

Stouffville Tribune

A Metroland community newspaper
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LETTERS

Too bad safe water can only be had through more development

Re: Box Grove residents back plans for their community; letter to the editor, Feb. 19.

I can only try to imagine the desperate situation the residents of Box Grove are in regarding their water.

I am well aware of the deadly e-coli contamination in their wells, as should we all after the Walkerton wake-up call. Therefore I agree they should receive municipal water as soon as possible.

What I really find annoying is the fact that in order to receive safe water they have to agree to more of the same thing that destroyed their water in the first place, urban sprawl.

That means inefficient use of land and resources, increasing commuting time, traffic congestion and pollution, as well as destroying farmland, green space and environmentally sensitive areas.

I don't believe we can continue to fill wetlands, culvert rivers, cut down forests and pave agricultural land and expect to continue to exist.

I think it's very selfish of us not to protect and preserve the real necessities of life, such as water, food and air.

Think about the quality or lack of life that we will leave to our children and grandchildren.

BERNADETTE MANNING
MARKHAM

Integrity-challenged defence minister should resign

As a Canadian citizen, I am both disturbed and disappointed with Prime Minister Jean Chretien, the federal Liberal government and Defence Minister Art Eggleton.

At his best, Mr. Eggleton has been mediocre as a career politician.

He has always lacked substance, intelligence and fortitude.

With this being said, we can add another descriptive word and trait to the former mayor of Toronto's character portfolio — dishonest.

Parliamentary rules stipulate that members of the House of Commons, within the

OPINION

POW BRIEFINGS INQUIRY



chamber and in committee, must refrain, abstain and avoid using language containing the word or words "lying" or "liar".

As a taxpayer and a Canadian who is extremely concerned about our men and women fighting terrorism in Afghanistan, I feel compelled to define Mr. Eggleton for what he really is.

The Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton is an elected public figure who has misled and deceived the House.

In one even sweep, the defence minister misrepresented the truth and exposed himself for what he really is.

Given this character flaw and his inability to restore confidence in his leadership, I am publicly requesting that the minister resign.

The honourable member has proven he lacks the integrity to lead an important department and ministry at such a pivotal and critical period in Canada's history.

KIRK SUTHERLAND
MARKHAM

Radical union leaders destroy respect between teachers, boards

I thought the letter by Frank Gray was a very good one about teacher unions refusing to take tests.

I spent most of my life in a graphic arts printing union and over the last thirty years or so. As younger, more radical union leaders gained control, any respect for employee-employer relations just disintegrated.

Most of the companies started looking for

other alternatives.

Recently when Nelson Mandela was speaking at SkyDome, Premier Mike Harris was booed by about 50,000 students when he was introduced.

Doesn't it occur to teachers that students are sent to school to learn not to be pulled into anti-government battles?

The best decision we ever made was to send our children to modestly priced live-in Christian high schools.

I think these tax cuts being introduced by the province is a very good thing for parents.

Parents need to be given other choices to educate their children, other than the union-dominated public school system.

I have since discovered that praying started to be withdrawn in North American schools in the 1960s and we have been paying the price ever since.

BUD O'CONNOR
UNIONVILLE

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Rick Vanderlinde

Abolishing Catholic school system reasonable request

Let me get this out of the way first, I am not Catholic.

That said, I have nothing against Catholics. My next door neighbours are Catholic. My best friend in high school was Catholic. I work with Catholics. I once dated a Catholic.

I have no prejudice. But I have to agree with Earl Manners, president of the Ontario secondary School Teachers Federation.

Catholics don't need a separate education system funded through general taxes.

Mr. Manners may be trying to increase his turf and the size of his union's membership by suggesting one publicly funded education system.

But his call for the elimination of Ontario's Catholic education system makes economic sense to hard-pressed taxpayers, especially parents who are paying twice through endless fundraisers put on by cash-strapped public schools. (I don't know if I can stand another chocolate-covered almond.)

In York Region, for instance, one system would mean one school board headquarters and fewer administrators. Although the boards share some resources, such as busing, so much more could be amalgamated. There just isn't enough money for duplication.

And with the bulk of education being funded through general taxes instead of property taxes, a single system would only be fair.

I'm helping pay for a Catholic school my neighbour's kids can walk to, while my children are bused across the city to a holding school.

Amalgamation doesn't mean Catholicism has to be completely eradicated from the system.

Manners points out Catholicism can be mixed with education through separate religious classes after 3 p.m. Catholic educators have always said that just won't do; religious teachings must be intertwined with everything from biology to physical education throughout the day.

I've always considered that argument a stretch, especially since much of what Catholic teachers espouse can be offered in a public system simply by talking about good character.

Predictably, Thornhill MPP Tina Molinari, a former Catholic school trustee, jumped on the constitutional argument when she heard about Mr. Manners' suggestion for a single school system. The right to Catholic education has been entrenched in the British North America Act since 1861.

But that really isn't a practical argument anymore.

In 1997, an amendment to the constitution allowed Quebec to change its religious-based education system to one based on language.

So, it's possible — and it's reasonable.

LETTERS POLICY

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