

Letters

Silver Creek valley issues 'quite involved'

Dear Sir:

Further to the article "Residents question Region stance" in last Wednesday's issue of the Herald, the issues that affect the future of Silver Creek Valley are quite involved.

Fortunately, it is not too late to avoid sacrificing the natural environmental heritage of Georgetown for the sake of a new sanitary trunk sewer through sensitive Hungry Hollow Class 2 Provincially Significant wetlands because there is a clear alternative, the Main Street route.

Last week's article contained comments from a Region of Halton Planning and Public Works staff member that needed clarifying.

First, there is a statement about the Silver Creek option saying "this alternative will have no negative environmental impact on the valley." The Region of Halton's own Public Information Handout clearly states "there are some natural environment impacts associated with twinning of the Silver Creek Trunk Sewer, mainly vegetation and wetland impacts." The Region hopes to control construction procedures "to mitigate these impacts."

Second, the consultant's report apparently states "the disrupted

area caused by the construction of the sewer will return to its natural state over the long term." It is because of damage to the wetlands caused by the existing sewer in the valley that the consultant can make this claim. Also, the construction of access routes and possibly fencing through the valley would ensure that it will never again be in a "natural state."

Third, in talking about the alternate route there is the statement "Since the pump is run on electricity, a power outage in the area would cause the sewer to shut down." Once again, the Region's own Information Handout states that a Standby Power Generator would be included in the Main Street alternative. In fact, the Region of Halton is presently installing a diesel power generator in the Cedarvale Wells pumphouse, just yards from the proposed site for the sewer pump on Main Street!

A key point that has not been raised is why the Region of Halton has not explained how the current sewer expansion will be extended through to Georgetown West, the primary reason for the expansion in the first place. Is it possible that Halton is hoping to

proceed through Black Creek Valley, which so far has remained virtually untouched, and which is part of the same Environmentally Significant and Sensitive area as Silver Creek? This route was part of the second and third alternatives in the February 1988 Sewer Study prepared for the Region by R.E. Cliphsham Limited.

If there is the possibility that Black Creek Valley will become part of the sewer project, a full environmental assessment is surely warranted on the basis of the total impact on the Hungry Hollow E.S.A. The separation of the project into two distinct phases must then be taken as an attempt by the Region to avoid this complication.

Perhaps it is time for another intriguing element to be introduced. Should the Region select the Silver Creek Valley route over the Main Street route, private developers would be given the opportunity to argue that the environmental damage caused to the valley should allow them the granting of necessary approvals for the proposed golf course in the valley, denied so far on environmental grounds. Unfortunately, the pattern in Southern Ontario is for wetlands

to become golf courses which in turn become development sites.

If developers are unsuccessful in obtaining approvals for the golf course during the next seven years, the Town of Halton Hills has the unique opportunity to purchase these lands, over 400 acres for an amount of \$50,000. This is one of the conditions agreed to by Enterac in the Master Agreement signed several years ago between the Town and Enterac when the Georgetown South subdivision was approved.

We believe the proposal favouring the Silver Creek route by consultants Marshall Macklin Monaghan fails to reflect the generally recognized significance of wetlands. In July, "Options for a Greater Toronto Area Greenlands Strategy" recognized the importance of wetlands and expressed concern that many have been lost over time and much of the remainder continue to be subject to intense pressure as a result of increased urbanization.

We think readers should know that "A Greenlands Strategy for Halton" submitted to the Greater Toronto Greenlands Strategy by the Region of Halton in March, 1990 identifies both Black Creek and Silver Creek as two of seven

elements of a Greenland System in Halton. The Region of Halton advocates a system approach to Greenlands planning and the following quote from their submission is revealing:

"By a system approach, we mean that, for instance Environmentally Sensitive Areas contain many ecological interconnections which may not be immediately obvious to the untrained eye. The removal or disturbance of one part of the system will affect many other parts, sometimes in unexpected ways. As another example, the draining of wetlands in the upstream areas may result in increased flooding throughout the river system."

At this time, we strongly believe the Region of Halton should take a leadership role in establishing a Greenlands System. An important first step would be to acknowledge the damage that has already been caused to Silver Creek Valley by the existing trunk sewer, drop the twinning project and go back to the Main Street route originally favoured,

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Halton Hills.

Columnists

Only in America — no pity here

WASHINGTON - Some things happen in this country that you can't imagine occurring anywhere else.

Imagine, if you could, stepping into a downtown gun shop and walking away with powerful semi-automatic rifles. No questions asked. No waiting period.

In downtown Washington, across the street from a grand building that houses the Museum of American Art and the presidential paintings in the National Portrait Gallery, smut merchants have moved into a row of small stores with virtual impunity. They claim they can satisfy a customers' desire for any kind of pornography and cater to a wide range of perversions.

Yet, a museum in Cincinnati is on trial for displaying seven photographs out of a collection of 175 Robert Mapplethorpe works that prosecutors think are obscene.

These are only two examples of somewhat bizarre activity in the U.S. A casual look at U.S. daily newspapers reveals many more.

Consider the campaign of John Andrews, for instance. Andrews,

a Republican gubernatorial candidate in Colorado who trails his opponent by an incredible 40 percentage points, has had the additional problem of explaining one of his previous jobs.

For two years, he worked for an organization that used experiments with mung beans, yogurt and potted plants to prove the power of prayer.

