



The Tribune

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Established 1888
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Published every Thursday at 54 Main St., Stouffville, Ont. Tel. 640-2101; Toronto phone 361-1680. Single copies 20 c, subscriptions \$10.00 per year in Canada, \$26.00 elsewhere. Member of Canadian Community Newspapers Association and Ontario Weekly Newspapers Association. Second class mail registration number 0396.

The Tribune is one of the Inland Publishing Co. Limited group of suburban newspapers, which includes the Ajax/Whitby/Pickering News Advertiser, Brampton Guardian, Burlington Post, Etobicoke Gazette, Markham Economist and Sun, Newmarket/Aurora Era, Oakville Beaver, Oshawa This Week, Mississauga News, Oshawa This Weekend, Acton Free Press, Milton Canadian Champion and The Georgetown Independent.

640-2100



361-1680

Editorials

Snowmobiles can be safe

A snowmobile club has been organized in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

This is good news. It may lessen some of the problems that owners and non-owners have experienced in this area over the past two seasons.

Because of their versatility and noise, a black mark was registered against these machines and their operators from the day they were introduced. In some instances, the criticism was deserved; in others, it was not.

To shed a little favorable light on this new form of winter recreation, readers are advised of the following facts.

Since 1975, participation in the sport of snowmobiling has increased 25 per cent in Canada and the United States. Yet, at the same time, snowmobile-related fatalities have decreased by 37 per cent. The reduction in accidents and the improved safety record are due to: (1). Better educated riders. (2). More trails and (3). Technical advancements in increasing the safety of the machines.

In the most recent consumer product hazard listing produced by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, the snowmobile is listed at No. 86. The highest is cycling; baseball, No. 4; basketball, No. 12; snow-skiing, No. 41; ice-skating, No. 51; tennis and badminton, No. 61 and golf, No. 72.

The Province of Ontario is presently offering snowmobile operator safety training programs. These include both classroom and field instruction. Subjects covered are maintenance and machine operation, proper riding positions, proper clothing, terrain and weather conditions, environmental awareness as well as skill, courtesy, judgement and common sense.

Trails are the key to increased safety in the sport. Without these, the hazard risk is great due to hidden objects such as cable and guy wires, fences, unsafe ice, rocks, stumps and low-hanging branches.

Join the Whitchurch-Stouffville Snowmobile Club this winter and increase the chance of being around next spring.

A good motto-buyer beware

Many companies and organizations send unsolicited goods through the mail this time of year. They ask you to send money to pay for the items.

If you didn't order them, you are not obligated to pay for them. You may keep them; destroy them or send them back at the sender's expense.

Also, be wary of fund-raising schemes. At this time of year, unethical operators who see a quick buck to be made, compete with honest fund-raisers for the dollars of a generous public. Most pleas for money are authentic, but to be sure that your donation goes to the needy, keep the following points in mind.

(1). Be wary of telephone solicitations.

(2). Make sure you understand the nature of the donation request. (3). Ask how they obtained your name. (4). Ask for the name of the person calling and the full name and address of his or her employer, including the telephone number. (5). When in doubt, request the solicitation be made in writing. (6). Check out the company's reputation with the Better Business Bureau.

For further information on refunds and exchanges; mail-order buying; fund-raising schemes and consumer complaints, the place to write is Consumer Information Centre, Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations, 555 Yonge Street, Toronto (M7A 2H6).



From THE TRIBUNE staff to all our readers and advertisers, a VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS and a HAPPY NEW YEAR. Front to back- Charles Nolan, Jim Thomas, Barre Beacock, Jim Holt, Mary Jane Heyworth, Joan Marshman, Eileen Glover, Ed Schroeter, Doreen Deacon, Art Dixon and Lois Wideman.

Roaming Around



An eleventh hour letter to Santa

By Jim Thomas

Only two more shopping days til you know what I can't believe it. Out of fifty-two weeks, it all comes down to a Friday and Saturday. Would that I could sit back and wish gifts to folks rather than travel from store from store to store looking for things I know I'll never find.

At this late stage, I guess I'll just sit down with my Mary-Lynn and write a letter to Santa. So here goes.

Dear Santa Claus: Please bring:

Mayor Eldred King, a gold lame suit with matching crown, a silk tie, satin socks and diamond-studded shoes.

Ex-Mayor Gordon Ratcliff, a pair of chore gloves, a three-legged milk stool and a solid oak-handled pitchfork.

Hydro Chairman Ken Laushway, a forty foot stepladder and a pocketful of 500 watt bulbs.

Councillor Bill McNailey, a guest pass to the Steerburger Disco on Main Street, and to Councillor Jim Doble, a pair of size 10 disco dancing shoes.

Councillor Bill Kamps, a crate of White Owl cigars.

Councillor Becky Wedley, a portable smoke detector.

Fire Chief Walter Smith, a red roof light and a siren for his blue welder's truck.

Police Chief Bruce Crawford, a signed agreement from every supermarket manager in York Region sanctioning a moratorium on egg sales the day before Hallowe'en Night.

