

Christmas gift campaign

TV personality-teacher spear-heads important annual project

In April of 1980, Terry Thomas radiated energy -- at least on the surface.

The television newsman, quizmaster and kids' show host had launched a new career just six months earlier as a teaching master in the Georgian College broadcast journalism program.

Eighteen hour days were common then. He still anchored the late news on Barrie's CKVR-TV. The game show for high school kids, Reach For The Top, kept showing adults just how sharp their youngsters were. And his syndicated children's program, The Tree House, was winding up its eighth season.

Out of commission

But one day, raking leaves, the tightening in his chest he had noticed for the past few days got worse, and he had to lie down. His concerned wife called the doctor. At 39, Thomas, a father of two, had been felled by a heart attack.

He says now he didn't believe it at first. He was too young. It happened to others, not him. But he was out of commission for four months. And his doctor laid it on the line: "There's no such thing as a heart attack that's not serious."

"I rarely, if ever, think about it these days," Thomas claims. "I just don't lift anything much, and I don't tear around."

But he admits the attack altered his values.

"The important things to me now are that I do a good job at whatever I'm doing. And I spend a lot more time with my family." His two boys are now 14 and six.

Geared up again

Eighteen months later, Thomas may have slowed down a bit, but it's scarcely noticeable. Reach For The Top still has its host. He's talking about a spin-off show from The Tree House. And while he no



Terry Thomas

longer works regularly at CKVR as the late news anchorman, he's available for spot duty when he's needed. That's all in addition to his regular teaching at Georgian College.

Those things he does for a combination of personal satisfaction, the challenge -- and to earn his living.

But as in his pre-attack days, there is another side to Thomas. A side that lets him say yes with enthusiasm when he's asked for a little more time -- and energy -- to help a worthy cause.

In 1979, Thomas was chairman of the Barrie and District United Way Campaign. That year, he helped push the campaign over its fundraising target for one of the few times in its history.

Another challenge

This year, it's another challenge, another goal.

When asked, it took him about two

minutes to agree to head up the 1981 Christmas Gift Campaign of Mental Health/Barrie. His concern? Could he make a positive contribution to make it a success?

Satisfied that he could, he jumped in, characteristically, with both feet.

He's featured in a television commercial being shown regularly on CKVR asking the public for gift donations. He's preparing a radio commercial for use in Barrie and Midland. And he's agreed to some public appearances -- including a tour to visit some of the people he hopes to help during this Christmas season.

The Christmas Gift Campaign is an annual affair launched by volunteers from Mental Health/Barrie to ensure that people with mental problems in Simcoe County aren't forgotten during the holiday season.

This year, gift boxes are on display in the Barrie and Midland areas in retail outlets, and organizers are asking shoppers to drop in a small gift as they make their own purchases for family and friends.

Gifts for the lonely, forgotten

The drop boxes will be in place until Dec. 15, when gifts will be collected for wrapping and delivery to people who too often are lonely and ignored during the Christmas season.

They are people without family or friends to remember them at this time of year. And they're in the Penetanguishene Mental Health Centre, nursing homes, the psychiatric unit of Barrie's Royal Victoria Hospital, homes for special care for discharge psychiatric patients and residents of homes operated under the cooperative housing program of Mental Health/Barrie.

Last year, 700 gift packages were distributed in the Barrie and Midland areas, containing more than 1,600 individual presents. Most came from private citizens, with some donated by corporations.

The campaign is run each year under the auspices of the Canadian Mental Health Association in co-operation with its local branches. This year for the first time, a major effort is being made in the Midland area by Mental Health Centre volunteers working with Mental Health/Barrie.

Putting something back

And as for Thomas, he has a straightforward explanation for his involvement.

"People tend to take so much out of a community that they rarely take the time to put anything back. Obviously as an anchorman on television, you're invited into people's living rooms for a half hour every day... I think you gain a certain amount of credibility or they wouldn't invite you back."

