

Editorial

Be fire smart

This week is Fire Prevention Week throughout Ontario, and while fire officials use it as way to draw attention to a particular aspect of fire prevention and safety, it is also a good reminder for the public to recognize those men and women who put their lives on the line in battling fires.

First, let's keep in mind this year's message—Use Candles With Care—as local fire officials urge the public to use common sense and safe measures when using candles. While candles are no longer used a primary source of light or heat, the popularity of candles has soared in recent years as residents use them for a variety of reasons from religious to a way to create a nicer ambience.

However, often people forget the fact that a candle is an open flame—one that can easily cause a fire if it falls over or comes in contact with a drape, or cushion or carpet. If you must use a candle make sure that it is out the reach of children and pets and always ensure that it is in a proper holder.

The Ontario Fire Marshal's Office reports that, between 2000 and 2003, house fires caused by candles rose by 17 per cent to an average of 285 a year. From 1995 to 1999 that number was 243.

Yes, a burning candle can add a lovely ambience to a room, but in a split second it can be the cause of a deadly inferno.

As we said earlier, Fire Prevention Week should also be a time to say thanks to the thousands of firefighters—both full-time and volunteer—across this province who not only battle fires, but lend aid and assistance at accident scenes, perform rescues both on land and water, and generally are there front and centre whenever an emergency arises.

It is a dangerous and demanding job but one the public relies on a great deal. While we hope to never have the need to call a fire service, it is reassuring to know that well-trained, brave and dedicated firefighters are there to respond should the need arise.



Letters to the editor....

Columnist's argument flawed, says reader

Dear editor,

Re: Two of Ted Brown's recent columns (It's OK to steal when you're 'due' and I stand by what I wrote—drivers stole "bargain" gas).

Letters to the editor

Letters to the editor must include an address and daytime telephone number. Unsigned letters will not be published. Letters should not exceed 200 words and may be edited.

Mail or drop off

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Ted, you made a faulty analogy when comparing the 'gang mentality' of individuals in New Orleans who participated in looting, raping and killing to the individuals who 'stole bargain gas' at the local Esso station. You argue these two events are somehow similar because these individuals had the belief 'they were due'.

However, Mr. Brown you failed to demonstrate the relevance of 'gang mentality' in New Orleans to what happened at the Esso station. What happened in New Orleans was criminal; what happened at the Esso station was not. Although the participants in both events were opportunistic, the comparison was unacceptable and unjustified.

Secondly, Mr. Brown you are guilty of distorting Marlene Jancar's position in her letter to the editor. Ted, you use the Cambridge dictionary definition of stealing as a defence to Marlene's argument that what happened at the Esso was "a far cry from criminal". You distorted her position when you wrote, "Those who knowingly pumped gas and

only paid for a portion were stealing, plain and simple." If it is so "plain and simple" why were no criminal charges laid?

I would go so far to say it was not stealing either. They paid the advertised price and as a retailer you have an obligation to honour that price. These people who took advantage of the discount are not the reason the owners are out \$1,500, rather it is whoever, over the course of two hours, didn't notice a strange amount of people filling up their tanks for extraordinarily low prices.

I was not one who took advantage of the discount gas; but I can see why people did. As consumers, we are the ones paying these unheard of prices, not only at the pumps, but soon on all goods that need to be delivered. The government failed us by not lowering their taxes on gas. The retailers failed in their mistakes such as letting 20-cent gas go unnoticed. In the end it means be prepared to pay a little more at the pumps for these failures by the government and retailers.

Ross Stevenson, Limehouse

HOPE thanks supporters for work on native garden

Dear editor,

On behalf of HOPE (Healthy Options for People and The Environment) I would like to express our sincere thanks to the volunteers who came out to help us with the planting of our native garden at Sargent Rd. boulevard.

On Saturday, September 17, 16 people helped us plant a selection of native shrubs, wildflowers and grasses to help beautify the boulevard. I encourage you to drive or walk by and take a look at their efforts. It was a beautiful day on the day of planting and everyone enjoyed themselves.

I would like to pay special thanks to Belinda Gallagher for the garden design and all her guidance throughout our project and to the several Wal-Mart employees who came to join us that day. We really appreciate your community involvement and support.

To see photos of the planting go to HOPE's blog (web log) at: <http://sargentrboulevardgarden.blogspot.com>

Thank you all.

Christine Upton,
HOPE

The Independent & Free Press

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