



Happy goth

Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry MPP Noble Villeneuve brought greetings from the province to Matt Hastings, who celebrated his 90th birthday Sunday at Hallville United Church. A native of England who immigrated to Canada when he was 16, Hastings is still active as a self-taught veterinarian. He is currently spending a 10-day vacation in California.

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Special guests help observe seniors' 10th

MOUNTAIN — Special guests were on hand as the Mountain Township Senior Citizens' Club celebrated its 10th anniversary last Wednesday at Mountain Community Hall.

Guests included Township Reeve Keith Fawcett and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Ewart Simms, Mr. and Mrs. Bert Hamner of Ottawa, Myrna Johnston, representative of Zone 35 USCO, and Mr. and Mrs. B. Charbeneau of Sault Ste. Marie.

Mr. Fawcett spoke on Township expenditures and explained the role of inflation in increasing taxes.

Mr. Simms, hall board chairman, also spoke and Mrs. Johnston brought greetings from Zone 35. Guest speaker Bert Hamner discussed health problems and nursing homes.

The Mountain Seniors' rhythm band and choir performed several numbers and Mrs. Ernie Boyd played a piano solo.

Mrs. Lanson Hyndman, who introduced the head table, announced that the bicentennial posters on display in the hall would also be displayed at Mountain Park on July 14-15. The posters were produced by students at various schools. Mrs. Hyndman also played a tape made by Grade 3 pupils at Nationview Public School.

Mr. Charbeneau, the club's first president, read the names of members who belonged to the club in 1974 who were present at this 10th anniversary. Several of those present have reached their 90th birthdays.

Gordon Clelland reported on the club's money-raising activities, and Doris Hyndman described social activities and tours.

Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Gilroy dedicated the club's Remembrance Shield, with 31 name plates for members who have died since 1974.

President Wilda Kirkby closed the meeting by thanking all the committees, and everyone who helped to make the day a memorable one. The meeting closed with the singing of God Save the Queen.

July 11/84

HALLVILLE — Two years ago, when Matt Hastings was introduced at his 90th birthday party as "a self-made veterinarian," he was as pleased as punch. But he is inclined to refer to himself as "a homemade man."

In 1911, more than a hundred orphaned and abandoned children were on their way from England to Halifax on the White Star of the White Star Line. Four of the boys in the group, Charlie Bagbell, Mattie Brown, Joe Woods and Matt Hastings, were on their way to farms near Mountain, Ont., where they would work for farmers for the next two years.

The four boys were from the Bainerda homes, a series of orphanages that gave children an education until the age of 14, some training in a practical field, like farming, blacksmithing or dressmaking, then, at 16, sent them to the colonies to make their own way in the world.

For Hastings, who didn't see land for two weeks, it was a disquieting experience. "I didn't know anyone, and I had to start work right away," he remembers. "Everyone was a stranger." The four boys would be working for an annual salary of \$56 the first year. In the second year, their wages would go up to \$86.

The Bainerda children disembarked in Halifax, and dispersed to all corners of Canada. Hastings and his three companions continued to Montreal, and then to Mountain, by rail.

In Mountain, the four boys were met at the station by the local livery man. He took the boys to their respective places of work, and they rarely saw one another afterwards.

Hastings, who has some agricultural training from the Bainerda home in Washington, England, had been placed with Ken Guy and his wife Anna, a farm couple with several small children. It became Hastings' task not only to work on the farm, but also to care for the children. The Guy farm was the beginning of his career in agriculture.

At 92, Hastings' face is still unlined after decades in the sun and wind. The only symptom of

old age is a cataract in one eye, which he says makes it difficult for him to see small details. But his hearing is still acute, his step is firm, and his memory is keen. For Hastings, the memories of coming to Canada as a "Bainerda boy" will never be forgotten.

It was from Anna Guy's father, Tommy Armstrong, that Hastings would learn the trade that would make his skills in high demand in the area. Armstrong taught Hastings how to birth a calf and remove the cow's afterbirth.

After his two years as a farmhand on the Guy farm, Hastings' stint was up, and he was free to take another job. His next boss, Henry Stoodley was "a good farmer" says Hastings, "but he didn't have the stomach for these things."

