
❖ Speaking Out ❖

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The Truth is Mighty and Will Prevail

New Tests Show Higher Contamination Levels at MURF Site

by: jim tolnai

On Sept. 15 I issued a letter to our subscribers urging you to action. I received information testing that had been conducted this summer revealed much higher contamination of the MURF site than was reported originally. The original report was bad enough with up to 800% higher levels than considered safe for man or beast. Now these new tests put levels even higher. Is anyone really surprised???

Me thinks something is smelling to high heaven here. In an article by Frank Matys of Orillia Today (Sept. 24 issue) it is revealed that Lori Koughan who is City manager Ian Brown's secretary is now the project manager for the MURF???? Could this be true???? Has the mayor and council handed a \$47,000,000??? project to a secretary to manage??? She states and I quote "officials have no reason to believe recent soil samples will reveal higher levels of contamination than were originally presented to council. As far as we know that is not going to change". Please note the weasel words used "as far as we know". Well Ms. Koughan our information is starkly different than yours. There was a meeting that took place and testing results were discussed. Results presented were considerably higher than council was told and the integrity of the testing was questioned as I reported in my letter.

In the same article councillor Morano questions why there was never an alternative site presented in case something like this were to happen? Great question. Why was there only one site presented for consideration? Why was council not shown the Molson deal before being suckered into voting for it? Why was the environmental report on the site withheld from councillors even after the deal was signed? "Ian Brown told me if I wanted the report to get it from Molsons" councillor Cipolla Dec. 2003. Why was the public not welcome at the

MURF seminar at Swanmore Hall? Why were we lied to about the true cost of cleaning up the site (\$8,000,000/\$6,000,000/\$3,000,000) when the truth was Shaheen Peaker in their report said \$20,000,000? Why say that the Toxic soup is now not Hazardous and it is safe to place 40,000 tons at the dump? Why then say in the city report that the chemical soup is a danger to man and beast but only if they come into contact? Dah!!! Why does Stevens, Cipolla and Brown keep pushing for this Dangerous, Toxic and Hazardous site? Why has a secretary now become the MURF Project manager and councils spokesperson??? Why is Cipolla who stated that he had faith and believed in the experts saying "We are just making sure all the tests (previous) are correct". Why were the new tests needed when Shaheen and Peaker along with Ian Brown claimed (that place is like a pin cushion and no more testing is needed). Why was Shaheen and Peaker not chosen to do the new testing? And finally why when another company does the testing for Orillia (us) this time and not for Molsons are the test results considerably higher????

Are there other forces in play. Could the mayor enlighten us as to his reasoning



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why the huge effort to develop this site at any cost? Why won't he or Cipolla or Ian Brown tell us why only one site was ever considered and who made that decision??? It is obvious council never made an informed decision because all the facts were withheld from them. They voted on the word of Mayor and Ian Brown. So just why are the taxpayers who are in majority for building a MURF being forced to pay double or triple for a facility, I believe will harm the health of our children not to mention what the dumping of 40,000 plus tons of Toxic soup on the shores of Lake Simcoe will do to our drinking water and all things living it will contaminate. So please tell us your reasoning. Surely there has to be a better reason than the supposed revitalization of the downtown which is four blocks away. Besides the last report from Bob Lamb and the Downtown management board said that downtown was doing just fine with virtually no store space left empty. If downtown is doing well then why do we need to spend upwards of \$50,000,000 to boost its fortunes? Yes the question is Why???? Is it to revitalize that end of town from industrial to commercial???? Is it possible to have a third major shopping centre in a city of 30,000 as envisioned by Ralph Cipolla. Will WalMart build another store to service the area? Will A&P re-open their King St. Store? Will Canadian Tire open another outlet? Why Oh! Why are these people pushing so hard when clearly it does not make any sense? Mmmmm??? But hey maybe these guys will answer these and many more questions that you and I have???? Do you think hell will ever freeze over???

We need to have a public inquiry that the public is welcomed at. Speaking Out will be sponsoring a PUBLIC meeting on the MURF so stay tuned for details. And yes mayor, council and city staff will be welcomed to bring their answers.



Another Fine Mess

by: doug peddle

Has anyone been following the drama taking place at the water treatment plant?? You know the project that is upgrading our facilities. Well it seems that there is a major problem. So let me tell you a story about an upgrade which should have cost about \$4 1/2 million dollars and is now looking more and more like \$9 maybe \$10 million.

A few years ago the engineering department put forward a couple of options to upgrade the plant. These options were sound and cost effective giving taxpayers a bang for their buck. Then there was the big bum rush of getting rid of the city engineer for reasons that are still unjustified. But I digress.

