

## Monarch musings

By all accounts, Queen Elizabeth's visit to Canada was deemed a success. Large crowds greeted the monarch, who will celebrate her diamond jubilee (60 years on the throne) in two years, wherever she went on her nine-day visit to Nova Scotia, Manitoba and Ontario.

While polls suggest an apathetic attitude to the monarchy, there was no hint of that indifference on any of Her Majesty's public stops.

For Prime Minister Stephen Harper it was a golden opportunity to regain favourable public opinion. What better way to boost his tarnished image than by escorting the popular monarch, erasing the public's vision of him presiding over a \$1 billion G20 summit while police corralled teenagers, dog walkers and tourists outside the concrete barrier?

Perhaps the loving reception to the Queen will pause the P.M.'s drive to revise Canada's parliamentary system— an elected Senate for example. Harper, an admirer of the U.S. republic, wants that American-style politics here— and yeah, we know how great that's working south of the border.

Here is Canada, for 143 years, this country and its citizens have thrived— and is now the envy of the world— under a parliamentary system— one, for the time being, is headed by an 84-year-old monarch.

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Toronto's mini blackout this week is a reminder to all to be prepared for the worst.

Ontario's aging infrastructure in North America is only a heat wave away from another blackout similar to 2003. Notably Environment Canada this week told Ontarians to be prepared for at least three heat waves this summer. According to the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO), for each degree above 16 C, it creates an additional 380-megawatt of demand for power— that's like adding a city the size of Brampton to a system, already under stress.

We can all do our part by lowering our power use such as using less air conditioning. After all if the grid goes down, there won't be any AC— maybe for days.

### Letters to the editor policy

Letters must include an address and daytime telephone number. Anonymous letters will not be published. Letters should not exceed 150 words and may be edited for content and/or length. Publication is not guaranteed.

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### WEB POLL RESULTS

Demands are growing for a public inquiry into police actions during the G20 summit. Do you agree?

Yes (30%)

No (70%)

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## Letters to the editor

### Emily shows where the green \$ goes

Dear editor,

Re: *Show me the (green) money!* Ted Brown column, May 6

As Program Director of Practically Green Solutions, an organization that helps businesses reduce their environmental impacts, I thought this would be the perfect question for Practically Green to answer, and I have detailed my findings below.

Unlike the recycling tax that has been added to hazardous household waste such as electronics, there is no overarching program for the collection and redistribution of money raised from the sale of plastic bags. Each store handles the matter separately.

For example, Metro began charging five cents per shopping bag in Ontario stores on June 1, 2009. Metro implemented this with a goal of reducing the use of these bags in its stores by 50% by the end of 2010. During 2009, Metro donated proceeds from the sale of these bags to the Green Apple School Program, up to a maximum of \$1 million. Subsequently, the Green Apple School Program has redistributed the funds to environmental projects at elementary and secondary schools across Ontario. Georgetown District High School actu-

ally received one of these grants to re-green its courtyard by planting trees, shrubs, and flowers. According to a company representative, since the \$1 million was reached, Metro now retains the five cents per bag as part of its revenue.

Similarly, Loblaw reports that a portion of the funds raised through its five cent fee to "providing \$3 million over the next three years to support the development of WWF-Canada's national program to help Canadians reduce their footprint on the environment."

The remainder of proceeds "will be used to cover the cost of the Loblaw plastic shopping bags reduction program and invested back in the business in price and customer service through reminder signage, reconfiguring cashier stations, retraining cashiers on efficient reusable bagging processes and new larger and heavier gauge plastic shopping bag."

Loblaw reports that these actions have led to a 55% reduction in plastic bag consumption and 1.3 billion plastic bags being diverted from landfill by the end of 2009.

Interestingly, Walmart, which does not charge for bags, reduced the size and gauge of plastic shopping bags to save an estimated two million pounds of plastic resin in 2008 alone. Further, within months of introducing its reus-

able shopping bag, the company reduced plastic bag use by an estimated 4%. Like Metro and Loblaw, Walmart has set the goal of reducing plastic shopping bag waste by 50% by 2013.

Mr. Brown I hope this answers your query! If you have any other questions, or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Emily Dimytosh  
 Program Director

Practically Green Solutions

### Great hospital service for son

Dear editor,

Every now and again, I read a letter from a resident complaining about the care/service received at our Georgetown Hospital. I have, unfortunately, been to the emergency room twice in the past three weeks and have to thank the hospital staff for the fast and efficient care my son has received.

Not once was I disappointed, frustrated, or felt he was not in the best hands for both of his injuries.

I believe in giving credit where credit is due and this is definitely the case with our wonderful hospital and its staff. Thank you for your care and easing a mother's worries.

Robin Downton-Poirier  
 Georgetown