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York Region Media  
Group community  
newspapers

The Sun-Tribune, published every Thursday and Saturday, is a division of the Metroland Media Group Ltd., a wholly owned subsidiary of Forstar Corporation. The Metroland family of newspapers is comprised of more than 100 community publications across Ontario. The York Region Media Group includes The Liberal, serving Richmond Hill and Thornhill, Newmarket Era, Aurora Banner, Vaughan Citizen, Markham Economist & Sun, Stouffville Sun-Tribune, Georgina Advocate, Bradford West Gwillimbury Topic, Beingswell and yorkregion.com

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POLICY**

The Sun-Tribune welcomes your letters. All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The Sun-Tribune reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space.

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# OPINION

Stouffville  
**Sun-Tribune**

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Have a logical day

Re: Keep religion out of public schools, letter to the editor by Ben Niu, Aug. 13.

I do agree with Mr. Niu that religious activities in public schools during school hours and involving students need definite guidelines. Good guidelines help everyone conduct themselves well.

The point of education is to teach a person fundamental knowledge and how to acquire and process more knowledge.

Mr. Niu is 100-per-cent correct when he says a big problem today is that people do not know how to think.

Knowledge comes in many forms. What is A+B (mathematics)? What is that animal (biology)? Why is that other person different than me (sociology)? How do I relate to that other different person (politics)? Who am I (psychology)? How shall I live (ethics and government)?

It is not true that spirituality is against logic. When scientists

do experiments they act like religious people.

They get a belief that a path leads to truth. Using irrational faith (often in their own genius) they do thousands of experiments to find what they are looking for. Sometimes they fail miserably and have to admit their religious belief in themselves did not lead to truth.

By the way, Catholic schools are a right by law. It was one thing that was promised to the Catholics when the British took over North America from the French; and reaffirmed during Confederation.

It seems so logical and easy to take away the rights promised to people. But logical thinking is not always correct thinking.

It must be because people who want this are often not thinking logically as to why Catholic schools exist in the first place. Everyone, have a nice logical and religiously scientific day.

RON BOYD  
STOUFFVILLE



## Cottage visit makes home seem luxurious

I had the luxury (I use that term loosely) of spending a couple of weeks up north and I have to say all the comforts of home in York Region were sorely missed, at least by some of the gang that gathered at the cottage my mother and sister try valiantly but not always successfully to maintain on Lake Huron since my dad passed away a few years ago.

A week before we left, my sister called to warn us the hot water was not working.

It wouldn't be the first time, as the cottage's hot water tank dated back to the time of the Romans and the warm H2O tended to cut out at the most inopportune times — like when you are fully covered in soap and shampoo.

"Oh well," I thought. "It's the warmest part of the year. The lake water unheated will be warm enough for washing or doing dishes."

Then the day before we left, she called again.

The pump — that magic device that pumps the water out of the lake and through the intricate cottage plumbing put together by a non-plumber but avid would-be cottager — was not working, which meant no running water, hot or cold, let alone warm



Bernie O'Neill

showers or sparkling dishes.

"Oh well," I thought. "We can just get a bucket from the lake, like in the good old days."

We can start a bucket brigade, like they used to do when a building caught on fire and there were no firefighters for 100 miles.

We can heat some water on the stove.

We can go swimming — a lot.

"Did I mention mice had got into the cottage over the winter?" she added. "We had to go through everything and throw a bunch of things out."

I hesitated to ask what those things might be: beds, stove, refrigerator?

More like food staples, some towels.

"If some things are missing," I

said, "we can always go to the store."

"Um, you know that boat motor you were hoping we'd get tuned up? They laughed when I brought it to shop."

They laughed?

"I mean, they were impressed, but they also laughed. They said they'd never seen anything that old and if they can't fix it, you should try selling it on eBay as an antique. They weren't kidding."

"Oh, well," I thought. "We can always just sort of 'float around' and maybe fish from the dock."

Powerboating was never my passion anyway. I'm more of a paddler/rower type, I told myself.

"The water is still ridiculously low," she added. "The dock is high and dry. So maybe the boat wouldn't work so well anyway."

Where all the water went, they were not sure. Maybe all the cottagers took too much out of the lake, in buckets, so they could do dishes and wash off the Muskol and clean off little patches of blood from the bug bites.

And on it went.

Truth is, it was great to get away — out of cellphone and Wifi range, away from the news about London riots or the U.S. credit limit crisis. Away from just about any news whatsoever. When we did get hold of a newspaper, on a

rainy day, the kids did crosswords and sudoku.

After a while, you are almost bragging to other people you see about how rustic it all is — no satellite dish, no cable, no hot water, and several of the assembled aunts, uncles and cousins are sleeping on beds and futons in what is supposed to be the living room.

We did get the barbecue working and a tank of gas for a very little boat and motor that was good enough to take the kids out fishing — and we did catch some fish, have a bonfire, set off fireworks and have quite a few laughs.

I don't know how long my mother will be able to hold on to the cottage. Nature is forever trying to reclaim these places and if you don't fight back hard with weed whackers, chainsaws and mouse traps, you will eventually lose.

If you ever get the chance to get out of York Region and stay at a friend's or family cottage or rent a place, it is definitely worth doing.

Kind of makes you appreciate the simple things in life, as well as the comforts of the city upon your return.

Stouffville resident Bernie O'Neill is a York Region Media Group editor