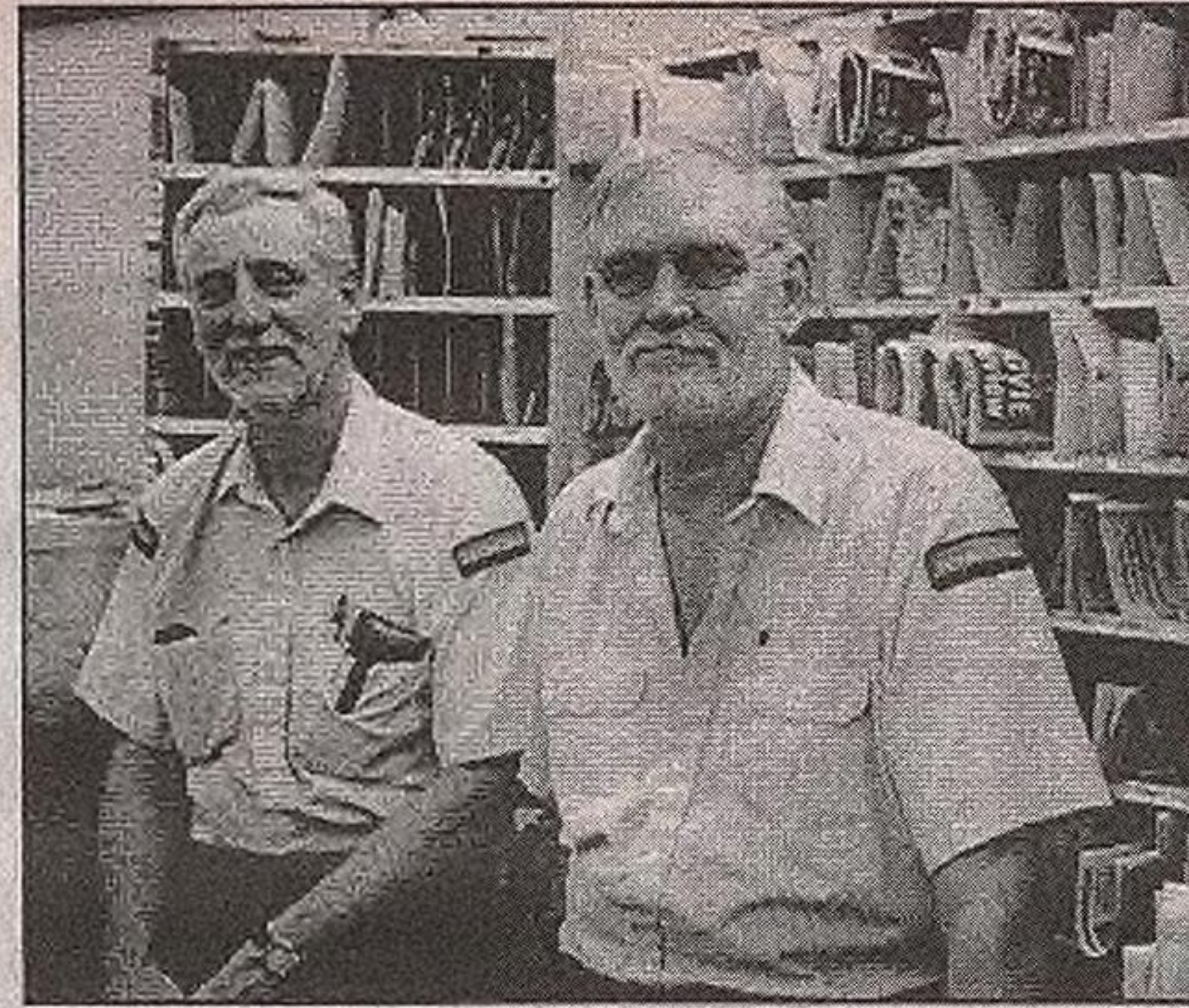


Two posties celebrate 25 years in Acton office

Only original postmen left

BY MAGGIE PETRUSHEVSKY
The New Tanner



Smallwood and Forrest

shifted three times as routes restructured.

The two men start their day at 8 a.m. by sorting their mail into the proper order for their individual routes. That takes about 1½. Then they spend three to 3½ hours walking door-to-door along their routes.

Probably the best change in recent years, Forrest says, are the new double saddlebags. They allow for better balancing of their loads.

"The personal touch has gone out of delivering mail," Lloyd Smallwood says, and he ought to know.

Smallwood and George Forrest celebrated 25 years of delivering mail on Acton's five in-town routes earlier this week.

"You used to get to know the people on your route," he says. "Now even the local mail gets sent to Gateway (postal plant in Mississauga) for sorting and redirecting mail (when people move and leave forwarding addresses) gets done in Brampton."

The men are the only two remaining of the original six posties hired when Acton first got door-to-door delivery in August, 1974. The other carriers have transferred to positions in other communities, Smallwood says.

