

Must 'save planet' veteran pilot urges

By Chris Shanahan
CLAREMONT — Most people know Michael Robertson as the high-flying head of a Claremont-based ultralight aircraft operation. But there's another side to the veteran pilot, a side that we're likely to see and hear more of in the near future. Robertson is concerned about the general state of affairs today, and says it's about time "all of us start putting some energy into saving the planet."

"I think it's important for us to think of consciousness on a global level where we concentrate on working together rather than competitively," the 42-year-old pilot adds. "And we have to fly this space ship earth!"

He's encouraged by recent famine relief efforts in Africa and is also pleased that "a lot of people are coming out of the closet" with respect to their particular philosophies and perspectives.

There's an on-going "awareness revolution" in modern society, according to Robertson, who feels it's important to "link energies to try and help on both a local and an international level."

"I think we have to concentrate on a spiritual plane," he says, adding "in flying we try to do these things ahead of time so they don't happen...it would be nice if we could do that on a global scale."

New focus
 Robertson, who readily admits the business aspect of flying isn't his strength, will now focus more attention on promotional and public aspects of the ultralight world.

He wants to harness some of the power of modern-day communications, including the medium of television. One upcoming project is a T.V. program that'll hopefully boost the sport, but at the same time use flying as a vehicle to broadcast the consciousness-raising ideas Robertson views as crucial to the planet's continued existence.

Champ
 A former world kite flying champion back in the 1960s, Robertson helped pioneer "gull wing" gliding in North America and followed this up with worldwide travel during an active competitive career. This included many years with the "Aquarama" show as a featured attraction on the waterfront during the Canadian National Exhibition.

Teaching
 But as family commitments grew — he and wife Janet now have three daughters, Deena,

four, Jessica, eight, and Shauna, 10 — Robertson gradually began moving into the instructional side of the field.

This switch to teaching was prompted partly by the "haphazard" way he had to earn his own flying wings. He claims major strides have been made in air safety, despite frequent negative media reports.

Safety
 Initially, he concentrated on teaching hang gliding through a company formed about 15 years ago, High Perspectives Inc. A sister operation, Northern Micro-lites, was created nearly four years ago to handle a participation boom sparked by the affordable and exhilarating phenomenon of micro-light aircraft.

Public interest in microlights peaked around 1983, then took a nose-dive last year, according to Robertson.

"A lot of it was due to that sensationalistic journalism," he says in reference to press stories that portrayed it as an extremely dangerous pastime.

In fact, Robertson maintains Northern has never had any flight mishaps resulting in serious injury.

Meditation
 Relaxation training and a limited introduction to meditation comprise part of the flying course offered at the school's headquarters, located on Durham Regional Road 5, west of Claremont.

"Flying is a form of relaxation...and you fly better if you're relaxed," he explains.

In a continuation of his awareness training, Robertson hopes to devote more time to his studies with the Dharma Society of Canada, under guru/teacher Namgal Rinpoche.

Born and raised in the Hamilton area, Robertson now resides with his family at R.R. 2, Claremont.

His business is split equally among teaching, sales and a mixed bag of related services.



Michael Robertson

Search on for top citizen

UXBRIDGE TWP. — The search is on for Uxbridge Township's 1985 'Citizen of the Year'.

Nominations are being received by TWP. Clerk Walters Taylor, P.O. Box 190, Uxbridge, Ont. L0C 1K0.

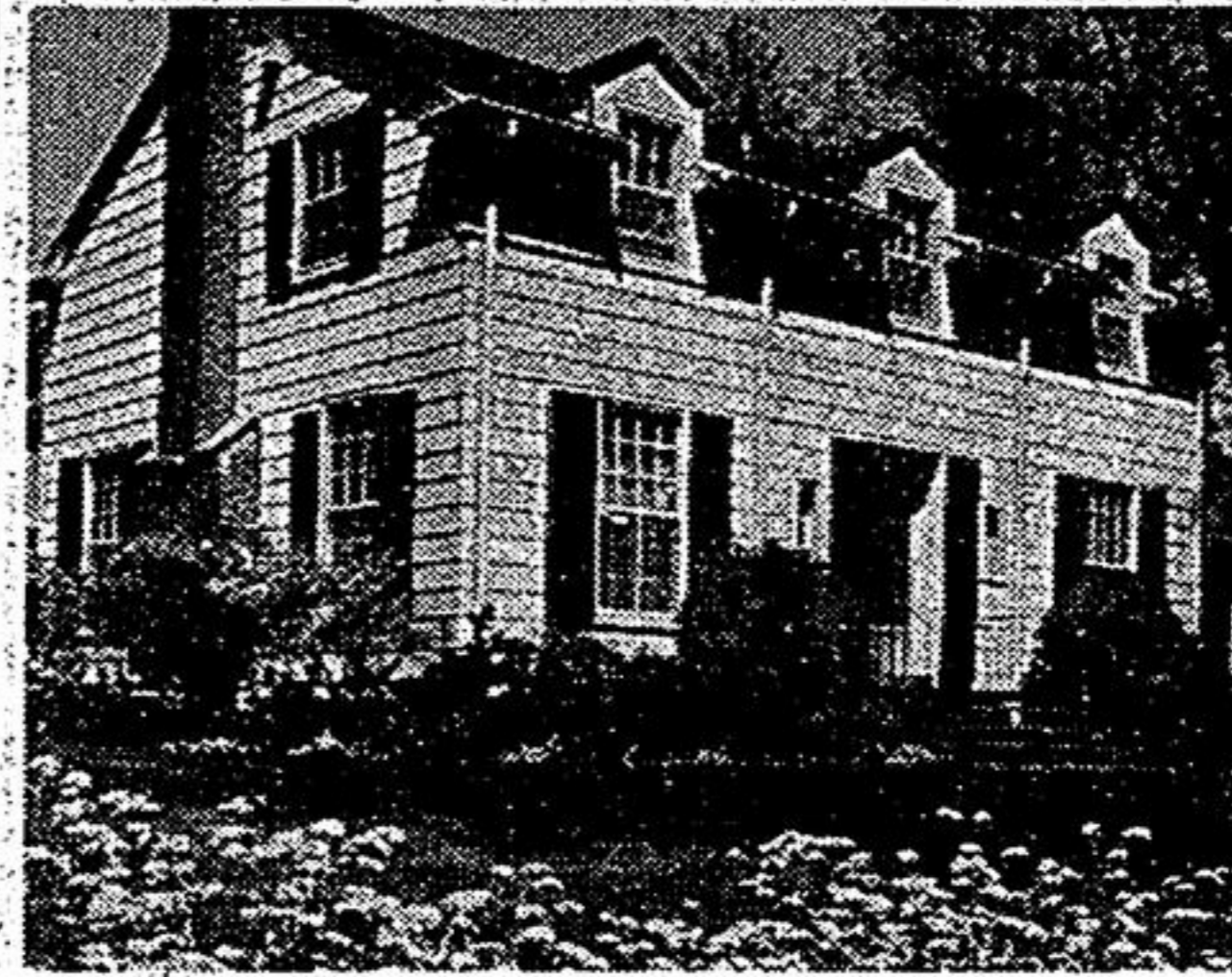
To be eligible, a person must be a permanent resident who has lived in the Twp. of Uxbridge for a minimum of one year.

