

STOUFFVILLE

Comment

Pool or pad could go private

With simple math skills, it's plain that skaters, swimmers and civic centre users can not all have their day in the sun.

Ivanka Bradley's expected motion to withdraw the design plan expenditure for a new civic centre from the council agenda is a graceful and well timed admission to this fact.

Recreation facilities in town are lagging behind the demand, yet the expenditures for swimming pool and ice pad are not readily affordable.

It's always a delicate balance between providing services and facilities that can reasonably be expected in a town this size, with the fact that such facilities often

Our View

need to be built before they can be fully profitable.

A facility such as an arena is at its best in profitability when it is outgrown.

Consider the predicament of council when pressures for a public works depot, a fire hall and a library expansion are also before it.

It's no wonder the town has put its five-year capital budget on hold. These decisions will need careful consideration and planning, and they'll need the input of residents who will ultimately be paying for them.

They've made a good start with the two-day strategy session

planned for mid-May.

Perhaps it's time to investigate private ownership or co-operative ventures with business.

Fast food franchises could be one way of helping to finance an indoor pool or a second ice pad.

Private ice pads could be investigated too, either fully owned or in partnership with the public.

Corporate sponsorship could be rewarded with overhead signage or, in the case of the ice pad, around the boards.

A fact finding committee could be struck to check out other communities which have gone this route, and to assess corporate or business interest.

Where there's a will there's a way.

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Internet info contains sick stuff

Hate and smut, including kiddie porn are travelling free and clear on the information highway.

At the moment, the cops can't stop it. Welcome to one of the downsides of the '90s. Welcome to one of the downsides of Internet.

While we're at it, welcome to yet another example of wishy washy world-wide government.

In case you're wondering what this is all about, here's a sampling of what's popping up, uninvited and unannounced, on computer screens in livingrooms across Canada.

A 10-year-old nude boy accompanying a text graphically describing the joys of sex with children.

A man appears on the screen. Has he got a story to tell. According to him, all white women want to have sex with black men.

Another character tells us that blacks are intellectually inferior.

A man appears and without blinking an eye, babbles away in his quest to have us believe that Jews bankrolled Adolf Hitler.

A woman appears to tell us about a bonafide case of puppy love. She's in bed with

a dog. The woman is taking a few minutes away from the pooch to tell us that she's interested in finding more sex partners. Of course, after a night with Fido, only dogs will do.

When these little surprises started appearing on the computer screen, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and Canadian police chiefs checked the law books in the hopes of finding a way to regulate the Net.

The cops admit they're powerless. It appears as if an anything-goes mentality has taken shape world-wide.

The question is: When kiddie porn is downloaded from another country, what can a cop in Canada do about it?

I don't for a minute believe that this situation caught the makers and shakers off guard.

While the powers-that-be may be shy on spunk, they're not stupid. They knew full well that when it comes to Internet or anything for that matter, misuse and abuse goes with the territory. Of course, the trick is to stop it before it gets started.

Government officials know all about preventive measures. The catch is: govern-



ment officials lack the courage to stand up and state that this is absolutely unacceptable in this country.

I'd like to remind our MPs that we're talking about Canada. And, we're talking about my Canada.

I'll also remind the MPs that in Canada, the principles of law under the Charter of Rights, the Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code also apply to computer communications.

I am quite aware that this sick stuff is coming from other countries. I'm also aware that it is a very complex issue.

Excuse me. International rules have been put in place before. Also, complex is complex. It is not impossible.

While I would rather Fido and his lady didn't occupy the computer screen, I'm more interested in keeping children out of harm's way.

Also, we must pay close attention to any flow of high tech hate.

Having anti-black, anti-Chinese or anti-gay messages on the Internet is scary. We could have a hate epidemic on our hands. If you wonder if hate is a big deal, I'll remind you of the bodies of the dead kids still trapped in Oklahoma.

You no longer have to lure a kid to a pro-Nazi rally. You can just feed him daily doses of hate through the computer.

I'm told the MPs are waiting for the public to speak out and suggest what society will or will not tolerate. I'm game. Here goes.

Dear whoever's in charge of Canada,

As a Canadian, I will not tolerate child pornography. Nor will I put up with hate, high tech or otherwise. The spreading of anti-Semitic or anti-black or anti-gay or anti-Chinese or anti-women messages is not acceptable.

In fairness to some, I know that Solicitor General Herb Grey wants to recommend an international agreement to control the flow of information coming through Internet.

I'm also aware that the RCMP is now taking part in a United Nations task force aimed at curbing the criminal use of the Internet.

And, I know an Alberta MP has introduced a motion in the House of Commons calling for a clampdown on spreading hate on the Internet. Meanwhile, groups are also taking issue. B'nai Brith Canada is monitoring anti-Semitic messages and Holocaust denials on the net.

I suggest that when dealing with how to stop ads for children to act as sex slaves, you spend less time listening to lawyers and more time listening to your conscience.

Technology holds but scant appeal

In springtime an aging housewife's thoughts turn to dust.

But because this subject is too much for my fragile self-esteem to handle and I really hate to be caught doing anything as bourgeois as housework, I switch to considering evolution and pondering whether, within the next few millennia, babies will be born with cellphones grafted to their ears.

After all, pre-people people used to lope about on all fours before they learned to stand on their own two feet and now they're probably wondering how on earth they got by on subways and city streets when they weren't bipeds.

Well, now that we've been programmed to suffer withdrawal symptoms after missing even the most annoying call, wouldn't it make sense for us to come equipped with the requisite technology built in?

Incredibly, there are people who resist such progressive ideas. I have one friend, for instance, for whom this form of evolution has scant appeal.

Stubbornly refusing to embrace the treasures of high tech in all its glorious invasiveness, she insists on disconnecting her answering machine whenever she feels like tuning out the world.

For some reason, she resents returning from a weekend away and having to plow through myriad messages from carpet cleaning salespersons, charities selling light bulbs, irate clients, a score of her offspring's buddies, surveyors who really only want your opinion but while you're on the line anyway, they just happen to have an incredible deal on magazine subscriptions... She insists that her free time (she's so out of touch



she still sets aside time for herself) is too precious to waste on the demands of an inanimate object like the telephone, but all she does instead of returning important calls is read books and go for walks.

Well, talk about wasting time when you could be doing something meaningful, like closing a deal for the office, standing on a lobby group soap box or improving your sagging abdominal muscles.

All of which, incidentally, can be done within easy reach of a cellphone or your personal beeper.

At least she has a touch tone phone. Unlike some people, who insist on retaining their prehistoric dial, which means they miss out on all the fun of interacting with machines which give you maybe six options when you call, none of which is what you want.

After you've hung on grimly for maybe 10 minutes, the machine will occasionally relent and offer you the opportunity of talking to a real person. The phone rings, your excitement mounts, it is picked up at the other end and a recorded message announces, "I'm sorry, I'm away from my desk right now, but if you want to leave a message press one; if you want to slam your head against the wall press two..."

Ah, technology. You can run, you can hide, but you can never escape it completely. Bring me that duster, hand over that broom, I'm going to turn off the phone, turn up the stereo and tackle the spring cleaning.

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