

The dreamer's dream comes true

# The David Richard finally sails

Many if not most of the people in Penetanguishene believed it would never happen. They thought it was an old man's dream-romantic at that, but one which would never come true.

It did late Saturday afternoon when former mayor and former owner of the Poyntz Plaza, Gil Robillard, (who isn't exactly the old man of the sea) and a crew of roughly a dozen guests boarded the David Richard and sailed out into Penetanguishene Bay.

It seemed like a business proposition with a lot of potential but at one point or another during the past seven years all of Gil's original partners, lost interest in the project and sold out. Only Robillard remained. On Saturday his persistence paid off. The David Richard sailed again.

The voyage was not without a couple of hair-raising incidents. Only seconds after the David Richard started to disembark the voyage almost met an abrupt end. In pulling out of the

into a private luxury cruiser.

Once in open waters Robillard's reconverted tug boat was queen of the bay.

It's by far the biggest vessel on Penetanguishene Bay and when it moves it purrs. Weekend movers in their outboats and sail boats seemed to recognize this was a special occasion. They hopped their boats about in the Richard's wake and then sped alongside to salute the crew.

By the time the Richard had passed the Mental Health Centre and was approaching Whiskey Island all the pleasure craft had left the scene. It was getting around supper time and the Richard was heading into deeper water.

### A close call

That's when the second hair raising incident occurred. The starboard engine overheated and had to be shut off. To make matters worse the regular steering mechanism on the bridge failed to respond to the captains touch.

The engine overheated because the hydraulic pump simply stopped feeding it water. Since the steering mechanism operates off the same hydraulic pump it failed to work too.

But as a harried Robillard said at the time of the incident, "That's what a trial run is for." Plans for a battery operated hydraulic pump are now in the works.

### Returning home

The overheated engine had to be shut off to allow it to cool down. To steer the boat, one of the crew, Sam Boucher had to operate a manual tiller. With only the port motor working the David Richard turned around and headed back to the Penetanguishene town dock.

Along the way Gil Robillard and his son Paul fed the starboard engine cups of water to cool it down. A valve plate which had come loose (Robillard suspects that this caused the hydraulic pump to stop drawing water up to the motor)

was tightened.

When the boat came within roughly a quarter mile of the town dock Gil tried to start the starboard engine. It responded to his touch. Both engines were functioning, the hydraulic pump was operating and the steering mechanism in the bridge returned to normal.

This time the David Richard cleared the Randall by a good fifteen feet as Robillard nestled his boat into the dock. It was only a trial run but the look of ecstasy on Robillard's face said it all. The biggest boat on the bay had finally sailed. A seven year dream had come true.

(N.B. Robillard plans to sail the David Richard at least three more times this summer. Two of the occasions will be for private parties. The other will be during Old Home Week when the Penetanguishene Secondary School Band is to board the boat. The idea is to sail a "floating music box" up and down the bay.)

### The crew

The first voyage of the David Richard, since Gil Robillard purchased the boat seven years ago, was noteworthy for a number of reasons, not the least of which was the crew on board.

The official captain, for the voyage was 71-year-old Wilfred Martin, who is Gil Robillard's uncle. Captain Martin last sailed on the Midland City, a passenger boat which used to make overnight trips from Midland to Parry Sound. His brother, Jerome Martin who worked as the engineer on the City of Dover and the Midland City, also came along for the trip. For both of the Martin brothers the voyage was their first in 20 years.

Gil Robillard's wife, Eleanor and his son Paul also made the trip.

### An empty hull

When Robillard purchased the David Richard it was nothing but an empty hull. The boat had been docked at Midland for around five years. During that time kids

sunk the vessel twice by opening its valves.

### Seven long years

The last seven years have been spent preparing the David Richard for what happened on Saturday. Robillard, who used to own the Poyntz Plaza, wouldn't say how much money has been sunk into the vessel but he did list the Ministry of Transportation and Communications tests which the boat has so far passed. The tests include inspections of the hull, the deck house motors, props, the holding tank, the life jackets and the life boats. The major remaining

test which has to be passed is one which Robillard hopes will licence the boat to carry 200 paying passengers. If that licence is approved, the David Richard could turn out to be a very profitable investment. Although it wasn't under the eye of an official government inspector, one more test was passed. That one was by Gil Robillard himself, who successfully completed his maiden voyage. Robillard could only sail the boat legally because he had Captain Martin aboard. Sometime in the future Robillard plans to get his own captains papers.



