

Halton Hills Wrong to Threaten Lawsuits

Freedom of expression has been upheld in an important court case involving The Town of Halton Hills and the webmaster of The Halton Herald, a community news Web site.

The Town of Halton Hills sued Al Kerouac for defamation, but Judge David Corbett dismissed the case, stating that “no government may bring an action in defamation.” The judge went on in a thorough report, declaring “The government may not imprison, or fine, or sue, those who criticize it. . . . Litigation is a form of force, and the government must not silence its critics by force.”

This ruling deserves to become

widely known, so that media outlets for small local areas in particular, feel safe to do their journalistic duty, namely,

report fully on municipal activities. In the recent past, The Town of Halton Hills has

threatened “slapsuits” as an effective way to silence criticism. This ruling should prevent municipalities from trying this from now on.

The Halton Herald can be read at www.thehaltonherald.ca.

Branimir Zlamalik

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The Wonder of Women's Beach Volleyball

Competitive women's beach volleyball fascinates me. It's a gruelling sport in blistering heat, and with only two players per team, there's no way anyone can coast. Every move a player makes is scrutinized by spectators. And the players wear the tiniest of bikinis.

When I first saw it played in Toronto's Beaches in the early '80s, I was stunned. Now that it's an Olympic sport, I remain transfixed whenever it's on TV.

The women's bodies amaze me.

There is not one ounce of fat on them. Their bodies are strong and tireless, efficient machines that function well for hours in blinding sun. Sand gets all over them, but they literally brush it off and keep going. They seem to have all-over tans without tan lines. Their strong, lean bodies are beautiful.

Although they are fully grown, their bodies seem pre-pubescent. Their breasts are small and athletic. Their hips are more boyish than womanly. They look as I imagine Amazons to have been.

Just like Amazons, they appear to

be oblivious to male spectators. They concentrate on the sport completely. Whatever reasons men may have for watching, the players never encourage sexual titillation. They seem to have an un-Canadian healthy attitude to their near-naked bodies. They show no self consciousness or shame.

They seem like young girls before they become sexually aware. They remind me of the glorious freedom of being 12 years old, before dramatic changes to the body bring on terrible awkwardness.

I admire their athleticism in extreme conditions, and respect their dedication to sports over gaining attention from men.



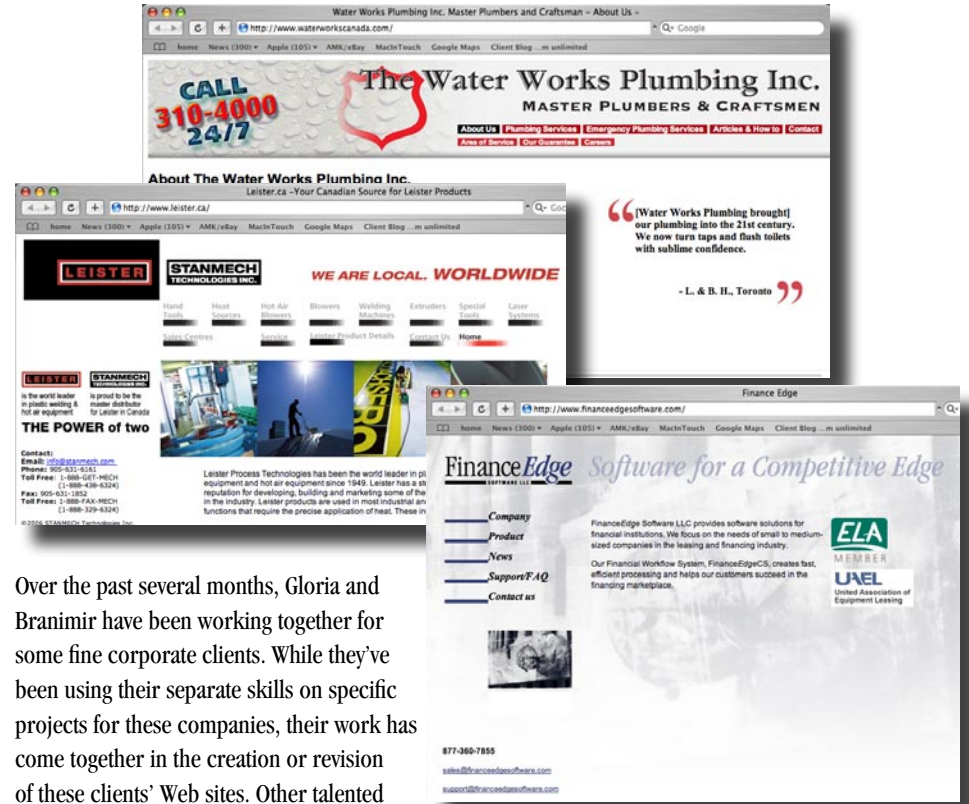
Working with Creative Talent New and Improved Sites

