

Private commuter train service calls it quits

By STUART JOHNSTON

A proposal to implement a privately owned and operated rail service for Toronto-area commuters, with potential stops in Acton and Georgetown, has been abandoned.

According to Paul Pagnuelo, president of the Toronto- Peterborough/Havelock Line Passenger Association, their dream of a private sector-operated rail service,

to have been named Canadian Commuter Rail (CCR), will not be able to get on track after all. It has been derailed by the Provincial Government's GO Train expansions.

"We've exhausted all our options other than lobbying the government," Pagnuelo said. "The private sector alternative was what we were hoping for, but its first breath of life was choked out of it by

the Province. We were originally left in the cold by the feds (with VIA cutbacks), and then we were dealt a fatal blow by the Province."

Earlier this year, a \$33,000 comprehensive study was commissioned by Quebec transportation giant, Bombardier Inc., to look into the feasibility of such a commuter rail service.

The study was funded entirely

by 12 municipalities, real estate developers, the olde Hide House and Bombardier.

The idea was to implement a five- route rail network with 24 stops stretching eastward from London to Kitchener-Waterloo, Orillia, Peterborough and Belleville, with potential stops in Acton and Georgetown.

Although the study concluded the proposed network could be a

financially sound and sustainable business venture, Bombardier decided last week not to pursue it any further, Pagnuelo said in an interview. Bombardier realized it would lose money if it competed against a subsidized government rail service, such as GO, he added.

Pagnuelo noted that despite assurances last December by

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Sweltering heat causes blackout

By SCOTT KLINE
 and STUART JOHNSTON

Taxed to the limit in Wednesday's withering heat, one of Georgetown's main power generators exploded at about 5:45 p.m., cutting off power to a fifth of the community for approximately 12 hours.

Power consumption was "going to the moon" on the hottest day of the year, Halton Hills Hydro general manager Jerry Trudell said, when one of three feeder cables entering the Mountainview Rd. South substation overloaded and exploded.

The extent of damage was unknown at press time, but heat from the burning cables connecting the transformer with breakers melted the bottom of a metal racking holding the cables.

Mark Tait, an eyewitness who notified the fire department immediately, said he first heard a crackle, like firecrackers going off, followed by a big bang. A large cloud of smoke then emerged from the roof of the building just before all the power went out in the neighborhood.

Trudell believes everyone coming home from work at that time,

5-5:45 p.m., turned on air conditioners and other appliances, overloading the cables.

At the substation, firefighters taped up their coat and pants cuffs against possible contamination from PCBs as they quickly doused burning feeder cables inside.

However, the fire department discovered that no contaminants were released from the substation. It is a PCB-free substation, Trudell said.

Firefighters were on the scene for about one hour.

Half a dozen Halton Hills Hydro workers scrambled by the light of portable lamps powered from a gas generator to rewire the enormous circuit breaker late Wednesday night and early Thursday morning.

First priority was getting power to the traffic lights at affected intersections, where Halton Regional Police posted police officers and four auxiliary officers to direct traffic.

