

HOME AND GARDEN

Household alternative

Water purifiers gain in popularity

Increasingly, residents in cities and towns are turning to other sources for the water they drink in the household

Chlorine injection has traditionally been an effective method of treating water problems, says Stouffville's Supreme Water Conditioning President, Jim Bell.

It reduces iron and manganese and controls hydrogen sulfide, iron and sulphate-reducing bacteria, taste and odor problems, Mr. Bell maintains.

When chlorine is injected into the water, however, it produces a by-product called Trihalomethanes (THM).

How THM's Form

Well-documented research shows THMs to be one of the most wide-spread contaminants in chlorinated municipal water supplies, he says.

THMs are comprised of Chloroform, Bromodichloromethane, Dibromochloromethane and Bromoform. "When chlorine reacts

with naturally occurring humic substances in water, THMs are formed, with chloroform being the main byproduct."

The problem is that THMs have been proven to cause bladder, colon, and rectum cancer. "The higher the levels, the worse the problem."

The maximum acceptable level of THMs in Canada is 350 parts per billion (ppb), which is the highest in the western world.

The acceptable level in Europe is only 30 (ppb), the U.S. is 100 ppb, while Canada soars at 350

ppb as acceptable.

Recent exposure on CBC at Six about this concern, caused a stir in the House of Commons and in most Canadian homes which viewed the three-part series.

What to do

The cities and towns have a dilemma on their hands because using chlorination is still the cheapest, safest way known to make our drinking water potable. An alternative to chlorination would be ozonation, which produces no byproducts but is very expensive to set up in comparison

to chlorination plants, especially when you consider that we drink less than one per cent of our water, Mr. Bell says.

This is why point of use systems have become increasingly popular in the last five years. These are systems which are installed in your home to eliminate your particular concerns.

"In dealing with THMs, the overwhelming choice is Carbon."

You can install a small 10 inch carbon filter which will help reduce your THMs and provide a

nicer tasting, clearer water.

The only problem with small in-line carbon filters is there is not adequate contact time with water and carbon to ensure proper removal.

The best choice would be a 1.0-1.5 cubic foot unit with high surface area of granulated carbon to dechlorinate the water and remove the chlorinated organics.

This unit would be installed on your main water line to "purify water for the whole house," both hot and cold.

The cost ranges from about \$800 to \$1,000 to do a whole house, Mr. Bell says.

If you have any questions about water quality or installation, call Supreme Water Conditioning at 640-8888 and ask for President Jim Bell.

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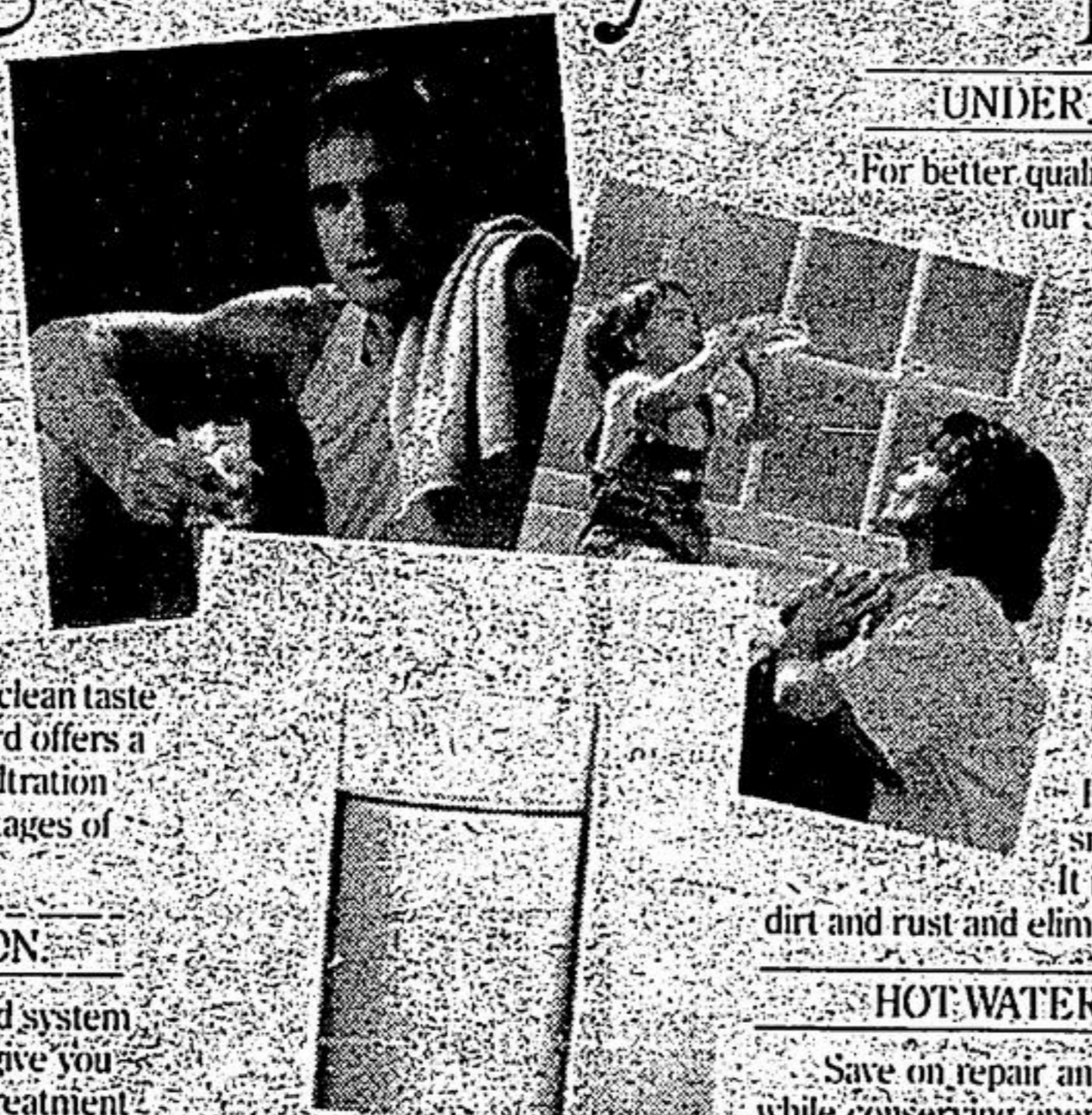
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