

Thursday, January 22, 1998
Vol. 110, No. 6

The Tribune is a member of the Ontario
Press Council

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EDITORIAL

Is your home safe?

It could be the best \$40 or \$50 you have ever spent. It could save your life and that of your family. It's as vital as the smoke detector in your home — a carbon monoxide detector.

The sad story about a father and son killed by carbon monoxide poisoning over the weekend in Toronto is a high-profile reminder of a deadly — and odourless — killer.

What few may realize is that every year carbon monoxide kills about 300 Canadians, and makes another 1,500 of us sick. Yet a simple investment of between \$40 and \$80 at your local hardware store can save you from becoming a carbon monoxide statistic.

While 95 per cent of homes and apartments in Canada have smoke alarms, under 15 per cent have carbon monoxide detectors.

Carbon monoxide poisoning looks suspiciously like flu, as symptoms include drowsiness, headache, nausea and dizziness. In severe cases, victims lose consciousness and die from asphyxiation.

Your home needs protection from carbon monoxide gas if you have any kind of fuel-burning furnace or appliance, or if you have one or more fireplaces.

Carbon monoxide can come from the fireplace, furnace, gas dryer or stove, even a faulty vent pipe from your water heater can be deadly. And newer homes are more at risk, because with better insulation, invisible toxic gases can't escape.

When carbon monoxide gas is sensed, the detector triggers an alarm so occupants can escape. These simple detectors are already saving lives every day — have you got yours?



Library public opinion doesn't count: reader

Dear Editor,

On Monday, Dec. 15, 1997, I attended the council in committee meeting at Latcham Hall. My purpose in attending was to ask questions regarding a report submitted to council by Merlin Dewing, CAD.

In this report Mr. Dewing made several statements that in my opinion, as both a member of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library Board and a resident of Whitchurch-Stouffville, cried out for clarification.

One of these statements was: "There are issues that the previous Library Board saw differently than the council, many of which impact on the town's ability to

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effectively operate."

When I asked Mr. Dewing how a nine-member board, of which two are councillors, could have that much effect/impact on the town's ability to operate, I was told by Mr. Dewing that if I wanted an answer I could call him at his office.

A further statement that I questioned in Mr. Dewing's report read:

"The board, although autonomous, must be an arm of council and be responsive to community needs so they relate

to the 'Big Picture' of delivery of services to the public." When I requested clarification of 'Big Picture', I was given no response at all.

I, as well as numerous people in the audience that evening, found that Mr. Dewing's responses as well as council's lack of action were both inappropriate as well as insulting.

Most of the candidates in the election ran on a platform of openness and input. If that night is any example of what is to come, then broken promises are all I can expect.

Councillor Sherban was involved in the Latcham Hall fiasco several months ago and when Mr. Dewing's report came out recommending that the new Library Board be made up of half councillors, I expected some support from her.

No support was forthcoming, but instead she moved the motion that the new board be seven members — three councillors, three school board and one member at large.

This new committee will not only be decreased (i.e. nine members to seven) but will have one more councillor than the last board.

This means that council representation is increased by 20 per cent. Throughout Mr. Dewing's report he constantly refers to the library's autonomy (given by the Public Libraries Act).

It would appear to me that this new council does not understand autonomy.

The Public Libraries Act sets

out the duties and responsibilities of a Library Board. This board's duties include: 1) day-to-day operation 2) overseeing the financial aspects of a library 3) governance.

The act states that council's only control mechanism is the budget approval process.

It would appear that council's charges to the Public Library Board are an attempt to find another control mechanism.

Since the Public Library is a service for the people of this municipality, shouldn't the people of this town be the ones to decide how the library service should be run, not council?

Finally, it would appear to me that senior town staff are not accountable to anyone nor being held accountable to any report they write.

Further, if this latest council meeting is any indication, then there is no accountability at that level either, when the Library Board removed its agreement in principle to be part of the new "Town Hall/Library".

This was done to insure the continuance of one of the services provided by the library (i.e. Latcham Gallery), which wasn't being included in the new building.

This decision was made in an open forum meeting. As an independent (autonomous) board we were allowed under the Public Libraries Act to make that decision.

Now it seems that when council doesn't get their way, they exercise their muscle in a manner much like a school yard bully.

It is a sad day when the people's opinion does not count.

Mark Dewar
Stouffville

People should be able to choose cable channels

Dear Editor,

You are to be complimented on your editorial "Buyer Beware" (Jan. 17). The state of the cable services in this province in particular is deplorable, to say the least.

One would have thought that the debacle of negative billing would have taught the cable companies a lesson in public relations, but here they go again. We now have a situation where the public is more or less compelled to accept a load of trash in order to be able to watch one or two acceptable channels. A clear example of arm twisting!

How much longer do we have to accept the principal of "a pound of apples is a pound of apples, take it or leave it"? The store now lets us pick our own apples. I suggest we are entitled to the freedom of picking our own channels, and not being forced to buy the garbage.

I sincerely trust the public will not fall for this downright despicable method of doing business. Maybe advice could be obtained from the people of B.C. who fought it, and won.

Bernard Graham

STOUFFVILLE TRIBUNE

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