

Threat to rural water drives residents to Milton Council

BY DONNA DANIELI

Water taken from Puslinch may be prized for its clarity, but issues surrounding the water-taking process remain murky. Residents from Moffat are concerned about nearby Nassaw Springs Ltd. on the 11th concession in Puslinch: they are concerned about the effect on their wells, about the truck traffic from the water operation and about how their property values will be affected. Since Nassaw Springs has recently asked the Ministry of the Environment for permission to double the amount of water that it takes, Moffat and Puslinch residents' concerns have escalated. The Town of Milton's Administration and Planning Committee meeting on January 20th heard from several delegations of residents.

Stephanie Kimmerer of Moffat explained that Mr. Doug Hatch, who owns Nassaw Springs in Puslinch, also owns Artemesia Waters in Grey County. Last year the Ontario Superior Court of Justice ruled against Artemesia Waters with its decision that water taking is considered a land use that should not be permitted under the official plan and zoning by-laws of Grey County. Mrs. Kimmerer provided the Milton Council with a copy of the Cease and Desist letter that was sent by the Municipality of Grey County to Mr. Hatch.

She declared, "I was very encouraged to find out about this letter's existence because I thought that this type of letter would also be written immediately by the Township of Puslinch to Nassaw Springs. Why is the Township of Puslinch not challenging Nassaw Springs to stop doing what it has no authority to do according to the zoning of that property? I

respectfully ask that Mayor Krantz contact Mr. Brad Whitcombe, Mayor of the Township of Puslinch, and ask Mayor Whitcombe this same question." Mrs. Kimmerer also requested that Mayor Krantz, along with Mayor Whitcombe, meet with the law firm representing the Municipality of Grey County to discuss the next steps in challenging Nassaw Springs since "so many residents of Moffat are affected."

Karen Magee echoed Mrs. Kimmerer's plea for a partnership between the two municipalities. "It may be a ministerial position to assign water-taking permits, but it has to start in our own community at the municipal level," she explained. "If you use the analogy of building a fence, the fence gets built much faster if both neighbours work on it together."

Catherine Scott expressed frustration with the Town of Milton's disregard for residents' worries about water.

"What concerns me is the position of Milton as to what is happening to the accumulation of, and withdrawing of, water from the community. The quantity and quality of wells has been affected since the building of Country Lane Estates and Tuscany Ridge, despite the Town's assurance that this would not happen. Our groundwater has been altered by these developments. I'm not a hydrogeologist, but we were assured by hydrogeologists that it would not be altered. They were wrong... It's very worrying and it's very frightening to us as to the value of our land and even if we can remain on our land if our wells run dry."

Milton's Administration and Planning Committee expressed reluctance

to directly interfere with another municipality's planning. However, councillor Brian Penman reminded the delegations that "this issue is within the jurisdiction of the conservation authorities. They do not settle within boundaries. They deal with entire watershed." Conservation Halton has approved Nassaw Springs' application with the following conditions: the current permit is temporary and subject to renewal following further study, monthly flow monitoring is to continue, and a one-day pumping test will be undertaken during a low-flow period in the summer to assess the actual physical changes in the channel associated with a range of pumping rates.

The Administration and Planning Committee made several recommendations. The Town will advise the Ministry of the Environment to deny Nassaw Springs' permit to take water until such time as the truck-haul routes have been considered. All applications for water taking within one kilometer of Milton's boundaries are to be circulated to the Town. Also, Milton staff is directed to bring forward an Official Plan Amendment to introduce policies and criteria with respect to commercial water taking. Councillor Cindy Lunau summed up, "There are too many springs and too many water sources in Nassaweya to just ignore this."

On February 5th at 2:00 p.m., Mr. Doug Hatch, the owner of Nassaw Springs, is addressing the Township of Puslinch at 7404 Wellington Road 34 (just west of the old Highway 6). All residents of rural Halton who have concerns about water issues are encouraged to attend this meeting.

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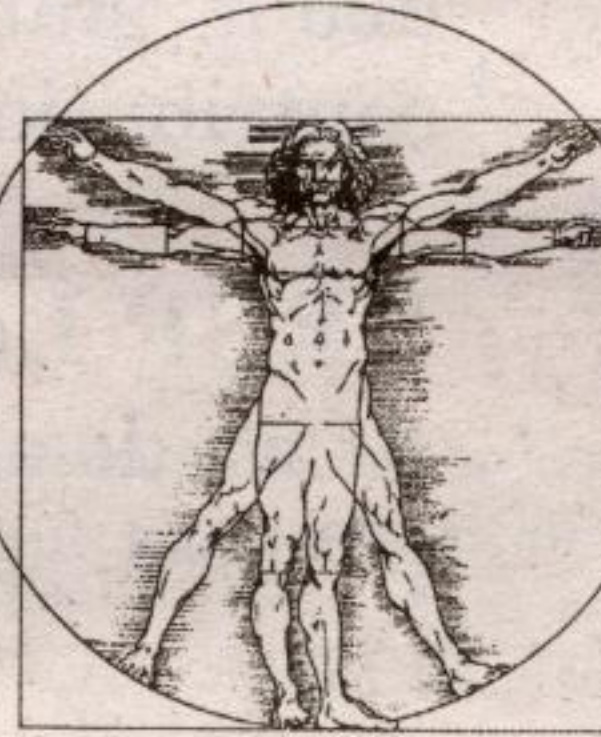
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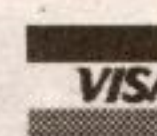


