

Subject: FW: Will Litter Defeat Us?

Date: Mon, 28 Feb 2005 09:18:10 -0800

From: "Ernie Crist" <ernie_crist@dnv.org>

To: "Mayor and Council - DNV" <Council@dnv.org>, "Senior Management Committee" <managecomm@dnv.org>, <fonvca@fonvca.org>, <Cagebc@yahoo.com>, "James Ridge" <James_Ridge@dnv.org>

From: Ernie Crist

Sent: Monday, February 28, 2005 9:05 AM

Subject: RE: Will Litter Defeat Us?

Dear Mr. Orr;

You have stated that in your opinion, the main culprits of litter in the streets are children and young adults especially around shopping facilities, schools and wherever else they congregate, including bus stops etc.,

I concur with you and it is for this reason that I have made several motions on District Council to initiative programs under which children, but particularly young adults, would get free access to our recreation facilities in return for cleaning up litter. The idea here is to make them aware of the problem, to instil in them a sense of social responsibility and to give them something they want in return for doing something for the community. In other words to show them the connection between taking from the community and giving something in return.

I have also suggested that we initiate work employment and other work programs during the summer months whereby we would hire young people to work in parks and clean up litter etc., I suggested that we enlist the help of neighbourhood associations, schools, our parks, recreation commission staff and even our cultural administrations. Free tickets to cultural events could be used as an incentive for that purpose. The main idea is to instil a sense of community in young people.

Not a single time was there any support by District Council. If anything our "leaders" ridiculed the idea and dismissed it as yet another frivolous attempt to upset the status quo. Indeed they went one step further and made noises about curtailing the number of motions a member of council should be able to submit so as not to upset any sacred cow.

I believe this is the real problem. It is lack of awareness by our community leaders that there is a problem in the first place. You might say it is a lack of culture. That same lack of awareness also allows raw sewage to be dumped into the ocean, and toxic storm waters to be emptied into our streams and rivers while bragging that we have more SUV's than even Saudi Arabia. All this is done at a time that we encourage children to save a salmon stream. One could argue that it is hypocrisy par excellence. Actually it is not hypocrisy in my opinion as much as it is simply a lack of civic pride as the saying goes.

Leadership starts at the top. If it is not present there, then we can hardly expect our young people to act differently or inspire them to be socially responsible.

The solution in my opinion is for the PUBLIC to show the way. If our leaders lack civic pride than at least let the public have a measure of it. For as the old saying goes, when the people lead, (maybe) the leaders sooner or later will follow.

Yours truly,

Ernie Crist

From: Elizabeth James [<mailto:cagebc@yahoo.com>]

Sent: Sunday, February 27, 2005 11:14 PM

To: Allan Orr; Ernie Crist

Cc: mmaloney@vancourier.com; Cagebc@yahoo.com; postmaster@city.burnaby.bc.ca; rheywood@cnv.org; rwood@westvancouver.ca; ckeating@cnv.org; tpeters@nsnews.com; bsharp@cnv.org; jferguson@westvancouver.ca; mayorandcouncil@vancouver.ca; pgoldsmith-jones@westvancouver.ca;

bfeanley@cnv.org; fonvca@fonvca.org; bsoprovich@westvancouver.ca; James Ridge;
newsroom@northshoreoutlook.com; rday@westvancouver.ca; Margaret Hansen; bperrault@cnv.org;
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newsroom@burnabynewsleader.com; Senior Management Committee; jclark@westvancouver.ca
Subject: Re: Will Litter Defeat Us?

Hi, Allan:

While I agree with your estimation of the litter around fast food operations and pizza 'palaces,' I believe the problem is more widespread than that.

Regularly along Lloyd, between Marine and 1st Avenue, there are delivery trucks and old motorhomes and what would amount to mounds of garbage along the street. On MacKay, opposite Capilano Mall and alongside the creek, the same thing. The little park, which used to be a little lunchtime picnic site for local businesses or ums with strollers, can no longer be used for that due to it having been taken over by the homeless, some of whom are drug users. TransLink bus-stops are little more than ashcans.

Further, into the sunshine-filled Mall parking lot, where Spring flowers are opening, some bright mind had tossed a paper drinking cup on top of one of the evergreens, which already was surrounded with discarded wrappers. You have to wonder why businesses go along with the regulations our councils impose, when they see their expensive landscaping being trashed.

On the other hand, if you and I and many others can see the litter so plainly, how come bylaw and works staff cannot? Is it lack of budget? A few weeks ago, I saw a young man toss away a cigarette package. He wasn't roughly dressed, so I picked up the box, ran after him and said, "Pardon me, I think you dropped this, you meant to put it in the garbage can, right?"

After I'd left his glare behind, I realized what a foolish move that was but I was really mad that he thought - if he had brains at all - that someone would come along and pick up after him!

I don't know what's to be done; by collecting litter, even you are risking picking up an infection or worse, though I commend you for doing it. You are helping, as are the two ladies featured on a newscast last week picking up needles in a downtown back lane.....You know the needles handed out by the Four Pillars staff.

Liz

PS: Everyone is hereby asked to start off this week by telling a good news story first!
Allan Orr <allandorr@shaw.ca> wrote:

Dear Margaret Hansen: The Save Our Shores committee works with the District to clean up the beaches from Cates Park to Deep Cove each July or September. Maureen Bragg is one of the directors. I occasionally volunteer when I am in town. I believe streamkeepers do a clean-up of one of the creeks each year. I, too, am appalled by the litter I see on my walking and cycling travels. I participated with the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition clean-up of the Dept. of Highways land at the north end of the Second Narrows and Phibbs exchange last June. The province no longer cares for this site.

