

OPINION

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Editorial

Anti-litter survey? Let's look at bigger environmental concerns

Have no fear
York Region is doing all it can to tell us what types of litter are blowing around our streets, parks and school yards.

In a joint survey by York, Peel and Durham regions, teams were sent out for two weeks to analyse litter found at computer-selected locations near highways and schools.

Dedicated litter crusaders found cigarette butts, take-out packaging and paper products in large quantities. The biggest offender, however, was (gasp) tiny bits of paper.

How much all this cost is being kept under wraps, however, for reasons anyone can guess.

Next, regions will spend money lobbying manufacturers of various materials and packaging and pass anti-litter bylaws, including penalties.

If borders on ludicrous the region would undertake an effort already being vigorously pursued by schools and organizations dedicated to picking up trash in their communities: Pitch-In, the Guides, Scouts, Big Brothers and Sisters, not to mention the provinces highway litter fine programs, already pursue keeping our communities trash-free.

York Region has far more pressing matters to deal with at home, such as its sewage treatment procedures.

Allowing hundreds of thousands of gallons of raw human waste to pour into various streams, ponds and lakes over the past several years is a much bigger threat to the environment than cigarette butts and Big Mac containers littering highways.

If York Region wants to get on the clean environment bandwagon, how about coming up with a strategy to combat errors and failures at its seven sewage pumping stations?

Instead of spending taxpayers' dollars pleading not guilty to the May 2001 Sutton sewage spill and forcing a ministry inspector to explain how she knows raw sewage when she sees it, perhaps a study could be undertaken to tighten procedures regarding staffing of pumping stations.

With bigger issues such as this to contend with, this litter campaign is nothing but a waste.



Letters to the Editor

The Stouffville Sun-Tribune welcomes your letters.

All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The Stouffville Sun-Tribune reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space. Write: Letters to the Editor, 34 Civic Ave., P.O. Box 154, Stouffville, L4A 7Z5, e-mail jmason@ymg.com

Natural park great idea for town

Re: Snakes for park scare councillors, Jan. 15.
I am once again relieved to find the editor continues to retain his sense of humour, or his sense of the surreal, at least.

Coming across an article with the words councillors and snakes together is a most serendipitous find for pundits such as me and, therefore, I find myself unable to resist commenting.

Mark Carroll (never one to let a little thing like losing the confidence of constituents get him down) is proposing a natural park for Ballantrae. His nemesis, Councillor Phil Bannon, seems to be both suspicious of and opposed to the notion.

I realize most council members are rookies in the political arena, but suggesting the common garter snake, a non-poisonous predator of things such as insects and worms, is dangerous to the community is patently absurd.

It also shows less than basic knowledge of local fauna and maybe a shortfall in the common sense department.

I believe it's a great idea to preserve some natural areas in the town for wildlife, even if they are fenced in and surrounded by cookie-cutter housing developments.

The way successive councils have been going at development approvals the last decade or so (to say nothing of the way the McGuinty "Liberals" have been "protecting" the rest of the moraine lands), these remnants of our natural heritage may soon be all we have left.

HUGO T. KROON
BETHESDA

Suburbs bigger threat than snakes

Re: Snakes for park scare councillors, Jan. 15.
Councillor Phil Bannon's use of the term "snake pit" to characterize Mark Carroll's proposal to construct a wildlife sanctuary in Ballantrae misrepresented the proposal.

As a new resident, Mr. Bannon is perhaps unfamiliar with the wildlife of Whitchurch-Stouffville. Mr. Bannon, there are no dangerous wild snakes in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Your concern a wildlife sanctuary for snakes, bats, birds and butterflies would pose a safety threat to children is misguided.

I believe a far greater threat to the cultural dynamics and well being of this community is the proposed proliferation of treeless suburban residential tracts, entirely disassociated from the existing community.

In a community whose motto is "country close to the city", it is only natural one would find birds, bats, butterflies, agricultural operations and, yes, even spiders and snakes.

PAMELA COURTOT
STOUFFVILLE



Off The Top

with Jim Mason

MP Emmerson? We've been fooled again

They dropped their doughnuts. Creamed coffee curdled, too, but only those belonging to the Conservatives.

You know you have a scoop in Stouffville when you shock the well-versed regulars at Tim Hortons on Main Street.

Truth is, Wayne Emmerson fooled us all. Before last week, we were convinced he had permanently traded in his chain of office for a measuring tape in November, going from mayor of Whitchurch-Stouffville to his old job at the order desk at Schell Lumber.

There were rumours of a run at the chair of York Region. And there was talk of a provincial appointment, that is, before the Tories went down like the Hindenburg last fall.

All along, Wayne Emmerson was contemplating his latest run, at the job of MP of the new riding of Oak Ridges-Markham.

He announced last week he will seek the Liberal nomination to a chorus of "really?" and "you've got to be kidding."

"People knew I would do something, they just didn't know what," he said Tuesday. "There were other offers, but we've been talking about this one for a while."

"The reaction has been very positive out there. Some people are telling me they have never voted Liberal before, now they're prepared to vote for the person. And I think the change in the party, with Prime Minister Martin, looks good."

Some people wondered, others always assumed he was a Conservative. But no membership cards on this guy, before this year, that is.

"I've never been a party member, because, as mayor, I had to work with all of them (parties)," he said.

"Once you get this in your blood, it's hard to get it out. But this will be a bigger House (of Commons) than I've been in before."

There is opposition but not from any other Liberals, yet. A nomination meeting is expected within the month, all in anticipation of a spring federal election.

Bob Callow, a member of the York-Regional Police services board, is seeking the Conservative nomination.

As a three-term mayor and regional councillor, Wayne Emmerson has a presence. He also has small town charm, which should serve him well in the rural-based riding of central York Region.

Jim Mason is editor of the Sun-Tribune.

Stouffville
Sun-Tribune
A Metroland Community Newspaper

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