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HERBERT JOSLIN DIES IN TRAGEDY

# One Dies In Maple Inferno

Herbert Joslin, 51, a stock clerk at Superior Propane Ltd., was the lone fatality in the spectacular series of fires and explosions which rocked the Maple plant late Saturday night.

Mr. Joslin was fatally burned when he tried to prevent the first of a series of explosions.

Charles Robson of Richvale, and Mr. Joslin, were returning to the Joslin home across from the plant on Station Street, when Mr. Joslin heard the sound of escaping gas.

Although Mr. Robson warned him, Mr. Joslin approached the truck from which the gas was apparently leaking. Then the first explosion hurled him through the air.

According to witnesses, Mr. Joslin was covered up to his neck by a mist-like substance.

Mr. Robson ran to the plant and half helped, half steered the badly burnt man back to the house. At the same time he beat out the flames which had enveloped Mr. Joslin's clothing.

Doctors say that he had 90 per cent burns to his body. He was rushed to Richmond Hill by his wife Joan and Mr. Robson, and then taken by ambulance to Branson Hospital where he died Sunday night.

Had Mr. Robson hesitated at his rescue attempt, Mr. Joslin would have been killed instantly by the second explosion, fire officials said.

The dead man's dog Spot lay in his lap all the way to the hospital.

Mr. Joslin's son, David, of Richmond Hill, said that he and his family

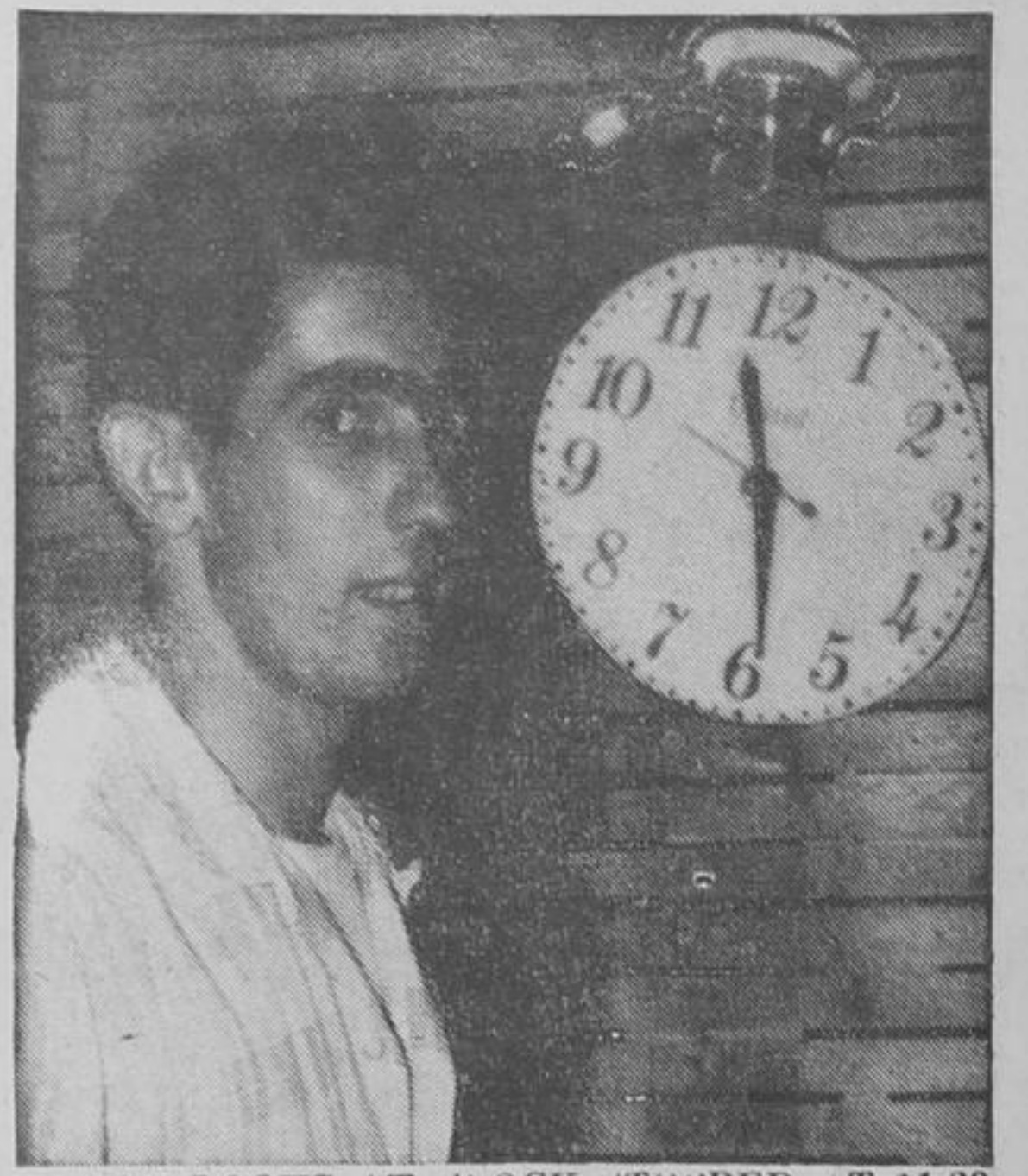
had just returned to their Richmond Hill home only minutes before the first explosion took place.

