

Orangeville Citizen

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The humblest Citizen of all the land, when clad in armour of a righteous cause,
is stronger than all the hosts of Error. - WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN

Wind energy remains merely part of the solution

THE MIND BOGGLES at the prospect of building a single wind power project in Lake Erie that's more than 30 times the 132-megawatt capacity of the Melancthon Wind Farm, currently Ontario's largest such project. Yet that's what the Dufferin project's owner, Canadian Hydro Developers Inc., now plans to accomplish.

Canada's largest independent developer of wind-energy projects is acquiring rights to the 4,400-megawatt "off-shore wind prospect" from Utah-based Wasatch Wind Inc. The nearly 900 wind turbines to be erected in the shallowest of the Great Lakes would produce enough power at peak to meet the current needs of about 2 million homes.

Although the prospect might be welcome news at Queen's Park, where the governing Liberals have been pushing hard to have more wind farms built in the province, it raises some serious questions as to how best to meet Ontario's long-term electricity needs.

At present, the provincial government stands committed to phase out all coal-fired power production within the next five years and at present has no plan to invest in any new nuclear power plants. And it will be at least 2014 before the first stage of the Lake Erie project would be on stream.

Although it's clearly a "green" form of energy production, wind power has serious drawbacks in the area of predictability.

Historically, predictability was a problem for Ontario only when it came to predicting long-term needs. A failure to predict the surge in power demands after the Second World War led to a severe power shortage, and in the 1970s the failure of demand to meet expectations led to just as serious an

over-supply of generating capacity and the need to cancel some projects and slow the construction of others.

With wind power, the real problem is the inability to predict a project's output beyond a few days because of the vagaries of meteorology. And even the largest wind project will produce little or no power on a hot, humid day when the demand for electricity peaks but there's nothing more than a slight breeze.

In the circumstances, there should be no doubt that Ontario's long-term power needs should be met by a sophisticated combination of base-load and peaking generators.

As we see it, any viable plan should include at least two new nuclear projects, conversion of the remaining coal-fired plants to use natural gas, and the strengthening of inter-provincial grids to permit large-scale imports of power produced in Manitoba, Quebec and Labrador.

Instead of carrying out its plan to close the 4,000-megawatt Nanticoke Generating Station on Lake Erie, the McGuinty government ought to set in motion the progressive conversion of its eight units to natural gas.

Although a few years ago such a conversion would not have made much sense economically, natural gas being so expensive and supplies being deemed so limited, that situation has changed dramatically with the discovery of huge untapped resources in shale deposits, not to mention the proven deposits in the Canadian Arctic.

And it just so happens that a lot of natural gas can be stored naturally in the Lake Erie basin.

Since the Hydro One transmission grid already provides for 4,000 megawatts of output from Nanticoke, it would seem fairly logical that the com-

bination of the Lake Erie wind farm and conversion of Nanticoke to gas would leave the province with a new type of base-load capacity that would shift from wind to natural gas depending on the wind velocity.

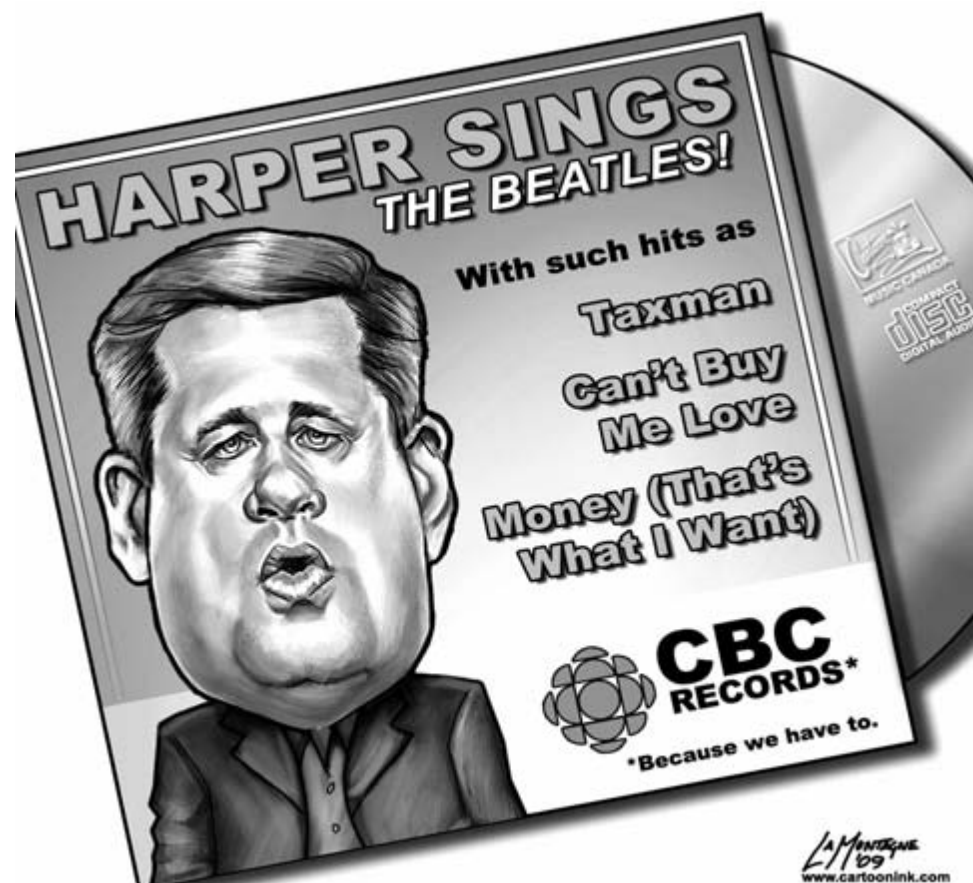
The argument for two new nuclear plants would be based in part on the economic benefits to Canada of being able to prove anew the superiority of Candu technology in terms of safety as well as reliability.

