

# EDITORIAL

with Hartley Coles

## Blackout menace

Last Monday – August 14 – was the third anniversary of the power blackout that shut down 100 electrical generating stations in Ontario and eight U.S. states. It happened shortly after 4 in the afternoon and there was instant chaos for about 50 million people.

Traffic lights went out, gas pumps wouldn't pump, air conditioners went kaput on one of the hottest days of the summer, stores closed and lost freezer food, factories lost production, etc., etc.

It all happened because of the failure of three transmission lines in Ohio which were knocked out by a falling tree – not the over-consumption of electricity. However, according to Ontario's chief energy conservation officer, Peter Love, the blackout has emerged as one of the most "powerful instruments shaping out attitudes towards energy conservation in Ontario."

The blackout certainly reminded people here how much we rely on a steady, secure supply of electricity in our everyday activities. All of Halton Hills Hydro's 18,000 customers had power again by 6a.m. the following day but most faced another two-hour outage on Friday during a rolling blackout as users shared existing capacity.

At the time it was thought the blackout was due to over-consumption because of over use of air conditioning in the unusually hot, humid weather – or to terrorists, a rumour which terrified many people at the time. Perhaps because three years have passed we're not as conscious now of the need for conservation. The hike in electricity prices this year underlined that power is no longer a cheap commodity in Ontario and how much we rely on other jurisdictions for electricity. And the cost of brining new power generating stations.

Ontario's power authority is emphasizing the importance of energy conservation with a few tips which not only make sense but save consumers money and reduce demand on the power grid:

\*Turning up the thermostat two degrees, you'll be just as comfortable.

\*Use compact fluorescent bulbs. They are four times more efficient and last eight times as long.

\*Pull the plug or turn off any lights, television sets or other appliances when they're not needed.

If we all cooperate then the threat of blackouts such as occurred on Aug. 14 of 2003 becomes much less possible.

## Safety concerns

It's not difficult to understand Guelph/Eramosa councillors concern about the safety of pedestrians – especially school children – on the Main St. bridge over the Eramosa River in Rockwood.

The uneven sidewalk on the bridge needs fixing and the Ministry of Transportation (MTO), which owns the bridge, will not finance any repairs and opposes erection of a barrier at the sidewalk's edge to improve pedestrian safety.

MTO's concern is with the safety of vehicles, not pedestrians, public works manager Ken Gagnon told council at their meeting on Tuesday, August 8.

Safety issues have increased since the school board cancelled a bus used to take younger students to Rockwood Centennial school from the south end of the village. Gagnon says the combination of the curve and narrowing of the lane width at the south end of the bridge forces large vehicles dangerously close to the sidewalk. The MTO has no plans to upgrade that area until 2010 or 2011.

He might also have added that traffic volume has increased tremendously since the bridge was built and safety concerns with it. It's hard to believe the MTO would be more concerned about the safety of vehicles rather than pedestrians, especially children, on the bridge.

As Councillor Dave McCrae announced, it's time to raise the issue with provincial politicians because fixing the sidewalk is only a band-aid solution. Safety concerns still exist.



**PARKING HELP:** Members of Acton Air Cadet Typhoon Squadron gave much needed assistance as Acton Trunk Sale resumed Saturday morning. Cathy Tate, Brenna Tate, Garrett Nuttall, Chantel Foley and Karen Foley, treasurer all helped. – Ted Tyler photo

## People watching ver-r-ry interesting

My grandfather used to love to people watch. I could remember sitting with him on a bench in a mall or elsewhere for what seemed like hours on end as he watched people walk by us.

The great thing about mankind is that there is a never ending supply of the variety of people that make up this world.

Last week while on vacation, the Dude and I had one goal. It was to relax, which can be hard to allow yourself to do when you work endless hours. Each day after sleeping in, we would head down to the beach. For hours each day we would swim and play in the Gulf of Mexico. The water was as warm as the air and between the salt water and the sun all our stress was lost at sea.

So as we floated in the water we seemed to be drawn to the interesting people who were either sunning themselves on the beach or playing in the water like we were. We watched two young men who were probably 15 or 16 years-old trying to pick up every young lady in view. Although the girl in the pink bathing suit talked to them, her mother soon put a stop to the boys' plan.

There was a group of men who



By  
Angela Tyler

sounded like they came from New York or New Jersey. They also looked like they came right out of the Sopranos. One of them even smoked a cigar while he was swimming.

A lady in a purple bathing suit was hilarious. She was large in presence and in voice. She had a drink in one hand and trying to balance with the other; she appeared to be three sheets to the wind. A male friend of hers was trying to coax her into deeper waters. Instead she had thankfully gone back to shore where she fell down and rolled on the sand, with beer still in hand, yelling how she couldn't get up.

"Geez, it's like the Jerry Springer Show," I said to the Dude.

As our day was coming to a close, we watched a man trying to boogie board across the incoming tide. Although obviously fit, he didn't fit the picture. His lady friend was like a beach bunny. He on the other hand looked like an accountant. "You ready to go?" I

asked the Dude. "Hold on a minute..." he replied.

The accountant's attempts were not pretty. The lady friend had lost interest in watching him try to impress her. The man continued to watch the water, toss his boogie board into the tide and tried to ride the wave. I was starting to feel bad for the guy. It was getting worse but I had to give him credit for trying. After about ten tries he did it, he rode the wave – and then it happened. The board hit sand and the guy went tumbling. Actually, he went flying. Finally, the lady friend had regained interest but was not interested enough to get out of her beach chair to make sure he was okay.

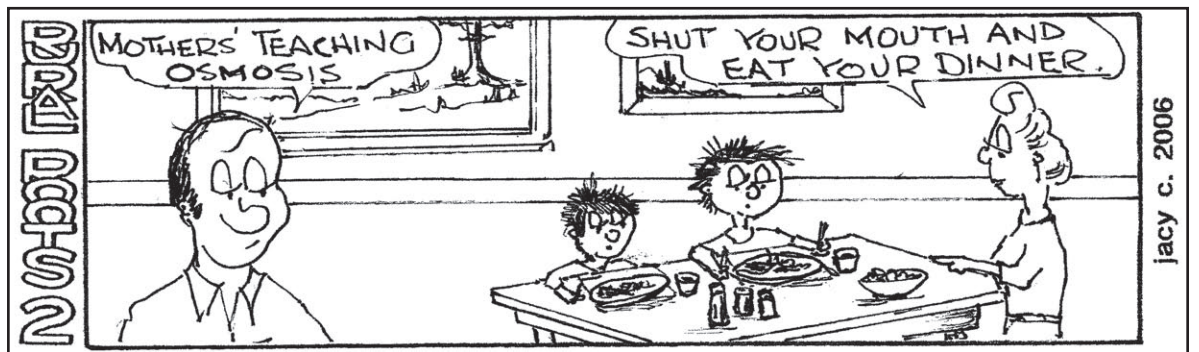
"You ready to go in now?" I asked the Dude. Our afternoon's entertainment was over and I was a little smarter.

Beach lessons learned:

1. If you have a teenage daughter, never leave her alone in a teeny bikini on the beach near teenage boys.

2. If you have been drinking stay out of the water.

3. If you're a man who is old enough to have gone bald, you're probably too old to be boogie boarding.



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