

Shooting messenger is a waste of time

When you're mad at the news, put on the blindfold, drop the gloves and start swinging. It's called Shoot the Messenger and it's a waste of time.



Joan Ransberry

inspection of a gravel pit, a more thorough look-see is under way by the Ministry of the Natural Resources.

I personally saw images of

Since I'm in the media, I'm drawn into it on occasion. Earlier this week, I was told I was an incompetent journalist. The reader was on a roll — according to him, a Ransberry-written story was totally unbalanced. Apparently, I reported all the wrong things and left all the right things out.

I was also chastised for including a report from a provincial ministry. I was then told I practise "yellow" journalism.

Here's what it was all about. People in the Warden Avenue and Bloomington Road area are worried that nearby gravel pits are posing health and safety threats. They're so hot under the collar, they're threatening to form a blockade to stop trucks from dumping fill at an area pit.

Whitchurch-Stouffville council bowed to the residents' concerns and denied four applicants the right to dump fill at gravel pits.

Still, residents continue to insist that contaminated fill is finding its way into these pits. Instead of being the target in Shoot the Messenger, I turned my attention to the people who are asking for the right to live in a healthy environment and to the people who have a right to make a living.

Things are happening. While the Ministry of the Environment reported, no problems from its initial

large quantities of asphalt pavement, roofing material, plastic pipe, plastic containers, fiberglass, plastic bags, plastic snow fencing, rubber, vinyl-covered electrical wiring, precast concrete, car tires and tractor tires.

I have a hard time accepting that this type of material is safe.

The Ministry of Natural Resources isn't saying one way or another if the material is iffy. Ministry officials and MOE inspectors are putting their heads together, hoping to figure it out.

I do know this: In the wake of the Walkerton tragedy, people will ask questions about their drinking water.

Dalton Hicks of Pitway Ltd., was one of the applicants denied a permit by local council.

Ironically, Hicks helped design a bylaw to put some teeth into the laws governing the 16 gravel pits in Whitchurch-Stouffville. The bylaw makes it necessary for pit owners to apply for permits to dump fill.

Gravel pit owners are now required to enter into a comprehensive fill agreement and post a substantial no contamination security bond with the town.

They're also undertake ground water monitoring and hydrogeological impact assessment prior to approval in the defunct pits.

Still, it doesn't ease the worry.

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