However, any twinning of the 3,600-megawatt Darlington nuclear plant and addition of a new-generation Candu plant at the Bruce Generating Station would clearly require a risk-sharing agreement between the federal and provincial governments similar to those involved in the pioneering Douglas Point and Pickering A stations. (Such agreements would limit consumers' exposure to cost overruns and poor performance.)

As for the interprovincial transmission grids, there should be little doubt that over the long haul the best means of keeping Ontario's retail electricity prices competitive with those of other jurisdictions would lie in long-term contracts for power from new hydro-electric projects in Labrador and Northern Manitoba. But the challenge will be to get that power to Ontario consumers safely and economically through use of the latest transmission technology.

Of course, the one big unknown is the future level of demand for electricity, given the uncertainty relating to the provincial economy and the conflicting impacts of power-saving technologies and breakthroughs in battery technology that would confirm the future of electric vehicles.

Clearly, wind and solar will have a role to play, but both have their limits.



Public finally learns of zoning process

IN A REFRESHING CHANGE OF PACE, opponents of a huge quarry proposed for Melancthon have now learned from the horse's mouth, so to speak, of the tortuous path to be followed toward approval or rejection of the required zoning application.

We commend Melancthon council for arranging a public meeting that included all involved provincial ministries and the township planner at Honeywood Monday evening.

If there is a point of criticism, it is that the meeting was not held earlier — at least prior to the point at which the council was forced by public pressure to take a position on a quarry application it had yet to see.

We can only guess at how the Ontario Municipal Board — which will have the final word on the application — is going to react to a council position of, in effect, saying, "we don't care what exactly they want, we are against it."

We have our concerns about the proposal. But how can we, or ordinary citizens, judge when the

only available information is that the proposal is for a 2,400-acre quarry designed to be rehabilitated to farmland rather than a lake, when there are scant details about how such can be accomplished, particularly when quarries away from an escarpment edge always wind up as lakes?

Apart from Monday's meeting in both time and place, a Ministry of Natural Resources official said in confidence that it would be difficult for the proponent to show that a 200-foot-deep excavation could be rehabilitated to farmland.

There is no doubt that the ministries will be taking a critical and in-depth review of the proposal. Opponents might take comfort in the fact that it took about three years for Strada to win approval of a gravel pit in Melancthon and about seven years for the Lockyer pits on Hurontario Street in Mono to gain approval of an above-water-table expansion of its pits.

The Melancthon megaquarry is a long way down the road, if at all. We shall be watching the process with great interest.

CITIZEN MAILBOX

Relationship between two 'ecofirms' clarified

To follow up on a telephone conversation with Wes Keller concerning his article, "Alter NRG expands, tests weeds for syngas," in your October 1 issue, I am writing to clarify who we are.

Alter NRG Corp. is a publicly traded company (TSX: NRG, OTCQX: ANRGF) pur-

suing alternative energy solutions to meet the growing demand for environmentally responsible energy in world markets.

The Company's vision is to commercialize growth technologies through environmentally sustainable and economically viable alternative energy

projects. Alter NRG owns Westinghouse Plasma Corporation (WPC) and its proprietary plasma technology.

On Wednesday, September 30, Alter NRG announced execution of a binding offer and sale agreement for the acquisition of 100 per cent of the shares of Clean Energy Developments Corp. ("Clean Energy"), making Alter NRG the first public entity in the \$7 billion geoexchange market in Canada.

