



1990: Businesses reluctant to open Sundays

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

Fourth week of June 1990

As public concern over the safety of pesticides mounted, one of Canada's leading producers of agricultural chemicals waded into the fray claiming that consumers were being misled and misinformed on the issue. A spokesperson for Ceiba-Geigy, a Swiss-based chemical fertilizer company with a large production facility in Cambridge, admitted that there were risks in the use of chemical pesticides but there were far greater risks from naturally occurring toxins. He noted: "science is solid on the products and used correctly there is no risk to the public". The company's Cambridge plant was the largest agricultural chemical plant in Ontario and Quebec and the fourth largest of its kind in Canada.

Local businesses were reluctant to say whether they would open their doors on Sundays following the statement by a provincial law enforcement official that retailers could still be charged for violating Ontario's Sunday closing law, even though the Ontario Supreme Court had struck down the law. Charges were still possible since the law remained in effect until provincial authorities exhausted its appeals.

About 600 employees on the morning shift at the Toyota Motoring Manufacturing plant in the city stopped work to participate in a short ceremony to celebrate the completion of the 50,000th Corolla sedan produced since the factory opened 18 months earlier. At the time, the plant was producing 265 cars a day.

A slower Cambridge housing market had builders scrambling for new innovations that would help them sell homes they were building. Many homebuilders looked at ways to reduce the price of houses. One area builder made the move to become the region's first environmentally friendly builder. Beginning with 32 building lots in its Silver Heights development in the city, the builder was to plant a pine tree in each front yard and was to make a donation in the owner's name to a fund to preserve one of North America's oldest pine forests. To reduce construction waste from the building site, scrap material was to be placed in recycling bins for the use of homeowners in their do-it-yourself projects and homes were to be provided with composting bins.

15 YEARS AGO

Fourth week of June 1995

Summer arrived in the city with a heat wave and high humidity. Temperatures earlier in the week had reached 35 degrees Celsius but felt more like 41 degrees due to the dense humidity. Weather forecasters suggested that temperatures were likely to remain higher than normal for the time of year, but lower humidity levels would soon make things a bit more comfortable. It was noted that June temperatures were "very much above normal". With the heat wave came concerns about water supply. Residents were requested to "exercise care in water use" and to use discretion when watering lawns and filling swimming pools. The region was reported to be running its water operations at 100 per cent and officials were concerned that if the hot, dry conditions continued demand might soon overwhelm the supply. Water use peaked at 45 million gallons up from the normal use of 30 million gallons and reservoirs were reduced to 60 per cent of capacity before lower temperatures helped ease demand.

Preston Metal and Roofing Products announced that the company would be closing its production facility after 45 years of operation in the city. For some time the company had been reducing its workforce as part of a restructuring program it had undertaken. Employment at the plant had fallen from 120 in 1993 to only 50 when the plant closure was announced.

10 YEARS AGO

Fourth week of June 2000

City officials and members of Cambridge's economic development advisory committee were taken aback when a

survey of small and medium-sized businesses in southwestern Ontario conducted by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business ranked the city dead last among 24 municipalities. The survey had responses from 175 local businesses who gauged the performance as good, fair or poor in categories of reasonable property tax levels, value for money of public services, control of government wages, fairness of regulations and bylaws and overall awareness of small and medium businesses.

The coroner's inquest into the 1998 drownings at the Parkhill Road dam ended with 40 recommendations including exempting police officers from provincial diving regulations when the dive involves saving a life. The five-member jury also recommended that police divers have the "unqualified right" to refuse or stop a dive if they believe it's dangerous. The jury recommendations came six weeks after the inquest into the deaths of Mark Gage and police diver Const. Dave Nicholson when they became trapped in a sluice below the dam. The jury also recommended that the four sluices in the dam be cemented.

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