

Here's a final look back at 1981

by Doug Reed

As we prepare to greet 1982 we'd like to take this opportunity to review with you, our valued readers, some of the highlights of 1981.

As your community-news newspaper in North Simcoe, it was our task to cover as many local events as was humanly possible.

Our coverage area included east to Coldwater, west to Wasaga Beach,

south to Elmvale and north to Honey Harbour.

Aside from our staff of reporter-photographers we counted on our more than two dozen correspondents and free-lance writers and photographers to keep the news of the day from here in North Simcoe flowing.

Their dedicated service is greatly appreciated. And now let's look back at the year 1981:

January

January dawned with Midland Centennials Jr. "C" hockey club finding it somewhat difficult to get a team.

Ontario's newest millionaire, 28-year-old Wayne King of Bayberry Estates was just getting over the shock of winning his grand prize in a Super Loto draw.

The first month of the new year saw the price of gasoline go up by 8.1 cents per gallon.

Government of Canada though had some good news for Penetanguishene. The feds announced that they were kicking in \$34,421 to be used for wages to be paid for the construction of new facilities at the town dock.

Down Elmvale way an early January snowstorm sealed the village for a day or two to through traffic.

By the way, nine-pound Stephanie Maurice became Penetanguishene General Hospital's first baby born in '81.

A house fire in Waubashene claimed the life of a 12-year-old youngster which sent shock waves throughout the area.

It was about at this time too that the ferry R. A. Hoey tied up for the winter.

The boat runs between Cedar Point and Christian Island as long as the channel between the two landmarks isn't ice-covered.

Simcoe County School Board Trustees couldn't hide their pleasure. They ended 1980 with a \$750,000 surplus as a result of reducing fuel oil consumption in the board's 100 county schools.

It was announced at the beginning of the year, Midland's famous Indian Village would be sold by the local Y's Men's Club to the Huronia Museum.

The local service club had owned and operated the popular tourist attraction for decades.

A March of Dimes campaign officially started down Elmvale way while it was announced the connecting link (Hwy. 27) between Waverley and Elmvale would commence in '81. By year's end the project had been shelved until early '82.

A Barrie firm was awarded a \$452,000 contract to build an orientation centre at the Historic Establishments in Penetanguishene...and plans were well underway to host February's annual Winterama in the same town.

Hockey fans here at home were shocked to learn of the untimely death of Victoria Harbour's Ross

Prentice following a car crash near Parry Sound.

Meanwhile talk of a proposed theme park in Tiny Township just west of Midland generated some interest.

During the same month it was predicted a new \$60,000 dockside building in Penetanguishene would be erected. It later became a reality enhancing the foot of Main Street to no end.

January saw Elmvale's building inspector quit. The same month a huge front-end loader crashed through the ice at the town dock in Penetanguishene not far from where a tug had sunk some weeks before.

There was a bed shortage at Huronia District Hospital. CBC announced it was going in the area with a new FM re-broadcasting station and Tiny Township firefighters were unable to save a new log home on Base Line Road from going up in smoke.

January ended on a happy note.

Penetanguishene's Brian Orser was crowned this nation's newest (Canadian) figure skating champion.

He competed in the senior men's division in Halifax and walked off (skated off?) with the top prize.

February

Famed Midland-Penetanguishene still photographer Mike Odessa headed "down under" to Australia for six weeks as part of Rotary's group study exchange program.

Later in the year, Mike had several of his prints published in National Geographic.

Plans for a \$14 million hotel-boatel resort project for the Bayshore Drive area of Midland was scuttled.

HDH received word that it could open up 18 more chronic care beds in the hospital.

And they were hitting the hustling early when Jack Harber announced he'd be calling on the local media in a stepped-up campaign to become Simcoe East's next MPP. Harber was the Grits' standard-bearer if you didn't already know.

It was during this month that former Midland reeve Sam Ancio stood trial in Barrie.

He faced a series of charges that stemmed from a Dec. 6, 1980 domestic incident. The most serious charge was one of attempted murder.

Down Elmvale way a local couple there won \$100,000 thanks to Wintario. By year's end there were several other

big winners from North Simcoe.

Midland Rotary Club recognized three individuals for their "dedicated service."

Austin Matthews, Bill Barnett and Frances St. Amant were honoured by local Rotarians.

A \$260,000 bridge spanning North River in Tay Township (on the 11th concession) was being constructed in sub-zero weather. It was later dedicated by top brass from the township and beyond.

Gord Smith, MPP for Simcoe East for 14 years announced his retirement from public office.

That decision, in part, cleared the way for Midland's Mayor Moreland Lynn to announce plans to seek the Tory Party's nomination in the riding.

Meanwhile there was a movement afoot to keep the Midland campus of Georgian College open. More than 1,000 signatures were affixed to a

petition calling on the college to reconsider its position.

Midland Chamber of Commerce announced it had purchased new town lapel pins similar to centennial pins. Mayor Lynn distributed samples of the pin to his colleagues and members of the press during a regular meeting of town council.

The tug Aburg was refloated in Penetanguishene after being in Davey Jones's Locker for several weeks.

The Midland branch of the Red Cross moved into new quarters on the top floor of the Sterling Trust building.

Alderman Bev Day of Midland was called "petty" during a dispute over whether the town of Midland should add two new replacement vehicles to the town's fleet of public works department trucks.

The Ontario Criminal Injuries Compensation Board announced from its offices in Toronto that the parents of a

murdered Penetanguishene teenager wouldn't be compensated for their pain and bereavement.

Elmvale Water Works Department indicated it would be buying a chlorinator to help get the community's local water quality back to normal.

District farmer Allan McLean won nomination at a Simcoe East Tory rally to pick

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