

Boiling Frogs

by SHERALYN ROMAN

Temperatures, and tempers, are rising both here at home and around the world. If you're one of the last die-hard deniers of climate change, surely even you must now agree that summer is hotter than ever, wildfires are raging on a seemingly endless loop and countries in Europe are baking while it snows in South Africa. Concurrently, the voices we began hearing during the pandemic, and whose focus was primarily anti-vax and anti-mask, have suddenly morphed into something far more dangerous; anti-semites, anti-LGBTQ2S+, anti-abortion rights and more. Yet here we simmer, like the proverbial frog in a pot who can't feel (or flatly denies) that the heat is slowly rising, downplaying the obvious, that we are in fact, about to be cooked.

Let's start close to home. We know with a level of certainty, that our bylaw enforcement is overwhelmed. So much so, that Councillor Maskell has tabled a motion asking staff to look at bylaw enforcement staffing improvements to enable the Town to more appropriately respond to noise complaints, illegal venues hosting large events, street parking and more, not to mention continuing to deal with issues already at the boiling point like illegal trucking yards and prime agricultural land being paved over and trees cut down en-masse. Their fellow Councillors supported the motion noting that the 'increasing number of bylaw infractions is a sad reflection on how society in Caledon has become: that there are rules and expectations'.(and yet) people choose to ignore them.? Meanwhile, until this motion at least, it feels like to some degree Caledon itself has allowed such actions to continually occur without proper enforcement and without appreciation for the long-term consequences to the environment, our climate and to species at risk that ignoring such bad behaviour results in.

In related news, Caledon is also facing destruction through the repeated expansion of existing quarries, and by the potential approval of new ones, even one that absolutely guarantees it will require blasting below the water table putting everyone and everything in the surrounding area and downstream of it at risk. But again, much like the frog in the pot we seem to be adopting the attitude that 'it's only one more,' or 'we're only expanding a pit that already exists,' implying a cavalier 'the damage is already done' kind of attitude so why try to turn down the heat now? Did you know that there is an application before the Ontario Land Tribunal impacting an already existing pit on Heart Lake Rd? I bet you didn't because we are all so focussed on the disastrous potential of a Mega Pit coming to Alton, that other applications might be quietly proceeding with no attention on them.

Speaking of the Ontario Land Tribunal, is it too soon to be hopeful about the recent appointment of one of Caledon's own to the agency? Perhaps a moratorium of sorts might be placed on further land development that's damaging to the environment? Consider this my polite request to turn down the temperature of the 'pot' at least here in Caledon, until we can properly assess the impact of more pits on us 'frogs.'

As for the rest of the world, across Canada wildfires are burning out of control, so much so that for several weeks we here in Ontario (and our neighbours in the northern US) have been advised to wear masks to prevent the inhalation of small and dangerous particles. So now the world is LITERALLY on fire yet still we can't seem to help ourselves. Forgive my sarcasm but how is it that masks (according to some) didn't work and weren't necessary to prevent small particles of COVID from spreading but they WILL help us deal with wildfire smoke? Perhaps some frogs deserve to stay in the pot?