

## LOCAL NEWS

# George Johnston: a lifetime with cars

*continued from page 1*

On another occasion he drove his mother, May, to the home of a relative for a visit. The hostess served them cherry pie, which they soon discovered was mouldy. While the hostess was in the kitchen they quickly dumped the pie into his mother's purse. Surprised that they had 'eaten' the pie so fast she offered them another. May countered that they were on a diet.

George had his share of mishaps at high school in Walkerton and then Clifford in western Ontario.

He lasted only a year at Walkerton. An accidental knockdown of a phys ed teacher in a rugby match led to ill feelings, so George transferred to Clifford Continuation School. Despite some missed days for fishing, trips to the fall fair, the hotel for a beer, or a jaunt to London in an unreliable car, George picked up his junior matriculation.

After confessing to the principal on one occasion that they had been fishing, George and a friend were given the strap. The teacher, Miss Hamilton, fainted after applying the strap once to each hand. The boys helped her onto a couch and revived her with a cool cloth. The next day George noticed her walking home after school on the rain and picked her up. She acknowledged that there was no beating him.

George has always had an interest in automobiles.

While growing up he pumped gas, did



**Old buddies:** George Westrope, left, and George Johnston worked many years together at Johnston Motors. Now, both are retired. PHOTO BY BOB OWEN

the books and was a general handyman in the garage business of his next door neighbour in Mildmay.

The purchase of the Turney Garage in Colborne meant a move for the young entrepreneur. For a time, George and his friend and handyman mechanic, Jerry Meyer boarded at the Brunswick Hotel in the village. Jerry stayed a year, then headed back home to Alberta. He was replaced over time by Ernie "302" Kemp (the box number on his truck), Eric Slater and Gordie Kemp.

The first gas customer was Joe Persowski, owner of Colbright Orchards.

Jerry Meyer may have inadvertently brought George and Barbara Johnston together. Jerry was the envy of the girls in town with his 1932 LaSalle convertible. Flocks of them would jump into the car to go to the show. Barbara Brannigan was one of them.

She and her friends would ride their bikes past the garage. It wasn't long before she and George were dating. The couple married in 1947, nearly 58 years ago.

Two years later he sold his business and purchased the building across the road where his Colborne Motor Sales sold Ford Mercurys. Part of the building was used to store milk delivery trucks. One of the drivers was Gordon Ramer. Every morning at 3 a.m. he would leave Colborne for his run to Toronto, returning eight hours later.

George's support of a local baseball team in 1951 nearly cost him. He bought a

\$10 ticket on a new Ford car, even though money was short. He tried unsuccessfully to sell the ticket before the draw. George won the car, sold it and invested the money in his business.

One of George's first employees, George Westrope, was with him to celebrate his eightieth. Other names familiar to Colborne were with him in those early days. Norm Cheer looked after parts and pumped gas. Glenn Barrett was a handyman mechanic.

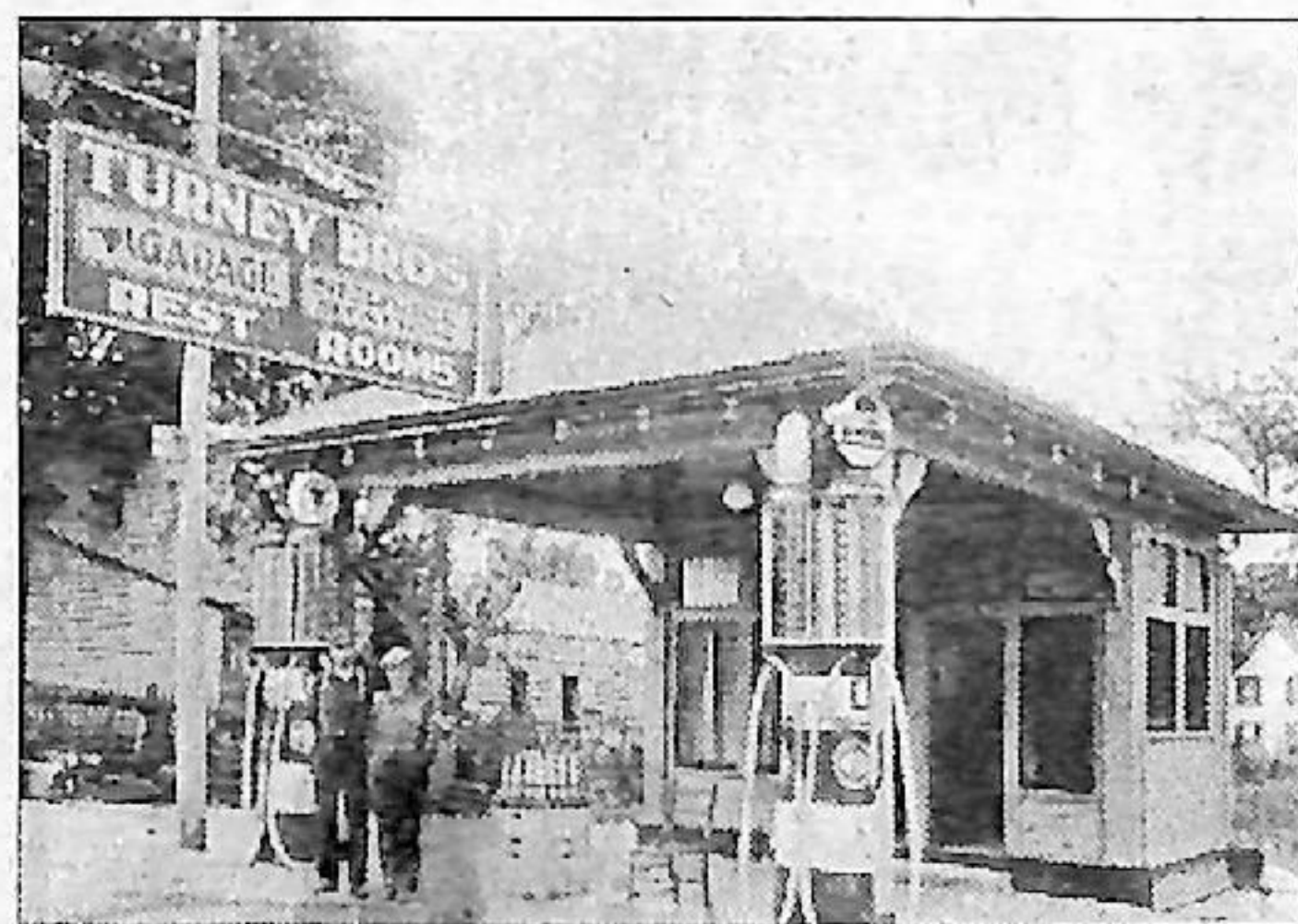
A surprise visit by a representative of General Motors resulted in George becoming a GM dealer in 1955. It was the beginning of a 50-year relationship that is carried on by his son, Dana.

