

Grrr-ash

Sioux Lookout
store roof
caves in

Chronicle - Apr 3/02



BRYAN MEADOWS/NORTHWEST BUREAU

ows smashed and merchandise was thrown across the street yesterday morning when a
n of roof collapsed at the Saan Store in Sioux Lookout.

o injuries in morning cave-in

BRYAN MEADOWS
NORTHWEST BUREAU

was as if a small bomb went

t's how provincial police
bed the damage to Sioux
ut's Saan Store after a sec-
f the store roof collapsed
day.

st. Bob Neelin said the
windows were blown out
bris and merchandise were

Saan vice-president Norm Noland could not be reached for comment, including information on how many employees might be affected by the store closure.

The Sioux Lookout Saan Store is one of about 250 across Canada. Dryden has a similar sized store.

Sioux Lookout's chief building official Allan Shaw said the building was built in the late 1980s.

A structural engineer is being brought in by the store's insur-

Street will be off-limits to pedestrians and vehicles until "we're sure there is no danger of the building collapsing further."

"It's better to be safe than sorry," he said.

Mayor John McDonald was surprised to hear about the collapse.

While snow levels "have been sneaking up on us," McDonald said, "there's not a lot of snow on the roofs in town."

Wind power proposals fall into Hydro's lap

BY KRIS KETONEN
THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

Thunder Bay continues to be a hotbed of power generation developments, with growing interest in building wind turbines in the city.

Thunder Bay Hydro general manager Larry Hebert said several companies have approached the utility with proposals for the turbines.

"Certainly it's a possibility," Hebert said. "We're not necessarily going to do them all on our own.

"We may look at supporting them . . . in terms of buying the output, or perhaps taking a small chunk

of the action and investing in them, to a degree."

Among the interested developers is the Thunder Bay Harbour Commission, which held preliminary talks with Hydro, port manager Dennis Johnson confirmed. They were looking at possible sites on the waterfront.

And a Fort William First Nation spokesman said band representatives talked with Hydro. They were interested in building a generator on Mount McKay as a pilot project.

Hebert said there are many possible sites, but developers would need to ensure the turbines are close to where the power is being used.

"Wind power is not — for whatever reason, probably because it's not consistent all the time — something that you want to be sending a long way," Hebert said, adding the voltage doesn't travel over long distances.

The only downside he's seen is turbines sometimes claim the lives of birds, which occasionally fly into the spinning blades.

That's more common on big wind farms, where many turbines are running.

The turbines wouldn't be the main source of supply, but they would augment current power sources, Hebert said.

The noise is minimal, and the power is environmentally friendly.

Hebert's words come on the heels of last week's announcement that Toronto will house the first downtown wind turbine in Canada.

The 65-metre turbine with 29-metre blades will stand in Toronto's Exhibition Place, a news release states.

The turbine will produce enough power for about 250 homes and displace large amounts of carbon dioxide, sulphur dioxide and nitrous oxide — the main ingredients in acid rain, smog and ground-level ozone.

Dryden council boosts tax, water-sewage rates

BY BRYAN MEADOWS
NORTHWEST BUREAU

Dryden ratepayers will have to dig into their pockets this year to pay for a 14-per-cent hike in municipal taxes and higher sewer and water rates.

Mayor Sid Wintle said the city's 2002 budget "takes the rest of the blow from last year" when the province reduced the Dryden pulp and paper mill's tax assessment by more than \$400,000.

By unanimous vote, council approved the city's \$20-million budget at a meeting last evening.

With education taxes the same for 2002, the overall tax increase translates to about 9.5 per cent more for residential ratepayers and 6.15 per cent for the commercial sector.

Heavy industry ratepayers like Weyerhaeuser's Dryden mill won't be hit with a municipal tax increase this year due to provincial legislation which caps tax hikes for the industrial sector.

For an average Dryden homeowner, the city's budget will add about \$150 a year to the tax bill.

Council had wrestled with the budget for several months.

Finance chairman Bill Brown called the budget process "a difficult task . . . in a spirit of compromise . . . we have faced the tough decisions."

Brown said the budget meets its goals of leaving the city with one of the lowest tax rates in the area, while continuing delivery of outstanding services and improving infrastructure.

City treasurer Paul Heayn said the budget includes more than \$6.2 million in capital expenditures, up from \$5 million in 2001.

The budget calls for half a million dollars to be spent on developing a blueprint for future infrastructure, and water and sewer system upgrades; \$1 million for a new auditorium; \$540,000 for reconstruction of the Duke Street bridge; \$409,000 in road construction and paving; \$530,000 for arena roof replacements; and \$314,000 in pool upgrades including a \$100,000 water slide and \$161,000 for roof repairs.

Capital projects put aside for next year include a \$1.5-million renovation project for the public safety building and fire station, and a \$750,000 ladder fire truck.

Council faced increases in long-term care levies, health unit fees, recycling costs and employee wages in the 2002 budget.

The city has to pay about \$122,000 more to Pinecrest's Home for the Aged for long-term care, another 1.8 per cent to the Northwestern Health Unit and a 1.5-per-cent increase in salaries for its unionized employees.

"It's not a number (14 per cent) we wanted to pass on, but many of the charges are out of our hands," Wintle said.

Last year, Dryden ratepayers were hit with an eight-per-cent municipal tax increase.

