

Opinion

Growing debate on our environment

By TERRY O'SHAUGHNESSY

For many, the incomparable natural beauty of Canada—the vast north, great forests and windswept seascapes, pristine lakes and awe-inspiring mountains—places Canada squarely in the middle of the growing public debate on environmental issues.

It's no stretch to imagine Canadians playing a natural leadership role on the frontlines of the battle to save our sickening environment.

A recent poll, conducted by the Angus Reid Group, lays the groundwork of the debate to come.

According to Reid, during most of the 1980s concern for the environment attracted less than 5 per cent of Canadians. However, during the last months of the decade, increasing numbers put the environment as their leading concern.

The Reid results broke down current attitudes to the environment issue into seven camps.

Of those who gave low priority to environmental issues, Reid found three distinct groups. While 14 per cent took the view that just living from day to day was a full-time issue for them and, therefore, concern for the environment an impossibility, a fatalistic 13 per cent of the population felt that the environment was damaged beyond repair and that they could not do anything.

Eleven per cent of those polled were characterized as 'hostile,' believing the issue to be artificially played up in the media and elsewhere.

The bulk of the pro-environment group, at 20 per cent, fell into the 'privileged optimist' category. They included the trendy consumers touting the benefits of composting and "buying green." They feel the environment can be repaired and will become more healthy in the future.

The 'enthusiasts' (9 per cent) and the 'activists' (18 per cent) shared a common belief in the overriding importance of environmental issues and seemed to differ only in their public approach. The enthusiasts intend to work behind the scenes while the activists aggressively make public waves.

The final 15 per cent, characterized as 'anxious,' were gravely concerned about the environment but were waiting for some leadership.

Certainly the poll does not say anything we hadn't already known or suspected. But the environment is going to become more of an issue in the months and years to come. These categories will no doubt overlap and merge together as public debate escalates. But one aspect is already very clear—the health of the environment has become a luxury that no one can afford to ignore.

Recession humor

Rural people have always laughed at themselves even during a recession or depression. Here's some country chuckles:

"When a man quits turning around to look at a pretty girl he's almost old enough for the Senate."

"Mary," said the sick farmer to his wife after a doctor diagnosed his ailment as smallpox, "if any of my creditors call, tell them I am at last in a condition to give them something."

Saskatchewan drought story—Tourist: "Looks like rain." Farmer: "I hope so. Not so much for me as for my boy here. I've seen rain."

Farmer's estimate of a war hawk: "fellow who is always ready to lay down your life for his country."

"You have no reason to be ashamed of your poverty if you acquired it honestly," said a newspaper during the great depression.



Boughing out...

—Photo by Kevin Powell

Our Readers Write

\$47 million high schools a joke?

Dear editor,

"It was the best of times..." to close a \$20 million modern high school and lease it for one dollar!

"It was the worst of times..." for the Halton school trustees to vote for closing another high school within 2 km of the above and to replace it at a cost of \$22 million.

Was it a far, far better thing to do than ever the trustees have done before to vote last week to build a second new high school at a cost of another \$25 million to the taxpayers?

What the "Dickens" are the trustees contriving to put over on Halton's and provincial taxpayers at a combined cost of \$47 million within two years, but a revenue of one Loonie? What a "Twist" in this past week's vote to finally get around to the real priority of building a new high school in the growth area of northeast Oakville as recommended by the Independent Consultant's Report to the school board in 1988.

However, along the way the trustees were able to change a "renovation" designation to a "replacement and relocation" of Oakville-Trafalgar H.S. to

the same non-growth area with declining enrollment that already has four high schools south of the Q.E.W. The growth area north of the Q.E.W. has one high school with 14 portables, and is projected to have 25 portables about the time the replacement O.T.H.S. is opened.

The lack of a "Scrooge" mentality, attempting to hold down costs to a level of fiscal sanity and responsibility to Halton's taxpayers, has put the wrong high school before the needs of students that do not have a school building, old or new. The trustees may have the confidence that the cupboard at Queen's Park is not completely bare, but are they not playing pre-election 1991 rhetoric asking for the second needed high school when the money for one is available now?

If funding by the Ministry is available, then the replacement of O.T.H.S. could proceed at the later date rather than before the truly needed high school for the growth area of Oakville.

George Pickios
Oakville, Ont.

Please keep your dogs on leashes

Dear editor,

My dad suffered a heart attack in May '89. After a full year of doctors' offices, hospitals, stress tests and angiograms it was decided a triple bypass was in order. That was successfully performed at Toronto Western Hospital in May '90.

