

# Small power generators need politician's help

**BYMAGGIE PETRUSHEVSKY**  
The New Tanner

There needs to be a huge reversal in attitude if the province really wants to buy power from small suppliers, says a local power producer.

"If the public is seriously committed to cleaner air they need to approach the government about cleaning up their act and recognizing the newer (cleaner) technologies available," says Halton MP Julian Reed, one of eight producers with water-powered plants built specifically to generate power for sale into the Ontario grid.

Air pollution is the main cause of asthma and that has been determined to be the biggest cause of school absenteeism. The Ontario Medical Association says contaminated air causes 2,000 deaths annually but until the public mounts a greater lobby to the government, Reed predicts no change will happen.

There are enough sites within the grid to produce approximately 4,000 megawatts of water-generated power but they sit undeveloped because of bureaucratic obstacles to construction of new plants.

Although Reed has had to temporarily shut down his Norval plant on the Credit River, he does have an operating plant near Haliburton producing 500 kilowatts of power which he sells to Ontario Hydro. The plant went into production in 1996 specifically to generate power for sale into the provincial power grid.

"We started in 1989 to get our approvals (from the Ministry of Natural Resources) and it was 1995 before they came through," he says.

Reed says two groups within the ministry have conflicting mandates. This results in one section of the group reviewing and commenting on any power devel-

opment plans while another group in the same ministry must give approval for the proposal.

"If you get opposition to small hydro (from the ministry), it could take years to get an approval," he says. "If they are in favour of it, the approval could come in weeks."

This lack of clear rules plus the fact that existing rules can be altered at will, results in "absolute chaos" for would-be power suppliers, Reed says. Until that confusion is cleared up the delays it causes deter would-be producers because "time is money" for them.

Reed notes public or environmental objections to power plants usually fall into five categories. The first is changing the quality of the water. Most objectors claim power plants warm the water in the stream thus changing or even destroying fish habitat. Not so, says Reed. That might happen if the water was dammed up, then taken from a pond. But with a turbine taking directly from a stream and returning immediately to the stream, the water is cooled, not warmed, a couple of degrees. The result actually improves cold water fisheries.

The second is the concern that plants help leach mercury into streams. When an area is flooded, mercury is leached from soil into the water. Reed's findings show no measurable change in mercury levels with small installations.

The third objection is to how methane leaches out of soil when an area is flooded. If that were a serious concern then the MNR should be going around blowing up all the beaver dams in the province, he notes.

Still another objection comes from anglers and naturalists who say turbines grind up fish. That is a straight myth, Reed says. Nature kills off 99 per cent of hatchlings before they ever mature and return to breed as opposed to

the 10 per cent or less which may get caught in a power plant intake system. When they are sucked in they die from reverse pressure in the plant, not the action of the turbine. Fish ladders eliminate the problem. Anyone questioning the statistics can look at more than 25 years of history with the North of Scotland power system, or results in British Columbia and Nova Scotia, he says.

Finally there are those who object to construction of new installations for purely sentimental or esthetic reasons.

"With 25 years in the business I've come to the point where I ask 'How do you want your poison?'" Reed says.

Environmental impacts

## Join Frogwatchers hike

Spring and all its wonders as the natural world comes to life can be witnessed in the forests and wetlands of the Mountsberg Conservation Area in the annual Frogwatcher's Hike on Saturday, May 6 from 7 to 9 p.m.

Male frogs are in full chorus in their annual bid to attract the mate of their dreams. The songs or mating calls are so distinctive from species to species that frogs can be identified by their voices alone.

The Spring Peeper, the frog harbinger of spring, has a distinctive peep that signals the return of the new season. This tiny, one-inch long frog and its high pitched peep are usually one of the first species heard and the sound of several hundred frogs calling

from gas and coal-fired installations are much higher than from water-powered ones. Given Ontario's lack of constant wind, except around Lake Huron, using wind as a power source doesn't even count. And even there, wind couldn't begin to meet the demand for additional power.

Purported support for small producers aside, Reed points to the bias against water-generated or "green" power.

"Owners of water-powered plants must rent every cubic meter of water taken from a stream and put through a plant. Then they must return it to its source in pristine condition," he says. "But gas-fired plants pay no tax towards the air they use or pol-

for mates together can be deafening.

During the Frogwater's Hike, participants will learn about the difference between frogs and toads. Participants will also pick through leaf litter in search of an elusive salamander and learn to identify local frog species. Most of all, you will listen to the romantic serenade of frogs as sunset approaches.

