

Comment

The Canadian Champion

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Too little, too late

Wednesday's regional council meeting was a perfect example of the downside of democracy.

As you'll see elsewhere in today's Champion, council really had no choice but to throw out a carefully-crafted recommendation — the fruits of labour from a seven-hour committee meeting and public hearing last week — on the Province's greenbelt because, much to its surprise, the plan was enacted Monday.

That means the powers-that-be at Queen's Park won't be accepting any more comments on the plan.

While the Region had on good authority that it had until March 9 to get its final suggestions in, staff acknowledged there really wasn't anything preventing the Province from adopting the plan before then.

We have to give the Region credit for following a democratic process, spending an entire day listening to local residents and landowners about the greenbelt and the contentious recommendation that 4,000-plus acres of Halton Hills' land should be added to the protected area.

But we also think it may have been too little, too late. While regional council approved hearing from the public on the issue at its January 19 meeting, it also decided waiting over a month to hear what's on residents' minds was acceptable, even with the looming deadline.

Special meetings on issues that interest the public are scheduled all the time, such as the one on the Province's growth plan coming up Wednesday.

While hindsight is 20/20, we say this would've been a good time to call a separate, earlier meeting outside regional committee's schedule.

If nothing else, this messy process will serve as a learning experience for all involved.

Our Readers Write

Thanks to all those who stopped to offer help during daughters' recent accident on Hwy. 25

Dear Editor:

On February 18 my daughters and two of their friends were involved in an accident at an intersection on Regional Road 25, just south of the 401.

The light was red and they were stopped when a tow truck plowed into the back of their 2000 Intrepid.

By the grace of God they were all okay. They were sore, stiff and scraped up — but it could have been so much worse.

There were a number of people

who stopped to help, including one couple who offered a blanket to one of my daughters and stayed with them.

Our kids have commented more than once about how nice all of the people were — the fellow motorists who stopped, as well as the police and paramedics.

We want to say thank you to everyone who cared enough to stop and offer help to my kids, as well as the police and paramedics who offered care and compassion.

It gives us peace of mind to know that all of the bad we hear about people in the media isn't really the norm — that people are essentially good, kind and caring.

Again, thank you.

And to the tow truck driver, while we know accidents happen, we hope that next time you're involved in an accident or see one occur that you'll offer a kind face, word or hand.

D.S. Houston
Milton

Make sure to include your name, address and telephone number when submitting a letter to the editor for publication.

A tale of two coffee shops and some difficult choices

If I had to pick a story of the month based on the number of conversations it's sparked here at the office, this month's would definitely be the opening of the new Starbucks on Market Drive.

I watched as the building went up and then one day saw a sign bearing the familiar circular green logo. After that, I could swear my heart beat just a bit faster each time I drove by.

As self-certified coffee aficionados, the three reporters here excitedly anticipated what liquid adventure we'd first embark upon once the store opened. Would it be the white chocolate mocha? A classic caffè latte? Or maybe just a venti-decaf-skinny-caramel macchiato to go.

It's now been several weeks since the beanyery opened and, much to the surprise of myself and Melanie Hennessey, both of us have yet to visit.

It was while pondering this that I realized chain stores just can't replace the magic of a place

where everybody knows your name. And they're always glad you came.

Since I don't drink (alcohol), my Cheers-equivalent here on Main Street has quickly become Espresso Yourself Caffé, where they do know my name. And they at least pretend they're glad I came.

If you've ever seen two tall girls and a guy resolutely walking down Main Street toward the coffee shop at 9:26 a.m., chances are that's your local team of reporters on our way for our morning fuel.

As our sports scribe once wrote about the complex relationship between a reporter and the caffeine-infused beverage:

"Coffee, coffee, coffee, you are my dark master, Coffee, coffee, coffee, you help me write faster."

Our daily jaunt somewhat resembles a class



with STEPHANIE THIESEN

Around town

field trip, and just the other day I had a vision of a gaggle of kids walking to the park, each clutching a spot on a long rope.

The daily selection of flavoured coffees at Espresso Yourself has become a bit of a predictor of the way the day's going to progress. Maple cream and Bavarian chocolate? It's going to be a good day. Snickerdoodle? There'll be no writer's

block causing frustration today. Holiday blend? Kill me now. Bad things are in store.

Espresso Yourself is one of the things I'll miss most when the Champion takes residence at its new location at Main and Thompson streets. Although a Tim Hortons is just around the corner, it won't be the same.

So, I'm considering making the drive to Espresso Yourself each day.

My hopes shot through the roof the other day when the owner of Espresso Yourself said he should set up a coffee delivery service once The Champion moves, but I quickly realized he was kidding.

Too bad. I thought it was a viable business idea with a promising future.

One day I'll venture out to Starbucks for a taste of liquid heaven. For now, I'll stick to Espresso Yourself while I'm still nearby.