

Doug's life in the fast lane

By BRUCE STAPLEY

For Stouffville's Doug Marshman, the entrepreneur's first commandment — find a need and fill it — has been fulfilled.

The 29-year-old Linden Lane resident spent five years as store manager at the Stouffville Canadian Tire outlet. It was a job requiring both long hours and good customer relations skills.

So when he decided he had gone as far as he could there, he made the decision to capitalize on a perceived need in town.

"I'd been delivering packages for local businesses in my spare time, and running people to and from the airport for two years," he says. "I realized there was no one in Stouffville offering a same-day courier service, so I decided to set one up."

Since that first day last September, Doug's "Soaring Eagle Courier Service" has taken flight with the speed of the bird after which it was named. He now has two cars on the road on a full-time basis, with another man working part time. His main customer base is comprised of Stouffville area businesses, although he has cracked the Markham market.

He insists the business has grown on its own, using the word of mouth approach that does so much to keep overhead down.

"There's been no economical way for businesses in Stouffville to get packages to and from Toronto," he claims. "Before I came along, they were forced to use a taxi for same day service, and that can get expensive. For \$9 we can do the same job."

Doug prides himself on being dependable. He realizes his customers rely on him to get them out of time jams, again and again.

"My service gives them one more tool to use to keep them on top of things. For instance, a travel agency can be sure that their customers will have their

airline tickets when they have to get away at the last minute, when there is just not time for them to drive to Stouffville to pick them up themselves."

Doug runs his business from his 1986 Cutlass Cierra, where he spends his day fielding calls on his cellular phone, and doing his pickups and deliveries in an area stretching from Stouffville to Mississauga. He also covers areas east of town, including Uxbridge and surroundings.

He'll usually make about 30 calls a day in his own car, in addition to those made by his full time employee. He's at it six days a week, but claims he's able to restrict his driving hours to a fairly reasonable 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. routine.

"But the phone is always ringing at home," he claims. "We're picking up new customers every week as people find out about us."

Doug sees the market as being inexhaustible, and can realistically see the day coming when he will have five cars on the road.

"The Markham area is filled with businesses," he says. "And so many of them need a same-day courier service."

While most of his 'cargo' is in the form of envelopes and small packages, Doug's had some noteworthy exceptions.

"I've been sent to pick up hockey and concert tickets. I picked up live lobsters one day, and was sent to NHL headquarters once."

But none can compare with the time he went hustling into the United States Embassy for a pickup, only to be thrown up against the wall and frisked.

"They are a little jumpy, I guess," he offers.

A stop at the Australian Consulate resulted in his meeting David Suzuki.

Doug feels good about the fact he is offering a much needed service, that the 500 kilometres he's



On call

Courier service operator Doug Marshman is at the ready with his trusty car phone. The Stouffville resident began his courier business last year serving the arc around Metro Toronto. —Jim Thomas

driving a day are resulting in his customer's businesses running smoother.

"You feel good about yourself," he says. "It's very satisfying helping people, and they're very thankful."

And he maintains he's learned all there is to learn about beating traffic jams.

"There's ways around rush hour," he insists. "I get around amazingly fast. Knowing the city is the key. I won't even try to head

into Toronto in the morning until 10 or 10:30."

He admits he's totally dependent on his car, and if it breaks down on him, he's in trouble. But he has established a working relationship with a local mechanic who gives him priority in the event of trouble.

"My brake pad disintegrated one day," he recalls. "But we got it repaired on the spot, and I was back on the road by noon. I didn't end up missing any calls,

although I only made one run to the city instead of my usual two."

Doug claims his wife Bernadette is an essential part of the business. As well as working full time at a local travel agency, and tending to their three-year-old daughter Ashley, she acts as secretary, accountant, banker and all-round handy person.

For Doug Marshman, happiness is soaring like an eagle in the fast-moving world of courier services in Stouffville and Markham.

Have your say:

Are you looking forward to entering Grade 9 at Stouffville Dist. Secondary School in September?



MIKE YOUNTZ
Grade 8
Ballantrae P.S.

"Yes, I am looking forward to it. I like the fitness program there. It's the best in the area. I also like some of the teachers."



TIM McCAMMON
Grade 8
Orchard Park P.S.

"Yes, because I talked with my brother who goes to S.D.S.S. He says I'll have a lot of fun there. And the sports program sounds good."



IAN WICKSTEAD
Grade 8
Summitview P.S.

"I am looking forward to it because I'll get a good education."



JODY BOUND
Grade 8
Summitview P.S.

"Yes, because it has lots of school spirit, good looking girls, and it has a good reputation."