The 2002 budget will also hike water and sewer charges for residential ratepayers by 20 per cent.

Effective July 1, water fees will increase to \$24 per month from \$20, and the sewer surcharge will rise from 64 per cent of the water rate to 84 per cent — from \$11 a month to \$20.

Brown said the higher levies "are necessary to cover capital costs and make the utilities self-sufficient."

Chronicle - Apr 16/02

Town faces paramedic crunch

Only full-time ambulance service staffer packing it in this month

BY CARL CLUTCHEY
NORTH SHORE BUREAU

MANITOUWADGE

Manitouwadge's beleaguered ambulance service will be down to a team of part-timers if it doesn't find some full-time paramedics before the end of the month.

Dave Schleier, the lone full-time paramedic left in the mining town, said his last day is April 26.

Schleier said he's leaving because he's uncomfortable with the prospect of being the sole full-timer, and having to be on call more than 20 days a month.

"Once I'm gone, I don't how they're going to manage," Schleier, who is leaving

after 10 years, said yesterday.

Rick Trombley, the other full-time veteran, has already left.

Schleier said staffing levels and morale at the ambulance bay were fine until early December.

But when the service made management changes, it lost the support of union paramedics and morale deteriorated, Schleier said.

The ambulance service, which operates on an annual budget of about \$270,000 and gets about 200 calls a year, is managed by Manitouwadge General Hos-

pital under a contract with the City of Thunder Bay.

That arrangement will stop at the end of August because the hospital says it's become too much of a burden.

"It's a lot of work for our staff, there's no remuneration for it, and if you run a deficit, that has to be picked up by the hospital," Manitouwadge General chief administrator Judy Harris said.

After August, the city will have to find a new operator or run the Manitouwadge service.

Glen Oram, an area rep for the Canadian Auto Workers union, said the problem of having one person on call for long stretches could be solved if the service

was given money to hire more full-time staff.

Harris said the hospital is actively looking to find full-time paramedics, but so far no replacements have been lined up.

Much of Northern Ontario is suffering from a paramedic shortage.

Schleier, who makes about \$22 per hour, said the issue for him is not about money.

He said he doesn't think he'll have to work too hard to find another job.

Since making the decision to leave Manitouwadge, other ambulance services have been calling to offer him work, Schleier said.

Chronicle - Apr 17/02

Eves forms new provincial cabinet

Opposition MPPs are taking a close look at Ernie Eves' new provincial cabinet.

Eves was sworn in on April 15, as Ontario's 23rd premier and shortly after, revealed his new cabinet.

Among the changes was moving Jim Wilson from the Environment and Energy portfolio to the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines. Former northern development minister Dan Newman became associate minister of health and long-term care.

NDP leader and MPP for Kenora-Rainy River Howard Hampton does not see Wilson's appointment as a step forward for Northern Ontario.

"Putting Jim Wilson in charge of the northern economy is like asking a black bear to protect the berry patch. Quite frankly, Wilson is the last person the North needs now," he said, noting the minister's last job was spearheading the move to sell off Ontario's public power system.

Other moves include: Jerry Ouellette, Minister of

Natural Resources; Elizabeth Witmer, Minister of Education and deputy premier; and Janet Ecker's rise to Finance Minister.

Former deputy premier and finance minister Jim Flaherty is given responsibility for a new cabinet position, the Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation. Eves also created a Ministry of Public Safety and Security, responsible for jails, police and anti-terrorist measures.

Chris Hodgson moves to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, which has expanded to focus on both rural and urban issues, as well as Smart Growth.

Others in the new cabinet are:

- Norm Sterling — Transportation

- Bob Runciman — Public Safety and Security

- Dianne Cunningham — Training, Colleges and Universities

- David Tsubouchi — Chair of Management Board and Culture minister

- Cam Jackson —

Tourism and Recreation

- Chris Stockwell — Environment and Energy minister, government house leader

- Tim Hudak — Consumer and Business Services

- Brenda Elliot — Community, Family and Children's Services

- Brad Clark — Labour

- David Young — Attorney General and minister responsible for native affairs.

- Helen Johns — Agriculture and Food

- Carl DeFarla — Citizenship and minister responsible for seniors

- David Turnbull — Associate minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation

- John Baird — Associate minister of Francophone Affairs, chief government whip and deputy house leader

- Dan Newman — Associate minister, Health and Long Term Care

- Brian Coburn — Associate minister, Municipal affairs and Housing.

- Tina Molinari — Associate minister, Municipal Affairs and Housing. ☆

Power

Chronicle
Apr 26/02

Grid sale still on the books

THE CANADIAN PRESS

TORONTO — The Ontario government will forge ahead with the \$5-billion sale of the province's electricity grid in what is expected to be the largest share offering in Canadian history. Premier Ernie Eves said yesterday.

Leaving nothing to chance, Eves said the province will appeal a court ruling blocking the sale, rewrite the legislation on which the ruling was based and hold "meaningful" public hearings.

"It's important to send a signal that we are proceeding with the restructuring of the electricity sector," Eves said after a cabinet and caucus meeting.

"It's important that Hydro One be privatized."

The government will start a "consultative process with the people of Ontario" as soon as possible, Eves said, although he made it plain the government will not change its mind.

"It's important to the future of the province of Ontario that they have a supply of electricity in the future at reasonable cost," said Eves, who acknowledged "there's a lot of concern" over the government's plans.