"The police wouldn't let me back through until nine the next morning," he said, "They told me that there had been a terrible fire—that the whole town was flattened.

"But I still couldn't believe my eyes when I came down Keele Street next morning and saw what had happened.

"When I was still living at home, my friends and I used to bet each other on whether or not the plant would explode in a given time," he recalls.

"Of course it never did. And I don't think we thought it would. Now it has."



SON LOOKS AT CLOCK STOPPED AT 11:29

## Night Of Horror Told By Citizens

A tired and battered group of people were still reliving the hell that had been the holocaust of explosions and fires which took place at the Superior Propane plant in Maple Saturday night.

Neil Campbell of "The Liberal" news staff was in Maple Sunday, talking to some of the people who lived through the night in nearby homes. Their comments follow:

By NEIL CAMPBELL

"I don't remember anything at all about the explosions," recalled Hilda Gaskell, who lives with her son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Dean Quinton, next door to the Joslin home.

"One moment I was in bed, asleep. The rest of the family was downstairs watching TV." she told us as we talked to her on the front porch of the Joslin home Sunday afternoon.

"The next thing I knew I was in a field behind our home, barefooted and carrying three left shoes under one arm. I don't remember anything that happened in between."

The Quintons had taken things a little more calmly and were catching up on their sleep Sunday afternoon.

"It was just like the bombings in London, during the war," she said.

David Joslin, son of the dead man, talked to us Sunday afternoon when doctors still held hopes for his father's recovery. "You read about these things, but until they happen to you, they're just a newspaper story — they aren't real.

"My son Jeff was lying on that couch right near the window," he pointed out. "Most of the glass from the window wound up on the couch. He would have been cut to ribbons."

The inside of the Joslin home was little more than a shell in the front part of the first floor and second floor. David said that his father had spent the last three or four years rebuilding the house.

"We won't build here again. Not if Superior Propane rebuilds the plant here," said Mrs. Louise Pineau, who saw her home burnt to the ground as a result of Saturday night's tremendous explosion.

The Pineau home was right next door to the plant. "I don't think anybody will want to live near this plant now," she said.

Mrs. Pineau, her husband, their two sons, Raymond and Andrew, escaped through the back of their property, immediately after the blast occurred.

Mr. Pineau was already in bed when the blast took place and Mrs. Pineau was watching T.V. The two youngsters were "sleeping out" in a lean-to they had built in the back yard.

Miraculously, the backyard shack was left almost untouched.

"We tried to climb the fence," said the still bewildered Mrs. Pineau. "The first explosion frightened me so, I don't know how I even got that far. My knees were just like water.

"My husband forced me to come with him, pulling me along. I kept telling him I couldn't go on, but we made it some way."

She and the two children spent the night at the home of Gordon Lines, in the Maple subdivision.

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MRS. LOUISE PINEAU AND HER SON ANDREW STAND BEFORE RAZED HOME.

1<sup>st</sup> IN NEWS ADVERTISING CIRCULATION

# The Liberal

"In Essentials Unity; In Non-Essentials Liberty; In All Things Charity"

HOME PAPER OF THE DISTRICT SINCE 1878

Knocked Off Feet By Blast

VOL. 84, NUMBER 6

RICHMOND HILL, ONTARIO, THURSDAY, AUGUST 9, 1962

PER COPY 10c

# PLACE BLAST DAMAGE AT HALF MILLION MARK



DEBRIS IS ALL THAT REMAINS OF HOME NEXT TO EXPLOSION

## The Night Of August 4

(By Toby Shore)

(Our Maple Correspondent) Many, many things and happenings, some sad, some amusing, will come to mind when Maple residents think back on the night of August 4.

