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Lorne & Heather Ashbee are pleased to announce the engagement of their daughter Kelly Elizabeth to Steven Pepler the son of Mr. and Mrs. Milton Pepler of Agincourt.

## Hydro commission celebrates 75th year

By KAREN SMITH

The Milton Hydro-Electric Commission will celebrate 75 years of making the town a brighter place this weekend.

The commission invites residents to celebrate with the company at an open house Saturday, said Don Thorne, general manager.

"This is going to be a fun day for the whole family. We want to give everyone a good idea of the whole power system," he said. "They will get an idea of everything we're responsible for."

The open house, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., will include displays, demonstrations as well as refreshments.

Displays will feature acid rain, fusion, meter reading, automated billing and wood pole testing.

Demonstrations will begin at 12:30 p.m. with a pole top rescue. At 2 p.m., staff will perform an emergency descent of a lineman from a disabled bucket truck by use of a sky genie lowering device.

Computer aided design and drafting demonstrations will take place throughout the day and a Van De Graaff generator will be on display. The kids will enjoy bucket rides.

Refreshments will include hot dogs, pop, coffee and popcorn.

The days of the tallow candle and the coal oil lantern disappeared when hydro power was first brought to Milton from Niagara Falls in 1913. Then, the population of Milton was 1,959.

Prior to 1913, a limited supply of electric power was obtained from a small municipal steam electric generating plant.

"Milton generated and supplied its own power, and in 1913 the town purchased power from Ontario Hydro," explained Mr. Thorne.

In March of that year, a lineman was hired to by the town at a rate of \$75 per month and lamps were being erected on the south east side of Main Street, so that both sides would soon

be lighted.

As well as street lighting, distribution lines, lines to industrial customers and transformer stations were installed to accommodate Ontario Hydro.

Residents looked at the new power supply as a life line for the progress of their community.

But the system had its difficulties. A five-hour power break in June 1913 was attributed to defective insulators.

By September, things were rather cool at town hall. The heat supplied from the steam generating plant was no longer available with the new hydro system, and the clerk was keeping himself as warm as possible with a coil oil stove.

As temperatures grew cooler, the town decided to move the boiler from the steam plant into the hall to heat the building.

Town council continued to deal with electric power affairs themselves until deciding to prepare a bylaw to be voted on at the December municipal elections to create a hydro commission.

As a result, the first Milton Hydro Commission took office in 1914 and the stage was set for the new independent authority that was to administer the hydro system locally for the next half of the century at least.

The growth during the first half century of Milton Hydro's existence is indicated in the following statistics:

In 1914 the total number of customers amounted to 235 and peak load of the utility was 284 kilowatts. In 1964, there were 1,877 customers of all classes and the peak load of the utility is 5,023 kilowatts.

In 1980, Milton Hydro expanded from providing electricity to four square miles of Milton to 146 square miles, the second largest area covered by a utility company in Ontario.

The Milton Hydro-Electric Commission moved to its present site at 55 Thompson Rd. in January 1983 from its previous location at 258 Main St.

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