

# Consumer ministry offer safe-camping tips

Many campers will soon be on the road again, scouting out likely spots for summer-fun weekends. Experts at Ontario's consumer ministry suggest they start the season safely by making sure portable camping appliances that run on propane, naphtha and kerosene are in good working order and used carefully.

Unsafe use of fuel-burning heaters, lamps, barbecues, stoves and fridges leads to many accidents in Ontario every year. Fires inside tents and trailers or outdoors can result in death or serious injury for campers.

Carbon-monoxide poisoning from using fuel-burning equipment in an enclosed space is another danger for campers. This peril is an invisible killer that has no warning odor. It doesn't give the careless a second chance.

John Gerdels, acting chief engineer with the ministry's Fuels Safety Branch, says, "We want to remind people that, whether they're using a fancy propane stove built into an RV or a little naphtha heater for backpacking, following some simple safety rules will help keep their holiday happy."

Before using any appliances for the first time this season, inspect it carefully. No matter how cautious campers have been when putting camping stoves and heaters away for the winter, spider webs, dust and other tiny bits of debris can close burner ports.

Follow manufacturers' service instructions carefully. That may include replacement of some small parts, such as the generator of a tent heater, but investing a few dollars will prevent aggravation and danger.

If any parts appear worn or corroded, have the unit checked by a qualified serviceperson before use.

When buying new equipment, read the manufacturers' labels and suggested use for the appliance. Only outdoor-venting appliances are appropriate for RVs. In the confined area of a tent, trailer or recreational vehicle, exposure to carbon monoxide can quickly result in disaster. Tent heaters should only be used when fresh air is circulating and should never be left running when campers are asleep.

Always look for the Canadian Gas Association (CGA), Canadian Standards Association (CSA), or Underwriters' Laboratories of Canada (ULC) symbol to ensure the product has been tested and complies with Canadian standards.

Protect against fire hazards. Naphtha (also known as white gas or camping fuel), kerosene and propane cookers and barbecues are meant for outdoor

use only, and should never be brought inside any tent - including a dining tent. Cooking appliances should also be kept well away from combustibles and out of the paths of children and pets.

Be safety-conscious when handling fuel. "It's important fuel is kept only in approved containers," says Gerdels. "At the campsite, the fuel should be stored out of direct sunlight, and away from motor vehicles or any

other possible source of ignition." To receive a free ministry brochure on the safe use of propane appliances contact the Consumer Information Centre at 555 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 2H6. Call (416)326-8555 in the Toronto area, or collect from area code 807 only. From other parts of the province call toll free 1-800-268-1142. The TDD line for the hard of hearing is (416)326-8566.

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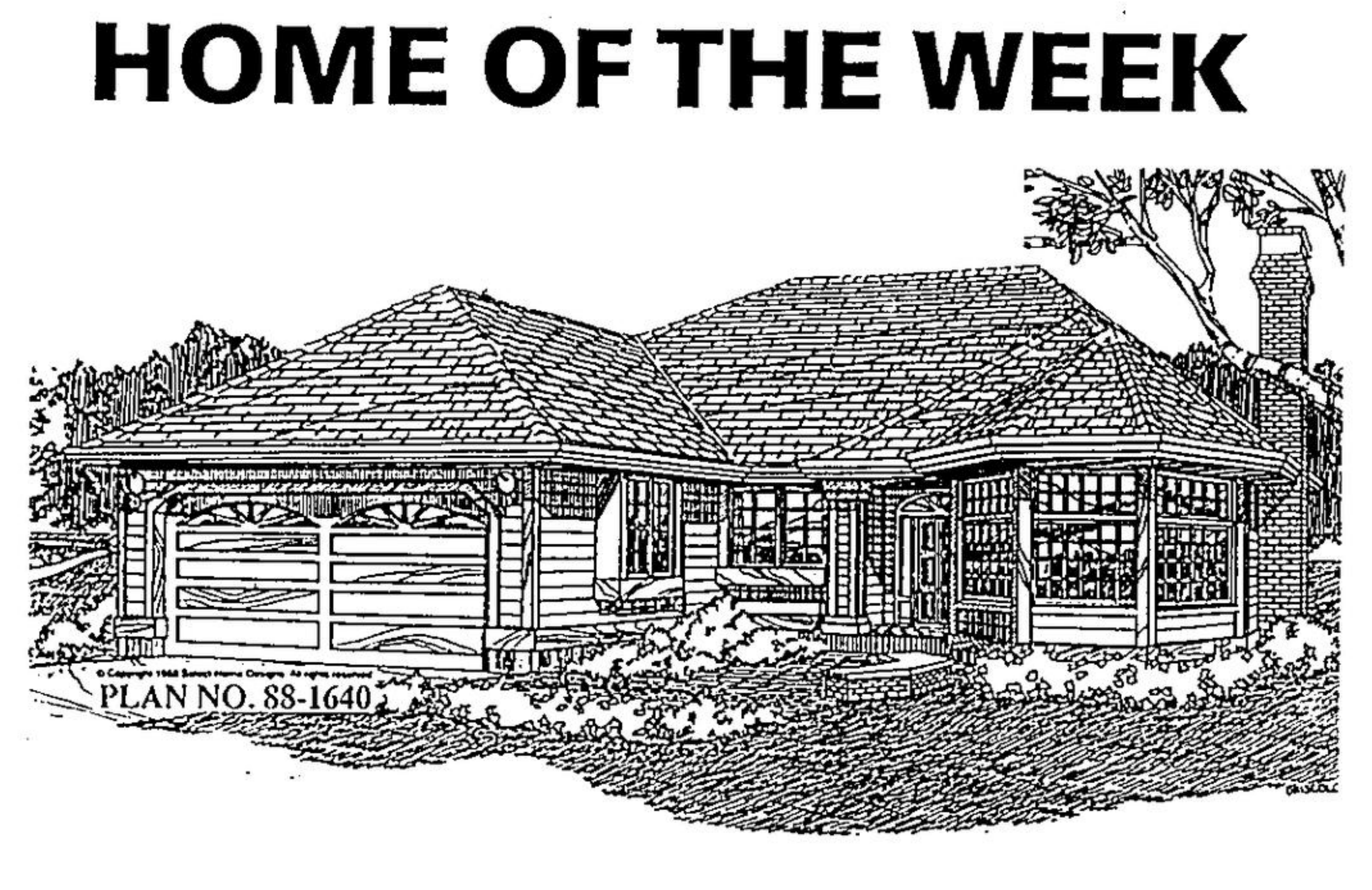
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On May 24, 25 and 26, Kevin Tribe of Acton High School participated in the Central Ontario Leadership Seminar (COLS) held in Mississauga at Erindale College, University of Toronto.

The COLS is affiliated with the Hugh O'Brian Youth Foundation and is intended to provide a positive leadership experience for 1 outstanding grade 10 student from each high school. This 3 day seminar had the theme "Canada in the World Community" and had several sessions addressing areas of importance to the young people attending. These sessions included topics such as "Entrepreneurship in Your Life" and "Education for Careers", and were designed to seek the involvement of the young people attending.

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