



GREENWORKS



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR LOOKING AHEAD TO 2008

As winter solstice approaches, and holidays of our multicultural community are celebrated, we at YREA send our very best wishes to our members and supporters.

We have great plans for the year ahead, including the expansion of our environmental education to reach students at both the high school and elementary school levels in all municipalities of York Region.

This will require substantial resources and financial assistance. If you are thinking of making a donation to a worthy cause at this time of year, please consider supporting our ongoing commitment to work for the environmental health and well being of our communities. You may also wish to renew your membership at this time. Our mailing address is: YORK REGION ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE, 61 Briarcliffe Crescent, Thornhill, ON L4J 7H2.

It is heartening to see more York Region municipalities implementing pesticide bylaws and we continue to work in partnership with them in presenting our organic lawn care workshops. If you haven't had the opportunity of attending this fun and informative workshop, they are again being scheduled for 2008, so check our website regularly in the new year for dates, times and locations. YREA, in partnership with the Oak Ridges Friends of the Environment and the Richmond Hill Naturalists have written to the Provincial government asking them to keep their promise for a province-wide bylaw banning the cosmetic use of pesticides.

Many thanks for the support we have received in the past year from our volunteers and funders. Through your continuing dedication to YREA we will together make our communities a healthier place to live.



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TRASH CANS & GREEN BINS

More green bins than trash cans again, but the trash cans really stink. Spot anything to shout about. Send in trash can and green bin info to membership@yrea.org

YORK REGION PRINTING has been YREA's printer of choice because of its consideration for the environment in all facets of business operations. They have now gone a step further and have become an FSC-certified printer! Environmental and social groups identify FSC as the best thing we can do for our forests. Demanding FSC products will make responsible forest management practices grow. Look for the logo when you buy any paper products.



MACDONALD'S for setting up glass, paper and plastic recycling in their establishments. Trouble is, staff have been observed still dumping it all in the garbage. Next time you are in MacDonald's, compliment them on their initiative and mention the need for staff to follow through to make this work. Now if only Burger King and Harvey's would do the same.



OPERATIONS BRANCH, TOWN OF RICHMOND HILL who continue to use pesticides on Town property even while Natural Heritage has implemented a pesticide reduction strategy. Get with the program Operations - you are giving the Town a bad name.



OAK RIDGES AND CONCORD FOOD MARKETS

Two of the nicest places to shop in York Region. Thumbs up to them for streaming their refuse into green bins, recyclables and trash. Now if they can do it why can't Loblaws, Sobey, Dominion and the rest deal with their waste this way instead of dumping it all into landfills?



photo by Jeff Laidlaw

Above: recycling containers at Oak Ridges Food Market



BUZZ HARGROVE for ranting about job losses in the American automotive sector. The no-longer-so Big 3 lag behind Honda and Toyota who have made inroads in the research and development of more fuel efficient vehicles. Instead GM is reintroducing the Camaro, a 60's muscle car. What century are they in?



YORK REGION for denying an application by Summit Golf and Country Club in Richmond Hill to cut down 2.6 hectares of trees to expand their golf course.



SUMMIT GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB for appealing the York Region decision at the OMB. Even some of their members don't feel the need for this to happen. Like we really need more golf courses.



MILLER WASTE for trashing and subsequently landfilling, Halloween pumpkins instead of adding to green bin compostables.



TRIDEL received the inaugural 2007 High-Rise Green Builder of the Year Award. Tridel was honoured for leadership and commitment to building sustainability and has five LEEDs projects underway in the GTA.



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EAC ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR TOWN OF AURORA Catherine Marshall

Consisting of eight appointed citizens, two councillors and five sub-committees (Climate Change, Naturalization and Wildlife, Planning/Policy/Bylaws, Public Awareness/Education, and Waste Management) and volunteer members, the Town of Aurora EAC was formed to focus on our local environmental priorities.

The Town plans on hiring an Environmental Coordinator who will support all town departments and advisory groups. Also, well into its draft form, is a pesticide bylaw hoped to be in effect by summer 2009.

Headed by David Tomlinson, the Naturalization Committee has just completed the Town of Aurora Storm Water Ponds, Vegetation & Wildlife Study, which shows how to best support natural life which come to rely on that habitat. Copies will be available online at <http://e-aurora.ca/eac/>. They are also working with the Town in developing The East Aurora Wetland Complex Urban Wildlife Park where creatures' needs, such as through path screening, will come first.

We hope to entice information sharing through 6 Get Eco Fit seminars a year. Upcoming topics will include: Waste Watching-well water and watersheds, Smart Growth-sustainable development, and local food services with preserving & canning. We aim to serve local food snacks and give away relevant door prizes. Annually, in March and April, the public helps with bird box building and placement in naturalized areas. EAC may host plantings as well.

