

# People have final say in protecting environment

In last week's column I called for Halton residents to voluntarily focus more attention on reducing the amount of garbage they create and reusing more material they would otherwise put out for garbage collection.

As residential waste comprises approximately 50 per cent of the waste stream, these two methods of waste conservation must be popularized. The popular blue box recycling program alone is inadequate to solve the present day "garbage crisis."

Another essential requirement to solving this problem is for the industrial and commercial sectors to follow the same advice. These sectors are responsible for the other 50 per cent of waste generated in

the Region.

Local environmentalists claim Halton Region isn't doing enough to encourage industry and the commercial sector to develop waste reduction and reuse programs. To substantiate their claim they point to Peel Region.

Peel has 24 employees working on industrial and commercial waste diversion programs, while Halton has four.

Granted, Peel is significantly larger than Halton, however it appears the Region could do more work in this area.

Art Leitch, Halton's Public Works Commissioner, defends the Region's lack of staff by saying the number of staff isn't the important factor in getting the industrial and



**Ben's Banter**  
by Ben Dummett

commercial sectors to become more environmentally conscious. Halton needs to have legislative powers over industrial and com-

mercial garbage pick-up to achieve significant results, said Mr. Leitch.

These powers will enable the Region to dictate to industry and the commercial sector what material is acceptable waste and what material should be diverted from the waste stream through reduction and reuse programs.

Mr. Leitch's position makes sense because the result gives the Region a "big stick" to hold over the head of the industrial and commercial sectors. Businesses would either have to voluntarily divert a significant amount of garbage they are producing or face municipal bylaws forcing them to take such action.

Here is where the province plays an important role. The Region

needs the province to pass legislation enabling it to control industrial and commercial generated waste.

However, the province's role doesn't stop here.

Assuming the province passes the required legislation, the Region will also need provincial funding to ensure the industrial and commercial sectors abide by any reduction and reuse bylaws Halton introduces.

In the end, money will be the deciding factor. Since any new government programs are paid through taxes, people will have the final say concerning the priority environmental protection takes in Halton and throughout the province.

# Potential of technology generally being ignored

The rather comical disaster of the would-be revolutionaries in the Soviet Union has provided a new meaning to the word "incompetence". The would-be saviors of the Motherland managed to mismanage their coup but at the same time to show how difficult it has become today to control the flow of information.

With minute-by-minute world wide coverage the secrecy element needed to create fear is debunked and weakness or incompetency is easily exposed.

The Chinese revolution of the late eighties was made largely possible by the use of the fax machine. Apartheid in South Africa is coming to an end because of the power of the electronic media. Brutality hidden

under the cover of censorship is nowadays difficult to use as a tool to solve political problems.

Unfortunately, the reverse is not true.

While our global information system has shown its capacity to expose and debunk, it has so far failed to educate and encourage. We still live in a world where the real power of the technology we have created is not understood.

Take the postal strike.

Television has brought us every evening the picture of elderly people waiting in line for their pension cheques. A depressing and sad vision. More depressing however is the fact that such misery did not need to be inflicted on our people.

No, the solution is not to force



**Another View**  
by Carlo Testa

an end to the postal strike and deliver the cheques to pensioner, unemployed etcetera. The solution, an extremely easy and inexpensive one, is to get rid of the cheques and transfer the moneys

by electronic means. It only does take a computer at one end and another one at the other. Actually a facility which is available to anybody who owns a computer to the moderate expenditure of a couple of hundred dollars. The system is absurdly simple.

The old-age pensioner gives the Government the number of its bank account and the Government transfers the money to it. A procedure already common in many private corporations. (Please do not raise the point that seniors do not have bank accounts, ...the exceptions are so few that money could be delivered to those few by horse-and-buggy).

Our Government however has, like many of us, ignored the

potential of the technology which every third grader uses, and is still prisoner of the paper world. A Provincial government department refused last week to accept information by fax: we had to send it in "hard-copy" by messenger. Back to the past.

Our inability to avoid the unpleasant side effect of the postal strike and the deflation of the Russian coup have one common element: technological illiteracy. And one common source: the leaders technological illiteracy.

The past has got some grand features. Ignoring the new powers at our fingertips is however not a sign of devotion to the past, it spells out just one word: incompetence.

