

Jeff Lumby's view from the country

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Beep Off

In the 1800's when homesteaders would head in to town, it may have taken longer, but it was certainly a lot less stressful. If the door on the buggy wasn't completely closed, you'd know by the incessant rattling. There was no need for some ridiculous beeping sound telling you the door was ajar. You didn't require yet another bong to tell you that you were low on fuel either, the horse just began trotting a little slower. Not now. These days we are inundated with annoying bings, tweets and beeps coming at us from all directions.

Let's begin with the family car. There are the obvious seatbelt beeps, door ajar beeps, low fuel beeps, low washer fluid beeps and then there's this one. A few weeks ago my wife and I were driving her new car to Montreal. At about Kingston all hell broke loose. Some strange looking orange symbol began flashing in unison with a weird sounding warning toot. My first instinct was to check the oil pressure and fuel gauges. Both seemed fine. And since neither one of us could make head nor tail out of the non-descript symbol, Julie had to break out the manual. Next to walking over hot coals in your bare feet, there's nothing much more thrilling than sifting through your car's manual. After much page snapping Julie finally solved the origin of the beeping. You'll love this. The car was actually telling us that we'd been traveling for 2 hours without stopping and that it was time for a rest. Don't tell me when it's time for a rest Mr. Car. I'll rest when I'm damn good and ready to rest. You just go faster when I accelerate, slow down when I brake and shut the hell up in between.

As far as overall clamour goes, there's clearly nothing more irritating than the back-up beeps emitted by commercial vehicles. Yes they're safety devices, but do they need to wake the dead? I live a couple of miles from any major highway and even though I can't hear the traffic, back-up beeps are audible from beyond those highways. It's nice to know that someone 2 miles away is backing up, consider me warned. That leaves me only 3

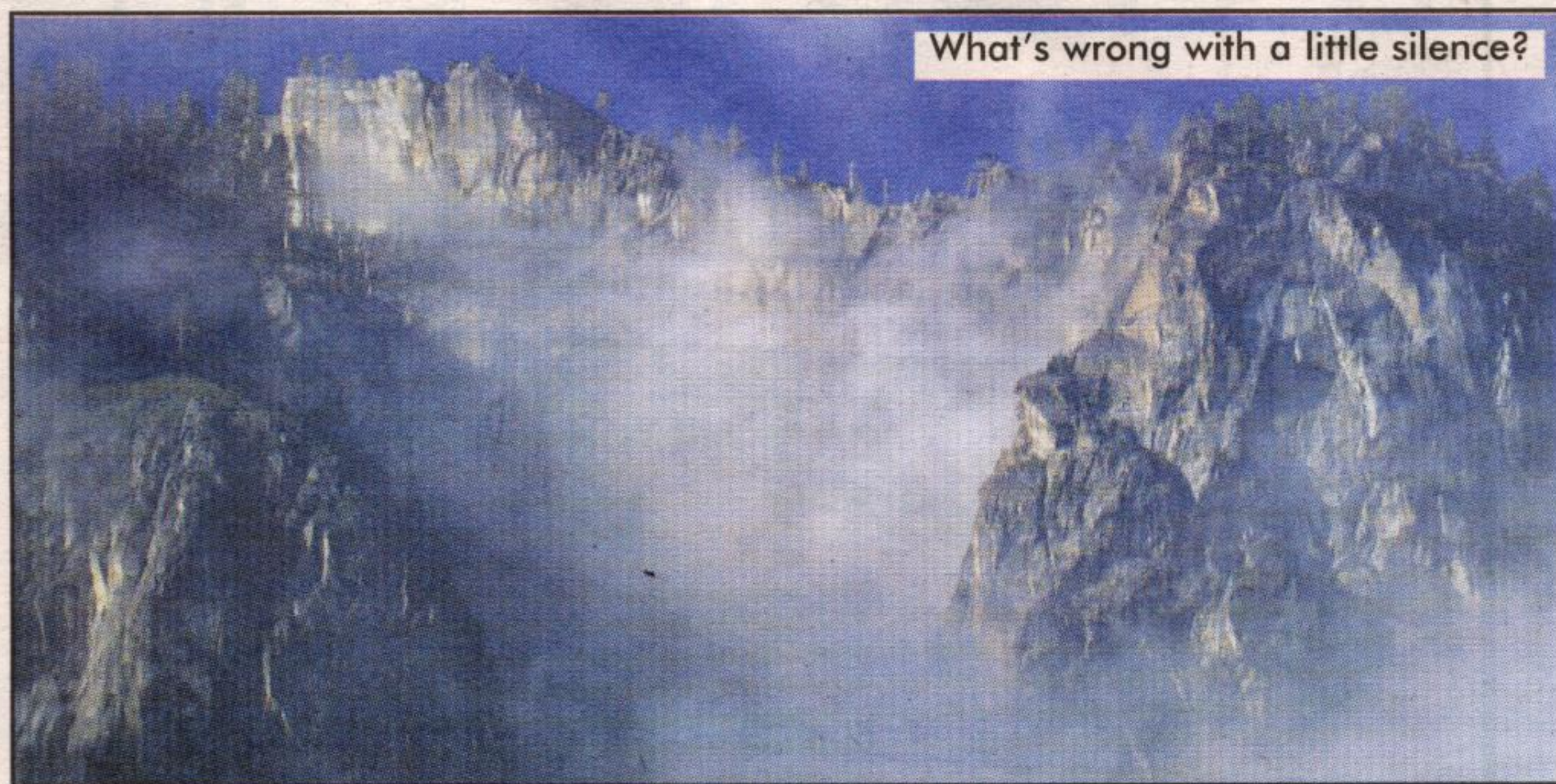
hours to get out of the way.

