



Drews: Credits Milton deputy chief with giving him the knowledge to land a good position with a Florida department.

## Drews gets his chance

Kari Drews thanks the Milton Fire Department for his once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

The 37-year-old former Milton native credits the MFD with special thanks to Harold Coulson for his recent posting as the first fully paid fire chief of San Carlos Park Fire Department near Ft. Myers in Florida.

Mr. Drews came to Milton in 1975 from Toronto to take a job as an instructor at Maplehurst when he joined the Milton Fire Department as a volunteer.

There as a rookie in the trade, Drews said Coulson started him on the right track and when Drews and his family decided to seek a warmer climate in 1978, he landed a position with the local fire department. He became assistant chief April 15, 1979 and was named the first full-time chief two weeks later.

"If I hadn't the chance to be a firefighter here," says Mr. Drews, "I wouldn't be a fire chief there. I owe it all to Harold (Coulson)."

"He was my mentor or tormentor."

He speaks with satisfaction of his position in the United States.

"It's the first time in my life I've been able to put everything I've done together."

"My army life, teaching and firefighting work all comes together on this job."

"My state of mental health has never been better," he said.

Mr. Drews' department has grown in leaps and bounds since he has taken over the reins. His budget for last year was \$36,000. However, a change in the tax base coupled with a growing population will push the budget to \$160,000 in two years and \$500,000, Mr. Drews anticipates, in 1985.

A stronger emphasis on fire prevention coupled with a more efficient

department has cut the fire insurance rating in the county from one of the worst in Florida to one of the best for any volunteer force. The average saving to the homeowner is \$30 per year in insurance strictly due to the better methods.

"I've modelled by training program in Florida on the Milton program."

"I try to get the family oriented into the department just like Harold does here in Milton. One man can't run a department either."

"It's strictly a team effort and our team is getting stronger every year," he said.

A 70 hour work week is the norm, says Mr. Drews, and he has upgraded his qualifications with several certified programs. Included among those programs are aircraft crash management, forest fire prevention, arson investigation, "Jaws" certification, and he is a certified smoke diver. That program lasted a week and cost Drews 37 pounds but he completed the course despite passing out twice.

"I wouldn't trade my job for anything," he adds.

"It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and I'm just glad I was in the right place at the right time."



Initiation: Georgetown's Bob Meads gets initiated the Georgetown way into the convention. All firefighters from Georgetown who attend the convention get the treatment. Here, Peter Hayes applies a liberal amount of mud mixed with leftover food.

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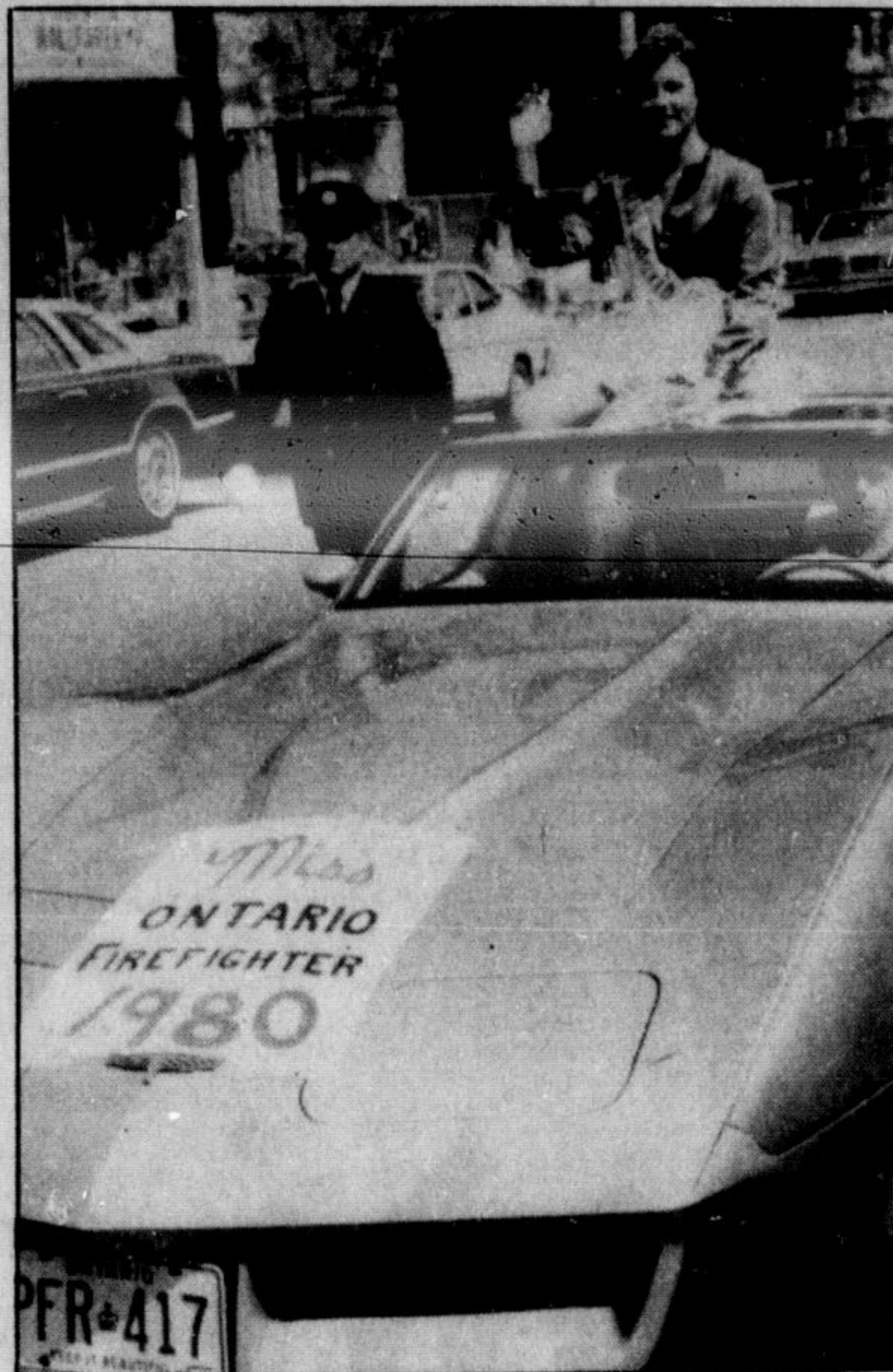
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A popular lady. Darlene Smith of Fergus, crowned Miss Ontario Firefighter, rode in the big parade Monday morning.



Bathtub: The Schomberg department brought along its own motorized bathtub which was entered in Monday's grand parade through the streets of downtown Milton.

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