

Headaches set in when lights go dim

By Kelly Laughlin
Of The Print

One morning last week, I woke up late because there was a power failure in our home, and my electric alarm clock refused to buzz. It was at this moment that I became acquainted with the inconvenience of modern technology.

Although I wouldn't exactly call taking a shower an event that I haven't missed on occasion, it was on the agenda that morning, and I was looking forward to it. How ridiculous it seemed that I had placed such little importance on running water until then, when all I received was a complacent dribble from the shower head. At the same time I was thinking, or more appropriately, wondering, what the time was. Was I early or late? Was I getting ready for school a little too promptly, or was I wasting my time because classes had already begun?

One thing was certain, however, as I stumbled up the stairs to the kitchen, I needed

light. I probably induced more bruises that morning than Rocky Marciano did in a lifetime. A cheap butane lighter (the disposable kind) was my only resource. The candle lighted with little difficulty.

I had planned to shave electric that morning, but, of course, that was out of the question. A straight edge, by candlelight, was quite risky. I suffered production of the "Gotcha" commercial at least 10 times before making a final take. A dry shave, next time, will be avoided at all cost.

It was then that I thought, "Of course, the phone must be working, why not call the time." As I dashed to the phone with wax dripping on me and the dining room floor, I knew that this would be the one event that would either make or break this dark, powerless morning. But that heartless, mono-sounding muffle of a dial tone had been reduced to silence. Not even the telephone lines had sympathy for me.

Immediately after my encounter with the telephone, I

felt a twinge of hunger at my side. But the microwave oven and electric grill were on the fritz as well, and my hopes for a fulfilling breakfast were shattered. I had to settle for last night's fried chicken. Luckily, there was enough milk to wash down the dry, tasteless substance.

With no hand or manual can opener, and the electric one on the blink, I figured that tuna fish sandwiches for lunch were out of the question. Hostess Twinkies and grapefruit were my only alternative.

Getting ready for school had never been so difficult.

With a wave of sudden energy, the familiar sound of the furnace and images of lights became a reality. I turned on the radio. The final blow to the morning came over the radio. School was closed.

Luckily sweet sleep required no modern technology. It was then that I realized my own human resourcefulness would do me more good than even the most efficient pop-up toaster.



Ice age cometh?

Scientist foresees chance of chilly future

By Scott Starnes
Of The Print

The abnormally cold temperatures Portlanders have been experiencing over the last month lead one to think the nation is receding into an ice age. According to Wayne Wright, College science instructor, the possibility of an ice age reoccurring is not improbable.

Wright said that during the last 30 years, the northern hemisphere has been yielding bumper crops which implies that weather conditions have been warm. "This 30-year warm period we are experiencing is in itself abnormal compared to weather conditions over the last century. Part of this increase in temperature may be attributed to the jet stream," he said.

Evidently, the jet stream has shifted to a north-south direction which is bringing storms in from the Arctic areas, Wright said. "Before, the jet stream was moving from the South Pacific bringing warmer air up with it. This sudden coldness we are presently experiencing, caused possibly by the change in jet stream is nothing new."

Wright said that approximately 40 years ago, Oregon was also experiencing colder than normal temperatures. "A friend of mine in The Dalles area said the Columbia River became so frozen that cars were able to

drive across the river itself," Wright added.

Supposedly, the world should be experiencing moderately warm temperatures because the spots or magnetic fields on the sun are approaching their maximum, Wright said. Careful research has proposed that these sunspots contribute a significantly to the severity of weather conditions on earth, he said.

But Wright said the increased presence of sunspots should create warmer temperatures on the earth which does not seem to be happening. "We may be experiencing a polarity change which is

indirectly associated with the sunspot cycle. A polarity change occurs when the poles of the sun are shifted by the sunspots, which in turn causes disruptions of the earth's weather," Wright said.

"Precession" was thought to be one of the causes for the inclement weather on earth but Wright said that he personally rules this theory out. "When earth is experiencing the winter months the earth, or in our case the northern hemisphere tilts or precesses toward the sun. Supposedly, temperatures should then be more moderate. We should have


cooler summers and warmer winters."

Wright said that mankind and not Mother Nature may be to blame for the continual cold. He said that there exist two ways that man has possibly disrupted the weather, one being the increase in carbon dioxide and the second being the contamination by a variety of particles produced by cars, fires, and other polluting sources in the air.

"With carbon dioxide in the air this creates better chances of increased cloud formation which in turn traps the infrared rays from the sun and transmits

these warm rays to the earth. On the other hand, the variety of particle contaminants form a shield which reflects the warm infrared rays back out in space making it colder here on earth."

"I'm optimistic and believe this cold spell to be a temporary thing. But the last couple of years have produced heavy snowfall which cause the warm sun rays to be reflected off the snow and out to space making the earth a little bit colder all the time. It could become a self-perpetuating thing and we could invariably return to somewhat of an ice age," Wright said.



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