Critics, who argue there's no benefit for the province in selling off the transmission grid, greeted Eves' announcement with scorn, especially his promise to give the people of the province a say.

"These public hearings are just a sham," said Liberal Leader Dalton McGuinty, who called on Eves to scrap his plans pending another election.

"Sure he's going to consult but he's told us that he's not going to listen. He's going ahead with this come heck or high water."

But Eves said he expected to

"there is some confusion" between the deregulation of the power-generating side of the business on May 1 and the sale of the transmission wires.

Paul Kahnert of the Ontario Electricity Coalition said no one's confused.

"Deregulation has not worked anywhere in the world and nobody wants it here," Kahnert said.

Critics argue that deregulation and privatization will lead to soaring power prices and blackouts.

Even the man in charge of the agency created during California's power crisis to ensure a long-term supply of electricity had an ominous warning for Ontario residents yesterday.

"We were all naive, hoodwinked, mesmerized by the idea that competition was just inherently so much more attractive and so much better than monopoly — how wrong we were," David S. Freeman, chairman of the California Power Authority, told an electricity forum in Toronto just moments before Eves' announcement.

"Here (in Ontario) you're taking the Crown jewels, the most precious assets owned by the people of this province and literally giving them away at half price."

But Eves and Energy Minister Chris Stockwell argued that the old Ontario Hydro had racked up \$38 billion in debt and had become a fiscal albatross. They said



Ernie Eves

al med school ahead

LLY
NICLE-JOURNAL

the principal players with the Northern med-agree it is a done Thunder Bay's Lakehead University and Laurentian in Sudbury will be partners in the venture.

ing the relationship Lakehead and Laurentianities, my understanding they have negotiated partnership arrangements that the Northern Ontario school is to be a part of the two universities, said dean Dr. Roger Falter by e-mail from Sudbury.

he says is quite accurate, Laurentian president Herter said.

nt venture has been approved in principle by Lakehead University," Falter said.

done deal? Absolutely. no issues between the two.

de - Apr 28/02

The formal announcement could come May 14 when Premier Ernie Eves is in Thunder Bay for a fundraiser.

"It's an opportunity for the premier to do that," Lakehead president Fred Gilbert said.

"We fully understand that for this venture to succeed, it has to be an equal and co-operative exercise between the two of us," he said.

Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) executives also expect good news from the province.

"We have no reason to believe otherwise," president Ron Nelson said.

"All indications show a positive response."

NOMA second vice-president Lynn Peterson agreed.

"I believe we're all on the same page. We all anticipate an announcement fairly soon."

However, Rene Larson, a member of the medical school implementation management committee, is proceeding with caution.

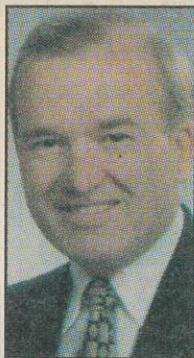
"The terms of reference have not changed," he said of the government decision to have the main campus at Laurentian and a satellite campus at Lakehead.

For the original decision to be altered, Larson said, Training, Colleges and Universities Minister Dianne Cunningham must change the terms of reference.

"She must give the government a formal definition and approval of the medical school."

Larson said the committee is preparing a report on both models for the school.

The report and cost of the options was to



Rene Larson

have been presented to the government yesterday.

New hydro market generates confusion

Deregulation in Ontario kicks in Wednesday

THE CANADIAN PRESS

TORONTO — For first-time home buyer Scott Millar, deciding how to pay for his electricity is as complicated as choosing his mortgage terms.

The 30-year-old resident of Ajax, Ont., had to choose between a floating-rate mortgage or lock in at a fixed rate.

Starting Wednesday, Millar and millions of other Ontario consumers will face similar decisions with their hydro bills. They can be billed by their local utility based on market rates — monthly charges could rise or fall depending on the wholesale price of electricity after May 1.

Or they could sign a contract with a licensed retailer that will charge a fixed rate.

"It's extremely confusing," Millar says. "I'm not a commodities trader, and I have no idea what effect deregulation will have on the price of electricity over the long term... even the short term."

He adds: "It's really difficult to know who is providing valuable advice and who is just trying to get more money from me."

Millar is not alone in being confused about the opening of Ontario's electricity market to competition Wednesday, when the at-cost, non-profit delivery of electricity gives way to prices determined by supply and demand.

Combined with the planned \$5-billion selloff of the Hydro One electrical transmission company — one of the successors to Ontario Hydro — the Ontario government maintains a deregulated market will bring new competition, improve efficiency and inevitably generate better prices for consumers.

Critics fear taking away public control will result in suppliers, utilities and retailers focused too much on bottom-line performance over providing affordable, reliable service.

"What you end up with is less supply and market manipulation, not market discipline," says Paul Kahnert of the Ontario Electricity Coalition, a non-profit organi-

OPEN MARKET

A look at some of the changes consumers will see when the Ontario electricity market opens to competition Wednesday, according to the Consumers Council of Canada:

- The biggest change is in how electricity will be priced. Beginning Wednesday, the Independent Electricity Market Operator (IMO), a government-regulated organization, will operate a wholesale market with competitive buying and selling of power. The IMO will set the spot price of electricity hour-by-hour based on the forces of supply and demand.