I agree with Councillor Crist. I see very little public or government interest in this problem. I frequently pick up garbage on my walks around the Parkgate area where I reside. I just can't pass garbage without doing something. Teenagers, I believe, are responsible for 99% of the litter, and they get their junk food from gas stations, pizza stores and other purveyors of junk food. What to do, indeed. Where should the leadership come from? The kids spread it and we pick it up. What fun.

Allan Orr.

On 27-Feb-05, at 3:14 PM, Ernie Crist wrote:

> Dear Margaret Hansen;

>

> Thank you very much for your initiative. I concur with you and have

> raised this issue many times on my own Council. If it is true for a
> household that cleanliness is next to godliness and that
> communities are judged by their appearance, then surely we must do
> more to fight the litter plague. There is a story somewhere that an
> angel was sent to a city to see whether it should be saved from
> destruction. The angel left in disgust so the story goes, after seeing
> filth in the streets.

>
> In the final analysis this is a question of civic pride. It is the
> absence of such pride and a lack of cultural consciousness which is
> contributing to the growing litter plight. You are absolutely right,
> there was a time when North Vancouver was virtually litter free.

>
> It is interesting also that you should
> connect cleanliness with cultural attraction and tourism. Nothing is
> more repulsive to tourists than to see litter, unkempt boulevards and
> dilapidated signs on the streets. I have compared it to walking into
> a restaurant, only to see parts of yesterday's breakfast on the menu.
> It does not exactly inspire confidence in the quality of food offered
> there. Who would you trust in such a dirty community. It
> is repulsive and would surely turn any civilised person away.

>
> I have raised this matter on numerous occasions but it will take the
> public to change the mind of politicians most of whom, in my
> opinion, are not even conscious of such matters. It will take the
> public to educate them and convince them that we, the people, will
> not tolerate a pigsty.

> Thank you for your efforts.

> Yours truly,

> Ernie Crist

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> From: Margaret Hansen [<mailto:Margaret.Hansen@shaw.ca>]

> Sent: Sunday, February 27, 2005 1:55 PM

> To: postmaster@city.burnaby.bc.ca; bsoprovich@westvancouver.ca;

> pgoldsmith-jones@westvancouver.ca; jferguson@westvancouver.ca;

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> Cc: tpeters@nsnews.com; mmaloney@vancourier.com;

> editorial@burnabynow.com; newsroom@northshoreoutlook.com;

> newsroom@burnabynewsleader.com

> Subject: Will Litter Defeat Us?

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>
> February 26, 2005

> TO: Mayor and Council of Vancouver, West and North Vancouver, North
> Vancouver District and Burnaby;

> CC: Editor, Vancouver Sun and Province, North Shore News, Burnaby News
> Leader and Now and Vancouver Courier.


> Subject: Will Litter Defeat Us?

>
> As a concerned citizen of Greater Vancouver I am writing to make you
> aware of a serious and growing litter problem in our communities.
> Although I live in the District of North Vancouver my concern extends
> to the City of Vancouver and its surrounding municipalities.
>
> Litter is increasing at an alarming rate and I feel strongly that
> swift action is required to reverse the trend and eliminate this
> environmental blemish. Everywhere I go in the lower mainland I
> encounter cigarettes butts, pop cans, coffee cups, newspaper,
> fast-food packaging, gum and household refuse. Most often I encounter
> it on municipal property or adjacent to major arterial roadways.
>
> Not only is litter unpleasant to look at, it takes a long time to
> decay; some litter contains toxic materials that are absorbed into the
> environment. E.g. an aluminum can takes between 200 and 500 years to
> break down and a plastic six-pack holder takes up to 450 years!
>
> Litter removal is a costly problem, e.g. in London England taxpayer
> pays £100 million annually in street cleaning to remove the 177,000
> tones of dropped litter. With the recent rapid growth of our
> population it is more important than ever to educate our citizens
> concerning this troubling trend and to encourage them to act
> responsibly. As a young woman growing up in Vancouver I often remember
> tourists remarking on the cleanness of Vancouver parks and streets, I
> am sorry to say that in recent years we have fallen by the wayside in
> maintaining this desirable standard.
>
> Sadly, without education, people have, in recent years, become
> increasingly accepting of this lower standard and this attitude (e.g.
> 'how can one more pop can hurt?') is dangerous and further exasperates
> the problem. Not only will litter increase environmental restoration
> costs, and encourage rodents and disease it will foster a trash
> culture and lower citizens' self-esteem regarding the community in
> which they live.
>
> Radically, Vancouver is at risk of loosing its tourist destination
> profile and will be hard pressed to achieve the 2010 Olympic showcase
> we envision unless this environmental blemish is addressed.
>
> Through preliminary Internet research I discovered many urban cities
> such as:
> * Richmond
> (<http://www.richmond.ca/services/recycling/environment.htm>);
> * Toronto (<http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/litter/>); and,
> * London, England
> (http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/environment/litter/litter_fairies.jsp)
>
> have implemented environmental programs designed to control and
> improve litter. Lack of similar programs in the lower mainland
> suggests we are behind the times and is a definite setback for
> citizens who wish to live in clean and beautiful cities. You as the
> political leaders of our cities have an obligation to the citizens you
> represent to take proactive action now!
>
> Please advise me on the actions you have planned and the programs you
> will implement in your jurisdiction to reverse this intolerable trend.
>
> Sincerely,
>
> Margaret Hansen, Concerned citizen.
>
> _____
> Margaret Hansen, 660 Seymour Blvd, North Vancouver, BC V7J 2J6
> Tel: (604) 985-4985 Cell: (604) 908-4985
> Fax: (604) 985-4910 e-mail: margaret.hansen@shaw.ca

>

Allan Orr
Ph. 929-4408

Send instant messages to your online friends <http://uk.messenger.yahoo.com>

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