

# OPINION

## Conflict must end

For 168 days the residents of Caledonia have had their lives turned upside down.

They have seen their peaceful little town become a battleground, their economy battered, infrastructure vandalized and neighbours pitted against one another.

While the ongoing native land dispute continues to simmer, we can only wonder how much longer Premier Dalton McGuinty's government intends to let this untenable situation carry on.

That also appears to be the question that Ontario Superior Court Justice David Marshall was asking last week when he ruled negotiations with the native protesters must cease until the protesters move off the housing development site they've illegally occupied since February 28.

The Liberals' decision to

bring in former premier David Peterson to bring both sides to the negotiating table may have allowed for a brief cooling off period, but this standoff appears to have no end in sight.

With the memories of Oka and Ipperwash still fresh, it's understandable the Liberals want to move cautiously in the Caledonia standoff. However, when the courts have ruled — repeatedly — that the protest must end it's the responsibility of the government to act.

No group in society — no matter how wronged they may have been in the past — can stand above the law.

The residents of Caledonia have been caught in a fight that wasn't theirs. The premier, indeed the Prime Minister, owes it to those people to have their lives returned to normal.



## ReadersWrite

Send your letters to [miltone@haltonsearch.com](mailto:miltone@haltonsearch.com) or drop them off at 875 Main St. E.

## Walker's views on pesticide issue frightening

DEAR EDITOR:

I'm responding to the letter written by Philip Walker condemning a proposed ban on cosmetic pesticides.

Although Walker's article was well written in the literary sense, the content of his letter absolutely terrified me.

The ban in question involves pesticides used for cosmetic purposes, which means using poisons in our environment to kill some weeds while leaving other ones society deems attractive.

I don't mean to sound condescending, but I'm not sure Walker understands the meaning of the term cosmetic. At times he drifted and implied that the livelihood of farmers would somehow be threatened by this ban. To be clear, agricultural use of pesticides isn't in question here.

And if he did indeed know this, I would feel insulted as a farmer that he would attempt to raise fear in others to gain support.

I understand the social and economic pres-

sure to maintain attractive-looking landscape. Most people in Milton take great pride in their homes and their surrounding neighbourhoods. Visually-attractive greenways and parkland draws many new citizens and businesses to Milton, bringing with them commerce and plenty of tax revenue for the town, which is a very good thing.

As a biologist, I thoroughly enjoy all the green space we have in Milton, and I hope this trend continues.

I personally don't use pesticides, nor do I agree with the use of any poison, but I have no power to stop others from using them on their own property, including Walker.

I have faith that my good neighbours will have investigated the risks to their families, pets and native wildlife before applying any such chemicals to our shared environment, as pesticides don't just land on weeds. They travel through the air and the water and soil, and we ingest them as residues or sometimes as the original chemicals in our water and food.

I also hope people understand that just because many pesticides are commercially available doesn't mean they're a healthy addition to our environment. Toxic substances are tested individually for their immediate effects on specific non-human species.

Governments then set standards based on these tests and regulate their use as they would exist independently from all others. The problem however, is we're never exposed to only one chemical at a time, nor do we have any idea of the effect of cumulative or interactive mixtures of these chemicals as they exist in our environment.

I'd like to state for the benefit of Walker that bleach (sodium hypochlorite) is in fact highly toxic, which is why it's used as a disinfectant. Bleach destroys viral and bacterial DNA, not to mention DNA from all other biological classes such as plants and animals — including humans.

That's why it's such an effective cleaning agent for households.

So for Walker to say that the pesticides in question are no more toxic than household bleach isn't an argument in his favour.

For me, the bigger question is why we feel we have to plant sod anyway. Grass itself is a weed that requires an enormous amount of water, whereas meadow plants such as clover and chamomile grow readily and require little attention.

Incidentally, the most hated plant — the dandelion — is actually one of the most nutritiously edible plants we have, and is in fact sold in health food stores. Perhaps this is food for thought.

BOB HICKS  
BURLINGTON

JOHN WILSON  
SPRUCEDALE LANE

## Let's really think about meaning of peace

DEAR EDITOR:

What is peace? Peace isn't just the absence of war. It's much more.

You would think that such an important word would be easy to define, but perhaps for many it isn't. In my view, peace is the maintaining of conditions for the sustainable social, economic, political and spiritual development of all people. However we express the meaning of peace and how often we express it is also important.

It's imperative that world leaders come

together more to talk, not just about the need for peace but also to give speeches about the meaning of peace.

A speech can have more impact than the most powerful weapon. Bombs can destroy the lives of millions, but powerful speeches could save the lives of billions. We need such speeches now. The urgency for this can't be over-expressed — for in the front of humanity's path may lie a most dangerous future.

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