

# Plow drivers tell their side



Ron Connor has been driving snowplows for 24 years and says the job has its moments. "When you see a car coming at you sideways, you wonder what's going to happen next," he says drily.

By Annet Lamure  
STOUFFVILLE — There's no doubt about it, most people have a very low opinion of snowplows. They consider them lumbering nuisances that hold up traffic, decapitate mailboxes, and gleefully fill in freshly shovelled driveways. Some even go so far as to accuse them of deliberately crushing children's sleds.

No wonder shaking a fist at the snowplow is a popular winter sport. However, Ron Connor, who has been driving a plow for almost a quarter of a century, feels that snow removal crews are unjustly maligned.

"We try not to fill in driveways," explained Ron, a husky man with a weatherbeaten complexion, "but it often can't be helped." Connor works with the Department of Transport out of the Stouffville yard and along with 23 others is responsible for 36 miles of provincial road.

"A lot of people shake their fists at me," he admitted with a rueful grin, but they don't realize that I also have to clear out my own driveway after the plow goes by. "I know it's sort of frustrating if you've just shovelled it out."

He also laid to rest the myth that snowplow operators take a fiendish delight in knocking mailboxes off their posts. "We manage to miss most of them, but sometimes heavy snow coming off the blade flips the box," he explained. Some also fall victim to the plow when they are hidden in a snowbank. "We can't remember

every location," Ron said reasonably. He would like to see individual boxes abolished and drop boxes, spaced one mile apart, put in their place. This would also reduce the risk of accidents when the plow driver suddenly has to swing out into the road to avoid knocking over a box.

Driving a plow is a demanding, two people job, and Ron says that a good wing man is essential. Each truck is equipped with a blade in front and a wing at the side to clear the shoulder. The wingman controls both blades. "It takes two pairs of eyes," explained Connor, who is partnered by George Dicks on the wing. Both men say that they have had their share of near misses, although they have never actually hit a car. "Some of the

things you see pretty well make your hair stand up straight," said Ron. He's not worried about driving his own truck, which, well ballasted with gravel is very stable, but passing cars have given him some uneasy moments.

When you see a car coming at you sideways, you wonder what's going to happen next," he grinned.

Ron's biggest worry, though, is what he can't see and he fears whiteouts more than icy roads. "I'm always afraid of hitting someone that's standing behind their car," he confessed. Stalled cars in general, of course, also create quite a few headaches. Often it's difficult to skirt the vehicle, and, since people usually take their keys with them, they're also hard to move.

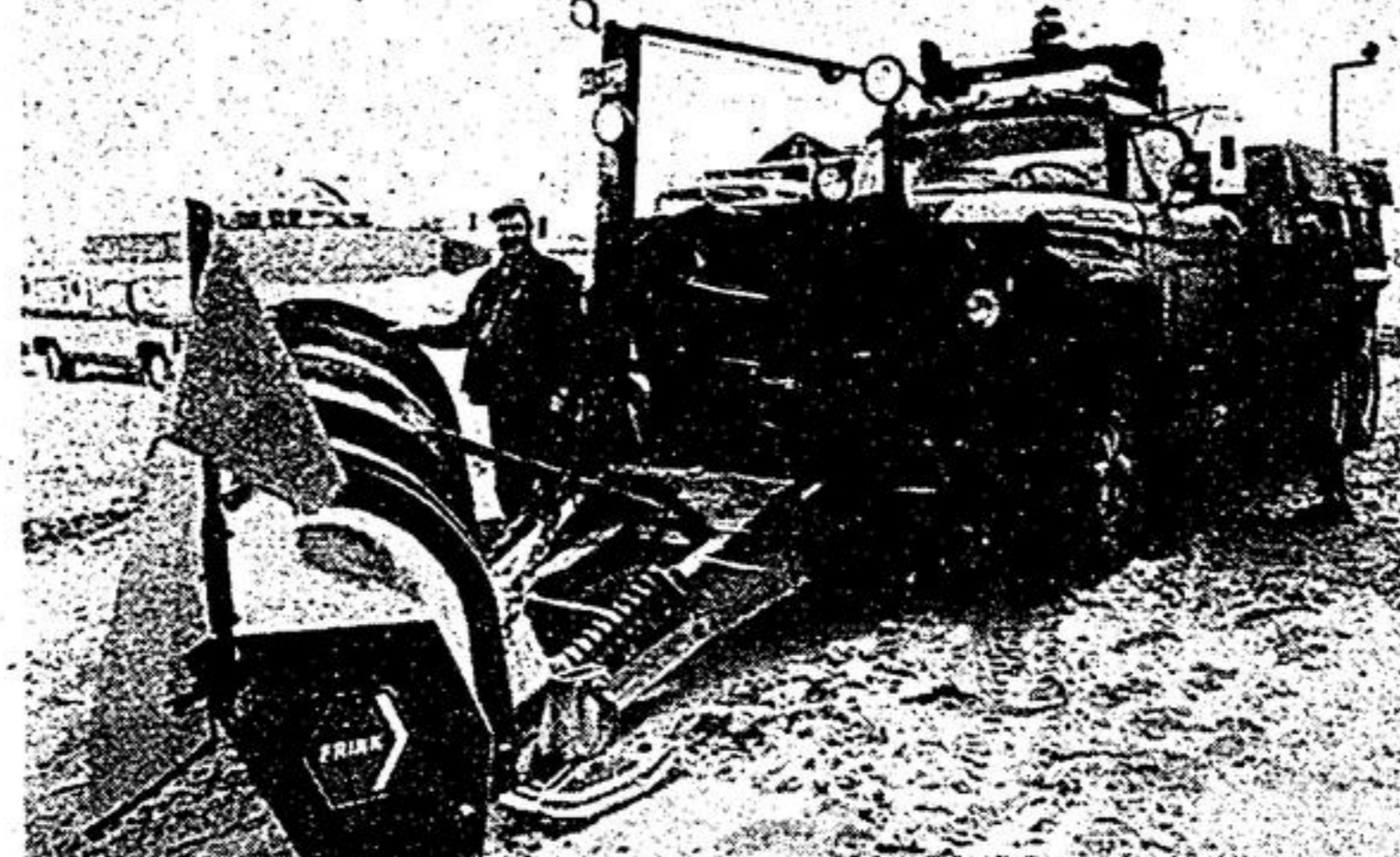
Harold Thorn, Stouffville patrol supervisor, said that the new cars with their locking steering columns, are the worst, but there is really no solution to the problem since he wouldn't want to recommend leaving a car unlocked either.

