



2000: Arena on budget

Jim Quantrell, At a Glance

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Cambridge archivist Jim Quantrell takes our readers back for a glance at events which occurred 10, 15 and 20 years ago.

20 YEARS AGO - First week of August 1990

Information Cambridge celebrated the completion of its first year of operation during which the organization's volunteers fielded about 1,500 calls. The group was set up as an arm of the Cambridge Volunteer Bureau to facilitate access to and delivery of social services in the city. The group received its funding from the City of Cambridge and the United Way of Cambridge and North Dumfries. Information Cambridge was described as a "veritable talking encyclopedia" where volunteers had ready access to a data bank of 3,000 cards "packed with information", a back-up filing system filled with background articles, another file of local events and festivities and reference manuals.

About 30 Japanese musicians aged eight to 18 began a four-day visit to Cambridge as part of the first "goodwill mission" of the Toyota International Association. Members of the Suzuki Children's String Orchestra from Toyota City stayed with host families from the Cambridge Kiwanis Boys' Choir. All of the orchestra members spoke some English and the senior members were quite fluent so the language difference was not entirely insurmountable. The orchestra's main presentation was a 90-minute concert held in Tassie Hall. When not performing, the orchestra members hoped to sample Canadian life and activities including a visit to Niagara Falls.

15 YEARS AGO - First week of August 1995

Cineplex Odeon Corp. announced that it would be building a new cinema complex on Hespeler Road. The new 20,000-square-foot complex was scheduled to open the following summer and was to feature seven screens, state of the art auditoriums, digital theatre sound systems and plush seating. All the auditoriums were to be handicapped accessible and would incorporate transfer arms on seating that would allow wheelchair patrons to sit comfortably on aisle seats.

Rev. Juan Cornejo, the minister that led a Spanish-speaking congregation at the King Street Baptist Church, was drowned when the boat in which he and two companions were fishing was swamped by two waves and capsized. Cornejo's companions, also from Cambridge, managed to make it to shore but lost sight of the minister in the process.

Staff at Cambridge Memorial Hospital was advised that due to a projected multi-million dollar "problem" that was expected to extend at least over the next two years, job security would not be available to any employee. Financial officials at the hospital noted that a "significant reduction" in expenditures would be necessary and it was uncertain how many jobs would be lost before financial conditions improved. At the time, the hospital employed 1,100 full-time and part-time staff. The equivalent of 12 full-time positions had already been eliminated.

10 YEARS AGO - First week of August 2000

In spite of a number of setbacks, the addition to the Hespeler Arena was "on budget and on time" for a projected October completion. The first phase of the \$5.2 million project had gone fairly smoothly but then there was a 12-week wait for structural steel. Various building materials were in short supply because of a building boom. The material shortage, however, was only one of the challenges to completing the arena. Changes to the building and fire codes since the original arena was built in 1989 also impacted the project and added significantly to the cost.

A \$591,000 facelift of the Preston core's streetscape was nearing completion. The work involved upgrading underground wiring, replacing aging hydro poles, pouring new concrete for curbs, gutters and sidewalks and installing new landscaping and street furniture. The previous time work of this nature had been done in the Preston Towne Centre as a Centennial Project in 1967.

It was reported that the Cambridge Times was part of a "historic newspaper transaction" that saw CanWest Global Communications Corp. purchase a number of publications, including the Times, from the Hollinger newspaper chain. It was described as "the largest transaction in the history of the Canadian media industry".

The Grand River was named as a finalist for the world's most prestigious river-management award, the 2000 Theiss Environmental Services Riverprize. The prize was to be awarded at 2000 Riversymposium, a major international forum on river management to be held in Brisbane, Australia in September. The AU\$100,000 prize rewarded excellence and innovation in river management.

Jim Quantrell, archivist, City of Cambridge Archives

46 Dickson St. Cambridge, (519) 740-4680 ext. 4610

quantrellj@city.cambridge.on.ca

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