

Comment

The Canadian Champion

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Why are we waiting?

It has been nearly five years since the Walkerton water tragedy, and while some measures have been taken to ensure our drinking water is safe, chilling government data released earlier this week shows industrial pollution remains a chronic problem.

Based on government data, a report from the environmental watchdog group Sierra Legal Defence Fund (SLDF) provides a snapshot of non-compliance with provincial water pollution laws during 2002 and 2003 — the most recent years for which data is available.

During that period there were 2,500 documented pollution violations by industry, including more than 2,300 water pollution violations and 102 illegal spills into water. The data also reveals that in 2003 alone the volume of illegal spills into water totalled more than 5 million litres.

Many of the offending companies were repeat offenders, some with as many as 329 violations.

While the Walkerton disaster

sparked a move by the Province to get tougher with polluters, Bill 133, which was only introduced last fall, has yet to be passed. The bill would allow environment ministry officials to assess about 140 large industrial facilities penalties of \$100,000 a day after a spill. That could be done before a court conviction, which ministry officials contend is often hard to obtain.

The principle behind the bill is that polluters should foot the bill for the clean-up, even if the spill is accidental. To us, that's a no-brainer.

"We're seeing hundreds of violations a year, a handful of investigations and maybe just one or two charges being laid," said Elaine MacDonald, a scientist with the SLDF.

Hitting offending industries hard in the pocketbook is likely the only way to get their attention and to stop them from destroying our waterways.

The Province shouldn't be waiting for another Walkerton.

Our Readers Write

Opposition to development seems like elitism

Dear Editor:

As owners of a townhouse in Hawthorne Village, we fully support the proposed apartment and mixed-density development at the southwest corner of Derry Road and Fourth Line.

Residents' concerns over the environmental impact of such a development are, as far as we're concerned, unfounded. Common sense dictates that medium/high-density subdivisions are less damaging to the environment since more people live on less land, thus preserving environmentally-sensitive areas.

Medium and high-density developments such as apartment buildings and townhouses also assist in the delivery of municipal and

regional services. Milton Transit can reach more people in a shorter time, which in turn promotes the use of this system, keeping more cars off the roads.

Also, emergency services such as ambulance, fire and police have less roads and side streets to navigate in these types of developments.

Young professionals typically favour apartments when first moving away from home and entering the workforce.

This centralization of young professionals encourages the establishment of services such as restaurants, movie theatres, medical/dental offices and grocery stores, which in turn benefit the entire community.

At the heart of the matter, resi-

dents' issues with this proposed development show signs of elitism and 'Not In My Backyard' syndrome.

Essentially, as far as we can see, new residents of Milton are simply complaining about even newer residents joining their neighbourhood in dwellings deemed less acceptable.

We believe that a healthy blend of apartments, townhouses, semi-detached and single homes are essential to the protection of the environment, the delivery of municipal and regional services and the prevention of ghetto-living.

**John Watson and
Lisa MacLellan
Milton**

We're globetrotting around world — thanks to you

The Champion must be feeling awfully jet-lagged these days.

Milton's community newspaper has certainly been piling up those frequent flyer miles since we introduced Champion Tracks back in the fall.

Officially started on November 12 with a photo of Editor-in-Chief Jill Davis in Las Vegas, the new segment was a little slow out of the gate — with just one other entry running through the rest of that first month.

But any concerns that Champion Tracks wouldn't fly — no pun intended — have since been grounded. Boy have they been grounded.

Suggesting Miltonians have taken advantage of the opportunity to have their pictures taken with The Champion during their vacations is an understatement of global proportions.

Including today's issue, we've had 65 photos published in just a four-and-a-half month span,

and more than a dozen other pictures are waiting to run at any given time these days.

As far as I can tell, Champion Tracks is one of the strongest indications we've had in recent years that Miltonians really care about their community newspaper.

The best part of all this, as far as I'm concerned, is the vast array of destinations being featured. Of course we get a fair amount of entries from popular spots like Florida and Mexico, but we've also had photos from more than two dozen countries outside North America — including such exotic locales as Hong Kong, Egypt, Thailand and Australia. The best entries are the ones that really capture an area's scenic wonder — like the shot of Barry Wilson 12,000 feet up and surrounded by picturesque mountains near Chamonix, France — or show off one of its key attractions.

To that end, two pyramid pics — featuring



with STEVE LeBLANC

Up
front

Robert Cormen in Egypt and the Paiero family in Mexico — are among my favourites. Also on that list is Lois Eibl standing outside the Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires where Madonna — I mean Evita — made her famous speech from the balcony.

And among the most creative have to be Harry and June Robinson atop an elephant in Thailand and Ken Armstrong using The Champion to wrap

up a barracuda fish his wife Pam caught in the Dominican Republic.

The Champion's even been there for Milton's goodwill acts around the world, like Grant Davidson's work with Habitat for Humanity in Costa Rica and Richard and Joyce Poth distributing bed kits to children in India.

But as well travelled as our local newspaper's been in recent months, its urge to roam continues. I for one would love to see The Champion getting trampled during the Running of the Bulls in Pamplona, Spain or caught on camera during a good old-fashioned European soccer riot.

So keep those Champion Tracks coming. Those interested in submitting a photo can do so by e-mailing it to miltone@haltonsearch.com, or dropping it off at 191 Main St. E. And as always, don't forget to include your name and destination information.