

EDITORIAL

with Hartley Coles

Greenbelt approved

A media release from the Ontario Greenbelt Foundation celebrating the results of an opinion poll conducted by Environics in partnership with the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation, showed 93% of Ontarians support the Greenbelt on the fourth anniversary of the Greenbelt Act and Plan.

The Act, imposed on 1.8 million acres of land in Ontario wrapped around the so-called Golden Horseshoe, aims at protecting farm land and water sources from development. It takes in the Niagara Escarpment, the Oak Ridges Moraine, the Rouge River and hundreds of towns and villages in the rural areas as well as some 7,000 farms.

Of those surveyed, 98% said protecting the natural water system is an important goal or benefit of the Greenbelt while 96% aid preserving agricultural lands is an important goal/benefit. About 36% of Ontarians said protecting the natural water systems is the Greenbelt's most important benefit.

Few would disagree with the intentions of the Greenbelt. Who doesn't want clean water and good farm land preserved? However, the Greenbelt did no favours for Acton which is completely enveloped by the legislation, probably because the town is on the lip of the Niagara Escarpment. A sign on Hwy 7, just east of Crewsons Corners, announcing the start of the Greenbelt, makes it well known.

The Greenbelt stifled all growth in Acton except for the land which already lies within the urban boundaries. It effectively muzzled any real growth for 10 years when it will come up for review. Meanwhile, along with water restrictions, the needs of Acton people who'd like to downsize in their later years and a shortage of affordable housing has required leaving friends and family for other places that suit their needs.

Unlike the Province of Quebec where a similar Act allowed a common sense look at the land involved the Greenbelt just arbitrarily drew a line and imposed the restrictions for 10 years.

It's particularly galling for some of us to accept especially when we see some of the best farm land in Ontario south of Georgetown and Milton being gobbled up by development. The province's growth plans call for Halton's population to increase to 780,000 from 439,000 by 2031. And guess what? Most of that growth will take place on some of Ontario's best farm land.

Does that make sense?

Schools and income

It has long been thought that schools in areas where parents have lower than average incomes tend to have poorer results and lower expectations. However, according to the Fraser Institute's Report Card on Ontario's Elementary Schools 2009, that ain't necessarily so.

The Institute found that 20 of the fastest improving elementary schools in Ontario are found in neighbourhoods that have among the lowest average parental incomes. The average parental income for all Ontario elementary schools is \$73,500. The schools the Fraser Institute discovered had average incomes ranging from \$23,800 to \$47,300.

Teachers and administrators in these schools have found ways to beat the odds and help their students do better, says Peter Cowley, the Fraser Institute's director of school performance studies.

"The study clearly shows that elementary schools don't need to be located in wealthy neighbourhoods to improve and be successful," Cowley says.

Schools named in the Report Card come from all across the province including Espanola, Kingston, Niagara Falls, Welland, Toronto, Cambridge, Brantford, St. Catharines, Thunder Bay, Hamilton, and Seaforth, among others. Eleven of the 20 schools are public, nine are Catholic.

Of course, economic factors can contribute to a school's performance but as the Fraser Institution's Report Card points out good teachers and administrators can find a way to do better than might be predicted by income. Intelligence is not the prerogative of the wealthy.



REMEMBER 1943-44? World War II was raging but the students in Grades 11 and 12 at Acton Continuation School found time to pose for the camera. They included, back row, left to right Jack Stewart, Ralph McKeown, Jack Mainprize, Dave Dills, Don Force, Fred Crewson, Ken Allen, Principal M.M. Leitch. Third row, Anna Graff, Lorna Frank, Annie Thompson, Jean Harris, June Talbot, Annetta Evans, Lorraine Hargrave, Jeanne Brunelle. Second row, Margaret Robertson, Helen Holmes, Joan Rumley, Betty Britton, Joan Pargeter, Marg Blow, Joyce Dessureault, Dorothy Pallant, Marjorie Bilton. Front row, Mac Sprowl, Clayton Fryer, Hartley Coles, Doug Davidson, Jack Gordon, Earl Masales. - Submitted photo

Five bucks for a lottery win

It started on a whim. I called the local greasy spoon to order lunch. Apparently I ordered there too many times as she knew who I was and knew my order.

"I was just thinking of you," she told me. I honestly never even really knew her name at that point. With that I offered these words of advice. "You should get a lottery ticket... something tells me." Before I knew it WE were in the weekly lottery pool.

"Give me some numbers and we'll start to play" she told me. I picked numbers that were important to me. My first date with the Dude.. his birthday, my birthday, my age... his age... the dogs' birthdays. It seemed frivolous. With that, the unknown woman who knew my greasy spoon order was off and running.



By Angela Tyler

She told me of tales of her father who played the lotteries for years and his numbers finally came up. It was the BIG win. The problem was, a few weeks before he had changed his numbers and his winning ticket wasn't the winner even though his family thought it was.

"we can't change our numbers." Ms. Greasy Spoon told me. I already had doubts about my chosen numbers. Quite honestly, my numbers sucked. They were too much in order, following one another. The Dude's birthday is the 12th. Our first date was the 12th. The one dog's birthday was the 11th and so is our anniversary. There were

too many 11s, 12s, 2s and 1s. I knew they were not winning numbers.

Each week I go into the greasy spoon (by the way, when I say greasy spoon I don't mean it in a bad way... I love their food but somehow it best describes a diner). And, every week I give Mrs. Greasy Spoon my five bucks in anticipation of the big win.

Then this week she told me, "We didn't win." She tells me the same story every week. Once and a while she says we won a free ticket or an encore but nothing big. I keep telling her we'll win big and she agrees. The day we win big is the day that she no longer needs to flip burgers and I no longer need to drive a school bus even though I know I probably still will.

"You know..." I start to tell her, "I don't need the big

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