
1993: Reporter denies closure

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.

EVENTS FROM 20 YEARS AGO

Third week of February 1988

Cambridge Memorial Hospital was among 22 institutions in Ontario under investigation by the province. Provincial authorities were trying to determine why the hospital and the other institutions had recurring deficits. The Ministry of Health chose for their investigation those hospitals in high growth areas that had demonstrated difficulty in managing to make ends meet with the funding allocated to them by the province. The hospital was forecasting a deficit of more than \$1.5 million on an operating budget of \$37 million for the 1987-88 fiscal year. In the 1986-87 fiscal year, the deficit had been \$320,000 on a \$33.2-million budget. According to a hospital spokesman, the main reason for the local deficit was the extraordinary growth in the use of medical services in Cambridge due to population increases and the rising percentage of older people in that population. He also noted that wage increases, higher expenses for drugs, and insurance and demands for improved services had also contributed to rising costs and the resulting recurring deficits.

A spokesman for Conestoga College noted that the college's presence in Cambridge could be increased if the long range planning exercise then underway indicated a need for expanded programming in the city. The long range plan was to be used to plot the college's course for the next five years and, as part of that study, the college was to look at gearing programs to the needs of Cambridge's businesses and industries. If an expansion of local facilities was indicated, the Doon campus might be enlarged or a new facility might be added in Cambridge.

City spending was up, but potential tax increases were being kept down as a result of a revenue bonanza generated by the issuance of large numbers of building permits. Cambridge residents expected an increase of about 3.7 per cent in the city portion of the municipal tax bill. Services provided by the city accounted for 37.3 per cent of the total tax bill, while services provided by Waterloo Region made up another 16.5 per cent of the total tax bill. School costs were the largest component of the tax bill eating up 46.2 per cent of the taxes generated by local taxpayers.

EVENTS FROM 15 YEARS AGO

Third week of February 1993

The publisher and general manager of the Cambridge Reporter went on the record to deny that the local daily was about to close its doors. The paper had gone through some difficult times recently, the publisher noted, but reports that the paper was about to close were merely "rumour and speculation". Rumours had started to fly when it was reported that Thomson Corporation, then the owner of the Reporter, was about to sell 10 of its smaller market dailies. If a buyer could not be found, the rumour continued, at least some of the papers would be closed down. Market analysts noted that if any papers were closed the Reporter would probably be one of them since the recent economic performance of the paper had been less than spectacular and management/employee relations had suffered significantly during a recent strike. Thomson management confirmed that 10 of its papers were to be sold by the end of the year but neither would it name the papers to be sold nor would it speculate on what would happen if those papers were not sold.

EVENTS FROM 10 YEARS AGO

Third week of February 1998

Cambridge had approved in principle the concept of creating murals on the interior walls of the renovated Galt Arena Gardens, but the questions of who was to do the work, what paintings would be allowed and how big they were to be had still to be decided. Mural Works, a company operated by two local men, had approached the city several months previously with a formal proposal to tackle the job. However, another local artist told council that he too had approached city staff several months earlier with a suggestion for a similar project but had not received a reply. He asked council to defer its decision on the murals until he was able to submit a formal proposal.

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