

# stouffville comment

## Flooring a welcome addition

The Chamber of Commerce will be rolling out the red carpet in the event the Whitchurch-Stouffville Recreation Centre gets new portable flooring.

The plan has initial approval, and chamber president Larry Rogalski is pleased the flooring, which will be used for such events as the annual Home Show, should be in place soon.

The flooring will cost \$28,700 to purchase, but the benefits are obvious for the town.

More shows such as the one the chamber sponsors, could take place, bringing needed revenue into town. It gives our Rec Centre a year-round multi-purpose capacity it never had before.

Some may say that in these times, any capital expenditure such as a portable floor is a luxury. But with the projected usage it will receive, the floor will earn its keep in no time.

The chamber is right in hauling it as a worthwhile asset to the town's recreation facilities.



## Life skills could help students enter real world

You can't always get what you want. But if you try sometimes, you get what you need.

That line from a popular tune of a number of years ago relates well in these tough times.

It relates particularly well to my car situation.

I had been driving a leased vehicle for the past three years, and to my horror, discovered some six months ago that the lease was deemed "upside down".

This means that the value of the car no longer met with the lease by-back value.

In other words, with a by-back of some \$5,000, and the value pegged at \$2,500 due to excessive mileage, I was going to be in the red at the

end of the lease for a whole whack of cash.

However, if I attempted to terminate the lease early, there was a penalty of \$220 for every month remaining in the lease.

So the dilemma I was facing began to look more and more desperate with each turn of the odometer. The more I drove, the less the car was worth.

To their credit, the car dealership admitted I had been slightly misled by the salesman who got me to tag my John Hancock on the initial lease.

Out of desperation, I went in last week and explained that I would drop off the car with a set of options at my disposal. I would drop off the



car, they could fit me with a new one, and the car company would have me for another four years.

Or I would drop the car off, buy a cheap replacement from a used car dealer and if they after me for the balance, I would list the car company on a list of creditors and go bankrupt. This seemed to have the

desired effect, and to cut a long, sordid story short, I am the proud new owner (no longer a lessee) of a 1992 vehicle.

The point of all this is not to take a shot at the shadiness of car dealers, but to alert others to make sure they read the fine print.

I leased my car out of desperation three years ago, and was stuck with a document not tailored to me driving needs. Better still, some knowledgeable teacher might want to set aside a few weeks and teach students about life. Not math, or trigonometry, but the facts of life concerning leases, insurance, mortgages, pre-nuptial agreements,

obtaining and maintaining credit, wills, traffic tickets, appliance repair and the like.

As far as I know, there is little in the high school curriculum that deals with these issues outside of home economics, and there certainly was no such training in my day.

If there is such a course, I'd like to hear about it.

Students might well push for such knowledge, rather than flying out into the world by the seat of their pants, on a wing and a checkbook.

I wish I had that sort of life skills training. I may have been able to get what I wanted, not just what I needed.

## Canada Post has left me cold

The Romans, with fast horses and good roads, were able to assure next-day delivery up to 280 km by post. The Canadian Encyclopedia, on the subject of postal history.

Ah, progress. Nowadays Canada Post can, in most cases, deliver local mail to your community mailbox within two days. They even send out helpful little flyers, which give you a special number to call if you experience problems.

What they forget to mention is, it's not a good idea to call during a period of stormy, icy weather, even though this is the only time you're likely to need help. This is because lots of locks get frozen, everyone phones at once, and the lines get all jammed up.

If you do persevere and get through, they're very sympathetic, as I discovered during the week of the big storm. They'd send someone out, they assured me, and I should



be able to get my mail by the following evening.

Any problems, just call back with this reference number. Call back? I pointed out that I'd just spent half an hour getting through this time. Surely they didn't expect me to repeat the performance. No, they said, they hoped I wouldn't have to. But you never knew.

After two days of futile efforts to open the box, I called again. It took numerous attempts to get through, and when I did, a recorded message in both official languages stated that the lines were busy right now, but an operator would be with me shortly.

"Your call is very important to us," the computer assured me soothingly. When I reached a real person at last, he told me that someone had probably been out to fix the lock but, in this weather, they just froze over again almost immediately.

This weather, I observed tartly, was not entirely unknown in Southern Ontario. Didn't it occur to the mailbox designers that metal locks, exposed to wind, ice and snow, were liable to freeze? And that a can of de-icer was about as effective at unjamming the works as Chicago's Stu Grimson would be at a peace conference?

Eventually, I was able to claim my mail, accompanied by an overpowering whiff of de-icer, with which it had been liberally doused. Leaving through it, I have to admit it probably wasn't worth all the trouble, but it did contain a cheque.

My down payment on a fax machine.

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