

ASBESTOS

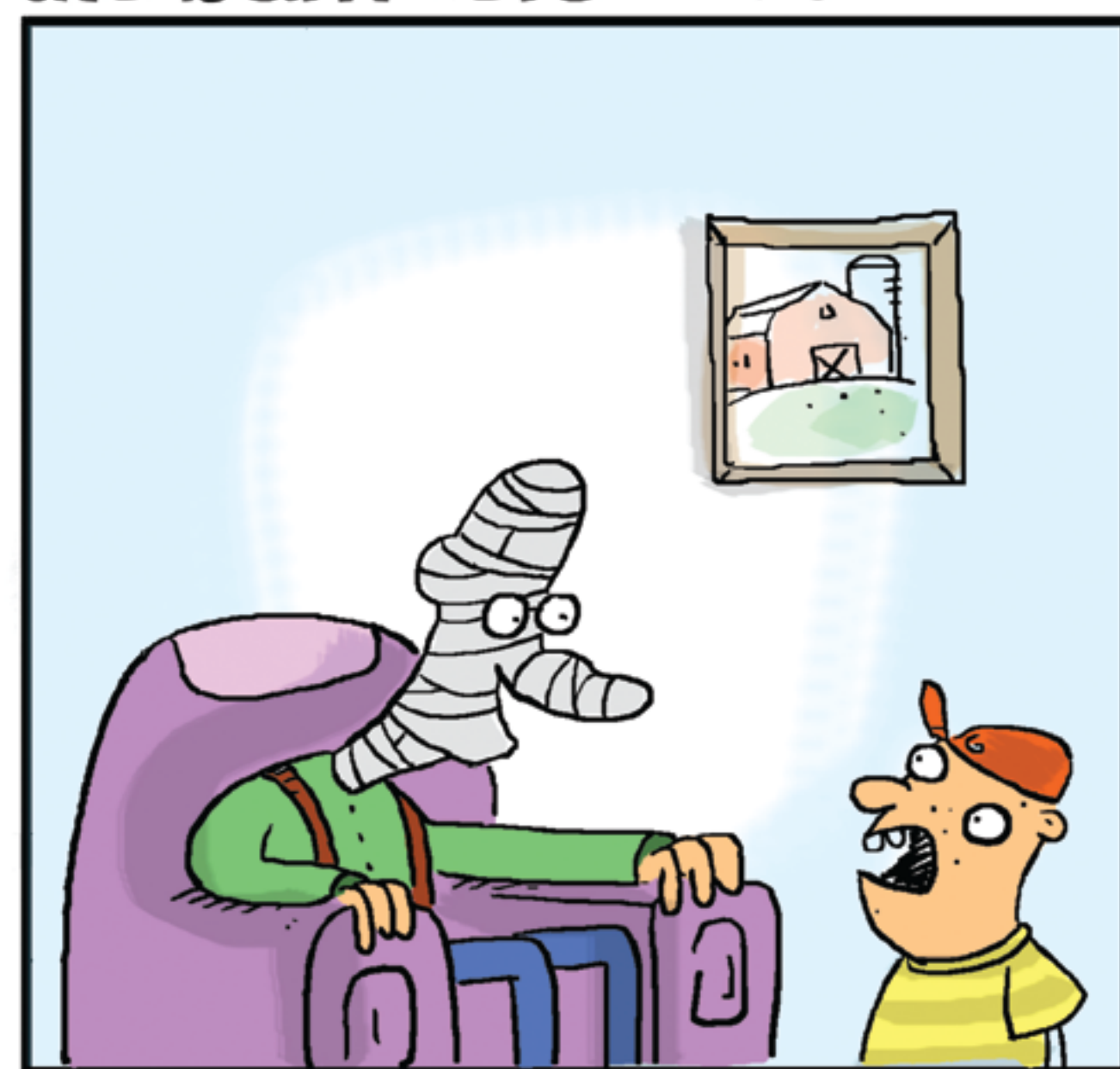
A more modern and less obvious danger related to buildings is the use of asbestos in their construction. Homes and other buildings, such as factories and schools, were regularly insulated using asbestos products. **When asbestos fibres are breathed** in they can accumulate and lead to serious health problems. A March 2003 headline in the Cobourg Daily Star reported, *"Asbestos removal signals the beginning of the end for Diversey plant"*. Some studies suggest that asbestos related deaths now make up almost 31% of all workplace fatalities. But there remain experts who believe that the dangers are greatly exaggerated.



WATER

For a town built on streams and a lake, water provides another ever present danger. Early records tells us that in 1832 two men were washed off the gangway of the Steamship William IV. Both drowned. Heavy rains in 1864 took three lives when those in charge at Perry's Mill neglected to leave the waste gates open. When the banks of the dam gave way **a vast volume of water surged down Factory Creek** taking everything in its path, including two men and a boy.

the barnders by gord.coulthart



Grandad, didn't they have safety when you were young?

AGRICULTURE

Agriculture provides its own set of concerns regarding safety. However, **one early farming accident brought positive results**. As a young boy out tapping for sugar, Henry severed two of his fingers. Since he could no longer perform manual labour around the farm he was sent to school in Kingston. That education and the experiences which followed from it led in time to Henry Ruttan becoming a member of the Legislature, Speaker of the House, Sheriff of Northumberland and an inventor of renown.

But **accidents rarely have such a happy outcome**. In Canada between 1990 and 2005, almost 15,000 people were admitted to hospital with farm-related injuries.

INDUSTRIAL POLLUTION

The story of the tanneries in Cobourg offer a prime, but not the only, example of industrial pollution in the area. Port Hope is still trying to deal with its problems of chemical and radioactive wastes from the federally owned Eldorado Nuclear Limited. The redevelopment of Cobourg's harbour lands had to deal with such contaminants as petroleum, hydrocarbons, creosote and heavy metals that are **typical of port, railway and oil storage operations**.

Remediation of the Diversey Water Technologies site at the harbour, bought by the Town for \$2, cost \$1,500,000. But **there can be no estimate of the personal costs** to employees of industries who, often in good faith, were exposed to industrial pollution of many sorts.