Option one was to build the upgrade across the street on the old Club Pavalon property. Negotiations to get the property were entered into but some one dropped the ball and the deal was not completed. Engineering had figured out that it would be much cheaper to build on this property because they could build shallower. You see most engineers know that the shallower you build the cheaper it is.

Having lost option one our city engineers plan B was to close off Jarvis street from the trail to the treatment plant. Sixty-six feet wide and about four hundred feet long would have been ideal to build on. This section of road is surplus as there are no homes or business on it and the park fronts on the other side. For some reason this plan B was never acted on as the engineering dept. had the big upheaval.

So what plan is implemented? It was to build on the \$5million dollar property

right on the lake shore. The property is too small for the job so it is decided to build DEEP (the most expensive of course). Now it seems after six months of digging and pumping water the city announces that they hit springs and construction will be held up for possibly six months. Folks if you believe they hit springs then I have a bridge at Atherly I want to sell you. Springs my behind. These people hit lake. Anyone who takes the time to go down to Jarvis and Bay St. will see that the hole is about 20 feet below the lake. There is only a narrow wall of land separating the hole from the lake. I imagine most people will know that water will always flow down hill and find the route of least resistance. So why on earth would these people proceed with such a bad option. Council should haul Peter Dance up on the carpet and demand an explanation. Here is another example of how little taxpayers money means to these people. From \$4 1/2 million to \$9 million and counting. We need answers.

Police Services

So the power has finally figured out that we have a shortage of police officers working in the city. Remember back before we disbanded the Orillia police force. We were told that an OPP contract was the way to go. It would be cheaper and service would be equal and possibly better. Many people disagreed and fought the switch. They argued and rightly so that the OPP could not and would not be cheaper and if it was cheaper service would suffer. People like Dennis Edmonds fought hard for you and me along with many others. They were pooh poohed as fear mongers and people were convinced that the truth was lies.

Fast forward to today. It seems according to council and the police board we are not being adequately policed. Dah!!! How can 36 officers police the same as 44 did. As for savings we have saved nothing. In fact our costs have gone up. You see when we had our own police force the budget included salaries for civilian employees. In order for the OPP contract to look smaller these employees salaries came out of the police budget and are now paid from the city coffers. We need to look at bringing back our own force again. And don't believe that it would be too expensive. We are always being told how local operations are

always less expensive than anything run by the province. We could negotiate with the surrounding Townships to make up a regional force and share the cost. Seems all the Townships are complaining about policing costs and lack of service. This is an idea whose time has come.

Thanks to former mayor French and council we are facing ever increasing policing costs and inadequate service. Another example of how bad decisions come back to bite US in the ass. Now we know that we were led down the garden path by the power and people like Dennis Edmonds were telling the truth did work on our behalf. Dennis and others who were against this bad decision were put through the wringer, maligned treated terribly for their efforts. Boy sure sounds like the battle we are fighting against the MURF being built on West St. The problem with the MURF is that our children's health will be at risk if the Toxic site is used while the police matter is only money. Does anybody (except the councillors and mayor who are pushing the project) want that on their conscience???? I sure don't.

Testing

After the controversial MURF meeting in May it was announced that the city would conduct testing on fish and fowl from the MURF site. Jim Tolnai was pushing for donations to help cover the cost of testing contamination levels on frogs, fish, birds etc. Lo and behold the city announces that they would conduct these tests. So were the tests done??? What were the results and why is it not public??? Is this another cover-up. Is life form at the MURF contaminated so bad that council is harboring the results? Does council at large even know about the tests or results? Another fine example of how this city is being run.

Barrie Rd. Site

So what is happening on the old Fahramet site on Barrie Rd. Seems the urgent need to dump contaminated soil in the Scout Valley area has been stopped. It seems that the site sits idle with great mounds of polluted soil and concrete passing time. Anyone have some information on what is going on? Let us know there maybe a story here.

\$47,000,000 Plus

by: jim tolnai

The truth is slowly leaking out about this MURF deal. The word now is that city hall has been approached by the architects and the report was not what we would want to hear. It seems that the cost estimates are actually coming in higher than expected. If true then expect the cost to be much higher. Remember what former councillor McLaughlin said a couple of months ago. (These guys will be lucky to bring this on for less than \$65,000,000).

Now for some more news that is disturbing. In doing some digging we have found that our former arch rival Barrie is tendering their third MURF to be built in Allandale. The Holly Park Recreation Center will be built on 20 acres to serve the people of Barrie. This is the third center that Barrie is building and will be a first class facility just like the two before.

Unlike Orillia City staff and councillors it was a great pleasure to find Randy Watson who is superintendent of Corporate Facilities for the city being open and honest about their project. Why Randy had no problem with discussing budgets and plans with people who aren't even from Barrie. In fact unlike Orillia city staff and politicians he was proud to talk about their accomplishments and yes was truthful when asked about possible budget over runs.

