

EDITORIAL

NORTH RENFREW TIMES

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Nuclear madness

This is the kind of madness we face when it comes to things nuclear... We? Anyone who believes in the future use of nuclear power in Canada, and has an interest in seeing the nuclear industry succeed and thrive. And what kind of madness? How about comments like this: "We have an obligation to protect Mother Earth and her inhabitants. We would be derelict in our duties if we turned a blind eye to this dangerous plan." "If ever there was a time to go back to the drawing board, it is now. The safety of our residents cannot be dismissed as a negligible risk." "We did everything right. We followed the playbook but the game was rigged from the beginning. We asked for an environmental assessment - denied. We asked for intervenor funding - denied. We worked with individuals, municipalities and First Nations and our views - ignored. Justice for the environment - denied."

Those statements - by Tyendinaga Mohawk Grand Chief Don Maracle, Alan DeSousa, vice-chairman of the city of Montreal's executive committee, and John Bennett, executive director of Sierra Club Canada, respectively - are relatively tame, but typical of the scaremongering associated with criticism of Bruce Power's plan to ship 16 old, decommissioned steam generators from the Bruce A nuclear power station to a company in Sweden that will clean the generators of traces of radioactive materials so that the metal can be recycled. Bruce Power would ship the generators from the port at Owen Sound through the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway, then out to sea across the Atlantic on their way to Sweden. The company received approval for the shipments this month from the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, and as you can imagine, some people have generally gone insane about the decision.

"Insane" may be a strong word, but how else can we explain the completely irrational response from some quarters? You have people in responsible positions, mayors of communities and other elected officials, talking about the Great Lakes being used as a "nuclear dumping ground" or "sewer" for nuclear waste. There are dark warnings about "worst case scenarios" and the Great Lakes being "poisoned" for "all time" by radioactive waste from the generators. Really? The truth is that these steam generators are exactly that - steam generators, that are only being subject to this kind of scrutiny because they were associated with a nuclear power plant. Over time, trace amounts of radioactive materials collected in the tubing inside the generators, and that's what required them to be classified as "low-level" waste.

The generators themselves are not radioactive and have never been irradiated. All openings on the generators have been welded shut so that there is no way for the elements inside to be released, and the maximum external radiation measured one metre from the surface of the generators was 0.08 millisieverts (mSv) per hour, meaning a full day's "dose" would be somewhere in the range of the exposure a patient receives from a medical CT scan - not something to ignore, but hardly worthy of creating doomsday predictions, one might think. Staff of the nuclear safety commission estimated that, in an "extreme, unrealistic" accident scenario in which the full contents of all 16 generators was somehow released, the maximum dose risk to a member of the public would be 40.3 mSv, certainly well above the regulatory limit of 1 mSv per year for a member of the public, but still lower than the 50 mSv a year allowed for workers in the nuclear industry. And what's a much more "realistic" accident scenario? The generators may fall off a truck, or their ship might sink, and then they would - lie there, causing no harm to anyone, until they could be retrieved.

But none of that really means anything to those who panic at the words "nuclear" or "radioactive" - or to those who exploit that fear for their own ends. There may not be any way to win an argument with those people, and certainly the nuclear industry must do a much better job of educating the public to counter the irrational fears that exist out there, but at some point it has to go beyond even that. We need to begin calling a spade a spade and describing those comments for what they are: just plain nuts.



The Deep River Library Arts Committee is sponsoring an exhibition of works by local artist Olga Nazarkina. The show opened Monday and continues to February 26 in the library program room. Among the works on display is "Pomegranate": "For this work I made 10,000 clay ladybugs and painted them. The pomegranate is a symbol of the universe, and a ladybug represents a person. We all think that we do something, follow something, but from a distance we are all part of one pattern."

Submitted photo

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Team put safety of its guests first

Re: "Put alcohol policy on ice,"
NRT February 9.

As probably the most recent user of the arena mezzanine with a Special Occasion Permit (Liquor Licence), I thought we should relay the steps we took to ensure the town, our hockey club, and our president (who put his name on the permit) were not at risk during our recent adult hockey tournament.

I think you will find these steps were more than sufficient to meet the concerns of town staff and councillors as reported in your paper.

First off we took out \$10,000,000 of liability insurance including host liquor liability coverage and named the town as co-insured.

We met all the conditions the

LCBO required for the permit which were numerous and quite detailed.

We ensured we always had a "Smart Serve" qualified bartender at all times and followed the guidelines published on their website.

We informed the Deep River Police to visit frequently and asked them to set up a Ride program.

We hired the Deep River Taxi service to drive our guests home and paid the bill for a lot of trips including to Petawawa.

One of our members actively stood at the exit and made sure everyone leaving had proper plans to get home and did something about if they did not.

We did all this to ensure the safe-

ty of our guests; reducing liability was a by-product.

We believe everyone enjoyed our tournament as much as we enjoyed hosting it.

The out-of-town teams filled the local hotels and had to overflow to Petawawa. The final game went down to the last over-time shooter in a shootout and the teams immediately started booking their rooms for next year.

As per the permit, we will be donating all profits to local groups including the food bank, the high school, and the ski club.

Trust this information is helpful in any discussions.

**Brock Sanderson, team captain,
Deep River Replays**

Time to stop looking the other way

Re: Damaged picnic tables at the Riverbank waterfront park.

"A person of interest was questioned and as there was no admission of guilt the file was closed until further information comes forward."

That's the official police report. The person of interest was at the scene with a snowboard and is known by public works staff as they have had to dismantle his snow ramps in the past.

There is a clear message here that you can damage property at will, just don't let anyone see you - anyone, that is, who would take the time or interest to report you.

I find it incredible that no one witnessed his shenanigans and reported him to the police before damage was done. After all, Brockhouse Way is a busy roadway.

Is this another case of looking the other way because you don't want to get involved?

Well, if you are a taxpayer or your parents are taxpayers, like it or not you are involved, you are on the hook for \$1,000, the cost of replacing the table tops.

What is sad is that these tables weren't supplied by some nebulous entity, the "town." They were donated by people who have pride in their community.

A thousand dollars was not their loose change.

It doesn't come as a surprise when people respond, "why bother, the kids will destroy it anyway?" when asked for a contribution.

What a sad mindset, all because we look the other way and don't want to get involved.

I recall some time ago there were letters to the editor by a resident whose front yard was damaged a number of times, pleading with the person responsible to get psychological help.

The first instance was reported to the police and subsequent incidents

were clearly revenge by the perpetrators. Others took part or witnessed what was going on but no one came forward.

So where do we go from here? Continue to pay a million dollars for police services so that we can continue to look the other way?

How about another million dollars in cameras so that we can pay someone to monitor them so we can look the other way?

Or we take collective ownership of our town. No more "that's someone else's problem, it has nothing to do with me."

No more witnessing a group of youths wandering around town at one in the morning and thinking "thank god they aren't in my neighbourhood."

How about parents taking responsibility for their children and not writing them off; "I can't do anything with him."

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