Early in 1956 he sold his first GM car, a Chev Impala that went to Lloyd Seward. After many years of careful care by its second owner, Bert Kernaghan, it was offered back to George. It was 27 years old and had only 64,000 miles. It remains one of his prized possessions.

After getting the tender to provide ambulance service in 1958, the two Georges (Westrope and Johnston) were pressed into service in their green Chevy station wagon.

Three years later the business expanded, adding service bays, office space and a stockroom at 17 Toronto Rd.

Over the years Dana has gradually taken more of the responsibilities of running the business. But even now, George can be seen driving his scooter to the post office to pick up the company mail.



**Circa 1930:** From left, Bill Turney and his nephew Harold Turney in front of the service station in Colborne.



**Circa 1940:** from left, Ralph ??, Bill Turney and Russel Peterson in front of the Turney's Garage in Colborne.



**Theme: Our Collectibles  
AGENDA**

Ode (See Back Page)

The Mary Stewart Collect (See Back Page)

Welcome From Earline Armstrong, District President

Greetings from Northumberland West & Peterborough District

Poem by Willa McCann

Skit by Doris Potts

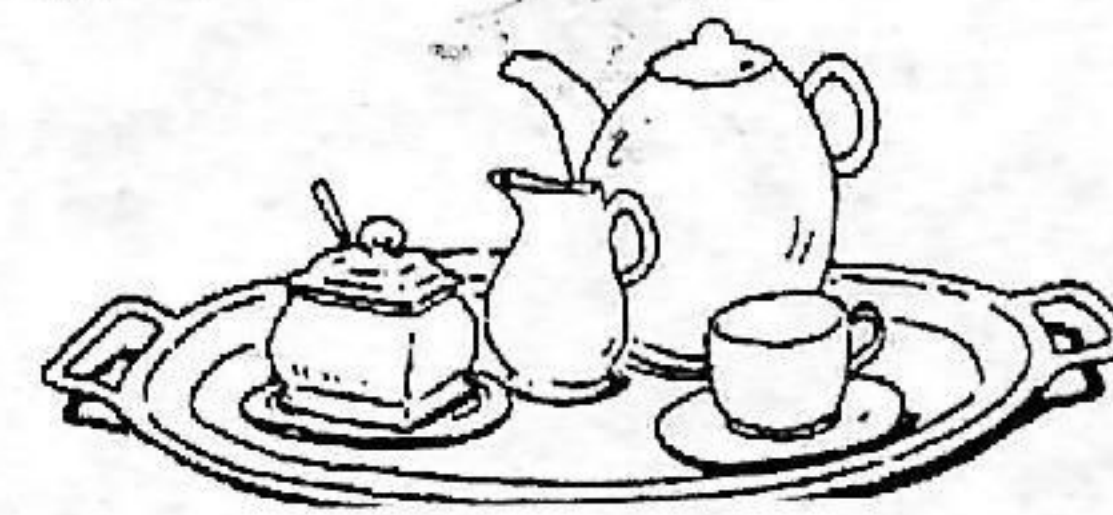
**Programme**

Table Setting — Joyce Murray

Tea Pouring by Willa McCann and Doris Potts

Door Prizes (Tickets available at entrance)

FALL RALLY SEPT. 29/04 CODRINGTON



**Programme**

Branch	Name	Collection
1. Seymour East	Jessie Poulton	Thimbles
2. Seymour West	Lois Brown	Dolls
3. Codrington	Lillian Piester	Plates
<b>Door Prize Draw</b>		
4. Castleton	Shirley McComb	Bells
5. Wooler	Marlene Gooding	Plates
6. White School	Earline Armstrong	Milk Bottles
<b>Door Prize Draw</b>		
7. Community	Jean Cassan	Bells
8. Maple View	Grace Zufelt	Placemats
9. York Road	Bernie Rosebush	Christmas
<b>Door Prize Draw</b>	<b>Workshop TBA</b>	Decorations