This page was exported from - Shelburne Free Press
Export date: Fri Oct 30 2:51:38 2026 / +0000 GMT

Littering

Written by BRIAN LOCKHART

I was taking a back road into town the other day, and sitting on the side of the road was a toilet.

Yes, a toilet. Someone had just dropped it there next to the ditch rather that dispose of it properly at the local dump.

I guess it's easier to wait for a town crew to drive by and pick it up rather than do the right thing.

It wouldn't be all that hard to figure out who decided to litter the landscape. This toilet was avocado green ? a style which hasn't been seen in years.

It would be fun to circulate flyers around town suggesting that if you have a friend who is telling you about the amazing renovations they are doing on their 1970's-era house ? you could ask them what became of their old bathroom fixtures, because there aren't that many people renovating a home at one given time from an particular decade, with a particular outdated colour of fixtures ? in particular, green.

It is amazing that in a time when ?green' is in ? green meaning environmentally conscience, that the truth is while people love to put the green bins and composting boxes in front of their house on pickup day, apparently that level of environmental commitment is only a concern when your neighbours are watching.

I spend a considerable amount of time driving down the concessions and side-roads in the region and am amazed at the amount of litter that is tossed from moving vehicles.

Besides the usual garbage there is a huge volume of Tim Hortons coffee cups, beer cans (who says driving WHILE drinking isn't a problem?), Monster Energy Drink cans, and plastic water bottles, all thrown from cars into the ditch.

It seems that many people who prefer Mississauga tap water because it is healthier than their own tap water because it comes in a plastic bottle, think nothing of quenching their thirst in a healthy, ?I only drink Evian' way, then throwing the bottle out of the car window rather than taking it home and disposing of it properly.

A lot of roads in the area have signs saying road clean-up is sponsored by ?Billy Jo Jackson and the Soggy Bottom Boys' or some other individual or group. Every once in a while I see them walking along the shoulder of the road with a bag in one hand and a pick-up stick on the other hand cleaning up the refuse that has accumulated.

While I admire their commitment, they shouldn't have to be out there cleaning up after other people.

Which leads to the question of whether the current ?green' trend is any better than it was several decades ago when apparently people thought nothing of throwing their week's garbage on any sidewalk.

Well, at that time, milk bottles, beer bottles and pop bottles were all returnable. Now milk comes in plastic bags, and pop is all in plastic disposable bottles. All liquor and beer products came in recyclable and reusable glass.

Grocery bags, which have become the horror of municipal governments for some reason, were once made of paper, reused for multiple things and quite often used as garbage bags.

If placed in the garbage, the paper bags decomposed and returned to nature in a very brief span of time.

The tree huggers think nothing of using energy wasting dryers to dry their clothes when they could used environmentally friendly and free natural wind and solar power to do the job. (Although I agree with that one ? I don't really want to see my neighbors skivvies flapping in the breeze.)

Most homes once had one television set. Now most homes have several, and they are larger than ever, and you can't toss them in your compost bin when they burn out.

Disposable diapers and green garbage bags ? by the millions ? are manufactured products which don't return to the earth for hundreds of years.

Then there is the problem with product packaging. It used to be a product, if it needed packaging, came in a little cardboard box or something similar. Now, everything is encased in hard plastic and hung on a hook for store display. After using your chainsaw and blow torch to actually open the package and free your new tube of glue, you still have the plastic package that will still be around somewhere 500 years from now.

I don't know who it was that decided to drop their old toilet on the side of the road, but I can bet they dutifully take their compost and recycle bin to the curb every week.