- You can choose standard supply service or a fixed-rate retail contract. With standard supply service, you buy electricity from your local utility at a price that reflects the variable rate for electricity on the wholesale electricity market. With a retail contract, you buy electricity at a fixed rate from a licensed retailer for up to five years. Regardless of your choice, your local utility will deliver electricity to your home.

- Your electricity bill will break down all costs involved in bringing electricity into your home. These include generation price, distribution costs (charges for account maintenance and for transporting electricity) and charges to retire debts left by the former Ontario Hydro monopoly.

— THE CANADIAN PRESS

zation opposed to deregulation.

"This has happened with every market deregulation in the world."

Kahnert fears price increases like those that hit Alberta, where the average wholesale price of electricity more than doubled in the first three months of market deregulation.

• Continued on page A5

THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

Monday

Power options could mean nightmare

• Continued from page A1

The head of the Power Pool of Alberta — that province's electricity exchange — says prices indeed rose dramatically after Jan. 1, 2001.

"We had the high spikes in natural gas in late 2000 and early 2001. That combined with some of the external market forces — California was going through a crisis situation and that drove up the overall market here in the western part of North America," says Lorry Wilson, the Alberta power pool's chief executive.

But Wilson says consumers have since become better acquainted with how market forces impact the electricity price.

"For Ontario, this is going to be an evolution," he says. "It is going to take some time for the marketplace to adapt and adjust."

In the meantime, Ontario homeowners and businesses struggle to sort through their options.

"This is nightmarishly complicated," says Tom Adams of Energy Probe, an industry watchdog.

"We are moving from a system where Ontario Hydro set the rate for the whole bill, to a new system where the commodity portion will float according to market conditions," he says.

Where that price will go is unclear. There are both costs and potential savings associated with converting from a monopoly system to a more competitive marketplace.

In the market, generators will submit offers to supply power into the province's electricity grid in different quantities and prices each hour of the day. Every five minutes, the Independent Electricity Market Operator (IMO) — which will manage Ontario's electricity exchange — will calculate a new spot-market price by balancing supply with demand.

Consumers have two options: do nothing and continue to receive electricity at market rates; or sign a long-term contract with a licensed retailer at a fixed rate.

Doing nothing — receiving electricity under Standard Supply Service — could result in a bill that fluctuates wildly from month to month.

Retailers have gone door-to-door trying to convince homeowners they offer security in a fixed-price arrangement.

"Prices could be very volatile and nobody seems to really know where prices are going," says Paul Massara, president of Canadian operations for Direct Energy, a private power trading company.

"What we're offering people is the ability to lock in at a fixed price and know with certainty what their fuel costs in terms of electricity will be going forward."

Outside the commodity charge, the Ontario Energy Board says distribution costs — the cost of transporting electric-

ity from a power station to your home — will be between 1 and 10 per cent.

Energy Probe's Adams indicates bills will be higher in the short term.

Distribution costs "regulated" part of an electricity bill. Regulated costs include the debt of the former Ontario Hydro and charges for service of the IMO.

For the unregulated part of the bill, many customers are worried about the market, but it's difficult to bet on the outcome.

On the demand side, a change in weather — such as a cold snap — will affect the commodity price.

On the supply side, the IMO will control about 70 per cent of the market, which has critics worried about pricing power. The IMO will reduce its market presence to 10 per cent within 10 years.

Several large companies, including the province, including steel and mining companies, it will take too long for competitors to emerge.

Adams, however, predicts it will be reasonably competitive.

The IMO, another spinoff, says it's ready to handle the transition.

"We're trying to build a fair, competitive market where everybody who wants to be a fair, competitive market," says spokesman Kevin Doherty.

He says IMO has been successful in California, where it has helped attract new power stations and address the problem of aging power plants.

"History is helping us," says Earl.

"We're not sitting here waiting for a black-out, we're going to have blackouts a chance."

Alberta faced blackouts due to tight power supply. Ontario has not had a single blackout due to supply concerns, Wilson says. He says the IMO will help attract new power stations and address the problem of aging power plants.

"We have invested in new power plants when you look at the pressed interest," he says.

The IMO will let such as TransAlta and there's a need for new power in Ontario. It will also let dictations, including American states, know an opportunity to sell power.

OPG's Earl says it will attract significant investment in Ontario. And the quick market share in Ontario can concentrate on the United States.

Chronicle - Apr 29/02

Council prepares for 14 per cent tax increase

(continued from page 1)
of Dryden Hydro, the city's reserves would fall to \$1.7 million in order to interim finance these projects, as well as manage a \$400,000 sewage treatment project for which there was no provincial funding.

Coun. Brian England expressed concern about taking that route, saying a \$2 million reserve is generally advised to guard against emergency situations or sudden shortfalls in revenue.

"I see clouds amassing in the sky and I'm certain we're going to see some lightning bolts," he commented.

Among the problems facing council are large levies from regional organizations trying to balance their own budgets as they deal with provincial cutbacks.

Heayn noted approximately half of Dryden's \$15 million budget is outside of council's control. This includes levy increases from the Kenora District Home for the Aged, Northwest Ontario Recycle Association, Northwestern Health Unit and the Kenora District Services Board.

Wintle stressed 5.5

cent of this year's tax increase can be attributed to those operating expenses alone. ★

Ontario may lease hydro grid

BY COLIN PERKEL
THE CANADIAN PRESS

TORONTO — Just hours after storming out of a heated public hearing on the planned sale of Ontario's power grid, Energy Minister Chris Stockwell abruptly acknowledged yesterday there may be a better way to go.

