

# Comment & Opinions

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Send your letters  
to the editor  
to the address below

## EDITORIAL

### The loosestrife wars

A century ago, its demon seed charmed its way onto our shores after crossing the Atlantic from Europe. It took some time before we discovered that, despite the alluring beauty of its striking flower, purple loosestrife is a killer.

It's one of nature's most indomitable specimens, with thirsting sponge-like roots, which can suck up a precious wetland in the blink of a cosmic eye.

Anxious ecologists have declared all-out war on the mighty weed, first with chemical warfare, dousing the invaders with toxic herbicides. This proved an exercise in futility. The hardy loosestrife continued to prosper.

Our pristine wetlands were defiled by this costly initiative, showing once again the short-sightedness of humanity's relentless attempts to conquer Mother Nature.

Now, navel-gazing ecologists have released millions of tiny six-legged assassins, imported from Europe, over some 500 loosestrife-infested wetlands across Canada and the U.S., transforming them into borderless biocontrol laboratories.

Their claim that these beetles (*Galerucella calmariensis*) will eat only loosestrife is suspect when held up to what we know about evolution and, as Australians learned after introducing but 12 rabbits to their huge island in 1859, messing with Mother Nature is wrought with unintended consequences.

When — and if — the loosestrife is eradicated, what will the beetles eat next? Are we trading in one biological disaster for another?

### Water issue hoses residents

Dear Editor,

What a fine letter from Mike Watson on the water problem at Musselman's Lake. Congratulations to Mr. Watson for standing up to council regarding the \$30. account fee. Of course, it's a ridiculous charge, but then the whole situation may be equally nuts.

I'm pleased to finally learn I do not have to cap my active well. I can use the water from the aquifer under my property to water the lawn and flowers, wash the car and maybe hose myself off, if the day is really hot.

Well, if I hose myself off on a hot day with water from the aquifer, isn't that the same thing as using the water from the aquifer to bathe in? And I'm not a water expert, but isn't the water in the aquifer under my house, which is about 15-feet from the lake, the same as the water in the lake?

I have been swimming in the lake every year for the last 10, and before that every year all through my teen years. I have yet to glow green in the dark, or lose a limb to some form of grotesque decay caused by the water.

This is the point Watson raised in his letter when he said the contamination problem has existed for at least 20 years. In our house we have bathed in the water for all that time. Why is it suddenly important enough I don't bathe in the water from the aquifer to make it unlawful for me to do so?

Now, I called town hall to inquire about the kind of pollution in the aquifer: is it bacterial, I asked, or chemical? I was told there is bacterial pollution, so I used the name E-fecal coli.

The person said yes, it was E-fecal coli. This I assume is the same kind of E-fecal coli the government tests in the water at Cedar Beach. If the count is too high, the beach closes. The beach has not been closed as far as I know in the last five or six years. That is surely good news. It probably means the E-fecal coli count is lower in the last five or six years than in the '80s. Yet the person I spoke with at town hall said the predictions are for the aquifers to become more and more polluted in the next decade.

In addition to that bacterial problem, nitrate is found in the aquifer.

I'm not expert enough to know if the nitrate in the aquifer is the same kind of nitrate used in say smoked meat, that is, sodium nitrate. Sodium nitrate is of course a carcinogen, so if the nitrate in the aquifer is the same kind of nitrate, then we are being saved from drinking unhealthy amounts of nitrates. We can then choose to

buy nitrates in the form of smoked meat, if we chose.

Is the nitrate similar to that found in tobacco smoke? I could be wrong, but I believe nitrate is one of the 400 dangerous toxins found in cigarettes. Cigarettes are readily available to adults who chose to buy them. No government agencies have been successful so far in keeping people from having choice regarding cigarettes.

We all know they are bad for us. Some people choose to continue to smoke.

Some people use bottled water, or a good filter system. Yet we are being told this is no longer our choice.

Of course the whole issue of water pollution at Musselman's was put to a vote. That should be the end of it, right? Wrong. The vote ballot was sent out by mail after many cottagers, part-time residents, summer users, had gone home for the year. The ballot was also the handy government style: if you don't object, your silence is taken as agreement.

I call that handy because Canada currently has a high illiteracy rate and you can't object to something you can't read. You can't object to something when you can't write. Somehow, town council has ignored this little statistic as though everyone in our particular neck of the country is totally fluent in English.

For this reason alone I am very suspect about the results of the vote.

There is just one more problem I have with the situation and that is the problem of sewage.

It has been stated publicly in town meetings, by people who work in the pipe-laying business, that you must put sewage pipes below water pipes.

Watson addresses this in his letter, saying sewage is the source of the pollution problem in the first place.

The only possible reason for putting in water pipes first is money: first you raise taxes in order to put the water pipes in, and then, a few years down the line, you rip out the existing pipe, put in sewage properly, replace the water mains, and raise taxes, again.

Mainline water does make the town of Stouffville more attractive to new residents, as Watson points out in his letter. More new residents means more new taxes. And more new water lines means new taxes from those of us already living in the area. A monitored water system means more money for town hall in spite of predicted water shortages. The reason for the whole water issue is clear: to hose down residents.

Charlene Jones  
Stouffville



### Internet article was timely

Dear Editor,

Thank you so much for your article, "Caution needed when using 'Net'."

We have just ordered our internet supplier and are looking forward to using this tool.

I will definitely purchase Microsoft Explorer or something similar to protect our school age children.

I hope there will be more articles about the internet.

Mrs. Marianne Foscari  
Markham

### Lori takes a great photo, reader says

Dear Editor,

Just a pat on the back!

Thank you for the lovely photo on the front page of Tuesday's *Tribune*, Aug. 12.

That photographer (Lori Emmerson) got more than a cute little girl, with a happy smile.

The details in the photo, are what caught my attention.

The ripples on the water, the leaves on the tree, the background scenery, are something to see!

Keep up the good work Lori.

Frances Vague  
Stouffville

## STOUFFVILLE TRIBUNE

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