

Written by Editorial  
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The issue of the frequency of letters to the editor by some of our "regulars" became a hot topic of debate thanks to (ironically enough) a letter to the editor by Ted Douglas of Keremeos complaining about the frequency of Elvena Slump.

On a related note, a long-time subscriber popped into our office on Friday to complain about the frequency of Tom Isherwood's rants.

Others have told us that they love Elvena and Tom's letters, even though they often disagree with their viewpoint.

It's never been the belief of this editor to muzzle free speech provided it's not hateful, illegal, unfair or libelous. It's also our paper's belief that letters to the editor must be signed and pseudonyms prohibited.

It's the same philosophy shared by the majority of Herald readers. In 2009, this newspaper spent considerable resources on a customer survey and found that the bulk of readers wanted a word count (they settled on 400 words, although some wanted it reduced to 200; very few believed in unlimited words) but didn't support our suggestion of limiting readers to one letter per month. (This would kill rebuttals.)

Our competitors have regulars, even a newspaper as large as the Vancouver Sun. If you visit the chat sites, there are all kinds of people who make several posts daily. Talk radio, even in the larger markets, has a ton of regular callers.

Yes, regulars can be overbearing at times but as a reader, you can skip to the next letter if you don't like the name of the writer.

The Elvena Slumps of the world should not be jeered. When something seems wrong, it's quite possible that it is wrong. Citizens should never be discouraged from taking a keen interest in their community, even when it's perceived as being negative.