

Approximately twenty-one South Dorchester residents organized to form the South Dorchester Volunteer Fire Department in the Spring of 1979. Albert Gamble was the Department's first Fire Chief.

South Dorchester fire truck starts off fire department

By RIC DOLPHIN
T-J Staff Reporter

LYONS — A small crowd of South Dorchester residents braved the light rain here yesterday to witness the arrival of the township's first fire truck. Now, all that is needed is a fire brigade to look after it.

After two years of periodic complaints from residents concerning the claimed inadequacy of Springfield Fire Department's equipment, South Dorchester Council set the wheels in motion about a month ago to buy its own department.

South Dorchester Reeve J. B. Wilson said yesterday the township received official approval from the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) last Saturday to borrow \$75,000.

This amount of money is being borrowed on a temporary basis, he added, from the Royal Bank of Canada's Aylmer branch until the OMB comes up with a debenture agreement between the township and the Ontario Government.

The truck, a red pumper, came from King-Seagrave in Woodstock and, complete with

uniforms, breathing apparatus and other extras, cost \$60,000. **TANK TRUCK TOO**

Reeve Wilson said the township has also bought a tank truck for \$6,000 from Archie Knott and Sons, a milk haulage company from Nilestown. This used vehicle is being overhauled, certified, painted red and should arrive in about a week, the reeve said.

As far as the remaining \$9,000 goes, none of the council members gathered in the township office yesterday knew what this would be used for.

The reeve thought it might perhaps be used for a communications system or additional equipment.

This matter and other fine details such as the recruitment of volunteers, registering the department with the Ontario Fire Marshal's Office, becoming a member of the Elgin County Mutual Aid Association and general administration of the fledgling department will all be discussed at a meeting sometime next week, said the reeve.

Asked about these points, Deputy-Reeve Gord Pettit said, "We got all this to find out. We



\$60,000 WORTH OF PROTECTION — South Dorchester Township witnessed delivery of its first fire truck yesterday. The red pumper will be stored inside the township garage until it can be housed elsewhere along with the used milk tanker the township will be receiving as a back-up vehicle. — (T-J Aylmer Bureau Photo).

don't know."

INTEREST GENERATED

The reeve did say there had been a lot of interest among township residents who wish to be volunteer firemen.

"We figure we can get 40 if we want to," he said.

All councillors agreed the response from the local populace concerning the formation of the South Dorchester Fire Department has been enthusiastic.

The decision among councillors to borrow the \$75,000 was unanimous, Reeve Wilson said.

He reiterated on previous statements, saying it was council's duty to provide adequate fire protection to its rate-payers: "We think we owe it to the people of this township."

The only opposition to the move has come from Pam Bogart, a farmer's wife who lives just outside of Springfield. She said she and 35 other residents are not happy council is spending so much money.

"What I'm really opposed to is the waste of money when we're well protected (by the Springfield Fire Department)," she said earlier this month.

She phoned Deputy-Reeve

Pettit to voice her complaint but said she had received a "brush off."

Mrs. Bogart's call was the only voiced opposition any council members could remember.

"We're not paying any attention to her," Reeve Wilson said. **OPPOSITION FUTILE**

It would now seem any opposition is futile.

The shiny new truck was parked in the Township Road Department's Garage yesterday afternoon, while interested parties sifted through the boxes of equipment, trying on hats and examining the breathing apparatus.

It has not been decided whether a fire hall will be built yet. A private garage is available in Lyons to house the tank truck when it arrives.

Until such time as the department is established properly, Belmont Fire Department is under agreement to provide protection to the whole of South Dorchester, with a pledge of back-up protection from the Yarmouth Fire Department. The number to call in case of fire is 644-1234.

J. A.
E. J.

South Dorchester firemen practise, could begin operations in a month

LYONS (Staff) — Every Tuesday evening, Albert Gamble and friends get together for a little training on how to fight fires.

Mr. Gamble, is the new chief of the fledgling South Dorchester Fire Department, and in about a month he and the 20-or-so other firefighters in the department will be on call.

