

## **Let's think green this summer- Editorial**

**by Marc Lalonde The Chronicle Article online since June 16th 2007.**

Now that the sunny weather and high temperatures are back, and West Islanders are out in droves playing soccer, riding bicycles, walking their dogs and mowing the lawn. Every time you step out the front door on a sunny day and the haze from smog lingers in the air, it's becoming quite clear that when you spend so much time outdoors, you better understand exactly how the world has changed, environmentally speaking, in the last two decades.

We knew about the hole in the ozone layer way back in 1989. For the most part, we didn't care, but now, even the 'show me' people have to be able to see how climate change and the environment have affected the way we live. Golf courses open at Christmas. Snow – lots of it – in April. The new Canadian winter gives us three weeks of spring in late April and early May and then goes right into oppressive summer heat. Hazy, smoggy days. Brutal heat and humidity.

Now, though, it's starting to affect the way we live. Certain lakes are developing a creeping toxic algae, which is created from too many phosphates in the water – a direct result of washing machine draining right into the lake. Now, the lake that once proved so inviting for summer shenanigans is unswimmable and dangerous. Lake St. Louis, also once a playground for children of all ages is now hopelessly polluted and we'll probably never see regular swimming in that lake again.

That's a shame.

And yet, with carbon emissions through the roof, you still see a single person in a Cadillac Escalade idling for ten minutes in a Starbucks drive-through window. You still see a man leave his car running as he runs into the bank, emerging nine minutes later.

Another man leaves his car running as he waits outside an office building for a package to be couriered elsewhere. Hands in pockets, he leans on his car – still running – and relaxes for a second in the sun before wiping his brow and muttering about the heat. All in a 20-minute stretch spent watching the scene unfold outside the Chronicle offices Monday afternoon. It's a disturbing trend, and one that is probably being repeated thousands of times across the city because people don't want to turn the air conditioning off. It's hot out there, you know.

The world our children inherit from us will be one we don't recognize, because by and large, we have ignored the problems we have created and even worse, we've denied our role in it.