

Stouffville Tribune

A Metroland community newspaper
9 Heritage Rd., Markham, Ont., L3P 1M3

Publisher: Ian Proudfoot
General Manager: Alvin Brouwer
Editor in Chief: Brenda Larson
Director of Advertising: Debra Weller

Deputy Editor:
Debra Kelly
Editor:
Jim Mason
Production Manager:
Pam Nichols
Distribution Director:
Barry Goodyear
Online Publishing Manager:
Margaret Fleming

Classified Manager:
Ann Campbell
Retail Sales Manager:
Stephen Mathieu
Inside Sales Manager:
Stacy Allen
Business Manager:
Rob Lazaruko
Office Manager:
Vivian O'Neil

OPINION

TELEPHONE

(905) 294-2200 / (416) 798-7624

FAX: (905) 294-1538

EMAIL: newsroom@econsun.com



Frank Daggett

Movie complexes kill older theatres, but often aren't viable

Remember your hometown movie theatre?

The squeaky seats, the sticky floor, the musty smell and those cracked, faraway screens? A theatre where you just knew that big, tall guy would sit right in front of you?

How about \$2 Tuesdays, when you'd stand freezing in line waiting to see the newest release, hands shoved deep in your pockets, blowing frosty air, laughing and joking with your buddies. Maybe you'd spot your teacher or your hockey coach or, far better, some cute girls from school.

I had those memories recently when I heard Loews Cineplex Odeon had filed for bankruptcy protection, dimming the lights at 25 theatres across Canada, including at The Promenade in Thornhill, and at 21 in the U.S.

Being a movie buff, theatres interest me. When I first moved to Toronto, I was pretty impressed by the movie complex near me. It had multi-screens, comfortable seating and plenty of buttery popcorn and cola. Plus it offered matinees at off-prices — what more could you ask? It was the height of movie-going luxury at the time.

Now there's Famous Players' Silver City, Colossus theatres and AMC Theatres, mega-plexes with mega-prices to match. What can an old-time theatre do?

Short of trumpeting low, low ticket prices and that "air of nostalgia", the outlook seems grim.

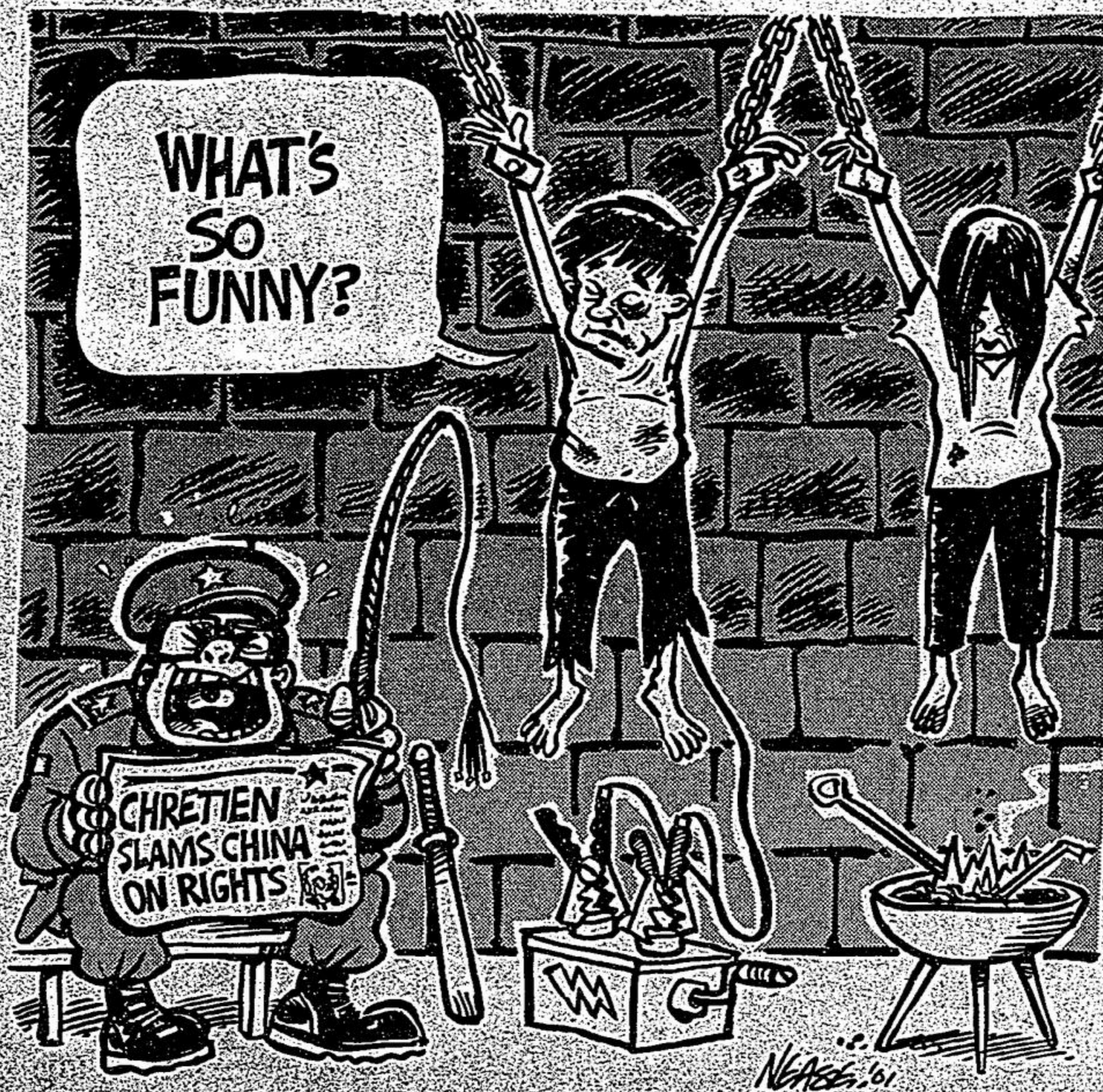
But it's also grim for the companies that own the megaplexes, since their newest creations are only taking viewers away from their older, smaller venues. What an exercise in poor planning.