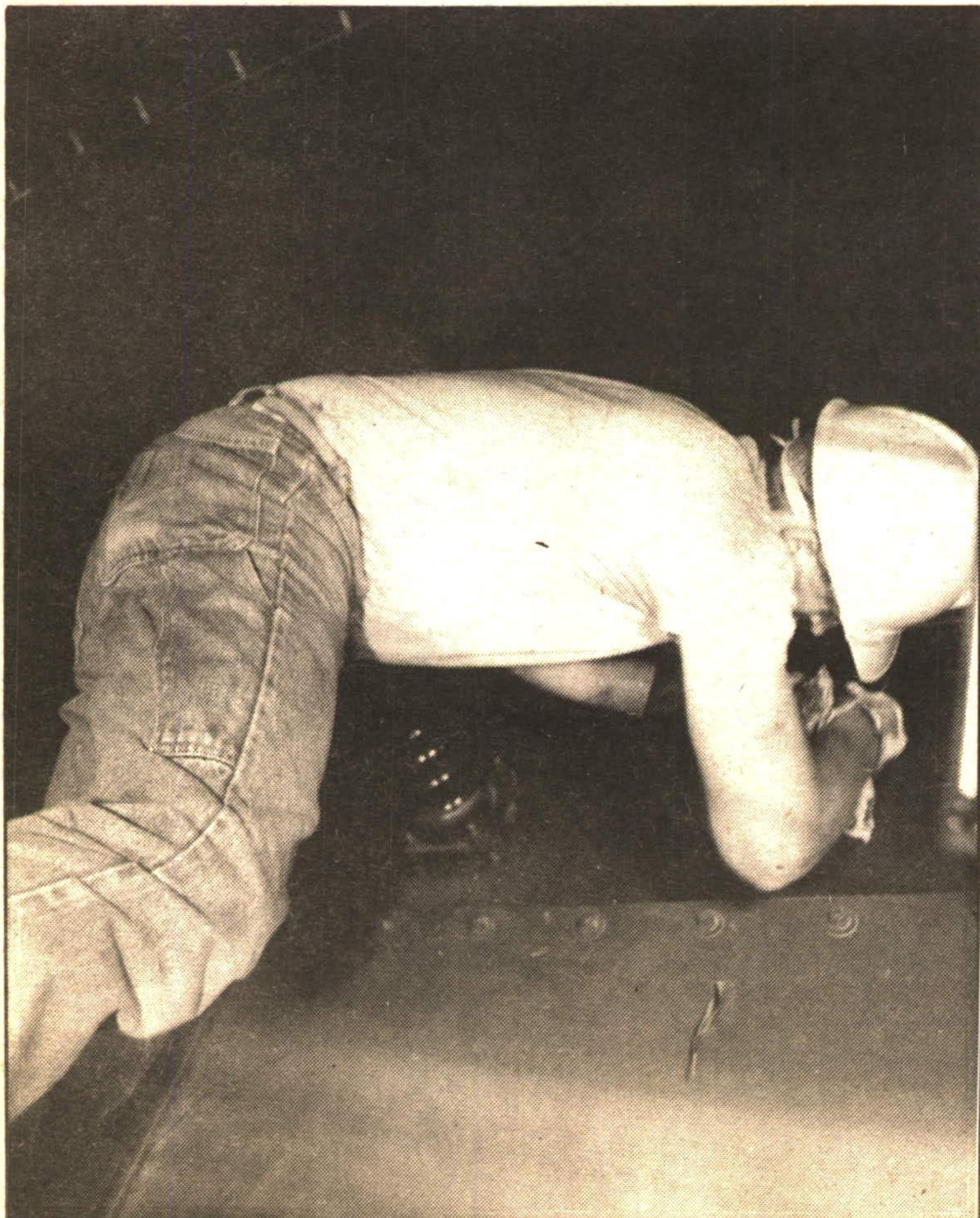
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GEORGETOWN

