

OPINION

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Religious faiths intolerant

Re: You don't have to share belief to respect others by Jim Rabyniuk, Jan. 4.

Regarding which of Abraham's sons was to die in Biblical or Koranic tales, the distinction is silly.

The effect, it should be noted, was wealthy medieval Christians willing to march upon the Arab empire, swords raised as they murdered at will. Later on, well-educated Muslims were willing to pilot planes into the World Trade Centre.

Mr. Rabyniuk next introduces the concepts of rationality and intellectual honesty, quickly devaluing both terms.

A rational assessment of the Muslim faith by a Christian must start by saying all Muslims are destined for an eternal hell. I don't think he understands his own faith.

He preaches tolerance, however, Christianity states it has the only right answer. So does Islam.

Any religious faith (particularly those evolving from the Abrahamic tradition) is, if honestly held, inherently intolerant.

I agree that "political correctness" is offensive. Religious belief itself, arrogantly the cause of so much evil, doesn't deserve respect.

MATT DOURIS
STOUFFVILLE

Some drivers don't know how to operate headlights

It sounds a bit silly to say such an obvious thing, but I saw some drivers in my neighbourhood at Dennison and Brimley roads, driving without their headlights.

I used to be a mechanic at some dealerships and, even now, I am a Sunday mechanic. I know how a car works.

To my surprise, there are a few drivers who use only their parking lights at night, not their headlights.

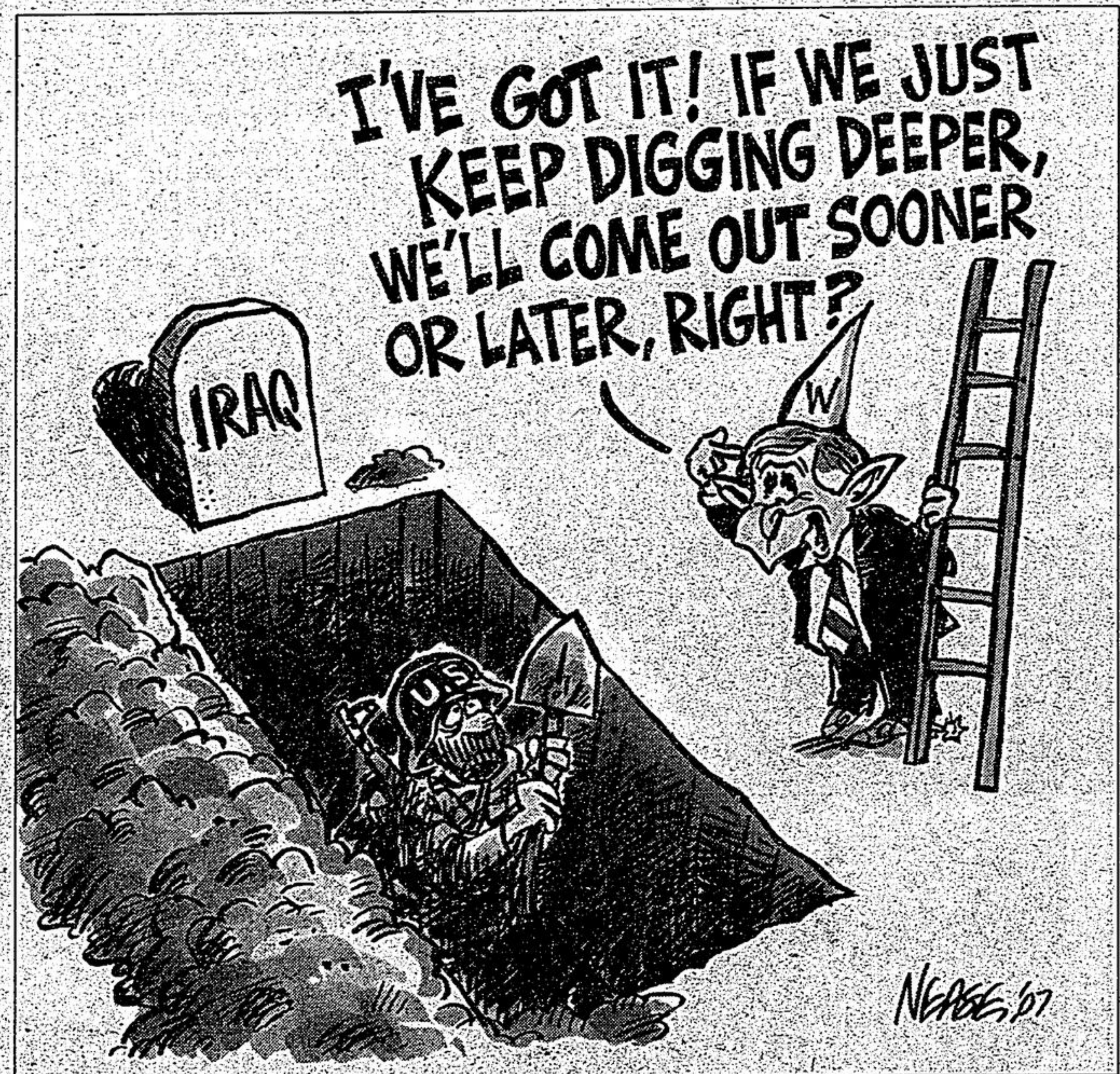
A couple of weeks ago, as I was entering the YMCA in Markham, a black Honda Civic driven by young woman pulled up without headlights on, so I approached the driver and said, "Why don't you turn on the headlights when you drive a car at night?"