The David Richard at the town dock



A happy Gil Robillard

For Robillard it was a dream come true. A dream he has kept and nourished since he and a handful of partners first purchased the old Great Lakes tug boat seven long years ago.

The David Richard is the biggest boat in the Midland-Penetanguishene area. Originally the idea was to reconvert it

into a floating store to serve cottagers along the bay and on the islands. But food wars killed that idea and instead Robillard decided to convert it into a type of luxury cruiser.

When Robillard purchased the David Richard it was nothing but an empty hull. The boat had been docked at Midland for around five years. During that time kids

## Barbaria — one year later



The king wants you!

Everyone has been so busy preparing for Penetanguishene's week long (June 28 to July 5) birthday party and Canada's (July 1) birthday that the anniversary of the creation of the Independent State of Barbaria has almost been overlooked - almost, but not quite.

King James I (Jim McKillip of Penetanguishene) and three of his subjects dropped into the Penetanguishene Citizen office on Sunday night to remind a weary reporter of the anniversary.

On June 22, 1974 King James I and six of his high school friends sailed to Giant's Tomb Island where they proclaimed the Independent State of Barbaria. The story made the local newspapers, CKMP Radio in Midland, CHUM and CFTR radio stations in Toronto, the Toronto Sun, the London Free Press, CKCO-TV (Kitchener) and CKVR-TV (Barrie).

At the time of the invasion King James I said, "We're doing it because we feel that the existing social system is insane and the economic system is hopeless. Inflation is ruining the poor and middle class. The exploitation of inflation is making the rich, richer. It is the same old story. We're tired of a system where you lose your identity. We want to be considered an individual instead of part of a machine."

Now, a year after the invasion, King James seems to be sticking to his guns. "Barbaria is not just a state," he said, "It's a state of mind." By that, King James said he meant, "You can kill a 1,000 bodies but you cannot kill an idea."

And that we guess means the state of Barbaria is still very much alive on this the 368th day of its existence.

### The reason for Barbaria

by Jim McKillip

After spending the better part of my life in school I began to realize that what was being

taught did little to stimulate the minds of the students. In fact it did just the opposite. I cannot help but laugh when I hear someone complaining about regimentation in the school system. Little do they realize that the teenagers regiment themselves to a stifling degree. While parents scream 'teenage revolution,' the teenagers gladly accept the norms of the existing social structure. While the trappings, music, hair styles, clothing etc., are different the underlying beliefs are identical. This is the part that really hurts. Teenagers demand 'freedom' yet what they really mean is freedom to establish new norms which are as constricting as the old ones. I'm sure that if most teenagers took a step back and looked at themselves they might very well notice something fundamentally wrong.

The economic situation also weighed heavily on my mind. In general, the world was becoming too small for industry. While the world population was hovering around the four billion mark, it was rapidly becoming impossible to use up the surplus of trinkets which had to be made to maintain the West's standard of living. The mass of the world's population simply could not afford enough to eat let alone purchase a transistor radio. The oil shortage began to be felt. Inflation in the world skyrocketed. As usual private fortunes were made at the expense of the average consumer.

In particular the Canadian government was being forced to fight inflation and unemployment at the same time. Curing one meant the growth of the other; an intolerable situation.

Thirdly the political situation was taking a turn for the worse. While Canadians sat back in gleeful isolation the power balance was gradually becoming considerably less stable. No one seemed to realize that the world was an armed camp and that every country in the world was held purely by the right of the sword. The freedom of Canada rests solely on the military power of the United States.

Finally it became apparent that individualism was dead. To be really free one must be capable of controlling ones own life. Democracy cannot achieve this in its present form, as in a democracy there will always be some liberty for security and order fine, but we should have a choice. As it stands today it is just a matter of picking the lesser of many evils. There is no New World to sail off to, we're stuck with what we've got. And that isn't good enough.



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