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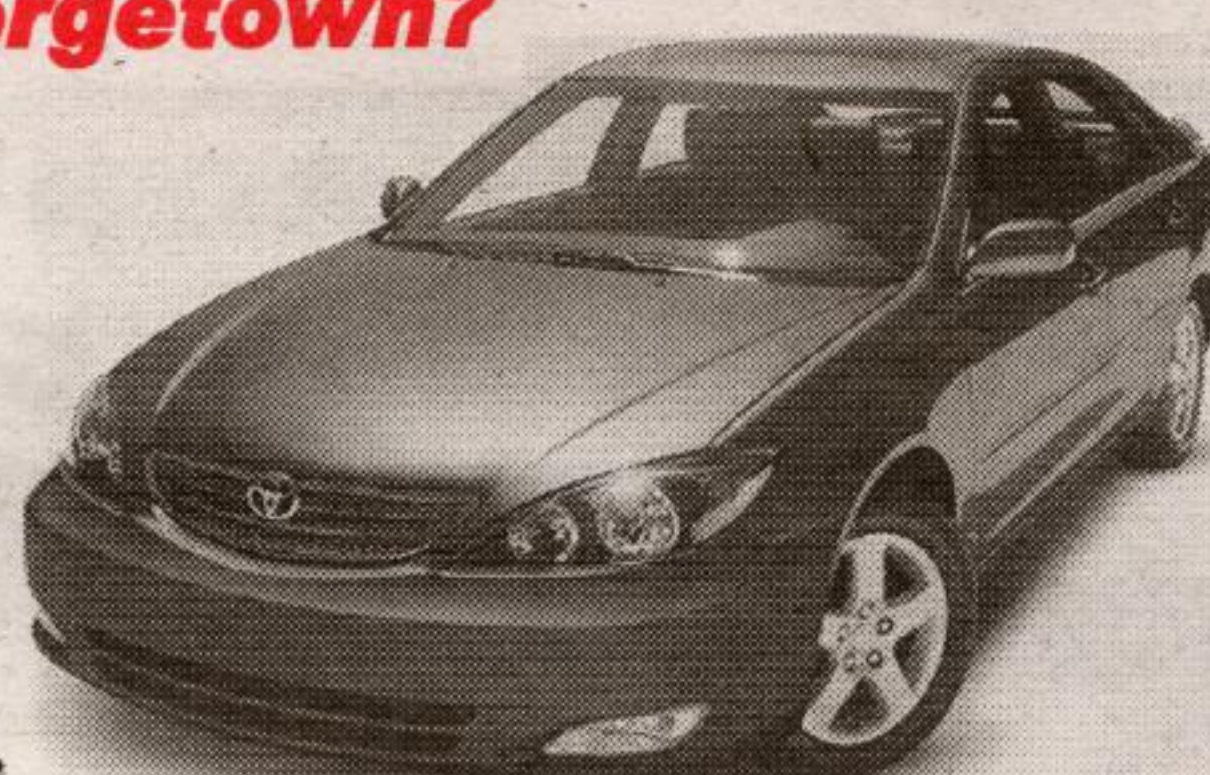
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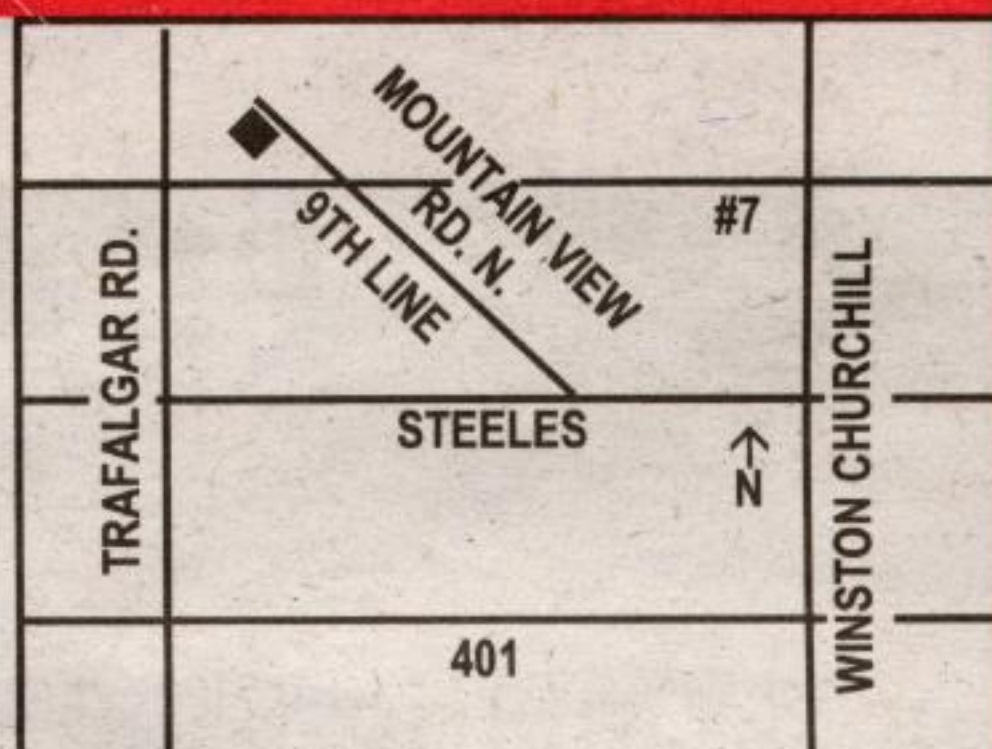


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