

PUFFS from the Steam-Era

By Roy Downs

It's over. The 1971 Steam-Era reunion is history now. But the memories will linger on. Here's a roving reporter's views on some of the activities that made the show the success it was:

—At the grandstand each afternoon you'd find the funmaking funnyman Vince Mountford entertaining crowds. Vince brought a few new jokes and a lot of the old ones, plus some top-notch entertainers to while away the hours.

—Missing from this year's reunion was the callopie or steam organ owned by Dave Thomson of the Minnie Thomson Museum at Stratford. It was tied up entertaining at the CNE in Toronto all weekend. (was that a loud cheer we heard from the residents who live in the neighborhood of the fair grounds? It wasn't a very popular exhibit for them as it blasted out noisy tunes all day long at previous reunions.)

—While organizers claim Steam-Era is Ontario's biggest and best steam and antique reunion, some say it's the best in Canada. One Toronto daily last week called Milton "the unofficial steam capital of Canada." That's a title we'll proudly bear.

—Milton didn't do much to tie in with the reunion this year, mainly because the once-popular old fashioned days promotion has dwindled. There were a few things worth noting, however — the sidewalk sale on labor day weekend took on an old fashioned flair and a few old costumes were seen on store clerks; the Chamber of Commerce sign promoting Steam-Era was displayed at the Chamber signboard at the Main-Martin intersection and Chamber secretary Bob McCuaig had a window display promoting Steam-Era for several weeks before the event; some other merchants had old fashioned window displays; and of course the town threw open its arms and gave visitors some good old Milton-style hospitality.

—Milton's garbage truck was busy picking up Steam-Era refuse each day of the reunion. We noticed a lot of people using the litter cans on the grounds but too many preferred to drop their trash where they walked. The result was a king-sized clean-up job that started Monday night and will likely last for a couple of days.

—Wally Gray of Milton had his 1931 Cadillac convertible coupe on display in the antique car section. He first brought it to the show last year, un-restored. Wally reports he's put 2,000 hours on it to date and has about 1,000 hours of restoration work to do before the old Caddy is in A-1 shape. It's thought to be the only one of its kind in Canada and it bears a pretty high price tag.

—Antique vehicles seen around town on Sunday were not part of the Steam-Era, they were from the Historical Automobile Society of Canada which held its annual steam cookout at Dave Watkins' farm on Fourth Line Sunday. About 40 cars and 200 people showed up for the event. They went on a tour Sunday before returning to Watkins' for the cookout — in the rain. A few of the vehicles were displayed at Steam-Era.

—Speaking of old vehicles, how about that Model T the Kentucky Hillbillies drove around the show? Wasn't that something

else? If you haven't figured out the secret method the mountaineers use to start their car, we won't spill the beans. But you really didn't believe the car would start by spitting on the rad, now did you?

—St. John Ambulance crew members were busy all weekend with the usual first aid problems: bees, burns and faintings from the heat. They also ran a child care centre which allowed parents to see the show without dragging along the pre-schoolers.

—Hundreds visited the "mini-chapel", The Little White Church in the Vale which was exhibited by Frank and Cynthia Joyce of Milton. The little church is a change-of-pace exhibit at the show and a popular attraction.

—Gordie Downs of Milton turned his Rumely tractor over to the Garbutt family for the Monday parade at the show. Norm, Clarence and Lou Garbutt, three sons of Wilson Garbutt of Cooksville, rode on the tractor. When it got to the front of the grandstand everyone joined in singing happy birthday to Mr. Garbutt senior, an active member who will celebrate his 87th birthday later this month.

—Did you see the bicycle built for three? It's owned by director Earl Davison of Detroit and was driven around the grounds by local girls Sandra Johnson, Susan and Diane Smith.

—There were more models than ever at the 1971 reunion. President Ross Calder counted 200 models on display.

—Best time recorded in the sheaf tying contest was that of Henry Jensen, Campbellville, who bundled up a sheaf of wheat in 10 seconds. It's quite an art, tying a sheaf without binder twine.

—Ray Death, the busy man from Rockwood who not only exhibited his antique car, helped in the Rockwood church booth and helped organize contests at the grandstand, also showed his prowess in another field. He won the log-sawing contest all three days of the show. Cliff Wrigglesworth was his Friday partner and Gerald Garbutt helped him win Saturday and Monday.

—There was even a mock wedding at the Steam-Era. "Preacher" Earl Davison "hitched up" one of the T-Model Hillbillies, Carl Rowe, to an unidentified girl from the crowd. Gord Rayner, the club's busy treasurer and all-round helper-organizer, played the part of the shotgun-toting father of the bride. It brought a lot of laughs. Genial Earl, despite the fact he had no time to rehearse, did a fine job of "marrying" the pair.

