

EDITORIAL

with Hartley Coles

Touching tribute

On Easter Monday of this week the 90th anniversary of the World War 1 battle of Vimy Ridge was commemorated with pomp and splendour at the imposing, rehabilitated Memorial in the French countryside. The Memorial, a testimony to the valour of the 3,598 Canadians who lost their lives in the battle for the ridge, stands like a grieving sentinel in the plains of Normandy on ground a grateful French Republic bequeathed to Canada as an expression of thanks for Canada's role in repelling the invaders.

The battle of Vimy Ridge took only one day, Easter Monday, April 9, 1917. Previous attempts by French and British troops had failed to dislodge the heavily fortified German army's position on the ridge. An estimated 155,000 allied soldiers had died attempting to take Vimy Ridge. So when 36,000 Canadians, under the command of General Arthur Currie succeeded, after months of planning and training, taking Vimy Ridge in a one day operation, it brought new life to the allied cause and established the Canadians as the elite troops of the British army.

The victory at Vimy was the deepest penetration of enemy positions in over two years of battle and became a huge source of material pride in Canada. King George V, the reigning monarch, was so impressed he came to the battlefield and knighted Canadian General Arthur Currie. Four Victoria Crosses were also awarded for bravery on the field of battle.

Vimy Ridge has been regarded as a cradle of Canadian nationalism which transformed Canada from a colonial country to one of the well respected powers in the world. It was the first time Canadians had planned, fought and won a major battle in the channel house of World War 1. It won Canada a seat at the Paris Peace Talks in 1919 and a signatory at the Treaty of Versailles.

Monday's beautiful ceremony, with the Queen, the prime ministers of Canada and France present, was a fitting tribute to the many who paid the supreme sacrifice in a war thousands of miles from their homes. These were young men, the flower of an emerging Canada. It is not only appropriate but essential we keep their memory alive as well as all those who have died in the armed forces in wars and peacekeeping efforts including six more Canadians who joined their ranks on the same day.

Job losses disturbing

It should be a matter of great concern to the Province, and to the country, that thousands of good manufacturing jobs in Ontario are disappearing.

Halton MPP, Ted Chudleigh, the Conservative party's critic for economic development, says that Ontario lost another 5,100 manufacturing jobs in March, brining the total loss of such jobs since the beginning of 2005, to 124,400.

Most of these are good paying jobs which offered a decent standard of living to employees. In time, they bought homes, furniture and raised families that contributed much to the economy of the province and the country. Few of those losing jobs will be able to find comparable work and pay in an economy which is growing, in jobs paying a few dollars above the minimum wage.

Ted Arnott, the MPP for Waterloo-Wellington, has been concerned about the loss of manufacturing jobs for the last two years. His riding has been particularly hard hit by job losses. This prompted him to put through a Private Member's Resolution which called on the government to schedule hearings to see what could be done about retaining jobs in Ontario. In November of 2006 the Resolution was passed by the Legislature.

However, Arnott is concerned, and rightly so, that nothing much has been done. He feels hearings should have started weeks ago. He does acknowledge that in their budget two weeks ago the government announced a plan in the budget to create an Ontario Manufacturing Council to deal with job losses. But, Arnott's opinion it's too little, too late.

Putting politics aside, Arnott is on the right track. The loss of good paying jobs in Ontario is something which should be on the government's front burner, especially since there's an election this October when it could become one of the burning issues.



EASTER RESURRECTION: Approximately 35 people from various Acton churches braved the cold for a joint sunrise service on Easter Sunday in the parking lot of Churchill Community Church. — Frances Niblock photo

There ought to be a law

Science Matters



By David Suzuki

Sometimes I feel like I'm the only person in Canada who doesn't own a cell phone, and I don't think I ever will. Watching people barking into their phones at the gym, on ski hills and in restaurants, I wonder why they bother to go there in the first place. But that's their personal choice. What really bugs me is the planned obsolescence of so many of these technologies.

Sustainability is a word that is generously slathered through corporate and government reports and from the lips of those who say they're committed to being green, but to turn words into action we've got to reflect on what they mean in everyday life. Sustainability is about ensuring that what we do today does not compromise the opportunity and future for our children and grandchildren.

We are a long way from achieving that right now. Everything we use — food, clothing, energy, consumer goods, etc — comes from the biosphere, the zone of air, water and land where life exists. And all of our garbage, effluent and waste goes back into that same zone of life. Indeed, if the globe were reduced to the size of a basketball, the biosphere would be thinner than a layer of plastic sandwich wrap. That's it, our home where we live. It is finite and fixed; it can't grow.

Today most people, myself included, are all agog at the wondrous outpouring of new technology, from cell phones to ipods, iphones, laptops, Blackberries and on and on. Even though I am a techno-incompetent and like to think I shun these new devices, I actually have a drawer filled with the detritus of yesterday's hottest product, now reduced to the status of fossils.

I have video cameras that use tapes no longer available, laptops with programs incompatible with anything on today's market, beta cassette recorders, portable tape and CD players I no longer use, and more. But what really upsets me is opening a drawer and finding it filled with cords, chargers, and transformers for which there is no longer anything to plug them into. Yet if I misplace a cord to charge the battery of my current camera

or laptop, none of the cords in the drawer works!

Forgive my rant, but I recently embarked on an epic search for a cord to plug into my wife's cell phone to recharge it. We were in Toronto and the poor phone kept bleating that it was running low and the battery needed recharging. Calls were coming in to Tara but there wasn't enough juice to return them. We asked others in our group to lend us a charger but found every single one was incompatible with her phone.

So we began a search — from big box technology superstores, to smaller suppliers and the cell phone companies themselves — all to no avail. Finally, a salesperson told my wife, "That's an old model, so we don't stock the charger any longer." "But I only bought it last year," sputtered Tara. "Yeah, like I said, that's an old model," he replied without a hint of irony or sympathy. So in the world of insanely rapid obsolescence, not only does each company's products have their own unique plugs and cords, each successive model is incompatible with the previous one it replaces.

If there must be new models with new gimmicks every few months, why can't there be a single charger or transformer that can be used interchangeably by all companies' products and from year to year? Why can't there be some sort of

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THE NEW TANNER
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