

All years reunion

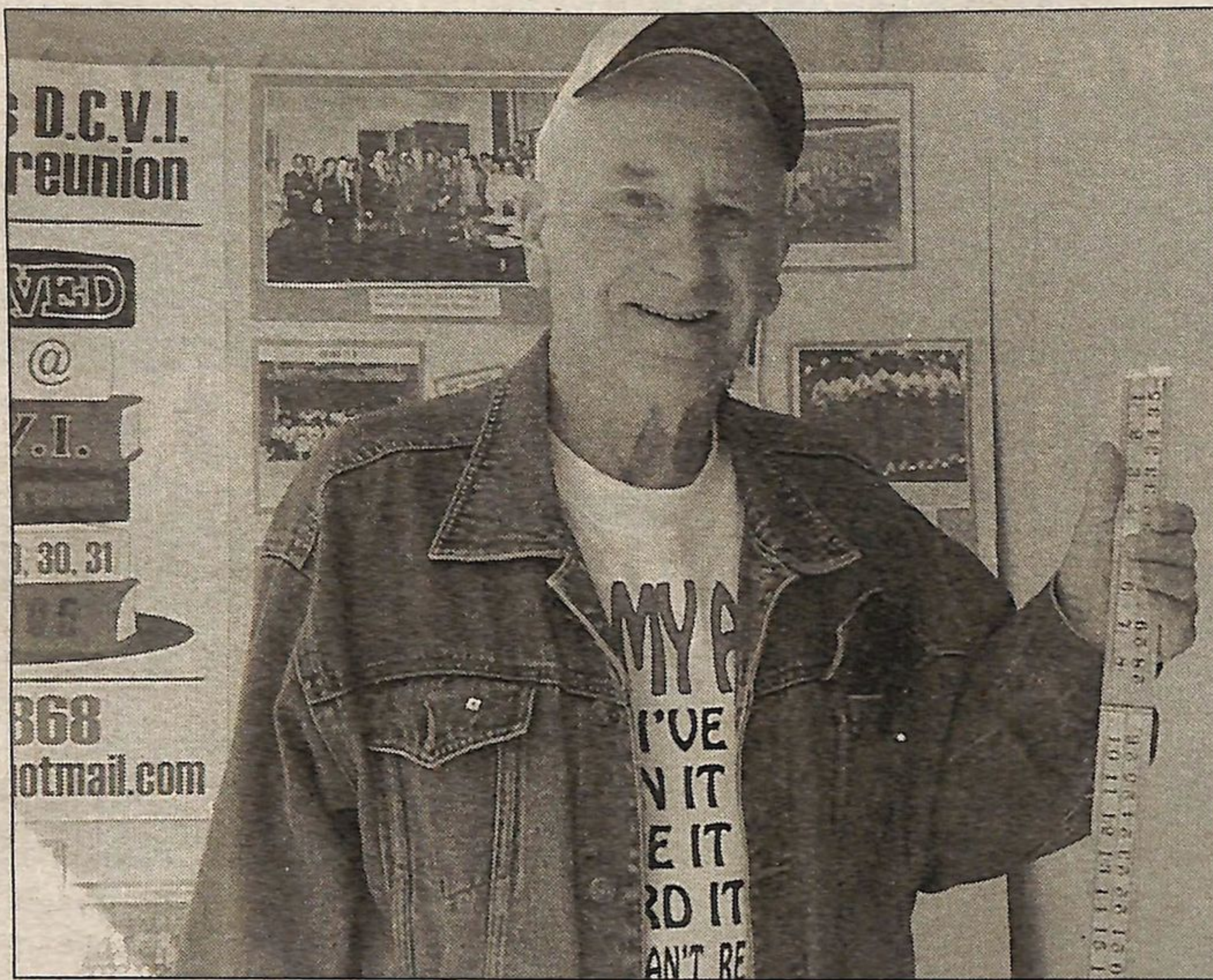
Carpenter recalls building new DCVI

By Laura Payton
EDITOR

The DCVI All years reunion will be an opportunity for many to remember some special memories. Reg Harris has been recalling a time over 50 years ago when he was 'first carpenter foreman' on the building of the 'new' high school on Elizabeth Street.

Reg Harris, then a Medina resident, was a young carpenter working with Thomas Construction when the high school was being built. With Thomas Construction, he'd already helped build Fanshawe Dam, an Ontario Hydro facility at Pond Mills, and the Centralia Airport.

His own high school career had ended early. He recalls starting at the "old school on the hill" (now Arthur Meighen) in 1941, but says he took sick in 1943, quit and went to work on the fami-



ly farm. Reg Harris, who helped build the high school on Elizabeth Street, was photographed in front of the All years reunion board in Sergio Boscarato's downtown storefront. Harris is holding his 3-foot 'blind man's rule.' He recalls the first one he bought many years ago was 60 cents; the last, 10 years ago, was \$16. "I couldn't work without one in my pocket," Harris said, "I bet no one uses them today."

ly farm.

