

Guelph Mercury

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Pollinator park an ideal solution

What to do with the garbage a municipality generates has long been a hot-button subject for myriad stakeholders. So, too, has been the question of what to do with civic garbage dumps once they've reached capacity at the end of their lifespan.

Across Canada different centres have tackled the afterlife of garbage dumps with different strategies and varied degrees of success. A former dumpsite in Sudbury became real estate for a subdivision — with some hiccups encountered as buried debris returned with some frequency to the top of the housing heap. In Winnipeg, one old dump became a park — featuring the popular landscape feature in the prairie centre of a large, grassy hill. Elsewhere, the pictures haven't been so well planned or as successful.

The uneven legacy of this urban reality is part of what makes what's at play and proposed for Guelph's former Eastview Road garbage dump such an interesting thing. The site is already making productive and green use of its yesteryear function with a system that captures its trapped methane gas and converts it into electricity. Now, there's a push — a smart and ambitious one — to have the site become a so-called pollinator park. On top of the dump would bloom a habitat to sustain or grow populations of bees, butterflies and other winged species responsible for pollination. While these organisms may not be as sexy as polar bears or manatees, they're at risk and they're key to many elements of any healthy ecosystem in a climate such as ours.

The pollinator park would be the world's biggest — of a people-designed sort. It promises to attract some ecotourism and would enhance the city's inventory of beautiful natural and naturalized spaces. If it comes off, it will spur educational and research opportunities and direct or indirect economic ones simply by aiding the insects that contribute to an estimated one-third of our foods.

The proposed park would enhance Guelph's green reputation. Talk of its likely development already has done so — far beyond the community. Not bad for an old dump site.

Surely, it will become trash talk elsewhere if we can pull this off. Let's hope we can.

Roundabout rates a look

There will be opposition to the suggestion that Guelph install a roundabout as a replacement to its locally infamous five points intersection. After all, the proposal would come with a hefty price tag. When it was last costed out — six years ago — such a move would have represented a roughly \$650,000 investment.

Such a job won't come more economically today.

The cost could be subordinated, however, by those offering a quick contrary view of the possibility. The more likely objection to this notion will probably arise from fear of the unknown.

While modern roundabouts entered into use in North America 40 or so years ago and have long been a common feature of European roadways, they haven't caught on here as elsewhere. Guelph has a recent and positive experience with roundabouts in newer south side neighbourhoods. But this would be a different context. This is an arterial road.

There shouldn't be a fear factor conditioning whether Guelph endorses this musing within civic administration circles. With reasonable public education, history shows roundabouts offer a safe option. When they replace rather haphazard intersection forms they're typically safer options.

The five points intersection is a beast. People who use it regularly or who otherwise witness its traffic patterns with any frequency have no shortage of anecdotes of bad moments experienced or observed at the downtown location.

As the city moves improving this intersection up its list of capital roadway projects, it should embrace this possibility. Roundabouts improve traffic flow and offer environmental benefits by reducing stops and starts.

Who knows? Maybe Guelph and one of its most infamous road crossings will be thrown for loop at the request of all.



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letters to the editor

Course offers some valuable life lessons

Dear editor,

With the economy in the state that it is, it has been noted that many Canadians lack the financial knowledge and skills to keep themselves and their families in healthy financial shape.

Some are calling for the government to mandate financial education in our schools, as is being done in many states in the U.S.

I would like to draw attention to the fact that financial education is already available in Ontario high schools. An excellent course called managing personal and family resources examines the management of time, money and talent in order to make good decisions relating to finance, food and nutrition, housing, transportation, and clothing.

It also covers how to make responsible choices in transition to post-secondary education and careers.

At the high school where I teach, this course used to run twice a year; this year it's only once.

And for next year, with only a dozen students registered, this course is under threat of being cancelled.

With so many great courses offered in high school, parents and students must decide which courses will benefit them the most. Would your teenager benefit from this course?

Robin Ysselstein, Guelph

Volunteers raised close to \$1 million

Dear editor,

For over half a century March of Dimes has depended on the kindness and generosity of Ontarians who open their doors, hearts

and wallets during our annual door-to-door campaign.

Once again, this past January and February more than 10,000 canvassers across the province went door to door to help raise money for children and adults living with physical disabilities.

This year's door-to-door volunteers carried on a tradition started more than 58 years ago when "Marching Mothers" went door to door to raise money for a polio cure.

Thanks to their efforts, a vaccine was found and Canada was the first country to be declared polio-free.

Today's March of Dimes provides programs and services that open doors for people with physical disabilities to jobs, recreation, mobility and independence — but we couldn't do it without our dedicated volunteers.

On behalf of March of Dimes, I extend my deepest gratitude to all of our volunteers in Guelph and thank them for helping us raise close to \$1 million in 2009.

We couldn't do without you.