So here is what Randy told us. This new facility will be 152,000 square feet in size. That is almost exactly the same size as proposed for Orillia. The building will house two ice surfaces just like our MURF. For the swimming enthusiasts there will be an eight lane Olympic size pool with spectator seating similar to what we are getting. Change rooms showers and other amenities will also be available just like in ours. So far I don't see much difference between the two.

Outside there will be soccer fields, three tennis courts and an outside rink. There will be a picnic area, playgrounds etc. Not unlike what is proposed for our MURF. Yes there will be eight tennis courts and instead of soccer we will have baseball diamonds for our MURF but it seems to me that the two facilities are almost equal in most ways.

Not wanting to stop with just Randy's opinions and take on this facility we

contacted Ward 6 councillor Michael Prowse who's ward will be served by this facility (he actually returned our call unlike our own councillors who avoid us). What a pleasant surprise to have a politician actually return our call and speak so openly of their project. Mike made no bones about the budget and that it was expected to cost slightly more than anticipated. He was honest about how the architects were told in no uncertain terms that the budget was to be kept or else. They were also told that Barrie would not accept or put up with costs like Orillia was getting hit with. What is their budget for this project?? Why it is just over \$20,000,000. That's right Barrie is getting a MURF that is almost identical in size and amenities for just over \$20 million dollars. Folks that is a mere 42% of the cost Orillians are expected to pay. We were not surprised to hear that Barrie councillors were adamant with the architects about costs and actually used Orillia as the example of what they would not put up with. Well it seems that Barrie architects are the same bunch who have been hired by Orillia. We find it funny that in dealing with Barrie these architects can build their facility with a .42 cent dollar. How come? Could the amenities envisioned by the mayor, Cipolla and Ian Brown cost \$27,000,000? Some how I can not believe that. Why for the kind of money these guys are wanting to spend Barrie could build a fourth MURF and still have money left over to repair 50 miles of roads.

Where is this \$27,000,000 going? Why are the costs so high to build in Orillia versus Barrie? If the Barrie facility is good enough for the fastest growing and prosperous city in Ontario like Barrie who can probably afford more then why do we need to spend so much more? As I wrote in a previous issue of Speaking Out if we have \$47,000,000 to spare then by all means let's spend the \$20,000,000 on the MURF and \$27,000,000 on say affordable housing, roads, community parks etc. But the truth is that Orillia can ill afford the extra \$27,000,000. Half million dollar Bob Ripley tells us that we can afford this expenditure because money is cheap. Good then let's get that cheap money and spend it on the roads. Say how about

fixing the sewer system so people don't get sewage coming into their basements during heavy rains. Lots of things to spend the money on. I am sure if asked people would come up with a lot of ways to spend this extra money.

By the way the \$20,000,000 price tag for a 150,000 square ft. MURF is not unique to Barrie. Contact any community in Ontario and you will find that this is the going rate for these facilities. It seems that Orillia's cost to build is the exception. It seems that Orillia's effort is being used as an example of how not to build a MURF. In the municipal government business Orillia is out of step.

Mayor Stevens, Ralph Cipolla and Ian Brown will tell you different but all anyone has to do is take two hours and make a trip to a couple or three municipalities to see their centers. Then give the people responsible for these facilities a call. You will find them more than willing to share information with you and speak freely of their trials and tribulations. No weasel words or cover-ups. By far everyone we spoke to are more than happy with their MURF's. Would they make any changes? Of course they would, but among all we spoke to there was a satisfaction and certainly no regrets. Would they have wanted more. Absolutely. But the reality is that they built facilities that meet and in some cases exceeds their communities needs at a price that taxpayers can afford.

Wake up Orillia we are being used as an example of how not to do business. Among all we spoke with everyone was aware of what is happening in Orillia and their smirks tell all. If we want to attract industry and business it is not helpful to have people using us as an example of how not to do things. So get involved. Do a bit of research yourself because the information fed to you by the POWER, Packet and to a lesser extent Orillia Today is sadly lacking. These people no longer have any credibility and if you do your home work you too will come to the same conclusion. You know the old saying "if it walks like a duck, quacks like a duck and looks like a duck it is a duck" Our ducks seem to be Daffy. Suthering Sucatash???

JUSTICE???

by:jim tolnai

Anyone remember Judge Kerry Evans. He is the Barrie judge who was accused by a court employee of sexual misconduct and sexual interference etc. This lady went through hell and should be admired for her resolve to stand up and proceed with prosecution of Judge Evans. Not an easy thing to do for a lowly employee. Yet she did proceed. The trial was moved to Hamilton in order to avoid any conflict by local judges??? In my opinion if you do the crime in Barrie then you should be tried in Barrie. Obviously someone in the system did not feel local judges could be trusted to be impartial???

