



The Wrong Foot

By Wayne and Tamara



I have been married to my husband for 19 years. We met in high school and had a child right at graduation. After high school and some college we decided to marry. I really didn't want to marry him nor did I want to continue the relationship with premarital sex. I wanted my freedom to date people and then see if he was right for me.

He didn't want to break up and he didn't want me to see other people, so I decided to stay, thinking he must really love me. I couldn't see my way out. I told him, let's get married or it's over. I didn't think he would marry me because he said he wasn't ready, but weeks after I broke it off he came back and agreed. So we were married.

I felt apprehensive about getting married, but I thought it was just cold feet. At the time I thought marriage would work out the kinks in our relationship, and the love we had for each other would overrule anything. Well, 19 years and two more children later I am utterly miserable.

He is now someone I do not like, and I don't think he likes me that much either, but he doesn't want to get a divorce. I do but I am afraid. Our oldest daughter moved out and we have two teenagers at home. Raising children together has been the best thing we've done. It's about the only thing we can agree on because everything else is a tug of war.

I want out.

But with the shaky economy and thoughts of being a single parent, I don't know if this would be the best time. Plus, if he doesn't agree to the divorce, it will be expensive and I will have to prove irreconcilable differences. At times I feel like I am pushing a man away from loving me. I am so confused. Jill

Jill, in the HBO series "The Sopranos," Carmela Soprano enjoys the lifestyle provided by her gangster husband, Tony. At the same time, she is dissatisfied with his crude ways. Contemplating divorce, Carmela goes to a therapist to find a simple answer to her dilemma, but she is taken aback by his bluntness. The therapist makes clear her husband is a mobster, and whether she stays or goes, Carmela intends to continue living off blood money.

You would like a simple solution, too, but in your own mind you are sidestepping the truth. Immediately after telling us you never loved your husband, you speak of the love you both had. Which is it?

It appears you gave him an ultimatum. Marry me, or I will date others. That isn't the wedding proposal most girls dream of, and if that is what happened, it wasn't the right way to begin a marriage. Most people don't like to say no, and that is why they often give in to high-pressure sales people. Is that what your husband did?

Look at what happened, examine it, and own it. There is no shame in admitting a mistake, when a mistake is made. Put your cards on the table with your husband, but before that, put your cards on the table with yourself. You are not the only person who ever mistook like, familiarity, and convenience for love.

Your yearning is telling you that you never had love and are still looking. Many women in your situation--trapped by economics and the prospect of single parenthood--go looking for another man and leave the marriage only when they have found one. But that is the low road, and you don't need to take the low road again.

We don't get more from less, and we don't get something from easy. First, be honest with yourself. Next, be honest with your husband. Then the two of you can decide where you honestly are. Wayne & Tamara

Dead and Gone...

The Same Price for Everybody

By Gary Payne, MBA

Founder of *FuneralCostOntario.ca*
The Fine Print



I have a PC Optimum card, and most of the time I scan it without giving it much thought. Groceries. Card. Points. Done. Every once in a while the app gives me an offer worth using, and I'm pleased with myself as though I somehow negotiated it. I did not negotiate anything. The computer offered it to me. There has been a lot of discussion lately about surveillance pricing, the idea that a company could use information it has about you to decide what price "you" should pay. Not what everyone should pay. You. If a box of cereal is \$5.99 for me and \$4.99 for the guy standing beside me because an algorithm thinks I'll tolerate the extra dollar, most of us know exactly how we feel about that. Loblaw says it doesn't happen in grocery. This summer, the company said surveillance pricing "does not exist in grocery" and that it will never use that kind of pricing. Fair enough.

But this week I went looking through the PC Optimum privacy material, and that is where the question gets more complicated. Loblaw's general privacy policy had just been updated, effective Sept. 30, while its separate loyalty notice spells out something much more familiar. PC Optimum is built to provide a "personalized experience." It uses past purchases and other information to tailor rewards to the things you buy most. In other words, the price on the shelf may be the same for both of us. The deal in our pockets may not be. You might get points on coffee because you buy coffee. I might get an offer on something completely different. Somebody else may get nothing at all.

That is not surveillance pricing in the way people usually mean it. Nobody has secretly added a dollar to my cereal. But if a personalized offer changes what I effectively pay, then the old idea that everybody walking through the same grocery store is having exactly the same transaction starts getting harder to defend. The shelf can still show one price while what you actually pay depends, at least partly, on who is holding the phone.

