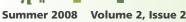




**MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR** 





### **PESTICIDE BYLAWS SPROUTING** with PROVINCIAL ONE COMING

YREA was formed in 1999 initially to campaign for a ban on the cosmetic use of pesticides. It has been a long battle, but with the number of York Region municipalities implementing local pesticide bylaws, and a provincial bylaw in the works, the lengthy struggle hasn't been in vain.

We have partnered with municipalities in pesticide education and continue to present informative workshops on organic lawn care and garden naturalization. These have been hugely popular. Members of the lawn care industry who realize they have to change the way they do business have been in attendance and are always welcome.

The key to successful lawn and garden maintenance is a knowledge of organic practices, the non-toxic alternative products available and how to use them. Municipalities and York Region have much information available, both published and on the internet, to help with this education. YREA has produced an organic lawn care calendar, a concise guide to pesticide free lawn care, which can be viewed on our website at www.yrea.org. Happy, healthy gardening! Vou March

Gloria Marsh

#### STOP JUNK MAIL WITH THE RED DOT CAMPAIGN



This campaign is a privately funded social marketing venture. Paper is precious. Vast amounts of trees, electricity, water and fossil fuels are used in the production and distribution of paper-based advertising. And yet the industry standard is a 2%

response rate! That means 98% of these resources are wasted! We say its time advertisers join the 21st century and adopt data-driven print technologies, electronic communications and social marketing. The Red Dot Community will help inspire this change. For easy ways to stop junk mail go to www.reddotcampaign.ca. Just place a NO JUNK MAIL PLEASE red dot sticker inside your super mailbox or on the outside of mail slot or box to stop unwanted paper litter.

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#### YORK REGION ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE receives ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION FUNDING

YREA gratefully acknowledges the recent three year grant from The Ontario Trillium Foundation which will go towards building our organization's capacity as an environmental leader in York Region.



With this funding, we plan to expand our communication network, develop an e-library as a source of environmental information and build our volunteer and support base so that we may more effectively contribute to a healthy, sustainable environment in a responsive, relevant, effective and resilient manner.

To accomplish our goals, we will need a strong volunteer base. Please contact us at membership@yrea.org if you are interested in contributing your time to YREA and being a part of this dynamic and exciting period.

The Ontario Trillium Foundation is an agency of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Recreation. with \$100 million in annual funding from Ontario's charity casino gaming initiative, the Foundation provides grants to eligible charitable and not-for-profit organizations in the arts, culture, sports, recreation, environment and social service sectors.

### **TRASH CANS & GREEN BINS**

Our environment is in a mess, yet this time we have mostly green bins to report. If you spot a GB or TC item, send it to membership@yrea.org

#### AURORA AND YORK REGION for switching three



of their government buildings to Bullfrog Power. Bullfrog sources its electricity from wind, solar and Ecologo hydro. There are 200 homes and 25 business in York Region that have made the switch. You can too! Go to www.bullfrogpower.com to sign up.



LOBLAWS for the last number of years has stopped selling pesticides. They are taking environmental leadership another step further by being the first major retailer to recycle flower pots and flats. Worth supporting them.

#### **OPERATIONS BRANCH, RICHMOND**

**HILL** meanwhile, having reportedly reduced their ungodly amount of pesticide use by 97% is still drawing

the ire of residents. Why can't they go the whole 9 yards?



MEGAWHAT? and its members who have worked so hard to research and transmit information to the public about the proposed 350megawatt gasburning electrical power generation plant which the

Ontario Power Authority is hoping to build somewhere in northern York Region.



plant.

TOWN OF GEORGINA'S MAYOR AND COUNCIL for approving the motion declaring that Georgina will not accept the current proposal to build the 350 megawatt electrical power generation





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#### ONTARIO CLEAN AIR ALLIANCE SPEAKS OUT AGAINST POLLUTING, INEFFICENT POWER PLANT IN YORK REGION

#### by Jack Gibbons, Chair, OCAA

In Northern York Region (NYR) and Ontario as a whole the demand for electricity peaks on very hot summer days when our air conditioners are running full out. In fact, during these peak hours, 40% of Ontario's total electricity generation is being used to simply power our air conditioners. The good news is that these huge spikes in the demand for electricity occur on only a few very hot days in the summer and last for just 4 to 6 hours on these days.



Ontario's Energy Minister Gerry Phillips has directed the Ontario Power Authority to contract with a private sector power developer to build a very large and very energy inefficient gas-fired power plant in NYR to power our air conditioners . Gerry Phillips' proposal doesn't make sense for a number of reasons. First, it is a very expensive option – it will cost approximately a guarter of a billion dollars. Second, the proposed power plant will have an energy efficiency of only 36% - that is 64% of its gas consumption will be wasted. Third, since it is so wasteful in its use of natural gas, it will have excessively high air pollution emission rates. Specifically, its greenhouse gas emission rate will be

double that of a high-efficiency natural gas-fired power plant.

