



George Herrington, the customer service rep with Halton Hills Hydro has been teaching Halton Hills youngsters about hydro safety. Among his pupils were Melissa Benson, 8, in Grade 3, and Eric McLure, 7, in Grade 2 at Harrison Public School. Photo by LAURA SALVERDA

## Students learn about hydro safety

By JANET BAINE  
Staff writer

You can tell children not to put anything into an electrical socket, but showing them why is much more effective.

That's what the pickle experiment is all about and all students in Georgetown, from Kindergarten up to Grade 8 saw it this fall. Students in Acton saw the same demonstration last year.

The electrical current flows through the pickle, which glows like a light bulb.

"We turn the lights out, you can see the arc. It shows what you're body would do when you get into contact with an electrical current," said George Herrington, customer service manager at Halton Hills Hydro. Everyone knows him as Mac.

This is one of many aspects of the energy safety and efficiency program which is carried out every three years in Halton Hills. The program is geared towards each age group, and by doing it every three years, students get the information two or three times before high school.

Sponsored by the Halton Hills Hydro Commission, the sessions have been taking place here for 20 years.

This year's program was very successful, with excellent comments coming back on a feedback form given to teachers, Herrington said.

Halton Hills Hydro has hired Bill Coakley, a retired Ontario Hydro employee who lives in Fergus to carry out this educational program.

A demonstration model used by Coakley outlines common accidents, all of which have happened. In this way, students learn what to do if they are in a car accident and hydro lines come down on the car.

Other accidents involve an electric lawn mower, kite, back hoe, pool and climbing a tree.

Coakley said he spends a half hour with students in JK to Grade 3, and an hour for a more indepth session with older students.

By the time they leave, even Kindergarten students, know why they should not put anything in a light socket, how to unplug something, how to handle toasters and why birds can walk on hydro lines without getting electrocuted.

(It's because they're only touching one wire at a time and they aren't grounded).

"You can stand there and tell them, but you don't get through to them like you do when you show them," Herrington said, so the demonstration models work well.

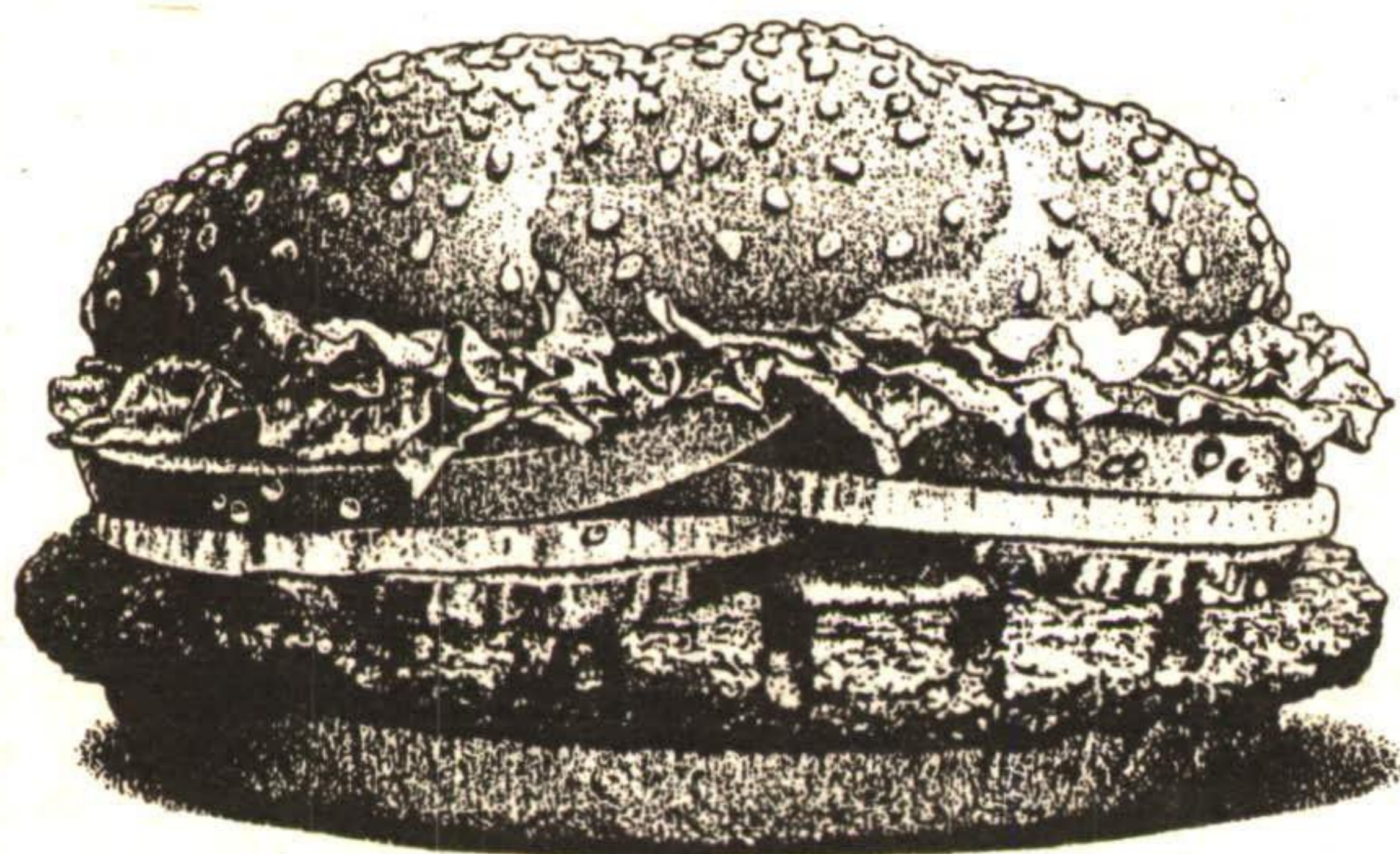
He also hopes the sessions might make the job of parenting a little easier, since parents won't have to keep telling children not to do certain things.

The sessions also deal with energy conservation and Herrington hopes the children will be 'change agents', like they are when they advise their parents about recycling.

For instance, Halton Hills Hydro pays a great deal more for power during peak periods, when everyone is using it. The peaks here are between 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m., and 4:30 p.m. and 7 p.m. This, students are told, is not the best time to do laundry or turn the dishwasher on, because ratepayers end up footing the bill, he said.

Students are also told to turn off lights as they leave rooms and not to stand with the refrigerator door open pondering their options.

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