

Local man happy to lend a hand to ice storm victims

A Georgetown man got back as much as he gave during Canada's last natural disaster. Frank Wielinga spent a week in Quebec during the January ice storm.

"It didn't look too bad driving in," he said, "but when we got there it was a little overwhelming. If you saw pictures of the damage, it was double that when you were actually there."

Wielinga originally gave his name to a number of organizations thinking he would be able to help farmers who had lost power because he knew how to milk cows. The Christian Reformed

Relief Committee called Wielinga and asked him to go to help clear fallen trees and branches.

He spent the first two days in a sugar bush helping clear branches so a farmer could tap his trees. He then helped residents of the town of Lacolle clean up around their houses.

Wielinga was going to take a week's holidays to make the trip but he got some unexpected support as well. Co-workers at Howell Plumbing contributed overtime hours to cover the time while he was away.

"It was nice to have everyone stand

behind me like that. I was very thankful."

So too were those he helped. Although they were without power, Wielinga said residents made sure the volunteers were well fed and looked after.

"One woman told us she wanted to come out and see us because she wanted to know what angels looked like."

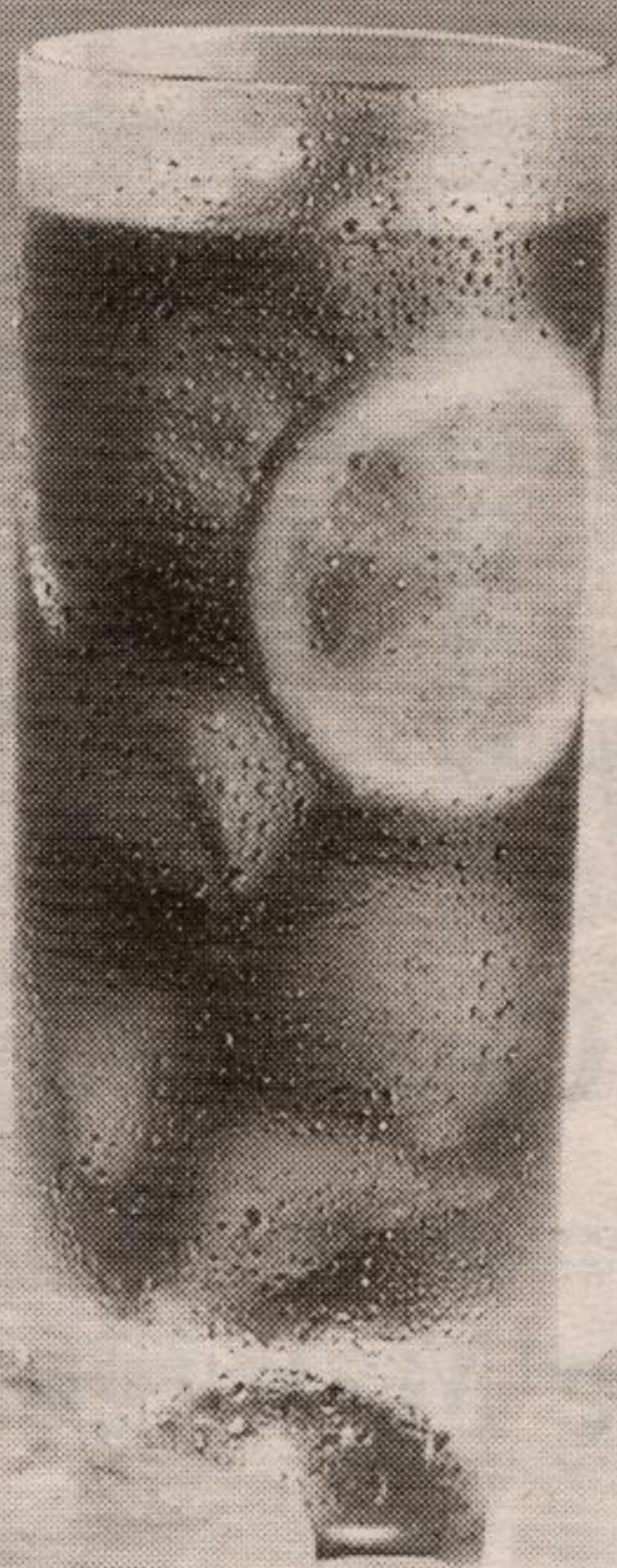
And if he were needed again, Wielinga wouldn't hesitate.

"It was a lot of hard work but being able to help somebody makes it all worthwhile."

—By Herb Garbutt, staff writer

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