Mary Lynne Stewart, director of fund development and communications, Ontario March of Dimes

Puslinch fire service a cause for concern

Dear editor,

I have lived in this great community of Puslinch for a little over 30 years, and I believe the residents of Puslinch should be concerned about what's happening with the fire department.

People should learning more about the dispute involving the management of the fire department that has seen two of its members leave.

To date, all we've heard from

our so-called leaders is more rhetoric and one-sided opinion — not the cold, hard facts.

Go to the website of our township and read over the minutes of the last three years. You'll be surprised what you learn.

Another related media report also has me really concerned, and should scare all of the residents of Puslinch.

A group of Puslinch firefighters has on more than one occasion threatened to withhold their services unless they get their way, court documents show.

Where is the township chief administrative officer with all this going on?

Is this group of volunteer firefighters being allowed to gamble and threaten our safety and well-being, along with that of the tens of thousands of commuters that use the 401 corridor through our township every day?

This group takes away from those Puslinch firefighters who are true volunteers and are on staff to protect our community.

I implore my fellow Puslinch residents to find out the facts and demand their right to know the truth.

Albert Dikkes, Puslinch



letters welcome

We welcome your feedback. All letters will be edited for clarity, style, length and legal concerns. Letters should be no more than 250 words. Letters will be verified. Please include your name, address and daytime phone number. Email: editor@guelphmercury.com; write: Box 3604, 8-14 Macdonell St., Guelph, ON, N1H 6P7; fax: 519-767-1681.

Dairy farmers standing up to fatty palm oil

It's not quite ice cream weather yet, at least for the customers.

But it certainly is for the processors and manufacturers. They consider April the optimal month for launching new ice cream products. It gives marketing campaigns time to dig in and generate buzz before the hot weather arrives and people start making choices.

Healthwise, some choices are brutal. They're either really high in fat, or really, really, really high in fat, thanks in part to palm oil. It's a saturated fat, found in some ice cream and, especially, frozen desserts, standing in for milk.

The world is awash in palm oil. It became a cheap alternative when consumers started demanding no trans fats in their food. But instead of trans fats, consumers got high fat — refined, bleached, deodorized palm oil. That's its official name. In the trade, it's popularly known by its acronym RBDPO. Yuck.

Canada's dairy industry is pushing back with the 100 per cent Canadian Milk campaign. It wants to bring the palm oil tsunami onto the radar screens of Canadians, and make imported palm oil a food



OWEN ROBERTS
urban cowboy

security issue, as well as a matter of health. The sector got a boost last summer when 90 per cent of 1,500 respondents in a Dairy Farmers of Ontario-sponsored poll said it was important that their ice cream be made with real milk, not with the likes of palm oil.

Some Canadian companies have avoided palm oil. For example, Chapman's, of Markdale, one of rural Ontario's best success stories, boasts about bearing the 100 per cent Canadian Milk designation. The company thinks Canadians will chose products made with domestic milk over imported palm oil, if given the chance — assuming similar quality and product selection.

Here's an emerging success story that illustrates that same line of thinking.

Back on a hot summer evening in 2005,

health enthusiasts Chris Delaney and Amanda House of Burlington were craving a cool, low-fat protein-fortified treat. On a hunch, in their kitchen, they mixed (and mixed, and mixed) some chocolate protein powder with vanilla frozen yogurt.

When they finally got the consistency they wanted and tasted it, they had the kind of eureka moment inventors dream of. To them, yogurt and protein together was YoPRO. Before long they were glued to their computer, researching how to develop and launch a food product.

Their quest led them to the Guelph Food Technology Centre. They worked with the centre for over a year and a half, where they engaged in a six-month feasibility study involving its staff and University of Guelph ice cream processing experts. Through this team effort, they figured out a commercial-scale recipe for a 100-per-cent natural protein-fortified product.

A manufacturer in Stoney Creek was brought on to develop their international patent-pending line, and they were on their way.

Last year, YoPRO was picked up by the

Loblaws chain. Starting this spring, it will be offered in all of their stores in Ontario and Quebec.

Earlier this year, it won a Canadian LIVERight Award for "best kid-friendly product." And now, with the assistance of BioEnterprise Corporation in Guelph, YoPRO is entering next month's ice cream season with a new caramel-ribbed and chocolate frozen yogurt bars — with 8 grams of protein and a scant 1.5 grams of fat. Plans call for expansion into eastern and western Canada next year, followed by entry into the U.S. in 2011, again with BioEnterprise's help.

John Wilkinson, Ontario's minister of research and innovation, says innovation "is all about talented people with good ideas that have the potential to seize global market opportunities."

Check the frozen food aisle. Indeed, innovative products are starting to fill the freezers.

Owen Roberts teaches agricultural communications at the University of Guelph. Urban Cowboy appears Mondays in the Guelph Mercury.