The beeping doesn't end once you get to work either. The fax machine beeps, so do the copier, the computer, the cell phone and of course the ultimate beeping machine, the beeper itself. How about a nice walk over the gym at lunch to get away from the racket? Good luck if you're fortunate enough to work near one of those intersections where the walk lights beep at you. Now I understand the service it provides for the blind and I'm not saying it's a bad thing. I'm just adding it to the beep list. Once you get to the gym you can count on the treadmill beeping at you every time you touch a button and just before the machine shuts down. Good thing too, because the slowing tread is never enough for me. Without that final beep why I'd run right into the elliptical trainer in front of me.

Even going to the movies isn't without its noise. If you need cash you'll get a healthy dose of beeps at the ATM. And you can pretty much count on your favourite scene in the movie being destroyed by some clown whose watch is set to let him know when each hour of the day begins.

The new age of beeping comes from home appliances. We couldn't find one that doesn't produce some sound or another. Microwaves have been beeping for years, but now dryers beep when the cycle ends. I don't know about you but I'm good with the sound of the motor stopping. The dishwasher beeps when it's done, the coffee maker let's you know when your coffee is ready and when it's getting stale. Thanks. The fridge even speaks up when the door is open too long. The oven chimes in when it's reached the desired temperature. Sometimes all the appliances are beeping at once so you don't know which one is yelling at you. Just when you figure it out the smoke alarm gets in on the act to let you know it's time to replace the batteries.

I can't wait for some yahoo to introduce a device that beeps when it's too quiet.



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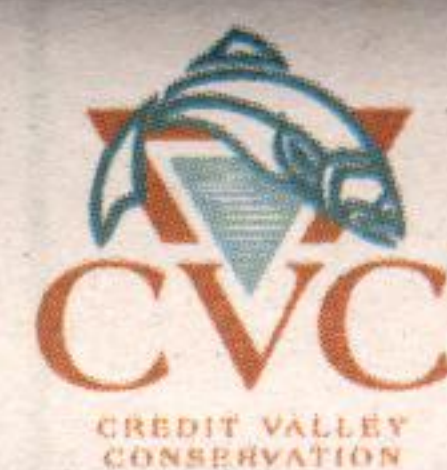
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Notice of Public Information Sessions

Revisions to the Conservation Authorities Act by the Province of Ontario have resulted in a new Ontario Regulation 97/04 - Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses.

Credit Valley Conservation will be hosting a series of public information sessions at the following locations and dates to present the new regulation and mapping.

September 26, 2005 - Dufferin County (Amaranth, Mono, East Garafraxa and Orangeville)
Monora Park, Orangeville

September 29, 2005 - Wellington County (Erin)
Centre 2000, Erin

October 4, 2005 - Halton Region (Halton Hills, Oakville and Milton)
Town of Halton Hills, Municipal Office, Georgetown

Times for all sessions: 5:00 - 7:00 pm

Our open houses will include information on the areas and activities to which the revised regulation will apply. Development within areas that are adjacent or close to watercourses, valleys, wetlands or shorelines may be affected by this regulation.

Future meetings will also be held for Region of Peel municipalities (Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon)

For more information, contact:

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