—Pinkerton Security force handled the gates and parking this year.

—A new "boss" was at the helm of the ever-busy souvenir booth this year. After six years of running the booth, Mrs. Madeleine Davison of Detroit "retired" and Mrs. Ross Johnson, Toronto ran the booth. It did well again and the ladies were sold out of buttons, caps, dishes, tiles and steins before the show closed Monday. Mrs.

Davison was around to help the ladies frequently during the weekend too.

—The Museum of Science and Technology in Ottawa sent along some antique displays for the weekend.

—Ontario Furrow Queen Mary Dolson of neighboring Peel County arrived Monday to put in a plug for the International Flowing Match at Nanticoke in October. That match comes to Haldon in 1974.

—Besides all the portable toilets around the grounds, Sam Newell was back with his "Johnny TO the Spot", a mobile two-holer bedecked with weeds and a lineful of laundry.

—The Supersweet sound car, with George Swann at the microphone, was busy touring the grounds announcing events and explaining displays for visitors.

—Not too many parents got lost on the weekend but occasionally some young child would show up at the microphone to have Vince Mountford announce that their child was looking for them.

—"Steam Puffs", the special Steam-Era souvenir paper prepared by The Champion, was sold to visitors at the souvenir booths. Almost 500 copies were purchased by show-goers. Copies are still available at The Champion and they can be mailed out for \$1.

—Milton Girls Pipe Band had a busy weekend, parading each day of the reunion and leading the downtown parade on Saturday.

—Steam-Era members come from all over Ontario and northern U.S. and they hold monthly meetings at Boyne Community Centre south of Milton. The meetings are mostly film nights and social get-togethers; the 10-man board of directors also meets monthly to conduct association business. There are presently 200 members, over 100 associate members and 29 junior members.

—Bob Clarke of Milton had his hands full during the show—he was parade marshal for the four parades. Announcers were Bill Shillinglaw and Norm Schell, with assistance from Earl Davison. Other committee chairmen were, activities, Bill Shillinglaw; antiques (Grand stand), Bert Carney; models, Wally Goutouski; farm equipment, Spencer Wilson, Fred Ruddell; steam engines, Bill Shillinglaw, Bernard Porter; gas tractors, Norm Schell; antique cars, Earl Carpenter; small steam engines, Ernie Batty, Vic Hall; sawmill, Gordon Booth, Bruce Buckle; coal and wood, G. Bridgen, Vic Hall; water, Doug Leslie; threshing, Sherwood Hume; transportation, Procurement Committee; souvenirs, Barbara Johnson; publicity, E. Davison; concessions, G. Rayner; grounds, Jack Arthur; country store, Mrs. Dan Kidd; spinning, Mrs. John Foucart.

—One of the members of Steam-Era, Bob Rogers of Cheraw, South Carolina, runs his own privately-financed show each spring, several Steam-Era members took in the Cheraw show earlier this year.

—Milton Post Office stamped all outgoing local mail with a special Steam-Era cancellation for a few weeks prior to the show. It has been in use here for about six years and gives further publicity to the reunion and the town.

—Gordon Smith, the jovial MPP from Orillia who is a past president of Steam-Era, gave a fitting quote over the microphone Saturday. "You can tell the men from the boys by the price of their toys... and boy, we've got some expensive toys here today."



LOG SAWING COMPETITIONS created much interest at the Steam-Era reunion. Two Milton directors of the sponsoring club, Gord Rayner and Bob Clarke go at the log with the big saw in a Friday contest. —(Staff Photo)

PoCo program is success as students earn \$2,000

Forty young teens involved in this summer's PoCo program through Milton Parks and Recreation Committee, proved that a summer employment program in the town is beneficial to both themselves and the community as a whole.

Teens between the ages of 13 to 19 were involved in the summer program, designed to supply them with odd jobs through the summer months. For the small registration fee of \$2 these teens found hours of fun, work and general satisfaction in themselves for having participated in such a program.

Together for the entire summer, the group of 40 raised a total of \$2,000. Odd jobs including babysitting, catching chickens, cutting grass and painting fences were among the majority of jobs through the summer.

Mostly boys

Organizer of the program, Mickey Goutouski of Campbellville, said she was "more than surprised with the number of boys who participated in the program. Usually with this type of program there are more girl applicants than boys," she laughed. "Much to my surprise only 11 of the 40 were girls, the remainder boys."