Mayor Gary Herrema of Uxbridge, a pet rock.

Councillor John Paxton of Uxbridge, a pet rock eater.

Councillor Jim Sanders of Stouffville, a model aeroplane kit and ten thousand garbage bags.

Rev. Jim Carder, Stouffville United Church, a fur-lined clerical collar to go with his warm handshake.

Trustee Harry Bowes, a portable slide rule to better calculate the Town's shifting school population.

Postmaster Gary Fisher, an automatic envelope-sealer and stamp-licker.

Summitview Principal Lorne B roadway, a gift certificate from the New Image Unisex Hairstyling Studio on Main Street.

Chiropractor Dr. Jerome DeLaurier,

signed approval from the Town to operate Whitchurch-Stouffville's first (for men only) massage parlor.

Teacher Ruth Herbert, a certificate of endorsement from Dr. Bette Stephenson, Ministry of Education.

Arena Manager Don Lewis, a pair of roller skates for summer use only.

Stouffville dentist, Dr. D.C. Morgan, a freezing device that administers a kick in the rear instead of a shot in the mouth.

Keith Acton, a 1979-80 contract with the Montreal Canadiens.

M.P. Sinclair Stevens, a stocking filled with nuts from Finance Minister Jean Chretien.

Regional Councillor Ron Moran, an illuminated sign reading Future Mayor of Dickson's Hill.

For my wife, an automatic dishwasher; an automatic clothes washer and six automatic hand-washers.

For "Prince", the Barker encyclopaedia on canine etiquette, volumes 1, 2 and 3.

And for me, a typewriter that can spell Merry Christmas.

Window on Wildlife



A boy's Christmas wish comes true

By Art Briggs-Jude

The shopping trip had been an exercise in frustration. Not only did the prices seem higher this year, any items they did decide on were either the wrong color or a size too small. On top of this, the plaza was packed with people and little Judy had a runny nose making her unusually irritable. Dragging her four year old daughter through those throngs of Christmas shoppers was starting to wear down the patience of mild mannered Mary Sneddon. And adding to the deterioration of everyone's yuletide feelings, was young Jimmie's constant tirade about wanting to go to the pet shop. In fact his Christmas wish for a pet had become almost an obsession. So much so that he had narrowed it down to a puppy or a kitten. "Something he could call by name, and that could run around, not like a canary or a hamster, or a stupid goldfish".

Hardly had the lad's words died in the bustling confusion, when his father's voice curtly announced to all within hearing, "That's it, we're going home". And while Mary momentarily objected, and little Judy whimpered slightly, Jimmie mumbled and grumbled his disapproval of leaving.

They stepped through the double set of glass doors, into the full force of a sleet-laden north wind. The earlier rain now coated every object with a sheet of ice. Pat and Mary hustled their children across the parking lot, slipping and sliding to the station wagon. Once underway, the main road itself was not too bad. The sand crews had been out early it seemed and prevented a major problem. And now as Pat Sneddon eased the vehicle along the 5 mile route towards home, his concern wavered between the icy pavement and the ice-covered trees and wires. "Hate to have to

climb a pole in this weather", Pat mused, as they watched a glistening coated cable spark against a lower strand. "Wow", said Jimmie, as a cluster of small twigs and icicles spattered on the hood and windshield.

