

# EDITORIAL

with Hartley Coles

## No common sense

We'll likely never have a Christmas holiday season with the proliferation of lighting that highlighted last years. All the indications are that the Ontario government's decision to privatize Ontario Hydro power will increase the price of electricity to the point where some people will have to cut back drastically on its use, and those who can afford it, will wish they never heard of Mike Harris.

As columnist Mike O'Leary points out in an adjoining column, consumers will have to pay down Hydro's existing debt (\$30 billion?), pay for power and its transmission, pay down the debt of the companies who buy it, plus pay for the profit they hope to make. It makes no sense, common or otherwise, to think otherwise.

Ontario was built on the strength of cheap, plentiful electrical power and supplied by Ontario Hydro, a monopoly. States in the US where they've been paying through the nose for power from private firms look enviously at Ontario where cheaper power has helped industry to compete against the US juggernaut.

The decision to privatize has all the earmarks of an ideological swindle of the people of Ontario so some private companies can get rich on the backs of consumers.

We'll be the first to admit Ontario Hydro has made some giant blunders, spent foolishly and piled up a big debt, but their stewardship could have been more realistic if existing governments had been more intrusive. The people of Ontario built the utility with their purchases and now we're about to see private interests take over what many of us consider our birthright.

Is the government creating another Enron with their move to privatize? Where the only people who'll benefit will be the underwriter and the millionaires? The head of one of Canada's biggest steelmakers is concerned. And so should we all be.

## A time of prayer

Sandwiched between the Chinese New Year on Tuesday and Valentine's Day today (Thursday) this week, is Ash Wednesday, which marks the beginning of Lent, the traditional 40 days of penitence and fasting observed throughout the Christian world in preparation for Easter.

Most of the churches in Acton unite with a series of weekly ecumenical services and luncheons to mark Lent with ministers and priests exchanging pulpits for the services. They also, of course, observe the 40 days in the confines of their own denomination.

The length of Lent at 40 days was established in the fourth Century, modelled after the 40 days Christ spent in the wilderness in prayer and fasting, as well as the 40 years the Israelites spent in the desert before they entered the Promised Land. However, the idea of a time of fasting and penitence goes back into the mists of time. For Christians, St. Paul advised the early church to work out their salvation in prayer and patience, in watchings and fastings.

At first, fasting was left to the discretion of individuals. Regular fasting imposed by the discipline of the Church, began in Gaul (France) in the second century A.D. However, it was 200 years later before it was settled that the period of fasting and prayer would last 40 days.

If you count the days between Ash Wednesday and Easter they'll total more than 40, so the question naturally arises, how come? It's because Sunday is not included in the total. Sunday, the day Jesus Christ rose from the dead, is excluded from Lent because it is a feast day, a time of joy or festivity, not of penitence. The eastern churches have an eight week Lent because they observe both Saturday and Sunday as festive days.

Modern observance of Lent is much different from the severity and excesses of the past. It is still practised widely throughout the world by hundreds of millions of people, but more as a time of prayer than fasting, the latter left to the individual. Some people find fasting not only a spiritual aid but a healthy antidote to excessive eating. They develop a keener appreciation for the good things of life by abstaining from them for a period of time.

Lent is also a good time for reflection, prayer and exercising one's charitable side more freely. Even those with little or no religion find that observing the disciplines of Lent can improve their life. One needs only to try it to find out.



**HONOURARY CITIZEN:** Actor Al Pacino became an Honourary citizen of Halton Hills during the filming of "The Farm" last Thursday at Nashville North in Norval. Mayor Kathy Gastle met Al Pacino to present a plaque on behalf of the town. Pacino is famous for his roles in Frankie and Johnny, Scent of a Woman, Scarface and Godfather movies, among others. - submitted photo

## Flower power dissolves me

Have you ever noticed the latest 'catch phrase' seems to be 'a random act of kindness'? What is that I've wondered? Sure we've had the award in Acton for those who have done random acts of kindness, but there have only been a few that, in my opinion, are random.

It may sound odd, but for me, it should be something different than regular volunteering. We seem to have forgotten the key word...random.

Until recently, a random act of kindness for me would be a person in a shopping mall who actually says, excuse me, when they cut in front of you bee-lining for a store. Sometimes I feel like I am the only person in the mall who does that.

That was how I was starting to feel until about three weeks ago. There was no other way to describe that week except for 'crappy'. Monday was disastrous. By the end of the week, it was so bad that Monday seemed pretty good.

Friday afternoon, just before lunch time, I was in the office getting ready to head out for an appointment. I was in the corner at the photocopier when a woman came upstairs. I briefly looked at her, then found myself taking a second look. In her hand was a basket of flowers. I assumed they were for Jolanda. She works downstairs in the travel office and her boyfriend is always doing nice things like that.

"Is there an Angela here?" the woman asked. Slightly in shock, yet completely ecstatic, I wanted to scream "That's me." As I accepted



By  
Angela Tyler

them I was dumbfounded. Delia, who was across from me at her desk, was also trying to figure out what was going on.

The delivery slip said Angela Tyler, c/o Tyler Transport...deliver ASAP. Inside there was a card. As I read it, I was no closer to finding out anything.

"Who are they from?" Delia asked. I couldn't tell her, there was no name on the card.

The card read, "Hello Angela. Here is a little something to brighten your day. Sincerely, a friend." Both of us looked at each other and I said, "I have no clue."

It was a random act of kindness and much nicer than anyone saying excuse me at a shopping mall.

It was also a mystery that I needed to solve. Who sent the flowers? Delia suggested it might be one of the drivers. At Christmas, he bought roses for quite a few of the women at work as a Christmas gesture. I shook my head and said, I didn't think so. I asked which florist the last flowers came from. It wasn't the same one as these ones came from. That afternoon, Delia, on my behalf, asked the driver just in case. He adamantly denied sending them.

My search continued. This act of kindness was wonderful. I love get-

ting flowers, I can't think of a woman that doesn't. On the downside it was starting to drive me crazy.

I began questioning anyone I could think of. I asked my two best friends. Neither had done it. My family said they didn't send them, nor did I think they did. The man from work didn't send them. I even tried the remote possibilities. Last year at Valentine's, the guys who work for one of our suppliers took pity on me being dateless and sent me candies. I interrogated each one of them with no luck. I was becoming obsessive with wanting to know.

Last week, my friend from Ottawa came back to visit with his family. I had questioned him about the flowers when I first received them, but it wasn't him. On Monday, the flowers were still alive and on my coffee table when he visited. He has a degree in criminology and he put his knowledge to work.

After analyzing the card and the delivery slip, he offered me these details. The card and the delivery slip are different writing. Therefore, the person went into the florist to buy the flowers. The 'T's' in the handwriting are slanted, thus making the person right-handed. Then he said he had no idea either. I was ready to dust the card for fingerprints and all he offered was the person was right-handed. I wasn't any further ahead.

Then he said to me, "why don't you just call the florist and ask them who sent you the flowers so you can thank them?" Well, I could I answered, but that would take all the fun out of it now, wouldn't it?



**THE NEW TANNER**

59 Willow Street North  
Acton, Ontario L7J 1Z8

email: thenewtanner@on.aibn.com

(519) 853-0051 Fax: 853-0052

**Publisher**

Ted Tyler

**Editorial**

Hartley Coles

Frances Niblock Mike O'Leary Ellen Piehl

Maggie Petrushevsky Angela Tyler

**Advertising and Circulation**

Marie Shadbolt Elaine Petkoff

**Composing**

Karen Coleman Ken Baker

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