Current EAC discussions, with an eye to action, include anti-idling, packaging, naturalized planting, trails & parks, garbage & recycling, energy, water security and, of course, environmental and servicing capacity necessary for a sustainable region.

Hopefully, you are enjoying EAC's monthly column in the Era Banner Eco Speak, as well as locally chosen Eco Heroes on our website... plus our newest weekly outreach, Eco Tips in both media. See the Era Banner's Notice Board, or log onto our website <http://e-aurora.ca/eac/> to see what's up.



Above: Public demonstration of energy efficient lightbulbs

KING TOWNSHIP

Jeff Laidlaw, Councillor, Ward 2

On November 13 to 15, 2007, the Ontario Municipal Board held a hearing in King City with regard to the Baldesarra development application in the south-west quadrant of Nobleton.

All parties to the hearing have achieved a settlement agreement in this matter, however, a group of participants and residents appeared before the OMB to challenge an alleged emergency access road through a wetland complex.

The Wilkie Avenue connector, proposed as a full municipal road, and initially rejected by the environmental consultants for the developer and the Toronto Region Conservation Authority as being too detrimental in environmental terms, ultimately was the option agreed to, and settled on, by the parties.

The participants noted a number of alternative access points (put forward by the developer during the planning process over the last two years), made reference to the Greenbelt legislation and the Provincial Policy Statement, alluded to the difference in form and function of a full access vs. emergency access road, and made many points with respect to process.

The OMB Chairman reserved judgement and is expected to rule prior to year end.



OUR HEALTH & PLASTIC

Environmentally, plastic is a growing disaster. In terms of health risks, the evidence is growing that chemicals leached from plastics used in cooking and food/drink storage are harmful to human health. The most disturbing of these are hormone (endocrine) disruptors, such as Bisphenol A (BPA), which can stimulate the growth of cancer cells. Exposure to BPA at a young age can cause genetic damage, and BPA has been linked to recurrent miscarriage in women. The health risks of plastic are significantly amplified in children, whose immune and organ systems are developing and are more vulnerable. The manufacture of plastic, as well as its destruction by incineration, pollutes air, land and water and exposes workers to toxic chemicals, including carcinogens. The evidence of health risks from certain plastics is increasingly appearing in established, peer-reviewed scientific journals.



photo by Jeff Laidlaw

PLASTIC TYPES, CHARACTERISTICS, DANGERS

Fortunately, consumers have a way to identify the type of plastic in many products, especially food storage containers and packaging through the code at the bottom. Knowing the code for a particular product, consumers can then inform themselves of the characteristics of the plastic and the risks of using that product. The seven plastic resin codes are each briefly described below to provide a quick snapshot detailing the name of the resin (i.e., the base material of the plastic), typical products it is found in, dangerous chemicals it leaches, and why they are dangerous.

POLYETHYLENE TEREPHALATE (PET or PETE)



Used in soft drink, juice, water, beer, mouthwash, peanut butter, salad dressing, detergent and cleaner containers. Leaches antimony trioxide.

Workers exposed to antimony trioxide for long periods of time have exhibited respiratory and skin irritation; among female workers, increased incidence of menstrual problems and miscarriage. Their children exhibited slower development in the first twelve months of life. The longer a liquid is left in such a container the greater the concentration of antimony released into the liquid.

HIGH DENSITY POLYETHYLENE (HDPE)



Research on risks associated with this type of plastic is ongoing.

POLYVINYL CHLORIDE (V or Vinyl or PVC)



Used in toys, clear food and non-food packaging (e.g., cling wrap), some squeeze bottles, shampoo bottles, cooking oil and peanut butter jars, detergent and window cleaner bottles, shower curtains, medical tubing, and numerous construction products (e.g., pipes, siding). PVC has been described as one of the most hazardous consumer products ever created. Leaches di(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP) or butyl benzyl phthalate (BBzP), depending on which is used as the plasticizer or softener (usually DEHP). DEHP and BBzP are endocrine disruptors mimicking the female hormone estrogen and have been strongly linked to asthma and allergic symptoms in children. They may cause certain types of cancer and are linked to negative effects on the liver, kidney, spleen, bone formation and body weight. In Europe, DEHP and BBzP and other dangerous phthalates have been banned from use in plastic toys for children under three since 1999. Not so elsewhere, including Canada. There is currently a similar NDP Private Members Bill (C-307) before the House of Commons, but the chances of it passing appear slim.