Mr. Gamble, contacted by phone Thursday evening, wouldn't say anything about how the department is getting along. He suggested talking to South Dorchester Township Reeve John B. Wilson.

Mr. Wilson, speaking from his home Friday morning, said he

didn't exactly know when the department would begin its protection of the township, but estimated "It'll be another month."

South Dorchester Council decided to get its own fire department back in the spring. Council felt the protection provided to half the township by the Springfield Village Fire Department was inadequate.

GOT PERMISSION

So council went to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) and obtained permission to buy a brand-new \$60,000 pumper truck, the various trappings to equip the firefighters, and a used milk tanker which was



J. B. WILSON

overhauled, painted red and will now serve as the department's tank truck.

A few weeks ago, council got OMB approval to take out another loan — in addition to the \$75,000 already borrowed — for \$25,000 to build a firehall to house the two vehicles.

Mr. Wilson said the rate-payers of the township will be starting to pay off the \$100,000 debenture next year.

The hall will be located at the site of the old community centre on County Road 48, just east of Lyons. Azter Construction of London is building the steel building, which Mr. Wilson anticipates will be completed in about three weeks.

COMMUNICATIONS

Before the department can become operational council will have to decide on a communications system to be used by the men. Mr. Wilson said systems offered by various companies will be looked at, before council decides on which will be used.

Meanwhile, every Tuesday evening an official from the Ontario Fire Marshal's Office comes out to Lyons to conduct firefighting classes for the men.

Until the South Dorchester Fire Department finally gets going, township residents will continue to receive their fire protection from the Belmont department. The emergency number there is 644-1234.

August 1979

J.B. EJS

Fire could have been a lot worse says Chief Barlow

A fire in an auto body shop behind Gary Card's residence in Lyons on Monday night, could have been very serious because of flammable substances stored in the shop said South Dorchester Volunteer Fire Department Chief Bob Barlow.

Mr. Card's property is located immediately north of the South Dorchester municipal building on Highway 73.

Chief Barlow said the fire was contained in the furnace area, but "we could have had quite an explosion."

"I think we were very fortunate," he said.

Chief Barlow said a full gasoline can was almost underneath the area where the fire was, and a small can and pail of kerosene were very close to the furnace.

He said he didn't know the kerosene was near the furnace until after the fire was extinguished.

"It wasn't the easiest fire to fight," he said, because the furnace was in a small room about six feet off the main floor of the shop.

Rain and wind didn't cause the firefighters any problems he said. The main problem was the poisonous smoke given off by the urethane insulation which was burning.

Mr. Card said he was working in the south car bay when the fire broke out, but wasn't aware of it until someone from the house warned him.

Monday night, Mr. Card said he knew that he had lost some paint, auto parts, carpenters tools and all of his office supplies in the fire, either through actual fire

damage of water and smoke damage.

Paint was stored in a small room off the furnace room, and the heat caused the lids to pop off, he said.

He said he went into the building twice during the fire to get doors open because the smoke was so thick the firemen wouldn't have been able to find them.

Chief Barlow said the fire was out in about half an hour, but the firemen stayed at the

scene for about two hours.

He said they put fans in the shop after the fire was out to blow the smoke out so they could make sure the fire hadn't flared up again somewhere else.

Mr. Card said there were two pick-up trucks in the shop when the fire started, but he got one out before it was damaged. The other truck received smoke and water damage, he said.

