

# Chamber still a low priority

The handling of the Chamber of Commerce by the Penetang council in two recent matters has raised questions about how high a priority the chamber is to our local government.

First, the budget is undergoing a first draft, which requires an itemized list from all the various committees and boards connected to the town.

It's here that the various chairpeople can argue their cases about why their group deserves more funding.

Some committees' needs are more obvious than others, such as the parking authority needing cash to pursue a possible off street lot or the town's commitment to the North Simcoe Waste Management Association.

However, the town didn't bother to notify Steve Robillard, the chamber's president, that he had to submit his budget, which was due early last month.

As a result, Robillard said the town was likely going to give the chamber the same amount they doled out in 1988 (\$10,000 last year, much of which is for the chamber brochure).

It's obvious that costs have increased in all areas, which include salaries, hydro and business materials. Also, the town is growing in size and population but the chamber's budget was simply going to be a carbon copy of the previous one.

Robillard had to prepare a rush budget this weekend in order to be considered for an increase, which doesn't seem likely when the second incident is considered.

At the chamber's meeting on Tuesday, councillor Bob Klug brought forward a project the council wanted the chamber to do regarding the organizing and distribution of a Sunday shopping questionnaire. No doubt the council wanted to tap the opinions of the business people of the town before they draft a bylaw either allowing or disallowing the shopping.

However, having a survey done costs money, of which the chamber is in short supply. It's granted the mailing list wouldn't be too long and pricey, but if the town wants something that the chamber hasn't budgeted for, it should be prepared to pay for it.

