

No one wants to see the junk from your trunk

By Sarah Sobanski

There's nothing like one of our area waterfalls. Its churning currents can easily pull you into a trance ? until the same current carries your eyes to a white, foaming, plastic bag caught on a stick near its bank.

One of our readers sent in a letter last week titled ?What Bancroft folks like.? It was funny but nailed home a point. It put me in the mood to participate in community cleanups for Earth Day this past weekend, as I hope it did you.

On Earth Day, we ventured up to Maynooth. Starting behind Black Spruce Gallery, an assortment of Maynoothians including organizer Councillor Tracy Hagar, business owners ? including Linda Lang, of soon to reopen after closing for winter renovations, Brush with the North, and Christine Hass, of the soon to be open for the very first time, Memories Café ? children and parents alike bent and snapped for garbage along the main drag. Afterwards, we were treated to a generous barbecue at Highlands Hot Tubs with manager and chef extraordinaire Nancy Capstick ? what a cool store. They have an adult popcorn-shaped floaty that I just can't get over.

But I digress, I now know ?what Maynooth folks like.? Or those who drive through and throw their garbage out the window a few kilometres down Hwy 127 from Hwy 62. We walked up and down that stretch and wow, what a mess.

I don't know if there's a mentality that the snow being six feet high from end to end in the area will hide everything but your cat when you throw it from the interior of your car or what, but it's melted now and what's been revealed is gross.

About 90 per cent of what we found was recyclable. There were pop cans, beer cans, beer bottles, milk containers and newspapers ? that is *not* what you should be doing with your *Bancroft This Week*, thank you very much.

We came across a hubcap, rust chunks, garbage bags ? could've filled those with trash and taken them to the dump instead of wasting them, just saying. There were also bottles filled with tobacco spit, others with pee. (You're surrounded by forest on both sides. If you can't wait, pull over, get out of your car and make like a bear. The trees won't tell anyone they saw your behind.)

It was the same story at the Mark McGhee clean up the next day. Our local Tim Hortons sponsored the event and thank goodness, because a strong cup of coffee goes a long way when putting up with ridiculous littering habits.

Besides the pee bottles, a few of the more ridiculous things I saw included four stacked Tim Hortons cups with the lids stuffed inside. I'm so glad this person took the time to collect everything and stack it neatly for the wildlife. Another was a bag of dog poop. So it was biodegradable, but this person wanted to seem like a standup guy and pick it up. That's great, except he then put a plastic bag around it ? so it's no longer biodegradable ? and left it in a ditch somewhere to be a bag of poop for eternity. What a sad existence.

By the end of the day, there were full bags of garbage lined up and down Bancroft's main streets. All I could wonder was, ?Where does it all come from??

Overall, I'm going to call the weekend a draw for humanity. Yes, the spring thaw revealed a tragic amount of trash left by careless human beings. That being said, there was also a great number of people who came out and proved that area locals care about the environment and want to keep North Hastings beautiful ? because it is.

Don't let all of our hard work this Earth Day weekend go to waste. Carry your garbage the extra 10 feet, or drive the extra 10 minutes until there's an available garbage. There's no excuse for littering. Not one.

We live in one of the most scenic areas of the province. Let's try to keep it that way.