Alter NRG and NRG Energy are two distinct, separate and autonomous corporate entities. They are not associated or con-

I totally agree with your assessment on the train service. We have been on your local train, and it was great. I also felt that the Go Train could be a dayliner, and add cars as needed, for Orangeville and Peterborough. I took the dayliner from Toronto to Peterborough, at the time you spoke of.

Perhaps your reps in government could do something about this. We are in London now, and I know there was service on the trains before, and they were diminished. Traffic on the 401 would tell that story.

Congratulations on your article.

Peter Wheeler
via e-mail

trolled by a common parent or holding company.

However, Alter NRG and NRG Energy do have a strategic alliance, wherein a division of NRG Energy called "NRG Plasma Power" has an exclusive licence for the Alter NRG/WPC plasma gasification technology.

Both Alter NRG and NRG Energy were mentioned in a single press release included in our Investor Bulletin used as a vehicle to keep our shareholders, investors and other stakeholders informed of our operations, strategic alliances and latest developments. On Sept. 25, NRG Energy announced the selection of Somerset Station, the existing 108 mW power plant, would be redesigned with new Alter NRG/Westinghouse plasma gasification technology.

Coincidentally, on Sept. 30, NRG Energy announced a pilot project at their Big Cajun II electrical generating station, where local conditions will be evaluated for growing switchgrass and high-biomass sorghum as renewable biomass fuels and it is this press release that is listed first on NRG Energy's website.

I trust this has been helpful in clarifying the misunderstanding.

Shannon Sharp
Alter Energy Corp.
Calgary AB

Time to reform provinces' alcohol policy

Never underestimate the ability of vested interests to protect their monopoly or near-monopoly positions. For a good example, consider the state of the booze industry in Canada.

In Ontario, a strike by Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO) employees almost occurred in the middle of last summer following union concerns about an increase in the number of part-time employees. Meanwhile, in New Brunswick last May, allegations arose about possible collusion between New Brunswick's liquor board and its suppliers.

Last winter in Saskatchewan, the opening of two private specialty win stores set off a public relations campaign by the government union warning about the "dangers" of private wine or beer sales. Apparently being able to buy your favourite Shiraz

or Sauvignon Blanc would be a clear and present danger.

These events highlight the curious nature of alcohol policy in Canada. With the exception of Alberta, every province has a government monopoly on the importation, distribution, and retail sale of alcohol. While some provinces make small allowances for private retailing, all retailers still receive their product from the government wholesaler. That creates an uneven playing field where government retailers always have the upper hand.

This antiquated system, a product of the post-Prohibition era, needs to change. Yet any discussion of reform is typically met with a hostile response from government unions. They fear losing their privi-

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Thanks from CLD

On behalf of everyone at Community Living Dufferin we offer our thanks to the community for your continued support of our 3rd annual ARTironadack Chairity fundraising event. This year \$3,128.00 was raised through our 4 raffles.

We offer our sincere thanks to members of CLD Options' woodworking group for building the table and chairs, to the artists Karen B and Karen M-F for painting the table and chairs and the quilters of the Dufferin Piecemakers Guild. Special thanks to the many volunteers who sold tickets to visitors at the Spring Home Show, the Farmers Market, Theatre Orangeville and to family and friends.

Thanks to the Orangeville Lions and the BIA for allowing us space to fundraise at the Home Show and Farmers Market.

Thanks to the members of Creative Partners on Stage for their support in affording us the opportunity to sell tickets during their performances of Beauty and the Beast at Theatre Orangeville.

And finally we offer congratulations to the 4 lucky winners.

Hibiscus table: Bea Chaney
Children's Jungle Chair: Kathy Majeski
Adult Tropical Chair: Marie Taylor
Community Quilt: Ann Somerville

We are already working on ideas for our 4th annual ARTironadack Chairity Fundraising Event.

Keep checking for news updates at www.communitylivingdufferin.blogspot.com

Community Living
Dufferin Fundraising
Committee

Concern over trains

I have seen a good deal of press regarding the probable excavation of gravel to the north of Orangeville and must add that none of what I have seen is good news for the area and its' residents. I do wonder, as I sympathize with those who live in the area of the said gravel operations, what effect the possibility of re-opening the rail line to the north will have on Orangeville.

How many trains will there be each day? How many rail cars will there be in each train? How long will it take these trains to pass through Orangeville from one end to the other? In other words will half of the town of Orangeville come to a halt for east and west bound traffic several times a day?

Imagine the economic damage that this will cause. Imagine if you will for just a minute what it would be like living in a house that is anywhere near the rail line. Imagine the chaos this will

cause. The west end of Orangeville will become a ghost town with drivers afraid of being stuck, waiting for huge freight trains to pass. The by-pass will become impassable.