People also become very resentful when snowplow drivers refuse to pull them out of snowbanks. "We try to help when we can, but we're not allowed to pull out cars," explained the men. Most of the drivers have rescued motorists in one kind of trouble or another and Thorn remembers once taking a woman to hospital to have her baby. "We plowed ahead of her all the way," he recalled with a smile.

The one thing that never ceases to amaze the plow drivers is the inadequate way that people dress. "We've seen them on the highway of a night, the women in short skirts the men in little suit jackets — they look nice but they're pretty, near froze to death," laughed Ron, shaking his head in wonder.

Snowplow drivers dress warmly to a man. They also feel great concern for the motoring public. "Our job is to make the roads as safe as possible," said Ron matter-of-factly.

So the next time a plow dumps a load of snow in your drive, don't shake your fist — give Ron and the boys a friendly wave instead. Remember, there'd be no sense in shovelling out the drive if the roads weren't plowed.



Road crews have more than had their hands full this winter, and the boys working out of the Ont. Dept. of Transport depot in Stouffville are no exception. Getting ready to "wing back" the shoulders on Hwy. 48 are George Dicks and Ron Connor.

## Science winners at Ballantrae

Ballantrae public school held an inter-school science fair last week. Winners included: primary division — Kevin Stem, first; Steven Morrison, second; Henry Dervaric, third.

Junior division — Christine Graham and Shannon Muraghan, first; Ann Carter, second; Debbie Stem, Ando and Linda Stafford and Michael Von Zuben tied for third.

Intermediate division — Mark Kerr, first; Christine Green, second; John Paterson, third; Sara Mosley and Maggie Van Vliet, fourth; and Suzanne Morrison fifth.

Top finishers in each division will be involved in area and regional science fairs in the future.

INTRODUCING **BRENDA WALLACE** OUR NEW HAIRSTYLIST

Brenda is a professional hair stylist with many years of experience and we warmly welcome you to meet her at our Salon.

Show your best features with a hairstyle that's made to compliment you. Our experts know how to do it! Come See!

**Linda's Hairstylist**  
Specializing in all Beauty Care  
72 Tenth Line N., Stouffville  
For your Appointment call  
640-2653

## Police reports

### Car, bus collision

A Stouffville man has been charged with careless driving after a car - GO Bus accident at Hwy. No. 7 and Bayview Ave. Thornhill, Feb. 2, which sent seven persons to hospital and caused an estimated \$32,000 damage to the vehicles.

OPP Constable Bill Workman said the accident occurred at 1:40

p.m. last Thursday when the GO Bus, driven southbound on Bayview Avenue by Raymond L. Beale, 57 of 139 Lundy's Lane Newmarket, was struck by an eastbound station wagon driven by Ludwig Schank, R. R. 3, Stouffville.

Both drivers and five bus passengers were taken to York Central

Hospital where all except one were treated and released. Mrs. Corinne Lucas, 59, of 396 Marybay Cr., Richmond Hill was admitted with major injuries. Mr. Schank's car was a total write-off, and damage to the bus was estimated at about \$30,000.

