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THE SATURDAY STAR

March 27, 1993

Ontario Hydro studying scheme for electric cars

SATURDAY SPECIAL



URBAN WARRIOR: Biker is suited up for a clandestine courier race across the city.

Bicycle couriers in love with life on mean streets

By Peter Cheney
TORONTO STAR

They live the life you may have dreamed of but never had the courage or foolish disregard to try: Out on the fringe, up on the pedals, lungs pumping, eyes and ears keen to a thousand dangers.

The life of the bicycle courier. . . You have a primal dream about it: Living by your own skill and animal cunning, like a gladiator in the Roman amphitheatre, surrounded by fat and decadent citizens who have never known the highs and lows of unrestricted experience.

You stride on muscled thighs through offices filled with suited drones, then take once again to the streets, your natural element. You go to the parties the straights never hear about, develop muscles

they have never known, and yes, they're all thinking it: You have the kind of sex they would give their fortunes for.

And you don't wear a tie, either.

☆☆☆

It's 10 a.m. at the Bread Spreads restaurant on Temperance St., just off Yonge. Outside, there are more than a dozen bicycles parked in the snow, an eclectic mechanical collection made up of scavenged parts, some with frames wrapped with black hockey tape, some with fenders lashed on with wire, one with a skull-and-crossbones sticker.

Inside, the pilots of this funky squadron sit at the red Formica tables, taking a respite at the restaurant that Please see **PILOTS**/page A8

By William Walker
TORONTO STAR

Ontario Hydro is planning to get into the car business — electric cars, of course.

The giant utility, which is in the midst of cutting 4,500 jobs and billions in capital spending, is poised to enter an agreement to help manufacture and market the vehicles.

Details are being kept under wraps because of a signed commercial confidentiality agreement, but Hydro chairman Maurice Strong is very positive about the new venture.

"Electric vehicles represent a very logical industrial prospect for the province of Ontario, which is already a major automobile manufacturer," Strong told The Star.

"Ontario Hydro . . . has a (\$300 million) research capability to match anyone in the field of electric technology. We are also prepared to get actively involved in manufacturing and marketing successful products, perhaps in joint ventures with private enterprise."

Electric cars make "a lot of sense for a company such as Ontario Hydro . . . in fact we are keenly interested," Strong said, adding widespread use of electric vehicles would help lessen urban air pollution.

He also said it would lead to a more efficient use of Hydro's available power, since most electric vehicles would be recharged overnight during "off-peak" hours.

The leading contender for a joint agreement with Hydro is Mississauga-based Asea Brown Boveri Advanced Battery Systems.

The company is the main supplier of batteries to Ford, by far the leader among the big automakers in advancing electric car technology.

Ford is developing the technology using an Escort minivan that's not normally sold in North America in its gasoline powered version but is the ideal size and shape to accommodate batteries.

Craig Simpson of Hydro research said a car that sells for \$10,000 would cost about \$15,000 in an electric model. That would be cheaper to run than a gas-fueled one, but the downside is replacing the batteries after about three years. The cost: \$8,000.

To begin to get electric cars on the road in the face of such economics, Simpson said, Ontario will likely have to introduce legislation to require a certain number of zero-emission vehicles on the road.

Electric vehicles represent a logical industrial prospect for Ontario.

— Hydro chief Maurice Strong

WILL SHE BE AMUSED?



'WHAT IF?' Electronically retouched image illustrates a new ad campaign from the Italian clothier Benetton. It discusses racial issues.

Ad portrays 'black' Queen

LONDON (Reuter) — Benetton, the Italian clothing company known for its often-contentious advertising, has produced a new campaign portraying the Queen as black, Michael Jackson as white and the Pope as Asian.

The computer-retouched photographs, brainchildren of Benetton photo chief Oliviero Toscani, will appear under the headline "What If?" in the company's magazine, with articles about racial and cultural problems around the world.

The company said the photos are not meant to be offensive.

"It's nothing to be upset about," a Benetton spokesperson said yesterday. "It's a very light-hearted, affectionate look at perhaps all our perceptions of race," she added.

The photographs are the latest controversial images from the Italian clothier.

It garnered headlines around the world with previous campaigns featuring images of a man dying of AIDS, a blood-smeared newborn, a blazing car, a Mafia shooting victim and a priest kissing a nun.

Chretien wants to hold the line on tax hikes

By Edison Stewart
TORONTO STAR

STE. FOY, Que. — A Liberal government would almost certainly not raise taxes, Jean Chretien promises.

"Canadians have reached the saturation level with respect to taxation," the Liberal leader said yesterday.

"No government can really expect to generate new revenues through new taxes," he told a Chamber of Commerce luncheon in this Quebec city suburb.

Chretien later cautioned that tax increases cannot be ruled out altogether.

But "I don't see how we will be

able" to raise them, he told reporters.

Lifting the veil further on the Liberal election platform, Chretien said mounting debt will leave the next government with "almost non-existent" room to manoeuvre, but Liberal economic policy will be "radically different" nonetheless.

Instead of what he described as the Conservatives' hands-off approach, Chretien said: "We are going to redefine the role of the federal government as a partner: partner of provincial governments, of the private sector, of unions, the educational community and volunteer organization."

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Mostly sunny
High 12°C
Details — A19

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Shedding light on Campbell's political record

Has Kim Campbell got what it takes? Her growing army of supporters believes that with her intelligence, wit and candor, she's just what's needed to revive the flagging fortunes of the Progressive Conservative party. Others wonder why the leadership should be handed to a relative newcomer.

Those who know her say Campbell has never been reluctant to go on the record with her opinions. Today, The Star dusts off that record to see what may lie ahead if she becomes Canada's next prime minister. **Insight/D1**



Banks accused of choking credit

Metro developers and home builders say banks, stung by loan problems with commercial real estate giants, have clamped down on credit and that's choking the budding recovery in the construction industry. **C1**

Law forces sex offenders out in open

By Tracey Tyler
TORONTO STAR

When Wilfred John Bouton arrived back home in Lafayette, La., a few months ago, he sent his neighbors postcards telling them of his return.

"Under Act 962 of the 1992 Legislature," the postcards said, "I am required to inform you that I have been convicted of sexual battery. I live at 425 Herbert Rd. and my name is Wilfred Bouton."

For 18 months, Bouton, 39, had been serving time at the state

prison on two counts of sexually battering little girls.

But thanks to one of North America's most aggressive new laws dealing with sex offenders, the residents of 270 homes within a three-block radius of Bouton's house were mailed handwritten postcards from their neighborhood sex offender.

Bouton, who until now has shunned interviews, said it was like writing his death warrant. "It's terrible," he said. The notoriety has already forced him to move once from the home of a

relative who feared vigilante attacks.

"If he's dangerous, he should still be in prison," argues Bouton's attorney, Paul Marx, who plans to challenge the legislation.

"If he's not dangerous, then he should not have a scarlet letter on his head."

Not everyone, however, would agree. Louisiana's tough new law comes in the midst of an intense debate in Canada and the United States about how far police and governments can go in protecting the public against sex offenders

while respecting a convict's rights.

Solicitor-General Doug Lewis has already said he won't stop the growing Canadian practice of police forces releasing photographs of sex offenders nearing parole. And he said he's considering setting up a national registry for convicted pedophiles under new sexual predator legislation, which is expected to be drafted by June.

Federal officials in the justice

Please see **EX-CONS**/page A6