So off they go to Hamilton. After all evidence was given the judge decided it came down to the word of a respected judge and the word of a woman. The judges verdict "NOT GUILTY"???? Oddly enough there were a total of eight complaints against the judge by other women. Yet the Hamilton judge still did not believe this brave gutsy lady. Why? how could anyone believe that a judge could act in this manner??? I can only imagine what this woman has endured before, during and after the trial. She really deserves a medal and all our support.

So now it seems that a panel of three judges have found Judge Evans guilty of sexual misconduct. The judges sit on the Ontario Judicial Disciplinary Body. This body was created in 1995 and this decision is the most serious one reached since it's inception. The panel has not recommended punishment as yet but will reconvene "as soon as possible".

So how come in a trial a judge decides "NOT GUILTY" yet once the criminal proceeding is over three judges looking at the same evidence come to the conclusion of "GUILTY". Makes one wonder if the people responsible for moving the trial to Hamilton did the right thing?? It was claimed they did not want to give an impression that there was favoritism if Evans was tried in Barrie. But now it could be said that the verdict in Hamilton seems to look like favoritism.

Many people do not have any faith in our justice system and I am sure the lady who went through her HELL is one of them.

Most people I spoke with who followed the trial were of the opinion that eight women could not have mis-interpreted his behavior. It is evident that when Evans testified he had to have perjured himself or in the least misled. Remember President Clinton's famous testimony "I did not have sexual relations with that woman". Well Evans testimony sure sounded along the same lines. Oh! I was just joking. I brushed her accidentally etc. Our justice system owes this lady a great big apology for having put her through the wringer. The judges who will be deciding on the punishment of Evans should invite all the victims to decide what will happen to this man. Let them decide whether they are willing to keep this man in a position of power or allow him to stay and possibly use his power against other women. I believe these women have earned the right to judge.

I was shocked when I read the Sept. 28 Packet story "Barrie judge found guilty". Instead of the story being headline news the article was three paragraphs long and mentioned the Judges name only once in the middle of the last paragraph. Very low key compared to the article announcing his not guilty verdict. Why the Packet did not even use local reporters but took the story from CP. Seems odd that a local judge when found guilty does not deserve a story. What about a story from the women's side? No the Packet does not like controversy so when the powerful are involved the stories don't seem to deserve space unless it is positive. Shame!!!!

CREDIBILITY

On another matter regarding the Packet. Two years ago I took councillor Downey to court because of his conflict regarding the sign by-law. Throughout the ordeal the Packet favoured Downey and suggested that his conflict was not all that bad. Their stories definitely supported the power. So I was amused to see the Oct.2 Packet giving Darts to city council for ignoring their own sign bylaw allowing two businesses to hang larger signs than allowed. "Why waste time developing policies if you aren't going to enforce them?" wrote the Packet. Exactly why I took Downey to court. It was wrong then and it is wrong now. Another loss of Credibility for the Packet and staff.

For the Children

Our seventh annual Hungarian Goulash Cook Out is over for another year. We have counted the money and our efforts this year has made \$3,600 for Sleeping Children Around the World. The money will provide 120 desperately needy children a bed kit so that they can have some comfort in their sleep.

This year we had Dave Dryden as our special guest. Dave is a former NHL goalie and brother of Ken Dryden of like fame. Dave and Ken's dad Murray Dryden started SCAW over 30 years ago. We were honoured to have Dave join us to represent SCAW and the memory of his father's great accomplishment.

Our little family event just keeps growing and both Anne and I thank our children for their help and enthusiasm in raising money for this worth while cause. Our hope is that what we have started our kids will continue with the help of their future families. The future of the world is in the hands of our children.

Last year we raised \$2,100 and had set our sites on \$3,000 this year. So it was quite a shock to find that we had far exceeded what quite frankly I thought was an unreachable goal. But thanks to all our generous friends who opened their hearts and wallets to help the children we did GREAT!!!

My buddy Fred Smith who you may remember offered to donate an extra hundred dollars if we hit \$1,900 last year offered \$150 this year if we hit \$3,000. Well true to his word he dropped off his cheque. It is because of people like Fred that we succeed. We had a good turn out despite the rain but the skies cleared in time for our meal. We all had a great time and again Anne's desert table far exceeded all expectation. A special thank you to my son Todd's friend Greg who made the vegetarian pizza again this year it was great, Marleen Wiles who never left the kitchen doing dishes and more. Thanks go to Pat and Lorraine my sister Martha and others who helped us it truly is appreciated. You made our efforts easier by taking some of the load.

We are looking forward to next year but in the mean time urge you to help SCAW as 100% of donations go to the children. Please go to www.scaw.org. The Tolnai Family