A Richmond Hill youth has been charged with several offences including theft under \$200, following an offense at Stouffville several months ago. On October 3 a telephone at Stouffville C.N.R. station was torn from the wall by youths who took it to the rear of the building and removed \$86.00 in change from it.

Last Friday, February 3, Wayne Ross Baker, 17, 395 Crosby Avenue, Richmond Hill gave himself up to police at 19 Division and was held in custody and taken to Newmarket Provincial Court.

He is charged with false pretense under \$200, theft under \$200, and failing to appear. Police indicate he has been in custody at North Bay on other matters since the Stouffville offense.

## Library open in Markham

MARKHAM — Markham Centennial Library re-opened for business yesterday, Wednesday morning after being closed last week when the leaking roof was judged not structurally sound.

Structural engineers called in by the Town of Markham evaluated the building and determined that the roof on the 10-year-old building is sound.

Accordingly the building has been re-opened.

The roof is presently not leaking but it is expected to drip again the next time there is a thaw.

The leaks in the roof cannot be repaired at present because of the amount of ice on the flat-roofed library.

The building has been closed for nearly two weeks, since Friday, Jan. 27. It was believed at the time of closing that the wooden beams supporting the roof would have to be reinforced with steel.

## Durham board does check road conditions

UXBRIDGE — There is a liaison between the Uxbridge Roads Department and the Board of Education on winter road conditions, according to councillor John Paxton.

At the February 2nd meeting, Mr. Paxton noted that the board of

education checks with the department in an attempt to determine winter road conditions. Residents, particularly from Goodwood had complained to council about the number of times school buses had not run even though the roads seemed clear.

Mr. Paxton commented that Bill Gilfillan, transportation supervisor for the Durham Board, had called Uxbridge numerous times to check the roads.

"They look at us as an information service, but they do not base their decisions to stop the buses solely on what the road department says, we are not their sole prerequisite for the buses running or not," Mr. Paxton said.

## Residents oppose industrial site

CLAREMONT — Concern over the location of a proposed industrial site has forced designers of this hamlet's secondary plan to consider moving or abandoning it.

The concern was expressed at a public meeting of 50 Claremont residents, a vast majority of whom voted in favour of eliminating commercial or industrial development at the

southern entrance. Part of their objections were over traffic problems, increased competition to business in the town, core and possible unsightly development should the area be zoned industrial.

The proposed site is on four acres of vacant land at the intersection of Old Brock Rd. and the town bypass.

## WHO NEEDS IT?

You need it. Any adult who is earning a salary can benefit from a Guaranty Trust Retirement Savings Plan. Call us and we'll explain the details.



81 Main Street W.  
640-4000

## WoodMaster Stoves

Woodmaster stoves are built with one purpose in mind; to heat your home as cheaply and efficiently as possible. They are all hand made in Canada and backed with a 10 year warranty.

Our stoves are built to be energy savers. They are made from 1/2" and 1/4" steel plate. All the seams are carefully welded together both inside and outside to make the burning chamber air tight. This unique construction allows wood to burn longer and more efficiently than many imitation stoves.

The stoves are easily installed and adaptable to any home or cottage. All our stoves are welded COMPLETELY AIRTIGHT



"THE ENERGY SAVERS" Save You Money

MODEL	FIRE BOX, LOG	WEIGHT	HEIGHT TO TOP PLATE	OVERALL LENGTH	WIDTH	RECOMMENDED HEATING AREA	FLUE SIZE
COTTAGE MODEL	18" x 18"	240 lbs	28 1/2"	37"	15 1/2"	1000-1200	8" x 8"
HOUSE HEATER	24" x 24"	420 lbs	31 1/2"	38"	20"	1500-2000	8" x 8"
FIREPLACE MODEL	27" x 27"	450 lbs	31 1/2"	38"	20"	2000-2500	8" x 8"

Dealer Inquiries Welcome

90 Melford Dr.  
Unit 19 Scarborough

292-0862

# GRAND OPENING

VALENTINE'S DAY FEB. 14th

## PLUM HOLLOW GARDEN CENTRE

TO SERVE YOU IN SUPPLY & MAINTAINING YOUR GREEN ENVIRONMENT

Valentine SPECIAL AZALEAS \$9.99

Free Carnation to the First 50 Ladies. Buy a Pot - Get a Plant 1/2 Price!

Wide Selection of Potted Plants on Special

HOURS  
WED. THURS. FRI. 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.  
SATURDAY 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
SUNDAY 12 NOON - 4 p.m.

Located... Hwy. 47 (JUST NORTH OF SALES BARN) Stouffville 294-6554

**TOWNE Cinema**

LAST TIMES TONIGHT: 8:00 P.M. "HEROES" ADULT ENT.

Starts Friday!  
Two Shows Nightly incl. Sunday 7-9 p.m.  
Matinee Sat. & Sun. 1:30-3:30.

## Across The Great Divide