

Friday's Power Failure: A Look Behind The Scenes

BY BILL SHORT

Nearly ten minutes into the second game of the Potsdam Invitational Basketball Tournament, the lights went out in Maxey Hall. The view from windows along the ramp leading to the second floor of the athletic complex revealed that, in fact, the entire Potsdam College campus was dark.

Nearly everyone in the Stygian darkness of the main gymnasium thought that it was another campus power outage such as the two that plunged the campus into darkness within the last year.

That, however, was not the case. The blackout was not only on campus, but also involved about 500 Niagara Mohawk electricity customers on Morningside Drive, Outer Main, Main Street and at least one downtown business block, as well as the block on Maple Street where the utility pole was knocked down.

According to village police, a car traveling at a high rate of speed and operated by Douglas O'Connor, 21, of Baldwinsville, was westbound when it struck a pole at the corner of Maple and Swan streets, cutting the pole in two. Electric power and cable television service were cut.

O'Connor was treated and released for a cut chin at the Canton-Potsdam Hospital, and was then ticketed for driving while intoxicated and driving at an unreasonable speed. Two passengers in the car, Judy Bennett and Nancy LaVigne, were also treated and released for minor injuries at the hospital, according to police.

A NiMo crew responded to the scene, where they restored power to all but the Maple Street block shortly before 11 p.m. The pole was replaced and electricity restored to the remaining customers by 6 a.m. Saturday.

But all that wasn't known until much later. Meanwhile, in the darkened gymnasium at Potsdam College, the Director of College Relations, William Hiles, happened to be in Maxey Hall at the time of the mishap, announcing the tournament games. As soon as the lights went out, Hiles attempted to reach the campus security office by telephone, but all the administrative telephones on campus had been changed that day to a computer-operated system, which went out of service without power.

After a few minutes, maintenance personnel had an emergency back-up generator powering emergency lighting, enough to evacuate the building, but still officials on hand did not know what the problem was or how long the campus would be without power. After officials of the college, the teams and the game officials conferred, it was decided that the games must go on. One of the teams, Genesee State, could not stay an extra day in order to finish the tournament on Sunday, so Clarkson College officials offered to let the tournament continue in the Clarkson Alumni Gymnasium across town.

As the game between St. Lawrence University and Genesee was moved to Clarkson, campus security men from the Public Safety office checked all the elevators on campus for stranded riders, but none were found. The next task at hand was to evacuate all students still in the dormitories from rooms and hallways into centralized lounges, where they could be more easily notified in case of emergency.

The problem could not have more effectively tied up communications on campus at any other time, because although the new phone system had been installed, three telephone lines

on the 265 exchange, not computer-operated, were not yet connected. Those telephones are intended to be used for just such an emergency.

Another problem caused by the power outage was the college's main computer being put out of service. That represents a problem because many computer science students have projects due just before the Thanksgiving break, and the computer was not restored to service until 10:30 on Saturday morning.

When finally the electricity was restored, many people found that, although they had power, they could not watch cable television. According to Potsdam New Channels spokesman Paul Blanchard, nearly 7,000 of their customers, all that the Potsdam office serves, were without cable service for about nine and a half hours. Once the new pole was in place, fifty feet of cable had to be spliced into the line on each side of the pole. The cable which was cut by the accident is the incoming transmission line for the Potsdam New Channels office.

With all services restored by 7 a.m. and a long night behind them, many weary men made it back to their beds, hoping that it will be a long time indeed before that sort of operation is necessary again.



POLE DOWN — Volunteer firemen at the scene of an auto accident Friday night that plunged much of Potsdam into darkness for about an hour. A car sheared off the utility pole in the background and interrupted cable television service as well as the electricity. (Bill Short photo)

CAT Scanner Would Bring New Technology To Local Hospital

Last Monday night the North Country Subarea Council of the Central New York Health System Agency was recommended for the Mobile Computerized Tomographic Services (CT) for the Canton-Potsdam Hospital.

If all subareas are recommended by their regional group and then passed by the state, the Canton-Potsdam Hospital, A. Barton Hepburn, Massena Memorial, Mercy Hospital of Watertown, and Oswego Hospital which was approved last Tuesday, will share the mobile CT.

