

Online privacy worth fighting for

The ongoing debate about online freedoms vs. law enforcement needs is poised to take centre stage again.

Recently Canada's police chiefs passed a resolution calling for laws that force people to provide their computer passwords with a judge's consent. Surprisingly, there is currently no law in Canada that would compel someone to provide a password to police during an investigation, according to RCMP Assistant Commissioner Joe Oliver.

That's making it tough for police, especially when criminals are operating anonymously online. The resolution comes as the feds begin consultations into cybersecurity. The government is in the unenviable position of having to balance the needs of law enforcement agencies with entrenched freedoms.

This isn't the first time the so-called digital age has pitted the needs of police against individual rights. It won't be the last, either. When the Senate began hearings in 2014 on Bill C-13, probably better known as the cyberbullying bill, the OPP suggested ending anonymity online. The logic? Well, people have to get their picture taken for ID when they get a driver's licence or they have to sign for a mortgage, yet there's no such requirement when we go online.

A licence to access the web? No more anonymity online for whistleblowers, people looking up medical information, anyone speaking out against their government? If it sounds a bit Orwellian, that's because it most assuredly carries not-so-subtle undertones of Big Brother monitoring our every move.

A free and self-governing society is part of the foundation of a healthy democracy. These are cherished values that must be carefully preserved from the invasion of government authority, which includes law enforcement. Such freedoms should be limited only in rare occasions and with great reluctance. Even our Supreme Court has acknowledged the importance of online anonymity and a reasonable expectation of privacy.

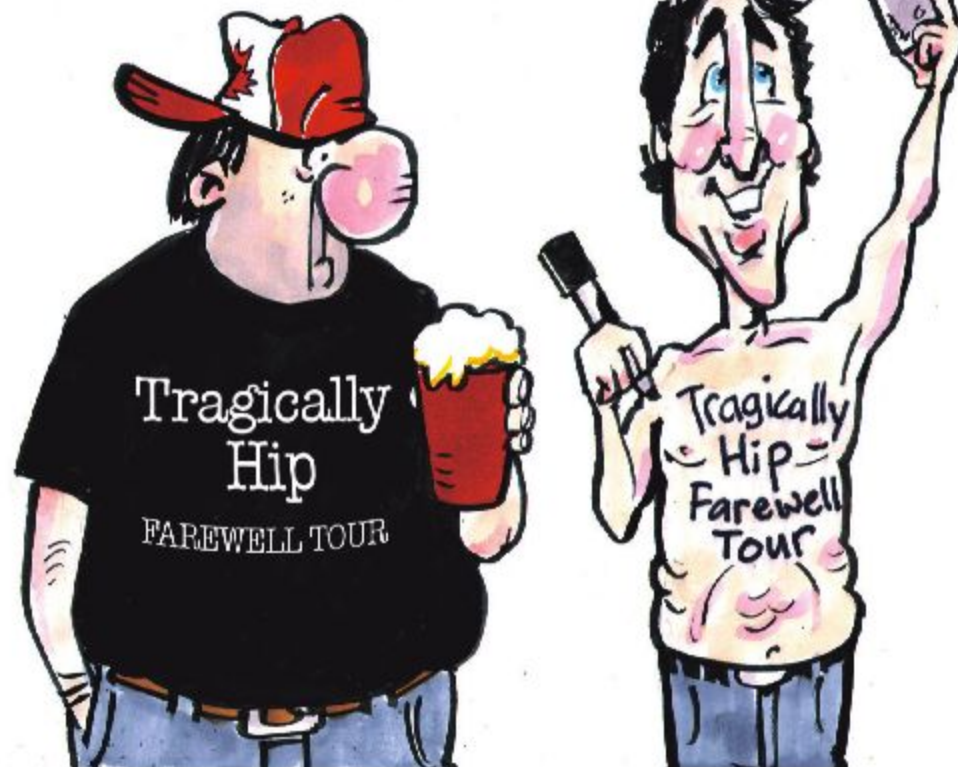
In *R vs. Spencer*, the court stated: Some degree of anonymity is a feature of much Internet activity and depending on the totality of the circumstances, anonymity may be the foundation of a privacy interest that engages constitutional protection against unreasonable search and seizure.

It's important we pay attention to such requests, lest we find ourselves giving up too much. Because once we let go of our freedoms, even a little bit, it'll be all but impossible to get back.

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Letters to the editor

Vaccines guarantee nothing

RE: Editorial, *It's time to educate*, Aug. 18.

There are so many pros and cons to vaccinating our children.

Though I generally see the benefits of vaccinating, I do believe the pressure is being put on by the greedy drug companies.

If they were so concerned about the affects of not vaccinating, they don't talk about the adverse results for some children. For children with egg allergies, vaccinating could result in death, since many of the serums (use egg proteins).

I grew up in the generation when all kids were vaccinated at school. Our family all got vaccinated, yet we still got all the childhood diseases, such as measles, mumps and chicken pox.

My friend got polio. So tell me what

guarantees anyone can give for the benefits.

The medical establishment is controlled by the pharmaceutical companies. They only care about profits. A good example is how they push for the poisons associated with chemo. When there is proof of natural remedies that work, (and much cheaper) they refuse to listen. So tell me, what is the real reason for vaccinating if it doesn't prevent these illnesses?

Jean Anderson,
Georgetown

Community struts its stuff

I just wanted to thank all the people who came out to the beautiful Scotsdale farm for our first Strut 4 Charity event and made it a success.

We raised \$500 for the Upper Credit Humane Society, and we couldn't have done it without the kind donations of everyone who participated.

Special thanks to Everything Dogs

Halton, Pawsitive Healing, the Muddi Paws Spa, The Doggy Did It Pet Photography, Strictly Fish and Over the Moon Balloons for donating raffle prizes.

And to Carol and Sean Mathison, Jayme Reynolds, DeAnne Joyce and Kelly Kingdon for all their support in making our first event a great one.

Thank you everyone from the bottom of my heart.

Jennie Joyce,
Halton Hills

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