Instead of a \$5-billion privatization plan for Hydro One slated for this fall that has critics howling and ratepayers scratching their heads, Stockwell is now entertaining the idea that it be leased to the private sector.

The apparent departure from the original Conservative plan came after a day that began in disarray for Stockwell, who bolted from the first public hearings into the sale after being booed by a handful of spectators.

"It makes sense, we'll review it," Stockwell said of the idea of leasing the grid to private operators on a long-term basis.

"It's a different process. You still go through the privatization process, it just has a term and after 25 years and that term is up ... it reverts back to public ownership."

The idea, which the Finance Ministry is now studying, was put forward yester-

day by Dr. Cal Stiller, who was scheduled to make a presentation to the hearings in London, Ont.

And after listening to the government insist for months that Hydro One had to be sold off, critics wasted no time pouncing on Stockwell's willingness to entertain a different approach.

"This is clearly amateur hour," said New Democrat Leader Howard Hampton.

"We have a government that apparently is going to make up policy on the fly with respect to an essential service. This government obviously doesn't have a clue."

Earlier in the day, a frustrated Stockwell bolted from the hotel hearing room after someone in the audience tried to ask a question.

"We're not doing that," said Stockwell, who threatened to shut down the hearing, then made good on his threat after just 25 minutes when the jeering continued.

"All right, fine. Let's adjourn," he said before storming out.

Retiree Frank Green, who held up an anti-privatization sign during the brief hearing, called it "atrocious" the government is "ramming" through the sale of Hydro One.

*"This is clearly
amateur hour."*

Howard Hampton
NDP Leader

Chronicle - May 1/92

AA: 87

Real Estate/Column

Pickle
Lake

eme Mackechnie

The Pickle Lake Curling Club held the year-end wrap up on April 20th with an ender-bender at the Community Hall. Is there a budding disc jockey out there? We need someone to come forward to be Pickle Lake's resident disc spinner (of course you need the requisite equipment - phone 928-2034).

Paulette and Donny Macklin are the proud parents of a new bouncing baby boy - baby came early but still weighed in at 7.7 - congratulations.

Fern and Bob Beliski are back from their annual jaunt to Hawaii - Bob is already back in the groove working hard to compute the winning Super 7 numbers.

Cause for celebration - Pickle Lake's budget is on track - no tax increases for the next year. It did take some juggling and some spending cuts but council and staff were able to do it.

Having Chuck Abbey and Heather to help us out in the process did help - thanks to Carolyn for her hard work and long hours. We are still without a Clerk/Treasurer but Caroline has stepped in to temporarily fill that gap.

The old Koval garage collapsed. Fortunately there was no one hurt. The building was unoccupied but had become a favorite stop-over for local drifters. The town has taken steps to demolish some of the derelict buildings on that property.

I met Mr. Barkman gas-sing up at the Mini Mart. He was driving a new Medical Services Band vehicle up to Sachigo. It was quite the vehicle, a mini bus equipped with a wheel chair lift and all the other bells and whistles.

Norm Van Tassel told me he had another birthday. Happy Birthday Norm

- older but no wiser - who stole Norm's groceries?

Doug Edmund has a new houseguest and a new girlfriend. From all indications she has found a job at Wasaya Petroleum. Welcome to Pickle Lake, Katherine.

Speaking of petrol - Dave Marshall is back from Terrace Bay, and is pumping AV gas for Carter Rice. This is a stop gap measure until someone is trained to take over.

Canterra will be back into Pickle Lake in May. They will be employing approximately 30 people at their mining operation at the Pickle Crow - first they need to set up an office and to hire a secretary. There should be some skilled people available for work as the Musselwhite Mine has undergone quite a lay-off.

The Salvation Army

Store has closed. Sadly it was under utilized and was not making enough to pay even the heating. However, it does free that space should Canterra be interested in a downtown office.

What broomball team was relieved of 52 mickeys before leaving Pickle Lake to return home? Going to a dry reserve? Remember, you can't take in any alcohol, even for personal use.

Who is the Captain and who is the First Mate? Watch for the new jet boat once the ice is off the lake.

Graeme Mackechnie

NAN leader discusses co-operation with NOMA

Native and non-native communities need to co-operate in an effort to improve the quality of life all in Northern Ontario. That was the message Goyce Kakegamic delivered to NOMA delegates at their recent convention in Thunder Bay.

Kakegamic, the deputy band chief of the Nishnabek Aski Nation, discussed Northern Ontario's two options, isolation or cooperation.

"Neither of us can do it alone," he concluded, dismissing the efforts to improve the economic opportunities for northern Ontario.

Kakegamic was speaking about self-government. He assured delegates First Nations are not seeking to separate themselves from Canada, but take greater control of economic development opportunities in their communities.

This includes more say in issues of education and culture and more control of their lands and resources.