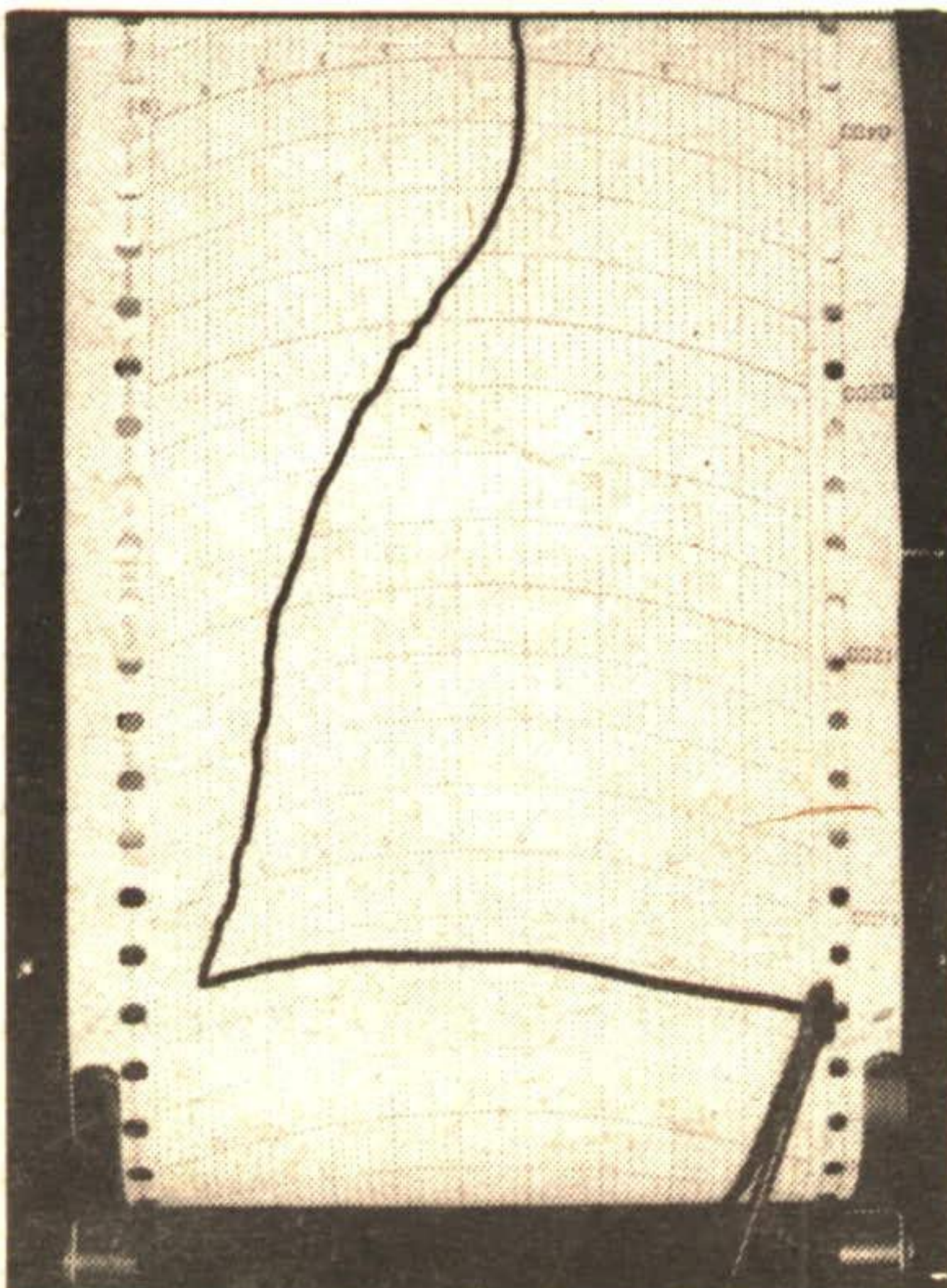
The red marks the area in Georgetown affected by the blackout. Temporary power losses were reported throughout the town as crews tried to restore power.



Eyewitness Mark Tait took this photo of the Mountainview Rd. hydro substation just seconds after cables exploded causing a blackout to one third of Georgetown.



Gord Stokes of Halton Hills Hydro cleans an insulator inside the substation. Lightning struck here three years ago, forcing replacement of much of the equipment.



With air conditioners churning across town, power demand was "going to the moon," Hydro manager Jerry Trudell said. The consumption graph inside the substation illustrated the demand's steady rise, right to left, then sudden plunge.

Merchants scramble to save thawing stock

Merchants in the affected area fretted over the possibility of losing frozen stock.

At the Becker's store at Delrex and Mountainview, Abraham Bakir and his daughter Saman parked their car in front of the shop and left its headlights on. That and candlelight enabled them to stay open for business.

Awaiting a generator being shipped from Becker's head office, Bakir said he'd be "in big trouble" if power wasn't restored quickly.

Their home in darkness, Delrex residents Lina and James Elphick dropped in to ask with a chuckle if there'd be a popsicle sale, but Bakir was asking customers not to open his freezers at all.

He and Dave Ogleby at Steak Express at Delrex and Guelph insulated their freezers with newspaper. Ogleby had \$20,000 worth of stock to worry about, but said his airtight freezers would probably be all right until morning.

At the Mac's Milk store next door, Mary Engleby had to explain to some puzzled customers why

she couldn't process their lottery tickets. She closed up early because darkness prevented her from keeping tabs on the store.



It was business more or less as usual at the Becker's store at Delrex and Mountainview, where Saman Bakir greeted customers by candlelight. Merchants watched frozen stock thaw and melt as they waited for power to be restored.