

EDITORIAL

with Hartley Coles

Heat / manure brew potent mixture

When the late summer heat wave arrived in this area last week it brought more than humidity and soaring temperatures. Coincidentally a farmer started to spread liquid pig manure onto fields bordering the urban borders of town.

The stench aided by a moderate breeze, settled like a pig in a blanket over the west end of Acton. Residents were forced to close windows and some were driven indoors by the stench in 33°C temperatures.

The phones started to ring at The New Tanner as residents complained about the foul odour. One woman on Scene St. phoned to say she had two baskets of washing hung on the line and the stench had infiltrated the clothes she had just washed. She said her children put clothes pegs on their noses to help alleviate the odour.

Countless calls to authorities about the smell brought little comfort. There were no laws to stop those who spread manure to desist during heat waves. The inference was they'd just have to live with it.

Another caller said when he lived in the rural area he expected to contend with the odours that go with farming but since he now lived in town surely those responsible for the nauseating odour should be held responsible.

The smell lingered for more than a few days, sleepers had to close bedroom windows as late as last Monday to keep the stench outside. Obviously the unusually hot weather and the manure mixture was still brewing a cauldron of stench that eclipsed the odour that used to emanate from Beardmore filter beds. The odour reactivated the old rural/urban tug of war.

Unfortunately, those who live in urban areas bordering farming operations have to contend with both worlds. They must rely on the sensitivity of their rural neighbours to spread manure when conditions are less likely to cause discomfort.

Affordable housing

Figures from a recent Region's Emergency Housing Group confirm there is an acute lack of available affordable housing in Halton. Only 63 rental housing units have been built in Halton since 1996, obviously not keeping up with demand.

Figures also show that almost 8,000 renter households in Halton fall below the low-income cut-off, which makes them at risk of becoming homeless especially if rents continue to rise.

There are 3,000 geared-to-income units in Halton now but the waiting list for such a unit is anywhere from three to seven years. This must create a feeling of hopelessness among those who would like one day to pay rent to match their income.

The emergency housing group concluded there are other factors contributing to homelessness other than the income/poverty levels. Their task is to evaluate the needs and make recommendations to the three partners (Town, Region and Salvation Army) to find some way out of the difficulties we now find ourselves in.

There's no doubt the situation in Acton, and other nearby centres, was exacerbated when the Province abruptly cancelled all plans to erect affordable housing shortly after the present government was elected. They also threw out rent controls suggesting that more apartment units would be built if developers decided they wouldn't be encumbered by rent controls and would make a reasonable profit.

It didn't happen. Landlords seem content to sit on their holdings and raise the rents, which are becoming even higher with the shortage of affordable units.

There are no quick fixes to the affordable housing problem but it's essential that all avenues be explored to solve it in the long run. The advisory group is holding a community consultation meeting at Region offices on September 19 to listen to suggestions and concerns from the community, a meeting which those who are concerned about affordable housing would be well advised to attend.



QUEENS SCOUTS: 1st Acton Scout Troop had seven Scouts elevated to Queen Scouts at a ceremony Blue Springs Scout Reserve in the 1950s. The Queen Scouts badge is the most coveted award in Scouting and required a lot of work to achieve it. Here, then Asst. District Commissioner Murray Scoyne, right, presents the Queen's Scout badge to Bob Hinton. Others who received the badge, left to right, Rick Currie, S Barr, Brian Otterbein, Ken Gardiner, Peter Newman and Laurie Duby.

Letters

More police not answer-listen to Town's youth

Dear Editor,

In response to the article "Louts loose again", by Hartley Coles, in the Thursday, August 29th, edition of The New Tanner. Having been a program developer and manager for street youth programs in Vancouver for the past five years, I was both shocked and appalled by learning "Acton's... town clerk would give (youth) troublemakers a one way ticket to Vancouver with a suggestion they never come back." Chances are many of these youth never did come back. Likely many are dead or living in the ghetto of the downtown eastside as a result, of their "one way ticket."

Sending a young person to Vancouver without support is like sending a first world city person into the jungle of a third world country. Although the narrative points out "such tactics are no longer politically and socially correct..." his statement carries a derogatory undertone. The article fails to include, such tactics are also politically and socially

irresponsible not to mention morally wrong, in such a town with such an upstanding "image" to uphold.

There's a wise old saying, "it takes a community to raise a child". I understand Mr. Coles believes he grasps the social conditions causing the behaviour of the "ill mannered louts" when he refers to "chaotic home life, parents that don't give a darn, etc". Although some youth "raised in the same conditions don't react with that kind of nonsense", what Mr. Coles fails to mention here is that some of these "louts" a.k.a. youth also come from perfectly well to do families, with perhaps perfectly no visible problems except this...

YOUTH IN THIS TOWN ARE BORED, UNHEARD, NOT UNDERSTOOD OR RESPECTED AS THEIR OWN INDIVIDUALS AND ARE ANGRY ABOUT IT! The youth's behaviour is a symptom of a greater problem.

Consider this, what is there for a youth to do in this town? What

is there that is geared for them, that meets them where they are at and not where "adult" society wants them to be? I am not condoning any act of vandalism here in Acton or anywhere else. I am suggesting we should be asking why are they behaving this way? What is it the community is failing to offer youth as an alternative pass-time, that meets their needs?

Additional policing will not solve the problem, excessive police presence usually drives problems further underground it does not bring about solutions. The solutions may not be what "traditionally" would have been the approach 50 years ago. However, if the solutions come from the very youth you would consider shipping out of town they will work. Perhaps a legal graffiti wall, the proposed skate park, a youth centre opened late at night that operates with a harm reduction philosophy - as a safe place to be. Spaces are needed where youth can freely express

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