

BY MANDY MARTIN

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When the power outage which threw an estimated 50-million North Americans into darkness August 15, Cramahe residents were the rarity. We had access to essential services because some exceptional business people opted to come to the service of the community.

The local pharmacy did not close until *after* power was restored after 1 a.m. August 16. Gas was being pumped until after 11 p.m. at the Olco station on King Street East. The convenience stores stayed open to sell whatever goods they had in stock to those in need.

And that Colborne tradition, Thursday Night Wing Night at the Queen's Hotel, went ahead.

Just after the 4 p.m. loss of power August 14, staff at Downey Guardian Pharmacy lit candles, used manual calculators to tot bills, and waited to see what would happen.

About an hour into the outage,

Curb water use

Customers on the Colborne municipal water system are asked to curtail non-essential use of water during the province-wide appeal for energy conservation.

Cramahe Township has posted notices requesting residents and companies refrain from watering lawns and gardens.

During last Thursday's power outage (August 15), the Colborne municipal water system was backed up with a generator to

ensure water flowed to customers. Those on private wells, beyond the municipal water utility's reach, were on their own.

To ensure the notice gets out to residents, Cramahe Township has retained operation of the electronic sign in front of the Colborne Municipal Building. The sign is serving as an official message centre for residents.

The municipal offices have remained open and all employees on the job this week.

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the Cobourg hospital called, asking owner/pharmacist Steve Bowskill to remain open to fill vital drug prescriptions for patients. It seems there were no pharmacies that were remaining open in Cobourg or Port Hope.

At 6 p.m., Steve told his staff to go home; he would staff the pharmacy alone, on-call, for the duration.

"You know, people sometimes

complain about small towns, how they can't get what they want or something may cost them a bit more, but in this case, it's the small town's that will take a risk, stay open, because they know you or are concerned," Josee Young says. "You know, it's really hard work for Steve because you can't call up any information on the computer. That was all gone. You can't look at a patient's history, you don't know if they're covered or not. But Steve decided he had to do it if people really needed the prescriptions. For those he didn't know personally, he was giving out just enough to get them through for a short while, hopefully until the power came back on.

"He was here until 1:30 a.m.," Josee said. "He worked by candlelight."

Friday, someone from the Cobourg hospital came to Colborne to personally thank the druggist for his contribution.

There was a mere 25-minute hiccup in delivering gas to customers at Colborne's Olco station, King Street East last Thursday.

"We were up and running within 25 minutes with three generators," Brice Cotter reports. "We got two generators from Mike Voskamp Construction. Electrician Guy Dunk hooked us up. He really got us going."

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PHOTO BY MANDY MARTIN

WATER BEARERS: Mill Valley Water employees were rushing to replenish water stocks at retail outlets after a rush on water purchases resulted from the August 15 power outage. Monday morning, Mill Water driver Doug Clement and assistant Brian Nelson arrived at the Colborne Olco station on King Street East.

Two annual events this weekend

It's a busy weekend coming up. Expect lots of out-of-town visitors Saturday and Sunday, August 23 and 24, roaming the roads, visiting farms and related businesses marked on the Rural Ramble route. (See story on page 2).

On Sunday afternoon, August 24, 1-3 p.m., Northumberland MPP Dr. Doug Galt's annual barbecue will be held on the grounds

of The Big Apple, Highway 401 and Big Apple Drive. Free hamburgers, hotdogs and fresh corn plus entertainment and kids' activities are planned. Special Guest will be the Hon. David Tsubouchi Minister of Culture and Chair, Management Board of Cabinet.

All are welcome. Bring a lawn chair!



GENERATING BUSINESS: A generator was hooked up to pump gas at the Petro Canada gas station in Colborne until shortly after 7 p.m. August 15. It was a cash-only basis - debit and credit card electronic transactions were unavailable.

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