

Tuesday, June 18, 2002

LETTERS

Protest too graphic

To the editor:

On the morning of May 29, 2002, Fenelon Falls Secondary School students were met with disturbing, graphic displays, placards and literature showing images of aborted fetuses at various stages of development, devastation and disfigurement.

The placards were approximately 3 by 5-feet in size and were propped in front of each bus at the unloading zone, making it impossible for students to avoid the images as they got off their bus.

At least one student who tried to pass by was forced to take literature that she did not want.

Our class has mixed viewpoints regarding abortion but the vast majority of us including some who are strongly opposed to abortion disagree with the way the demonstration was carried out.

Some students who tried to evade protesters were pursued and felt intimidated.

The signs were very graphic and highly visible. Young siblings in cars could not avoid seeing these images.

A majority of staff and students found this to be an unpleasant start to our day. Some found it emotionally devastating and traumatic.

We feel protesters have the right to freedom of speech and the right to open assembly.

However we also feel that intrusive unpleasant and graphic presentations are harmful, insensitive and do not belong in a school environment.

While this rally was intended to educate, many staff and students were reluctant to listen or discuss given the method of communication.

Several students noted that these images were violent and felt underage teens would not normally, legally be allowed to view these graphic sorts of images.

We feel that parents, particularly of the younger students, need to know what kinds of tactics were being used.

Regardless of your views on abortion we invite you to address this issue with letters to your MP and MPP to request guidelines for these types of "legal protests."

Respectfully,

**Concerned students of Ms
Carruth's HSP3M Class
Fenelon Falls Secondary School**

We have no doubt you were disturbed.