Hastings continued to learn about the finer points of bovine midwifery. He developed a fastidiousness about cleanliness, and was always meticulous about disinfecting his arms. Naturally right-handed, Hastings used his left hand for working with the cows, and his right hand for other work around the cow.

At the time, distances to veterinarians were great, and roads were poor. Most roads were simply mud tracks. "We got awfully handy because we had to do these things ourselves," says Hastings.

Stoodley told his neighbors about Hastings' skill, and his fame in the neighborhood spread. All through the years of the first World War, and through the influenza epidemic of 1918, Matt sharpened his abilities and was, more and more in demand by local farmers.

In 1918, when Hastings was 24 he married Katie Bellinger, whom he met at Sunday school as a youngster. "She was a strong, hearty lassie," he says.

Katie's father helped Hastings to invest in a farm near Hallville, and Hastings went about building up the property. At the same time, he worked at William Coleman's cheese factory for \$50 per month. At that time, a new pair of boots was \$5, and his tailor-made wedding suit cost \$35.

For six years, Hastings made cheese in the summer, and harvested lumber from his property during the winter. He

hired boys to help around the farm, always remembering his own part as a "Bainerda boy", and careful to treat each boy as though he were his own son.

"You have to do the thing the best way you know how," he says, "or not at all. That's what I did when I made cheese or anything."

During the Depression, Hastings refined his veterinary skills, and often offered his skills to neighbors who had no money. With the development of antibiotics, Hastings who had used carbolic acid as a disinfectant, learned the use of penicillin. His technique, however, remained the same.

"As I went around the country, I told others how to do things," he says. "The more I did, the better I got."

The Hastings' method for birthing a calf, learned from his years of experience and advice from farmers he met on his travels, involved "floating" the calf around until it was turned the way it should be, always carefully moving the umbilical cord to prevent choking the calf. He then "developed" the muscular rings around the cow's birth canal stretching them slowly to accommodate the calf.

Many farmers, he says, believe in pulling the calf out as quickly as possible from the uterus, but Hastings says that his method is more gentle and prevents a great deal of bleeding. "It's a big help to the cow," he says.

Hastings also developed a technique to prevent the calf from drowning in its own fluid. He lifted the newborn calf by its hind legs, pumping its lungs so the fluid comes flooding out. "As soon as the oxygen gets to it, it will live," he says.

The last part of the job is to remove the afterbirth, which Hastings says rests on "buttons" in the uterus. He very delicately disengaged each of the dozen tiny "buttons" to release the afterbirth.

Usually, the task could be completed in half an hour. "A really bad case" might last an hour and a half.

The Depression was a difficult period for farmers. Hastings recalls one farmer who called for his services, but reminded Hastings that "All I have to my name is 50c."

"I'll beg before I'll take that 50c," said Hastings, who never asked for payment for his services. Most farmers, he says, were usually very generous with voluntary payment.

In other cases, farmers took Hastings good nature for granted. One farmer, after repeated calls, offered Hastings only his thanks. "I don't know what pocket I can put 'thanks' in," mused Hastings.

Hastings also treated horses, but mares, he says, are another story completely from cows. "A horse kicks like anything," he says, while a cow is only able to kick with one foot at a time. In the case of a skittish horse, Hastings would back the horse with its hindquarters to the manger. Working in the manger, he would straighten the foal, then let the mare turn around, and have the mare naturally.

"If everything's coming naturally, then good," he says. "If it isn't, then you have to help nature a little." He believes in taking his time to do the job as well as possible. "You have to take your time and know what's going on," he says.

Hastings' skills made him a valuable commodity to the area. He never had to drive to see a cow because farmers always came to pick him up, first in buggies or cutters pulled by horses, and later by tractors when road conditions made them impassable for cars. At one time, his territory extended in a triangle as far as Morrisburg, Metcalfe and Kempville.

Hastings, who never drank or smoked, attributes some of his long life and success to a lot of elbow grease, and some to providence. "I had good health, and I was a good worker," he says.

