

Editor's Mail We care

Dear Editor:
Stouffville is truly a caring community. Despite the fact the town has grown and continues to grow, it hasn't lost its feeling, one person for another.
The 'Pray For Debra' sign on the Lloyd Britton property is a prime example.
On occasions, I've had strangers ask me: "What's it all about?" When I explain, they're amazed that a community could care so much.
This is what sets Stouffville apart from any towns I've ever known. I count it a privilege to live here.
(Mrs.) Ruth March,
Lori Avenue,
Stouffville

I agree

Dear Editor:
I wish to respond to your 'Roaming Around' column of Nov. 9 under the heading 'Best We Forget'.
Initially, I thought you were suggesting we should forget those people who paid the supreme sacrifice during two world wars. As I read on, I came to realize this was not the point you were making. Instead, you were suggesting the witch-hunt, as you describe it, for so-called war criminals should cease.
I fully agree. Like yourself, it disturbs me greatly when I hear how some poor soul, now a senior citizen, has been arrested for something that happened more than 40 years ago.
Angus Murphy,
Greenwood Road,
Stouffville



The Tribune
ESTABLISHED 1888

JAMES THOMAS Editor
PATRICIA PAPPAS Publisher
DEBORAH WELLS Advertising Manager
JENNIFER HUTT Distribution Manager

RETAIL ADVERTISING: Susan Berry (Manager Charles Canning)
REAL ESTATE CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING: Joan Marshman (Real Estate Manager Dorothy Young)
DISTRIBUTION: Sandy Kiteley, Arlene Maddock
BUSINESS OFFICE: Manager Chris Bertram, Doreen Deacon
NATIONAL SALES REPRESENTATIVE: Metroland Corporate Sales 493-1300

The Stouffville Tribune, published every Wednesday and Saturday at 54 Main St., Stouffville, Ont., is one of the Metroland Printing, Publishing & distributing group of suburban newspapers which includes: The Acton Free Press, Ajax Pictorial News Advertiser, Aurora Banner, Brampton Guardian, Burlington Post, Etobicoke Advertiser, Georgetown Independent, Markham Economist & Sun, Milton champion, Mississauga News, Newmarket Era, Oakville Beaver, Oshawa Weekly The Week, Richmond Hill Thornhill Vaughan, Liversid, Scarborough Mirror, Topic News Magazine, Willowdale Mirror, Metroland Printing, Publishing & Distributing is a division of Harcourt Enterprises Ltd. Single copies 50¢, subscriptions \$21.00 per year in Canada, \$25.00 elsewhere. Member of Canadian Community Newspaper Association, Ontario Weekly Newspaper Association, Ontario Press Council and Suburban Newspaper of America. Second class registration number 6896.

