

EDITORIAL

with Hartley Coles

A few notes

So much for weather forecasts by Warton Willie. Three days after the marmot declared we were in for a mild and snow free final six weeks of winter, the worst snowfall and wintry storm struck most of southern and central Ontario. Willie should go and look for his shadow. It must have got lost.

However, Warton Willie wasn't the only weather prophet to get it wrong. Almost the same forecast came from Environment Canada and meteorologists around this province. It all goes to show that forecasting weather is only partly an exact science. Much depends on the whims of the weather.

Acton branch of the Royal Canadian Legion again showed how much they are such an integral part of this community with their announcement of a one time grant to all Seniors who are drawing a General Income Supplement (GIS) to help alleviate the high cost of heating. The Legion does much in other areas, too, not only for veterans and their families but for all in need. The latest is just another one in almost 75 years of existence.

Electricity prices are high enough but residents who burn natural gas and aren't locked in to a fixed price, got a rude shock when they opened their gas bills for January. The price of gas shot up from 31.7 cents a cubic metre to 41.6725 an increase of 9.37 cents. Despite the fact it was the warmest January on record, the gas bills were the highest in January ever.

Why are we paying such a high price for natural gas when it's produced in this country? It's NAFTA of course. Free trade means we have to pay the same price as our American neighbours who buy it from Canada. If there's a shortage in the U.S. commodity prices shoot up and Canadians pay through the nose, not only for natural gas but at the pumps, too.

Maud Barlow, national chairperson of the Council of Canadians says it succinctly: "Canadian consumers like you and I are competing for our own energy resources against an economy and a population ten times bigger. And as if it's not bad enough that we set Canadian oil and gas prices according to spiraling demand by the U.S. – the world's biggest energy-waster – we pay even more than our American neighbours because they don't have to pay the GST."

Canada gave up total control over its oil and gas in both the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA), and its successor the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). We exchanged energy security for guaranteed access to the U.S. market. But not only are we prevented from setting a lower price for Canadians but Canada can never cut back on the proportion of energy we produce and sell to the Americans.

In case anyone brings up the fact Toronto's garbage is flowing across the border in ever-increasing volumes, a fact which residents of Michigan abhor, it should also be noted there is a counter flow of nuclear waste into Canada from the United States. It's a fact which seemed to have been lost in the current flap over garbage. Which waste would you rather have going across your border?

Needless to say Toronto and other areas which ship garbage to the U.S. should be coming up with some solutions to their garbage problems. There's been so much lip service paid to solving the debacle but most solutions run into the Not in My Back Yard (NIMBY) syndrome. No one wants Toronto's garbage, including this area, which finally was relieved of the possibility a few years ago. It's taking time for Toronto to realize they should make room in their jurisdiction for their own waste.



PEEWEE RAFFLE: The Cleghorn family, Daniel (left) Jamie, Troy and Quinn were busy selling raffle tickets for on Saturday at the 36th annual Pee wee hockey tournament in Acton. – Frances Niblock photo

Super centre dazzles but frazzles

I like to shop in Acton. I think it's important to support local businesses. Granted there are some things we still can't purchase here, but for the most part, you can do most of your shopping in Acton.

However, every once and a while, change as they say, can be as good as a rest. With that in mind, I decided I needed a rest, so my change would be doing some grocery shopping at another location. After hearing about the new, massive grocery store in Georgetown, I felt a need for a field trip and see the sight for myself.

Monday afternoon, I ventured into the nasty weather and headed out of town. I didn't need that many things. I was more going to the store to see it. I had heard plenty about it. I heard it was three storeys tall and it had everything in it from a doctor's office to a daycare and, of course, the grocery store part.

As I walked into the store, I was completely overwhelmed. It was massive. It was HUGE even if it wasn't three storeys, only one with a mezzanine. I didn't even know where to begin my shopping. I wished I had a map of the store to help me find the items on my list.

As my cart started to fill up, I found myself going in circles. I'd head off into one direction to find



By
Angela Tyler

the produce and then find myself back tracking to find something else. The aisles were really long. They ran from groceries to bedding. I was afraid to turn off into another aisle part way down in case I missed something I needed to buy.

Grocery shopping, for me, can usually be done in about 30 minutes. I have a routine of which aisles I go up or down and which ones I don't need to. Even if I forget my shopping list, the entire process when I shop in Acton is to the point – and painless. The only thing that seems to delay me is when I start talking to people I know who are shopping in the store as well.

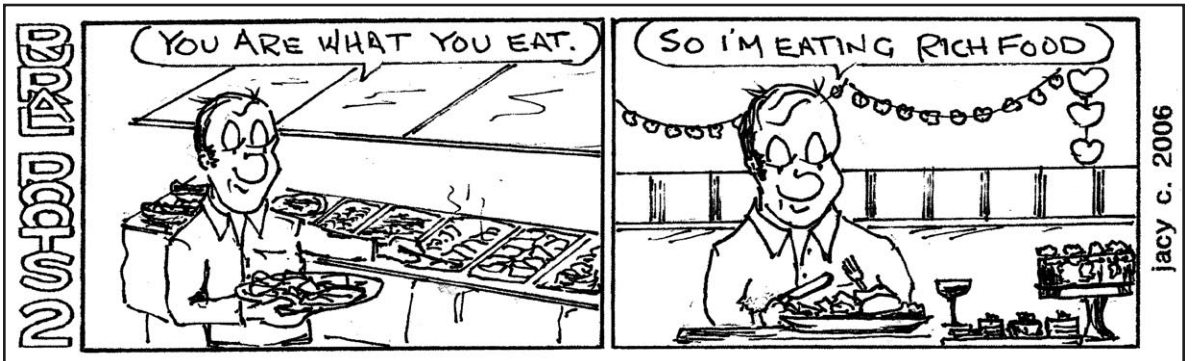
Grocery shopping at the "super-centre" is a completely different thing. An hour and a half later and after I purposely gave up on seeing most of the housewares and clothing in the store, I found myself at the cashier. I was tired. My feet hurt. Even my eyes were sore from looking at the many items in the store. As the cashier rang my items in, I noticed there was something that was bothering me about the store more than my

aching feet.

The cashier looked sad or tired. She never said "hi" to me, nor did she ask me how I was. The only thing that she commented on was that the large candle I had bought was a better deal than buying a smaller one because they last longer. In Acton, they always say "hi" to me or cashiers I know will have a conversation besides telling me what my total bill is. Maybe the cashier was sad because of the depressing music I heard piped throughout the store? Then I thought about it some more...I didn't see one person I knew at the store; not a single one.

As I started to pay for my purchase I remembered I forgot to pick up some cottage cheese. I looked back to the grocery area of the store and realized the dairy section was at the far wall, which seemed about a mile away and my feet started to subconsciously hurt even more. In Acton, I would have just told the person behind me I forgot something and hopped back to pick it up while the cashier rang in my other items. Or they usually just wait for you without complaint. In Georgetown, I figured by the time I walked all the way back and returned to the cashier, I might as well just stop in Acton on the

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