

## Stouffville Tribune

A Metroland community newspaper  
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# OPINION

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Roy Green

## Want cash for study? State and research blatantly obvious

It's early yet, but February is already shaping up as a record month for obviologists.

In the past week, the daily scan of newspaper headlines reveals:

- Playing hockey can lead to heart problems for men in their 30s who do not exercise regularly (Canadian Medical Association Journal).
- People who use tanning beds face an increased risk of developing skin cancer (Dartmouth Medical School).
- Overfed babies are more apt to be obese adults (Children's Hospital of Philadelphia).
- Adolescents who watch wrestling on TV are more prone to violence (Wake Forest University).
- TV commercials for drugs prompt patients to ask for the drugs they see on TV (Health Canada).
- Children whose fathers play an active role in their lives have fewer behavioural problems (University of Maryland).
- Personality disorders among youths may increase the risk for criminal and violent behaviour in later life (Columbia University).

Other studies prove conclusively parents of young children have little free time; teen drivers account for more accidents than any other age group; poverty, homelessness and racial discrimination prevent kids from achieving to the best of their abilities; university students like to drink alcohol; talking on cell phones while driving increases risk of accidents and the more time children spend in non-maternal child care the more at risk they are for aggressiveness and disobedience.

I'm not making this up. Somebody — probably you and I and other taxpayers — actually paid for these studies into the patently apparent and the manifestly evident.

The good thing about research into the unmistakable, at least for people who write columns in Sunday newspapers, is there will never be a shortage of topics to study.

Which is why I'm suggesting, free of charge (well, except for the fact that I actually get paid for this), a few self-evident truths for the benefit of researchers who may wish to get a government grant and re-prove them.

I'll even include headlines:

- New research shows city traffic heaviest in mornings, late afternoons.
- Students who read are more apt to succeed, study says.
- Sun prone to rising in east, setting in west, analysis reveals.
- Survey shows farmers unhappy regardless of weather.
- Taxpayers can expect increase, says probe.

And, my own personal favourite, politicians rarely follow through on campaign promises.



## LETTERS

### Cartoon an accurate depiction of prime minister's recent dealings

The cartoon by Nease (Jan. 19) depicting Jean Chretien as a card shark was right on the button. Our prime minister dealt his last hand of poker by sending off Brian Tobin.

Mr. Tobin was the most recent member of the Rat Pack that Prime Minister Chretien had no further use for. Poor Brian desperately wanted to be our next prime minister, but Mr. Chretien had picked John Manley as his choice to keep Finance Minister Paul Martin from ever attaining his heart's desire to lead the country.

The first Rat Pack member to go was John Nunziata. It appeared that John had far too much personal integrity and backbone for our prime minister to stomach.

Sheila Copps, another member, was silenced and removed from her position as deputy prime minister. The last member, Don Boudria, was given a promotion in the recent cabinet shuffle, for his obedience.

Our very own MP, John McCallum, having just been sworn in as a cabinet minister, was abruptly brought to heel by Mr. Chretien for answering a question from a reporter.

Why send representatives to Ottawa when they must remain dormant, or face the wrath of the prime minister?

J. SHAW  
MARKHAM

### Teachers refuse to jump through hoops on recertification testing

Re: Teachers' refusal to take tests is extremism gone too far; letter to the editor, Jan. 26.

I take issue with Mr. Gray's comments regarding teachers and their refusal to participate in the Tory government's recertification program. Mr. Gray suggests that teachers have been "defying rules" and "breaking the law for about seven years now".

I take it he is referring to our act of protest which has been called by some an illegal strike. This was an isolated event brought on by the government's unilateral decision to wrest control of school boards from locally elected trustees.

The results of this move include dirtier schools, a lack of textbooks, long waits for

special education services, reduced busing for field trips, etc.

Mr. Gray states "taxpayers (are) being forced to bankroll their (teachers') salary increases and...pension plan." It is the nature of public service that employees are paid with tax dollars.

As for wage increases, teachers had their salaries cut (during the NDP's 'Social Contract') and then frozen for about ten years. The increases they are now beginning to receive are between two and three per cent annually and are still less than the average for the private sector.

As for the pension plan, teachers fund it and manage it themselves.

The suggestion that teachers, by refusing to participate in the government's poorly devised recertification program, are setting a bad example for students, does not take into consideration the context in which teachers have taken this stance.

It is not testing per se that teachers object to, it is the government's use of recertification as a political device designed to persuade voters that they are raising standards in education.

The government's own college of teachers made recommendations about recertification that were ignored. Ontario's teachers are amongst the best trained in the world.

They need high grade averages (similar to those required by applicants to law school) just to get into an education faculty.

Additionally, teachers have to prove they are of good character and have particular interests and abilities that would enhance their contributions to education (e.g. past volunteer work, sports and musical involve-

ment, related jobs such as camp counsellor).

Teachers continue to upgrade their skills through various training programs and course work.

They do so voluntarily, as they have always done, paying for courses with their own after-tax dollars.

What teachers are refusing to do now is to jump through the government's hoops which are intended primarily to create an illusion of educational reform without providing meaningful and substantive positive change.

B. O'SULLIVAN  
STOUFFVILLE

### Supportive community helps in fight against breast cancer

The past month has been the most difficult and trying of my life. Dealing with breast cancer can be a very scary and lonely experience. I have been able to get through this challenge with numerous words of caring, encouragement, kindness and love.

I have shed many tears, but would always end up smiling. I have received phone calls, flowers, books, gift certificates, cards.....the compassion is overwhelming.

"Thank-you" just doesn't seem to be enough for the support that my friends, neighbours and family have given me.

Unionville, what an amazing community; I am so fortunate to be a part of it. Thank you again.

CATHY HODGSON  
UNIONVILLE

## 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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## Stouffville Tribune

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