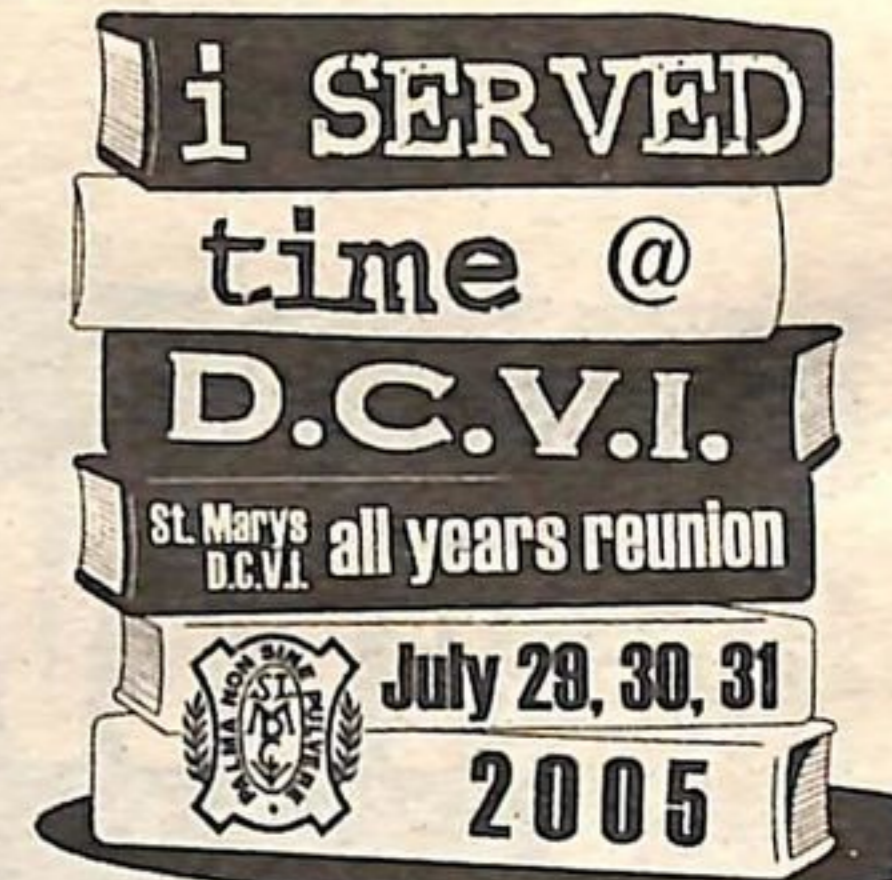
He started his carpentry career with Fenton Rumble, who did a lot of work around St. Marys at that time.

Construction started on the new high school in 1952, and there were three foremen on the project in all; Chris Diehl, Harris and Norm Tobin.

Harris says he took over the job on October 13, 1952. He recalls the land the high school has built on was "pretty bare" at that time. "It was pretty out in the open," Harris said of the school, which is now surrounded by residential development.

He stayed only until March 31, 1952. "I quit because I was going to get married, and wanted to open my own company," he explained.

Harris owned and operated Harris Construction from 1953 until 1995, when he passed the company -- and his expertise --



