

# Everyday Heroes -

# Spencer Wilson

BY BETTY BROWNRIDGE  
SOUTH ESQUESING

Spencer Wilson was born on January 13, 1913, at Lot 1, Con. 6, Esquesing. This is known today as the James farm on Steeles Avenue. His parents were Arthur Wilson and Nettie Chisholm. After a brief period living on the Third Line, the family returned to the farm his grandfather, John Wilson, had purchased in 1873 from the Reverend William Pickard, Lot 3, Con. 9, Esquesing. This had been the pioneer home of the Pickard family, who had built a Georgian style brick house from bricks which had been made on the property. It was built in 1844.

Spencer attended Pinegrove S.S. #4. In his youth he coached the Norval Junior Farmers baseball teams and took short courses sponsored by the Department of Agriculture.

Spencer and Kathleen Hyatt were married on June 5, 1937. They farmed on the home farm and enjoyed life in the big house. They raised two children — John, who with his wife Ria lives next door, and Jean who lives in Georgetown. They sold the farm in 1974 and built a lovely ranch style home on the farm's east corner. Kay passed away on March 11, 1994. Spencer enjoys his one grandson, three great-grandsons, one granddaughter and

two great-granddaughters.

Spencer reminisced about his community activities as we visited. He recalled competing in his first ploughing match in 1926, at the farm of George Currie on the Seventh Line, now Trafalgar Road. He ploughed at the International Match at Fergus in 1937. He continued competing and also coaching young contestants until the early 1980's.

In 1936 Spencer became a director of the Esquesing Agricultural Society, and was president in 1956 and 1957. He worked at the Fair until the mid 1980's. By this time he was heavily involved with the Milton Steam Era, started in 1961, of which he is a Charter Member. He is in charge of the small antiques exhibit under the grandstand.

The former Pinegrove School of which he was a trustee, became the Pinegrove Community Centre. Many reunions and picnics have been held there and euchre is a regular activity. Spencer and Kay worked hard to keep the Centre open. Kay is greatly missed in the community and in the Norval United Church. They had been very active there and Spencer is looking forward to helping at their Annual Chicken Barbecue to be held on May 30, at Huttonville School.

Last, but by no means least, is a most unusual activ-

ity that keeps Spencer busy from spring to fall. His specialty is witching for water. This is also called dowsing or divining. He showed the ability to find water in the 1930's.

His Uncle Sid Robin from Georgetown encouraged him. He claims he is right 99% of the time. When I called him to set up an interview, he was busy the next day as he had to go to Orangeville to witch for water. He found three locations on that property. He uses two pieces of copper wire, with copper tubes over the handles so that no one can claim that he twisted them manually.

Spencer attends the Peel Children's Ground Water Festival at Vic Johnston Community Centre in Streetsville. There are 1000 children in attendance each day. It is held in early June and is open to the public. He demonstrates the method he uses to locate water. Last year a lady came up and asked him if she could try witching. He said "Certainly". She tried it and it worked for her. He asked if she would be interested in taking over as he had more calls than he could handle and did she live in the Streetsville area? A photographer asked him if he had any idea who he was talking to. Spencer replied "No". The man said, she's the Lieutenant-Governor, The

Honourable Hilary Weston".

Last year, Spencer had over 100 calls. In his lifetime he has answered calls from Kitchener to Arnprior. As our interview was coming to a close, the doorbell rang. How

fitting that it was someone asking him to witch a well for him.

Spencer is a fine citizen of his community, his province and his country — our everyday hero.



TWO OF A KIND - Lieutenant-Governor Hilary Weston and Spencer Wilson compare well witching notes at last year's Peel Children's Groundwater Festival, a yearly event promoting clean water.

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The Georgetown Arts & Crafts members attended services at Limehouse Presbyterian Church on Sunday, April 26th and presented a lectern to the church in recognition of Jessie Glynn's contribution to their group.

Jessie, who at age 92 is still very active, has been a staunch supporter of the church for many years. Pictured with Jessie is Pat Beer, Past President of the Arts & Crafts, who made the presentation on their behalf.

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