

ENVIRONMENT

Scarborough celebrates Earth Week

Scarborough high school students were invited to attend events about Earth Day as part of a contest sponsored by the Friends of the Rouge Watershed. Here are some excerpts from the winning essays:

WHY THE ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

"Our society does not encourage knowledge, but encourages disbelief for all understanding of which one does not perceive a need. That is the attitude of the stereotypical 'cool' teenager: ignorant, disdainful, and proud of it. The desire in all children to seek to investigate, to inquire, and to understand is all but dead in most people by their teen years. Despite the best efforts of innovative educators, our system does not teach our students to seek knowledge; we give them plenty of fish, but yet we fail to teach them how to fish. It is not that some people simply cannot or do not want to learn, but that this childlike desire to understand and to comprehend has not been kept alive by the society.

"We must keep the road of this unwillingness to change our lifestyle: it is how we raise and educate our children, and the values that we as a society, especially the media, instill in our youth. We must keep alive the desire to seek knowledge and comprehension, and teach, not force, the concept of personal and social responsibility. As a short, the concept of 'natural philosophy' should be reintroduced into our society, especially our school system. Such a program would involve the comprehensive teaching of life and natural sciences. Only by understanding as much of our surroundings as possible may future and even present generations truly realize the importance of making the personal and collective 'sacrifices' necessary to reduce the impact of our industries on our planetary weather systems."

— Write the Earth essay submission by Dave Chen, Weber C.I. (author of 24-page manuscript file)

A CAR MUST HAVE THE SOUL

"A reason we cannot eliminate cars is that they are status symbols in our society. Look at our roads. All the ways are talking about Bentley's and other expensive cars and convincing people that a car is a sign of success. I mean, how many reports ever write a song about a bus? Or, but it was Kline

Kline, and they intend it anyway. Toronto's second Auto Show was unbelievably successful, showing that a lot of cars are still built a nice car will make you cool, popular and get you chicks. Even if this is true, you won't look so cool driving a long career because of all the air pollution. And you chick won't look so hot either."

— From Why There's No Hope for the Future, essay by Anne Sealey, Weber C.I. (author of 2100)

ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES OVER THE PLANET

"Many people think that 'all these factories' come pollution. While industrial pollution does account for a majority of the use of electricity, the gases released from heating and cooling houses, and the endless from automobile contribute to 25 per cent of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions. The average house from travels 2,000 kilometers and the average Canadian home generates over 900 kilograms of garbage every year."

"In 1983 Canadian industry produced 525 million tonnes of greenhouse gases and this was a rise of 14 per cent from 1980. Worse still, the levels of 1990 are predicted to be 50 per cent higher. This picture of reality seems sad and even frightening."

"There is still some time to act. Reducing the house owners include being energy-efficient appliances, improving the building shell and efficiently managing household wastes. A compost program is an excellent idea, one that appeals to children."

"Renewable resources are becoming more attractive because of the obvious problem with non-renewable resources like coal, oil and natural gas. Their supply is limited and once used, they cannot be replaced."

"While we have worked hard for thousands of years to arrive at this state of frightening control over the planet, many easily forget that we are still part of the Earth, inextricably connected to every pond, forest and mountain landscape."

"Allowing the things to disappear takes something away from us, because humans have just as many rights to the planet as every other living being. We should probably make and make rules, while killing sharks in video games and wearing coats of fur and pretending to be leaders."

— Write the Earth essay submission by Doug Lewis, Albert Campbell C.I. (author of 1800 manuscript)

THE POLLUTION KILLER

"In the average day, you will take 11,000 full breaths of air. You will move 10,000 litres of air through your body. Every four seconds, you will take between 0.1 and 1.0 litres of air into your lungs, which means that roughly speaking, before you've done reading this essay, you will have been exposed to 76 litres of air. The effects of this may be entirely unnoted or non-existent to you, but statistically speaking, you take a risk every time you take a breath from city smog."

"In 1984, the Canadian Lung Association published a report stating that between 1980 and 1982, asthma, allergies and other chronic breathing problems increased by as much as 40 per cent. They stated that even in five Canadian cities with some form of respiratory problem, that between five and 10 per cent of Canadian children have childhood asthma, and that lung disease is on the rise from being the third leading cause of death in Canada... Why is air pollution a serious problem? Because it kills, it ruins, and gives the current rate with which we are generating air pollution, it may not be a problem for much longer. But and because we will have that it."

— Write the Earth essay submission by Matthew Fyfe, Weber C.I. (author of 2000 manuscript)



Photo by WILLIAM BAZZANI

James Park plants a tree at the 11th annual Multi-Cultural Community Tree Planting and Friends of the Rouge Watershed event Saturday.

TOURISTS ARE IN SMOG

"Did air pollution ruin your summer? Well, it ruined my winter! Being an athlete and living in a city where the air becomes thick with smog all the time makes playing my best hockey really hard. I always have to worry about my asthma because of all the nasty junk I inhale with every breath. Whether you are an asthma sufferer like me or perfectly healthy, air pollution makes having fun in the sun, being out on the ice, or even just driving in Toronto just a little bit less fun and a whole lot sicker."

"Have you ever been somewhere that smelled really, really good? Think twice next time you are."

"By my house there is an industrial complex. When it smells delicious, it smells like the most delicious chicken bones you have ever tasted."

"There is only one problem. That cinnamon bun smell is really the smell of dangerous and harmful byproducts that result from the production of silicon wafers."

"Every time I drive by that smelting on my way to hockey I hold my breath and think 'Thank my stomach turns at the thought of smelling so dirty smelling so good.'"

— From A Breath of Fresh Air by WJ Gibson, Weber C.I. (author of Toronto Green Guide)

WARMING IS CLIMAX OF THE SCENE

"The question of whether human-caused global warming is real or fiction is up to long heated debate."

"The fact of the matter is that Global Warming is a complicated issue that many do not understand."

"Because of this, many simply close their eyes to the issue and ignorance takes over again."

— From Global Warming, Part of Fiction by Anne Sealey, Richmond Park C.I. (author of unpublished manuscript)

CHANGING OUR WAYS FOR OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE

"Simple little things like biking to school or work, helping plant trees in preservation areas, and recycling can all help our environment. Looking at the level of pollution in Toronto, we cannot afford to pollute the air or water anymore."

"If one day people of Toronto wake up under a bright blue sky without hearing any smog alerts, it would be a miracle."

"Let's hope we can change our ways in time for our children. Have it done!"

— From Air Pollution: What We Can Do by Anne Sealey, BAYVIEW Park C.I. (author of Toronto Green Guide)



Photo by OWEN FRENCH

Rose King gives her daughter Elizabeth a ride in a wheelchair while her sister Lisa carries the boards during the 20,000 Trees for the Rouge event Sunday.