When the colossal theatres sprang up, a few of the "out-of-date" theatres were closed, leaving too many seats for too few moviegoers.

It's funny, the rumoured buyer of Cineplex is none other than Onex's Gerry Schwartz, who just bought Chapters. Funny because this bigger-is-better mentality reminds me of the Chapters/Indigo phenomenon, where consumers were urged to abandon their local bookseller for the big-box bookstore where they could relax with a trendy coffee in a cosy reading chair. Well, people went in to read and have a cuppa, alright, but they didn't buy books.

I wonder if, in time, moviegoers will also become disenchanted with the cavernous complexes and return to the theatres of their youth — where they saw their first R-film or went on their first date.

Maybe Giuseppe Tornatore told it best in the film Cinema Paradiso, where the old movie theatre was the heart of the community, the projectionist a town celebrity and the movies were something to be shared by all.



LETTERS

Doug Walker article was 'a typical character assassination'

Your recent article regarding Mr. Doug Walker was a typical character assassination in which the bullets come from an undisclosed source and although they always hit the target, they quite often miss the mark.

Here is just one example. Mr. Walker did not "advertise for young actresses" a couple of years ago. It was, in fact, a published audition call for a show produced by a local theatre company.

My daughters responded to the call, auditioned before a panel and were given roles in the production, along with 40 other young people. Mr. Walker conducted the cast, the orchestra and, of course, himself with decorum and a high level of professionalism that is characteristic of everything he undertakes.

You clearly missed the mark on this one. How many others did you miss in your assassination attempt?

Fortunately, Doug Walker has many friends who are giving him support and encouragement to carry on with his life as a leader in music and as a leader of people. If we judge him at all, it will be on his merits, which vastly outweigh a mistake in discretion made 23 years ago.

Doug is still "Mr. Walker" to students who studied music under his direction for the past two decades. His contribution to the community through his leadership in music in a concert band, theatre companies, choral groups and jazz festivals cannot be matched by any one. Mr. Walker will get through this media debacle and get on with his life. His friends will make sure of that.

DAVE DUGGAN
Stouffville

Cell phones shouldn't become an obstacle to driving safely

Re: Please hang up... and try your call somewhere else, a story on cell phone etiquette, Feb. 1.

