

Halton Hills Electrical celebrates 30 years in business

By JENNIFER ENRIGHT

Lyle Preuter grew up on a farm and decided the farming life wasn't for him. Looking back, he can only laugh about it now after 30 years as president of Halton Hills Electrical Contracting Ltd.

"I hated the idea of farming because you have to be there 24 hours a day, seven days a week. So what did I do? I got into the electrical business and offered a 24-hour service."

Lyle and his wife Marie, Acton residents since 1971, both grew up on farms in south central Ontario, not far from Stratford, Lyle in Bornholm and Marie in Monkton, Ontario. They moved to the Halton area in the 1960s, back in the days before the Region of Halton was established in 1974 and before the creation of the Towns of Halton Hills and Milton.

The wage he made as a first-year apprentice is marked in his memory, something he's not afraid to let anyone know. "I was making \$1.50 an hour in 1966," recalls Lyle.

In 1969, the year he and Marie moved to the Georgetown area, he was serving part of his apprenticeship with Perth Electrical Contracting of St. Marys, Ontario, working on wiring for a new addition to Georgetown District High School, a job that he says lasted approximately a year and a half.

Once that job was finished, he went on to work for other contractors, all known locally in the area - Dave Williams Electric, T and S Electric, and finally Nadalin Electric where Lyle would complete his 9000-hour-long apprenticeship.

But something just wasn't right for him once he became a qualified electrician. Lyle says he didn't want to work for someone else, and he decided early on in his career to set up his own business. On January 1, 1975, Lyle and Marie established Halton Hills Electrical Contracting. The name seemed like a good idea since the Town of Halton Hills had been incorporated about a year earlier.

As newcomers in the area, Marie says they weren't sure how successful they would be. But a short time after they opened their business they secured a large contract that lasted several months. Lyle says one of their first major jobs was wiring the new Terra Cotta Inn after the old building burnt down in 1974.

They started out small, working out of what Marie describes as their "little one-car garage" at their home in the Lakeview subdivision in Acton. Then it was on to larger rented space at a shop at 265 Main St. North in Acton. They

would occupy that location for about three years. Finally, in 1980 the Preuters purchased property at 2 Commerce Crescent in Acton, a location their business has occupied ever since.

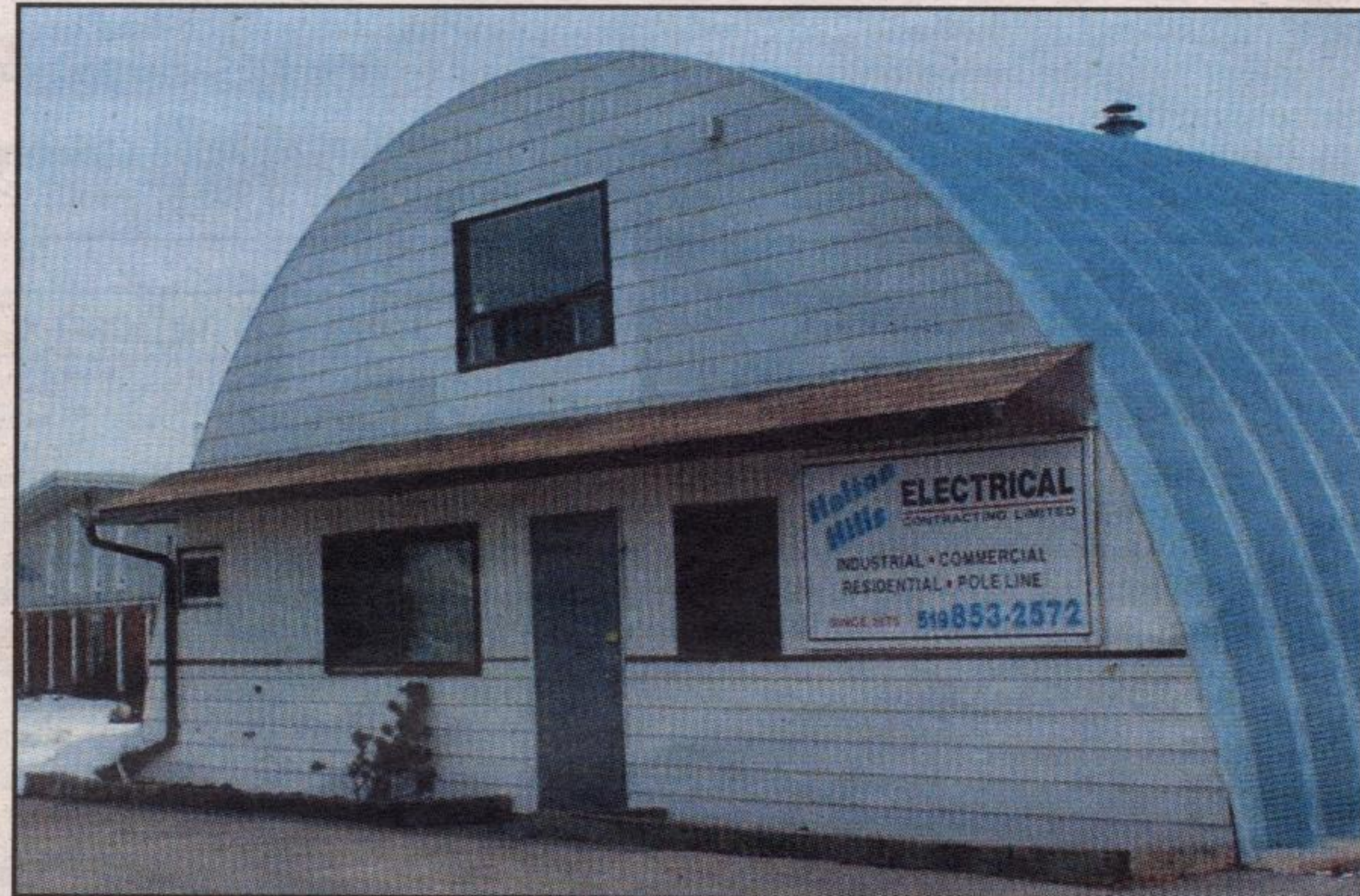
Over the years, their company has built up a client base that includes many local industrial and commercial clients including Sobeyes in Acton, Prosperity One, and Superior Glove. They also have many residential clients. And a big part of their business, Marie says, is assisting people. Quite often, they handle troubleshooting calls. People might be phoning with general questions related to their electrical service or they might be calling about a power outage. But they also receive a lot of other requests, says Lyle. "We do a lot of calls where there's a problem with aluminum wiring. We will have to go and detect why the circuit doesn't work. We also do a lot of service upgrades when people want to change their service from 60 to 100 amp or 100 amp to 200 amp."

Lyle says he enjoys assisting customers and offering them this kind of personalized service. And after 30 years putting in what he says are "a lot of hours into the business," he has no thoughts of slowing down. Even though his sons, Trevor and Ryan, work alongside him and he and Marie can take vacations now, Lyle would prefer to keep working.

"I'll probably never retire. I enjoy doing what I do best."

PHOTO BY JENNIFER ENRIGHT

Marie and Lyle Preuter (third from the left) started their business, Halton Hills Electrical Contracting, back in 1975. The Acton couple wasn't sure at the time if they could make a go of it, but as Marie says, "Once we got going we never looked back." Sons Trevor (beside Marie) and Ryan (right) both work in the business.



Halton Hills Electrical Contracting Ltd., which opened on January 1, 1975, has enjoyed three decades as a successful business in Halton Hills. Most of the company's clients are local, with an estimated 95 per cent of business coming from the Halton Hills area.



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