

HISTORY OF THE NOBLETON AMBULANCE SERVICE

In 1964, Nobleton had a population of 600 and a one-room school. Members of the Nobleton Fire Department formed the "Nobleton Firefighters Club" which purchased a 1953 Pontiac ambulance. The service went into operation in March. The ambulance operation was the responsibility of the townspeople and the Volunteer Fire Department; members of the service included a homemaker, an insurance broker, a pharmacist and a garage mechanic. The only qualification/credential required of original staff was a "commitment of time".

The calls (only 4's, no 8's) were dispatched by direct phone call from the Vaughan Fire Department in Maple, using a prepared duty list. The attendants responded in "as is" attire. York Central and Etobicoke General had not been built at that time, so people from the coverage area of Nobleton, King City, Bolton, Kleinburg and Schomberg were taken to York County, Peel Memorial or Humber Memorial Hospitals.

In the spring of 1966, the club was incorporated as the "Nobleton Firefighters and Ambulance Association".

In 1968, the Nobleton Lion's Club, bought and turned over to the association, a new ambulance, a modern "International" with bells and lights but no attendant front seat. The ambulance was still kept in the fire hall but dispatching was done by a portable paging system, about the size and weight of a 12 pack of beer. Two of the crew had the pagers and a phone list. Each person phoned until two people were found who could respond to the call.

By this time response time and coverage had improved because Bolton had its own ambulance and York Central and Etobicoke General had been built. A first aid certificate along with traditional willingness to help were the only requirements. The training sessions included how to jumpstart the ambulance at 7 below Fahrenheit.

In 1969, all ambulance services in Ontario are part of the Ontario Hospital Services Commission. The Nobleton service averages 80 calls a year.

In 1974, uniforms were issued to the 8 to 10 people who did regular shifts. The service was still stationed at the fire hall with the big monitor boxes still being used.

In 1976, a manager took charge of the service and introduced a pay system- \$2.00 per shift and \$10.00 for the weekend shift from 6pm Friday to 6 am Monday). George Quinn also introduced uniforms, rosters, pagers, monthly training sessions and he started dialogue with the Ministry of Health.

In 1984, Linda Pabst had taken over as manager and the service was now located in a new hall beside the arena. The staff had increased to 40 trained ambulance attendants.

In 1987, Mr. George Quinn, a man who did more than his share for Nobleton, passed away. He is missed by all.

In 1986-87, Nobleton Ambulance responded to 1870 calls.

Expand and renovate home for Nobleton ambulance base

By Carol Christian

Thanks to a \$200,000 grant from the Ontario Ministry of Health, the Nobleton ambulance base now has four vehicle bays, an upper level which includes crews' quarters and an office, and air conditioning.

The construction was started in May and although it led to some difficulties for the base's employees and volunteers, they moved into the new quarters Aug. 1.

The Nobleton base, which has been in operation for more than 25 years, was expanded and renovated because the Ministry of Health needed a centre for transfer vehicles. The Nobleton location, with revamping, was the most cost effective.

Gerry Lindgren, who has been with the service 17 years, told The Weekly that while other locations

were looked at, Nobleton was already an ongoing service with fully trained personnel.

It was also chosen because of its central location and close proximity to Highway 400.

The expansion to Nobleton has cut down on the need to take emergency vehicles out of their area to transfer non-critical patients from hospital to hospital or home.

While the new facilities were being built, the ambulance service was operated out of a trailer behind the construction site with no storage facilities for equipment or vehicles.

Ms. Lindgren, who serves as a part time employee, public relations officer and a volunteer attendant, said working out of the

trailer was frustrating and rough but they managed.

The building's new second floor houses three bedrooms, two bathrooms, a living room, kitchen, office and a staff training room, which includes lockers.

The lower level has been renovated as home to three vehicles, an emergency vehicle, a transfer unit and a spare Regional ambulance, used by the service.

The transfer unit is the busiest vehicle of the service answering four to five calls a day along the Highway 400 corridor to move patients in and out of the city, said Ms. Lindgren.

The emergency vehicle responds to about 2,500 calls a year.

The Nobleton operation is responsible for emergency calls from Highway 9 south to Kleinburg, and from the King-Caledon Line east to Dufferin Street.

Ms. Lindgren explained that since Woodbridge and Aurora have an ambulance service the Kleinburg and Dufferin Street boundaries are shared.

She added that the staff is happy with the new facility, though awaiting some last minute touch ups, but lamented that having a larger space increases the amount of housework.

"It's harder to keep clean," she said, adding that they have a cleaning schedule for the building and vehicles.

The service has five full time employees, about half a dozen part time and about 20 to 25 volunteers, but the "list is going down rapidly."

Ms. Lindgren told The Weekly the service "would like a lot more volunteers" as the service is "basically a volunteer unit and we'd like to maintain it as that."

For more information on being a volunteer call 859-0716.

Volunteers work two 12-hour shifts a month after being trained extensively for more than eight months. Training includes going out on calls with the regular attendants.

"We have a very good training program," which is conducted by

Gordon Hooper, said Ms. Lindgren.

The base is always manned by a two-person crew working 12-hour shifts, 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. then to 6:00 a.m. in three-week rotations.

The transfer unit is on the road most of the day from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., noted Ms. Lindgren.



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Gerry Lindgren and Mike Castro in front of the expanded base.



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