He and Forrest have walked several routes over the years. In fact, Smallwood calculates he has walked an average of 60,000 miles a year delivering letters, papers and parcels to homes and businesses around this town.

"Now just think how many times could I have walked to Florida and back?" Smallwood chuckles. "You don't realize just how far you are walking as you do it, just a bit at a time."

When Smallwood and Forrest began their careers getting a government job was no walk in the park. They had several requirements to meet. First they wrote an aptitude test. Forrest remembers 60 to 70 people writing it with them in the old Canadian Legion building on Main Street North. Then they had to be fingerprinted and allow a police inquiry of their background in order to be bonded. "Now you can't even ask if they have a criminal record when people apply," Forrest points out. "It's an invasion of their privacy."

They were also forbidden to take any part time work that might be deemed a conflict of interest - like working for a courier.

While Acton has grown since the original five walking routes were laid out, Smallwood points out any new homes get service through group boxes these days, rather than with additional routes and posties. Forrest is still with his original route but Smallwood has

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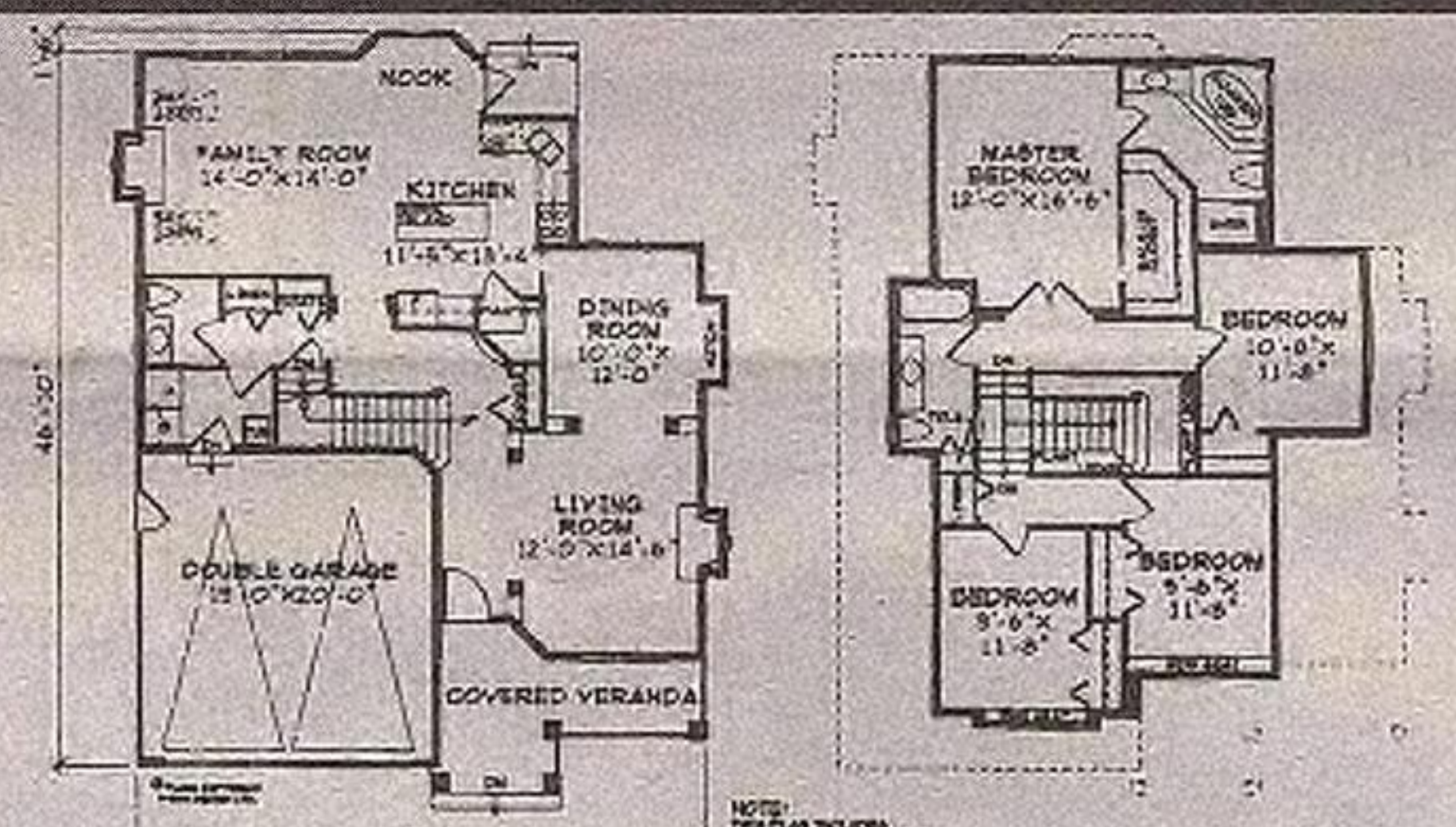
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