Ottawa has noticed the issue too. Bill C-36, tabled in June, is the federal government's latest attempt to rewrite private-sector privacy law, and its background material identifies "inappropriate surveillance pricing" as an unfair use of personal information the legislation is intended to address. At a media briefing, officials said the bill does not simply ban surveillance pricing. They pointed to possible benefits, including targeted discounts, and said the regulator would ultimately have to determine what counts as an appropriate use. Use what you know about me to make something more expensive and I'll probably be furious. Use what you know about me to make it cheaper and I may thank you for the points. Same data. Very different reaction.

The data itself has already caused trouble. In March, the federal Privacy Commissioner ruled on complaints from six PC Optimum members who had tried to delete their accounts. Loblaw removed names, email addresses and other direct identifiers, but retained information that included historical transaction data. During the investigation, Loblaw took the position that the remaining information had been effectively anonymized. The Privacy Commissioner found the company had not demonstrated that adequately, and Loblaw accepted the recommendations, including an independent review of its anonymization practices.

That part matters more than the points. The receipt used to come out of the machine and go into my pocket. Now the store can keep a memory of the transaction too: what I bought, when I bought it, what offers I used and what I tend to buy again. That history can then help decide what offer appears on my phone next Tuesday. There is nothing automatically sinister about any of this. The old grocery flyer was trying to influence what I bought too. Coupons did the same thing. So did 10 per cent Tuesdays, seniors' discounts, club cards and the paper coupon somebody clipped from the newspaper and carried around in a wallet for three weeks.

Which brings me to the obituary. Maybe "the same price for everybody" isn't dead. Maybe it never really existed. We have always found ways to charge one customer a little less than another. What has changed is who does the

clipping. It used to be me, at the kitchen table, with a pair of scissors and the grocery flyer. Now the coupon clips itself.

And it knows what I bought last week.

Who Wants Room Temperature Water?

Common Sense Health – Diana Gifford-Jones



Have North Americans become accustomed to excessively sweetened beverages? That's my theory after hosting guests from both Europe and Asia recently. Almost without exception, upon taking a sip of bottled iced tea, they remark on how sugary it is. One child declared it tasted "like syrup."

It's no small concern that North Americans have come to prefer sweeter foods and beverages. We also tend to go for colder drinks, not those at room temperature, and that's not helping. It's a lesser-known fact that cold temperatures reduce the perception of sweetness. The colder the drink, the less sweet it seems. At corner stores where people shop for refreshment, it's no small challenge to find selections not full of sugar.

I have been in enough convenience stores around the world to be frustrated at what they offer in this part of the world. Zero nutrition. Garbage drinks, candy, chips, and fatty fast food.

In a typical North American convenience store, stretches of refrigerated space are given over to soft drinks, sweetened iced teas, sports drinks, energy drinks, fruit drinks and flavoured beverages. Fifty per cent of the store may seem like an exaggeration, but it's not far off, and the other half contains chips, candy and other highly processed food. By contrast, a convenience store in Japan offers a very different experience. You will find some sweetened drinks, but you will also find an astounding assortment of unsweetened green tea, barley tea, oolong tea, black coffee, sparkling water and plain water. Unsweetened tea is not a niche health product. It is a regular beverage. It's a public health disaster that the North American beverage environment has become saturated with sweetness. And we should do some finger pointing, because taste is trainable.

If someone gets sickly sweet drinks often enough, that level of sweetness becomes familiar. Reduce the sweetness and, for a while, the drink may seem tasteless. But the palate adapts. What is astonishingly sweet to a child visiting from afar can become unremarkable to a local who has been drinking it for years.

We have become accustomed to beverages that are essentially liquid candy. The consequences involve high caloric intake and increased risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, dental cavities and everything that follows from these gateway diseases. Consumers need to get angry. Why should we have to navigate aisles filled with brightly packaged sugar water before finding plain water or unsweetened tea? Why

should we have to decipher labels only to discover that the beverage is loaded with sugar? And why, when governments are spending enormous sums dealing with obesity, diabetes and dental disease, are we so reluctant to challenge an industry that profits from selling the products that contribute to those problems?

I would like to see thousands of consumers join me in writing to the chief executives of the big beverage companies and convenience store chains. And to government regulators, too. For their absence of care, I have a strong message: shame on you! But we all should change our habits of our own initiative. Do not buy those awful drinks. The far better choice comes freely out of our faucets. Drink good old-fashioned water. Make your own unsweetened tea. Drink your coffee black. To the beverage executives, I'll add more scorn. You know exactly how much sugar you are putting into these products. You know that taste preferences can be shaped by repeated exposure. You know your customers include children who have not yet learned to question what they are drinking.

