



Appointment with Pohlman Turned off by hype

By Ralph Pohlman

It's about time for another of my rants and maybe a couple of inane comments.

Let me begin by saying that I have not read *The Da Vinci Code*. Nor do I intend to. And I'm not going to see the one-star blockbuster movie either. I'll even tell you why.

Generally it is because I don't have much respect for public tastes and enthusiasms, which are a little like lemmings toppling over cliffs. When something becomes really popular, it is usually crap.

Take, for example, that book of a couple of years ago that was on the New York Times bestseller list, called *The Celestine Prophecy*, which was about as sensible as a hubcap and did for bull-dung what Rev. Jim Jones did for Grape Kool-Aid. All sorts of people were reading it, talking about it and even believing in it. Now there was a piece of crap. It was followed by another best-selling piece of junk called *The Eleventh Prophecy* or something like that.

But back to *The Da Vinci Code*. All the columnists, and even the church, just keep the controversy going, which sells even more books. My advice? Ignore it. It will go away and be as disposable as a paper towel.

It is the hype that bothers me, too. Maybe it's just that I don't appreciate being told what to like or to do. Intrusive advertising that sits up there like Don King's hair works just the opposite on me. It turns me off.

I could make a whole list of that kind of stuff.

But I do have some good news.

As reported in *The National Post*, a recent study by Dr. Bryan Raudenbush of Wheeling Jesuit University in West Virginia hints that eating milk chocolate may boost brain function. Now there's something I can accept. And from a Jesuit, too. Apparently a group of volunteers (unfortunately I wasn't one of them) consumed on four separate occasions, 85 grams of milk chocolate and 85 grams of dark chocolate. After a 15-minute digestive period they completed a variety of neuropsychological tests designed to assess cognitive performance, memory, attention span, reaction time and problem solving. Milk chocolate scores were significantly higher than for other intake or conditions. Impulse control was improved, too. Chocolate, anyone? Have some before you write that exam.

Every once in a while you read about some group of drunken louts going into the local cemetery and tipping over tombstones or doing significant vandalism in their town. They usually get some kind of probation and have to perform community service. I'm

not okay with that.

I'd like to suggest that the courts reinstitute a sentence that hasn't been used since...oh, I don't know...maybe the Middle Ages. It is called Exile... plus restitution.

My version would actually be what might be called a "Reverse Exile". In the old days someone would be exiled to a remote island from which escape was impossible. Or maybe Siberia.

My suggestion is that these culprits not be exiled to somewhere, but that they be exiled from their community. Since they have demonstrated that they have only contempt for the values and mores of their fellow citizens, they have forfeited the privilege of living there.

It would go something like this; "You can live anywhere you like, but not here. You can live in Hamilton or Calgary or anywhere else but you are forbidden to enter into this community for a period of one year."

Now I'm not so naïve as to expect that, in this permissive age, such a sentence would actually be passed or even upheld on appeal. But I like it anyway.

That's it for today.

A FOND FAREWELL TO A WONDERFUL COMMUNITY

By Kate Gilderdale
Stouffville Free Press

After 14 years working in local financial planning services, Signy Lawson is retiring from the Independent Planning Group and embarking on some new adventures with her husband, Doug.

In 1992, Signy and Carol Clements joined forces to open Money Concepts in a small office at the west end

of town, on the north side of Main Street. Five years ago, having outgrown their original office, they moved into a newly-constructed building at Main and Albert St. South.

Signy will miss "the wonderful community of Stouffville," but is excited about the next stage of her life. "Our first plan is to spend some time travelling across western Canada and visiting friends and family out there," she said. "In the fall we'll be doing some major travelling around the world."

Destinations include Iceland, "which is my background, and Scotland, which is Doug's background." The couple are also starting a new life in British Columbia. "We're going to be living about as far west as you can go in Canada; on the far west coast of Vancouver Island. We're very much outdoors people; we love hiking, gardening and landscaping, although it may be a bit of a challenge trying to landscape the side of a mountain," she added, laughing.

Although she's looking forward to the move, she acknowledges that she will be sad to say goodbye to her many friends in Stouffville. "We've been here for over 15 years, which is a big portion of my life, and I've enjoyed it very much. We've certainly put down roots and made great friends in the community."

Heritage Railway to introduce new board

By Kate Gilderdale
Stouffville Free Press

An information meeting on the York Durham Heritage Railway will be held at the Stouffville train station on June 14 at 7:30 p.m.

The YDHR will introduce its new board and invites members of the public to join discussion on future programs and plans for the railway, which starts its 2006 schedule on June 4. The organization is supported by the downtown Business Improvement Area and the Whitchurch-Stouffville Chamber of Commerce.

Everyone is welcome to attend.

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