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## Penetanguishene's town council officially sworn in at last night's meeting

Seated (left to right), Reeve Art Stewart, Mayor Ron Bellisle, Deputy-Reeve Frances St. Amant. Standing (Left to right), Bob Cascagnette, Bob Sullivan, Ray Baker, Don McNee, Lionel Dion, Ken Tannahill.

Photo by Paul Sanderson

# Mayor's 'state of the union' address

by  
**MICHELE GOUETT**  
Council Chambers in the Town of Penetanguishene's Municipal Offices was the setting last night for the inaugural ceremonies that saw the swearing in of the town's lawmakers for the next three years. Mayor Ron Bellisle, as well as the other council members were on hand for the ceremony.

In his inaugural speech to the new council and those on hand for the event, Mayor Bellisle pondered on the accomplishments of the council for the past three years while not overlooking the disappointments. Although Bellisle admits he has found it satisfying to see many of the council's projects now off the ground, there is a certain amount of frustration in the council's inability to get anything moving in terms of downtown renewal. "After employing a Redevelopment Officer for four years specifically for that purpose, we finally gave up the idea," said the Mayor. "We will wait and see what future government programs may assist us in its renewal."

In his speech from the throne, Bellisle also called for immediate attention to the major problems facing the library with its continual growth and the Centennial Museum which is temporarily being housed in the High Poynts Mall because the building which used to house the museum on Burke Street has been condemned and needs extensive repairs before it can be used safely. "Unfortunately these two cultural centres are competing for money and attention at the same time as we are in the middle of major sanitary sewer development in the north and east end of the municipality," said Bellisle. "I am sorry to say that it is my expectation that in spite of their apparent needs, these two cultural services, while important, will have to wait for the completion of the sewer project which has the full financial participation of the Ministry of the Environment. Looking back at the last year, Bellisle added that the servicing of the north end of the town which has cost the municipality in excess of \$3.3 million would not have been possible without the financial support of the Ministry of the Environment. He also com-

plemented the council on the residential development that has taken place in Penetang over the past several years. Although over 75 rental units were constructed or converted in the last year, Bellisle made mention of the fact that the town is still in need of more rental accommodations. Although the town has not been able to get the downtown revitalized many of the residents through the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program and the Ontario Home Renewal Program many of the homes have gotten well needed facelifts. With an excess of \$2 million being lent out for the changes to the existing homes 70 percent or 1.5 million of these loans have been "forgiven", according to the Mayor. Bellisle called the continued expansion of

many of the existing industries in the town over the past two years a good omen since it is, as the mayor said, it is "a sign of confidence in the municipality." "The past several years have been very good for Penetanguishene with substantial progress in many areas, and while perfection is sought, it is seldom achieved," said the Mayor. One major change the Mayor called for was the petitioning of the province for the term of office held by council to be decreased from three years to two. As a result of the mayor's belief that a three-year term is too long, he recommended the appointments made to the council be reviewed after only two years in order to rejuvenate the interest of the council. Coinciding with the

change to two-year committee memberships, the position of deputy mayor which has long been fulfilled by Reeve Art Stewart will be transferred to Deputy-reeve Frances St. Amant. In closing, the Mayor released the chairmanships of the four committees of council. The mayor called upon Councillor Don McNee to head the important Administration and Finance Committee adding, it will require a fair amount of skill and expertise to implement many of the projects the town has in store. Mayor Bellisle asked for the assistance of 25-year council veteran Lionel Dion to head the Public Works Committee which will be very active in the next few years with the continual development of the North End sanitary sewer system.

With his vast experience at the county level, the Mayor called on Reeve Art Stewart to take the operations of the Public Safety Committee which Bellisle says reflects on the municipality as a whole. The last of the committees of council, the Development and Housing Committee will be headed by Councillor Ray Baker. After the past three years as Chairman of the North Simcoe Waste Management Association, Bellisle has once again asked Councillor Lionel Dion to represent the town on the very controversial six municipality board. With the defeat of Larry Bellisle, who was the other representative of Penetang on the NSWMA, Mayor Bellisle asked upon Reeve Art Stewart to fill the portfolio.