

Stouffville Tribune

A Metroland community newspaper
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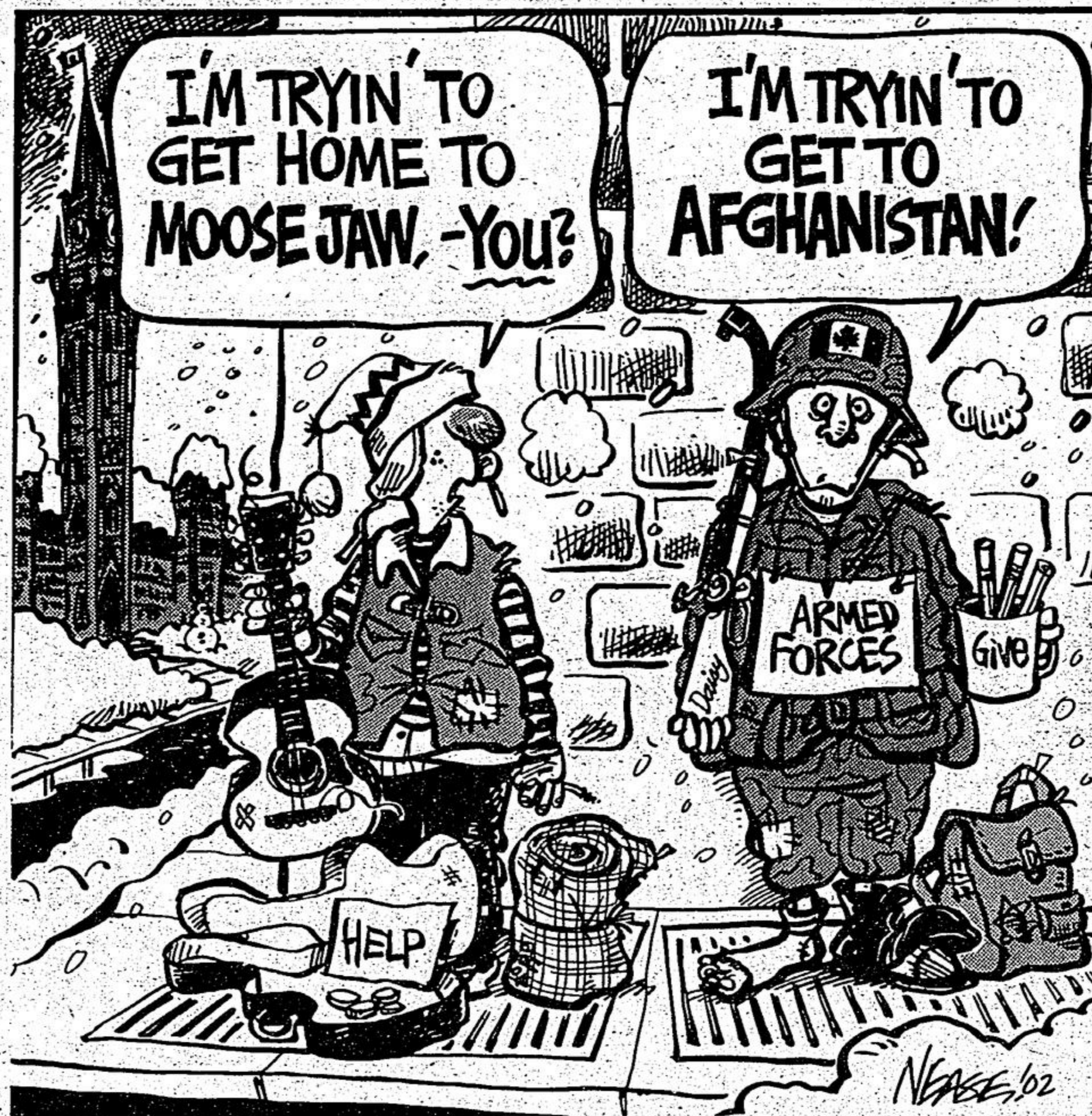
OPINION

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Rick Vanderlinde

Cranky grown-ups should be kept away from children

There are plenty of no-kids zones; condominiums, restaurants and other places where children are off limits.

But what about areas that forbid entry to the childless adult?

I know that conjures up sci-fi images of a place where couples without children are sent, for whatever reason, after being banished from neighbourhoods filled with the busy buzz of kids.

But as a guy with three children, I have little time for adults who have no patience for wee ones. I have plenty of friends without children who relish them, go out of their way, in fact, to immerse themselves in their wonderful little world.

My no-go zone is for adults who just can't stand the fact kids will be kids.

Nadia Ciuriak, a Hamilton woman who wants to rid her neighbourhood of street hockey, is certainly one of these.

Ciuriak goes to court tomorrow as a witness against the father of one of the boys who plays road hockey in front of her home.

What is the community raising anyway?

