

The Way We Were, part 5

A history of the Herald

McGilvray, Biehn introduced new era

By RICHARD RUGGLE
Garfield "Mac" McGillvray was hired as a printer by J.M. Moore in 1926. Though wages were only \$5 a week, after a year's experience, the new employee gained an extra dollar.

Type was still being set by hand, and the other boys were quick offering to show him the "type lice" that emerged when type was placed in a tray of water. As he peered to see the lice, the type were pulled

together, spraying his face. Another trick was to send Mac out in search of a pail of steam to beat the static in the paper. But with the encouragement of foreman C.D. Cole, he learned the skills of the printing trade. They were changing skills, for in 1928 the Herald bought a linotype machine.

On Wednesdays, young people would gather to watch the excitement of the hand-fed Campbell flat-bed press with its fly-leaf, printing four pages

(one sheet) at a time. It took about three hours to print the 600 to 800 copies that were needed. Georgetown was still a small town, with a population of about 2,500, and one of the problems of the newspaper business then was simply to find enough news to print.

When J.M. Moore died in October, 1939, his will advised his family to sell the business, because he felt the day of the independent, small-town newspaper was already past.

At the time, Walter Biehn, a native of Chesley, was starting what he expected would be a career of accountancy in Toronto. His dad, however, rather thought that he would make a good editor, especially since he had taken well to English and history at university. There were a lot of papers for sale just then, and when driving through Georgetown, Mr. Biehn senior looked in on the Herald as well.

When he saw the George-

town paper advertised some time later, he urged his son to take it on. Fathers (then still had a great deal of influence on their sons (it seems a bygone era), and Walter began his new career; he would carry the Herald on as an independent for almost two decades more.

BETWEEN OWNERS
In the interval between owners, Garfield McGillvray oversaw the operation. He had been more than a printer, for he had begun the paper's sports column, and ventured into other articles, even an occasional editorial, so he was able to lend a hand at most jobs when it was needed. When the new owner joined the army in 1941, first in the pay corps, then in intelligence (which he found "deadly dull"), his wife, Mary Biehn, ran the business.

The war did not end the lean times of the depression for the newspaper business, since advertising dried up during those years. Walter Biehn started editorializing when he acquired the paper, and he sought to deal with local topics rather than use the canned editorials which were widely available. Though he avoided partisanship at election times, he found that politicians could be sensitive to publicity. In the past, the paper had simply reported council minutes, and when he began to report council meetings more fully, he did so over the objections of the mayor.

Walter continued the pattern of community activity which his predecessors had set, though he limited himself to one post at a time, feeling that the corollary to the old adage about giving a busy man a job is that he's likely to drop one of the other jobs for the new one. He has served on the public school board, was chairman of the short-lived Georgetown Board of Education (which oversaw both public and high schools), then served on the district high school board; he was a member of the Lions

Club (then the only service club in town) and a warden at St. George's church; and he is presently a member of town council and secretary-treasurer of the Chamber of Commerce.

The Herald prospered after the war, and in 1952 it purchased its own office, at the present location on Main Street. During the late fifties, the Thomson newspaper chain bought a number of small-town dailies, and then began to branch out further still. The Herald and the Orangeville Banner were among first small town Ontario weeklies to become part of the chain.

In a sense, newspapers fell into the same pattern as other businesses, with small independent owners giving way to larger bodies. Newspapers depend on their advertisers, and a newspaper chain finds it easier to solicit the advertising of, for example, a grocery chain, than would an independent paper. The paper chains, too, can share the printing time on larger presses. Walter Biehn had bought a better press for the paper, but when the Herald became part of the Thomson Company, the press was sold to the Bolton Enterprise, and now mats were sent out of town to print the paper.

RIVAL PAPER?
I've been told that the Herald had a rival early in the century, but have not been able to discover anything about it. From 1961-1964, Rex Heslop Sr. sponsored the Georgetown Leader, and in 1973 the Independent was set up by the Dills group (now owned by Inland Publishing). That same year, Walter Biehn retired from the Herald, and on his leaving, there was a fast-changing series of publishers and editors.

The Herald is now in a new era, more properly the subject of journalism than of history. For amidst the many changes and activities of any business, it takes time to gain the perspective to see what things will prove important in the



Herald editor Walter Biehn reigned over the newspaper from 1939 to 1973. Although he had originally intended to be an accountant, his father persuaded him that owning and editing a community newspaper was a nice, respectable job and, looking back over his career, Mr. Biehn admits he did enjoy it, even though it wasn't his own choice.

(Herald photo)

long run. The Herald now has a local person, Paul Dorsey as its editor; it plans soon to move to new premises. Though changes have always affected the newspaper business, the pace of change these days has quickened. Still, the local paper provides the news of the people we know and the place

we live, and carries the ads for where we shop; it remains our source of information about the things that concern us most directly. It will be interesting to see how new technologies and changing lifestyles affect, and are reflected in, the newspapers of years to come.