Her reply was, "I am driving a car with headlights on."

I pointed to her that her headlight switch was turned only one flip at the parking light. I said she needed to flip one more time to fully activate the headlights.

It's stupid, but at the same time, it could be dangerous for both drivers and pedestrians. If they do not know how to turn on headlights, they should at least consult with their owner's manual.

FUMIO ISHIGURO
MARKHAM



We're not famous, but we can change world

It's common for towns and cities to partner with similar communities elsewhere in Canada, North America and around the world.

Markham, for example, is twinned with Laval, Quebec; Cary, North Carolina; Wuhan, China and Haidian District, also in China. Richmond Hill is twinned with Lakeland, Florida.

Numerous factors go into these twinning agreements, the most important being economic development and trade.

Often, a sister city will be chosen because many residents came from the area. For example, Vaughan has twinning agreements with cities in Italy, Israel, Japan and The Philippines. This makes for politically popular, as well as economically beneficial, partnerships.

A cynic might add a third criterion: it sure helps if the twin city is a pleasant place for politicians and bureaucrats to visit.

Then you have the case that

breaks the mold: Stouffville's partnership with Igoma, Tanzania. There is little economic advantage to be gained in an impoverished African community; few folks in Stouffville claim Tanzanian heritage and while many locals visit there, it's hardly a holiday.

The Stouffville Igoma Project has furnished a doctor, medicine and equipment to the only medical clinic in the town of 40,000.

It sent Markham nurse Glenna Cummins-Peterson over to help people in Igoma and the surrounding area and it has provided 500 mosquito nets to help prevent malaria, with 1,500 more to come. It helps nurses and vocational students pay their tuition and is working on providing a clean water supply.

Stouffville is calling on other communities to take on similar partnerships.

Now, if one of the smallest (population-wise) communities in York Region can make this kind of differ-



David Teetzel

ence to so many people, surely bigger, wealthy communities such as Markham, Vaughan, Richmond Hill and Newmarket can do likewise.

OK, admittedly, Stouffville's partnership is led more by the community's churches than its politicians and that may, in fact, be easier to do in a smaller, more homogenous community such as Stouffville. But every religion endorses charity — and Thornhill, at the very least, already has an interfaith organization called

Mosaic that helps people in need.

We don't have to look very far this week to see an example of how an individual can have a global impact.

Const. Davis Ahlowalia spent his vacations helping orphans in India and Jamaica. He convinced York Regional Police to sponsor the Jamaican orphanage. Closer to home, he supported the York South Association for Community Living, Friends of the Poor, ViCARS York Region and the Toronto AIDS walk.

And, in the meantime, he earned his living keeping us all safe.

We lost this hero in a horrific crash on the weekend, as well as two young men — Sulman Yusef and Waleed Shaukat — who, by all accounts, were also examples of what a character community is supposed to be.

York police are hoping to continue supporting the orphanage to honour Const. Ahlowalia's memory. Residents who want to make a memorial contribution can bring

donations to Friends of the Poor Canada Inc. to any York police station.

But while someone as selfless as Const. Ahlowalia might seem intimidating to us average slob, I believe we all have the ability to be heroes.

Whitchurch-Stouffville has grabbed hold of this.

I know every town in York Region has the resources to do what Stouffville has done. I believe every town in York Region has people who want to do what Stouffville has done. I think it's high time we stopped entrusting the developing world to governments and rock stars and took action ourselves.

The Stouffville Igoma Project is willing to mentor other communities. For more information, call the Stouffville chamber at 905-642-4227 or EastRidge Evangelical Missionary Church at 905-640-3911, ext. 42.

LETTERS POLICY

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