

LOCAL NEWS

YESTERDAY AT THE PUMPS

Renton 80.9
Walsingham 79.9
Delhi 80.2

79.9
Simcoe

REPORT GAS PRICES TO 426-6710 EXT. 137



Energy symposium slated for Jarvis

NUKES IN NANTICOKE PROMISES TO BE HOT TOPIC

Monte Sonnenberg
SIMCOE REFORMER

Local residents who want to get up to speed on energy issues affecting Norfolk, Haldimand and the rest of Ontario are invited to take a crash course in Jarvis later this week.

Local MPP Toby Barrett has called an energy symposium for this Thursday night at the Lions Community Centre in Jarvis. The gathering is a follow-up to a similar event held in Jarvis last year. At that event, the possibility of siting nuclear reactors in the Nanticoke Industrial Park was the main issue on the agenda.

"Toby has been thinking about this for a while," constituency assistant Rob Willett said. "We always had the idea we would revisit that one. Some of the same faces will be there and some will not be. Greenpeace, for example, will not be there."

Greenpeace representative Shawn-Patrick Stensil is an outspoken critic of Ontario's increasing reliance on nuclear power. He attended last year's symposium in Jarvis but will not be able to attend this week due to a scheduling conflict. Expected to make the case against nuclear power in his stead is the Canadian Environmental Law Association.

Also scheduled to make presentations this week are Ontario Power Generation, the Canadian Nuclear Workers Association, Competitive Power Ventures, Farmers for Economic Opportunity, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Grand Erie Energy Quest, the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Power Workers Union and the Clean and Affordable Energy Alliance.

Grant Church, a resident of Cayuga with a keen interest in "clean coal" technology, is also scheduled to speak.

The event will also feature a number of exhibitors.

Handing out literature and answering questions will be representatives of Bruce Power, the Nuclear Waste Management Association, CAE Alliance, the Society of Professional Engineers and Associates, TCI Renewables and M2 Fuel Saver.

"Given the series of energy proposals targeted for our area and the potential for this central location (Nanticoke) to step up as a green energy hub, I feel it is my role as provincial representative to provide a forum for all and sundry to express their views and get answers from experts representing the full energy spectrum," Barrett said in a news release.

There is no admission fee. Door open at 6 p.m. Presentations begin at 7 p.m.

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Police remind drivers about winter safety

Norfolk OPP are reminding the public that with the change in the weather to prepare yourself as well as your vehicle for the winter season.

The winter season is fast approaching and with it comes snow and slippery roads causing problems on the road. Norfolk OPP want to remind drivers to take your time and be safe on the roads.

Drivers should have your vehicle checked to be sure that your vehicle is maintained properly for the winter driving season. Have a mechanic check your vehicle to be sure your brakes, battery, ignition, lights, heater, defroster, thermostat, antifreeze, wipers and windshield washer fluid are in proper working order. Having your vehicle well maintained will help in ensuring you get to where you want to go safely.

Drivers should also pack items in your vehicle in the case that you are stranded and can't get to safety. Police remind drivers that personal safety is paramount, having a winter car kit in your vehicle will help should you become involved in a collision or are stranded. Your winter car kit should include a candle, flashlight with extra batteries, first aid kit with pocket knife, blankets/sleeping bag, extra clothing, booster cables, bottled water, non perishable foods, scraper/brush, shovel, sand/salt or kitty litter to help if you're stuck as well as any necessary medications.



Kelby Balch plays with her dog Buttons after school. It's the little things like this that keep the teen, who is suffering from a neurological disease, positive.

'I know things will get better eventually'

Kelby's courage

FACED WITH RARE SUDDEN NEUROLOGICAL DISEASE, SIMCOE TEEN DETERMINED TO KEEP MOVING FORWARD

Ashley House
SIMCOE REFORMER

She lays her head between the cushions of what looks much like a massage table.

But you can tell by the way Simcoe teen Kelby Balch, 16, clinches her hands together and winces her eyes closed tight that this is no relaxation therapy.

Her physiotherapist starts with soft tissue massage, though the light pressure puts Balch's muscles into spasm. He twists her right foot to its natural position, but for Balch, it is so unnatural, she bites her thumb to keep from yelping in pain.

Kelby Balch has been in physiotherapy two to three times a week for a year and a half to get some, if any, relief from her dystonia.

The neurological disease short-circuits signals from the brain causing muscles to spasm and the body to contort in awkward positions.