640-2100 649-2292

ROAMING AROUND A town institution

BY JIM THOMAS



I could set my watch by him. At 9:15 most mornings he'd come shuffling into the Office. No matter what the weather, hot or cold, rain or shine, Carl Watson seldom missed an appointment. The girls would look up from their desks to see him standing a few steps inside the door. He was an imposing figure, over six feet tall with a brown touque pulled over both ears and part way over both eyes. A brown wool scarf was usually wrapped loosely around his neck. If it was windy or wet, they'd try to discourage his volunteer courier duties. But Carl wasn't easily persuaded. "But I want to," he'd insist, "I like helping if I can." Diminishing Carl's kind of enthusiasm was difficult. Seldom did he leave empty-handed. But before he did, he'd always sit down and pass the time of day. "Anybody dead?" he'd ask. I'd read him my list of obituaries. He'd nod if he knew them or shake his head if he didn't. While his stay only lasted a few minutes, I often resented the intrusion, especially on Tuesdays when attempting to meet early deadlines. Much of the time while he talked, I was paying no attention; and he knew it. "You're too busy," he'd say, his voice tinged with resentment, "I hate being a nuisance." "It's okay, Carl," I'd reply, "but Tuesdays are a bit rough. Drop in tomorrow and we'll go have a coffee." He did, but I still couldn't find time to put my pen aside and talk. That's all he wanted — to talk. "Thursday should be better," I said. "We'll have that coffee sure." Unfortunately, for Carl and for me, Thursday's coffee time never came. He was struck down and critically injured that same morning while crossing Main Street near Summitview School. He died Friday in Toronto General Hospital. The news hit me hard, not so much his death. At age 75, I knew his chances of recovery were slim. It was the fact I'd put him off one day too long. Our tomorrow would never come. Carl had been afflicted with cerebral palsy since birth. I wasn't aware of this. I only knew he had a problem, mentally retarded. I think they called it 'back then'. We first met in the old Stouffville Station. I was about 12 at the time. Carl was close to 30. Even then, he wanted to talk. But I shied away, not knowing quite what to make of this 'stranger' in our midst. Little was I to know we'd become the closest of friends. In years since, Carl and I travelled hundreds of miles together. "Going anywhere to-morrow?" he'd ask each Friday, hoping to go along. If my jaunts were far enough to make it worthwhile, but not too far to tire him out, Carl was welcome. Our last 'trip' was Uxbridge Fair. How he loved it, striking up conversations with anyone who'd take the time to talk. He made one circuit of the site, then took a seat by the refreshment booth where everyone would, sooner or later, drop by. "I really enjoyed myself," he said later. "I want to go next year too — if you'll take me," he added. I promised I would, little knowing 'next year' for Carl and I would never come. We visited other places too — the Mennonite Festival at Black Creek Pioneer Village, plowing matches and Markham Fair. A piece of apple pie and a coffee usually concluded each event. Carl had friends; some he only thought were friends. He also had feelings. When a 'friendship' turned sour, it hurt him badly. He would talk about it for days, always reassuring himself with the statement: "You can't tell about people. Some are worse than kids." Then he'd add: "I still think I'm pretty well liked. I always assured him he was. For that's what he wanted most out of life, to be liked. Snide remarks, suspicious stares and looks of disgust cut him to the quick." But for those who got their kicks out of putting him down, there were folks ready and willing to pick him up. He talked about these people constantly — Marilyn (Woodrow), Tom (Winters), Helen (Taylor), Barbara (Spinney) and others. They were true friends. Whatever Carl's shortcomings, he never lacked for ambition. There wasn't a lazy bone in his body. He enjoyed accompanying local mail couriers on their routes. The Post Office was his 'second home'. As a walker, there were few in town his equal. He thought nothing of 'hoofing it' from Tenth Line South to the west end plaza, more than two miles both ways, sometimes in the pouring rain. He also enjoyed Saturday visits to the Sales Barn. Crossing Main Street was scary; for eye-witness pedestrians and drivers too. After several close calls, Carl began signalling his intentions by raising one arm. While beneficial in some respects, it also gave him a false sense of security and may have cost him his life. Eating and drinking were pleasant pastimes for Carl. A restaurant order often included doubles of everything along with a coffee, a hot chocolate and a pop. He usually ate alone. On one occasion, I invited him for New Year's dinner, an occasion he never forgot. Months later, he was still saying thanks. He was looking forward to Christmas. "Tom's taking me out," he would say, "I don't know where, but he's asked me to go." That outing too, like so many others, will never be realized. Carl always kept abreast of current events, both locally and world-wide. He continually quoted CFRB newscasters, addressing each on a first-name basis. "What's coming to town?" he'd ask, "any new building?" When I'd tell him about a new store or industry, his eyes would light up with interest. He enjoyed watching Stouffville grow. Attractions like the Trade Fair, the Strawberry Festival and the Markham Home Show were of great interest. He'd come away, his arms laden with literature. While Carl and I travelled many places, he never accompanied me to church. "Some day I will," was his stock reply to my request. Not until the funeral service, Saturday, did I realize that privilege had belonged to Pentecostal pastor, Rev. Craig Pitts. As strange as it may seem, I find it hard to comprehend a Stouffville without Carl Watson. He was as much a part of our town as Main Street, as much a part of The Tribune as my office chair, the same chair he occupied each morning. And I can still hear him ask: "Anybody dead?" Would that I could reply — no one, Carl, no one.

Editorials Remembrance Day a community event

On Sunday, Nov. 6, a Remembrance Day Service was held in the Stouffville Legion Hall.
On Friday, Nov. 11, a wreath-laying ceremony was held in the Town Square.
At precisely the same time as the latter programs, varying in format but focussing on the same theme, were taking place in each of our local elementary schools and the high school.
The time has come to co-ordinate these public assemblies, the young and the old, into a rallying force for peace.
Let's make Remembrance Day an all-encompassing community event.

Such a proposal's by no means new. Some towns, including Uxbridge, have been doing this for years. It's a service with numbers and with meaning. It's moving and impressive.

The correct location, we feel, is the cenotaph in the Town Square.

The time has come in this regard to change our way of doing things. Certainly, the tradition must remain but participation should be less fragmented. Let's all join in one common cause — remembrance of wars but, more importantly, preservation of peace.

One community, one purpose come Nov. 11, 1989.
Let's think about it, then plan for it.

Don't toy with lives

A pedestrian crosswalk protected by push-button lights is urgently required in the area of Summitview School. Parents have been requesting this safety device more than two years. As far as the Town's concerned, it's still under study.
And that's what tries the patience of people. Requests are studied and restudied before action results.
Several years ago, a 12-year-old girl was struck and killed at this location. On Thursday, a senior citizen was hit and died later in hospital.
These are cold, hard facts. Close calls don't count.
Rather than foist yet another responsibility on an already overworked engineering co-ordinator, Council would be well advised to make this decision on its own. Our advice is this:
Rather than wait endless months, maybe years for the reconstruction of Stouffer Streets North and South, establish the automated crosswalk at the intersection that now exists. If, and when the corner's reconstructed, the crossover can be changed.
We dislike toying with people's lives, particularly young people's lives.
Several hundred boys and girls cross Main Street daily, five days a week going to and from Summitview School. The risk of injury, even death is great. No Council wants a needless fatality on its conscience. So let's get moving and eliminate a very obvious hazard.



Parental pride at Commencement '88

There were many proud parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles in the audience when Stouffville Dist. Secondary School held its annual Commencement Exercises, Friday. But there were none prouder than John and Kay Marshall, O'Brien Avenue. Son, Ian, the last of their family to graduate, was the recipient of his Honor Graduation Diploma and an Ontario Scholarship. — Jim Thomas