



Workers at the Backus Mill secure the large overshot wheel in front of the flume. The mill should be operational before long as they are still waiting for a few parts. (Photo by Richard Houghton)

Wheel hung at Backus Mill

By Richard Houghton

An overshot water-wheel, approximately ten feet high was hung Wednesday morning at 9 a.m. at John Backhouse Mill near Port Rowan. Dick Hunter, Resource Manager for the Long Point Region Conservation Authority, said they were going to try the overshot wheel because you can get the most power out of a water-wheel that way.

The conservation authority started major work on the mill last January, and since then have spent in the neighborhood of \$25,000 in restoration of the mill.

In April we started taking out the old foundation, and putting in a new one, said Mr. Hunter. We also did a lot of replacing of rotten beams.

They haven't started running water into the flume as of yet because they are still waiting for a couple of parts that will make the mill operable.

The builder of the mill, John Backhouse came from Yorkshire, England to the United States in 1971, but shortly thereafter moved to Upper Canada in order to remain loyal to the British Empire. He served as a major in the first Norfolk Militia in the War of 1812. Later he became a chairman of the Quarter Session, then the chief instrument of local government.

Mr. Backhouse built his mill in 1798. Prior to this wheat grown in Norfolk County was taken by open boat to be ground at the nearest mill

on Niagara River. This was a long and perilous journey on which the very existence of the infant settlement depended.

The mill remained in the possession of the descendants of John Backhouse until it was purchased by the Big Creek Conservation Authority in 1955.

Somehow the mill managed to escape the ravages of the war of 1812 and was in continuous operation for a longer period than any other mill in Ontario.

George Backus, of Port Rowan, is a descendant of the family that built the mill.

This wheel must be a little smaller than the one that was there originally, he said. I remember that once my aunt climbed inside the one that was there before and the men inside the mill started the wheel up while she was inside it. She had to start running like she was inside a treadmill. She was running in there for about three hours before they found her inside the wheel.

Lottery winners

Woolworth's in Tillsonburg has announced the winners of their Ontario Lottery Tickets.

Mrs. Wm. Herman, 184 Tillson Ave., Tillsonburg; Annie Breit,

R.R. 5, Langton; Mrs. Isaal Loucks, Port Burwell; Edith Bradfield, R.R. 1, Delhi, and Madeline DeDecker, R.R. 1, Delhi; all won thermometers and an Ontario Lottery Ticket from Woolworth's.

Public purse overloaded

A number of proposals to advance to goals of the United Way were presented recently at a meeting of the board of directors held in the Lynedoch United Church Hall.

One of these is designed to reduce the number of appeals made annually by calling upon those conducting campaigns to give careful consideration to working the "United Way". Carl Woodside, Head of Student Services at the Port Dover Composite School, and a member of the executive, presented a brief he had prepared for the Ability Fund-formerly known as the March of Dimes-inviting them to work with the United Way.

Similar letters will be prepared and sent to the various money-raising organizations. We are declaring war on the large number of appeals being made on the public purse, President C.F. Waite said. "The present jungle of charity solicitations is too wasteful of manpower

and of money. The hard earned dollars of working people deserve better use in the support of key social services. The situation becomes a little ridiculous when the business man opens his door in the morning only to find more solicitors waiting for him than customers.

A second measure adopted by the United Way Board is to write to all the industries in the area suggesting the steps necessary to establish a payroll deduction plan for their employees. The present practice of a one shot gift of a few dollars is not nearly so helpful as a year round gift for a dozen agencies to enable them to operate for 12 months.

Jack Lukasik and Dick Pearson, both members of the Simcoe Chamber of Commerce, reported that they had approached the Chamber and have full support and approval in educating members of the United

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Norfolk Library Board elected

Officers for 1974-75 elected at the May meeting of the Township of Norfolk Public Library board were: Evans Knowles, chairman; Mrs. Margaret Van Laeken, secretary; and Welsey Horley, treasurer. Other members of the board are Alfred Stucker, chairman 1973-74; Nick Nyilas, a new representative recently appointed by the Norfolk Board of Education replacing Mrs. Brenda Tolenaar; Harold Woolley, Mrs. Stella Krupicz; Mrs. Jean Argue; and councillor Mrs. Dorothy Overbaugh.

Public library hours will continue at Valey Heights on Wednesday and Thursday evenings until the end of the school year. They will be discontinued for the summer months of July and August, and resumed again when school re-opens in the fall.

Mrs. Janzen, librarian at the Port Rowan Public Library, stated that as a result of a questionnaire previously circulated, it has been found that the preferred hours were from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday afternoons, rather

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Project S.W.E.E.P.

The 1975 S.W.E.E.P. program with the Long Point Region Conservation Authority commenced on May 5, 1975. The technical and organizational level of the program began at this time, with the foremen and labour crews starting on May 20, June 9, and 23, respectively.

Long Point Region

A major portion of the program will involve conservation development work on properties owned by the Conservation Authority. Jobs such as erosion control and stream bank stabilization measures along the mill pond at Backus Conservation Area general park enhancement work, and maintenance on existing spawning beds in Young Creek are only a few examples.

It is expected that some of the crews will become involved in municipal projects such as roadside clean-up and removal of debris from

watercourses. A total of 38 students including 5 technical positions will be involved with this year's program.

The technical positions cover the following topics: John Cooper has been engaged to carry out a Land Use Assessment. This will involve the initiation of a property survey of the east part of the watershed to identify the priority area for acquisition by the Conservation Authority in future years. Grant McCullough, wildlife biologist, has been hired to compile a habitat and wildlife inventory for Sowden Tract, Fisher and Rowan Mills Conservation Areas. He will also be preparing wildlife management plans for the above areas.

The information and education duties are being performed by Sally Hamilton. This involves coordinating the media coverage for S.W.E.E.P., preparation of

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The pipes of the Hamilton Pipe Band lead the Zone B-1 of the Ladies Auxiliary, on their march to the cenotaph in Cayuga. (Photo by Richard Houghton)