With most of us the uppermost thought will be of how fortunate we were that the casualties were so few and light. Shared by all who knew, respected and loved him — and they are legion — is the overwhelming loss of one of our own — Herb Joslin, the only fatality of our night of horror.

With the first blast, everyone seemed to realize it was "Propane" and did the sensible thing — they left their homes fast and fled. The fact that some were oddly and scantily attired went unnoticed. While Maple residents

moved out of the area, the outsiders prepared to move in and traffic was congested over a wide area. With the Metro Police contingent's arrival to assist our own Vaughan Township Police, our village was soon organized to handle all emergencies.

**First Aid Station** Two first aid workers from Richmond Hill left their car outside of town and walked in with their large kit, when they found it was useless to buck the traffic. We got talking together and decided to set up a first aid station in the back of the fire hall.

Mrs. Joyce Harris of Washington, D.C. was on her way north to enjoy a Canadian holiday with her family. They were nearing Maple when the first blast went off and, because she is a nurse, she and

her son came to offer their help. Such neighborly thoughtfulness was indeed appreciated.

Because of hydro power cutoff, the 1st Maple Boy Scouts' two lanterns did yeoman service. Peter Shore (my mainstay throughout the whole affair) picked up supplies from our house necessary for first aid treatment.

Councillor Maurice Windatt dropped by.

When police questioned Wally Brown as to why he had taken it upon himself to direct traffic at Maple's east approach, Wally replied, "I was concerned for the safety of the people and since our president of the Lions Club is out of town, I assumed the responsibility." "That's sure quite enough for me," was the policeman's reply, "Go ahead."

Just shortly after, the BIG ONE went off and Wally remembering his old army training to "hit the ground and cover your head," did just that, but was cut several places on his arm and burned by flying hot metal, skinned his nose and upper lip and his knees. Dr. Charlie Birkett dressed his arm and we were in business.

As is always the case, exaggerated news spread outside of Maple and nurses from the Villa Nursing Home, many St. John Ambulance Brigade members and Red Cross arrived, expecting many casualties, but were relieved when Dr. Birkett said he had treated four with minor abrasions and burns and sent three to the Branson Hospital for treatment and they were all released.

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A series of propane gas explosions which rocked the village of Maple Saturday night and early Sunday morning killed one man, injured seven others, completely levelled the \$250,000 Superior Propane Ltd. plant, destroyed six houses, left another six homes unfit for habitation and demolished two railway tank cars and 19 tank trucks. Officials say damage will exceed the half-million dollar figure.

The flame-filled explosions which started shortly after 11 p.m. Saturday and continued through the early hours of Sunday morning left 18 families homeless. Another 26 families were evacuated from the area late Monday afternoon when officials feared further explosions from tanks still burning in the devastated remains of the quarter of a million dollar plant on the outskirts of the village.

Dead is Herbert Joslin, 51, company employee, who made a heroic attempt to stop gas escaping from a tank truck in the storage yard moments before the first explosion occurred.

He received severe burns to 95 per cent of his body and died Sunday night in North York Branson Hospital.

Three persons received first aid at the scene and four others were taken to hospital for treatment but were later released.

Maple Police and Fire Chief James Davidson said Tuesday that the three remaining tanks could "blow anytime."

"There is still a lot of danger and all we can do is sit and wait for them to burn out or blow up," the chief said.

Officials fear that if another tank does blow up, damage will be greater because the devastated houses in the area would not be able to cushion another shock wave.

**Entrances Blocked** Police are still blocking all entrances to the danger area and no one except fire officials are being allowed in or out.

Investigators from the Ontario Fire Marshal's office, the Provincial and Energy Resources Board and the Provincial Labor Department said it could be days before they would know what caused the explosions.

The first blast was in the north east section of the plant property where a railway car had been unloaded and another was waiting to be unloaded.

An official said there definitely was a gas leak but that there was no indication of what ignited it.

David Joslin, son of the dead man, told "The Liberal" that his father saw gas gushing from a tank truck and ran to try and stop it when it blew up in his face.

Charles Robson, 47, of Richvale, who was visiting Mr. Joslin, dashed into the yard through the searing heat and helped the badly burnt man to safety.

He said: "Herb's clothes and hair were on fire and he was screaming with pain. I half helped, half carried him across the road to his house. It was dreadful."

