is what will the Responsible Gambling Council do about it?

Is it going to prohibit gambling in the entire Markham district?

Or will it seek to modify Canada's gambling laws?

KENNETH M. CHUI
MARKVILLE SECONDARY SCHOOL

Putting up Christmas decorations too soon can spoil season

Christmas is a wonderful time of year, but people should re-think the timing of when they put up decorations.

Decorations that go up too soon seem to lose their charm and value.

They no longer feel special; they become ordinary.

Merchants at Markville Shopping Centre had their decorations in full swing as soon as Halloween was over.

The commercialization of the holiday is to persuade people to buy more than they would have because of the extended promotion.

Christmas originated as a religious celebration. Having weeks of decorations diminishes the importance of the season. The truth is lost in all the glam and glitter.

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Dave Teetzel

Take a look: Has the Oak Ridges Moraine really been saved?

Driving west on Stouffville Road from Hwy. 404, I find it hard to believe the Oak Ridges Moraine has been saved.

The Jefferson forest has been hideously scarred and carved up, not only for the Bayview extension, but for residential developments trumpeted by roadside signs.

I want better north-south traffic flow as much as anyone and I've followed the moraine process and appreciate all the arguments, but I still feel sick when I look at what "progress" has done to what was once a beautiful woodlot.

When I learn new urban areas west of Hwy. 404 were incorporated into the Crombie deal, I can't help but feel the situation is still out of control.

In some ways, it may be more out of control than it was before the provincial government introduced the Oak Ridges Moraine Act.

When Richmond Hill town planners ask questions about the new provincial moraine legislation, they're told to do whatever they think the legislation says.

I wonder who will take the blame if the town guesses wrong and destroys an environmentally sensitive wetland or costs a developer a few million dollars.

Although I have long since grown tired of the antics of the "save the moraine, save the Rouge, save the salamander" circus, I was excited to learn last Friday they had thrown a monkey wrench into the construction of the Bayview extension.

The gang turned up for the usual bout of drum-beating and sign-waving, when the police were called in.

In a moment of inspiration, Liberal MPP Mike Colle demanded the police arrest the work crew for cutting down the forest without a permit.

Sure, it was utterly disingenuous for Colle to question why the guy driving the bulldozer didn't have formal paperwork in his pocket — and the region insists paperwork isn't necessary, but the region blinked and, for one week-end, the hacking and slashing stopped.

The bulldozers are back at it again, but the environmentalists are promising to show up Friday and plant seedlings in the areas that have been cleared.

It's another silly stunt and the chances of success are next to nil.

But I wish it would work. I wish this was some feel-good Hollywood movie. But we all know it isn't.

What makes sense in the real world is to pass a law to save an environmental feature, then write into that law a bunch of new developments, the residents of which will be isolated and underserved and, in all likelihood, will clog the Bayview extension so it provides little relief to the commuters it was intended to serve.

Those protesters are crazy, but they're starting to make a lot of sense.

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,
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