

# THIS WEEK IN “LITTERLAND”

[litterpreventionprogram.com](http://litterpreventionprogram.com)

March 15, 2020

## EDITORIAL

### Cleaning up our act in viral times

In this rapidly evolving COVID-19 world, hand washing and other clean behaviours have been drawn into sharp focus. Worldwide, strategies to conquer this new and highly infectious disease rely on the global citizenry to follow strict rules in a fight to eradicate it. Looking around at the landscape just here in Toronto and the utterly tragic proportions of litter revealed by a spring thaw, one wonders how society will wrestle down the novel coronavirus when it can't even manage to stop the littering habit. To not litter is simpler than washing your hands, easier than not touching your face, doesn't involve “social distancing”. Everywhere, health officials are dispensing advice day to day, hour to hour. We'd like to hear them say: no spitting, no throwing your cups, cans, bottles and lids, nor straws, no wipes and tissues on the ground, no cigarette butts or chewing gum dropped or flicked. In short, use a bin. It's a simple rule, that in this new era of keeping it clean the authorities don't recite, but should.

### Petition calls for Toronto bag ban

The grassroots group [StopPlastics](#) is trying to get plastic bags banned in Canada's largest city. An online [petition](#) urges Toronto Council to act decisively, and sooner, to implement bans to halt the use of single use plastic. A council committee will be hearing back from staff in early May on reducing single-use and takeaway items. StopPlastics hopes its six-year Ban the Bag postcard campaign and change.org petition signatures will send the message that the public supports swift action.

## DID YOU KNOW?

[Innovations Challenge](#) is a student competition now in its third year, run by Pennsylvania's Department of Transportation. It seeks the best ideas for reducing litter within the next five to 10 years, without relying on existing laws, programs and educational campaigns. The top three entrants will share a \$3,000 cash prize. One recently announced regional winner proposed an app that links the motorist's state-issued E-ZPass transponder with a dash cam that can record littering offences and share footage with police.



If we listened to children, they would tell us to “keep our world beautiful”, as this sign designed by a Toronto school reminds us. It is one of two, large, student-designed art pieces installed at Woodbine Beach on the shores of Lake Ontario, the world's 14th largest lake, which carries all the five Great Lakes' waters to the Atlantic Ocean.

## HEADLINE LITTER GRABBERS (MAR 8 - 15)

Some of what made our News Reel this week

### Trying to nip 'nips' in the bud [\(3/8\)](#)

Hoping to cork the problem of littered “nips”, those non-redeemable single-serving liquor bottles, Connecticut's wine and spirits industry and environmentalists unveiled “Don't Trash Connecticut - Nip It In The Bin” Tuesday. It's a retail sign campaign backed by Live Green CT.

### Australian ocean study findings surprising [\(3/10\)](#)

The ocean itself is now a major contributing source of litter onshore as the sea regurgitates debris back onto land, a CSIRO study of Australian coastal litter has found. People littering on land is the other source.

### Austin looks for local involvement [\(3/11\)](#)

March 6 was “It's My Park Day” in Austin, TX, and 3,000 answered the city's call to help litter-groom the parks.

### Putting a figurative foot down on dog poop [\(3/12\)](#)

Dublin City Council has launched a salvo against dog litter, asking dog owners and walkers to pick up their pooches' poops. The fine for non-compliance is 150 euro. A fresh survey found that 7 in 10 respondents had stepped in it, 31 percent had wheeled a buggy through it, and 11 percent of wheelchair users had rolled over it. Free doggie bags are available in all public buildings in Dublin.

### Church-based litter pilgrims take the lead [\(3/13\)](#)

Members of Trinity Episcopal Church, Virginia held their first monthly “litter pilgrimage” for the year 2020. The team fans out to tidy up adjacent South Boston streets.