He said this was the third

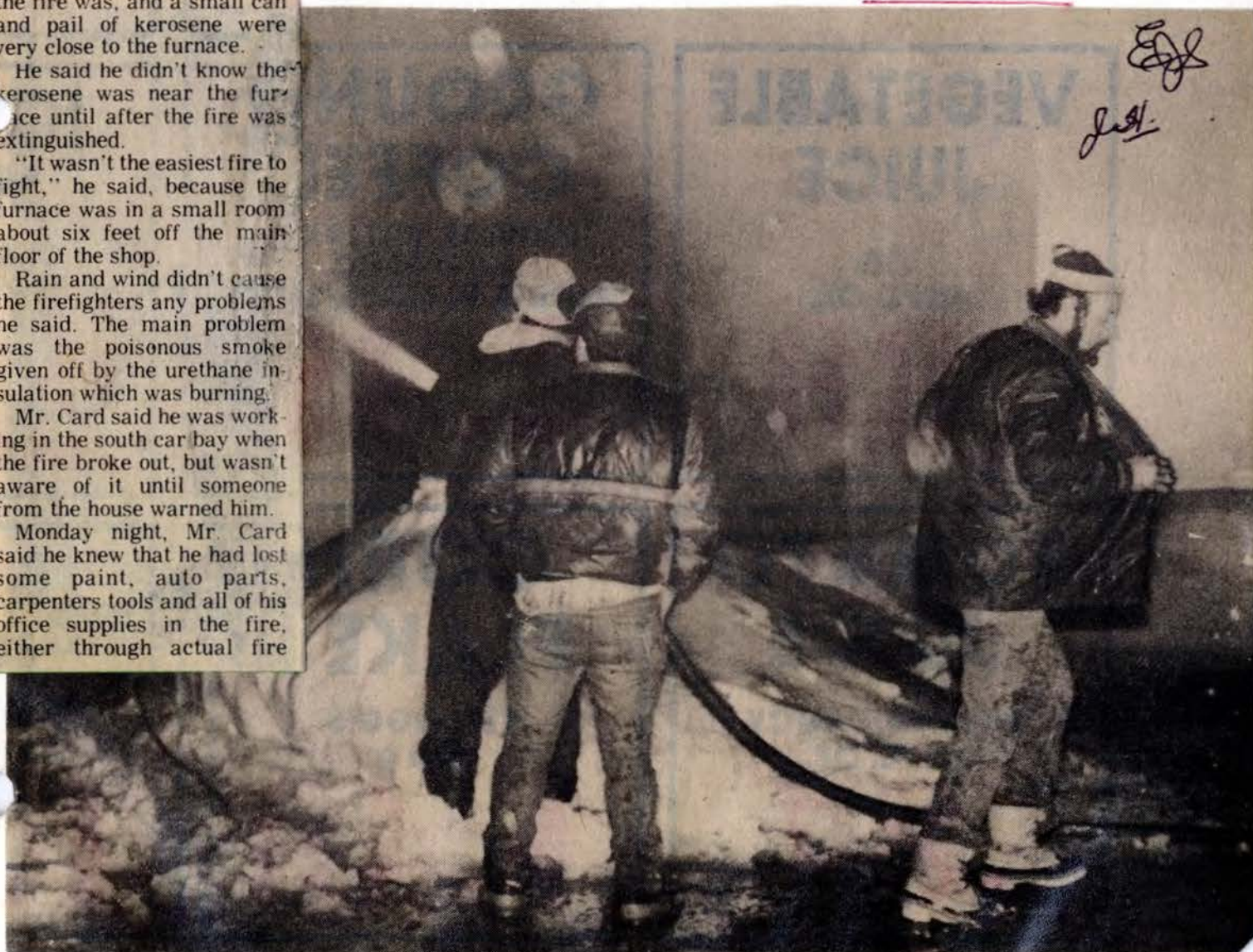
fire on his property in the last three years.