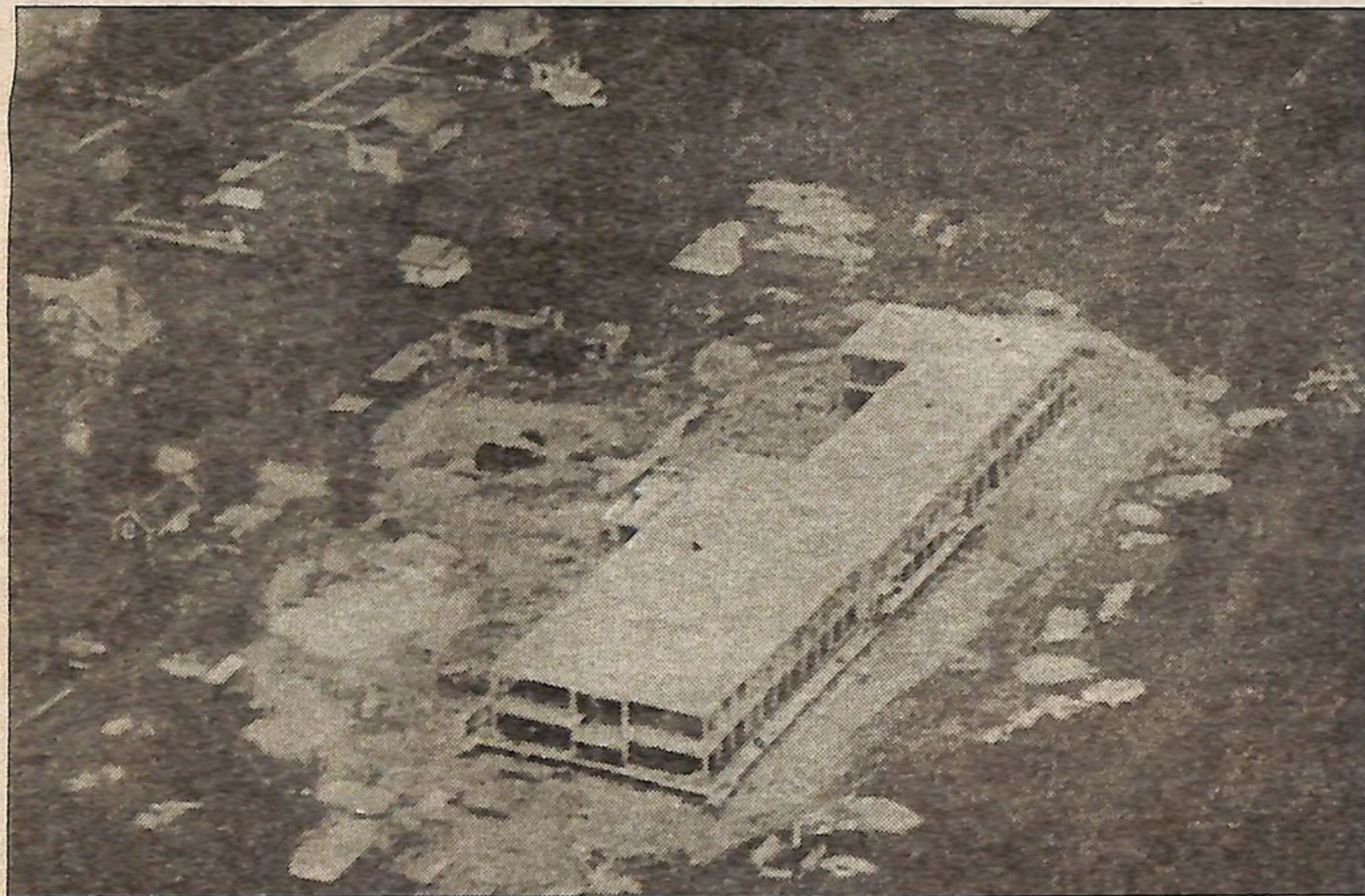
- onto his son, Brian Harris.

A list of workers on the high school project is featured on the DCVI reunion board in a downtown window. Unfortunately, Reg Harris's name is not on that list (We've reprinted it in this page, with him included.)

"It would be nice to know if anyone who worked on the project is still living. The ones I recall working with are all gone. I was only 24 at the time, and many were older," Reg Harris said.

Harris recalls enjoying helping to build the new high school.

"It was something different than what I had been doing. It was interesting, and I knew it would be my last big project," he said.



Work on the new Collegiate Institute began in September 1952. The tender for the project was awarded to Thomas Construction Company, of Galt, the lowest bidder at \$518,350. This photo shows progress reached by June 1953. The photo was taken by John G. Bell of the Journal Argus staff.

Years of planning for school

197,000 bricks, 102 doors, 15,000 square feet of terrazzo floor tells just part of the story of the building of the new St. Marys high school.

Just how many hours of work, how much planning and thought has been given to the matter of building the new St. Marys District Collegiate Institute, probably will never be tabulated.

Taking the matter as a whole, the planning stage, when the members of the Board, the Inspector and the Principal and teachers discussed the matter of a new school over a period of years, dating from the end of World War II, there must

have been many meetings, conferences and much private discussions.

Later, in 1951, the matter of a new school came closer to realization when the Collegiate Board took steps to secure from the town some vacant lots and a part of the undeveloped street known as Rogers Avenue in the Coupland Heights survey. In January of 1952, a further step was taken when Mr. Burwell Coon of Toronto, a well-known architect, was asked to submit sketch plans for the new school.

(From the Journal Argus, April 29, 1954)

Some who helped build new school

The following is a list of St. Marys and district men who worked on the new St. Marys District Collegiate, which opened in 1954.

N. Tobin, R. Harris, E. Marziali, C. Diehl, G. Spearin, M. McDonald, D. Eeley, W. Lancaster, L. Hogg, M. Teahen, E. Ball, B. Beacham, C. Acreman, W. Johnson, M. Wood, E. Haycock, A. McNaughton, J. Aicken, W. Calcott, B. McCauley, G. Bickell, R. Taylor, C. Kappler, B. Spilitch, S. Campenelle, S. Webb, K. Hoffran, J. Fletcher, J. Poel, R. McDonald, C. Blackman, W. Flood, R. Lacroix, M. Martin, J. Lang, G. Poel, F. Cappa, E. Vander Mollen, W. Wilmore, C. Roadhouse, P. Kainz, A. George, J. Gordon, W. Newman, J. Swan, A. Gordon, J. Westerhof, J. Droog, W. Hamilton, R. Lang, W. Bryan, B. Knowles, R. Partridge, G. Melville, J. McNaughton, L. Doyle, B. Thompson, A. Pearson, H. Harvey, J. Bannerman, P. Gregory.



Norm Tobin, one of the foremen for the new Collegiate, pointed to the work to be finished on one of the over 100 windows in the school. The photo was part of a special edition of the Journal Argus published Thursday, April 29, 1954, as part of the school's opening.