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PLASTIC & OUR HEALTH

LOW DENSITY POLYETHYLENE (LDPE)

Research on risks associated with this type of plastic is ongoing.



POLYPROPYLENE (PP) Research on risks associated with this type of plastic is ongoing.



POLYSTYRENE (PS)

Used in Styrofoam containers, egg cartons, disposable cups and bowls, take-out food containers, plastic cutlery, compact disc cases. Leaches styrene, which is an endocrine disruptor mimicking the female hormone estrogen, and thus has the potential to cause reproductive and developmental problems. Long-term exposure by workers has shown brain and nervous system effects, adverse effects on red blood cells, liver, kidneys and stomach in animal studies. Also present in second hand cigarette smoke, off-gassing of building materials, car exhaust and possibly drinking water. Styrene migrates significantly from polystyrene containers into the container's contents when oily foods are heated in such containers.



OTHER

This is a catch-all category that includes anything that does not come within the other six categories. As such, one must be careful in interpreting this category because it includes polycarbonate - a dangerous plastic - but it also includes the new, safer, biodegradable bio-based plastics made from renewable resources such as corn and potato starch, and sugar cane. Polycarbonate is used in most plastic baby bottles, clear plastic "sippy" cups, Nalgene brand and other "sports" water bottles, three and five-gallon large water storage containers, metal food can liners, some juice and ketchup containers, compact discs, cell phones, computers. Polycarbonate leaches Bisphenol A (some effects described above), and numerous studies have indicated a wide array of possible adverse effects from low-

level exposure to Bisphenol A: chromosome damage in female ovaries, decreased sperm production in males, early onset of puberty, various behavioural changes, altered immune function, and sex reversal in frogs. Important note: two other types of plastic that fall under code 7 are acrylonitrile styrene (AS) or styrene acrylonitrile (SAN), and acrylonitrile butadiene styrene (ABS). Both AS/SAN and ABS are higher quality plastics with increased strength, rigidity, toughness and temperature and chemical resistance. AS/SAN is used in mixing bowls, thermos casing, dishes, cutlery, coffee filters, toothbrushes, outer covers (printers, calculators, lamps), battery housing. The incorporation of butadiene during the manufacture of AS/SAN, produces ABS, which is an even tougher plastic. ABS is used in LEGO toys, pipes, golf club heads, automotive parts, protective head gear. Research on risks associated with AS/SAN and ABS is ongoing.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOUR EVERYDAY PLASTIC USE

You may wish to seriously consider your – and especially your children's – use of plastics numbered 1, 3, 6 and 7 (polycarbonate), all of which have been shown to leach dangerous chemicals. This does not necessarily mean the others are completely safe, just that they have been studied less to date. So if you have to use plastic, it is safest to stick to numbers 2, 4, 5 and 7 (other than polycarbonate) whenever possible, although in all likelihood when testing is complete on 2, 4 & 5 plastics it will show they are toxic as well. Your best bet when there is a choice is to opt for glass food containers.

Source: www.lifewithoutplastic.com/factsonplastic.htm



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CLEAN AIR SMOG SUMMIT

The following presentations from representatives outlined initiatives being undertaken by various York Region municipalities to combat smog and climate change.

REGIONAL COUNCILLOR JOYCE FRUSTAGLIO - YORK REGION

- York Region is working on adopting and implementing a Regional Air Quality Strategy.
- York Region is currently assessing the viability of a wind power project at the Sutton Water Pollution Control Plant. Construction of a 500 kilowatt turbine could potentially save 220 tonnes of greenhouse gases annually.
- All new regional buildings must meet LEED silver standards.
- York Region testing biodiesel in 5 VIVA fleets.
- York Region is planning to purchase 5 hybrid/diesel electric transit buses in 2008.
- York Region is working towards a forest cover of 25% through greening strategy.
- York Region's Draft Sustainability Strategy was just endorsed by Council – it lists over 80 actions the region plans to undertake.

COUNCILLOR VITO SPATAFORA – RICHMOND HILL

- Richmond Hill is going to be using geothermal heating and cooling in the new Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts.
- We have a new policy requiring that all town buildings over 500m² must be built to silver LEED standards – any retrofits undertaken will also require these buildings to adopt green design and construction principles.
- We have 6 hybrid vehicles in our fleet and plan to expand to even more in the coming year. These vehicles have been found to use half the fuel of conventional vehicles.
- In 2007/2008, we will embark on the implementing the Pedestrian and Cycling Master plan – this plan will connect trails and travel corridors.
- Our wind feasibility study has been completed and the Town will be making a decision on whether to move ahead with the construction of 3 wind turbines for a total of 5 MW (about enough to generate the power required by 2500 homes).
- We continue to plant 10,000 trees a year– have planted 50,000 trees over the last 5 years.

