

# Planning has its pitfalls in any country



**John Sommer**  
IDÉAS AND THE ARTS

"To plan" means that the one who plans is convinced that planning is desirable. Therefore all planning activities, wherever we encounter them, are motivated by ideologies of one kind or another.

Planning under communist rule was (and is) based on the ideas of Karl Marx. The goal was to create a new man, one with a collective awareness seemingly superior to the money grubbing west-man, who, so went the argument, lusts for nothing but his (or her) own gratification. This marxist blueprint has repression written all over it. Accordingly the countries that were ruled by these beliefs until recently have become, for all practical purposes, unliveable.

Planning in non-communist countries seems to be free of the ideological taint and because of that is still enjoying the good will of the people who are affected by it.

In reality, however, planning departments, tucked away in every town of the country, are veritable breeding grounds of revolutionary change and never-ending confrontation. Their gods are not Marx and Lenin but Robert Moses and Sam Cass, their goal is to hand the world over to the motor car and to the highrise developer, and the result will be an unliveable world, not so much different from the one the communists brought about.

At this point, I am afraid, your eyes will glaze over and you will make the decision to read no further. Please, bear with me a moment longer.

Last Friday I went to the Campbell House Gallery on Main Street in Georgetown for the opening of an exhibition of paintings by Maggie Bol, a painter who lives in Stewarttown. To Ms. Bol, an immigrant from Holland, Canada is an object of curiosity and fascination. In these paintings she expresses respect and protective care towards these original inhabitants, who's land we took without giving them much in return. Upstairs her work has an even more disturbing edge. In her best paintings, "New Life", "Time is a Constant", and

"Immigration" to name a few, she depicts the neverending war we wage with the help of our overbearing inventions against a fragile balance of nature. These paintings are tragic because the outcome of the battle seems so certain: Nature will eventually be destroyed.

But could we not agree to keep this beautiful planet, the only home we have in a vast universe, alive and well? If we plan at all, isn't that what we should plan for?

I had entered into a conversation about these concerns with a couple from Mississauga and when we left the Campbell House Gallery together around 10 p.m., the temporary mall on Main Street was still filled with people who listened to a band that wailed a plaintive song into the balmy night air.

From the direction of the cultural centre came a stream of people who had watched a per-

formance in the theatre there and were now in search for more entertainment. It was a lovely scene in front of mighty Knox Church and the Mississauga couple enthused about it. They had never been to Georgetown before but though it such a handsome town that they would certainly want to come again. They loved the mall and hoped that it would become a permanent feature. They thought us so lucky that we had a main street off the highway. This one could be unique with even more trees and tables and chairs and fountains. A real people place that would draw visitors and shoppers from far away.

I didn't have the heart to tell them how endangered their charming impression of our town was. Will we be able to keep it that way or will the Georgetown we know and love become a victim of the presently prevailing ideology of

growth for growth sake?

Tonight, from 7 to 9:30 p.m., will be the opening of the great summer art exhibition with new works by the Rockwood sculptor Andreas Drehters, at the Gallery of the Halton Hills Cultural Centre. The exhibition is sponsored by "The Friends of the Halton Hills Libraries." It will continue to July 28.

On June 23, music composed for this exhibition by Robert Daigneault, will be performed three times during the day at 11

a.m., 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. in the Gallery of the Cultural Centre by Valerie Nichol. Admission is free.

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