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Comment & Opinions

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EDITORIAL

Let's call a truce

What do the Olympic Winter Games and the military crisis between Iraq and the United States have in common?

Everything and nothing. Everything, because the eyes of the world are on the players in both arenas - sports and military. Everything, because in both situations people can watch competitors pit themselves against each other trying to prove who is the fastest, strongest, and mightiest.

And nothing. Because the military show of force against Iraq - whether in good conscience and moral necessity - is the antithesis of what the Olympic spirit is all about.

The ancient Greeks held Olympiads every four years to allow athletes to participate in events such as foot races, boxing and wrestling. Even back then, a special truce was declared during that period of the games and any wars were suspended to allow athletes and spectators to enjoy the spectacle in safety.

Prizing the Olympic values of physical and mental development and competition without warfare, France's Pierre de Coubertin revived the idea of the Olympic Games in the late 1800s, resulting in the first Olympic Games being held in 1896.

Since then, warfare and terrorism has threatened the peaceful Olympic movement several times. Who can forget the massacre of Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Games? Or the boycott of the 1980 Olympics by many countries over Russia's invasion of Afghanistan?

Let us hope that the world's athletes can exemplify the Olympic spirit of competition with guts and not guns, skills and not smart-bombs. Let's pray that the men behind the military machines in both Iraq and the United States find peaceful ways to resolve their conflict - and turn off their radar screens and on their TVs.



Dogs make good news; bylaws do not

Dog shows, home and trade shows and an Elvis weekend are full of fun and full of life - anyone who objects is full of himself.

I'm echoing a statement made by Ward 5 Councillor Judy Scala in regards to the legality of the upcoming dog show. "Common sense will prevail."

Despite a silly bylaw mixup, Stouffville will still go to the dogs on the weekend.

More than 1,600 dogs will arrive in town to compete in the Ontario Breeders' Association's annual four-day show to be held at the Stouffville Country Market, beginning Feb. 13.

About 10,000 people will attend while dog lovers will pump some \$150,000 into the local economy.



Off the Record

Joan Ransberry

I'll be there. I know zap about dog competitions. But, I like dogs. I also like the Country Market. It's got character.

The upcoming dog show was an item at council last week. I paid close attention. I've been in the news game long enough to know that dog stories are always a hit with the readers.

On the other hand, if the subject is zoning bylaws, the readers bail out in great numbers.

With the greatest respect to all

bylaw enforcement officers, planners and politicians, stories about zoning are sleepers. And, I get nervous when the readers slip into a coma.

Here's a fact of life: Readers know what they want. If a reporter writes about laws, the readers are counting on stories about murder, armed robbery, prostitution and kidnapping.

I can't blow you away with a story about General Zoning Bylaw #87-34, but I'm asking you to stick with this. I'll take 30 seconds.

Under permitted uses in the zoning bylaw, as it applies to the Country Market, dog shows are out, home and trade shows are out, strawberry festival events, the Elvis weekend, likewise, a car show and a chili cookoff.

Because all the good stuff is out,

common sense dictates that the bylaw needs to be amended. But, in keeping with a provincial law, a public meeting must be held before an amendment can be granted.

The process takes time. The public meeting is early March, while it's expected that the zoning will be adjusted soon after.

In the meantime, local council, in its wisdom, is looking the other way when it comes to the dog show and the local business.

I think Country Market adds much to Stouffville. I'm confident that Country Market officials, the town and the public will soon iron out a fair working relationship. As a bonus, this will spare our readers any more dull stories about zoning bylaws. See you at the dog show.

City proofreading job was hard on the old eyes

Moonlighting becomes me. Last week, for a change of pace, I took a couple of days out to ply my (rusty) trade as a proofreader at a design company in the city, checking copy on food and beverage packaging.

The work was not what you would call intellectually stimulating, but it did make me realize that lunch prepared with fresh ingredients is less likely to make a person glow in the dark than some examples of the pre-packaged variety.

Of the massive index of ingredients listed for one of the aforementioned nuclear snacks, references to anything approximating real food were rare, and most of those had gross-sounding stuff added to them. My literary acumen was of little use, since Shakespeare and his ilk were disinclined to write soliloquies on



Kate's Corner

Kate Gilderdale

such gourmet delights as xanthan gum, carrageenan or sodium erythorbate.

Adding to the challenge was the tiny, perfect typeface which would have been indecipherable even when I was in my prime, and which now required a powerful magnifying glass to decode. Each word had to be painfully spelled out and by the time I had done my two days hard labour, crouched like Bob Cratchit over the accounts' ledger in "A Christmas Carol," a bracing one-and-a-half hour crawl up the Don Valley Park-

way in a raging snowstorm seemed almost like a vacation.

As I detoured through Markham on my second day, avoiding as many traffic snarl-ups as possible, I couldn't help noticing the new road signs which have begun to spring up, presumably in response to the growing dimness of boomers' eyesight. The immensity of their lettering was in such stark contrast to my ingredient lists that I was transfixed.

Gazing up at them, I felt as though I had shrunk, like Alice in Wonderland, or been fed some hallucinatory drug which was altering my perception of the everyday world.

It was almost a relief to arrive downtown and squint at the regular signs, which are so minute and posted so close to intersections that even the young and sight-enhanced have been known to drive straight through

instead of turning left or right.

At the end of my sojourn in the city, I was asked to submit a time sheet. This task was far more daunting than the job itself and required a degree in higher mathematics, since the amount of time spent on each task had to be broken down into fractions and totalled to accurately represent my hours.

My stress level was exacerbated by a miniature parking spot, which required me to reverse in at an acute angle, while simultaneously checking the rearview mirror and a large concrete post located uncomfortably close to my left front fender.

To my astonishment, I parked there not once, but twice, leaving the post and my car unscathed.

Now that I've upgraded my skills, I'm thinking of applying for a proofreading position with the Markham Works Department.

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