Canton-Potsdam Hospital and Oswego Hospital will make recommendations to the Central New York Health Agency that meets in December and then to state. If the state approves the CT, it will be in effect between February and April.

According to Cliff Westerling, public relations of the Canton-Potsdam Hospital, they have proposed a contract with an outside company in Fort Lee, N.J., the CTT Mobile Management Services, Inc.

"This company will buy this \$1.2 million machine and operate it," said Westerling. "They will drive it from location to location with registered technologists in the van. Once they get to the hospital, Dr. Frank Citro, a radiologist at the hospital, will be in charge."

Dr. Citro feels the CT will be of great assistance to the hospital and the trained staff.

"The CT is an x-ray device that takes a section of the body and turns it up. It is a three-dimensional look at that area.

"The CT is a more powerful diagnostic machine, that will show up organs that normally won't show on a routine x-ray," explains Dr. Citro. "The pancreas is very delicate and won't show abnormalities on an x-ray, but will on a CT."

Without the scanner, people will have to be transferred to other hospitals that have a scanner. This will cost the patient a lot of time and money.

"If the scanner was centrally located, people may not use it," said Westerling. "The day they decide to go it may not be there. This is why the CT

has been designated to be at the hospitals at certain times. "It will be at this hospital six hours a week on Wednesday mornings and Friday afternoons," said Westerling.

The cost per scan is about \$200 and the hospital will pay so much per scan performed at the hospital here. The high rate is one scan per hour and the low rate is three scans per hour.

It is estimated that there should be 4,000 scans per year at the five hospitals combined and possibly 400-500 at the Canton-Potsdam Hospital.

"If we do the business we expect," said Westerling, "then it will pay for itself. There will have to be 400-450 scans per year to pay for it."

If the state does recommend the CT, it will help the doctor to make a more specific diagnosis.

Wood Energy Serves Clarkson

Question. What could you do with 4,500 tons of wood waste each year?

Clarkson College has found the answer — it will be putting it to use as fuel for its newly operational wood chip furnace.

Clarkson is in the vanguard among colleges and universities nationwide in reducing fossil fuel consumption by converting to wood energy, officials say.

As the cost of oil has escalated, school officials have been seeking alternate means to heat the nine buildings of its downtown campus.

A solution appeared in 1978 when Clarkson professors Peng-Bor Lin, Norbert L. Ackermann and Edward B. Kear, Jr. conducted a wood energy utilization study for the New York

State Energy Research and Development Authority.

By 1980, the college received a \$281,929 grant from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and work on the wood chip project began.

The completed furnace, which went on line in November, will save Clarkson about \$175,000 each year in energy costs, according to Gerald C. Gonyea, assistant to the vice president.

Gonyea also expects that the college's fuel oil consumption will drop from 300,000 to 30,000 gallons each year. The remaining amount will be used to power back-up boilers and for use in the early autumn and late spring when wood usage is less economical.

Fund Drive Falling Short

MADRID — The end of the Madrid Rescue Squad fund drive is approaching, and Treasurer Thomas Nelson is urging all team captains to contact their canvassers and turn in the collected pledges as soon as possible.

Madrid Rescue Squad has been engaged, along with its voluntary citizens advisory council in trying to raise \$14,000 to meet a matching fund grant from the Department of Safety in Albany to purchase a new ambulance. At last report, approximately half the money needed had been pledged and collected.

Madrid's Rescue Squad has provided

ed thousand of manhours of service per year, to make the Madrid area a better place to live. The squad provides service to area hospitals and transports and transfers to and from area medical facilities. The new ambulance will provide more advanced and quicker medical care to the patient during emergency situations and before the patient can be seen by a doctor.

Garbage Filled House

Draws Village Notice

Potsdam village police, the village building inspector and a newspaper reporter were called to an unoccupied house at 1 Hamilton St. last Tuesday morning to witness what the landlord, Lester Gale, said was "the worst mess I've ever seen."

Village Building Inspector Herbert Crump said Monday that no official action has yet been taken by the village, although Village Attorney Richard Dudley did suggest that Gale be given ten days to clean up the property.

Gale has reportedly hired someone to clear out the rubbish from the house.

Rotting food, clothing, newspapers, books, toys, games and junk were in every room of the two-story, six room house, and Gale said the cellar was also filled with rubbish.

