

THIS WEEK IN "LITTERLAND"

www.litterpreventionprogram.com

March 23, 2014

HAPPY SPRING!



CBC-TV Toronto has asked viewers to tweet @cbctoronto with photos of litter revealed by the ebbing snow. The network ran a light - look news feature on litter on the first day of spring. Cleaning up was mentioned as a solution to littering: education was not.

Special Edition

'TIS THE SEASON

Cleanups galore. That's what Spring 2014 brings. The Great American Clean Up March 1 - May 31 is already underway. The UK has been toiling away since February.

HEARTBREAKER IN MANILA: FOREST FIRE!

Endangered Species Preserve Wiped Out By Manmade Inferno

An illegal hunter's smoldering cigarette butt on the forest floor is one likely cause of a killer fire March 21 that has consumed 50 hectares of rare mountainside habitat, investigators are saying. The area of "mystical" Banahaw was off-limits to backpackers due to its eco-sensitivity and the uniqueness of the species it housed.

HE GIVES A SHIRT ABOUT LITTER

Jeff Poster is a man on a mission with a message emblazoned on a t-shirt. The Asheville, NC litter-conscious luminary behind www.stoplittering.com sells hemp-organic cotton shirts and sundries to fund his work. See his adorably eye-catching logo, below. He's shopping for a Canadian sponsor, having landed local US support from Moe's Original Bar B Que and possibly a hometown Subaru dealer. We agreed to spread the word. Contact Jeff at jeffreyposter@gmail.com or via his website. NC just kicked off a statewide anti-littering drive.



HEADLINE LITTER GRABBERS (MAR 16-23)

Some of what made our News Reel this week
litterpreventionprogram.com/news-reel.html

Singapore starting from the ground up (3/16)

Tickets issued for littering in Singapore increased by 14 per cent over last year. The leader of Keep Singapore Clean, Liak Teng Lit, uses volunteers to convince litterers to change. "I hope the day will come when, if anybody litters, somebody on the side will just remind them: Please don't do it."

Portland's bag fees and foam ban stalled by foes (3/20)

Businesses loathe it. Environmentalists love it. Portland's attempt to put a bite on litter by putting a 10% fee on paper and plastic shopping bags and banning polystyrene foam packaging is in stall mode after a heated meeting this week.

Head scratching in Helston over failed campaign (3/21)

Amelia Hawke-Treener, 6, and her plea to Helston dwellers to not litter had no impact. The mayor now vows to move to punitive approaches since cute calls for goodwill didn't work.

Plymouth's housing boss rocked by MP's barb (3/19)

MP Oliver Colville's railing about puddles of urine and piles of litter at Plymouth Community Homes earned a rebuke from the housing chief, who said the unfair portrayal undermines the longtime hard work of residents to keep the place clean.

Ocean litter "as far as the eye can see" (3/19)

A thick, multi-coloured layer of marine litter on the tide line awaits UK's Big Spring Beach Cleanup, March 28-31.

NEW SIGNS FOR TORONTO, CANADA (Right)



Source: City of Toronto

Smokers in Toronto, residents and visitors, please use these bins and do not litter your butts. City officials request that you do your part to keep Toronto green, clean and litter-free.

With more than 6,000 litter and recycling bins on Toronto's streets (and more to come), the solution to not littering is just steps away. Often located in high pedestrian traffic spots and close to transit shelters to accommodate people waiting for public transportation, the bins are there to help you put waste in its place.



"I feel guilty every time I litter my cigarette butt."

- Female smoker in Liberty Village when given the gift of a pocket ashtray in the course of recent street interviews we did for the filming of a documentary on gum litter by Andrew Nisker, coming out on TVO later this year.

COFFEE & SMOKES

Right, butts rest in snow at the base of a waste bin on private property outside a Toronto coffee shop, their toxins ready to flow into the waterworks.



DID YOU KNOW?