Admission for the Frogwatcher's Hike is by advance registration only. Space is limited. Call (905) 854-2276 to register. Adults \$10, children \$7.

Mountsberg Wildlife Centre is located on Millborough Line, 5 km west of Campbellville, between Hwy. 6 and Guelph Line.

lute. They strip the oxygen from the air, add heat and carbon dioxide and pay nothing."

**ACTON PHARMACY LIMITED**  
*Headquarters for Health*

- WE SERVICE ALL DRUG PLANS
- FREE IN-TOWN DELIVERY
- COLOSTOMY SUPPLIES
- BLOOD GLUCOSE MONITORING MACHINES

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday ..... 9-7  
Thursday, Friday ..... 9-8  
Saturday ..... 9-6

2 Main Street North, Acton  
853-1620

**DIGIROLAMO'S GREENHOUSES**

Growers of Fine Quality  
Perennials, Annuals and Herbs

**NOW OPEN**

*Just in time for Mother's Day!*

8890 Eighth Line R.R. #2  
**GEORGETOWN**

**The Wellness Centre**

**CHIROPRACTIC:** *Dr. Tom Thompson D.C.*  
Chiropractors correct vertebral subluxations which produce nerve interference. When subluxations are corrected, the nervous system is allowed to operate properly and the body is able to adapt to its environment and be self-regulating and self-healing which is its innate function.

**MASSAGE THERAPY:** *Mark Weidner R.M.T.*  
*Donna G MacDonald R.M.T.*

For relief from:

- Headaches
- Muscle Spasm
- Post Surgery Swelling
- Pregnancy Discomfort
- Tendonitis
- Whiplash Injury
- Arthritis
- Stress

Massage Therapy is a hands on natural therapy for all ages, and an aid in immune function strengthening.

**CHIROPODIST/FOOT SPECIALIST:**  
*Deanna Wilson D. Ch.*

- Nail care
- Diabetic & arthritic foot care
- Pediatric evaluation
- Plantar warts
- Corns
- Arthritic foot care
- Custom orthotics
- Ingrown nails
- Arch pain
- Heel pain
- Custom orthotics
- Sports injuries

**NUTRITIONAL COUNSELLING:**  
*Nancy DesJardins, R.N.C.P.*

Your body may be trying to tell you something by the presentation of multiple symptoms and sicknesses. A comprehensive evaluation of your nutritional situation will be conducted and recommendations made to help you with your personal Nutritional Education Programme. The programme is not just a diet but a very practical guide to a healthier lifestyle based on natural teachings.

*For consultation/appointment, call The Wellness Centre (519) 853-3460*

**-THE SMOKE SHOPPE-**  
Unit A, 56 Mill St. East, Acton  
*(Village Variety)*

*We would like to thank all our faithful customers who have supported us for the last thirty years.*

**KEEP COMING FOR THE NEW OWNERS**

**HELEN - ENA - LISA**  
**853-0411**

## ACTON SENIORS' RECREATION CENTRE

**By Dot Redekop**  
Don't forget to come along on our "Sentimental Journey" with us on May 10 at 7:30. The Acton and Georgetown choirs will take us on the trip. Tickets available at the door. Everyone welcome. Refreshments are included.

Our number was drawn for the 50/50 on the coach Wednesday. Nick said I could have the money because I was holding both tickets at the time. We hadn't decided who was to have which ticket. So according to Nick, Dot Redekop was the winner. Of course, I left it at Rama. Betty said be sure and spell the name right.

We have some great trips for June and July so watch for details as the dates get closer. Our next trip to Rama is Wednesday, May 31. Cost is \$5 and includes lunch. Come on out; the bread pudding is great.

We are closed Monday, May 22 for Victoria Day.

**Travelpack** *brings you the world!*

**Britain**

**Best of Britain Coach Tour**

- 14 day Coach Tour
- 13 nights in superior tourist hotels
- breakfast daily
- 7 three-course evening meals
- visit London, Leeds, Edinburgh, The Highlands, shores of Loch Ness, Glasgow, The Lake District, Chester, Cardiff & Cornwall

**\$1799**

**British Adventure Driving Holiday**

- "go as you please" driving holiday
- 7 nights Bed & Breakfast
- 7 day car rental

**\$595**

**TED TYLER TRAVEL SERVICE LTD.**

*"Best Price, Best Service Since 1972"*

**519-853-1553 • 888-833-8953 • Fax: 519-853-1559**  
379 Queen St., Acton, Ont. L7J 2N2