

LIMITING FREEDOMS

Canadians in general are usually deferential when it comes to government and policing powers.

During times of great calamities, such as 9/11, Canadians grudgingly agree to the state imposing limits on their movements in the name of public safety. And as technology has become ever more sophisticated and pervasive, we have accepted a slow invasion into our privacy believing it is for our benefit.

But as various governments, including Hamilton, deal with this unprecedented health crisis, there is a disturbing acceptance by the public of further encroachments by government into the public's limits on movements, speech, how we conduct business and even use open space.

Hamiltonians have been more or less accepting during the last four months to limits placed on the ability to use public facilities, engage with government, and even on how we gather with family, friends and relatives. Hamilton is expected to mandate that people wear masks in all indoor facilities, again another invasion of our bodies, but for most of us an acceptable encroachment in a time of pandemic.

What is not acceptable is how various governments have slowly taken advantage of our willingness to give up certain freedoms in times of crisis.

The most obvious for Hamiltonians is the limitations on public involvement in council decisions. At a time of a pandemic there is a desperate need for dialogue with the public, yet Hamilton is limiting how the public can speak to council. While there some impetus to allow citizen advisory committees to operate, the process is evolving too slowly.

There also remains no process for allowing residents to speak directly to council except through written letters, a poor substitute to in-person or electronic dialogue.

There is also the matter of the city's Emergency Operations Centre. While it seems to have been ably steering the city through the pandemic waters, how do we measure that success? Questions remain on how long the centre will operate, how does it operate and at what cost to taxpayers? Council granted administrative staff extra powers in March without really properly explaining or consulting with the public in this emergency.

There is even more concern of government overreach at the provincial level as Premier Doug Ford proposes to extend some of the pandemic emergency orders that could possibly be extended into 2022.

Ford, who has cried that "I don't want a power grab," has argued the legislation will allow his government to quickly extend or change public health measures as the province emerges from the strict lockdown rules it has been under since March.

While Canadian governments are far less onerous than other world leaders in using the pandemic to repress dissent, crack down on civil liberties and expand their powers, limiting public discussion about governments can and should use their powers is a fundamental detriment in a democratic society.

It states the university abhors a vacuum. It needs to be filled. If our rights and freedoms that have been hard-fought to keep are allowed to erode in the name of public safety, will anyone notice when government encroachment fills that vacuum to the detriment of our freedoms?

TO LEARN HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR OWN CONTENT VISIT HAMILTONNEWS.COM



THE SHOW MUST GO ON

ARTS OF AUGUST WILL CONTINUE SAYS COLUMNIST GORDON CAMERON



GORDON CAMERON
Column

For the past several year's it's been my pleasure to be involved with Living Rock Ministries Arts of August program that showcases the work of Hamilton's youth. For me, it all started in 2017 when I was asked to act as MC during the festival's fashion show.

Every year I've been involved has been a joy. It's great to be able to play even a small role in helping to celebrate the creativity and skill of your local youth.

Of course, like so much else, this year's event will be very different from those in years past thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Instead of a gala, the event will be held virtually, with the artists and performers showcasing their work online in a special show. The panel of judges will still pick the winners and it'll be my job to tie it all together with a series of video clips. It'll be quite different than in years past, but the heart of the event will remain beating.

The program came out of a 2003 anti-racism initiative by Living Rock as a way to provide a voice and a means of creative expression for the youth it serves. Over the years, the contests themes have usually had a social justice angle, with this year featuring works exploring peace, equality, love and culture.

All youth from 13-25 are welcome to submit their work, which can take the form of visual arts, photography, sculpture, poems, articles, and short pieces of music, spoken word, dance, drama and films.

To participate, youth must register and submit their art by Aug. 15. You can register online at

<https://forms.gle/kzxZkWVEX4ZNyrwd6> and submit art to aoa@livingrock.ca or at the Living Rock, 30 Wilson St.

Every year I've been a part of this project I've always been struck by the talent, creativity and variety of the entries. I've also learned a lot from the professional artists who offer their constructive critiques to the participants. I know from experience as a writer how valuable an outside eye can be when it comes to honing your craft.

However, this year won't be like last year or the year before. It'll be something different, which makes it all the more exciting and, for me at least, a little more difficult. After all, how will I know if the audience is laughing at my corny jokes?

Of course, even though I'm the MC, I'm not the star of the show and as long as I'm able to help display the artistic talent of Hamilton's youth, it'll be job done.

— Gordon Cameron is the group managing editor for Hamilton Community News. gocameron@hamiltonnews.com

ABOUT US

This newspaper, published every Thursday, is a division of the Metroland Media Group Ltd., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Torstar Corporation. The Metroland family of newspapers is comprised of more than 80 community publications across Ontario.

This newspaper is a member of the National NewsMedia Council. Complainants are urged to bring their concerns to the attention of the newspaper and, if not satisfied, write The National NewsMedia Council, Suite 200, 890 Yonge St., Toronto, ON M4W 2H2. Phone: 416-340-1981 Web: www.mediacouncil.ca

nnc
National
NewsMedia Council

ocna

mpearson@hamiltonnews.com
[@HamiltonCommunityNewsOfficial](https://www.facebook.com/HamiltonCommunityNewsOfficial)
[@AncDunNews](https://www.instagram.com/AncDunNews)

WHO WE ARE

VP, Regional Publisher

Kelly Montague

General Manager

Nelson Parreira

Group Managing Editor

Gordon Cameron

News Editor Mike Pearson

Director of Advertising

Melinda Therrien Bos

Office Manager

Lorna Lester

Regional Production Manager

Rhonda Ridgway

CONTACT US

Ancaster News | Dundas Star

333 Arvin Ave.

Stoney Creek, ON L8E 2M6

Phone: 905-523-5800

Fax: 905-664-3319

Letters to the editor

All letters must be fewer than 320 words and include your name and telephone number for verification purposes. We reserve the right to edit, condense or reject letters. Published letters will appear in print and/or online at hamiltonnews.com

Delivery

For all delivery inquiries, e-mail customerservice@metroland.com or call 1-866-838-8960.

Accrédité
FDSA
Accredited