It was June 2007, while watching a friend's dance recital, when her life changed dramatically.

"It took three hours maybe," Balch says, describing how her right foot turned inward. "It was kind of scary."

Her right leg now rests at a 90-degree angle inward, forcing her to use crutches daily (which she hates) and a wheelchair on occasion. The disease has now affected her jaw and neck, causing those muscles to tense and freeze up and give her an "indescribable" pain.

"But we never hear about it," says her mother, Karen Balch. "We're so proud of her. Her true colours have really shown through this experience."

Balch is the epitome of an optimist.

Even through the wrenching pain of physiotherapy, Balch laughs it off with her therapist.

"I know things will get better eventually," she says.

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Since her diagnosis in October 2007, Balch has taken the opportunity to advocate and raise money for the Dystonia Medical Research Foundation of Canada to help find a cure for the disease.

"If I hadn't been affected, I don't think I would be this passionate about anything," she says.

She raised \$2,800 in the Walk and Ride for Dystonia this summer.

She also sells blue "Freedom to Move" bracelets.

"It's pretty cool to see all my friends at school wearing them," says Balch, a student at Simcoe Composite School.

Her dining room table is covered in art supplies as she and a friend are working on a biology project on Dystonia, hoping to educate her fellow students.

"That will really help spread the word," Karen says. "There are still so many people who have no idea what she's going through."

The rare disease affects an estimated 300,000 people in North America.

Balch also works closely with physiotherapists Jay MacDonald and Jeff Scott at Great Lakes Physiotherapy. With 25 years experience between MacDonald and Scott, Kelby is their first patient with Dystonia.

"She's one motivated lady," MacDonald says. "I've never known her without a smile."

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Balch has also endured botox injections to loosen up the muscles in her leg and jaw, which involved three-inch needles injected into her muscles.

She was also on medication that made her



Physiotherapist Jay MacDonald twists 16-year-old Kelby Balch's ankle to its natural position. Dystonia, a neurological disease, has caused Balch's ankle to turn inwards at 90 degrees.

dizzy and drowsy.

Neither helped. She's not sure if physiotherapy helps but without it, those muscles don't move at all.

She was all set to have deep brain stimulation surgery in August, which would implant a device that sends out electric signals and give her 70 per cent mobility back to her right leg. But at the last moment, her neurosurgeons said the surgery was too risky and not going to happen in the near future.

"I get upset," she says. "But I'm not mad."

She keeps her focus on the end goal of being able to walk without crutches and get back into competitive dance.

"She always gave her all no matter what," says dance instructor Jo-ann Adams, who has taught Balch since she was three years old. "It was a big hit for her and everyone (when she had to quit dancing)."

But Balch remains involved in dance with a stretch and strength course and emceeing at the dance school's performances.

Balch says not being able to dance or do things like go home for lunch is the hardest part of the disease, not the intense pain she lives with everyday.

"Now, it's not having a job or any money to go shopping," Balch says, though she's willing to work and has sent out numerous resumes.

Keeping busy keeps her positive.

"I don't like to stay home much," she says with a laugh.

School work, volunteering, and weekend trips with family (like an upcoming trip to see Dirty Dancing in Toronto) or just hanging out with friends keeps Balch's mind off the chronic disease.

She's a fashionista, her mom says, and her grades prove it as Balch boasts a 91 per cent in fashion at SCS. She's in Grade 11 this year and finding the courses tougher. Still, she averages 84 per cent.

"I want to be a pediatric nurse," she says, explaining all the time she has spent in hospital influenced her decision.

The Balch family, including father Lance and younger sister Morgen, are waiting on the results of genetic testing done back in August 2008 to see if Balch carries the hereditary dystonia gene. In February, Balch will head to the Shriners Hospital in Erie, Pennsylvania, to get more consultation on how to care for her disease.

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Though Karen's health care benefits cover some of Kelby's medical expenses, the family has already paid out an estimated \$10,000 for physio, botox and drugs. That's not including the costs associated with trips to her neuro-specialists in London and Toronto.

They had to apply for grant funding for the genetic testing and would also have to pay \$50,000 to \$100,000 for a brain study that could yield results for Balch.

"We're frustrated that there isn't much out there to help Kelby," Karen says of the limited care options covered by OHIP. "It shouldn't have to be this way."

The Balch family has been chronicling Kelby's journey through Dystonia at <http://www.caring-bridge.org/visit/kelbybalch>.

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