Kids or tulips?

The dad, Gary Kotar, has been charged under a seldom-used Hamilton bylaw that prohibits playing on a street.

Ciuriak called in the law because too many tennis balls found their way into her garden. What is the community raising anyway? Kids or tulips?

Listening to Ciuriak being interviewed on CFRB Friday morning, it's obvious she would be the type who would benefit from a childless adult zone. When host Michael Coren simply asked if she had children of her own, Ciuriak abruptly hung up. A telling response.

Perhaps some adults should be warned ahead of time they're entering areas inhabited by children.

ENTER AT YOUR OWN RISK — CHILDREN AT PLAY.

As children, we all ran into adults who had no time for us, even though it's fairly certain they were once kids themselves. They're the Grinchés and wicked old witches of our world.

I remember a crotchety old farmer who didn't like the neighbourhood kids playing in his hayfield. Instead of approaching us, perhaps with a treat in hand, to tell us he'd prefer we played elsewhere, he loaded his shotgun with salt pellets and fired away.

Sure, we got the message. But it was a message that showed us confrontation, not consultation; is the way to handle disputes. Give kids a chance before you pounce. They're people, too.

LETTERS

Help OSPCA protect our furry friends from abusive owners

I have lived in Canada all my life and never knew there were such things as puppy and cat mills.

I did know, however, the Ontario SPCA sometimes has to remove livestock until the farmers can prove they won't abuse the animals anymore.

I am now 65 and legally blind. I've had pets all my life and so have my children.

We have to love, care and protect our pets, not starve and beat them. There are no set laws for this kind of abuse. I guess the government doesn't think it is important enough.

The people convicted of abuse should get a jail term or worse. Mills should be stopped for good. What people get now is a small fine. There is nothing to stop them from doing it again.

The Ontario SPCA has its hands full getting these animals well and it needs our help.

I make blankets for the cages and so do a lot of other people. Small blankets or heavy towels help keep the animals warm.

In one day, I got more than 100 names on a petition to send to our MPP. If enough of us do this, the government will have to listen.

Please help stop mills and protect our furry animal friends.

MICKI CLARENDON
NEWMARKET

Local residents encouraged to apply for millennium scholarships

The Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation has launched the application campaign for its 2001-2002 excellence awards.

In the context of a global economy that is ever more dependent on knowledge, excellence and commitment are essential to success and the creation of wealth.

Contrary to what we may sometimes believe, there is no shortage of Canadian individuals striving to meet these high standards.

Last summer The Economist & Sun/Tribune published an article on a number of exceptional students from York Region: Stephen Chan, Karen Cooke, Ian Friedman, Valerie Intralgi, Janet Manias, Kelly Sinclair, Shauna Tsuchiya and Edward Young.

I invite parents, teachers, politicians and members of community organizations to encourage potential candidates to submit an application to this unique, prestigious program, which distributes 900 scholarships each year, ranging in value from \$4,000 for one year to \$19,200 over four years.

Candidates must complete and submit their applications to the foundation by Jan. 25. Forms and information kits have been sent to all secondary schools in the country.

If you have difficulty obtaining a copy of the application form, or if you are not currently a student, you can download the form from the foundation's website at www.millennium-scholarships.ca.

JEAN C. MONTY
CANADA MILLENNIUM
SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

Private school standards often better than public system

Re: *Private school tax credits should come with a price; editorial, Dec. 20.*

As a parent of two children currently in the elementary school system, I thought this editorial missed some important points.

While I agree with provincial Tory leadership candidate Ernie Eves that private schools should be required to prove they are meeting basic standards in reading, writing and math (through Grade 3 and 6 testing), I suspect most private schools far exceed these standards.

We were fortunate enough to be able to send our children to a private school up to last year and were very impressed with the high academic standards. This year, we moved our

children to the separate system and the level of work that is coming home is a lot less challenging.

I assume the difference is attributable to the lower student-to-teacher ratios in the private system. There, the largest class size we experienced was 17 children. I had to drive my children to a public school out of our area to find a class that had 21 children.

Common sense suggests a teacher faced with the task of instructing 17 children can do a better job with each individual student than a teacher faced with the task of teaching 30 children.

If the government has money to provide parents in the private system with tax breaks, why can't this money be pumped into the public system to facilitate smaller class sizes?

The other important difference between the public and private system is the availability of enrichment in the private system.

Many families have two parents working and must pay to have their children cared for between 3:30 p.m. and the time they get home from work.

In the private system, parents are usually provided with options such as free before-and-after care, homework room or extra-curricular activities such as sports or arts programming.

Although parents are usually required to pay extra for these after-school activities, they would otherwise have to pay for aftercare.

Offering enrichment activities after school would not cost the government anything since they could be offered at a rate comparable to the going rate for these activities in the community.

TAMMY MORRELL-BELLAI
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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