Most people have enough common sense to recognize that creating positive working relationships will result in better achievements. They also realize that if they're hiring outside creative talent, they should take advantage of their training, experience and expertise. It makes sense to get your money's worth. If you think you can do things better yourself, don't engage someone's services.

Here are some things that wise people do, and don't do, when working with creative consultants.

1. Know their names. If you're bad with names, keep their business cards in front of you during meetings. Apologize for slip ups. I met with one client who kept referring to the designer by my name. Finally I said "The designer's name is Mary. I'm Gloria." The client didn't even blink.
2. Permit creative freedom. If you want creativity, don't give instructions so detailed that they state the exact arrangement of every element. The client told me they wanted something new, but the brief outlined the specific content of each block of text.
3. Don't give conflicting instructions. I was told that previous copy should be greatly reduced, but later, was told that everything that had been stated before needed to be used again.
4. Say something positive. Even if you don't like anything that's been done, look for something good to say, even if it's just "Thanks for getting this to us so promptly."
5. Avoid snap judgements. Take some time to consider the approach the creative team presents. If it has taken some time to develop a concept, draft or layout, it's worth examining and appreciating. A designer I worked with called a client to check that a layout had been delivered. The client said that it

- had just appeared on his desk. Less than five minutes later, the client called back to say that it was "all wrong."
6. Acknowledge your own instructions. Something can hardly be "all wrong" if it follows specific instructions. It would be better to say "We thought we wanted this, but now that we see it, sorry, we think we need something different."
7. Respond quickly. Get back with your comments promptly. It's not fair to have no contact with the creative person until she follows up a week later, and then to complain that you've run out of time and have to use something that's less than satisfactory.
8. Be aware of your own attitude. If you've been forced to take on a project you don't want, don't blame the chosen talent. It's better to discuss this and see it as a creative challenge.
9. Recognize that you can be "fired" too. Competent professionals don't have to work with you. If the relationship is abusive or even just unpleasant, we will drift to clients who appreciate our work.
10. Think of your own reputation. Creative professionals often know each other. If they consider you unreasonable, word can get around. Next time you need outside creative expertise, you may be left with people who are inexperienced or desperate for work. The best will be unavailable.



Over the past several months, Gloria and Branimir have been working together for some fine corporate clients. While they've been using their separate skills on specific projects for these companies, their work has come together in the creation or revision of these clients' Web sites. Other talented people have also played important roles in getting these sites up or relaunched. Yet Branimir and Gloria are the common element in these three sites:

www.Leister.ca – A site maintained by STANMECH Technologies Inc. of Burlington, the master distributor for Leister in Canada.

www.financeedgesoftware.com – Finance Edge Software LLC provides software solutions for companies in the leasing and financing industry.

www.waterworkscanada.com – The Water Works Plumbing Inc. is a company of master plumbers and service technicians for part of the GTA. And check out their plumber's blog!

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