

High school president's job much the same after 36 years

The role of student council president has not changed dramatically since Barbara Hewlett was elected to the role in 1955.

At that time there were 223 students at the school, recalled Barbara, who is now married to George Pratt and lives in Uxbridge. "There were probably

five students in Grade 13, so I didn't have to campaign a whole lot. In previous years with larger classes, however, it had been a serious business.

"We had campaign speeches and people put up posters. They tried to make it an exciting and hard fought election. The president's role was almost entirely a social one, she

explained, and a lot of effort went into organizing events such as dances, which were held at the school.

In her student council report of March 6, 1956, Barbara wrote, "Our first party, the initiation dance,

due to a good initiation committee and a large number of students who delighted in the torture of the miners, lasting all afternoon and on into the evening, also seemed to be enjoyed."

"After Christmas we organized a square dance and a Valentine's dance, and are now moving toward a Sadie Hawkins Party. The last two dances have not been well attended by the students, but we are hoping for better things to come. The annual formal dance, the big event of the year, is now coming into the foreground and a large attendance will be needed to carry expenses."

This was the highlight of the year at Stouffville District High School. "We worked all day to decorate the gym, and I made my own dress. Many of the staff attended the formal and mixed with the kids; it was a lot of fun. We had breakfast parties afterwards and didn't go to bed until dawn."

The commencements in the fifties were similar to today's, except that the lines of people receiving certificates are much longer now," Barbara

Presidents past and present compare notes

has fond memories of her teachers, who included Jerry Waite, John Marshall and Ron Mercer.

During the year she was president, there was an incident that still stands out in her mind. The pencil sharpener from the cafeteria disappeared and was found damaged outside on school grounds," explained Barbara. "The principal (O.E. Robbins) cancelled all extra-curricula activities until the perpetrator of this horrendous crime confessed."

The outraged student body threatened to go on strike over the issue. "People were really angry about it and it was even reported in the *Toronto Star*, because (former *Tribune* editor) Jim Thomas was a stringer for the *Star* at the time." As far as Barbara remembers, the "criminal" was never caught, and the matter was eventually dropped.

"A lot of what the president does is for the students," explained this year's outgoing student council president Craig Gaudaur. "We provide funding for any sports and social activities. We had a Sunsweet fund raiser last year, with kids going door-to-door selling chocolates."

As in previous years, candidates are nominated for the position of presi-

dent. "If you're nominated, the past year's student council brings you down and asks if you'd like to run for the election. Interested nominees start campaigning with posters and speeches and a student vote is taken to decide on who should be elected."

"When I got in last year, there were only three of us running: myself, Paul Spencer and Nadine Rennicks. The other two were 1st vice president and 2nd vice president. Everyone that runs for student council executive has to make a speech at the second last assembly of the year," explained Craig.

"It's pretty nerve racking." Morning announcements are made by the student council, and they try to make sure they're interesting, informative and lively enough to keep people awake. It's a kind of radio station format," he noted.

Members of student council also act as a liaison between students and staff. One issue that has caused a good deal of friction in recent years is that of smoking on school property. Craig believes there should be a designated area for smokers, and estimates that student support is fairly evenly split.

He has enjoyed his year as president, and feels the rapport between staff and students is generally good. "Mr. Dickson and Mr. Hooper are two of the easiest men to co-operate with that I've ever known," he concluded.