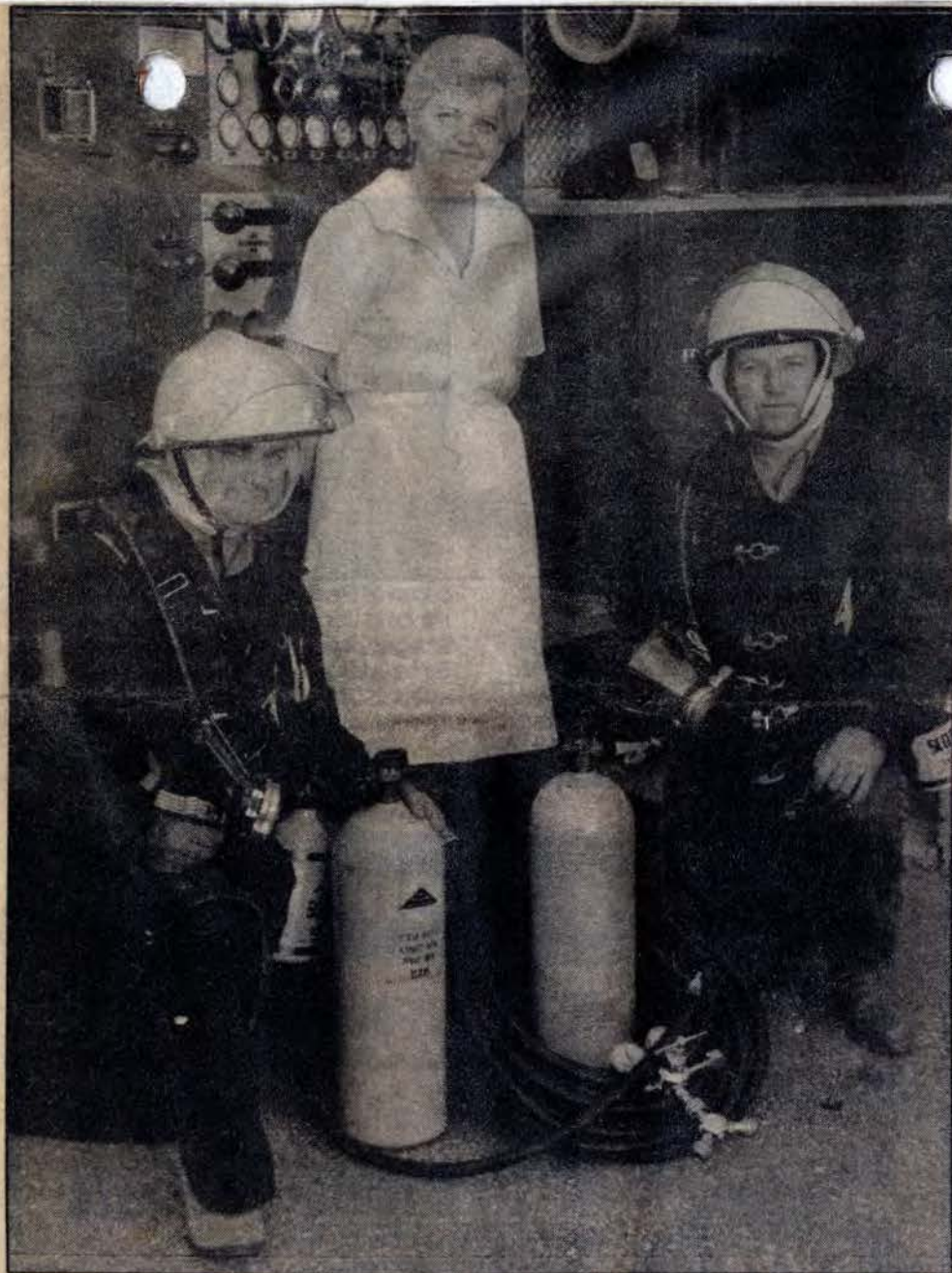
Three years ago, lightning struck his newly built home and caused about \$65,000 damage.

Two years ago a problem with the electrical wiring in the body shop burned out the back wall, he said.

Mr. Card said the shop had been renovated following that fire, adding the building was about eight or nine years old. "I've had enough," he said.

Gary Card, right, retreats from the acid smoke as firefighters work to extinguish a fire which broke out near the furnace in his body repairshop. Thick, poisonous smoke from burning urethane insulation caused problems for the firemen, but the fire was extinguished in thirty minutes. March 1985
Aylmer Express





NEW PROTECTION -- Volunteer firemen from the South Dorchester Fire Department at Lyons display the new self-contained breathing apparatus donated by the Elgin County Farm Safety Council (ECFSC). Pictured (l to r) are Richard Fenn, a cash-crop and hog farmer from R.R. 2 Springfield who's been a volunteer fireman

since 1979; Shirley Bechard, ECFSC secretary and Albert Gamble, a fireman since 1979 from Lyons. The breathing unit is the second of its kind in Elgin. The first was purchased three years ago and is housed at the Southwold Volunteer Fire Department in Shedden.