Former tenants Leon R. and Patricia A. Hollinger had moved out earlier in the month, according to Gale, who said he had contacted attorney Robert Halliday to discuss possible legal action against the couple.

Gale said the Hamilton Street house was "immaculate," with a fresh paint job and new windows when the Hollingers moved in some three years ago.

They paid \$175 a month, no utilities, for the house, Gale said.

The Hollingers filed a \$500,000 notice of claim against St. Lawrence County last March in an attempt to regain custody of their 11 year old son, Leon, who has been a foster child for ten years.



GOBLERS' GLORY — Two turkeys on a Winthrop farm confronted one another last week, apparently oblivious to the attention of a small kitten. (Pat McKeown photo)

New Officers For Literacy Volunteers

The election of officers and granting of awards for outstanding service were the features of the annual meeting of St. Lawrence County Literacy Volunteers, held in Canton

Nov. 14. The meeting was presided over by Ralph Wakefield of West Stockholm, beginning his second year as president of the organization. An afternoon workshop on reading skills

and the annual dinner preceded the meeting.

Officers elected included Edwin Pierce of Canton, first vice president; Ann McLaughlin of Pierrepont, secretary and Jack Wells of West Stockholm, treasurer. Three directors were elected: Rita Montague and Anna Varakuta of Massena and Marion LaRue of Ogdensburg.

The first award presented was in special recognition to Lin Van Epps of Canton for her services as administrative coordinator. Six tutors were recognized for ten years of active participation in Literacy Volunteers.

Norwood Mayor Defends Police

NORWOOD — Facing criticism of the local police force by some village residents, Mayor Willard Smith has come out in strong support of the department.

"As Mayor of the Village of Norwood, I will give my full cooperation and support to Police Chief (James) Lahey and the Officers under him," Smith said in a prepared statement released last week.

Lahey and three part-time officers make up the local police force. At a village board meeting last week, they came under fire from several local residents who declared they were being harassed by the police. Lahey denied the charges.

"These same people are advocating abolishing the police department entirely by a ballot referendum," said Smith in his statement. "Do you want your children growing up in a village of lawlessness?" he asked.

Smith indicated that the department has been responsible for easing incidents of screaming tires and motorcycles on private property. Speeding tickets dropped 75 percent in October, down from 32 in September to eight, he said. And arrests for driving while intoxicated dropped 50 percent over the same period, he said, from six to three.

Smith defended the officers. "They are trained for their profession with degrees in criminal justice, police schools, and training programs," he said. "It is not the duty of the Mayor to obstruct the police in fulfilling their sworn duties," he continued.

Urban Renewal Agency

Elects New Officers

Theodore Mellas became the new chairman of the Potsdam Urban Renewal Agency last week as the agency held its annual meeting and election of officers.

Joining Mellas are Howard Smith, vice-chairman and Barbara Lenhart, secretary-treasurer. Mrs. Lenhart, Paul Claffey and John McMann were recently appointed to the agency to fill vacancies created by the resignations of former chairman Norma Thayer and members John Chapple and Girard Mulherin.

State and federal closeout of the 11 year old urban renewal project has been completed, but the agency will continue to exist for some time longer to act on the sale of land parcels and other routine matters.

The agency approved a two month extension of preferred developer status for WF Associates, Fairport, N.Y., for urban renewal parcel three, the downtown motel parcel.

One of the partners in WF, William Rowley, died earlier this fall, but his partner, John Flowers, said he still intends to build a Holiday Inn on the motel parcel.

The agency also approved a \$25,000 contract with Syracuse attorney John Benjamin Carroll for legal services in connection with the Harry Bronson court case and other litigation.

New Phone Numbers For Potsdam College

Potsdam College has a new telephone exchange number — 267 — to go along with the college's new Dimension PBX computer phone system.

All phone numbers for administrative offices, faculty and staff are being changed; the college's main switchboard number is now 267-2000. It may be dialed between the hours of 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. Student phones are not affected by the change.

According to college relations director William G. Hiles, Jr., the new system offers more flexibility than the previous system.



GARBAGE FILLED — This unoccupied house at 1 Hamilton St. was filled with garbage last week as landlord Lester Gale, the police and other village officials inspected the premises. The former tenants, Leon R. and Patricia A. Hollinger, had moved out in early November. (Betsy Baker photo)