

Snowmobiles must be banned from public lands

Dear Editor,

It's a beautiful, sunny day and the snow lies fluffy and clean around me as I glide down a trail on my cross-country skis, my dog jogging along in front. A squirrel chatters noisily above me in a red pine and I catch a glimpse of curious deer watching me through the trees. The crisp, cold air feels good in my chest, and all is well in the world.

Suddenly, a low roar breaks the solitude. Quickly it develops into a menacing howl and a machine designed in hell flies over the hill behind me. I jump to the side of the trail and yell to my dog just as a madman in a dark ski suit and

EDITOR'S MAIL

helmet crashes by me, narrowly missing my frightened dog.

Slowing just enough to stand up to see what he has just missed (no doubt he can plan his next attack better), the crazed rider flicks a cap from his beer at me and, as quickly, is gone. The squirrel has fled. The deer is bounding away through the woods, no doubt remembering the last time that he had been chased to

exhaustion by a similar horror. The air is thick with the stench of exhaust. The parallel grooves in the snow that I had been following have been obliterated.

Thankfully, I wake up at this point to realize that it is only a nightmare. Or is it?

I'm not fond of snowmobilers. I spend a lot of time in the York Regional forests around Ballantrae

and I wish that snowmobiles would be banned. They are dangerous. In the past month, my dog was nearly run down in a scene just like my nightmare. My daughters and I were buzzed by a snowmobile while tobogganing.

Snowmobilers are inconsiderate, seeming to go out of their way to flatten any ski trails they can find. They have no respect for private lands either, trespassing boldly and openly. They harm our environment, crushing young trees on our public lands when they wander off the trails. They frighten the wildlife. They pollute the air with fumes and noise. I often

encounter a pile of beer caps and an empty cigarette package, laying along the trails.

Why are these bullies allowed to dominate our public lands? If enough of us protest, surely they can be evicted. Let them go to private clubs instead, and my nightmares will end.

I have another dream. This one is to pick up The Tribune someday and read the headline: Snowmobiles banned from all public lands in York Region.

Stephen Cluff
Stouffville

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Province's nurses should be paid fairly for their work

Dear Editor,

I would like to add my voice in praise of the "Florence Nightingales" in white at the Markham-Stouffville Hospital.

I recently underwent major surgery and spent a week in this new facility under the expert care of the nurses in the Mother/Baby unit, in particular one special nurse.

Hers was the first face I saw upon waking from a long recovery period. Her soft, warm reassuring voice gently probed me for any signs of discomfort or pain, and reassured me during the nausea and uncomfortable feelings as the anaesthesia subsided.

Throughout my stay, she and the other nurses attended to my needs with an always cheerful, friendly and caring attitude about their work.

I was astonished and distressed to hear, during my conversations with the staff, about the low wages these ladies and men are making.

I consider nurses professionals in the field of health care, and they are an important and integral part in the smooth-running operation of the large hospital institutions.

My husband and I are very proud to be founders of the magnificent Markham-Stouffville Hospital, and therefore, we will lobby the politicians for fair and progressive pay for the nurses in this province's hospitals.

If you are concerned about the quality of care within our health care system, please add your voice to ours and let your government know now. Support our nurses in their quest for better wages — let's not lose these professionals to the U.S.A. or have them leave nursing completely.

Find out for yourself what their salaries are. You will be just as surprised as we were. We need our nurses here!

None of us like hospitals but if you ever need one, you will be very fortunate to receive the best care possible from the entire staff and facilities at Markham-Stouffville Hospital. We should be proud of it.

S. Castonguay
Stouffville

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