(Staff Photo - Heather Buchanan)

By Heather Buchanan

Elgin County received another chance to stop farm fatalities due to deadly silo gases with the recent addition of a self-contained breathing apparatus.

The specially designed unit was presented by the Elgin County Farm Safety Council (ECFSC) to the South Dorchester Volunteer Fire Department (SDVFD), located in Lyons on July 22. The apparatus is the second of its kind in the county; Southwold Township Volunteer Fire Department, located in Shedden, has had one for about three years.

Shirley Bechard, ECFSC secretary, said Elgin County Council donated the funds for the first breathing unit after a presentation by the farm safety council.

Mrs. Bechard said fundraising for another unit has been on going over the last three years because it was felt another breathing apparatus was required to adequately cover the county's 125 km radius. South Dorchester received the unit since it had the second largest number of silos.

The breathing apparatus allows firemen to enter confined areas for longer lengths of time, something which was impossible before due to the larger more cumbersome Scott Paks.

SDVFD Chief Bob Barlow said the new lighter more compacted units will make climbing easier as well as providing mobility in confined areas.

Chief Barlow also said the new system could provide air for one man for up to three hours. The larger Scott Paks only contain enough air for about 15 minutes.

Mrs. Bechard said the purchase of the \$5,000 unit was only possible after generous donations from all the townships, Pioneer Hi-Bred Limited, Elgin Pork Producers, Elgin Milk Board, Elgin Mutual Aid, St. Thomas and South Dorchester Optimist Clubs, Workers Compensation Board grants, Sterhouse Muir Farms and Williams Farm Equipment.

She said the self-contained breathing apparatus would be available through the fire department in cases of emergencies. Fire Chief Barlow said Yarmouth, Bayham and Malhide along with South Dorchester

a workshop for farm women in Alymer. She added while attendance wasn't high the women that participated came away with a lot to think about on their own farms.

"This course was intended to help the farm wife, mother or daughter to see dangers on the farm and put safety measures into practise...if interest is shown this fall another one may be conducted in Elgin West," said Mrs. Bechard.

Chief Barlow said the fire department has operated since 1979 and has 21 volunteers. He said about 60 to 65 per cent of the volunteers are farmers.

Bob Goulet, Ontario Farm Safety Council president, said farm accidents have dropped by four per cent across Ontario during the last year while the number of fatalities have lowered by one-half.

Goulet, a Kent County farmer, said figures so far for 1986 show a further decline.

He said units such as the self-contained breathing apparatus could save a farmer's life from silo gases.

He said the farm safety council's work in schools may be partially responsible for the decline in farm accidents and deaths. He said there seemed to be less accidents in the 25 years and under category.

Goulet said another problem was appearing among older semi-retired farmers. He said there were increasing fatalities among the 55 years and older category.

He said one reason may be due to these farmers being semi-retired and now assisting on the farm because of economic conditions.

"...they've been away, the machinery has changed and their reflects have slowed down. It can be a deadly combination," he said.

Goulet said counties are becoming more active in pushing farm safety. He said it was a grassroots movement started with in the counties.

Breathing Unit
may Save
Farm Lives
Aug. 1986

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South Dorchester firefighters to get new paging equipment

South Dorchester Township council has agreed to purchase a new paging system for the volunteer fire department at a cost of \$25,000.

The purchase is subject to approval of debentures to cover the cost.

The decision was made at the March 2 meeting of council following a presentation by a delegation of volunteer fireman.

Spokesman Stan Putnam said the present paging system was rented from Maclean Hunter Communications in London and was slower than the proposed new system.

An alarm phoned in had to go through the Aylmer operator who in turn would relay the message to London. During tests, he said, it was found that it could take up to three minutes between the time the telephone was hung up and the first pager activated.

The system offered by Bennett Communications would be owned by the township. A call would go to Aylmer where the operator would relay the message to the pager activating equipment at the municipal fire station.

Tests showed the new system could activate the first pager within eight seconds. "Quite a difference," said Mr. Putnam.

