

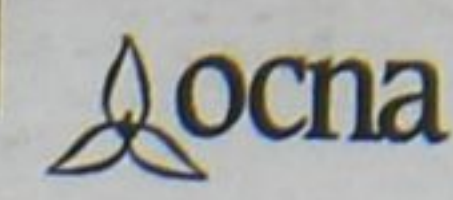
WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE THIS MONTH

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Local News Views Happenings
whitchurch Stouffville this month

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In order to keep tax increases to a minimum council will be forced to cut corners here and there...



Opinion

Turning Off and Tuning Out

In our brave new world, you don't have to turn on your television to be aurally assaulted by commercial messages, you can just pop into Blockbuster or Shoppers.

These days, increasing numbers of retail chains are taking advantage of a captive audience to pitch their products and 'specials' in-store, a tactic which drives some of us out the door and straight to the competition. Fortunately our town offers alternatives to the chains, but with the expansion of the latter, small, independent merchants are in danger of being driven out of business, leaving hapless consumers at the mercy of increasingly intrusive marketing techniques, not to mention lack of genuine choice.

Attention shoppers: if you don't want to listen to a disembodied voice-over delivering a health and wellness lecture interspersed with commercials while you purchase your deodorant, you can visit downtown Stouffville and enjoy personal service brought to you live by your friendly, local pharmacist.

We would be the last to deny that advertising is a legitimate and useful way of promoting products and services, and this publication would not exist without the support of local advertisers, but today's ubiquitous voice-over commercials carry echoes of George Orwell's chilling classic 1984. In our view, the increasing reliance on in-store promotional propaganda is so annoying that we find ourselves almost nostalgic for the bad old days of mere Musak.

Taking freedom for granted in a turbulent world

Living in a society which allows and even encourages debate, it's all too easy to take our freedom for granted. We can rail against the things that annoy us, complain publicly about government corruption and engage in open discussion about everything from religion to politics. Millions of others, however, are not so lucky, as a letter from a reader who is a member of Amnesty International eloquently reminds us.

He is one of a group of local citizens who have been working tirelessly on behalf of a democratically-elected member of the National League for Democracy in Myanmar who, in 1997, was jailed by the military junta which overturned the election results and seized control of the country. This woman is imprisoned under horrific conditions, a plight which is all too familiar in many parts of the world.

We in Canada may not always agree with each other's opinions, but we are extremely fortunate to be able to express them.

Letters

Put citizens before developers, reader says

To the Editor:

In preparing this year's budget, I ask this of council: put the needs of citizens over developers. For me, this means I would like services, such as Latham Gallery, the library and the swimming pools, funded so that current service levels are maintained. It means road maintenance

and other infrastructure is a priority.

It also means to me that I don't want a tax increase to pay for more staff in development services. I wish to emphatically state that I'm not suggesting current staff work harder. I'm suggesting that developers need to get used to waiting longer before their

files can be reviewed. Our town can't support their needs.

Similarly, I question whether the fire department requires more funds for existing citizens, or to prepare for 'growth'. If the latter, then I don't want my tax dollars paying for it.

Jim Priebe
 Stouffville

Sounding Off

Do you think they should ban fighting in hockey?



DEREK EMMERSON

No. If they ban fighting, players will find another way like stick work. Players need a venue to release emotions.



JEFF GIBSON

No they shouldn't ban it. It's part of the sport and it gives excitement to the fans.



DARCY CAIRNS

No, but the coaches should keep their players under control.



SHELLEY PAINTER

No, I don't think they should ban fighting but I don't think it should be the focal point of the sport like it seems to be.



NICKY RAMER

Yes, they should ban fighting in hockey. I know it is penalized now but the penalties should be tougher. It shouldn't be part of the game.