

The heat was on during their trip to Philippines

By IRENE GENTLE
The Champion

It was a world of heat, humidity and temperamental hydro.

That's the story told by Milton Mayor Gord Krantz and Town chief administrative officer Mario Belvedere after their return from Santa Maria, Philippines.

They appeared jet-lagged at a recent Town committee meeting, but otherwise no worse for wear.

"It certainly was an experience," said Mr. Krantz. "Part of me is still out there, part of me is here and I'm somewhere in the middle. The time change and jet lag will sure catch up to you."

Mr. Krantz and Mr. Belvedere were joined by Sandy Martin from the Milton Chamber of Commerce in the trip to Santa Maria.

The trio left Easter weekend and returned April 17, courtesy of the Canadian Federation of Municipalities and the Canadian Industry Development Agency.

The idea behind the trip is to aid developing nations by forming partnerships with industrialized areas.

A council resolution agreed to Milton's participation in the initiative, making it one of 40 Canadian communities to do so.

"I can assure you it was far from a holiday," said Mr. Krantz. "These were 14-16 hour days in 95 to 100 degree (Fahrenheit) weather with a humidity level of some 80 per cent."

Even air conditioning didn't make much of a dent, he said.

"Electricity wasn't very reliable there and the air conditioning is only good when the hydro is working," said Mr. Krantz. "The air there had to be 110 degrees."

If the weather was far different from the budding spring climates left behind, so was the system of government.

"It's certainly the other side of the world," said Mr.



"There was a tremendous difference between ... parts of the community. There (were) the very rich and the very poor."

— MARIO BELVEDERE

Krantz. "The way the government operates there is certainly far different from what it is here."

One difference is the security measures taken to protect government representatives.

"The mayor of Santa Maria actually had a driver and a bodyguard as part of (his) standard activity," marveled Mr. Belvedere.

Another difference was the layout of the community.

"There was a tremendous difference between certain parts of the community," he said. "There (were) the very rich and the very poor."

Despite the differences, there were also some big similarities, pointed out Mr. Belvedere.

"One of the issues that came up is their community is entirely serviced by well water," said Mr. Belvedere. "They can't expand too much because they can't service the new growth."

Though the idea was not to foster trade, there may still be some opportunities for Milton in that area, said Mr. Belvedere.

"Although it is a developing economy, they do have some opportunities and needs our businesses can buy into," he said.

A meeting with the governor of the area confirmed that impression, said Mr. Krantz.

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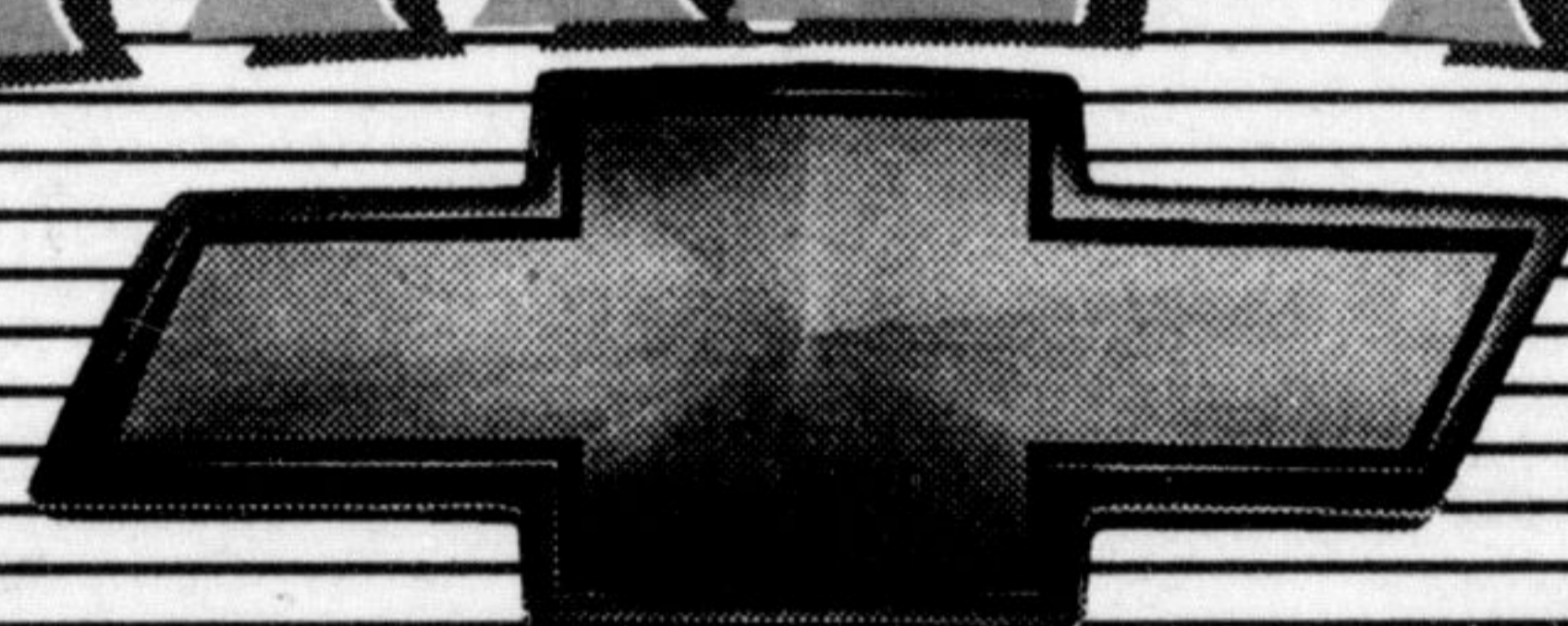
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