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Who?s leaving all the garbage

by BRIAN LOCKHART

?These are actual trees son. And those things, well they're rocks.?

?Are we going to see any bears? Or moose? Or maybe a wolf??

?Possibly son. We're north of Highway 7 ? this is frontier land.?

If you ever had a conversation with someone who grew up and still lives in Toronto, that's pretty much how they view anything outside of their city.

I once heard a Toronto radio reporter calling in a report from London, Ontario, where she referred to London as ?this small town.' The last I checked, London had a population of over 380,000 people, and every time I've been there, I had lots to do.

During these strange times, suddenly everyone has this urge to walk in the woods for some reason.

Hiking, as it's called, is a pastime where you walk on trails through the woods, around the rocks, and if you're lucky, to some kind of lookout spot where you can stop and say, ?Look at that view!?

I guess since so many activities are banned or restricted, turning to the exciting sport of walking at least gets you out of the house.

If you drive by any area that has Bruce Trail access, you're going to see cars. It could be three o'clock on a Tuesday afternoon, and there will still be some cars parked and groups of people marching through the woods and marveling at the fact that trilliums, the provincial flower, do actually grow in the wild, and are not just some fancy logo created to emboss signs or documents.

Yes, everyone wants to see the natural environment as it was meant to be seen ? with trees and rocks.

The new environmental movement over the past few years is just a different twist on an old agenda.

Of course, any normal thinking person should want to respect the planet.

If an oil carrying ship hits some rocks and spills oil into the ocean, there is a huge outcry. Then of course some enterprising soap company will come out with a commercial showing someone using their product to wash the oils off ducks or sea birds.

?Not only will our product make your dishes sparkle, it cleans oily ducks!?

The problem is the environmentalists are apparently all talk and no action.

Being an environmentalist means you respect the environment at all levels, not just when it makes a good photo for your non-profit group of some guy washing a duck.

Oh, and it's got to be a baby duck - a little tiny one with fluffy feathers for the full effect.

No one is moved to tears by a full-size old duck getting a soap bath and snapping angrily at its handler.

You've probably seen the photos or at least heard about the problems at Mono Cliffs Provincial Park.

It really is a beautiful park, and if you're a hiker, this is a great place to go.

The problem is it has become a little too popular. Last week the police started handing out tickets to people who had parked their cars illegally.

I can understand why the locals who live in the area are getting a little disturbed. There are photos showing cars parking all over the road, hundreds of them, and blocking private driveways and parking on private property.

You think that people who want to commune with nature so badly they will park a mile away and complete half their hike before even reaching the park entrance would respect the park and what it is all about.

A friend of mine who lives nearby and has frequented the park for years, before it became some kind of crazy place where hiking means going on a walk with a thousand other people, said she was disgusted by the amount of garbage left behind by these environmentally friendly people.

Discarded face masks were all over the parking lot. Water bottles were tossed on the ground, and other refuse scattered around.

Who are all these people who have total disregard for their environment that they are too lazy to walk ten feet and dispose of a water bottle properly?

It's not you of course ? you would never do that.

But take a drive down a local rural road and see how much garbage is tossed out of car windows.

If you did a random poll on the environment, you probably wouldn't find a single person who would say they think it's okay to toss your empty beer can out of the car window.

Well, someone, a lot of people telling the truth.

If there was a bounty on discarded water bottles, you could make a fortune just cruising the back roads for an afternoon.