"What is fair in regards to land and resources? It is not what we are getting now," he stressed. ★



Goyce Kakegamic spoke at NOMA

Staff photo

Wa sta, - May 16/02

Cycling across the Ontario landscape – for a cause



submitted photo

Sightseeing takes on new meaning – Paul Blasig displays his chosen mode of transport. Blasig, a registered nurse with Health Canada, will be taking a one year absence from work in order to undertake an incredible journey that will take him from Windigo Lake (the most northern point in Ontario, accessible by an all weather road) to Pelee Point (the furthest southern point in Ontario.) Blasig, who has been an R.N. for two and half years, is bicycling the 2,400 k.m. stretch to raise funds and awareness for the Out of the Cold Shelter in Sioux Lookout. As of last year, Blasig has been living and working at the Mishkeegogamang Nursing Station. Blasig estimates the trip will take him about three and a half weeks to complete. He says people wishing to donate money to support the shelter may do so by writing a cheque payable to the Out of the Cold Shelter and sending it to St. Andrew's United Church, P.O. Box 219, Sioux Lookout, Ont., P8T 1A3 or contact The Rev. Susan Barclay at (807)737-1148.

Regional health officer talks tough on issue of smoking in restaurants

BY CARL CLUTCHEY
NORTH SHORE BUREAU

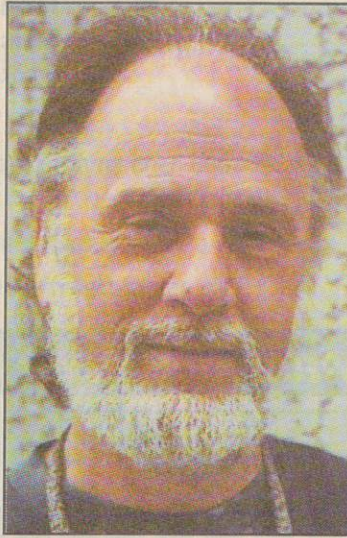
Kenora's outspoken medical health officer is turning up the heat on the region's 3,000 restaurants, bars and other businesses that allow customers and employees to light up.

And Dr. Pete Sarsfield, who claims to have the authority to take the controversial measure, isn't just blowing smoke.

Starting June 3, Northwestern Health Unit will begin sending notices to business owners ordering them to eliminate second-hand cigarette smoke from their premises.

If they don't comply with the order, Sarsfield — who expects the move to be challenged in court — says violators could face fines of up to \$25,000.

"I'm not just a wide-eyed fanatic on this," Sarsfield insisted yesterday. "We have been trying for four years (without success) to get our 19 municipalities to pass non-smoking bylaws."



Dr. Pete Sarsfield

Sarsfield says he's within his rights to declare second-hand smoke a health hazard under Ontario's little-known Health Protection and Promotion Act.

The Ministry of Health said yesterday it is reviewing the "applicability of a health hazard

when it comes to second-hand smoke" — something the provincial government has not done.

Over the past four years, Sarsfield says he's made his share of enemies by his tough stance on the second-hand smoke issue.

His latest attack on smoking didn't fail to anger those who could be affected most.

"He's stated many times that he doesn't care about us at all," said Kenora bar owner Marc Bissonnette, who fears his business could drop by nearly half if he bans smoking.

Bissonnette says he'll seek legal advice if he receives an order notice.

Sarsfield said he can't do his job properly and also worry about the impact on operators like Bissonnette.

"My job is to protect public health," he said. "If I start worrying about someone's business falling off by 10 or 20 per cent, I won't be able to do my job."

Kenora Mayor Dave Canfield said he doesn't doubt Sarsfield's

expertise on health issues, but wonders if this latest approach against smoking is too heavy-handed.

A municipal smoking bylaw that would target restaurants and bars isn't in the cards because the City of Kenora lacks the staff to enforce it, the mayor added.

"We don't need that headache," said Canfield, a non-smoker.

Many Kenora restaurants are already smoke-free, giving consumers lots of choice, Canfield added.

NDP Leader Howard Hampton, who represents the Kenora-Rainy River region, applauded Sarsfield's stand because he says eliminating smoking could save the province billions in health-care costs.

Thunder Bay medical officer of health Dr. David Williams, meanwhile, will not be following Sarsfield's lead.

"It is not our intention to follow a similar approach," said Thunder Bay District Health Unit spokeswoman Eileen Dias.

Chronicle - May 25/02

Council agrees on smoking bylaw

By Warner Bloomfield
A smoke-free workplace law will be voted on by Dryden city council on June 1.

Council agreed at last night's committee of the whole meeting to give the law its first and second readings at the next regular meeting. The bylaw will receive its third reading following a public meeting later in the month.

The City of Dryden senior management team has spent much of the past half year studying the issue of smoking in the workplace and developing the bylaw in response to pressure from the Coalition for Healthy Dryden and the Northwestern Health Unit. Monday night's decision allowed an announcement next week that Dr. Pete Sarsfield is now preparing health orders for more than 100 bars and restaurants

bylaws.

May 31 is also World No Tobacco Day. The NHU set that day as the deadline on Feb. 25, when Dr. Sarsfield issued his declaration that second-hand smoke was a public health hazard.

"What I would prefer is that the province be the lead hand. However the province has consistently said it's not biting and prefers the municipalities do it," Dr. Sarsfield said in an interview.

With the exception of Ear Falls, which recently passed a no-smoking bylaw to go into effect this fall, and a few other communities like the City of Dryden which have stated they are preparing bylaws for debate, regional municipalities are not responding to the health unit's call for a ban on smoking in public establishments.

Dr. Sarsfield noted that,

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Council agrees on bylaw

(continued from page 1)
obeyed, may result in fines.

