

Hilton Falls Conservation Area opens exhibit

PHOTOS BY JENNIFER ENRIGHT

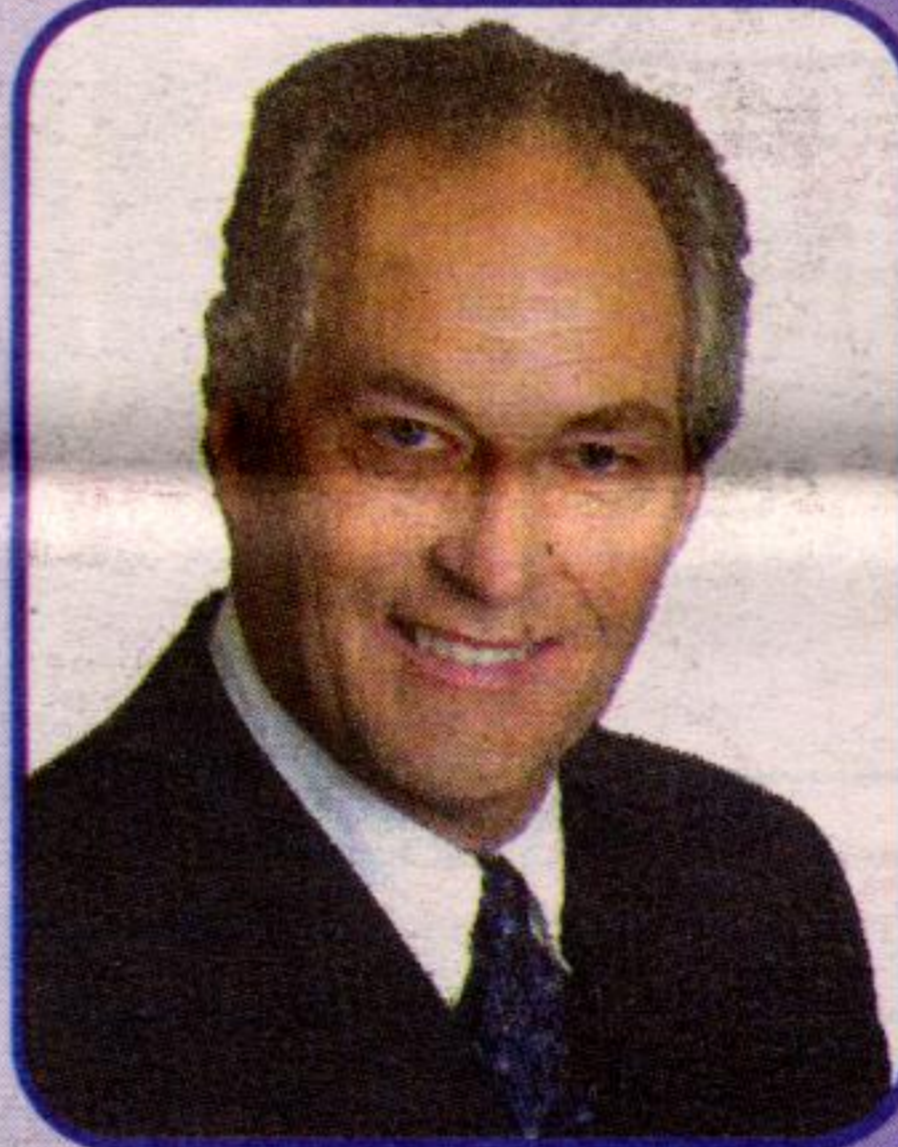


Conservation Halton (CH) officially opened an exhibit at Hilton Falls Conservation Area that showcases the wildlife as well as the history of the park. The exhibit, which is situated at the visitor centre, features information on Hilton Falls' geology, history, flora and fauna, and a myriad of other subjects relating to the area. CH Chair Jean Williams attended the ceremonies along with (from left to right) Roger St. Louis, regional manager of TD Friends of the Environment Foundation, Halton MPP Ted Chudleigh, and Don Ford, chair of the Conservation Halton Foundation. TD Friends of the Environment Foundation, the Burlington Community Foundation, and Canada Life all provided financial assistance to build the exhibit.



Queen's Park Report

Ted Chudleigh, MPP Halton



If we want to generate a high standard of living for Ontarians we have to generate more electricity.

It's the fuel of our economy, our jobs, our schools, our hospitals, and our entertainment. It powers our lives.

Our Pinocchio Premier Dalton McGuinty insists he will close Ontario's coal-fired electrical generators by 2007 because they produce significant air pollution. It's a noble plan but one doomed to failure and one promise Ontarians better hope he doesn't keep.

There are not enough new generating plants being built to take up the slack if the coal plants are closed. Ontario is already at the brink, using almost as much electricity as our plants can generate.

We need action on future electrical generation and we need it now.

Our plan to deregulate electricity, which would have created new generating capacity, did not survive the rough road of transition. People were rightly concerned with the bumps and unpredictability of moving quickly to a market system.

So, in Ontario, general tax revenues subsidise electrical bills. That means the guy down the street who is running three fridges, a freezer, a hot tub year round, air conditioning and heating his pool until October is doing so with electricity that is being paid for in part by your tax dollars.

Given that the people who can afford all those extras are the ones likely paying more in taxes, perhaps the current system of artificially low electrical rates is indirectly fair.

However, Dalton's plan to close the coal-fired plants is dust in the wind. And there lies the issue. Dalton is so concerned about the pollution that he forgets the absolute need for electricity. Our society cannot function without it.

I believe we should invest in smoke scrubbers, essentially new technology that significantly reduces emissions from coal fired plants. These scrubbers are in use in parts of Europe and some places in the United States. We need to build more capacity of every type of generation including nuclear. We need to invest in solar power and wind power as well as conservation.

Spreading our generating capacity among alternatives makes our system less likely to be affected by price shocks. Reducing our usage, especially at peak times, ultimately reduces our need for power.

Electricity is an odd commodity. It must be used when generated because we do not have the ability to save it for later use in the quantities necessary. That means we have to be able to generate electricity for our peak usage, rather than our total usage.

That's why streetlights are on all night. It's use it or lose it. You can't turn off Niagara Falls and a nuclear plant is not easily shut down.

Conservation Halton Foundation chair Don Ford (left) and Jean Williams, the chair of Conservation Halton (second from left), are joined by Carol D'Amelio, a Burlington regional councillor, and Roger St. Louis of TD Friends of the Environment Foundation at the opening of the Hilton Falls Conservation Area exhibit. Both Ms. D'Amelio and Mr. St. Louis were presented with copies of *Halton: Rising Wild and Beckoning* by Conservation Halton. Ms. D'Amelio accepted the gift on behalf of the Burlington Community Foundation. TD Friends of the Environment, the Burlington Community Foundation, and Canada Life all provided financing for the exhibit.



John Riddell, a manager with Mountsberg Conservation Area, brought along Elly, the Turkey vulture, to entertain people during the opening of the Hilton Falls Conservation Area's new exhibit. The new exhibit at Hilton Falls provides the public with information on the history and wildlife of the area.

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