"Particularly if your house is on fire," said Deputy Reeve John Wilson.

"That might save a building or a life," said Reeve Clarence Willsey.

Councillor Marlene Taylor asked about the possibility of problems getting the message through the Aylmer operator.

Several persons admitted that at times, telephone communication could be difficult but the operator in Aylmer gave priority to an emergency call.

It was emphasized that through the new system the message would be repeated only once.

Fire chief Bob Barlow said the department had experienced situations where three different messages had been relayed to the 21 pagers used by the volunteers.

The chief said that Maclean Hunter guaranteed repair service within 24 hours but two broken pagers sent to Maclean Hunter for repair at the beginning of January were still not returned.

Mr. Putnam said the system offered by Bennett was already in use in many surrounding communities where officials had indicated they were satisfied.

Deputy Reeve Wilson said if the system was compatible with those used in surrounding communities then it would be worthwhile, particularly with Mutual Aid and the possibility of a county wide 911 system.

Fire Chief Barlow said the pagers had an additional benefit in that they had the capacity to monitor the department's radio communication system.

This would allow him to relay messages to the firefighters at a fire scene and warn them of any possible danger.

Councillor Peter Charlton suggested the department be

authorized to "go ahead and purchase the system."

Concerns about the effect on the 1992 budget were allayed by Councillor Patrick Ungar who submitted a written breakdown of costs for financing the purchase over a four year term.

His information included comparative costs of the present system. They showed the overall cost of the new system at \$33,641 at the end of four years compared to \$33,385 for the existing system.

At the end of four years, the municipality would own the system.

*J. 27
M.T.*

Aylmer Express October 6 1992



South Dorchester Volunteer Fire Department is one of several serving East Elgin communities. Its members are: front row from left; Piet Bouthoorn, Stan Putnam, Pat Unger, and David Wood. Middle row:

Legg, Rick Minor, Alex McNeil, Fire Chief Bob Barlow, Dave Stover and Marvin Corless. Back row: Bob Tracey, Larry McNeil, Bill Light, Nick Provost, Ian Barlow, Albert Gamble and Bob Kyle.

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J.A.
M.T.

October 1992

A 4-H Club with a Difference

"Having five boys in a 4-H Homemaking Club? It is a little different . . . because the boys are eager and interested and are willing volunteers!" That's the opinion of Nancy Gardner, a 4-H leader for the Kingsmill-Mapleton Homemaking Club in Elgin County.

Fellow leader Eleanor Stover agrees that their 4-H club with five boys and one girl has been a good one and each of the members echo their sentiments. The Belmont area club is just completing their winter project "Food for Friends". Members are Roger Stover, R. #7 Aylmer; John Weber, R. #5 Aylmer; Michelle Wright, Michael Goble, Larry Jenkins and Sean Gardner, all of R. #1 Belmont. Four members are completing their first project while this is Michelle's third and Roger's fourth.

The cooking project featured party foods such as tacos, crepes, mini pizzas, appetizers and Chinese food. Members were exposed to appliances that might not be used at home including the pressure cooker, blender, microwave, fondue and wok. Parts of the project dealt with the metric system and calculating the amount of energy that different appliances consume.

The leaders found that John was way ahead on the electricity questions because of his electrical shop course at school. Members even had little problem with the metric recipes because of their training in school. In fact, Larry's mother finally made use of her metric measuring cup when Larry showed her how!

A 4-H Homemaking Club with five boys in it is not exactly traditional but the members' reasons for joining are as traditional as anywhere. Some were encouraged by mothers, some by friends and some by leaders. John was hooked when he spent the weekend at Roger's home



The Kingsmill - Mapleton 4-H Homemaking Club (l - r): Mrs. Eleanor Stover (leader), Michelle Wright, Larry Jenkins, John Weber, Michael Goble, Roger Stover, Sean Gardner and Mrs. Nancy Gardner (leader).

and attended a 4-H meeting. Larry added, "4-H fills what might otherwise be a boring Saturday."