Garfield McGillvray, or "Mac" as he is fondly called by long-time community residents, started with The Herald as a printer in 1926. Before he retired, almost half a century had

passed and his involvement had broadened to include a sports column and even the occasional news item and editorial. (Herald photo)

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

'Give a cow a break' - fish farmer

By MAGGIE HANNAH
Herald Staff Writer

With food such an important matter in everyone's eyes, the person who produces it is also a person of importance; specially farms, in particular, abound in recognition of the fact that many edibles require specific growing conditions.

Trout farming requires special situations and yet works well either as a sideline to some other type of farming, or as a second income source in a totally unrelated occupation, according to the president of the Ontario Trout Farmers Association (OTFA).

John Harrington, owner of Halton Hills Trout Farm Ltd. on the Fourth Line, started out looking for fish to stock a pond on the property he had acquired. Four years later, he is the president of a group he didn't even know existed in 1976 and is considering expanding his sideline to tackle the Toronto market for fresh rainbow trout.

The Harringtons visited the Sportsman Show in search of their stocking trout and found members of the OTFA willing to tell them what they needed to know about their trout and trout farming. Mr. Harrington says the dollar signs "started clicking" after he visited one small farm operation and discovered that he had a better natural set up for trout farming than his host. If this farmer could make his operation pay, why couldn't the Harringtons convert their home into a trout farm, he wondered.

Mr. Harrington spent seven years in industry as a draftsman before becoming a high school teacher. He is now head of the technical department at Morning Star Secondary School in Malton.

NO TRAINING
Mr. Harrington started his trout farm with no training and picked it up bit by bit from other farmers who belong to OTFA and from books, workshops and speakers presented by the OTFA.

While he recommends these sources as being very helpful to anyone interested in fish farming, he says the University of Guelph also offers a degree in fish biology which



John Harrington cleans his fish and wraps each one individually for delivery to his customers. He finds customers usually call towards the end of the week and meeting the demand keeps him hopping some weekends. He has been delivering to customers and is just starting a scheme for customers to pick up their own orders. (Herald photo)

could be useful; graduates are in demand in certain industries as well as fish farming, he noted.

The other requirement a prospective fish farmer will have is a proper location for his farm. The farmer needs an abundance of fresh spring water, rather than great quantities of land, for this operation. Mr. Harrington is considering expanding his operation on his 10-acre property by adding ponds to what he already has, but he won't have to buy more land, he says.

Very few of Ontario's fish farmers carry the entire operation from hatching eggs to selling finished trout at table-ready size. Usually, they specialize. One farm has plenty of water and space, but no ready access to markets, so the owner hatches eggs and sells trout fry; another raises fry from tiny size to larger

size. Mr. Harrington finds the most economical way to operate his farm is to buy nine to 12-inch long fish and stock his ponds. These are ready to be caught and sold to stores and restaurants.

The Harringtons offer both. They operate a fishing club to which members pay a fee to fish any time of year. They also harvest their own fish and sell to stores, restaurants and the general public.

90 MEMBERS
It took a bit of doing to get their first member, but now they have 90. What did surprise them was the number of local people interested in joining. They had expected their members would come from Toronto, Mississauga and Brampton. Most of them, however, are from the Georgetown, Milton and Acton area.

The Harringtons had been selling fish, offering free

delivery to the Georgetown and Milton areas, but just recently have decided to broaden their scope and are offering free delivery to Mississauga, Brampton and Oakville on orders of four dozen or more. It's still in the experimental stages. Since they began using their ad, "give a cow a break, eat fresh fish", they find they're attracting far more attention and sell \$300 to \$400 worth of fish locally each week.

"As a part-time job, it can keep me hopping," Mr. Harrington says. "I'd like to sell to Toronto stores and restaurants, but the size of the market makes me cringe. What would I do if I couldn't service all my customers? That's what makes me hold back on trying to move into that market."

Mr. Harrington feels he needs a full-time farm

manager to look after his operation if he wants to expand enough to tackle Toronto. To attract such a person, however, he feels he may have to build a second residence on his property and that will require council permission. His property isn't even zoned agricultural; it's hazard land, he says.

Considering that fish are probably the world's best converters of food to flesh, and thus a prime food source, it's ironic that fish farming is governed by the ministry of natural resources, not the ministry of agriculture. Trout are a game fish and thus considered part of our resource and recreation system, not our food system, in the eyes of the ministry.

This is one of the OTFA's aims, to switch their control into the hands of the ministry of agriculture. While natural resources licensed and basically controlled them, it never encouraged them, Mr. Harrington says. Ministry officials are so scared of poaching and upsetting nature's balance, they totally overlook the food value of fish, he complains.

The ministry of agriculture has done a bit of research into the industry and was amazed at the dollar value involved in the findings, he says.