The City of Toronto has a way for its residents to file online reports of loose litter on public property at www.toronto.ca or phone in specific complaints to 311.

TORONTO UPDATE



GO PUBLIC!

Any item dropped on the ground becomes litter and takes away from the clean and green standard we like to maintain for our city. Besides having openings in the bins for garbage and recyclables, there's a smaller special receptacle dedicated to cigarette butts.

Yes, cigarette butts are litter too. In fact, butts are toxic. Young children, pets or other types of wildlife are at risk if they eat them.

The Litter Prevention Program and the City of Toronto Staff Working Group on Littering have cooperated to bring "Litterland" readers this important information. A new bylaw in Toronto, coupled with a province-wide law, will ban smoking in more and more public locales. Toronto smokers and friends of smokers have an opportunity to become world leaders of the Environmentally Responsible Smoker movement toward using an ash receptacle every single time.



SHEILA WHITE
Editor & Publisher

Editorial

by
*Sheila
White*

Journalism and Litter: Lessons To Be Learned

First, thank you, loyal readers, for migrating to *Litterland* every week and especially for allowing me to 'unload' this unprecedented three-page Spring Edition on you. I wanted you to know about some recent happenings – a film shoot with environmental doc maker Andrew Nisker on Wednesday was the highlight of my week. I conducted on-the-street interviews about chewing gum litter and offered my perspective as well. Watch for a TVOntario release of "The Dark Side of The Chew" later this year.

Those of you who have been following our escapades in *Litterland* will know that I recently took aim at advertisers portraying the act of littering in their television commercials. In this case the unwitting offender was drug-maker Pfizer Canada depicting a woman littering a cigarette butt in an ad for nicotine replacement products. I flagged the issue with Advertising Standards Canada (ASC), the national governing council in charge of deeming ads acceptable. I had a wonderful conversation with CEO Linda Nagel and was delighted to hear her say what sounded like magic words, "No one is arguing with you." My opinion piece on littering in advertising and what creative departments and product manufacturers need to consider when dreaming up their ads will appear in ASC's next complaints newsletter, which is sent to all the big players.

Media is a potent force, but when it comes to litter it is largely a wasted force. Filmmakers like Nisker are the exception. I always commend media when they pay attention to the litter issue, but sometimes they do it a disservice, as with the following two examples that competed for my attention this week.

The first was the perennial story about snow melting and leaving litter in its wake, a piece on CBC Toronto evening news. The national broadcaster has a better record than most for its focus on littering, but it missed the mark with its coverage this time. It offered no particular educational value, was in fact the same old, tired story. Snow melts, a sordid mess is itemized, people express their disgust, a city manager outlines the cleanup schedule and urges people to pick-up litter. We cut back to the news anchors, who in that moment had an opportunity to convey the missing message – do not litter in the first place. Instead they laughed about it. Main message: the city workers should clean up from winter sooner and quicker. Why didn't these jocular, smiling role models ad lib along these lines? "Folks, stop the littering. Use a bin." No city can afford the clean up costs of keeping up with ongoing litter proliferation. Not littering is a lasting solution.

Then this, from the Toronto Star Business Section, "Gum-sales bubble burst by expanding competition" (Mar 21, 2014), about the US chewing gum industry's sales decline of 11 per cent in four years to [gulp] \$3.7B. Here is the jaw-dropping paragraph from Associated Press reporter Candice Choi: "From designer mints to fruit chews, candy companies have invented plenty of other ways to get a sugar fix or battle bad breath and anxiety. The alternatives don't come with gum's unpleasant characteristics either, like the question of whether to spit out or gulp the remains."

'How unfortunately ignorant,' I think to myself, 'that the choice for this AP scribe is to spit or ingest, not a single mention of disposing used gum in the garbage where it actually belongs.' So you see, fair readers, I have my work cut out for me. You will find my Op-Ed on littering in advertising on my blog, "Sheila's Shlog."