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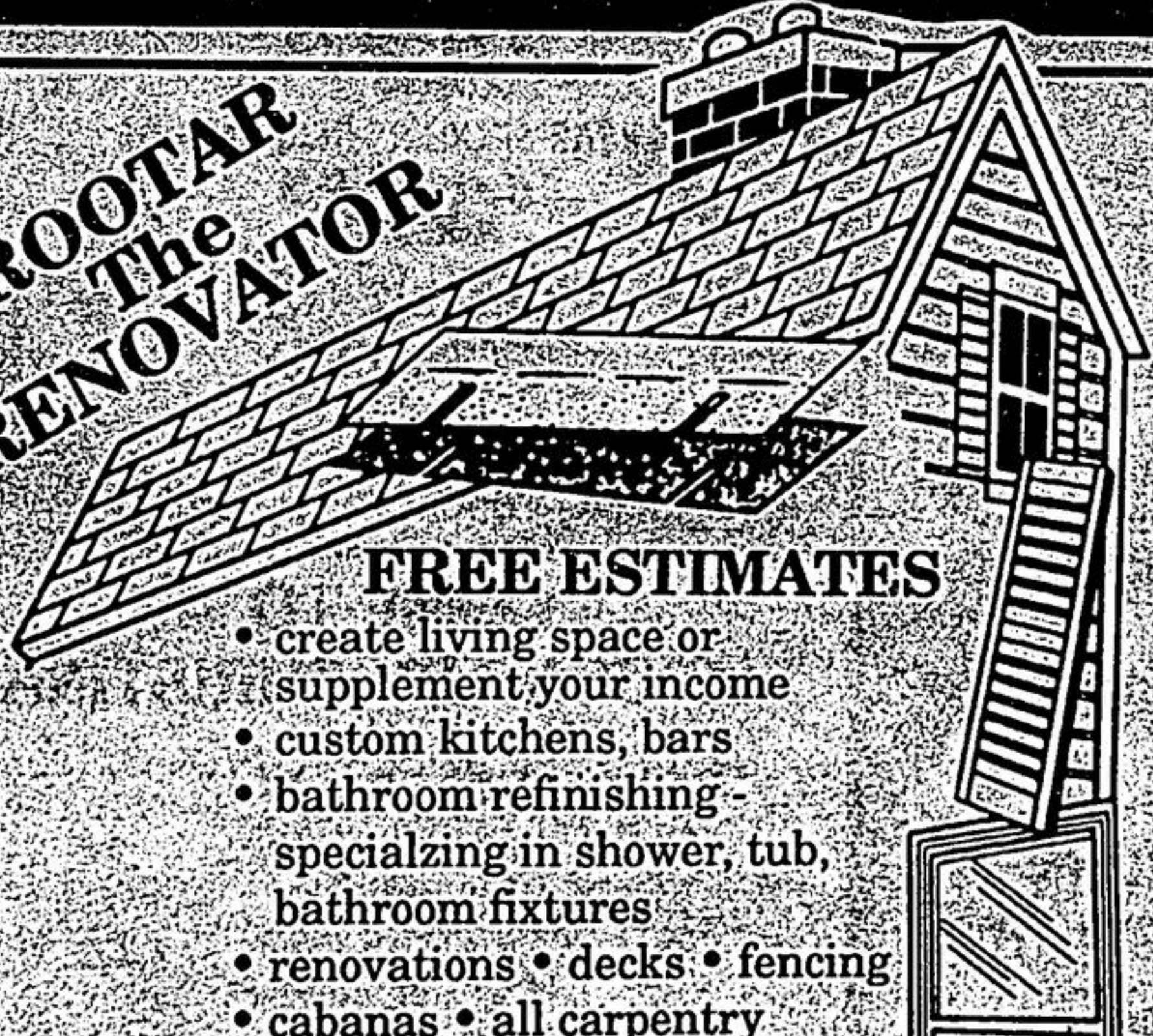
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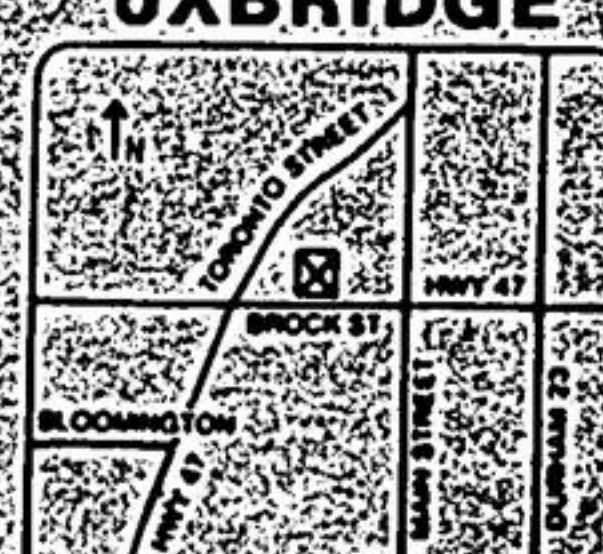
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