Protecting Agriculture While Planning for Responsible Growth in Oshawa Ward 1



Statement by Olaleye Oluwaolunlanke Candidate for Oshawa City Councillor – Ward 1

I would like to sincerely thank James Blair, everyone who participated in the Agricultural Summit, the farmers and agricultural stakeholders who contributed their experience, and those responsible for preparing the extensive report arising from these important discussions. The summit is important because the future of agriculture is not separate from the future of our cities. It is part of the same conversation about growth, food security, economic development, environmental stewardship, infrastructure and the kind of community we want to leave to future generations.

I have long held the view that a modern and growing city can coexist successfully with a strong rural and agricultural community. Urban growth and agriculture do not have to be opposing forces. Good planning should make room for both. Oshawa's own planning work recognizes that the northern half of the city retains a significant agricultural and rural component, supporting agriculture and food production, open spaces, rural settlements and agri-tourism. Ward 1 extends into this northern part of Oshawa, making the future of agriculture particularly relevant to the residents and landowners of our ward.

Farmland is more than vacant land waiting for development. Agricultural land must not simply be viewed as land waiting for residential, industrial or commercial development. It is productive infrastructure. Through photosynthesis, plants use carbon dioxide and water, release oxygen into the atmosphere and convert solar energy into carbohydrates that sustain food systems and wider ecosystems. Agriculture therefore contributes not only to our economy but also to our food supply, environmental sustainability and quality of life. The agricultural report reinforces another important point: farmland can also make a positive fiscal contribution to municipalities. Its Ontario analysis found that agricultural land contributes property-tax revenue while generally creating relatively limited demands on many categories of municipal services. The report concludes that protecting farmland is important not only for food security and economic resilience but also for long-term municipal fiscal health. Importantly, these are Ontario-level findings from the municipalities examined in the study and should not simply be treated as an Oshawa-specific financial estimate. They nevertheless provide valuable evidence that farmland should not automatically be regarded as economically inferior to development.

Growth must be smarter, not simply wider. - Oshawa is growing, and families need housing, employment opportunities, businesses and community infrastructure. The question is not whether we should grow, but how we grow responsibly. Before productive agricultural land is permanently removed from farming, we should examine opportunities to make more efficient use of land already within our developed urban areas.

That means encouraging appropriate infill, redevelopment, mixed-use development and greater density in locations capable of supporting it, rather than continually assuming that outward expansion is the only solution. This is not inconsistent with Oshawa's existing planning direction. The City's Official Plan already promotes higher-density, compact development and intensification in designated centres and corridors.

The Durham Official Plan similarly describes prime agricultural land as a finite, non-renewable resource and establishes policies intended to prevent fragmentation and loss of the agricultural land base.

Farmers must have a voice in decisions affecting their future. As a candidate for Ward 1, I believe farmers and agricultural landowners should be meaningfully included whenever planning decisions could affect agricultural operations. The summit report recommends Agricultural Advisory Committees as a way of ensuring farmers' knowledge and practical experience are incorporated into municipal decisions involving zoning, development and broader growth strategies. That principle deserves serious consideration. Municipal agricultural policy should therefore focus not only on preventing unnecessary farmland loss but also on creating conditions in which farming remains economically viable. My policy position would support consideration of measures that: · protect productive agricultural lands from unnecessary or premature conversion; · prioritize appropriate intensification, infill and redevelopment before unnecessary outward expansion; · provide farmers with a meaningful voice in municipal planning decisions; · support agricultural and on-farm diversified businesses where compatible with surrounding land uses; encourage young people and new farmers who want to enter agriculture; and · recognize farming as an important part of Oshawa's economic, environmental and community infrastructure.

The report itself warns that Ontario farmland continues to face pressure from residential, commercial and other non-agricultural uses and argues that municipalities have both economic and environmental reasons to preserve productive agricultural land. A balanced Oshawa - The objective should not be farms versus housing, rural versus urban, or farmers versus developers. The objective should be balance. We can build housing. We can attract businesses. We can accommodate population growth. We can strengthen our tax base. And we can protect the agricultural lands that help sustain us. These objectives require thoughtful planning rather than treating every undeveloped acre as the next development opportunity. For Ward 1, agriculture should remain part of our long-term economic and community strategy. Farmers should be regarded as partners in Oshawa's future, supported in keeping their operations productive and sustainable rather than being gradually displaced by development pressures.

The Agricultural Summit and its accompanying research provide an important foundation for that discussion. I appreciate everyone who contributed to it and, as a candidate for Ward 1, I believe its findings deserve serious consideration as Oshawa makes decisions about growth, land use and the future of our northern communities.

Olaleye Oluwaolunlanke Candidate for Oshawa City Councillor – Ward 1 Protecting what sustains us while planning responsibly for what comes next.