Nominations should be submitted in writing with reasons outlined, no later than Friday, May 31.

Uxbridge's outstanding citizen will be recognized during the opening ceremonies of Spring Water Days, June 20.

In 1984, 'Citizen of the Year' honours were shared by Alma P. Soper and Dr. J. Russell St. John.

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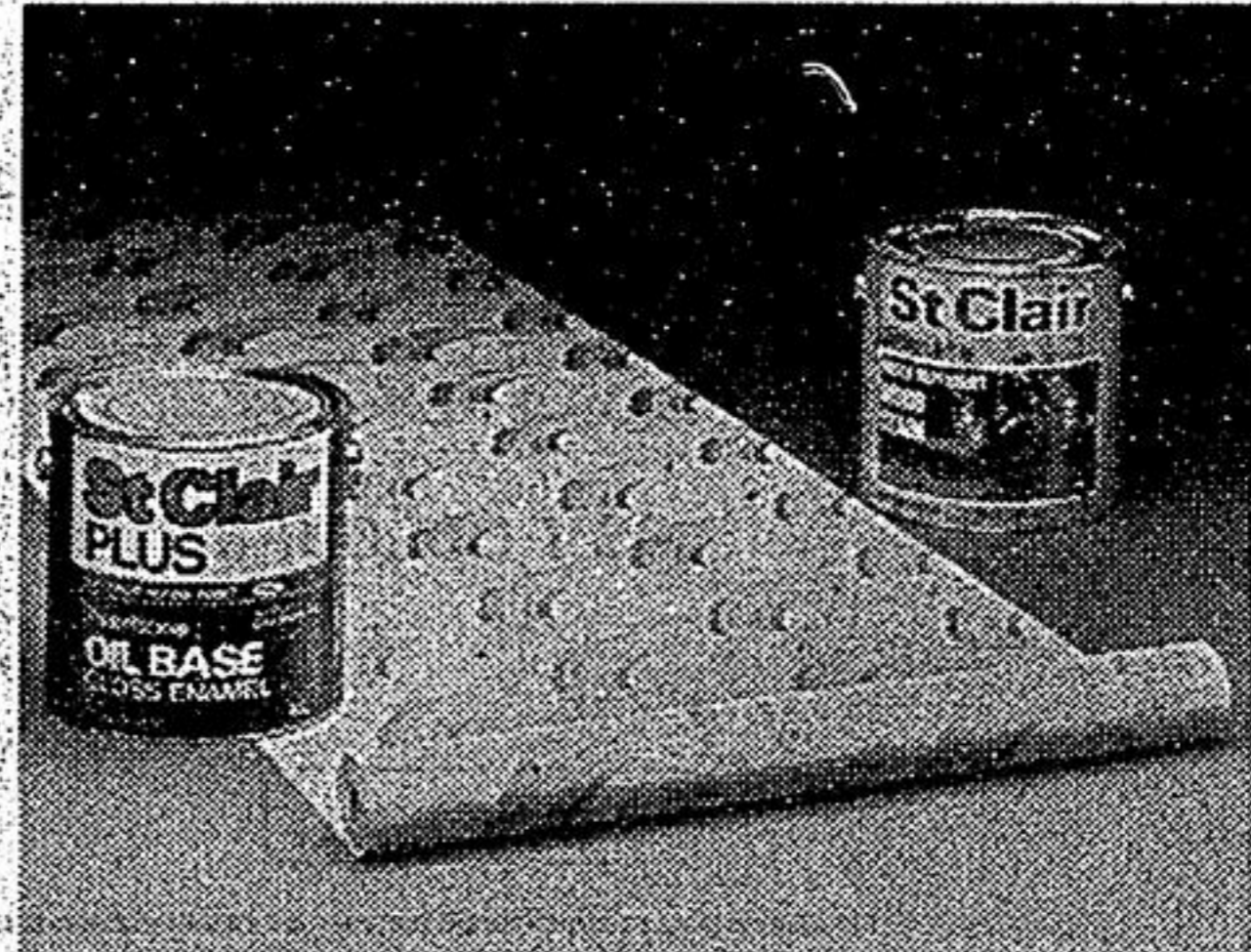
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