Teens wishing to participate in the program paid their registration fee to the recreation office at the start of the summer and became active participants in the program. Residents with odd jobs to be done were asked to contact the office and a student was sent to complete the job.

After the job had been completed, the home owner was asked to fill out a form, stating whether or not the job had been done to their satisfaction, and if not, why? "In most cases we found the PoCo students completed the work satisfactorily," she said.

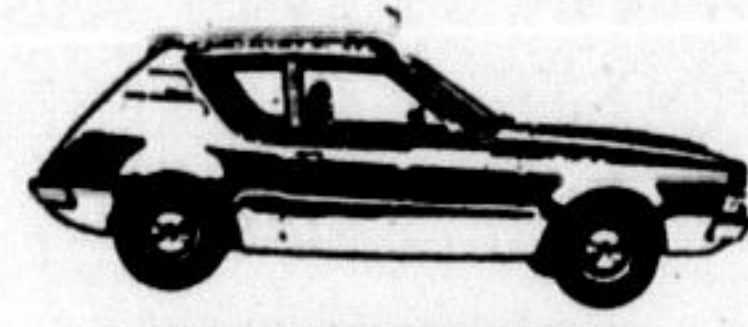
Deduct percentage

A deduction of five per cent was taken from the wage of each applicant at the beginning of the summer, but later they discovered the students weren't making enough to cover the five per cent deduction, she explained. "Finally near the end of the program it was decided to deduct 10 per cent from wages \$5 or more."

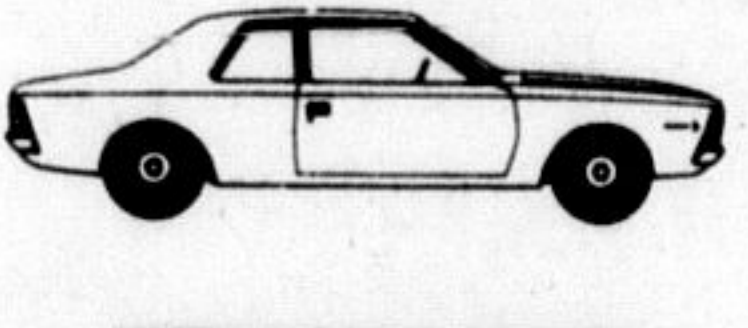
Various odd jobs had different prices and babysitting duties demanded 50 cents an hour and an additional 25 cents for every hour after midnight, plus the

certification of a ride home for the sitter. "The main problem of the program was finding enough jobs for the students and also transportation to and from the jobs."

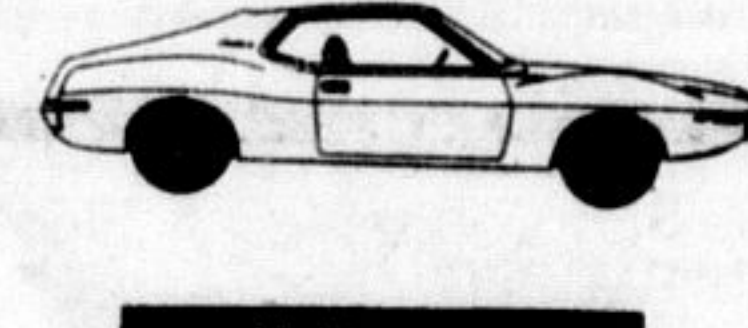
"The program was entirely well worth the effort," said Miss Goutouski. "It was something to fill in the ground between playground and no work at all. It was a trial program and we learned a lot from it. I hope to see the program continue next year," she concluded.



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Hungry, thirsty crowd at show

Steam and antique reunion visitors were again a hungry, thirsty bunch. Before the show ended Monday many food and drink items were completely sold out at the various booths offering refreshments.

The WAVES group of Omagh Church of Christ again served full course meals at lunch hour and supertime each day of the show and totalled up almost 1,800 meals when it all ended Monday. They served beef dinners at Noon, ham at night.

Hamburgs, hot dogs and soft drinks were the main menu at the Lions Club of Milton booth. Organizer Chris Schouten said the crowd went through 600 pounds of hamburger, 60 dozen hot dogs and about 350 gallons of cold pop during the weekend, and the hamburgs and cola drinks were sold out before the show ended Monday.

Tired workers at the Rockwood Presbyterian Church Twilight Auxiliary booth reported running out of ice cream three times on Monday. At St. Stephen's Church booth next door, the sidesmen's group served up 1,500 half chickens cooked on a large outdoor barbecue.

Similar rushes for food and drink were reported by Kilbride Cubs and Scouts, Dick Corder's Pepsi Booths, Galt and Hespeler Rovers and Limehouse W.A. booths.

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