

Bill's road is 25 years long

By JIM THOMAS

WHITCHURCH — Twenty-five years of change hasn't changed Bill Dike. Now a foreman with the Whitchurch-Stouffville Road Department, Bill's just as dedicated to his job today as a quarter century ago, and just as modest.

On Jan. 24, he declined any hand-shaking ceremony when members of Council chose to honor his milestone accomplishment. Instead, Supt. Ron Gibson drove over to Vandorf and presented him with a Town Pin personally.

"Pat, (the clerk-co-ordinator), knows I don't go for that sort of thing," he said.

He also rejected The Tribune's plea to take his picture.

"That's where I draw the line," he stated firmly.

But he (somewhat hesitatingly) agreed to an interview, recalling how he first came on staff back in 1964 when Ernest 'Sandy' Davis headed the department.

"He, (Sandy), wanted me to help out when some of the boys were on holidays, then he asked me to stay," he recalls.

Bill admits the winters now are nothing like 'back then.

"We had two graders with plows. We'd run them 24 hours a day," he remembers. Today, they deal more with ice than with snow.

While Bill's been fortunate to remain accident-free, he recalls one occasion when the heater quit in the cab of his grader. It was 21 below zero.

Bill speaks highly of all Road Department employees and Ron, the Superintendent.

He keeps in touch with his former boss and accompanies him to superintendent meetings.

"Sandy still enjoys getting together with the fellows," he says.

The Vandorf detachment of five employees maintains close to 70 miles of road plus a number of subdivision streets. They try and

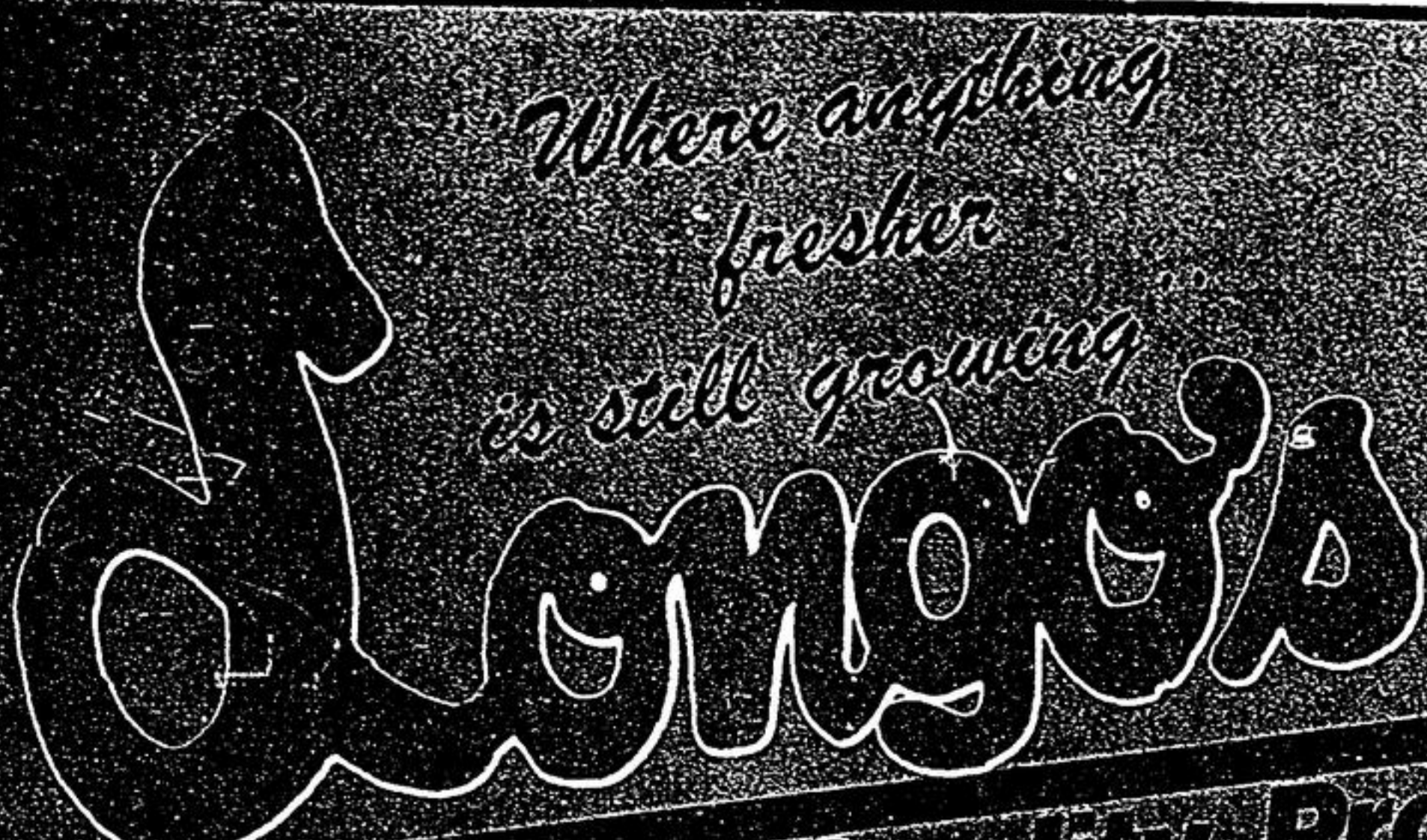
do the school bus routes first, he explains, a policy that sometimes irritates commuters in more built-up areas.

On a morning like Thursday when rural roads were like skating rinks, it's difficult to cover the area as quickly as they'd like, he explains.

When conditions are extreme, the men come in at 4:30 in the morning, three hours in advance of their usual times.

Now 62, Bill hopes to continue another three years. However, retirement won't mean giving up work. He, his brother Delbert and a nephew operate a dairy farm on the 5th Concession, south of Pine Orchard. There, an additional full-time helper will no doubt be welcomed.

Meanwhile, Bill Dike will continue doing what he enjoys doing best. Twenty-five years hasn't deterred his dedication. As a member of 'the old school', he's learned his lesson well.



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