

Town artist to be Gallery guest

By JIM THOMAS
STOUFFVILLE — The painting skills of Stouffville's Jim Bessey need no exaggerated adulation before fine art critics. The beauty speaks for itself.

There may be those, however, who haven't yet had an opportunity to fully appreciate Mr Bessey's accomplishments with palette and brush.

In Whitchurch-Stouffville, this obscurity will end with the presentation of an exhibit in Latcham Gallery of the

Town's Public Library. The official opening is Thurs., Sept. 11 at 8 p.m. Mr Bessey will be present.

Jim and June Bessey moved to 235 Booth Drive, Stouffville, six years ago. They enjoy the town with its accessibility to farming country. "We feel right at home here," Jim says.

It was in 1972 that Mr Bessey began painting full-time. His works, recognized around the world, hold positions of prominence in Buckingham Palace and other distinctive centres.

He's been formally introduced to Queen Elizabeth; Prince Philip and the Queen mother.

In all, Mr Bessey has completed between six and seven hundred pieces.

Prices range from \$800 to \$3,000.

Jim refers to his business as "a hobby that grew." "I decided to take the plunge," he says, recalling the year of '72, "it was like jumping into the freezing water—quite a shock."

Mr Bessey does all his

sketching on location. "I sit down by the side of the road, paint, and hope someone likes it," he explains. The finishing touches are applied in his upstairs studio.

Nature provides so many subjects, Jim says, "I'll never run out as long as I live."

He sketches wherever he goes. "Sometimes something grabs you," he notes.

"The Bessey Series" on cheques, is one of the most requested in Canada.

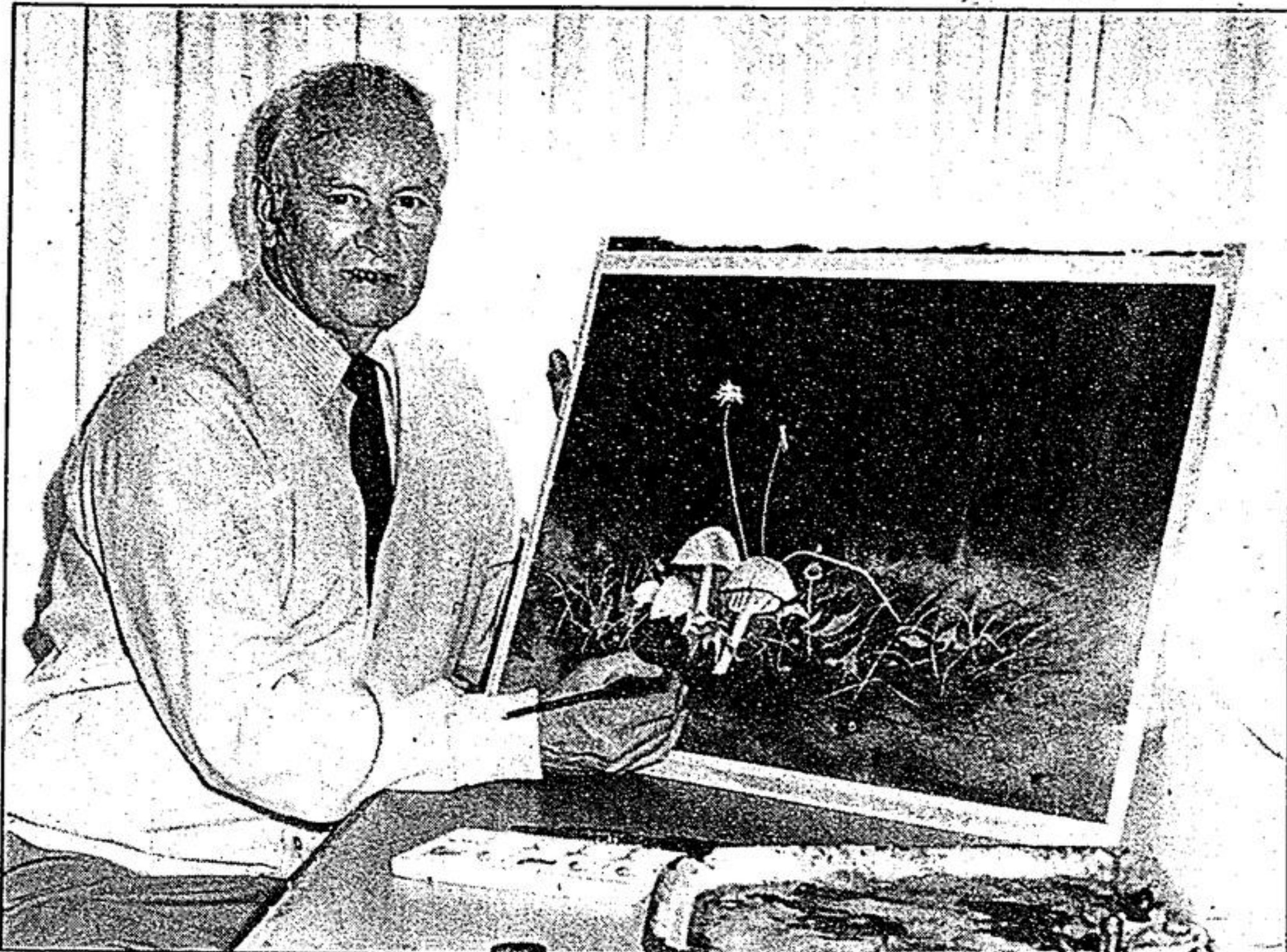
Jim Bessey doesn't live unto himself. He enjoys talking to people of all ages, particularly children and teens. "I want to pass on something of what I've been fortunate to gain over the years," he says.

Wife June, he admits, has been a great help.

They're both intensely interested in the work of The Society for Crippled Children and The Big Brothers.

Jim's also a strong supporter of Latcham Gallery and what it means to the community.

"I'm looking forward to the exhibit," he says—a first for Jim Bessey and a first for Whitchurch-Stouffville.



Stouffville artist, Jim Bessey of 135 Booth Drive, has been invited by Latcham Gallery to place some of his close to 700 paintings on display next month. Mr Bessey's watercolor landscapes hold places of prominence around the world including London's Buckingham Palace. —Jim Thomas

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