

*A political point of view*

# Protecting our heritage is important



MPP Julia Munro

**By Julia Munro  
MPP, York-Simcoe**

As your MPP at Queen's Park, I also serve as PC opposition critic for culture. The Ministry of Culture is responsible for such things as heritage (historic buildings and museums), the arts (performing, visual or

literary) and libraries. Culture is an important element of a creative society and study after study has demonstrated its great economic value. Culture is also an area where the current Liberal government has let us all down.

After Dalton McGuinty's election four years ago, one of the first meetings I held was about small town libraries, because the Ministry of Culture had just cut their funding. We held the government's feet to the fire on libraries and eventually made them reverse their plans. Our local libraries need certainty that the provincial government will maintain at least a stable level of funding. They face many

challenges, including ensuring they can make the best use of new technologies. One of these is the e-book initiative Simcoe County libraries have just launched to increase access to online and downloadable books (www.pulse.simcoe.ca).

We also had to fight to make the government enhance tax credits for the film industry and even to save the provincial archives. In the last year of the PC government, we had signed a deal to create a new home for the archives - a deal cancelled by the Liberals when they took office. They thought they could get a better deal, but all their delay in taking action in the face of reports of mold,

vandalism and decay threatened the records and heritage of all Ontarians.

To be fair, the news is not all bad. We did see some positive reforms to the Heritage Act - legislation to protect our architectural history.

I was pleased to lead consultations on the issue under the Eves government, but we didn't have time to pass legislation before 2003. The new act gives communities a number of tools such as heritage committees to protect local history.

The only area left out of the legislation eventually passed was protection for heritage cemeteries, threatened in many parts of Ontario.

Last year, I was very pleased to see the Ontario Legislature pass my resolution calling for a War of 1812 bicentennial commemoration commission. My resolution aimed to gather together experts on the period with residents from the areas of battle and other Ontarians. I wanted local communities to decide how they wanted to remember this vital war - with the province as a coordinator and promoter.

The public response to my resolution was very supportive and it passed the legislature by a unanimous vote.

With this support I convinced my party to commit to establishing a commission in our

campaign platform last year, with a starting budget of \$2 million. Unfortunately, the re-elected Liberal government is not interested in a grassroots celebration and is allocating only \$8,000 to each of a limited number of regions in Ontario. This is not good enough, and our party will be demanding a process that will allow true local control - and provide the money to make it work.

Promoting our arts, music, literature and heritage helps define us as Canadians. It also makes good business sense, as it contributes to our economy. As your MPP, I want to ensure that culture thrives, both in York-Simcoe and throughout the province.

## Plastics may be left out of county recycling plans

**By Richard Blanchard**

Adding polystyrene and other plastic materials to Simcoe County blue boxes would create more problems for the municipal recycling program.

In a report to the corporate services committee recently,

environment manager Rob McCullough said that residents have asked for the addition of polystyrene, film plastic, and plastic clam shells and trays, to the recycling program.

"Staff do not recommend that these items be included in an expanded curbside

recycling program at this time," he said.

McCullough added, as an example, that Styrofoam products found in packing peanuts, disposable plates and coffee cups, meat trays and some kinds of insulation "are made of different grades of polystyrene in-

cluding expanded and extruded material and it is important to note that processors do not accept all types of polystyrene. This complicates public education and increases the likelihood of contamination."

McCullough says similar

issues are seen with film wrapping material and plastic seen in food plastic clam shells and trays.

## Naturalists hosting meeting next month

The York Simcoe Naturalists Group will hold a general meeting on Tuesday March 11 at 7:30 p.m. near Holland Landing. Their speaker will be Phil Taylor, chief scientist from

Bird Studies Canada.

Taylor came to Bird Studies Canada to do a year of research into bird migration in the Long Point area using radar technology. He agreed to stay on for an

additional year to continue to pursue scientific enquiry in his own fields of interest, and also assist all biological staff in the design, analysis, and publication of scientific results.

He will discuss his findings during the meeting. The meeting will take place in the River Drive Park

Community Centre, located at 20 Oak Avenue.

## Church Directory

- Baha'i Faith - Innisfil.....431-7139
- Bell Ewart Baptist .....456-3334
- Christ Church - St. Jude Anglican, Ivy...458-9631
- Church of God Worship Centre, Thornton  
.....705-730-1738
- Churchill United.....456-4692
- Cookstown United .....458-9701
- Gilford United .....456-4692
- Holland Marsh Christian Reformed.....775-7291
- Exaltation of the Holy Cross .....705-730-7999
- Ukrainian Church www.holycrossbarrie.ca
- Holy Martyrs Roman Catholic.....775-2065
- Holy Trinity Lutheran .....775-3412
- Innisfil Community .....436-1611
- Lefroy United .....456-2098  
www.lefroyunited.ca
- Living Faith Presbyterian Church....705-424-0779
- New Life Fellowship Baptist .....436-5413
- St. George's Anglican, Utopia.....458-9631
- St. James United, Stroud .....436-5225
- St. John Vianney .....726-8007
- St. John's Anglican, Cookstown.....458-1801  
www.stjohnscookstown.com
- St. Paul's Anglican, Coulsen's Hill.....775-3648
- St. Paul's Anglican, Stroud .....722-7755
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