Now six months later we are still working very hard to build his strength and encourage his spirits. He attends both Toronto Rehabilitation Centre for heart victims and Heart-to-Heart, a program offered by Peel Memorial Hospital to assist with coping and provide a better understanding of how families' lives are affected by such a drastic condition.

Through all of the doctor's advice about quitting smoking, limited alcohol, low-fat diet, and salt restrictions, it has always been most highly stressed that walking two miles for five out of the seven days a week is vitally important. He has developed a commitment to himself to perform this.

Last Friday, after working a full day, he came home and decided he should go for his walk. On his way home a man came out of his house with a dog accompanying him, but unfortunately not on a leash. Having a fear of dogs, my dad was just about scared to death when it came after him.

The man who owned the dog couldn't gain control and dad's only defence was his fists as the dog

attacked him three times. Finally, after standing behind the owner, so he was between dad and the dog, the owner managed to grab him by the collar.

It is through this experience that I make my plea to the citizens of Halton Hills. Please keep your dogs on leashes or tied up outside.

I'm sure there are many good and kind dog-owners who give faithfully to the Heart and Stroke Foundation feeling they are doing their part to help others. I am also sure that the majority do not understand the damage they may be inflicting on those others by letting their dogs run loose.

We all know the old saying "A dog is a man's best friend." My argument is that I don't expect my best friend to become yours while walking down the street.

We have suffered enough worry in the past 18 months to last a lifetime, and now even watching him do one of the most important things he can do for his health still creates worry and stress for both him and his family.

I hope no one reads this and feels I am condemning them or their dogs. I am just a very concerned daughter looking out for someone I love very much and want to keep around for awhile.

Thank you,
D.L. Kane, Georgetown

THE GEORGETOWN INDEPENDENT /
THE ACTON FREE PRESS

WEEKEND

KEN BELLAMY
Publisher

211 ARMSTRONG AVE., L7G 4X5
GEORGETOWN, ONT. (416) 873-0301

The Georgetown Independent /The Acton Free Press Weekend, published every Saturday at 211 Armstrong Ave., Georgetown, Ont., is one of the Metroland Printing, Publishing & Distributing group of suburban newspapers which includes: The Acton Free Press, Ajax/Pickering News Advertiser, The Aurora Banner, Barrie Banner Advance, The Brampton Guardian, The Burlington Post, The Erin-Hillsburgh Echo, The Etobicoke Advertiser/Guardian, The Georgetown Independent, Markham Economist & Sun, The Milton Champion, The Mississauga News, The Newmarket Era, The Oakville Beaver, Oshawa/Whitby This Week, Richmond Hill/Thornhill/Vaughan Liberal, The Echo-Review, The Scarborough Mirror, The Stouffville Tribune, The Willowdale Mirror. Metroland Printing, Publishing & Distributing is a division of Harlequin Enterprises Ltd.

Advertising is accepted on the condition that, in the event of a typographical error, that portion of the advertising space occupied by the erroneous item, together with reasonable allowance for signature, will not be charged for, but the balance of the advertisement will be paid for at the applicable rate.

In the event of a typographical error advertising goods or services at the wrong price, goods or services may not be sold. Advertising is merely an offer to sell which may be withdrawn at any time.

Editorial and advertising content to Georgetown Independent/Acton Free Press Week End is protected by copyright. Unauthorized use is prohibited.

Price: Store copies 50¢ each; subscription \$19 per year by carrier; \$52 per year by mail in Canada; \$75 per year in all other countries.

EDITORIAL - 1-800-268-8719
Managing Editor: Hartley Coles
Staff Writers: Cynthia Gamble, Robin Incoe, Paul Dorsey, Stuart Johnston, Janet Baine, Scott Kline. Photography: Ted Brown

BUSINESS OFFICE - 1-800-268-8719
Manager: Jean Shewell
Accounting: Pat Kentner, Sherry Mitchell, Bev Nelissen

ADVERTISING - 1-800-268-8719
Director of Advertising: Lorne Beechener
Advertising Manager: Beth Snelgrove
Display Sales: Charmaine Letts, Tammy Salt
Telemarketing: Jeanette Cox
Real Estate Sales: Kathy Toth
National Representative: Dal Browne 493-1300

CLASSIFIED - 1-800-268-8719
Manager: Carol Hall
Staff: Barb Izzio, Arlene Bellamy

DISTRIBUTION/CIRCULATION/SUBSCRIPTIONS - 1-800-268-8719
TORONTO LINE - 451-9024
Manager: Nancy Geisler
Staff: Mark Prevost, Jean Brander, Mark Esposito

COMPOSING MANAGER: Steve Foreman