The Ontario Clean Air Alliance (OCAA) contends that our electricity needs can be met at a lower economic and ecological cost by a balanced combination of conservation and demand management, renewable energy (e.g., hybrid solar/electric water heaters, geothermal, biomass and wind) and small-scale, high-efficiency natural gas-fired combined heat and power plants. In fact, all major new developments in NYR should be required to meet some of their electricity needs on-site from renewable sources or combined heat and power. For example, the new Crates Landing condominium development in Keswick is using

For more information, please visit the OCAA's web site: www.cleanairalliance.org/nyr.

geothermal energy for heating and cooling.



#### **MARKHAM**

# EAC, hosted by YENYR a huge success

By Mike Turk, Director, YREA

With inspiring words from keynote speaker, Justin Trudeau, and numerous breakout workshops, more than 200 students and teachers from Markham schools left the Environmental Action Conference(EAC) on April 9, 2008 with a clear mission to reduce their ecological footprints.

The Youth Environmental Network of York Region (YENYR), through funding from the Town of Markham and other sponsors was able to meet their objective of encouraging youth to contribute to the well being of their community through local initiatives and environmental action plans. It was heartening to see such enthusiasm and commitment from these fine young people.

The future will be in good hands if YENYR can further develop its mandate to expand membership and cooperation between all youth environmental groups throughout York Region.



Justin Trudeau speaking with YENYR founders

Photo by Mike Turk





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#### **Richmond Hill**

# DAVID DUNLAP GREENSPACE FOR SALE TO HIGHEST BIDDER

#### By Marianne Yake, President, Richmond Hill Naturalists

In the early 1900's, Dr. Chant, Canadian Father of Astronomy worked on research to bring astronomy to the students of the University of Toronto. Dr. Chant envisioned an Observatory that is located in a park where public education and access to the telescope is unrestricted, like many observatories worldwide.

Jessie, widow of David Dunlap, is asked if she would consider memorializing her husband David's love of learning, nature and astronomy by setting up a facility observatory. Within a short time Jessie Dunlap and Dr. Chant find a suitable farm on a height of land just south of the old Town of Richmond Hill.

The Administration Building opened to the public in 1935. Since that time research has continued with discoveries by notables such as Dr. Helen Sawyer Hogg's, globular star clusters and Dr. Tom Bolton's confirmation of the first Black Hole.



In 1994 the Town of Richmond Hill became the first municipality in Canada to adopt a light pollution bylaw, taking back the night to 1970's levels. Studies have now shown that light pollution is affecting plants, animals and humans health. Other municipalities are now looking to lighting guru Dr. Tom Bolton for guidance regarding their bylaws.

Last fall the University of Toronto, announced the sale of the 189 acres, now in the middle of downtown Richmond Hill.

Many believe that this should be designated a UNESCO World Heritage site and should not be left to local planning or Smart Growth initiatives. Last month NASA research grants were again awarded to only two observatories in North America, one went to the David Dunlap Observatory.

The tree planting on the 1930's farmland has now developed into an oasis for deer, coyotes and other flora and fauna. The David Dunlap Observatory was part of the ORM until the political boundary moved, but is still included geographically.

This property should be considered part of the Greenbelt. This is a headwater area, aquifers for the Don and the Rouge and has been disconnected from all natural systems, with urban areas now surrounding it. Poor planning in the past has the resident deer using the CN track as their wildlife corridor. We believe that this is very similar to Boyd Park that was included in the Greenbelt one year after the Act was put into place. The Greenbelt will only be strengthened by improving all natural heritage and river system connections. This is especially important in urban communities as growth impacts on older downstream areas. The summer storm event of 2005 was devastating in Thornhill just south of the Dunlap Property. Greenspace is now more threatened by pressures of intensification but open spaces are needed to support this plan.

Heritage buildings, landscapes, nature and science all collide on this property and creative solutions are needed.

The Richmond Hill Naturalists are appearing before the Conservation Review Board with the University of Toronto and the Town of Richmond Hill this year. We are looking to the community to support our legal challenge.

For more information, visit www.rhnaturalists.ca





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### **Richmond Hill**

# CELL TOWER APPLICATION TURNED DOWN BY RICHMOND HILL

By Gloria Marsh, Chair, YREA



Cell tower disguised as flagpole

A capacity crowd attended Richmond Hill Council meeting on May 12th and heard compelling testimony from Dr. Magda Havas on the health risks of electro-magnetic fields (EMFs) associated with cell phone towers. Her contention is that we have had a huge increase of all kinds of radio and microwave frequencies and that ever increasing bombardment is having a cumulative, negative effect on our health.