Compliance with the orders will be enforced through spot checks and complaints, he explained.

"He's going to do what he's going to do," Dryden Mayor Sid Wintle said, adding council planned to proceed as it sees fit.

The medical officer of health conceded he is likely to face opposition to the action and the matter is bound to end up in court.

"I expect they will say I

haven't got the right to take action on that. I am assured by our lawyers that I can probably win," he said, observing such a case could set a precedent in Ontario and possibly across the country.

"Other medical officers of health have told me that they see this as a test case. They want to see what happens. If I win, they will go ahead," Dr. Sarsfield explained.

The health unit is currently looking at upwards

of 2,700 businesses which could receive the orders. That number could drop if municipalities passed smoking bylaws since that would remove the need for a health order, he said.

"This is nuts. It's an insane way to spend your tax dollars," Dr. Sarsfield said. He views the province's refusal to address the issue of second-hand smoke as political cowardice.

Coun. Joe Delaney, who also owns a restaurant in

Dryden, said he objects to a blanket ban of smoking in the workplace, preferring to see market forces settle the matter.

He said that he could support a bylaw that restricted smoking where minors would be exposed to second-hand smoke. ★

r Falls seeks own land use

oug Pronger

lls continues its
the release of
nd for housing
nts. The township
ting to buy water-
and in the mean-
veloping recently-
Crown land with-
al boundaries.

land has always
issue for our small
y," said Mayor
lain.

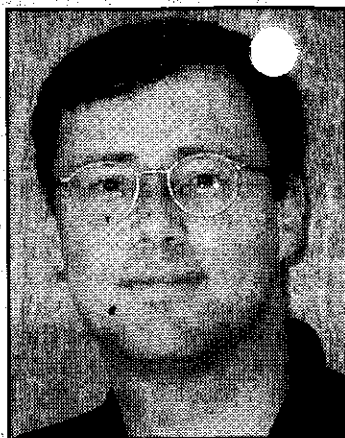
sawmill was devel-
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munity so we are
18 residential lots
il. We're currently
or market value
ts to purchase the
om the Ministry of
esources," he said.
ing road would be

extended to develop the lots
in the Goldpines area, possi-
bly by the summer of 2003.

Following up on public
demand for greater flexibili-
ty and larger lot size, the
township created nine lots of
about five to eight acres in
size, designated rural-resi-
dential, allowing people to
build a horse barn, large
garage or other secondary
component on the property.
Three of the lots, along High-
ways 105 and 804, have
already sold.

The township has entered
into an agreement with a
local real estate agent to
market an additional 107
standard-sized lots serviced
with water, sewer, natural
gas, and paved road, priced at
\$5,000 each.

McClain said more people



*Ear Falls
Mayor Geoff McClain*

are residing in the communi-
ty instead of commuting to
work at the Weyerhaeuser
sawmill. Ontario Power Gen-
eration's commitment to
build a 12-megawatt gener-
ating station at Ear Falls has
advanced to the process of
selecting a contractor for con-
struction and design of the
facility. When that project
materializes, McClain specu-
lates short-term rental
accommodation will be at a
premium. ☆

*Dryden Observer
May 28/02*

Drunken Observer May 28/02

Machin mayor resigns

By Doug Pronger

At the mid-point of his three-year term, Arne Bratland has resigned as Mayor of the Municipality of Machin.

The Vermilion Bay resident said that, with the pressures of business — he owns two stores and a restaurant — he couldn't do

both jobs and do them both well. Deputy Mayor Sandra Walkey took on the mayor's role after Bratland stepped down at the end of April.

"I enjoyed my time as mayor, but it's quite different than 16 years ago when I served as reeve," Bratland said, adding, "It's the same job but with all the govern-

ment downloading it's a lot more work. Municipal politics doesn't pay much and the time had come to put business and family first."

He said the municipality did not want to incur the expense of an election and would advertise and appoint a replacement to

(continued on page 2)

Machin mayor resigns

(continued from page 1)
the Machin council.

Bratland and his wife Margo have remodeled the restaurant beside Bratland's Gift and Fishing

Tackle. They've renamed it "Buster B's" and created a "moose-oriented" theme with a "fun" menu for the smoke-free restaurant. He also owns and operates

Moose Creek Trading Company in Vermilion Bay.

"The real village is heating up for the tourists," Bratland said, pointing out that the May long weekend traffic indicated a good start to the season. ★

Water rates spark hot debate

BY BRYAN MEADOWS
NORTHWEST BUREAU

With some discontent, Dryden city council has approved hikes in water and sewer rates for ratepayers.

By a 4-2 vote, council passed motions last night increasing the monthly charge for residential users to \$24 from \$20 per month; and the sewage rate from \$11 to almost \$20 per month.

Similar hikes in commercial water and sewer rates, effective July 1, were also approved.

That raised the ire of Coun. Joe Delaney.

Delaney said he wanted to see changes in business classifications under the waterworks utility bylaw before rates were changed.

"I'd prefer to see the categories adjust-

DRYDEN

ed to achieve some degree of fairness," he said.

"In some cases, businesses are paying exorbitant rates."

Delaney maintained the "rate structure is so far out" for businesses.

Examples in the bylaw include: a restaurant pays \$102.90 per month compared to a one-unit car wash which is charged \$46.50 per month and funeral homes \$47.10 per month.