# Fixation with excellence is hard to shake

At long last a counter-attack has been launched against one of the most pernicious obsessions of the late Twentieth Century.

No less a newspaper than the Globe and Mail has officially begged us to stop trying to improve ourselves.

Praise heaven. Just when we'd begun to fear that all might be lost, our national newspaper is leading the crusade to make the world safe once more from mediocrity.

Well, perhaps I'm going a bit overboard. The Globe hasn't exactly launched a crusade.

But the other day, it did run a freelance column which bemoaned "the North American mania for self-improvement," by which we end up killing ourselves to meet impossibly high ideals of physical beauty, intellectual accomplishment and financial success.

According to the columnist, we've utterly lost touch with the traditional meaning of the word "satisfactory" - which traditionally meant "satisfactory." It now means "less than excellent," and is sneered at accordingly.

Well. Bravo. And hear, hear.

In fact, I'd take this even further. Settling for "satisfactory" rather than "excellent" is certainly a step in the right direction.

But when you come right down to it, what's really wrong with "I've seen worse?"

Personally, I don't think this world will ever be a happy place until we can all rise in the morn-

**Weir's World**  
by Ian Weir  
Thomson News Service



ing (preferably late in the morning), look at ourselves in the mirror, and happily exclaim: "Every day, in every way, I'm deteriorating less rapidly than I might be."

Granted, the fixation with excellence will be a hard one to shake, considering that we've all been victimized by the most insidious propaganda campaign in the history of humankind. I refer, of course, to self-help books.

Self-help books repeatedly assure me that I should be able to accomplish anything I put my mind to. This is because I am a Truly Special Individual - there is not another one like me in the entire world.

But we've swallowed this doctrine whole, and hurled ourselves headlong into the pursuit of excellence - beginning with day-care centres for gifted children.

Personally, I'm never really sure what a "gifted child" is in the first place. Perhaps they're

referring to kids like my boyhood friend Sam, who was able to entertain us at birthday parties by squirting pop through his nostrils.

On the other hand, I sometimes suspect that a "gifted child" is in actual fact a perfectly ordinary child whose parents are determined to produce a genius even if it kills the little beggar.

The fatal blow in the whole doctrine of self-improvement is, of course, perfectly illustrated by the societal quest for physical fitness. The world is full of people who are obsessed with running faster and further than they were able to do before.

Unfortunately, this flies in the face of the fact that the human being reaches his peak, in terms of physical energy and capacity for exertion, at the age of two. He starts onto the downhill slope at about the same time as he masters the intricacies of the potty.

When it's put in this perspective, we can see the futility of our aspirations to climb (as it were) to the mountaintop. For most of us, the journey through life is more like a descent from the foothills. They key is to do it gracefully.

Sooner or later, we're all going to wind up resting in peace.

The truly happy man is the one who starts doing so well before he is dead.

## Poets' Corner

### THE SPIDER AND THE FLY

"Do you love me?" asked the spider  
"Yes, I love you", said the fly  
"Then come and live with me", she said  
"Oh, no", he said, "I'd die".

"We're not meant to live together  
For you love - then kill - your mate  
I'd rather live alone forever  
Than suffer such a fate."

"But I do truly love you  
And I'd cherish you", said she  
"I'd never ever hard you,  
And I'd love you faithfully."

The fly thought about the spider  
And he missed her - It was true -  
He didn't want to live without her  
So he knew just what he'd do.

He came to see her at her web  
To beg forgiveness for his sin  
But before he could even call her  
He got firmly stuck there-in.

His impassioned pleas,

"Oh, help me"  
Brought the spider to his side  
And she gazed at him in sadness,  
And she held him as he died.

She failed to hear his dying words  
As her poor heart broke in sorrow -  
And she stored his stiffening body  
And said, "I'll deal with this tomorrow."

The next day, as she ate her lunch -  
(His body, by mistake)  
She learned, at last, his dying words  
But it was, then, too late.

Su sure he'd been she'd kill him  
He'd committed suicide -  
He'd filled himself with poison  
Which the spider ate - then died.

There's a moral to this story  
It's enough to make you cry -  
You can sometimes trust a spider

But never a suspicious fly.  
S.L.W., Rockwood.

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