

SERIOUS STUFF

Suburbia is where you bulldoze the trees and name the streets after them.



Fifty years ago, milkmen brought bottles of milk to your door. Also, grocery stores put all your purchases in a strong paper bag. But times have changed.

DEAR MAYOR, LOBLAWS & SHOPPERS DRUGS

I vote in favour of free plastic shopping bags, and lots of them!

Brian Chiasson

More than 50 years ago, a kid on a bike would deliver newspapers from door to door, if he didn't walk.

Also, back then, a milkman (a full grown adult) delivered glass bottles of milk to your door.

And, yet another service, way back then, grocery stores put your purchases into a strong paper bag.

As technology developed, so did bags - plastic was cheaper for stores and easier to carry with handles.

If people around the world abandoned paper bags, this could slow down the clear-cutting of forests.

Cannot Collect Taxes

However, technology was nasty. Plastic is made from petroleum products - harmful to the environment.

So, in recent years, politicians in Toronto and other municipalities started charging a tax on store bags to encourage shoppers to reuse their bags.

In fact, some stores, seeing a profitable opportunity, started selling better bags, with advertising on it, for the purpose of reusing them.

However, one small problem - the politicians didn't have a system to collect the bag tax and the store owners kept it.

Imagine that, public servants (giggle) abandoning their pursuit of taxes. You'd think they would set up a system for collections instead.

Stopping Bags

Yes, Toronto decided to stop the bag tax to help consumers. Maybe it was just Toronto Mayor Rob Ford, and his friends on council, as opposed to most other elected officials. Mind you, Rob Ford is definitely different.

For that matter, Toronto is different. Several Ford haters jumped on a surprise vote to stop plastic bags completely.

Currently, waiting for the new law to take effect on January 1, 2013, many stores stopped charging the fee, while others, like Loblaws and Metro, still gouge their customers.

Mississauga

In Mississauga, local stores behave the same, some continue charging and some stopped.

For example, regarding Shoppers Drug Mart, the one at Mississauga Valley Blvd and Central Parkway Blvd still charges, but the Shoppers at Burhamthorpe and Cawthra stopped.

Mind you, the bags at Shoppers are extremely flimsy - the handles rip easily. I ask them to double the bags, unless they use the bigger bags.

Wal-Mart has never charged and still offers free bags. They even double the bags for heavy loads.



As we move toward 2013, a war is brewing over the choice to use reusable bags or plastic ones.

Back in July, Mayor Hazel wanted to ask Mississauga residents about the possibility of outlawing plastic shopping bags, following in Toronto's example.

I can't imagine anyone liking the idea, other than radical environmentalists (the same people who want gas prices to skyrocket so people will stop driving cars).

For or Against

There are probably normal people who are afraid to admit publically that they prefer the free bags. After all, the media is only too happy to provide a public forum for self-righteously judges who condemn anyone who disagrees.

Nonetheless, the Mississauga council's environmental committee will make recommendations in September.

Isn't that a conflict? Who on this environment committee will favour bags? Such a person, fighting in favour of bags, would be banned - even before the bags.

Here's a few reasons why plastic might be helpful:

► Most people use bags to line garbage containers.

► Modern newspapers use plastic bags to protect their deliveries in the rain - the same newspapers which ironi-

cally argue in favour of the environment.

► Milk comes in cartons and plastic bags.

Free Bags are Helpful

► Many fruits and vegetables are also placed in a plastic bag for weighing.

If politicians want to ban plastic, perhaps they should start with marketers. Almost every product in most stores is in a container of plastic or cardboard or both.

And, if you really want to put an end to petroleum products, perhaps everyone should abandon cleaning products (some of which contain petroleum) and go naked (ditching their clothes).

Hey, while saving the environment is a serious matter, perhaps abandoning our clothes can make it a fun endeavor as well.

Except that unemployment would skyrocket, particularly in the automotive industry and fashion world, just to name two fields of productivity and income.

To tell Mayor Hazel your vote, dial: (905) 896-5555.

Brian Chiasson has 24 years in newspapers and radio.