Coun. Brian England said there was no debate by council about the proposed water and sewer rate increases when the budget was approved last month.

"This is not the end of the rate increases," England said.

He said the day is coming when municipal water utilities "will be self-pay-

ing utilities including capital (expenditures)."

City engineer Brad Johns suggested council hold off on any changes in business classifications because the provincial government is to establish new regulations for municipal water utilities.

Coun. Velma Silver, who also voted against the rate hikes, said the increases are another case for user-pay and water metering in the city.

Dryden council backed away from a plan to install water meters in March 1993, citing questionable financial returns.

A \$50,000 water use study is to look at costs, implementation and validation for installing meters, giving council a better idea of how much water is used by residents and businesses.

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May 31/02

Machin has a new mayor

NORTHWEST BUREAU

The Municipality of Machin has a new mayor.

Sandra Walkey has taken over the post following the resignation of Arne Bratland.

Bratland said yesterday that he felt he wasn't doing a proper job.

"There was too much going on," said Bratland, who owns two gifts shops and a restaurant in Vermilion Bay.

Walkey had been deputy mayor.

Council plans to fill the vacant councillor-at-large seat by appointment and has advertised in a local newspaper for interested parties to apply by June 7. So far, one person has submitted a resume.



Letters to the Editor



AA '87

anti-smoking issue Pickle Lake

ould seem that the
western Health Unit
king to divide towns
smoking issue. In
Lake the non-smok-
law seems to be the
' raison d'être.
ncil itself is divided,
n on the side of the
40 per cent who op-
restrictive no smok-
icy so one may view
roach as sour grapes,
er those who would
an anti-smoking by-
pushing it with such
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alem Witch Hunts—
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has teeth and that
okers mean busi-
ever to victimize or
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o intimidate.
the federal and pro-
governments in their
will not touch the
g issue with a ten-
tch; it is a powder
ting to explode and
does it may scatter
So, knowing the
"fools rush in where
ear to tread" and in
with the govern-

ment's downloading policy: give it to the municipal governments to deal with. There are a few municipalities who have seen the side stepping for what it is but not Pickle Lake's town fathers.

Now, if a person is addicted to drugs which are infected and does not want to quit, the government will pay for that person to have clean needles; if that person wants help, the government supplies access to programs to help. If a person is an alcoholic, that person is viewed as suffering from a disease or illness, the government will again pay for a cure or rehabilitation.

So, where is the free nicoban or ziban to help the individual addicted to nicotine?

Generally bad gases and fumes which are harmful to your health can be monitored and deemed acceptable if they fall below an established criteria of so many parts per million. Not so with second-hand cigarette smoke. It would seem that even one molecule per million is one molecule too many.

I would never advocate smoking, but non-smokers and smokers should have equal rights. Businesses do not need the extra expense of special signage; taxpayers do not need the extra expense of enforcing another bylaw and people do not need to lose the freedom of choice.

*Graeme Mackechnie
Pickle Lake*

NWHU weighs in again on no-smoking issue

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the

members of the Sioux Lookout Heart Health Coalition for their hard work. These volunteers have found themselves at the front line of the smoke-free bylaw issue in their community. I know from personal experience that there are people in most of the communities where smoke-free bylaws are being discussed who feel the need to voice their negative feelings about such a bylaw at high volume and accompanied by cursing and rudeness. I suspect that volunteers in the local coalitions are sometimes at the receiving end of such tirades. This is indeed unfortunate.

When the Northwestern Health Unit determined, in 2002, to deal with the significant public health hazard of second-hand tobacco smoke in indoor spaces we knew that what we were requiring represents a change from the regular behavior of the smoking public and as such would likely meet with resistance. We also knew that there would be resistance from some in the hospitality business because their business sector stands to be impacted by such a change in behavior, and their understandable fear that such impact will be economically negative.

Mr. Michael Perley, Director of Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco, was recently invited to the Northwest by the health unit to address this. He asserts that if the studies that have been funded in some way by the tobacco industry are eliminated from consideration and we look only at those that are based on the real numbers found in

sales tax data information, the studies indicate no net negative impact on the hospitality industry as a result of smoke-free bylaws.

But even knowing that we were going to face resistance, we also knew that the vast (but unfortunately still silent) majority of people understand why we have to change the way we look at smoking indoors; how it is largely the workers in the hospitality industry who are paying the price for our lack of action on this issue; how changing our behavior as a community of adults will positively influence the smoking pattern of a whole upcoming generation of teens; how a community decision taken now for a healthier future will result in significantly fewer premature deaths later.

To be honest, I naively thought that the aforementioned majority would rise to the occasion and get involved in the debate in an effort to influence the outcome. I also believed that the municipal leaders of our time would also rise to the occasion given the evidence put before them about the health hazard and the significant advantages to long term community health afforded by the simple passage of a 100 per cent smoke-free bylaw.

There is, after all, a firmly established trend toward smoke-free indoor spaces and many municipal examples of success with smoke-free bylaws in Ontario. We are not the first down this path by any means and I still think I wasn't wrong to place my hope in the municipal leaders of Sioux Lookout and the actions of people in

Sioux Lookout who care enough to get involved in an issue that is meant to create a healthier future for their community.

*Jennifer McKibbin,
Health Promoter,
Northwestern Health Unit
Dryden, Ontario*