

POLITICS AS USUAL: The Magic of Snow

By Alison Collins-Mrakas

This week, my column was originally written about the current existential angst in the tech and social media industry about what their technology has wrought; namely, the wholesale attack on democracy and foundational tenets of civilized society (truth, justice etc) that unfettered access to any and all manners of discourse ? informed, ill-informed, un-informed and just plain bat poop crazy ? that it affords anyone and everyone.

Alarm bells have finally gone off in Silicon Valley and they are scrambling to respond.

However, that column can hold for a week or two as it is not likely that an issue which evolved over years will be solved in mere days. There's time to talk about that.

Moving from the global to the local, I would like instead to talk ? rant really ? about a more pedestrian topic and one that I have touched on before; that is the lack of respect for fellow residents by some users of our public spaces and in particular our trail system.

Just like teenagers throwing stuff under their beds and jamming stuff in their closets may give the appearance that their room is ?clean?, everyone knows that with one opening of the closet door, the mess will once again come tumbling out. The place is a pigsty, just hidden.

The January thaw has the same effect.

Snow, to some folks, seems to be a somewhat wondrous substance that can magically make any manner of debris disappear into its lovely ?clean? whiteness. Just toss your coffee cup into the snowbank, don't worry! It will sink down and be hidden by another layer of fluffy whiteness.

Cigarette butts, candy wrappers and dog poop, lots and lots of dog poop can be rendered completely invisible by the wonder of snow.

That must be what folks think. How else to explain the fact that when we get any kind of thaw, as we are right now, it becomes pretty darn evident that there are delusional or deliberately disrespectful people that use our public spaces as one giant garbage bin. Within a 20 foot radius of any public building doorway you will find mini mountains of cigarette butts. It's disgusting! Honestly, where do these people think their butts are going? Most buildings have specific receptacles for cigarettes. There's really no excuse to throw them on the ground.

But what really crunches my cornflakes? The folks that let their dogs poop in the middle of the trail?and then just leave it there! On Tuesday, as I was walking through the trail system to get to Yonge and catch my bus, I had to gingerly navigate a veritable minefield of poop. I am not exaggerating. Pile after pile of poop.

Come on, people. That's just disgusting. There are trash receptacles at the entrance and exit of every trail system link. There's simply no excuse for not picking up the waste and putting it in the bin. If your dog pooped in the middle of the sidewalk, would you just leave it there? (I hope not!) Well, why would you leave it in the middle of the pathway in the trail system?

Good grief! Don't be a litterbug (or whatever you'd call someone who leaves dog poop everywhere). Pick up after your pets, put your butts in the bin, and have some respect for your fellow residents! Rant over?