

# THIS WEEK IN "LITTERLAND"

[www.litterpreventionprogram.com](http://www.litterpreventionprogram.com)

August 31, 2014

## Trashed!

LABOUR DAY  
DOUBLE ISSUE

## Toronto yanks littering ads

The City of Toronto's anti-littering campaign has been derailed by threats of legal action by unnamed makers of products shown in the ads, *Littering says a lot about you*. (Sample shown at right.) Less than one week in, and with an online presence partially in gear, officials applied the brakes to the full five-week run of print ads destined for exterior bus panels and transit shelters. A planned YouTube launch was also canned. Various companies complained about the use of their trademarks and the "potentially negative effect that this campaign might have on their brands," a city official told *Litterland*. No word yet as to the cost of the taxpayer-funded ads or how the city intends to hold its ad agency, Publicis Canada, accountable for the embarrassing fumble. Meanwhile, the city "will be exploring other anti-littering initiatives."



### Is that 'funny' ha-ha, or 'funny' strange?

The poster below shows Japanese-style humor in action for a good cause. It is being used to prompt smokers to think about not littering.



## DID YOU KNOW?

It's Keep Australia Beautiful Week! September 1 - 7 marks Zero Waste Week. This is also the month for the fall Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup and, internationally, Let's Do It! World countries around the globe have organized seasonal clean up events.

## HEADLINE LITTER GRABBERS (AUG 24 - 31)

Some of what made our News Reel this week [litterpreventionprogram.com/news-reel.html](http://litterpreventionprogram.com/news-reel.html)

### 215 million fewer bags distributed in Ireland (27/8)

Positive news for the Irish after a year of paying a 5p fee for plastic carrier bags: Merchants distributed 215 million fewer bags, a 72% decline. Phase 2, to include goods valued under 20p, will commence on January 19, 2015.

### Yuk! Botswana has a Pampers problem (27/8)

Botswana's biggest litter problem starts at the bottom. The dumping of Pampers disposable diapers is a serious public health concern, MP Pono Moatlhodi told Parliament on Monday. On top of the risk to humans, livestock feed on the wanton diapers as well as sanitary pads, he said.

### Litter hits the headlines of mainstream media (27/8)

*The Atlantic* online touched on litter this week. An article looked at the work of litter psychology guru Robert Cialdini, emeritus professor of psychology and marketing at Arizona State University and author of *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*. Talking about litter is essential to success, the piece concludes.

### Litter here and lose your identity card (30/8)

In Old Town, West Jakarta, 53 people caught littering Fatahillah Museum had their ID cards confiscated. One was a native of the city and the other 52 were tourists. They had to sign a letter promising not to litter again.

# California bans the plastic bag *but will Governor follow through?*

The California Senate approved a bill to ban plastic bags across the state in a 22-15 vote on Friday just before midnight. Governor Jerry Brown has until Sept. 30 to sign the historic bill, SB270, into law. The legislation would halt the availability of plastic bags at grocery stores throughout California. At least 124 of cities and counties there already have bag ordinances. It is not known where Gov. Brown stands on the issue. One plastic industrialist has signaled that the move to outlaw the ubiquitous single-use carrier bags will spell layoffs in the sector. The bill proposes financial aid for companies to help them retool to manufacture reusable plastic bags. Friday's vote represented a decade-long-fought victory for non-profit Californians Against Waste in the face of ferocious opposition from the plastics industry. Californian consumers rip through 10 billion disposable plastic shopping bags every year, the group says.

## EDITORIAL - TORONTO ADS GONE BAD

By Sheila White

I began pushing Toronto for a littering ad campaign in March 2013. (See *Litterland* #7.) Disappointment best sums up my reaction to the city's doomed offering, "Littering says a lot about you."

I will say that it got people in my beloved city talking about littering during the campaign's brief life, and it will find a limited, albeit enduring, presence online. But for me the campaign missed the mark and I wish the powers-that-be had taken advantage of my knowledge and know-how.

My first piece of advice is to attack the habit, not the person. The second is to focus the ad campaign on the litter world's public enemy number one - cigarette butts.

Putting aside for a moment the question of trademark infringements in the kyboshed ads, I do not believe name-calling that they conjured would result in reduced littering. Piecing together letters on packaging to spell "Pig" and "Dipstick" may entertain those who already loathe littering, but will have no impact on those who do litter.

By playing fast and loose with other people's branded trademarks, the city's ad agency gave product makers an easy way to excuse themselves from the picture. Corporations do bear some responsibility for the over-littered world in which we live. In spite of killing this campaign, (the source of the complaints was never revealed) city officials say these companies are supportive of anti-littering initiatives. Yet there is very little evidence that these makers are sincerely involved in solutions. They just can't see a business case for getting involved.

I am looking to see them demonstrate their commitment to litter education and awareness. They must do more than shut down a litter campaign in Toronto. My hope is that the parties can regroup and work together on crafting a litter prevention campaign for this city that works. Fingers crossed, the baby doesn't get thrown out with the bathwater.



## The flip side: Two cool approaches

Shown above, in Bankstown, AU, where "Don't Be A Tossler" is the national keep clean call to action, life-sized, cardboard cutouts of individuals looking ready to place waste in a bin are installed next to litter receptacles.

Horsham, UK is the latest to sign on to the



sensational chewing gum recycling innovation called Gumdrop. The company collects chewed gum that the public deposits in pink

containers made from processed chewing gum. Gumdrop's promo team launched the program in town on Aug. 27 using giveaways, bubble-blowing contests and awareness-building questionnaires on litter pollution, in which gum plays a prominent role.