

EDITORIAL

It's the time of year when the winds howl across the escarpment, tearing down the last of the apples, leaves and occasionally the trees themselves. Nobody gets excited in my neighbourhood. You just yank the chainsaw into life and turn the downed trees into next year's firewood. The only problem comes when the trees coming down take the hydro lines with them. Then if you have been really prepared, you turn the mains off at the pole and plug the generator into the house circuit. Doesn't give you unlimited power, but will keep essentials running for a few days until the hydro line is fixed. Well that's the theory and it would work in practice if the power connector from the generator actually plugged into the hydro pole. I didn't tell my wife, but we lived 3 years on this farm with a connector that didn't fit the pole. The price of the right plug was an incredible \$250 and I'm just too cheap to part with that kind of cash for an electrical connector, especially if there are no guarantees that there will be a blackout. All was well until some bright spark ran into the hydro pole on the street and left us without power for two days. My wife is no dummy and having multiple extension cords running through open doors to a mobile generator in the dead of winter was a pretty good clue that the backup system wasn't fully hard-wired. She doesn't always appreciate my efforts to economise; especially on those months that Canadian Tire has a special on something that I really, really can no longer live without. She didn't say anything. She just gave me that look. I'm now \$250 lighter and just itching to plug her in and fire her up. Every time I hear a squeal of brakes I think today will be the day. I've thought this for 5 years now and everyday the power keeps on running. I'm beginning to hate the guys I gave the \$250 to.

PETER C. MCCUSKER
PHOTOGRAPHER

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Thirty years experience and still fresh

Bullying Awareness Week 2005

The Halton Catholic District School Board will join many other organizations across Canada in celebrating the 3rd Annual Bullying Awareness Week (November 14 - 20, 2005). Bullying Awareness Week is a joint initiative of The Family Channel and Bullying.orgCanada.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Open Letter to the Minister of Municipal Affairs

Dear Minister:

Thank you for sending me copies of your letters of October 18th, addressed to Mayor Russ Spicer of the Township of Centre Wellington and Mayor John Green of the Township of Mapleton. As you will recall, these letters comprised your preliminary response to the request of the Councils of Centre Wellington and Mapleton for provincial financial assistance following the devastating tornados which struck those communities on August the 19th.

I was absolutely surprised at your unwillingness to accept these Councils' recommendations that we had experienced a disaster, especially given the visit of our colleague, the Hon. Monte Kwinter on August 23rd and your own tour of the devastated areas nine days later.

In researching the response of the Provincial Government to the community of Peterborough in the summer of 2004, I was impressed with its immediacy and its generosity. Remarkably, the Government acted within just six days of the flood by committing \$5 million under the Ontario Disaster Relief Assistance Program, in advance of a formal request from the City Council. By July 30th, fifteen days after the flood, the first batch of cheques was issued to approximately 2000 residents to cover initial clean-up costs. In addition to the \$5 million pledged immediately after the flood, another \$3.5 million in funding was announced on September 6th to cover further relief assistance. Just over two months later, on November 18th 2004, a further \$14 million was allocated to help residents and businesses. It is clear from the rapid and charitable response to these flood victims that the Government is both willing and able to assist communities with emergency funding after natural disasters. Unfortunately you have not extended our area the same consideration.

While your offer of support under the Special Assistance Grant amounting to \$182,500 for Centre Wellington and \$152,600 for Mapleton might be viewed by you as reasonable, as the MPP for Waterloo-Wellington I find it to be insufficient.

Knowing that I would have the opportunity to speak with the Premier on this issue by telephone on September the 9th, I invited Mayors Spicer and Green to participate in the conversation. We were very encouraged by the Premier's interest and commitment to help, which seemed to imply a greater degree of support than has been indicated by your October 18th letters.

I am aware that as Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, you have extraordinary discretion with respect to the allocation of funds through the Special Assistance Grant. As such, I believe that it is within your power to waive the 4% reduction of "2004 Taxation for Own Purposes" in calculating the Special Assistance Grant that you are contemplating for Centre Wellington and Mapleton. It is my understanding that this would mean that Centre Wellington would receive approximately \$230,000 more than your initial offer. In the case of Mapleton, it would mean approximately \$100,000 more.

As you know, the residents of these two communities volunteered in the hundreds to help their neighbours, who had experienced the wrath of this natural disaster. Surely this "in kind" contribution should count for something, and the taxpayers of these communities should not be expected to shoulder the cost of clean up twice. In effect, if you are unwilling to waive this 4% provision which reduces our Grants substantially, this is exactly what you are expecting our local taxpayers to do.

The Grand River Conservation Authority alone has estimated its clean-up cost at approximately \$750,000. It appears that you have totally overlooked this aspect of our need. If little or no assistance is forthcoming by the Province for the GRCA, the cost will be borne largely by the local taxpayers on the Grand River watershed. Again this hardly seems fair, especially when viewed in light of the Premier's reassurances to the Mayors and me on September the 9th.

I am respectfully requesting that you revisit this issue and I await your reply.

Sincerely,
Ted Arnott, M.P.P., Waterloo-Wellington

The annual Deer Hunt began... November 7. If you suspect ANY circumstance of illegal hunting, phone the Conservation Officer: 1-877-TIPS-MNR. A live body attends the phone 24 hours a day and will see that the local Conservation Officer gets the information to follow up on. The CO has full powers to charge and arrest anybody hunting illegally, and even has the power to confiscate equipment and/or vehicle when warranted.

You may well report the same information to police as well, but please do report it to the Conservation Officer. He can't enforce what he knows nothing about.

Incidents of illegal activity:

- shooting after dusk and before dawn,
- shooting at night,
- shooting where no permission has been granted.
- Shooting before or after the time frame allowed.
- Un-encased guns when not hunting.

Because of an increased deer population hunters are allowed two deer this year as opposed to one in past years.

Note: the bow/arrow hunt is a longer season. The bow doesn't necessarily have to be encased when not hunting but it is illegal to be on the road with it loaded.

The majority of hunters are very ethical sportsmen but there are a few jerks out there who don't care about giving the deer a fighting chance.

Councillor Jan Mowbray, Milton

Encouraging today's youth



Nominations are now being accepted for the Ontario Junior Citizen of the Year Awards

The strength of our community lies in solid citizens. Today's youth are tomorrow's leaders. If you know a young person, aged 6 to 17, who is involved in worthwhile community service; a special person who is contributing while living with a limitation; a youth who has performed an act of heroism; or a 'good kid' who shows a commitment to making life better for others, doing more than is normally expected of someone their age - help us recognize their contribution - nominate them today!

Nominations will be accepted until November 30.

Contact this newspaper or the Ontario Community Newspapers Association at www.ocna.org or 905.639.8720.

ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE - NOMINATE SOMEONE TODAY!



ONTARIO JUNIOR CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARDS



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