

Cramahe preparing for future emergencies

By BOB OWEN
cchronicle@linkd.net

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Everything went well in Cramahe Township during the mid-August blackout but township officials are taking precautions to protect residents if there is ever another emergency.

Township Chief Administrative Officer Merlin Dewing says that the township is already shopping for a pair of portable generators. One would provide emergency power to maintain water supply to the village of Colborne and the other would serve at an operations centre.

In August the township had to rely on a generator provided by Lakefront Utility Supply (LUSI) to keep the water flowing. LUSI operates the water supply system for the village.

While most of the rest of us were trying to determine what

had happened, Community Emergency Management Coordinator Leanne Latter was informing Mayor Jim Williams and Mr. Dewing that the blackout was widespread and would probably be long lasting. The trio discussed what potential problems might arise from the blackout. Sewage treatment was operational. (It has its own power supply.) They then ensured that the water distribution system was working.

The Keeler Centre and other municipal properties were checked to determine that they were all right.

The Friday teen dance was cancelled but a large wedding scheduled for the Keeler Centre on Saturday posed a much bigger problem if the power were to remain off for any length of time. Options other than closing down the centre for the wedding were considered. Fortunately, the power

returned early Friday morning.

Fuel supplies were verified at the township yards and the public works crews were put on standby. Fire Chief Gary Cammack was informed that there was water available in the village. He inspected a reported gas smell at the Keeler Centre.

Mr. Dewing and Ms. Latter remained in the office until they were certain that all was all right.

Once everything was in hand the councillors were informed so that they could answer calls from residents.

Mr. Dewing commented that the province has passed legislation which will soon supersede the previous legislation governing emergency situations.

Under the old Peacetime Emergency Plan nothing would be done until an emergency had been declared. Mr. Dewing says the township didn't use this plan

in August. Their efforts were coordinated immediately, saving time.

Under the new policy which has not yet taken full effect the requirements are much more detailed.

When it does come into effect residents will be expected to take care of themselves for the first 72 hours. After that, water and a heated place to stay in cold weather would be addressed. All emergency services would be coordinated. Potentially dangerous buildings would be evacuated. Some services might be cancelled without notice to users if they were deemed to be potentially dangerous. People who might hinder emergency services could be ordered to leave the area. And in some cases the medical officer of health would be contacted.

Ms. Latter is currently forming the committee mandated in the new legislation. It will include representatives from the fire department, public and social services, police and others who are knowledgeable about the community. She hopes they will meet by the end of the month. The entire plan must be in place in three years.

In the meantime the township CAO will be meeting with the Emergency Planning Committee to find ways to improve communication. The township will also be applying for money under the provincial Emergency Preparedness Program.

Former CHS Principal W.R. Baxter honoured with scholarship

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At the time, he taught science. There were 150 kids in the school. The grade nine class was usually quite large. In Harvey Thompson's Grade 13 class there were only 10. Many went back to the farm. Some planned only to complete Grade 10 or 12.

With so few students, the teachers knew them well. There was a bond between them. The students allowed the teachers to become involved in their lives and help them - very different from the high schools in the cities.

Mrs. Troop remembers the Grade 13 provincial tests as a rite of passage. Everyone in the province wrote the same exam at the same time. They were all collected and sent off to be marked.

In his speech at Mr. Baxter's retirement, Mr. O'Neill noted that in 1954, his students had a 98 per cent passing rate in all subjects and the highest percentage of 1st class honours of any school in the province.

Mrs. Troop remembers that he was an excellent science teacher. At that time every student in the school would have him at one point in his or her career.

Mrs. Troop recalls that Mr. Baxter and his wife Agnes were very good citizens, working hard and giving of themselves. Mr. Baxter was an excellent disciplinarian and a man of few words when annoyed. Mrs. Troop and Mr. O'Neill both commented on his piercing blue eyes. As a

teacher he was reserved, stern and respected. He ruled gently or forcefully, as the case demanded.

Mr. Baxter once commented "one way to keep discipline was to be real fast and clobber the big ox before he had a chance to get out of his seat."

Those were very happy days for Mrs. Troop.

She remembers coming into the school one day with her phys ed class, and meeting the principal in the hall. He was about the same age as her parents. Inadvertently, she called him "Dad".

One other prospective teacher did not fare as well. She gave up her apartment in Guelph, packed all her goods and bought a one-way ticket to Colborne, arriving at 2 a.m. She called Mr. Baxter on her arrival, getting him out of bed to help her find a place to stay. By 4 p.m. the next day, she had driven the hotel manager to distraction. W.R. spent the \$10 to buy her another one-way ticket - home.

In the retirement speech, Mr. O'Neill remarked about one student who put a snake on the brim of the principal's hat.

In Mr. Baxter's early teaching years, they closed school on the first day of trout season. After the inspector completed his visit, the teacher might go off fishing with him.

W. R. Baxter was a very important person in the lives of many students for over 40 years.

TESSIER, IRENE IRMA

Peacefully in the arms of her husband on Saturday, September 6th, 2003. Irene Tessier (nee Vavere) of Colborne at 50 years of age. Beloved wife of Dwayne Tessier. Dear mother of Gregory (Wendy), Jennifer (Jim Bryning), William, Cherie. Cherished grandmother of Shelby, Jesse, Cody, James, Brandon, Lexis. Loving sister of Anita Vavere, Doris Vavere (Al), Kathy Yow Foo (Frank), and Alice Settembrini (Carlo). Aunt of Jessica, Luigi, Clinton, Christina, and Irma. Niece of Anita Bugsch. Cousin of Harold Bugsch (Susan) and their children Ryan, Scott, Stephanie and Heidi Kindell (Errick) and their daughter Aspen. Daughter of the late Irma Katie Schmitt and the late Harolds Vavere. Also missed by her numerous friends. A Funeral Service will be held at the Colborne Pentecostal Church (Division St. in Colborne) on Thursday, September 11th at 2pm. Visitation to be held at MacCoubrey Funeral Home, 11 King St. W. in Colborne on Wednesday, September 10th from 2-4 and 7-9pm. Those wishing may make a memorial contribution by cheque to the Heart & Stroke Foundation or the Diabetes Association. Condolences received at www.maccoubrey.com

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