

**SIMCOE-YORK  
PRINTING &  
PUBLISHING  
LIMITED**

**Publisher of the**

Innisfil Scope  
The Times  
King Township Sentinel  
P.O. Box 310  
Beeton, Ontario  
L0G 1A0  
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Within 65 km except  
towns with letter carriers -  
\$28.00 + G.S.T.

Beyond 65 km and towns  
with letter carriers -  
\$41.00 + G.S.T.

Single copies 71¢ + G.S.T.  
or 75¢ (includes G.S.T.)

Published every  
Wednesday  
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The Scope 2008

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We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada, through the Publications Assistance Program (PAP) toward our mailing costs.

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# Answering the garbage clean-up call

Sometimes when the mayor speaks, you just have to listen.

The town's annual Pitch-In Day took place on Saturday, and despite advertisements and articles in local media outlets, the number of residents participating appears to be down this year.

It has been suggested that a number of factors may have played a role in the lower than expected turnout. The Pitch-In Day organizing committee started on preparations later than normal, due mostly to the move into the New Town Hall.

But anyone watching mayor Brian Jackson speak about the effort could see the disappointment in his face. About 2,000 people are believed to have participated in the three-hour annual event. But most of the residents participating were students from local schools, who were picking-up trash during class time throughout the last week. Many others were students from Nantyr Shores Secondary School, who were fulfilling their mandated community volunteering obligations.

These students do valuable work, and contribute a large percentage of the Pitch-In Day garbage found, but for whatever reason, few



## Comment

by Chris Simon

parents seem to be joining in the clean-up efforts. Even free refreshments, snacks and a barbecue lunch couldn't seem to draw much of an older crowd.

And without the encouragement of schools, the number of participants would almost certainly have sank further. It's left Jackson questioning whether the town's efforts are worth it, and he's even suggested Pitch-In Day may not take place next year.

The thought may have been a slight overreaction — or warning call — over the less than anticipated participation numbers. But the potential disbanding of Pitch-In Day would certainly have a negative impact on the town.

For about a decade, Pitch-In Day is one of the town's best efforts to clean-up the municipality, and bring awareness to the littering that takes place over the winter months. Garbage tossed

from vehicles during cold and snowy conditions collects over months, leaving ditches, parks and roadsides littered with coffee cups, full garbage bags and large-scale items like televisions and couches.

Last year, about 18-tons of garbage was collected during the event.

Run-off from this garbage seeps into streams and the local watershed, and is flat-out unsightly. And right now, the town admits it simply doesn't have the staff to fully clean the municipality, meaning that without Pitch-In Day, garbage would continue to build.

Many of the residents who did participate helped for other reasons as well. Several picked-up broken glass and other dangerous items from parks, ensuring child play areas remain free of debris.

Of course, Pitch-In was also an opportunity to get fresh air for three hours, and teach children the responsibility of cleaning up and protecting the environment.

Basically, Pitch-In Day is essential to the town and its residents for many reasons. Let's just hope that the mayor's call for help is answered.

# Council should take another look at whistle plans

## Letters From Our Readers

Obviously, no one on council has ever ridden the VIA Rail train from Toronto to Montreal.

If they had, they would experience how quiet the ride is through every town and city on the trip, because the train does not blow its whistle.

Only at rural crossing in

the country where there was little or no protection at crossings does the train whistle blow.

It would appear that all these municipalities have exactly the same crossing gates, lights, and warning bells as our GO Transit line does that runs through Innisfil.

In fact, I would wager that our warning systems being the newest, are better than those on the VIA line. Obviously each of these

municipalities pondered this same question and decided the whistle was not needed.

Council talks about safety concerns being the reason why the whistles continue, but when lighted crossing gates come down across the road, bells ring and lights flash, how much more warning can a train whistle a quarter mile away give a motorist. Also, consider that the train whistle is coming at the stopped vehicles from 90 degrees, not directly at it,

which makes it harder to hear.

And finally, we must remember that train whistles are like police and fire sirens that cannot be heard at a distance because the sound is travelling either at the same speed, or slower, than the vehicle giving the warning blasts.

Perhaps council could investigate this matter a little more thoroughly by contacting other municipalities that have

stopped the whistles in their area, before abandoning the requests of a large number of South Simcoe residents who suffer though this every morning.

At least Barrie has agreed to look further into the matter, even though it will cost \$10,000, which I am sure our council could find in the budget if they really wanted to try and help their citizens.

George Kleinstieber,  
Stroud

# Innisfil District Association's stand without merit

## Letters From Our Readers

I'd like to respond to Don Avery's letter in your May 7th edition.

First, the Memorandum of Settlement was not "offered" by the province. It was negotiated and ultimately signed by Kimvar, the province, the County of Simcoe, the Town of Innisfil, the Residents of Innisfil Association and the Sandy Cove Acres Homeowners' Association, with the assistance of the provincial facilitator. It was a joint effort and an excellent example of consensus-building.

It is interesting that Avery perpetuates the fiction of three opposing parties. Two of them are related, private, for-profit companies whose goal is to expand the members-only Big Bay Point Golf Club on lands right next to our resort. They are self-interested

corporate competitors, not citizens' groups.

It is very curious that Avery now commends the province for its stand on environmental issues, given that the IDA and their corporate allies put me and three levels of government (including the province) through a lengthy OMB hearing in which the opponents took the position that environmental issues had not been satisfactorily addressed.

Either Avery's current commendation is some sort of cynical after-the-fact attempt to curry favour with the province, or his organization's position at the hearing was without merit. It is most likely both.

Nor was the IDA's case at the hearing about reducing the number of boat slips or units, which Avery says was their concern. Not once did they ever say that the resort would be acceptable if it was smaller. Their position was that it had to be refused, lock, stock and barrel, on

the basis of what turned out to be baseless environmental and big picture planning complaints made by witnesses who hadn't read the relevant studies or planning documents.

That's why we're seeking costs against the IDA and its corporate partners.

Avery says that the IDA could not support the settlement due to the number of boat slips and units, and that these were established at private meetings and were a fait accompli when his organization was invited to join the discussions.

The truth is that the negotiations were organized and directed by the provincial facilitator. She decided that the talks should start between Kimvar and the three governments (not just the town and county, as Avery says). If there was progress, Avery's group and the other residents' associations would be asked to participate. That's what

happened.

We attended all of the meetings, including those at which Avery's group were present. The IDA was represented by eminent counsel, and by experienced planning and environmental experts.

Not once did they ever offer to support a scaled-down project. Not once did they put numbers on the table.

What they did do, once the memorandum was finalized and available for them to sign, was to fire their lawyer and

environmental expert. I wonder why?

As for the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority's views, they are on record in the exhibits filed at the OMB hearing. And, had the authority harboured any concern about the project, it would have exercised its right to participate in the hearing. We are committed to working with the authority to bring about a sustainable future for the lake.

Earl Rumm,  
President of the  
Geranium Corporation

