

stouffville comment

Trash issue will not soon go away

A sigh of relief was let loose last week at the IWA's announcement of dumpsites for those communities not directly affected by a dump in their backyard.

But the sigh may be short lived and that goes for this area as well, even though we were not on the dumper's short list. We will all be impacted by these mega-dumps in Peel, York and Durham. We can only hope that a new provincial government will put a stop to it and proceed with more sensible and viable options, like Japanese compression techniques, rail hauling or incineration.

In the meantime, we can only sympathize with those communities selected to bear the GTA's mounting pile of trash.



AMIR'93

Firewood may be new growth industry

Imagine the look on the faces of our ancestors if we told them we paid the equivalent of an average worker's pay for the week... on firewood.

I bought firewood for the first time in my life last weekend, meaning to say I actually paid for some, and while I had a relative clue as to the amount of wood I would be getting, I was quite stunned by the prices.

Not to say that my man wasn't competitive. In fact, he was below many firewood people I called, and he delivered it in fine style and with eager promptness.

But it seems almost surreal to pay upwards of \$250 or \$300 for a bush cord of wood.

Of course, I am spoiled. I used to get my wood up north,

where a bush cord ran \$60 and a face cord could be had for \$10, if you loaded it yourself; \$15 if they did it for you.

Of course, there are plenty more firewood salespeople in southern Ontario, and I am pretty sure that they all originally came from up north.

You see, if you really want to make some money in this day and age, get into firewood. Since there hasn't been a decent grove of trees standing in these parts since John Graves Simcoe was the chief tree-feller, people have been short of firewood. And what with these million dollar homes in the area with their multitude of woodstoves and fireplaces, demand is high.

That is why a bush cord of



wood in this town will cost you \$80. There are about 170 logs in a bush cord, or about two weeks worth if you have a decent fire every night for a couple of hours.

Now these smart northern Ontario boys have come down here to take orders for all these fireplaces.

Then, they run back up north on the weekend, and with a

hefty 16-inch chain saw, root through the bush, and chop up some tidy profits. It costs them \$40 in gas, wear and tear on the truck and they have a nice little sideline for eight months of the year.

Bully for them.

Of course, I don't like paying the firewood boys, especially after spending my whole life looking at trees just ripe for the picking. I am adjusting to the price structure though, and was thankful to have the wood this past weekend with it being so damp and miserable.

Here is a tip for those who have recently come into possession of a woodstove or a fireplace. Pay the man to stack the

wood for you. One hundred and seventy logs may not sound like much until you have to pick them up and put them in neat little rows.

There is a true skill to this, and I have yet to learn it. In fact, I restacked my pile several times on the weekend before I actually got it to stand up straight without rolling into an avalanche of bark and sawdust.

Here's another tip. Wear safety boots.

I sport a rather wonderful shade of purple on one of my toes thanks to a big chunk of birch.

I'll have my revenge on that errant log tonight, as I keep the homefires burning.

An assembly to remember

When I visited my daughter's school last Thursday morning, I found myself reduced to tears.

I was there to watch one of the Grade 8 classes perform a dramatization about the devastating effects of war, which was being presented as part of the school's Remembrance Day assembly.

Without warning, the lights in the gym were doused, a universal signal for mayhem among any self-respecting student audience. Throughout this performance, however, you could have heard a pin drop as the drama onstage was played out.

The actors were dressed entirely in black. From time to time the dimly lit stage exploded with flashes of light, accompanied by ominous rolls of thunder, to underline the specific horrors of war with stark effectiveness.



One student read a poem - the others acted it out to an eerily sombre musical score. And unless Grade 8 students have changed incredibly since my school days, one might have expected them to feel uncomfortable with such openly emotional scenes.

Instead, they performed with an eloquence and understanding beyond their years, creating an immensely moving and harrowing portrait of a situation we hope they will never have to face themselves. A mother and daughter were dragged to the gas chambers in a concentration

camp; a letter was delivered to a young woman with the chilling words "We regret to inform you..."; a mother hugged her baby as the narrator informed us that the father would never return to know his child.

It was powerful stuff. One teacher told me afterwards that in all his years of teaching, he had never been so moved by a student performance.

It's easy to forget, as people fret about escalating crime and out-of-control youth, that most young people care deeply about the world they live in and want to do everything in their power to preserve what they have.

Teacher Bill McMahon and his students made that fact abundantly clear last Thursday. If we really mean to give peace a chance, it's hard to imagine a better way of getting the message across.

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