**Visit Homes** Vaughan Township Council on Monday sent a committee to visit every home damaged by the explosion.

Reeve Albert Rutherford said that when an accurate picture of the damage is ascertained, we will decide what is needed to help those left homeless.

St. John Ambulance Brigade set up a first aid centre in a shopping plaza on the east side of the village and treated about 12 people for minor cuts caused

(Continued On Page 3)

## Wants Superior To Keep Plant In Vaughan Twp.

Vaughan Township should do everything in its power to retain the new Superior Propane plant. This was the opinion expressed by all members of council Tuesday night.

They expressed these views in reply to questioning from Michael Granger of Maple.

Reeve A. H. Rutherford commented that the firm would be able to build in Maple again unless council decided to rezone the area.

He said that the township did not want to lose the jobs and taxes provided by the firm, but felt that people and lives were more important than either.

Deputy-reeve J. Bryson recalled that nobody had thought the plant dangerous before the explosion. The company had just completed a head office on the site which was destroyed by the blast, he said.

Before enacting council's business, Reeve Rutherford asked its members, the press and audience to observe a moment's silence for Herbert Joslin, "a good friend and member of the community who gave his life for the municipality."

Mr. Ryan carried his year-old son Sean until he met another Richmond Hill teenager, Gord Adams, who carried the frightened youngster the rest of the way to the quarries.

Dave Marshall of Willowdale returned the two families to the Ryan home at Carrville Road and Dufferin Street.

Mr. Ryan wasn't able to contact his wife in hospital until the next morning.

"It was all pretty familiar to me. I lived through some of the London blitzes in World War Two," he explained.

Mr. Ryan spent most of Monday rounding up stray dogs in the blasted area.

Two Richmond Hill residents and a Maple resident were among the first lucky winners in "The Liberal's" giant FIX THE MIX-UP Contest. Mrs. P. A. Limpert, 446 South Taylor Mills Drive, won the modern coffee percolator, and Mrs. Betty Hatch of 328 Kerrybrook Drive won the lovely new electric fry pan. The Maple winner was Mrs. John Mitchell of Lancer Dr. in Maple, who received a wrist watch.

Mrs. Limpert had an entry slip enclosed from 1 Hughes Shell Service Station located on Yonge Street North. Mrs. Mitchell made her purchase at the George Virgus Hardware in Maple Plaza.

On page 12 of this issue the second contest appears with many co-operating merchants. At the bottom of the page are nine anagrams. In order to take part, the contestant must fix up the anagrams to agree with the name of one of the advertisers.

Get your entry form from any one of these merchants with a purchase of a dollar or more and enter now for a chance at the valuable weekly prizes and the trip for two to Nassau.

Prizes for the second week will be a travelling case and L. P. Record, GE Electric Kettle and a GE Hand Mixer.

All entries must be received by "The Liberal" not later than 5 p.m. on Tuesday of each week.

A Carrville Road man risked instant death to rescue his two children from near the heart of the inferno at the Superior Propane plant in Maple Saturday night.

When the first explosion took place James Ryan, canine control officer, was at his kennels near Maple. His wife was in hospital just after having the Ryans' third child, a daughter.

Ryan realized immediately the source of the explosion and that his two older children, staying with a babysitter on Station Street across the road from the scene of the explosion, were in grave danger.

He jumped into his car and headed for the scene, only to be stopped by a police roadblock. Mr. Ryan set out on foot for the cemetery where he climbed the fence to take a short-cut to the Station Street home.

"I was halfway across the graveyard when the next explosion came. It knocked me over and by the time I was on my feet again, I had forgotten my directions," he said. "I lost my way because of the smoke and heat."

When he finally found his way out to Station Street, he met the CNR station master and his family running away from the explosion.

"Just as I was leaving them, the third explosion took place. When I got to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Dave Archibald, who were looking after my kids, the windows and doors were all blown in. They were all huddled in the basement," Mr. Ryan said.

"We took our children, the Archibald children and headed for the fields east of their house towards the sand quarries. We were only 150 yards from the rail tanker when it blew up."

"We had our backs to the blast but the heat and smoke was so great, that we thought the kids were in danger. We threw ourselves on top of them."

The two fleeing families had just gotten back on their feet when they met John McIntyre, 18, of Richmond Hill, who had seen the explosion and was heading towards town to help. He carried three year-old James Ryan the rest of the way to the stone quarries.

Mr. Ryan carried his year-old son Sean until he met another Richmond Hill teenager, Gord Adams, who carried the frightened youngster the rest of the way to the quarries.

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## Name Contest Winners