In one experiment, 14,000 mung beans were divided into two groups. One group was prayed over while the other was left alone. The group that was prayed over had twice as many sprouts as the other group, says one of the organization's brochures.

In other experiments, plants and dishes of yogurt were given mental "promises" to promote growth.

"I regarded this investigation as being potentially responsible and potentially useful exploration of the interface between religion and science," the candidate told the Denver Post. His job experience is a "non-story relative to my candidacy," he added.

In Baltimore, a 640-pound businessman is suing the city



Kevin
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because it does not recognize his as part of a deprived minority.

Donald Keister's 25-page lawsuit asks the court to order the city to grant him minority certification, which would entitle him to bid on special contracts that are set aside for only minority and women contractors.

"They tell me I can't qualify because I'm not black and I'm not a woman," Keister told reporters recently.

Keister, who is so large he has to be weighed on a hospital laundry scale, says he is disqualified from contracts because his weight does not allow him to in-

spect potential work sites. "I can't walk through a 500-unit apartment building," he said.

A lawsuit is the latest salvo in a three-year civil war between Confederacy buffs to determine who has the right to honor the memory of the Old South.

The Confederate Memorial Association alleges rival organizations of civil racketeering. The suit claims that the Sons of Confederate Veterans, the United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Southern Relief Society of defiling the reputation of the rebel cause and making obscene telephone calls.

Among other things, the Memorial Association charges its enemies with slapping bumper stickers on its Washington headquarters that say "Have a Nice Day. Shoot a Damn Yankee."

The rival organizations deny any wrongdoing, and attribute the battle to a personal tug-of-war for the right to represent the Confederate legacy.

In U.S. politics, gimmicks are used extravagantly to press

home a point to the voters.

In one recent incident in Congress, a Democratic representative pulled out a milk carton that he had made with a picture of President George Bush in the space usually set aside for photographs of missing children.

"Have you seen this man?" he asked his colleagues during a crucial time during budget negotiations when the president was gallivanting across the country making speeches at Republican fund-raising events. He urged anyone who had seen the president to call the toll-free number emblazoned on the carton to return him safely to the White House.

Another gimmick is a South Dakota candidate's promise to pay voters \$10,000 each if he serves more than eight years in Congress.

Capitalizing on the voters' "kick-the-bums-out" mood, Don Frankenfield has even signed contracts to make the payments. All the voter has to do to get a contract is to contribute a minimum of \$1 to his campaign.

Only in America.

Spirit of the printed word shunted aside

OTTAWA - The Spirit of the Printed Word remains but her domain has been banished to a cramped, jerry-rigged room in the basement of Parliament's Centre Block.

The female figure of the Spirit, holding high the Torch of Enlightenment, is one of six unique murals created almost 70 years ago for the magnificent Parliamentary Reading Room. Until recently, she looked down on an eclectic collection of Canadian and foreign newspapers, periodicals and books.

MPs and their assistants, along with journalists, could look through almost 800 publications in a calm oasis set between the Senate and the Commons. But a decision to use the space for committee meetings has produced a drastically reduced collection in an unadorned, much smaller room.

As one employee lamented, the

Reading Room's new location is "just a room. It doesn't have the same impact." Absent are the murals, the wood cupboards for newspapers, the carved stone pillars, the wrought-ironwork and sculpted ceiling.

Gone too are 470 weekly newspapers from Canada, 90 magazines and 15 foreign publications. And that has made MP David Kilgour mad.

"A source of important information to MPs has been removed," the Edmonton MP says. "I'm someone who is interested in the written word and it was nice to know it was there."

VOICE STILLED

Kilgour believes the ability of MPs to get a sense of the country's mood has been diminished because the weekly voice of rural and small-town Canada has been stilled.

"It reduces our ability to know the country and that's what we're



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supposed to be here for," he says.

The MP says the 200-odd books on hand in the old Reading Room made MPs more effective as legislators. Only some of those books will still be available in Parliament's main library, he says.

"What's the ultimate extension of this? That we should have comic books in the Reading Room and no words larger than three

syllables?" he asks.

Kilgour has twice risen in the Commons to protest the demise of the Reading Room. Each time, Speaker John Fraser has referred Kilgour to the Board of Internal Economy, which made the decision.

The secretive board, peopled by MPs from all three parties and charged by the Speaker, made the move during the summer recess when MPs and many journalists were away. Employees were given a week to pack up and move, Kilgour says.

One issue he plans to raise with the board is fire safety. The 1916 fire that destroyed the Centre Block started in a small reading room "constructed of highly flammable material," he says.

Its replacement had stone walls and was made highly fire resistant. Kilgour wonders if the Reading Room's new location is as safe.

"I don't know how much greater the risk of fire is in the new mini-room, but I suspect it's greater," he says.

TWO EXITS

But a spokesman for Speaker Fraser says the new location is safer because it has two exits, unlike the old Reading Room that had only one.

The number of people using the room daily has declined to between 50 and 60 from 80 to 90, a staffer says. There's too little room and too few desks for proper service.

The smaller location also means major Canadian daily papers are tossed out after six weeks. They used to be kept for up to five months.

Kilgour doubts he will change the board's mind and restore the Reading Room to its old spot. But he hopes Canadians "who believe we are not living in a post-literate age" will pressure their MPs.