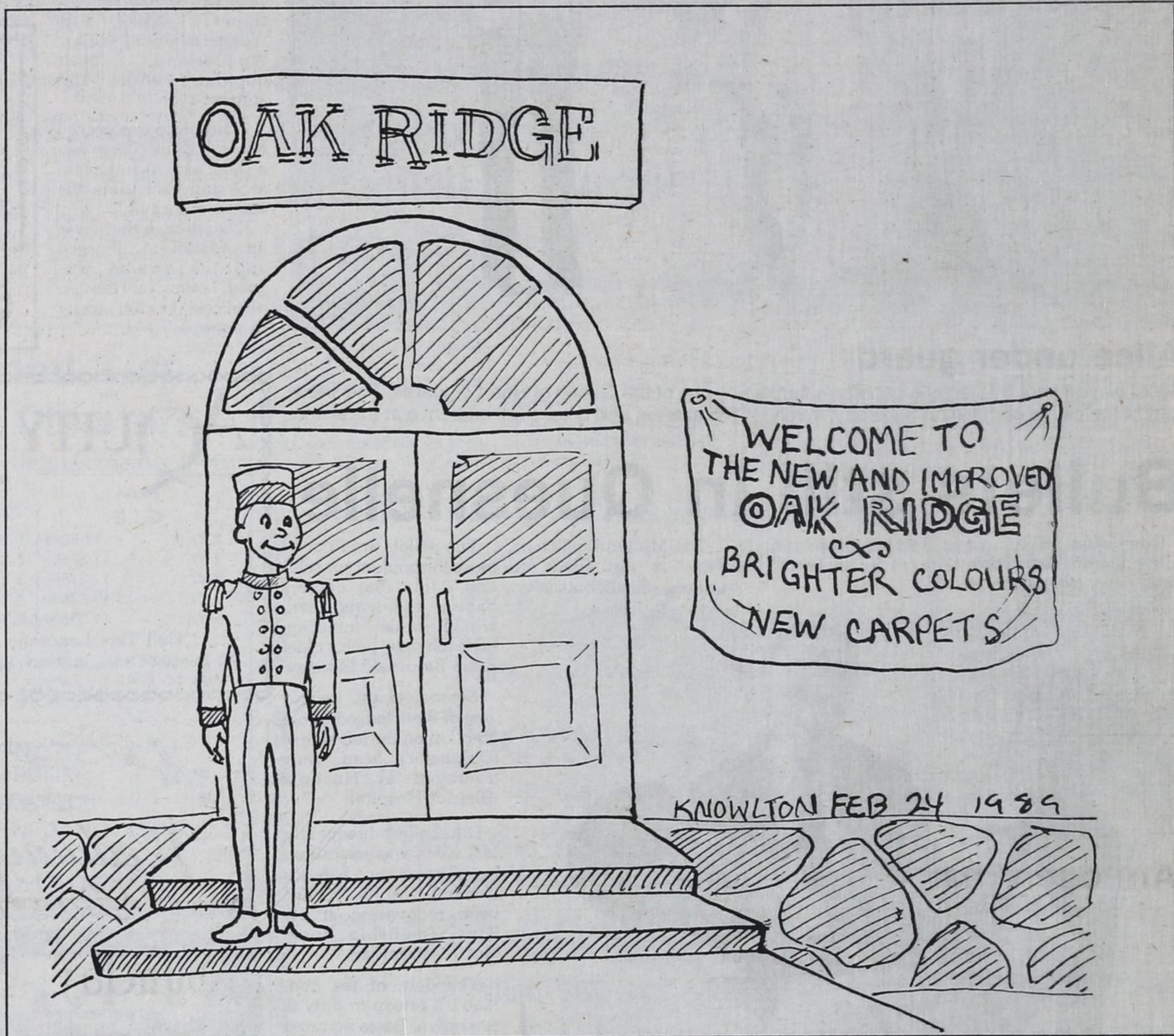
When asked by the chamber if the coun-

cil is prepared to pay for the survey, Klug said it hadn't been brought up. Obviously the government thought the chamber

would see fit to carry the ball by themselves.

It's hoped better communication bet-

ween an important organization like the chamber and the town council is the exception rather than the rule.



## Risky business

by Robert Risk

# Time and time again

Have you ever felt that you were a slave to your watch? Can't quite function properly without one? I'm one of those people.

As a reporter, being on time to cover a speech or a cheque presentation is essential, especially since there is a rival newspaper in these parts.

If I'm not there to get the story and the competition is, I get nasty phone calls from the boss.

I've worn a watch since I was 14 and putting it on every morning since then has become as automatic as locking the car door. Unfortunately, I've sometimes left my keys inside the car, which is not too different from forgetting the watch at home.

I was walking down the street when I wondered what time it was. Naturally, I

stretched my arm out and pulled up my sleeve. It wasn't until I saw my bare arm that I realized I had forgotten the watch at home.

Its weight is insignificant, and I've gotten to the point where I just take it for granted that it'll be there to faithfully tell me the time.

It's bad enough realizing the loss once, but twice today I started to look at my left wrist before I remembered my situation.

What makes it worse is working with a bunch of people who also need a watch to perform their jobs.

When I ask them if they've got the time, I get questions like, 'How much did you pawn your watch for?' or smart comments like '...if you've got the place ...'

It's not very humorous to somebody whose already angry at themselves for being so forgetful, never mind worried about whether he's completely missed an appointment.

It's a rare situation when I leave my watch behind, which has drawn my attention to something that disturbs me a little.

Not only does my job require me to keep up on the time in order to have interviews done, but on a day where I didn't have many outside appointments, I was still asking for the time.

I didn't need to be out anywhere, yet I still needed to know what time it was. It's like I've developed an insecurity about knowing how the old clock is doing.

When I have my watch on, that driving

need to know can be satisfied with a mere turn of the wrist, as many times as I want to every day.

That's the part that bothers me. I keep bugging the other workers here about the time, so that means I'm often looking at my watch several times a day, often without thinking about what I was doing (a common failing of mine).

I've become a time junkie! Without a watch, my day falls apart and I start getting on other people's nerves.

On the bright side, I guess it's like people who have to smoke or drink. In my case, the sight of 5 p.m. on my Pulsar digital (especially on Friday) is enough of a narcotic to get the monkey off my back.

## Letters

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