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## OPINION COLUMN

### Big thinking, guns and trash - FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



By Frank Rupnik, Sault Star  
Sunday, October 8, 2017 11:14:08 EDT AM



Frank Rupnik - Editor

Councillor Matthew Shoemaker thinks big.

His impassioned push to have Amazon's second headquarters located in Sault Ste Marie was a great pep-talk, but it wasn't very realistic. Most of the top echelon at Amazon likely don't know where Sault Ste. Marie Ontario or Sault Ste. Marie Michigan are located.

And speaking of location, major cities such as Chicago, Detroit and even Toronto can lay claim to being at the centre of the Great Lakes Hub with transportation infrastructure that is already well established.

Every city has its charms which make it different and liveable.

The bigger population base with world-class universities provide a better pool from which to recruit.

Shoemaker knows the competition is fierce. It won't deter him because there is value in participating the process.

"If we don't land Amazon's headquarters at least we'll have made an honest effort to do so and who knows, maybe we'll entice another business to take a second look at Sault Ste. Marie," he said.

In her most recent column Elaine Della-Mattia sums it up well.

"Sure, Sault Ste. Marie will be facing stiff competition from across North America and larger, metropolitan Ontario cities such Toronto, Kitchener, Waterloo, and an array of American counterparts. And in the end, it may not win the bid," she writes. "But the exercise of researching, writing and submitting such an application is important and can serve as a learning tool for the future."

Indeed, our participation will provide us with confidence and experience when going after smaller technology companies. Smaller companies that have the potential to grow. It shows we are serious about becoming a Smart City.

Also, let's not forget we already have an important headquarters here in the form of Ontario Lottery and Gaming.

Perhaps the first project on our table should be to make it a true headquarters by moving some of the numerous staff at the Toronto office north. Insist that new hires relocate to Sault Ste. Marie. This should be fairly easy. If we can't bolster the numbers at OLG in the Sault, thoughts of attracting firms such as Amazon can only be considered fantasy.

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I'm ashamed to admit it, but when I woke up to the news of the massacre in Las Vegas I rubbed my eyes and thought, oh well, here we go again.

A minute later the magnitude of this latest U.S. slaughter hit me.

It was the largest attack in U.S. history. There were 59 people killed and 515 injured when Stephen Paddock opened fire on a music festival. It's a grim milestone which is certain to be overtaken if U.S. policy makers don't get serious about gun violence. There should be a ban on the sale of military-style assault weapons. What purpose do these weapons have? Not hunting because it's not very sportsmanlike. Self defence? Chances are the weapon will inflict death on someone in your family or that it will be stolen. Maybe I'm a chicken, but the thought of having such a gun in my home is scary.

Of course we need to go beyond gun control. Understand the signs of mental illness and take a proactive approach in treating it. Such killings go against the grain of humanity and the possibility exists to reach troubled souls early in life.

We've talked about this issue before. Sadly, I predict we'll do so again.

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The Ontario government is considering a major push to get the province to adopt a program that will divert organic waste from landfill sites.

The city says it will need financial help from Queen's Park to make it work.

Ward 1 Coun. Steve Butland said he's in favour of the city launching a green box or organic collection program and has raised the issue in the past.

"We've always been told it is not economical because of the amounts that need to be collected to make it worthwhile," Butland said.

Who can be against the program if it is economically feasible? Many gardeners already compost their material. Those who came here from the 'Old Country' showed us the way.

The only thing that bothers me is that separating plastics from paper and now disposing organic waste in its own bin makes taking out the trash a full-time job.

- Frank *Rupnik*, Editor

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