

OPINION

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Bong found in messy park is breaking point

I frequently take my son to Personna Park, which for the most part is spectacular.

The grounds are beautifully maintained and the playground equipment is immaculate.

However, the way the grounds are treated by the people using the park is horrific. The playground area is littered with cigarette butts (perfect for babies to chew on), despite the fact bins are provided throughout the park.

Although I find this extremely annoying, my breaking point was reached when I saw my one-year-old son walking through the park carrying what seemed to be a water bottle. It turned out to be a home-made bong, a device used to smoke drugs.

Who knows what was smoked through this bong? Pot? Crack cocaine?

What's next? Needles distributed throughout the park, putting our children at risk of contracting a variety of unmentionable diseases?

I know this is common in a lot of parks throughout the Toronto area, but Personna Park?

I notice a lot of adults spend time relaxing and having lunch at the park. They drive there and I can't help but wonder who's responsible for this mess.

If you are using our park, please treat

it with the respect it deserves and have consideration for the residents and children of the Cachet area.

M.JAZYK
MARKHAM

Box Grove will lose out

Re: Fore! Road threatens courses July 7.

I live in Box Grove and can say from experience the final decision will be one that only panders to the developers building the subdivisions in the "new" Box Grove.

I was on the Box Grove Ratepayers group for two years and resigned after realizing developers have a huge influence on council decisions, and that the process is so ridiculously wasteful and politically controlled it is borderline unethical.

Our councillors have repeatedly shown their disregard for the locals here in Box Grove and sided with the developers on almost every issue.

What they should do is stop pretending they care about the environment and just blow a super highway through Box Grove and be done with it.

I will bet my last dollar the golf course and residents of Box Grove will lose out and the subdivisions and roads will plow right through to make way for "progress".

Shameful, but expected.

DAVID ROUT
MARKHAM



Real U.S. climate leaders not in White House

The United States is not exactly known for having a progressive official policy on climate change.

President George W. Bush goes out of his way to avoid talking about the issue and prefers to discuss "climate variability", thereby removing the human hand from the problem and downplaying the urgency of the situation.

In fact, the U.S. government has been accused of softening — even altering — scientific statements about global warming. The U.S. was also instrumental in watering down a proposed joint statement on climate change from the G8 leaders summit this week in Scotland. A draft statement showed no targets or timelines and is essentially meaningless.

But while the official U.S. position may involve sticking its head in the sand, many U.S. states and cities are stepping up to the plate, taking the problem seriously and recognizing the benefits of reducing the emissions that are disrupting the climate. And some of the emerging leaders are also some of the least expected.

California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is one. The former actor and current leader of the world's fifth-largest economy has announced plans to reduce his



David Suzuki

state's heat-trapping emissions to 80 per cent below 1990 levels by 2050.

"Not bad, for a Republican," some might be tempted to say. But changing the way we produce and use energy is not a partisan issue. Mr. Schwarzenegger deserves full credit for setting such an ambitious (yet achievable) target that may have raised more than a few eyebrows in his own party.

Regardless of one's political affiliations, shifting to more sustainable forms of energy production and using energy more wisely makes sense. Doing so will save money, partly because energy, in any form is expensive. But it will also save money in the long term because it will reduce other burdens to soci-

ety like climate change and air pollution; burdens that have real economic costs in terms of health care, infrastructure and agriculture.

They also hurt our quality of life.

Mr. Schwarzenegger isn't the only U.S. leader to recognize the advantages of changing our energy economy. Seattle Mayor Greg Nichols, a Democrat, has organized some 300 other American mayors, including many Republicans to agree to meet or beat the targets set out in the Kyoto Protocol. That's the very same Kyoto Protocol the U.S. officially dropped out of years ago, saying that reducing heat-trapping emissions would damage the American economy.

Meanwhile mayors such as Mr. Nichols are embracing the transition away from fossil fuels as an economic opportunity for their cities. Mr. Nichols recently told Grist magazine the change is inevitable, so we should embrace it and encourage entrepreneurs to figure out how to make it profitable and create "green jobs".

It's too bad that kind of leadership hasn't trickled up to the G8 meetings. Together, G8 countries, including Canada, are responsible for nearly half the world's carbon dioxide emissions, the main heat-trapping gas.

They are also the most technologically and scientifically advanced, accounting for 70 per cent of the world's scientific citations. British Prime Minister Tony Blair has been a vocal proponent of a stronger climate commitment from the leaders, but President Bush has consistently shut down any meaningful action.

A month before the G8 meetings, the scientific academies of each of the G8 countries, including the U.S., released a joint statement calling on the leaders of these countries to take action on climate change. They pointed out failing to act quickly will make a problem that we will inevitably have to deal with much worse.

That's something many world leaders, U.S. governors and hundreds of U.S. mayors clearly understand already.

Change is happening, whether the White House likes it or not. It's only a matter of time before the Bush administration will have to pull its head out of the sand and face reality.

With the U.S. responsible for a quarter of the world's heat-trapping gases, we must hope that will happen soon.

Take the Nature Challenge at www.davidsuzuki.org.

LETTERS POLICY

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