

On the WATERFRONT

Standing up for no-legged pedestrians: (from left) Salmon Lake's Bruce Morden, Ken Bromby, and Richard Garland.



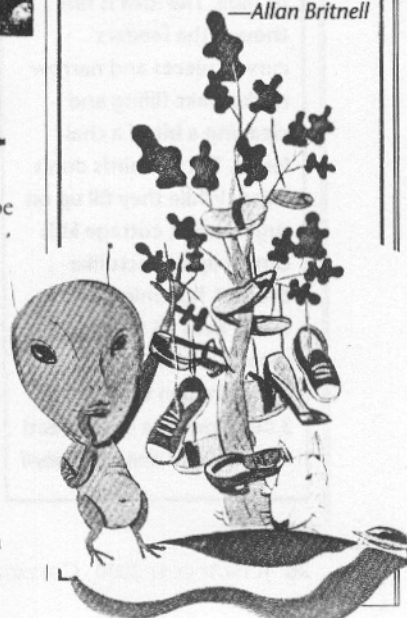
ALIEN FOOTWEAR

Shoe tree sighting spooks locals

Shoe trees can cause quite a stir outside their natural cottage-country habitat. Take this eyewitness report from a California newspaper, *The Sacramento Bee*: "About 10 miles east of Red Bluff... a full-figured oak tree sits just off the road. From the thicket of branches dangle shoes of every kind: children's tennis shoes, sensible pumps, golf shoes, cowboy boots... whether it's the work of a single shoe donor or a plethora of like-minded shoe flingers – a shoe cult, perhaps? – is not immediately known. Nor has the purpose of the shoe tree been made clear."

Must be a Canadian thing.

—Allan Britnell



Rattler rules of the road

It's a bad time to be a snake in cottage country. Beginning next year, as part of the expansion of Hwy. 69, the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) plans to build four new lanes through a stretch of undisturbed land from Mactier, Ont., to Hwy. 141 – prime massasauga rattler habitat for hibernation and reproduction, says biologist

At risk on highways and byways, snakes deserve a brake

Chris Parent of Killbear Provincial Park. Those snakes that survive the bulldozing and blasting will face the added threat of traffic. "A four-lane highway is an impassable bar-

rier. Many snakes stand to be killed." When Parent and biologists from the Ministry of Natural Resources presented their concerns to the MTO last year, its engineers responded by designing a series of culverts along the highway. Unconvinced that the snakes would take shelter in them, Parent has embarked

on a government-funded, eight-year study to track the rattlers' progress before, during, and after the roadwork. "We can't stop the building of the highway, but I hope the results of the study will educate planners in the future so they build roads that don't fragment rattler habitat."

In the meantime, to minimize harm to the snakes,

Parent is building gestation sites on both sides of the highway, so that they won't need to cross the road. And he is spreading word of the rattlers' plight to people such as Bruce Morden, who has cottaged on nearby Salmon Lake since 1978 and now lives there year-round. Morden was disturbed last summer to see more and more squashed snakes on the cottage road leading to his place, so he urged the Salmon Lake Ratepayers Association to push Seguin Township for two road signs at key junctions to alert motorists and slow them down. Association president and cottager Richard Garland took up the cause. "We should do whatever we can to protect the snakes."

Garland approached another rattler defender, Bob Johnson of the Toronto Zoo's department of reptiles and amphibians, who arranged for the zoo to donate metal signs reading "Please Brake for Snakes." Garland and Morden then talked Seguin Township council and association members into splitting the \$400 cost of signposts, concrete, and installation. This May, in a roadside ceremony, the 4' x 4' signs were installed along the Salmon Lake road. Now, says Morden, the rattlers have "a fighting chance."

-Amber Nasrulla