

## I can't help but wonder?

by SHERALYN ROMAN

With so many things of importance happening in Caledon; in Canada, to the south of us, and around the world, you might be right in asking me why I'm choosing to write today about what you might consider a relatively unimportant topic. Yet for me, I've long thought of this subject matter as a prime example of all that is wrong with society. What's on my mind this week? Littering, vandalism and graffiti.

It seems our town has been hit hard by this troublesome trifecta recently and I can't help but wonder why some people seem to have no problem whatsoever with defacing public or private property, whether blatantly or through active dereliction of their civic duty. For me, it implies a slippery slope toward all manner of other issues, many of which some might consider more pressing concerns.

Perhaps in a world where it's increasingly possible enough people don't care that a lying, cheating, swindler of a man might soon become the President of the United States, it's also possible that enough people just don't care enough to pick up after themselves, or think nothing of destroying property. I believe it's a reflection of a certain level of apathy amongst those folks who litter, vandalize, or cover plaques or artwork with tags or graffiti. It might be generous to assume they are acting out; making some sort of statement based on the dismal state of world politics, climate change, wars or famine, but that would also assume they have a modicum of care about the world around them and I believe this is simply not the case.

Instead, such actions likely stem from a 'me first,' attitude; a belief that what one chooses to do or not do is at their sole discretion and consequences be damned. Consider those who can't be bothered to bend over and pick up dog poop. I doubt they give a flying fig about the environment, polar bears on dwindling ice floes, or whether Mayor Groves just handed Caledon to developers on a silver platter. I can't help but wonder why bigger world problems don't concern some people, but perhaps it makes sense when you consider that some of those same people think it's perfectly ok not to 'poop and scoop.' By the way, to those who don't what exactly do you think is going to happen to all that poop, that it will get up and walk itself to the trash?

Perhaps in a world where corporate greed is endemic, the rich do indeed seem to be getting richer, and social media continues to feed us lies and misinformation (or glorify influencers at the expense of the influenced) random acts of vandalism mean little. Is it the disenfranchised who destroy soccer equipment on local fields or simply the disengaged? One rather thinks it is the latter. Random acts of vandalism aren't about standing up for the marginalized or oppressed in a meaningful way, but rather, likely a sign of hyper-stimulated youth raised on a steady diet of TikTok, reels and Instagram who, lacking guidance by stressed out and overworked parents, go on a rampage out of frustration or worse, simply to post and get 'likes.' Whatever the reason, the not-for-profit soccer clubs who are 'staffed' by hard-working volunteers trying to provide a more meaningful outlet for pent up energy are left paying the price of repairs to vandalized equipment, as are the children who just want to play soccer.

As for the most recent graffiti damaging the Cardwell Junction murals, only recently unveiled, the plaques describing the reasons for the murals existence have been 'tagged.' Ironically, while some might consider graffiti to be an art form, in this recent example the graffiti 'artist' has painted over the Artist Statement of the mural's designer Blaze Wiradharma, thereby rendering mute any 'respect' for a fellow artist. Whether or not you admire Banksy, who started life as a graffiti artist, or approve of graffiti as art in the concrete spaces like under bridges or in the laneways and alleyways that dot cities, tagging is not art. Tagging is someone who simply wants to leave their mark on this world regardless of any damage done along the way, marking their 'territory' much like a dog who urinates on the fire hydrant marks his.

Finally, as happens far more often than you would think, for those who apparently think nothing of tossing trash bags on the side of our country roads, there is an especially malodorous place in 'H.E. Double hockey sticks' with your name on it. I can't help but wonder why you would go to all the trouble of bagging said garbage, stuffing it into your car or truck, and then taking it out for a Sunday drive. Are you offering your trash one last little glimpse of the life it could have had before disposing of it on the side of the road? If you've gone to all the trouble of bagging it, there are much easier options than driving to the country to toss it. It's a novel

suggestion but how about you simply carry it down to the end of your driveway, or dispose of it in your condo or apartment building's provided trash receptacles. If you insist on taking it for a drive first, then head directly to the dump.

One can only assume you are a special kind of degenerate who refuses to pay for extra trash bags, but surely the cost of gas for that long, last goodbye, negates any trash bag savings? I can't help but wonder that if you're the kind of person who thinks nothing of leaving your dog's poop behind, dropping your coffee cup wherever you are after taking your last sip, or worse ? one who actively destroys or dumps on public property - what else don't you care about and why?

No wonder this world is in trouble.