"I guess I'm attempting to show the human side of a newsman. I think most people tend to view somebody on the air as an actor -- often with little substance. Maybe by doing these things I'm trying to show the community I'm just as caring, just as human as anyone else."

That's an ongoing quest for many newsmen. To find a way to do something more than simply report the events of the world -- to become a part of that world.

Thomas is a man with something to prove. That he -- and other members of society -- care about those less fortunate people who too often are forgotten in the confusion of everyday living.

As he says in the TV commercial: "This year -- on their behalf -- I'm asking for your help."

DROP BOXES -

MIDLAND / PENETANGUISHENE AREA

Jason's Department Store - Huronia Mall

Huronia Office Services - King Street, Midland

Zellers - Zellers / Dominion Plaza, Highway 27

Woolworths - King Street, Midland

Jory's I.D.A. Drug Store - King Street, Midland

Bay Pharmacy - Main Street, Penetanguishene
Penetang I.G.A. - High Poyntz Mall, Penetanguishene

Drop boxes will be in stores until Dec. 15. Gifts will be wrapped the evening of Dec. 17 at the Blue Flame Room, Consumers Gas, Barrie.

Vasey

by Carol Graham Eleanor Edwards

Visitors with Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Irish and Kevin on Sunday were Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Lumree and Sheila, Mr. and Mrs. Burney Still and Shawn all of Barrie and Mrs. Verne Todd of Elmvale.

Sympathy of the community goes to Mr. and Mrs. Ken Robinson and family on the loss of their grandson Tim Allems, son of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Allems (nee Sondra Robinson) of Brooklin.

Thelma Fargher visited with relatives in Toronto during the weekend.

Mr. Ken Rumney has returned home from Toronto General Hospital after undergoing surgery. We wish him continued progress.

Mr. and Mrs. Erich Wagner have returned

home after an enjoyable holiday in Florida.

Mrs. Margaret Doekes of Burlington spent the weekend with Mr. and Mrs. Fred Edwards.

During the weekend Mrs. Ellsworth Collins of Wyebridge and Mrs. Ellen Whetham of Orr Lake visited with Mr. and Mrs. Orval Edwards.

Sunday visitors with Mr. and Mrs. Roy Edwards were Mr. and Mrs. Don Woodrow and

Sunday visitors

family of Coulson.

Visitors during the weekend with Mr. and Mrs. Clare McKeown were Mr. and Mrs. Bob McKeown, Robbie and Amanda of Bracebridge and Mr. and Mrs. Allan McKeown of St. Catherines, and they celebrated Robbies 10th birthday also.

June Bannan of Willowdale was a weekend visitor with Mr. and Mrs. Walter Bannan.

Mr. and Mrs. Harold

Graham spent a few days last week in Niagara Falls where Mr. Graham was attending a conference of the United Steelworkers. Sunday they visited with Mr. and Mrs. Eric Barrett of Toronto.

St. John Ambulance teaches that prompt, efficient First Aid saves lives, promotes healing and prevents injuries from getting worse.



THE ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION

Branch 68

Penetanguishene, Ontario

will hold a

GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday Dec. 1st

8:30 p.m. Sharp

All active & associate members are expected to attend & participate in the business of the branch.

Your Executive

SKI & SKI BOOT EXCHANGE



Saturday, November 28th, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

NOW OPEN THE NORTH SIMCOE CATHOLIC FAMILY LIFE CENTRE

The Centre is a charitable organization and was established with the support of the Regional Parishes, out of an awareness of being a caring community for those in need, and funded through Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Toronto.

Our objective is to provide service to those in need of:

- marital counselling
- individual counselling to adults and adolescents
- parent-child relationship counselling

To identify unmet needs in the community and accordingly innovate appropriate programmes.

The service extends to persons of other faiths and to those of no religious affiliations.

**354 Midland Avenue,
Midland
526-9397**