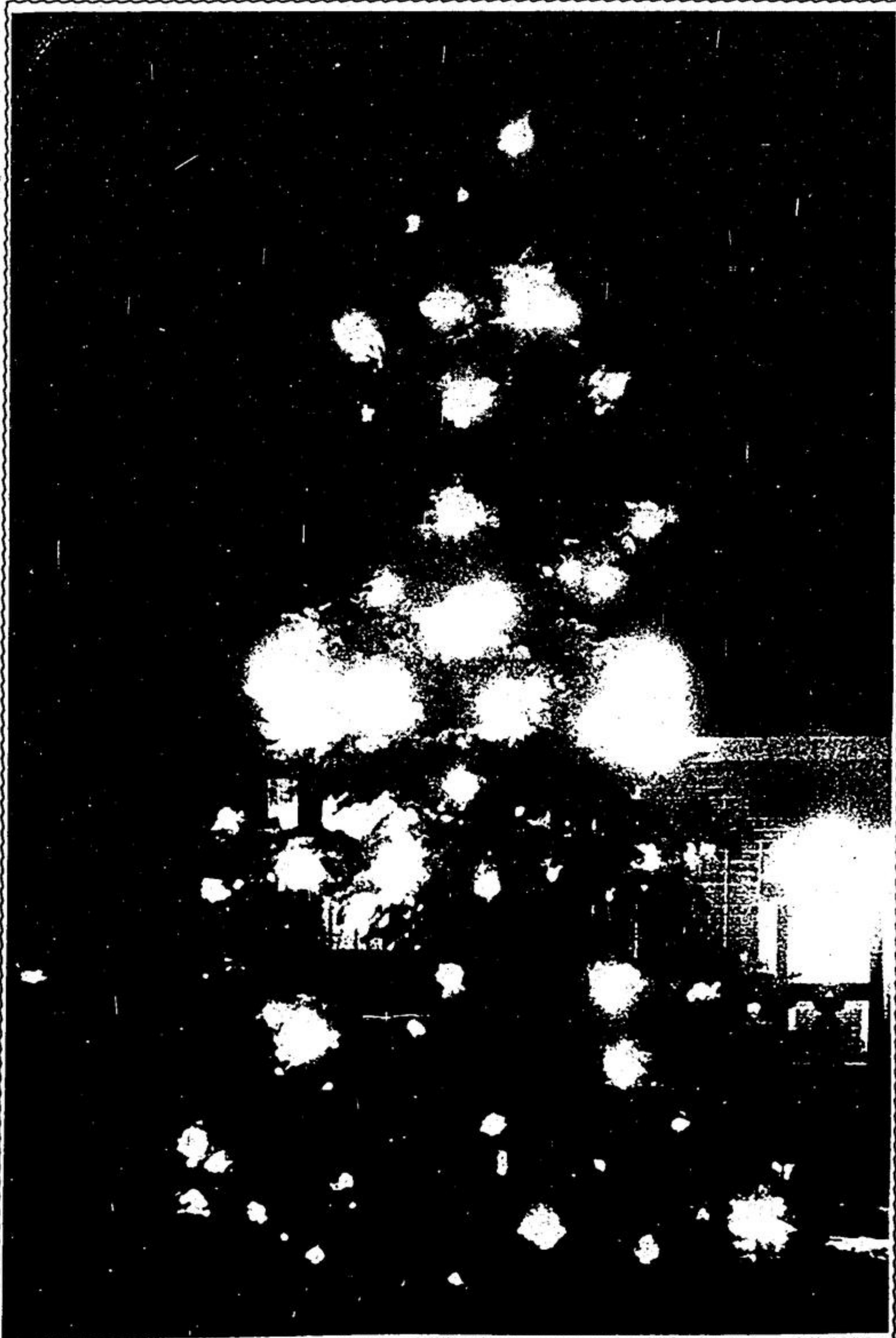
At that moment Mary had almost begun to think her son had put away the pet idea at least temporarily. But Jimmie started all over again, "I'll keep it outside in a little house we'll make, and it can run around our backyard, so then why can't I have a pet animal, like Freddie Johnson's cat, or Spencers' dog down the street"? "You know you can't have an animal with fur because of your allergy", said his mother, "So why can't you go along with what's best for you"? "Listen Jimmie", Pat added, "If you don't forget that idea for a while, I'm going to put a pet rock on your behind, do you hear me"? "Yes" came back the meek little answer.

For the next little while, no one spoke. Then as if to ease the tension a bit, Mary mentioned how beautiful the landscape looked with its sparkling coat. In fact the sky had lifted somewhat and now only the wind was cause for concern. They were just turning the corner by a hardwood bush, when a large rotted limb, heavily-laden with ice, crashed down on the roadway ahead, narrowly missing the car. Pat managed to avoid a collision with the largest sections, but felt his tires bump against several of the smaller pieces. He pulled over and stopped the car, unsnapped his seat belt and opened the door. In a moment he was clearing the broken limbs off the road.

As he reached to pick up a short hollow stub, his hand almost touched the still form of a gray squirrel still clinging stubbornly to its

cavity nest. What to do now? Carefully he picked up the broken log with its occupant, and placed it in a large box in the back of the station wagon. "What are you going to do with it?" his wife asked, as he got behind the wheel again. By this time though, Jimmie was furnishing all the answers, "We're going to put it in our yard and feed it and look after it and name it and, we're going to keep it, aren't we Dad?" "Just a minute son," his father interrupted, "I'm not sure if it will even be alive when we get home. It's had a bad fall. Maybe it's only stunned, but it could be hurt inside." "We'll have to wait and see," he added.

Later, in the new subdivision whose trees had all been cleared during construction, Pat climbed the clothes line pole in that wild wind. He fastened the log house up a safe distance from the ground with the dazed squirrel still inside the warm leaf lining. And the bushy-tailed creature did recover and accepted its new surroundings and the handouts that went with them. It went to Mary's feeder, where nothing had ever come before, and entertained the family with its antics. When her mother remarked it sure knew how to fill its chops, little Judy picked up the word, and they named it "CHOPS" after that. Pat just smiled and crumpled up his Christmas list and tossed it in the fireplace. Jimmie would have his nose pressed against the window on Christmas morning watching old Chops pick up the peanuts he'd put out or scurrying across the porch with some acorns from the outside wreath he'd made at school. And both parents knew deep down inside that sometimes in such simple things of life, was Christmas really made.



The tree that "came alive" at Christmas

An evergreen tree on the front lawn at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Beer, 308 Rupert Avenue, Stouffville, has "come

alive" this Christmas. The 35 foot high beauty is adorned with 100 lights of various colors. Jim Thomas