An initial motion put forward by Councillor Foster to send this issue to the Federal Ministry of Industry was roundly cheered by the citizens group PACT (Precautionary Approach to Cell Towers). However, when Deputy Mayor Brenda Hogg pointed out that Richmond Hill would be shifting the cell tower problem directly into the hands of the Federal government, leaving Richmond Hill little subsequent recourse, her point was lost on many in the audience. Even with Councillor Warren's suggestion of wordsmithing, one of the motions passed requested that the Federal Minister of Industry (FMI) and the Federal Minister of Health (FMH) respond to the concerns of the residents of Richmond Hill regarding the health and safety of radio communications and broadcasting antenna

systems. Well, this motion was pretty pointless as FMI and FMH think all is fine and dandy, as attested to in FMI letter responding to the Honourable Bryon Wilfert M.P. which council already had as part of their staff report!

Better to have taken Dr. Havas's advice and asked for a new standard of cell tower installations be set at 300 metres away from residences and schools. Advocating for this and getting FMH to pay attention to all the data on adverse health effects and to fall in line with European standards is where PACT needs to be going. When communities such as Simcoe start to remove cell towers due to ill health, FMH should take notice.

# WINDFALL ECOLOGY FESTIVAL

on the banks of the Holland River Fairy Lake Park, Newmarket, Ontario Sat & Sun June 7 & 8 2008

FREE ADMISSION • FREE PARKING • FREE BICYCLE VALET PARKING

In park events begin each day at 10am

- green exhibits and marketplace
- healthy cooking demo
- world music stage
- kid's eco activities



#### Vaughan passes pesticide by-law

Joining the York Region municipalities of Georgina, Markham and Newmarket, Vaughan is the fourth to implement a pesticide bylaw. All municipalities allow for integrated pest management (IPM) on golf courses, and in the case of Vaughan, this is also being permitted on cemeteries and Canada's Wonderland. Aurora is set for a final vote on its own bylaw on May 27, 2008. Come out and make your voice heard in support of this.





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### Georgina

# GEORGINA RESIDENTS TAKE ACTION TO FIGHT THE 'PEAKER' PLANT

The majority of residents of Georgina do not want the Ontario Power Authority to build a 350-megawatt gas-fired electrical generating 'peaker' plant in our 'backyard', and a great many of us don't want to see it in anyone's backyard.

This project is wrong in so many ways. First of all, the plant would use simple-cycle turbines, which is the least efficient way to generate electricity from natural gas. The Ontario Clean Air Alliance makes the excellent point that while it is now illegal to sell a gas furnace that is less than 85% efficient, this power plant will be only 36% efficient! The greenhouse gas emissions from this plant would be twice those of a combined heat and power plant.

We've been told that this plant is just for back-up during times of peak demand but the citizen group MegaWhat? argues it is foolish to believe that anyone would invest about \$350 million dollars on a facility that only runs 2.5% of the time.

The Ontario Power Authority(OPA) assures citizens that the stack will be 'very tall', thus dispersing emissions over a wide area. That's supposed to calm us down! The list of pollutants which the stack will spew includes sulphur dioxide gas, particulate matter, nitrogen dioxide, and of course carbon dioxide. Running at full capacity, EACH DAY a 350 MW single-cycle natural gas power plant can add 3,696,000 kg (8,131,200 lbs) of greenhouse gases to our airshed.

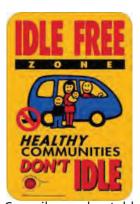
Then there is the question of water. The OPA reports that this plant could use over 59,000 litres of water per hour.

In spite of, or perhaps because of the blight that this plant promises to be, the OPA is allowing companies bidding to build the power plant to change their minds about where to build before they submit their proposal for detailed evaluation. The upshot is that residents have to pay very close attention, or the project may be underway before they have a chance to respond. Georgina has voted down the 350MW "peaker" plant, but the battle is not over. Ultimately, the province can come in and build wherever it wants. Citizens must speak out loud and clear if we are going to put an end to projects such as these.

What you can do - visit the MegaWhat website at www.megawhat.ca to learn more and to find out about upcoming meetings. Write to Energy Minister Gerry Phillips and demand that the OPA reconvene the working group and find a better solution.

by Susan Sheard, Director, YREA

# WILL GEORGINA'S TOWN EMPLOYEES BECOME ANTI-IDLING ROLE MODELS?



One of my most thrilling teaching moments this school year happened at a Town of Georgina council meeting in March. One by one, members of the small but enthusiastic group of Grade 5 and 6 students known as The Green Team stood confidently before

Council and told them about the environmental, public health and financial costs of idling.

They also presented Council with a petition, signed by students, teachers and parents, asking Town employees to stop idling, and gave them a stack of anti-idling windshield decals to sport in Town vehicles.

Part of the reason I was so thrilled is that the students had done all of the research and writing themselves. All I had done was complain to the students that I kept seeing Town trucks running on the side of the road while employees collected brush and garbage in the parks.

After their presentation, Mayor Grossi told the Green Team 'It is very important that you bring this message to us...people like you make us do what we do'. He added that they would be invited back to hear what steps would be taken. Will the students' hard work, courage and optimism be rewarded with real change? Will they learn that citizens can make a difference, and it is worthwhile to have an opinion and to voice it? I've got my fingers crossed.