

Tom Craven's yard a hub of activity

By BRUCE STAPLEY
WHITCHURCH—If you should drive up Hwy 48 near the Bloomington Road some Saturday, don't be alarmed to see something resembling a space ship sparkling in the sun on Tom Craven's front lawn.

It's Tom's collection of 3,000 wheel covers. He leans one against the other, waiting for motorists to pick out what they want.

According to Tom, chances are good they'll find what they're after.

"We set them out about five weekends a year," he says. "It takes about four hours to put them all in place."

What motorists see is really only the tip of the iceberg. Tom's hobby involves close to 30 men, most of them employees of the Scarborough Works Department where Tom has been employed since 1955.

"The boys are constantly finding wheel covers on roadsides, in garbage and in ditches. They're all brought to my place where they're available to buy or trade," explains Tom.

Tom says most requests can be met.

The discs are set up in sections — everything from Hondas and Toyotas to Cadillacs and Rolls Royces.

"Whatever falls off, we have," he explains.

The rare ones, Tom keeps for himself, including one from a 1930 Ford and two made of brass.

"I won't part with them," he says, "but the rest are there for the taking at prices a fraction of what dealers ask."

Dented or damaged covers are free.

Tom claims he's always on the look out for those who try to sell him an expensive looking set at a ridiculously low price.

"I just send them on their way. I don't intend to get involved in anything questionable," he says.

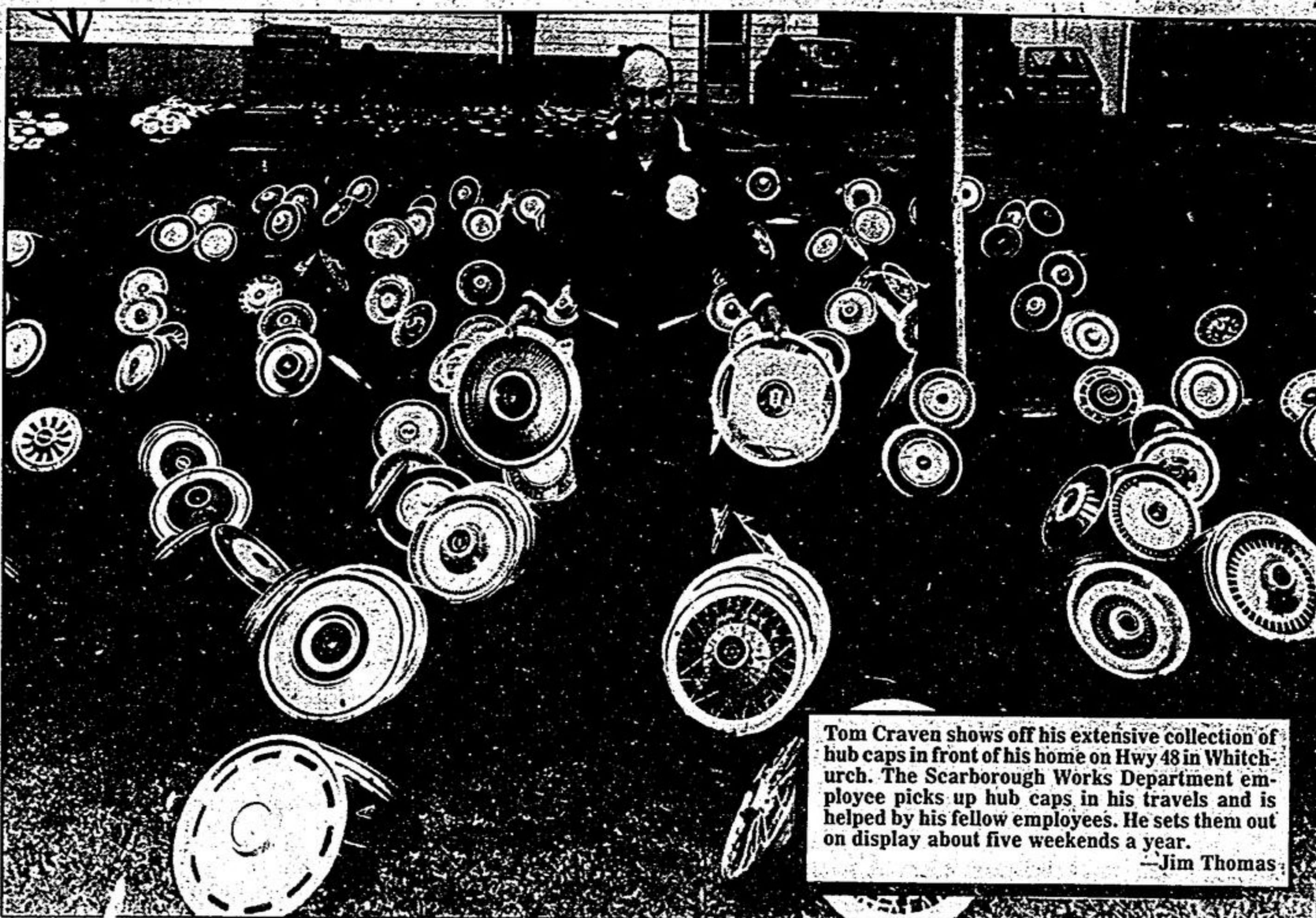
Tom's interest in collecting wheel covers began three years ago when he talked to a seller at a flea market. "He offered to buy a pair I'd found, but wouldn't pay enough for my trouble. From there on, I just kept on collecting."

Setting up and taking down the exhibit is Tom's responsibility with the help of his wife Betty and son. Often, as many as 10 people stop at a time. Occasionally, covers 'go missing' when he gets too busy.

Although it's really a hobby, Tom also considers it a service. Some caps would cost \$100 new," he claims.

Ever the humorist, when Tom is asked 'how's business he replies, "it's dropping off."

As long as wheel covers keep on 'dropping off', Tom will keep on lining them up on his front lawn so folks can snap them up for a song.



Tom Craven shows off his extensive collection of hub caps in front of his home on Hwy 48 in Whitchurch. The Scarborough Works Department employee picks up hub caps in his travels and is helped by his fellow employees. He sets them out on display about five weekends a year.
—Jim Thomas



Reel 'em in

With the trout season close at hand, Don Burd of Ringwood is busy preparing for an influx of fishing enthusiasts. Using a giant screening process, Don separates the big from the not-so-big and places the oversize fish in another pond. Every pay-to-fish participant is guaranteed a catch. As Don puts it, "you don't leave for home without one." The Don Burd Trout Pond is located on the east side of Hwy 48 a half-mile north of Ringwood.
—Jim Thomas

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