

That's My Line



Yvon Gagne town clerk

With the exception of a brief period between 1968 and 1970 Yvon Gagne has been the depute-clerk or clerk of the Town of Penetanguishene since March, 1961.

He has seen the town go through some dramatic changes in 20 years. In 1961 industries were facing or moving and the town's road budget was \$5,000.

After graduating from high school in my hometown, Hearst, in 1955, I joined the Bank of Nova Scotia. I started in Kapuskasing and was later transferred to the Penetanguishene branch.

I fell in love with the town. In Hearst, when you went swimming, you couldn't swim against the current. You swam downstream, climbed out, and walked back to the spot where you started.

It took me a week to learn how to pronounce Penetanguishene.

The clerk of a small town is an administrator. He acts as a go-between between council and the department heads.

As a statutory officer I attend all of the council meetings. I receive all of the mail and issue all of the correspondence. The clerk is the focal point of

the municipal administration.

Statute
My role is not as much to do things as to cause things to be done according to statute. I also need to be aware of the availability of all government grants.

Ignorance can be very costly at times. This town has a very low per capita assessment and much of the work which we do is done with government financial assistance.

In the early 60s the town was so poor it couldn't buy chalk without debenturing. Now we can plan a \$300,000 or \$400,000 project without debenturing because of the availability of heavy subsidies. When I started here the roads budget was \$5,000; last year's roads budget was \$700,000.

Our Neighbourhood Improvement Program has cost \$3.2 million but the town debentured only \$80,000 of that amount. It takes a lot of careful planning.

Being clerk is an interesting job. I'm asked how I can work with nine bosses. The paths become straight after a while. The councillors tend to assume an interest in certain areas.

Experience
The clerk's experience becomes valuable when he knows not to be caught in certain areas where the format will destroy the content. For example, a resolution by council will be acceptable by some government ministries, but other ministries will only accept a bylaw.

Everything on a council meeting agenda is prepared by the clerk. He decides what goes before council and what does not.

The clerk has to get along with the mayor. The mayor is the big policeman on council. He comes to the town office every day, or we have to run after him, to get him to sign cheques, or something else.

Our council only meets once a month. There are many decisions that have to be made between meetings so that decisions at council meetings can be made forthwith.

I'm involved with a lot in one day. In many cases the responsibilities are fulfilled by other members of the staff. I'm responsible for issuing marriage licences but in fact I personally haven't issued one for five years.

Loaded school bus, car make highway accident when they collide

No injuries resulted from the collision Wednesday afternoon of a loaded school bus and a car on Highway 12 just west of the Highway 400 and Highway 69 interchange.

No charges had been laid yesterday, but the investigation had not been completed.

Midland OPP says that the school bus, driven by Honey Harbour resident Laverne Spencer, 51, was carrying 30 Midland high school students. Most of the students live in Honey Harbour.

The eastbound bus was struck on the left side when a car driven by George Willsher, 78, of Orillia, entered the intersection after stopping on

the ramp exiting from Highways 400 and 69.

Police estimated \$2,500 damage was done to the Willsher automobile and \$750 to the 1975 yellow school bus.

Wednesday evening around 6:30 p.m. Isabel Heels, 58, of Waubushene, was taken to Huronia district Hospital by private automobile after her car rolled on Highway 12 near Concession 6 of Tay Township.

The car, moving west, went into a skid after hitting ice and rolled after entering the north ditch. Heel's injuries were minor, Midland OPP said.

Midland park scene of accident

Investigation of an accident involving two cars in Midland's Little Lake Park at 4 p.m. Wednesday continued yesterday.

Town police report that eastbound car driven by George Pound, age unavailable, of First Avenue, Port McNicoll, and a westbound car driven by Monica Hill, 23, of Hugel Avenue, Midland, were involved. The two cars collided on the curve in the public park's

west end.

A white 1973 Evinrude snowmobile parked on King Street was stolen Wednesday evening. Owner Andrew Messenger of Bayview Drive, Midland, was visiting friends at the time of the theft.

The licence number of the stolen snowmachine is 202343.

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