All of them like cooking and even admit they enjoy eating the food. Their 4-H project is useful at home too. Each member cooks at home as often as three times per week and those with working mothers are put to especially good use. As for their dislikes, they too are common with many 4-H members: home assignments and waiting for the food to cook!

All six members find time for other interests besides 4-H and cooking including motorbikes, snowmobiling, sports, piano, collecting and making models, farmwork and crafts. Their long lists of activities match their energy and enthusiasm.

The male members of the club never get teased for belonging to a 4-H Homemaking Club. Michael reported that the

people in his class are all interested in what he's learning. But all agreed there are some people you just don't tell! And how does the lone female member like this club? Michelle says it's O.K. and Michael quickly pipes in that she gets lots of attention.

The leaders, Nancy and Eleanor, have led together for five years. This year they found that most of the girls in the community were either too busy or didn't like cooking. Many of them had other interests besides 4-H and in fact 4-H was not as much of a novelty for them.

They've enjoyed their 4-H club "Food for Friends" in spite of a shortage of female members. All six members are lively people. "It's been fun and a good club. Everyone enjoyed it and everyone was interested," reports Nancy. "And we didn't even have one accident in the kitchen!"

Now that's something!

Sean Gardner lifts a cooked crepe from the electric crepe pan.

Eating the food is one reason the members like this club. Larry Jenkins tries the taste test on mini-pizzas.



J. B. E. S.



County Honours for Elgin 4-H club members were presented at Fitness Fare last Wednesday night at McGregor Public School. The award, which is presented to those who have completed six projects, was given to, from left, Linda VanRoessel (Lions 4-H club), Kim Jackson (Pt. Burwell),

Jennifer Foster (Belmont No. 2), Ramona Snyders (Belmont No. 2) and Lori Lewis (Kingsmill-Mapleton No. 1). Bonnie Wilson, right, rural organization specialist, Elgin County, presented the certificates.

J. Foster
EGS

MICHAEL STOVER VISITED ALBERTA on an EXCHANGE PROGRAM



Michael Stover

Michael Stover, 16, of RR 7 Aylmer was one of fifteen Elgin County 4-H members to spend eleven days in Alberta recently on an exchange program.

Mr. Stover said the July 4 to 15 trip was sponsored by the Canadian 4-H Council and was called the Open House Canada Exchange Program.

The program gave 4-H members a chance to see other parts of Canada and meet the residents there, he said.

Michael stayed with a family named Pavka that owned a 500 acre farm and grew grains.

the farm was big to what he was used to in Elgin County, but was small for Alberta.

The first night in Alberta the Elgin County 4-H members stayed at a 2,000 acre farm.

Michael said he didn't notice much difference in the people in Alberta, but the farming methods were different.

The area was very dry and "They would not be anywhere without irrigation," he said.

"They haven't had a rain in so long the ground is almost like cement."

The land in Alberta was very flat and the only trees were located near the buildings.

One of the side trips during his stay was a visit to the Calgary Stampede, where he saw cross-Canada runner Steve Fonyo open the event.

On another side trip, he said, "I enjoyed seeing the Rocky Mountains." The best part of the trip was "making new friends," he said.

Other 4-H members from East Elgin who went on the trip were Tracey Whaley of RR 1 Aylmer and Jenny Cook of Belmont.

The Elgin members got a chance to return the favour to host 4-H members from Alberta when they arrived on a visit to the county July 22.

The Alberta visitors, including Patrick Pavka, 17, a member of the family Michael stayed with, were in Elgin County until July 31.

This exchange was during July 1985.

J. H.
EJ

4-H BASIC BAKING CLUB



We were the KINGSMILL*MAPLETON BUTTER FINGERS

This project was held in the fall of 1985
The leaders were Mrs. David Stover and Mrs
Jack Wackley. The members were (l-r) Shawn
Knutson, Darren Goble, Lesley Stover and
Scott Millard. In the club, they learnt
how to make tea biscuits, pastry and pies,
how to decorate a cake and how to plan a
bake sale. For the Achievement Program, we
had a Bake Sale at the EESS. We donated the
proceeds from our table to the Salvation
Army Christmas Fund.

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