

## Embracing power of positive stinking

Jul 21, 2009 04:30 AM

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I am now accepting the challenge of a reader who encouraged me to be more positive during the municipal strike.

Hang on. The TV in my office is blaring CP24 and a lawyer just said he believes the temporary dumpsites are illegal. That is, the city may be contravening its own official plan.

Now he's saying residents could go to court to seek an injunction? Now a caller is saying he believes the city is spraying the dumpsites with a grade of pesticide that violates environmental law? Now a headline on the news channel is asking, "What are your rights during the strike?"

Good Lord. I better turn this off. I can't possibly think about rights and stay positive at the same time.

So it's Day 30 of the strike.

Let's see, a Google search reveals that one can accomplish remarkable feats in 30 days. You could quit smoking. You could learn to flirt. You could turn \$6 into \$15,000. You could land a dream job in the tropics.

So when you think about the strike, positively, we've reached a milestone. How many other big cities are hobbled by a labour dispute that drags on for an entire month? How many bustling metropolises can boast about virtually shutting down for four weeks (and counting) despite having six months to negotiate a settlement?

We should have a costume party at Nathan Phillips Square to celebrate: You come as a docked ferry, I'll dress up like a bag of recycling.

That reminds me. I need to invent some new games to occupy my toddlers this summer. We had prepaid for a number of recreational classes. But those are now cancelled.

"Girls, instead of ballet or story time, why don't we go to the backyard and play with all the boxes, bottles, cans and newspapers? We'll call it Camp Refuse. Don't be scared. That's just a mouse, like Stuart Little."

Thirty days and counting? Bravo to all involved. Both sides have dug their heels into the toxic sludge, embraced unreasonable demands, coasted on inertia and triggered widespread woe during this summer of our discontent.

But you know what? Unless you live downwind from a dumpsite, rely on city daycare, work on Centre Island, need a permit, are susceptible to respiratory problems, need to urgently contact a bureaucrat, or have a problem with waiting for no apparent reason to jettison your garbage, this strike is no big deal.

In fact, it's great. Toronto is basking in free publicity.

We're getting singled out in travel advisories. We're featured on CNN. Our mayor is on the cover of news magazines.

On YouTube, a search for "[Toronto garbage strike](#)" brings videos of citizens having meltdowns near picket lines, parks filling up with garbage, raccoons and rodents feasting upon waste. There are also trenchant soliloquies in which disgruntled residents excoriate the city, the union or both.

I was clicking through a forum on [TripAdvisor.com](#) yesterday when I came across this comment from a visitor: "I am in Toronto right now and it is out of control. The smell in same (sic) areas is greater than in other (sic) ...

on Spadina it seems that people have dumped garbage bags right on the side of street. There is overflowing garbage in parks on streets ... They even have garbage drop off areas along lake shore blvrd (sic), taking away one lane of the road, not an impressive sight as you enter the city for the first time."

You see, now that's the problem. This is your first time. Stay for a while and you'll learn to be more positive.

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