"It's a multi-million dollar industry in this province," Mr. Harrington says. "Despite the amount our own people produce, we're still importing millions of pounds of trout from the United States, Japan and Denmark each year."

FEW MAKE MILLION
There are 100 or less licensed fish farms in Ontario, he says, although very few will do a million dollars worth of business. Most are full-time farmers.

Mr. Harrington says a prospective fish farmer would do well to enjoy fishing and the outdoors, and it wouldn't hurt to have a scientific turn of mind. It would also be useful if he was something of a handyman.

The cost of setting up a fish farm operation will vary greatly depending on its size

and type. Ponds cost \$5,000 to \$7,000 for each half acre of surface area and a properly-constructed hatchery will run \$15,000 to \$30,000, depending on how much of the work the farmer can do himself.

The fish require daily feeding, although the use of automatic feeders has cut down a bit on that work, Mr. Harrington says. Tanks must be cleaned and flushed at least twice a week to prevent disease. Then, through December to February, the farmer will be working constantly, as this is the breeding season. March to May the fry have to be fed and graded. Then through the fall, the rearing ponds or raceways will need cleaning.

NEED ROOM
Mr. Harrington says he hatched 20,000 eggs three years ago but had to sell off the fry since he had no room to raise them.

Fish food is available commercially and is extremely nutritious. It does not change the flavor of the fish. The fact that these commercial foods can be fed to fry from the moment they hatch is the reason why commercially reared fish are ready for market far sooner than those reared in the wild. Fry feed every half hour and grow much faster if they don't have to spend their time and energy looking for their meals.

Fish are considered one of nature's most efficient food converters. From two pounds of food, they will produce one pound of flesh and in many cases convert pound for pound. Other flesh producers require five to 10 pounds of food to make a pound of flesh.

Mr. Harrington says one returns from fish farming are comparable to that of any other type of farming on a similar scale. The farmer who sell \$1 million worth of fish will probably realize a \$100,000 income. Like any other work, it's all in what you want to make it.

One interesting note was an admission that, although he is a trout farmer and enjoys fishing, Mr. Harrington has never acquired a taste for fish.

Walter still has urge to write

EDITOR'S NOTE: Ex-Herald editor Walter Biehn may have retired, but hasn't lost his way with words. Mr. Biehn's name was among those listed as consolation prize winners in this weekend's Sunday Sun Travellers' Tales of the Seventies contest. Mr. Biehn will receive a book on Canada for the following tale on how he mangled the French language in gay Paris.

By WALTER BIEHN
"When in Rome" the saying goes, so "When in Paris..." likewise.

We had checked into the Grand Hotel de l'Opera shortly before the dinner hour - a beautiful room with one slight flaw, a burned-out bulb in the boudoir lamp.

With references to my tourist dictionary, recollections of my long-unused high school French and a verbal rehearsal, I dialed room service.

"C'est l'ampoule sur le bureau. Elle est morte. Veuillez

vous le remplacer, s'il vous plait, quand nous allons a manger."

"Que cola?" said the voice.

"Sur le bureau. Le bureau!" I repeated.

"Qui, oui, monsieur."

En route to an elevator, I was barely conscious of passing a bellhop carrying something on a tray.

During our meal, my wife complimented my foresight in carrying our own supply of bottled water. Always purchased at a convenience store, for European hotels notoriously overcharge for this.

Returning to our room, I flicked the boudoir lamp and was annoyed to find still a burned out bulb.

But on the bureau, would you believe? A tray containing a large bottle of water.

The many times we have chuckled about my foray into French have more than made up for the atrocious charge made for that bottle when we checked out a few days later.

About the Hills Perfect crib hand

After 53 years of playing cribbage, Earnie Pearce Jr. of Georgetown got his first perfect crib hand last Sunday. Mabel Pearce told the Herald, her husband was dealt fives in clubs, hearts and diamonds and the Jack of spades.

"He had them all in his hand and said that all he needed now was a five of spades - and it showed up," she said, adding that she and her husband play cribbage almost every night. "Neither one of us has seen anyone get a perfect hand before."

Grant to RDOP

Halton regional council has approved a grant of \$500 to the Halton Community Pulse Group of the University of Guelph's Rural Development Outreach Project. The grant will be used to publish a brochure on the realities of rural living.

Paper drive resumes

The First Norval Scouts will be resuming their regular newspaper pick-ups Saturday. They will start collecting newspapers from homes in Terra Cotta at 9 a.m. and in Norval at 9:30 a.m., according to spokesman Art Rice.

"Right now we're getting \$30 per ton for the newspaper we bring to the Brampton recycling plant," Mr. Rice told The Herald Monday. "The money that's made will be used to send scouts to the 1981 Canadian Jamboree, which will be held near Banff in Alberta."

Mr. Rice said the scouts are starting to develop a lot of regular customers for their paper drives, which are held on the last Saturday of each month.