

**YOU KNOW
HIS TRUE
POTENTIAL,
BUT YOU
JUST CAN'T
SEEM TO
BRING IT OUT.**



Jack Barkey

Local man a driving force

By KATE GILDERDALE
When Jack Barkey, owner of the Stouffville Driving School, decided to start his own driver training here in 1960, his friends thought he was joking. "They told me I was a fine one to teach. I was a very impatient driver, always using my horn," he laughs. Determined to prove

them wrong, he applied to take an instructor's test in Oakville. "I had to take an examiner on the road and instruct him on a manual transmission," he recalls. He also had to complete an extensive written test before he qualified.

Having passed the test, he began to establish himself in the area. "There was no one else up here at the time," he observes. "Some of them would advertise here, but they wouldn't come up this far if you wanted lessons." At one time, he remembers, he couldn't work in Markham unless he bought a special licence and received police department approval.

"I'd taught one woman's daughter down there before they made this rule," he remembers. "She called me afterwards and asked me to teach her twins." He explained he couldn't take them in Markham any more, "so she said she would bring them here."

The mother sat with Jack's wife, Dorothy, while the twins took their lessons.

"Since then I've just finished teaching her granddaughter," he says. Most of his business is by word of mouth and he's come to

know many local families over the years.

"Most people are nervous when they start, and if they're not then it worries me," he says. "Girls are generally easier to teach than boys, because the boys usually don't want to take lessons."

"A lot of them think they already know how to drive," says Jack, "and they're frightened they'll look like sissies. If only takes one or two lessons to show them they've still got a lot to learn. Women are often over-cautious to start with, but usually become good drivers," he adds.

Jack estimates it takes the average driver between 15 and 17 lessons of 45 minutes each before he or she is ready to take a test.

Lessons used to last an hour, but "there's only so much a person can absorb; you can learn as much in 45 minutes as you can in an hour."

"The first time I take students out, I get them behind the wheel." Once he's explained the controls and how to operate them, he takes them out on the street. "If I feel they're not in control, we'll go down the 10th and spend one or two lessons on that. Most people grasp it pretty quickly."

Towards the end of the training he tells his students, "I want you to take me for a drive through town. I'm not going to tell you what to do."

"I've always felt I'm doing this because I enjoy it, not to get rich," he smiles. He gives lessons in his dual control automatic. "When people want to learn standard, I teach them on the automatic first," he explains. "When they get their licence I give them one or two lessons on driving a standard in their own car."

When he started giving lessons standard transmissions were almost non-existent, now they're much more popular.

He estimates that between 75 and 80 per cent of his students pass their test on the first try. Says Dorothy: "Forty-seven students in a row passed first time about five years ago. That was before they brought in the two-year probationary licence."

Jack recalls the time one of his students had an accident while taking the test. "She stopped at the stop sign, then pulled out in front of a car coming down the street. She said she thought he was going to turn," he said.

Despite causing \$2,300 damage to Jack's car, her main concern was when she could take the test again.

Dorothy, who always takes students to the test, had to call Jack and ask him to pick her up. Friends were quick to notice the crumpled car, with the Stouffville Driving School sign on the roof, being taken away on the back of a trailer.

On another occasion, he was teaching a tall woman to drive a standard transmission.

"We came up the hill by the old post office and I was trying to teach her how to hold the car with the clutch," he said. "I told her to keep her foot on the brake, let the clutch out to friction point and get her foot on the gas. She reached down with her right hand, pushed on the gas pedal and said, 'can I do it like this?'"

Jack's students say they've never met a man who knows so many people in town, Dorothy observes. He's always waving at friends, many of them former students. When he retires from his full-time job, he'll probably continue to give driving lessons, although there are drawbacks.

"Insurance is tough and go," he points out. "One accident and you could be out of business."

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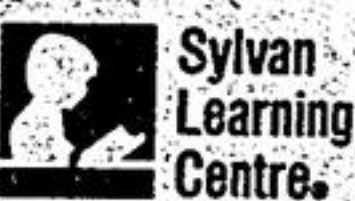
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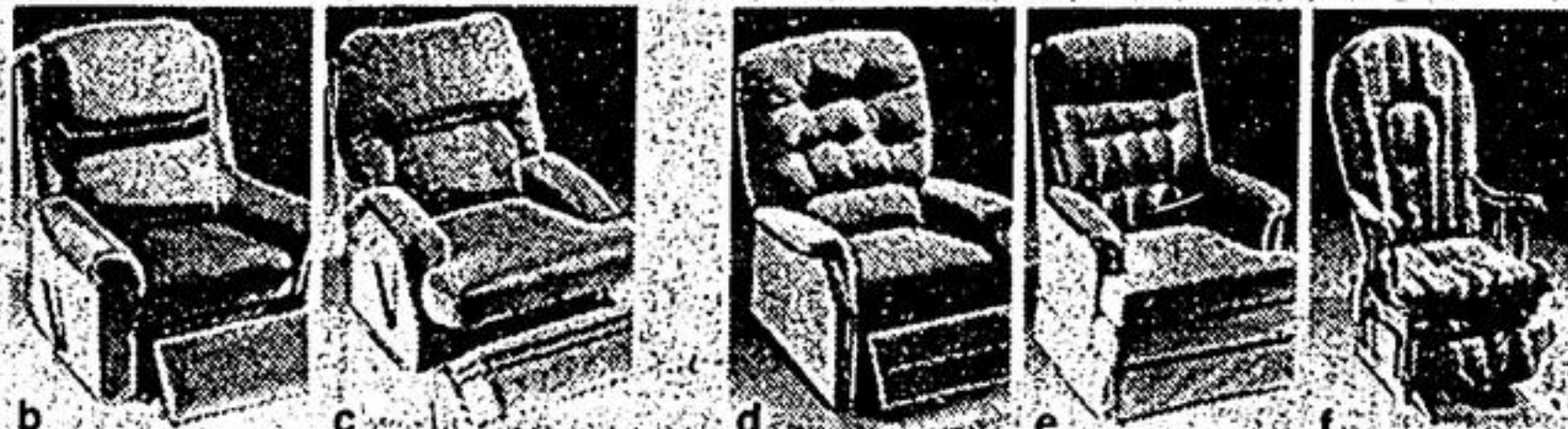


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