Everything has to be done quickly in this fast-paced society. Sometimes, we wish each of us could have two pairs of hands, so that a multitude of things could be accomplished at the same time. Unfortunately, our predecessors did not evolve this way and the reality is

that each of us only has a pair of hands. The only solution to get things finished quickly is to be able to multi-task.

In daily life, it is not difficult to see people making use their ability of multi-tasking. The most usual scene we encounter is using a cell phone while driving. There is little doubt that cell phones are convenient, but the benefit brought by this device should not become an obstacle to driving safely. It takes a great concentration to drive. We all know the truth that the road is one of the most dangerous places.

Sometimes the driver only has to pay for repairs after the accident, however, there are more incidents where accidents cost more than money. It could be bodily injury, or psychological effect. There are also cases where people are paralysed or sometimes even die. It is indeed advisable that people should prevent an irreversible mistake.

With all the tragic accidents that have occurred, how can people still be willing to jeopardize their lives by conducting conversations with cell phones while driving?

ZABRINA MOK
Markham

Blow's sentence suggests Tories' 'get tough' policy is inconsistent

Open letter to Ontario Premier Mike Harris and York North MPP Julia Munro

I have serious doubts about our justice system and the penalties related to "white-collar" crimes. It is becoming difficult to pick up a newspaper without reading about major fraud two or three times a day.

A former friend, Stouffville businessman

David Blow, was convicted recently of more than 70 counts of defrauding victims of \$7.2 million over 11 years. He was sentenced to 54 months in prison.

The sentencing disturbs me greatly. I thought the Tory government has a "get tough" policy on criminals. The York Regional Police major fraud unit interviewed more than 100 people and spent much time and tax dollars getting information about this case.

They did an excellent job and were available to victims whenever they required time. They amassed more than 30 victim impact statements and had them placed on record. The victims were told these statements could be read out at the hearing. It appears part of the shameful deal the Crown attorney and lawyers made before the hearing and sentencing was that Blow would be allowed to speak — not the victims. How just is this?

Justice Bruce Shilton stated the sentence imposed was at the low end of the range he could have considered. He took the advice of Blow's lawyer to take into account the time and money saved when Dave Blow agreed to plead guilty and help police.

He didn't take into consideration the many seniors who scrimped and saved and worked overtime to save for decades and had their money stolen in an instant.

RICK BRUSHETT
Mount Albert

Correction

A letter about same-sex marriages in Tuesday's Economist & Sun contained an incorrect name. The correct name of the author is M. Javed Akbar. We regret the error.

LETTERS POLICY

Stouffville Tribune welcomes your letters. All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The newspaper reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space. Write: Letters to the Editor, 9 Heritage Rd., Markham Ont., L3P 1M3. Email: letters@econsun.com

Stouffville Tribune

Serving the community since 1888



Canadian Circulations Audit Board Member



Ontario Press Council

Canadian Publications Mail Product Sales Agreement #1403419
Subscription rates by mail: 1 year: \$69.55 (Tuesdays only)

Phone: (905) 294-2200
Fax: (905) 294-1538

Classified:
1-800-743-3353

Distribution
(905) 294-8244

distribution@econsun.com

Stouffville Tribune, published every Thursday and Saturday, is one of the Metroland Printing, Publishing and Distributing Ltd. group of newspapers, which includes the Ajax/Pickering News Advertiser, Alliston Herald/Courier, Barrie Advance, Barry's Bay This Week, Bolton Enterprise, Brampton Guardian, Burlington Shopping News, Burlington Post, City Parent, Collingwood/Wasaga Connection, East York Mirror, Erin Advocate/Country Routes, Etobicoke Guardian, Flamborough Post, Georgetown Independent/Acton Free Press, Kingston This Week, Lindsay This Week, Midland/Penetanguishene Mirror, Milton Canadian Champion, Milton Shopping News, Mississauga News, Newmarket Aurora, Georgina Era-Banner, Northumberland News, North York Mirror, Oakville Beaver, Oakville Shopping News, Orillia Today, Oshawa/Whitby/Clarington/Port Perry This Week, Peterborough This Week, Richmond Hill/Thornhill/Vaughan Liberal, Scarborough Mirror, Stouffville Tribune, Today's Seniors, Uxbridge Tribune and City of York Guardian.