

Comment

Graylane was murdered by thieves

Here lies Graylane Boutique. 1986 - 1996

Rest in peace.

Such would be the inscription on a tombstone for one of our town's finest businesses if we had graveyards for such things. But you might add a corollary to its grave-marker: Murdered.

Graylane served high fashion to Stouffville women for a decade.

It brought high-end clothing at affordable prices from the sole dominion of the fancy shops of Bloor St. and Hazelton Lanes to Stouffville. Countless special occasions were celebrated in a Graylane outfit, and countless more gifts were purchased there.

On a street where retailing has been in a downward spiral for much of the past decade, Graylane was one of a handful of bright lights. People came from miles around to shop in the quaint pink and grey store on Main St.

Now it is gone. After two senseless assaults on her store in the past month by thieves, Irene Kubica has packed it in. Her dream has been murdered. And this town is

the worse for it. Yet another business person has had to suffer needlessly because of thieves. Kubica said, "If I was to

quit or move, I wanted to make that decision. But, I can't. They've (criminals) have made it for me." We hope the thieves who shut

this business down are caught before they can murder another person's enterprise. Our condolences, Irene.



Time is ripe for amalgamation beyond Toronto

Here's a weather report: The winds of change will not bypass Stouffville or Uxbridge.

Last week, during a conversation with one of the brightest public servants of all time, I paid close attention to the silence. It's not what David Crombie said; it's what he didn't say. As we all know, silence can speak volumes.

As chairman of the province-wide Who Does What panel, Crombie is about to unveil the new face of Ontario. With about 10 days to go before the report will be made public, Crombie is naturally keeping things close to the vest. Crombie's careful. He's intense. He's quiet. He's got something important to tell us...We'd better brace ourselves.

Not only did Crombie's panel look at who does what, it's advised the government on ways to eliminate duplication, how to handle over-regulation and blurred responsibility for the delivery of local and provincial services. As well, the panel is helping to implement the changes.

With the public feeling unloved and overtaxed, the panel's goal is to reduce cost and make government more accountable.

There are lots of questions. Is duplication an issue here at home? In York and Durham regions, there are a total of 17 municipalities. This means we pay 17 chief administration officers each about \$100,000 a year. While we're at it, we employ 17 fire chiefs, 17 planning directors, 17 public works directors and on it goes. Believe me, not one of them comes cheap.

Here's another question: Do York and Durham really need 17 mayors and about 100 municipal councillors? And, why do we need four



mega-sized school boards covering York and Durham. While we're short on teachers, we're overdosing on trustees and administrators.

The Who Does What final report

On a recent weekend, in deference to my yuppie origins, I visited one of the new mega bookstores which are being touted as the wave of the future.

You could tell it was a real bookstore because it had a Starbucks Café, where faded 40-somethings such as your correspondent could sip on a cappuccino or latte when the strangled screams of echo-boomers, protesting in the wake of parents determined upon improving their malleable little minds, became unendurable.

Of course, you had to line up to get a seat and before that you had to line up to get a parking spot, but if you want to hang out at the happening places, you have to be prepared to make sacrifices.

Despite having been open only two weeks, the store already looked well-thumbed.

Small children were everywhere. Some hung onto their daddy's pant leg in a vain effort to gain attention. Others thun-

seems to be pro-active. It will not sit on a shelf. Already we've seen major tax reform and more recently, changes to child welfare.

Crombie's worn many hats: city councillor, Toronto mayor and federal cabinet minister. A while ago, he headed up the mega Burlington to Clarington waterfront study, giving public access to Lake Ontario's shoreline. Crombie proved himself a long time ago. The little man can do a big job. When people like Crombie are in charge, I sleep better at night.

In our chat, I pointed out that the question most often asked on the homefront is: Will Whitchurch-Stouffville be swallowed up by Markham? Here's Crombie's answer: "All options are on the table." He added, "We're not down to exact boundaries and borders. But, it's all within the context of what we're doing."

While we're on the Who Does What subject, I'm giving the "thumbs up" signal to a plan to create a super city to be known as Toronto. Since this move would

eliminate Metro's six municipalities, it addresses a duplication problem. With one city, taxpayers would no longer be paying the extra cost that comes with having Toronto, Etobicoke, Scarborough, City of York, East York and North York.

When it comes to the plan to build a \$2.5 million town hall in Whitchurch-Stouffville, my jury's still out, especially when I think about the town halls in Uxbridge and in Markham. Maybe we should be thinking amalgamation.

Mega superstores overstimulate the senses



to decide between two jackets, each of which cost one dollar, I am clearly not the target audience for today's mega stores, with their massive inventory and army of employees.

I even began to develop a sneaking sympathy for Imelda Marcos and her daily ordeal of choosing one among the thousands of pairs of shoes which were her trademark.

For me, the ideal bookstore is an intimate place, where the owner knows my taste in books and where conversation and ideas are exchanged in the comfortable ambiance of a country house library, to the accompaniment of soothing classical piano music or perhaps some mellow

jazz. If a book I want is not on the shelf, the owner can always order it for me and that will give me an excuse to return and enjoy another prolonged browse.

When I visited the book supermarket, however, it put me in mind of a cross between a large daycare centre and a fast food restaurant.

In one area, a recently published author was trying in vain to read excerpts from his works over the hubbub of squabbling children and exasperated parents, whose attempts to instill the finer points of literature into their offspring's brains had clearly misfired.

Overwhelmed by the whole experience, I left empty-handed, but perhaps I was just suffering from post-reading trauma, as defined by the late Robertson Davies: "There are times when I think that the reading I have done in the past has had no effect except to cloud my mind and make me indecisive."

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