MAYOR TONY VAN BYNEN – NEWMARKET

- Newmarket has a 1% tax for dedicated land acquisition. It has been allocated to buy environmentally sensitive lands and has increased green space from 9% 5 years ago to 12% today.
- There are an additional 16 kms in trails to be built this year - \$3 million over the last 5 years has been spent on connecting these trails.
- Newmarket has provided incentives to developers to meet or exceed the ENERGY STAR standard, it has been voluntary but has been very effective in increasing participation.
- We have allocated a green fund of \$25,000/year to pay for additional costs of more energy efficient purchases.
- An additional 3 hybrids have been added to the fleet.
- We have just launched the first ecosubdivision in Canada in an attempt to show eco homes to be affordable and mainstream. It will result in a 25% decrease in water use and a 60% reduction in energy use
- Launched an energy retrofit program in the range of \$1.6 million that has a payback of about 10 years and will result in a savings of 563 tonnes of GHG/year (similar to taking 83 midsize vehicles off the road each year).

COUNCILLOR VALERIE BURKE - MARKHAM

- Last year at the Smog Summit, Markham announced the creation of the Markham Energy Conservation Office (MECO). Since then MECO has been involved in a number of energy conservation initiatives

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Clean Air Smog Summit....cont'd from page 6

including Cool Shops and the appliance retirement program - 580 small retail shops changed over 1200 incandescent bulbs for CFLs, and the Haul Away Your Energy Hog helped residents retire over 1300 appliances (refrigerators, freezers and air conditioners) saving over 1000 tonnes of CO2.

- In the coming year MECO will be retrofitting municipal facilities and 3 community centres and assessing street-lighting opportunities for energy conservation.
- Markham will be launching the largest solar district feasibility study looking at the application of solar thermal in a 400 unit condo development. Energy will be collected from solar panels and stored underground. This would be the largest commercial application in the GTA and the second such application in Canada (first one is Otokoks, Alberta).
- In the coming year, Markham will be undertaking the initial implementation of the Pathways and Trails and Cycling Master Plans.

REGIONAL COUNCILLOR JOYCE FRUSTAGLIO – CITY OF VAUGHAN

- Vaughan has launched the employee trip reduction program in coordination with North Toronto/Vaughan Smart Commute.
- We have also added 2 smart cars to our fleet.
- Our Cycling and Pedestrian and Environmental Master plan is completed. These plans will guide decision making.
- Construction has begun on 2 new LEED Gold buildings
- Vaughan has been working with a developer to begin construction of an ENERGY STAR subdivision of 300 homes.
- We have begun implementation of a Green bin program.

CLEAN AIR DAY AWARDS

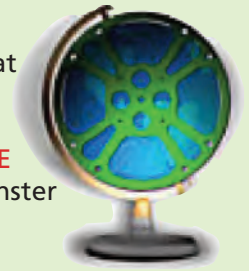
THE TOWN OF EAST GWILLIMBURY, in the public sector, received a Clean Air Day award for their leadership in encouraging green development standards, not only within their own operations but within the community as a whole.

TOYOTA CANADA, in the private sector, received an award for their leadership role in research and development of their hybrid systems with the aim of achieving low emissions and conserving energy.

Source: www.cleanairpartnership.org/smogsummit/

2008 GREEN REEL ENVIRONMENTAL FILM FESTIVAL

January 4 – 5, 2008
Screenings start at 10:00am



THE CITY PLAYHOUSE
1000 New Westminster Drive, Vaughan
(corner of Bathurst)
Box Office: 905-882-SHOW (7469)
Box Office Hours:
Monday, Wednesday, Friday from 2pm - 7pm
and Saturday from 12pm - 5pm
Administrative offices: 905-326-7469

Once again, the City of Vaughan is rolling out the 'Green' carpet for you to come and enjoy two days of award winning and celebrated environmental films. Includes on-site environmental vendors, information kiosks, activities and refreshments. Worth taking Friday off! Some of the must see entries include **WHO KILLED THE ELECTRIC CAR**, Michael Moore's controversial **SICKO** and **EXPOSURE: ENVIRONMENTAL LINKS TO BREAST CANCER**. For full film listings and schedules and how to order tickets go to our website: www.yrea.org and click workshops/event or visit: www.city.vaughan.on.ca/community/playhouse/playhouse_events.cfm

THANKS!

Hats off and many many thanks to renewing member Marianne Yake and new member Cristina Amicucci for your donations. Cristina also wants to volunteer for YREA. We will be very busy in 2008 and all who wish to help will be called upon. We have you noted Cristina!