

OPINION

Stouffville Sun-Tribune
A Metroland community newspaper

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Editorial

Legislation may be answer to strike

Given Ontario's history of labour strife in education, some of these students have been here before.

Whether it was in elementary or high school, many already know what it's like to be pawns in a battle between militant teachers and unswerving bureaucracies. Students — this time the community college variety — are, once again, paying the price for unsuccessful negotiations.

Ontario's 9,100 college teachers walked off the job Tuesday, tossing about 150,000 students out of their classrooms.

This is only the third strike by college faculty in more than 20 years. In 1984, the walkout lasted about three weeks, ending with back-to-work legislation.

Five years later, college classrooms were darkened for a month, with teachers returning through a much preferred negotiated settlement.

When it comes to students, there's a significant difference between those strikes and this one. It's all about timing.

The strikes of '84 and '89 were in the fall, meaning lost time could be more easily made up throughout the school calendar.

This time, there's only four to six weeks left before many students graduate. As Steve Mattar, president of Seneca College's student federation, says, this is a crucial time for students.

They may lose their semester or be faced with making up classes in the spring or summer, when many are working to pay tuitions. Students in their final year would have to postpone graduation, some putting jobs on the line.

While teachers have a point saying their fight for smaller classes and more full-time staff is about quality education, the timing punishes this crop of students too severely.

They are being sacrificed.

If it weren't for the bad timing, many more students would be behind their teachers. Perhaps the college's bargaining team purposely forced the strike, as the union suggests, knowing how unpopular it could make teachers.

But the finger-pointing rhetoric of labour negotiations provides little comfort for students paying thousands of dollars for an education.

Regardless of what triggered the walk-out, it's the college students, especially this time around, who pay the heaviest price.

Fortunately, there appears to be some room for a negotiated settlement.

Teachers say this is not about money. But the colleges are offering a 12.6-per-cent increase over four years, giving the top paid college teacher a handsome \$94,277.



Off The Top

with Jim Mason
Sorry, Stouffville, we're not Hockeyville... yet

Stouffville is Hockeyville. The name sounds cool and would look great on those blue signs that mark so many entrances to our town.

But it won't happen unless someone enters our name in a nifty national contest by the end of next week.

Capitalizing on this country's obsession with the game, and maybe cheese, Kraft came up with the idea. The corporate giant must have already earned its investment back in ink, including this very column, and this is just the thin edge of the wedge, my puck-fancying friends.

A tour of eastern Ontario last weekend and an online read of papers in other communities reveals this is serious stuff. Smithers and Trail, B.C.; Miramichi, N.B.; the Soo, Schreiber and Barry's Bay, Ont.

All Hockeyvilles in the opinion of their inhabitants. People are into it.

The contest has people sending in photos of their towns and rinks.

And, for some reason, they have to make up a name for a town team. As if the people at Kraft already checked the roster of team names from coast-to-coast and were not impressed. Would the Whitchurch-Stouffville KDs work?

Kingston already has jerseys done up with the name the Sir John As, after its most famous son next to Don Cherry and Doug Gilmour, on them.

The winning community will receive a trophy, \$25,000 in upgrades to its arena, \$10,000 in hockey equipment and an NHL exhibition game that's somehow valued at \$400,000.

Stouffville has a notable legacy of pucks, with its roster of indoor and outdoor rinks through the years. Ontario championships and pro products, including its most famous offspring, Leafs assistant coach Keith Acton. The charity games he organized raised tens of thousands of dollars and drew the biggest names in the game to our town.

But it would be hard to compete with the likes of Kingston, the self-proclaimed cradle of the game. Peterborough, a hot bed for producing NHLers, is in. Same for Collingwood and Orillia.

And how about Belleville, the home of Bobby and Dennis Hull, where the Stouffville minor atom Clippers won Sunday? It's home to one of the oldest rinks on the planet. The downtown Memorial Arena looks like a movie set for a hockey flick set as far back as the 1920s.

In Canadian Idol style, a group of up to 50 qualifiers will be narrowed down to the winner during a series of made-for-CBC-TV shows from March 29 to June 11.

Don't know where Hockeyville is? You will.

Jim Mason is editor of *The Sun-Tribune*.

Letters to the Editor

We've lost enough heritage

Re: Old fighting new neighbourhoods, Feb. 16.
Regarding the comment, "While the mayor is working to protect established neighbourhoods"

Why then would the mayor, town council and powers that be in Whitchurch-Stouffville remove two established baseball diamonds in the centre of town?

There is also the possibility of a third diamond, the lawn bowling court, the tennis court, the skate board park, basketball court and outdoor swimming pool all being removed from the centre of town.

For what? More green space or a dog walking area.

Let's not forget, these or some of these facilities are going north, well over a kilometre away to Bethesda Road and Ninth Line. But this will be great because the kids can get there by way of the "nature trail" (a pedophile's delight).

Getting back to the "new and unimproved" Memorial Park. The drawing I saw at an information session Jan. 18 showed Park Drive extended south to Hoover Park Drive. It showed an equal amount of land on both sides of Park (roadway), perfect for development down the road. We were told otherwise at the information session Jan. 18 (no development), but many didn't believe it.

I can see the new Park Drive now or maybe it will be changed to Lebovic Trail.

Let's not forget what Memorial Park was intended for. Like its name, a park dedicated in memory of our Whitchurch-Stouffville war vets. A very important part of our Canadian heritage. God knows we've lost enough of it.

The Stouffville Sun-Tribune welcomes your letters. All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The Stouffville Sun-Tribune reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space. Write: Letters to the Editor, 34 Civic Ave., P.O. Box 154, Stouffville, L4A 7Z5 or e-mail jmason@yrng.com

Protect children in Courtney's memory

Re: Girl, 12, hurt as pit bull attacks newspaper carriers, March 2.

I am so mad as I type this letter I am shaking. Another dog attack, in Stouffville of all places. A young girl is attacked by a dog that has attacked before! Shame on you, Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Town council, Mayor Sue Sherban, York Regional Police and citizens of Stouffville do something about this dog. Fine the owners and destroy the animal.

It wasn't that long ago my daughter, Courtney, was attacked and killed by a 130-pound bull mastiff in a Stouffville backyard. A dog that attacked before. Maybe if something had been done after the first attack my daughter would still be alive.

We had a coroner's inquest into Courtney's death, Ontario has Bill 132 banning pit bulls, Whitchurch-Stouffville has bylaws for dangerous dogs and, still, another little girl is attacked. Thank goodness the dog only latched on to her arm with its teeth, shaking her 85-pound frame back and forth until her arm snapped.

Do not let this dog live. These attacks are not accidents. Please, Stouffville, do something in Courtney's honour. Do not let this beast attack another child. Do not let this dog live.

T. ARNOTT
STOUFFVILLE

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