

EDITORIAL

with Frances Niblock

Pay it forward

“In the order of nature we cannot render benefits to those from who we received them or only seldom. But the benefit we receive must be rendered again, line for line, deed for deed, cent for cent, to somebody.” Ralph Waldo Emerson

A concerted effort to ask that good turns be repaid to a third party – the concept of “pay it forward” – begins Sunday in Acton when the BIA (Business Improvement Area) and other community groups, launch a “Random Acts of Kindness” week.

The plan is to have good turns repaid by doing a good turn for another, in hopes that good turns being paid forward will multiply. The BIA suggests that Random Acts of Kindness could include leaving a friendly, anonymous note on a colleague’s desk, volunteering for a not-for-profit group, smiling at a stranger, or any other deed that is done for no other reason than being nice.

While some criticise the pay it forward concept as manufactured reciprocity, others appreciate any behaviour that does good without costing a lot of money.

As the semi-regular recipient of chocolate mint patties – left anonymously without fanfare or expectation of thanks on the media table at the Halton Hills council chambers – I know how much simple Random Acts of Kindness are appreciated. Pay it forward, indeed.



BUY A BRICK

The Knights of Columbus Council 8050 – St. Joseph Patron of Canada Church – pledged support for Heritage Acton’s “Buy a Brick” fundraising campaign. Proceeds will help build an addition to the Town Hall Centre, including an elevator, to make it fully accessible. At a recent Knight’s Jiggs dinner and dance at the Town Hall, Grand Knight Paul Hansen (left) presented a \$1,000 cheque, the first instalment of the Knight’s pledge, to Heritage Acton members Kathy and Bill Sanford.

– Submitted photo

Humans may have loaded the bases, but nature bats last

By David Suzuki



Humanity is facing a challenge unlike any we’ve ever had to confront. We are in an unprecedented period of change. Exponential growth is causing an already huge human population to double in shorter and shorter time periods.

When I was born in 1936, just over two billion people lived on the planet. It’s astounding that the population has increased more than threefold within my lifetime. That staggering growth has been accompanied by even steeper increases in technological innovation, consumption, and a global economy that exploits the entire planet as a source of raw materials and a dumping ground for toxic emissions and waste.

We have become a new kind of biological force that is altering the physical, chemical, and biological properties of the planet on a geological scale. Indeed, Nobel Prize-winning chemist Paul Crutzen has suggested that the current geologic period should be called the An-

thropocene Epoch to reflect our new status as a global force – and a lot of scientists agree.

We now occupy every continent and are exploring every nook and cranny of the Earth for new resources. The collective ecological impact of humanity far exceeds the planet’s capacity to sustain us at this level of activity indefinitely. Studies suggest it now takes 1.3 years for nature to restore what humanity removes of its renewable resources in a year, and this deficit spending has been going on since the 1980s.

For the first time in human history, we have to respond as a single species to crises of our own making. Until now, this kind of unified effort only happened in science fiction when space aliens invaded Earth. In those stories, world leaders overcame human divisions to work together against the common enemy.

The only way to come to grips

with the crises and find solutions is to understand that we are biological creatures, with an absolute need for clean air, clean water, clean food and soil, clean energy, and biodiversity. Capitalism, communism, democracy, free enterprise, corporations, economies, and markets do not alter those basic needs. After all, those are human constructs, not forces of nature. Similarly, the borders we throw up around our property, cities, states, and countries mean nothing to nature.

All the hopes that meetings such as the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and the climate conferences in Kyoto in 1997, Copenhagen in 2009, and Cancun in 2010, would help us resolve major ecological challenges will be dashed as long as we continue to put economic and political considerations above our most fundamental biological, social, and spiritual needs. We humans may be heavy hitters, but we must remember that nature bats last.

Learn more at www.davidsuzuki.org

Looking Back



Ten Years Ago

- Three red oak trees were planted at the memory Garden at Acton High School to commemorate the one year anniversary of the deaths of three Acton teens – Rory Dick, Travis Toth and Mark Everson – killed in a train-car accident at the Fourth Line rail crossing.
- Acton student Chris Neal wins the all-Halton gold championship.
- Frustrated by delays, the developer of the proposed Acton East plaza said the project is in jeopardy because of red tape at the Town.

Five Years Ago

- Halton began applying larvicide to standing water throughout the Region to kill mosquito larvae that could cause West Nile Virus.
- Acton mourns the passing of the late Mac MacSween, a master gardener whose green thumb is evident all over Acton, who succumbed to cancer.
- Efforts continue to try to lure more family physicians to Acton which had the most acute need in Halton for additional doctors.



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