



Rural auction sale

Bargain-hunters from the area and from as far away as Toronto swarmed to the Vasey community park on Saturday for the Vasey Church auction. Staged to raise funds for renovations to the Church hall, the auction netted \$7,000 for organizers.



Robbert Hartog

A man with a sense of public responsibility

by Shirley Whittington

On his 105 acre retreat near Penetanguishene, Robbert Hartog has planted thousands of tiny hardwood seedlings. The greatest threat to their continued growth is the snowmobile.

Hartog has dealt with the problem in a way that is characteristically inventive, effective, and public-spirited.

Although he is not a snowmobiler himself, he has built trails throughout his acreage, and has posted the property with signs requesting that trespassers keep to the trails, and off the tiny trees.

"It works most of the time," he says, in his thick Dutch accent. "Sometimes, I have a confrontation. Not often." Confrontations don't faze him. "I like a good fight," he admits with a grin.

In Midland, he's fought the good fight on behalf of a community swimming pool, senior citizens housing, youth activities and planning policies.

His highly individualized style of aggressiveness, tempered with humour and a sense of social responsibility has made him a successful and highly respected businessman. He's President of Waltec Enterprises which comprises Aquarobic Systems, Arista Products, Kindred Industries, Waltec Engineering, Waltec Franchising and Waltec Industries. He also holds directorships in five companies.

"It's a nice little business," he says agreeably. "I'm satisfied with the way fate has dealt with me."

When Waltec Enterprises moves its headquarters to Cambridge later this summer, Robbert Hartog will be going too. He'll be remembered not so much for his business interests as for his personal contribution to the quality of life in the area.

Born in Holland, Hartog was educated in France

and later earned his M.A. in Economics from the University of Toronto. During the war years, he worked with the French underground, and later was in a Dutch Regiment with the Allied Expeditionary Forces under Eisenhower.

After the war, he chose Canada to be his home. "I liked the natural environment, the space, the people," he says.

Space, natural environment, people — his extra-business activities reflect his continuing concern. Planning activities at the municipal, county and area level have absorbed a lot of his time. "Most people," he reflects, "think planners are people who say 'no'." The function of a planning board is basically to represent the public, and they are invited to participate. But most people don't get excited about planning until it hurts them personally.

In Penetanguishene, a community in which Hartog says he feels "very much at home," he sees the development of the Industrial Park as an example of sound planning. "Their system of land banking could serve as an example to any municipality," he says. Those people work well together. Everybody contribute, and they have played their cards right.

One of Hartog's biggest concerns is with the youth of the area. Last week he attended his last meeting as a Venturer advisor, and he admits "It hurts to give that up. They are a terrific gang of kids."

He himself was introduced to Scouting in France when he was 11 years old. Now he's involved in Scouting nationally and internationally, and holds Canada's highest Scouting award — The Silver Wolf. As chairman of the world training committee, he's in charge of the program for a national jamboree in 1977 which involves more than 12,000 kids. It's a year distant, but Hartog says,

"Things are fairly well worked out."

Locally he's worked with Scouts and Venturers. A typical outing was the 24 day canoe trip from Moosonee to Penetanguishene which he took with the Penetanguishene Venturers.

As a Y's man in Midland, he was chairman of the fund raising and building committee. The Y Pool was built during his tenure.

In 1968, he was President of the local Liberal riding association. Politics, he says, alternately fascinates and frustrates him. An admittedly highly individualistic business man, he feels current economic restrictions are good basically. "But balance is what we need," he says. "Perhaps if we have too many regulations we forget motivation and initiative."

He gets angry when he hears whining about current high prices in this country. "Compared to other countries," he says, "we are far better off. We don't know how lucky we are."

He knows what he's talking about. For many years business responsibilities kept him continent-hopping. He's multi lingual — French, English, Dutch, German and a little Spanish.

Robbert Hartog is also on the Board of Governors for Georgian College, active in St. Paul's United Church and a member of the Finance Committee for Glendon College.

How does he manage to coordinate his business and community activities and still have time left for himself?

"I channel my time," he says, indicating an appointment book that is booked for months ahead. "And when I get mad at people too early in the day, I know I'm ready for a holiday."

He describes himself as a private person — so private that he consented to be interviewed only

because he would soon be leaving the community — and much of his free time is spent in solitary activities. Skiing claims him in the winter months. Summer finds him on the Georgian Bay where he has boated for many years.

His new boat is called the "Deedracht" (Concord).

"My great-great-grandfather was the first white man to set foot on Australia in 1616," he says. "I named my new boat after his."

The library of his country home contains 3,000 books and he reads greedily — fiction, history, biography and economics — in English, Dutch and French. Not surprisingly, Hartog very nearly became an academic. After the war, he was offered a scholarship at the Harvard School of Business. "I hesitated over that decision," he says. "At that time, I thought I didn't have the temperament for the

academic life. Perhaps now, I might enjoy it."

He's a skilled camper and naturalist and periodically escapes into Canada's northlands for some white-water canoeing. "That's a challenge I really enjoy."

He likes to cook, and when he has time will invest a couple of hours in the production of a special dinner.

Hartog says he's moving to Cambridge as "a free man". If he has a personal motto, it seems to be "Let's get on with it."

Although he says he has enjoyed his years in the Midland area he is not burdened with sentimental regrets now that he has made the decision to leave.

"My boat will be here, and the people here are not strangers to me."

He'll be well remembered — and missed — by his friends, as a private kind of man with a strong sense of public service.



Robbert Hartog

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