Who has an explanation for this? To be viable, access to the rail line is needed and while farms may have been bought up to acquire the necessary land, I suggest that they, the gravel company, should not be able to halt an entire area of town in order to get their product to market.

This is a problem that is not going away and has many more effects than those mentioned above. Every person in town will probably be affected in one way or another, whether it be from noise, delay, economic loss, stress related health problems, the list goes on.

Just take a few minutes and think about how it will affect you, the reader.

Philip Barnes
Orangeville



Meagre
Musings

Dan
Pelton

Less handgun extremism, folks

I dropped in on the gun show at the Orangeville Fairgrounds Sunday of last week to take a few photos and chat with a few exhibitors.

I was greeted at the front by a woman who asked, in a pleasant and jocular manner, "are you pro-gun or anti-gun?"

Seeing where I was, I declared my undying devotion to firearms. "Right answer," she said with a laugh.

The whole exchange was obviously a joke, but one couldn't help but realize that it was not without its serious undertones. Few face a more severe public backlash than the handgun owner.

I should know, because I was once an advocate of the ban-the-handgun movement and would visibly recoil when somebody informed me that they owned one. My reasoning was plain enough. Handguns are unlike rifles and shotguns, insofar as they are manufactured for one true purpose, and that is to shoot people. After all, sportsmen do not go deer hunting with a .38.

Over the years, though, my viewpoint has been tempered. The first opinion-altering event happened at the home of my brother-in-law, a historic museum curator and antique specialist. He had this collection of swords, which I approved of and admired.

Then came the disturbing revelation. We treat the sword with noble reverence and — in the case of such pig-stickers as Excalibur — a sense of mysticism. Yet, were swords forged to harvest wheat? Were they there to cut down trees for firewood and keep our loved ones warm?

No. Their sole purpose was to shred the innards and slice off the heads of our foes. In other words, if I was going to be anti handgun, I should be anti sword and I wasn't.

Then, over the years, I met a number of handgun owners and collectors, and I had to admit that I had never run into such a conscientious bunch.

I will use a friend of mine in Thunder Bay as an example. He kept his handgun in a massive safe that little short of a Howitzer blast could penetrate. He made his own bullets, but kept the fixings hidden in separate parts of the house.

As well, he was very secretive and would only reveal to a trusted few that he possessed such firearms. Further investigation found that he was not a paranoid exception to the rule. He was typical of the many who fully comprehend that their hobby has an element of danger.

For every scumbag who carries his concealed illegal pistol and guns down a person to assert his manhood, there are many responsible, decent folks who are unfortunately lumped into the same group as the criminals.

Finally, at that Sunday's gun show, I couldn't help but admire the craftsmanship and symmetry of a .22-calibre pearl-handled Colt.

So, why do we have this hot, lava-filled divide between anti-handgun and pro-

handgun forces? I can only conclude that extremism on both sides has made this a black-and-white issue with no grey areas.

On one side, like it or not, the National Rifle Association and its inordinate number of vocal nut jobs has come to be regarded as the voice of the gun owner.

The NRA, in my opinion, has overreached in its defence of a U.S. constitutional right to bear arms stemming from conditions in the 18th Century. Call me naïve, but I'm convinced the British aren't going to attack again, anytime soon.

And I still remember a 60 Minutes segment from the 1980s, where the NRA was out in force to foil a local jurisdiction's efforts to ban a bullet that had the proven ability to pierce the body armour worn by police officers.

It was lunacy. The association was willing to jeopardize the lives of those sworn to protect society, just so it could ensure its warped American dream of a chicken in every pot and an M-16 in every closet.

On the other hand, you have the ardent anti-gun group who sees a handgun owner and almost automatically labels him an ultra-right, stogy-chomping redneck with the I.Q. of an acorn.

Yet, it's hardly a stretch to assume there are people that support gay marriage, are opposed to our involvement in Afghanistan and could still have a well-secured handgun in their home.

Then there was the billion-dollar folly of the federal gun registry that tried to strengthen firearm restrictions that, while not perfect, are strong enough to make Canada far less prone to gun violence than the U.S. The program was costly and largely ineffective.

From a personal perspective, could I go on a hunting trip, gaze down the sites and blast a hole in Bambi? No. It just isn't in my nature.

But do I support responsible hunters who pay their fees, obey the rules and significantly contribute to the ecosystem's well being in doing so? Yes. It doesn't make me a hypocrite.

Gun violence is a real and major concern in this country and the answer includes tough sentences for offenders and those who provide illegal handguns, and continued cognizance of the horrific consequences of their actions. Nobody wants a pathological killer or a sociopathic profiteer on the street.

The average Canadian, for the most part, does not have the inclination to own a handgun. The average Canadian who does own one is respectful and responsible. Work together to come up with effective gun control measures, not against each other to promote ideologies.