

Tribune editor part of Stouffville's life

We all knew it was coming, but we refused to believe it, and when Jim Thomas announced his retirement last week, it was like a death in the family.

This gentle, unassuming man is as much a part of Stouffville community life as the Strawberry Festival, and we all took his presence at local events, big and small, for granted. He attended every imaginable function from school concerts and golden weddings to high school graduations, recording each in faithful detail with his camera and his notebook.

There were few fires or accidents he didn't cover, but his exposure to the less pleasant aspects of life never hardened his heart to tragedy. Most of all, Jim was instrumental in maintaining the unique flavor of this town.

Working with Jim for the last 18 months opened my eyes to the enormous commitment of time and effort he put into his job. However great the pressure on him, he always treated his staff with respect and courtesy.

I'd seen Jim countless times over the years; he'd photographed my children at the library and the Strawberry Festival; but even so, it was with some trepidation that I approached him and told him I'd like to write for the paper. Within a couple of days he was on the phone, asking me to cover a meeting at the high school.

Barely meeting the deadline, I provided enough material for a short novel. I



KATE'S CORNER
Kate Gilderdale

was delighted to see my name over the lead story that week, but crushed to note that my text had been reduced to a mere three paragraphs. Perhaps reporting just wasn't my forte, I reasoned.

That night, the phone rang. It was Jim, to tell me he was delighted with the story, and would like to have used it all if only he'd had the space. It was typical of him that, after 40 years, he could still be so considerate of someone else's feelings, and it was the beginning of a happy, though all-too-short, association.

It was also typical of him that for the first three months or so that I worked with him, I addressed him as Jim, while he called me Mrs. Gilderdale. He once told me that he believed in flowers for the living — he liked to celebrate what people had done while they were around to receive the credit.

If anyone deserves such recognition, it's surely Jim himself. He may not be rushing around after fire trucks or going to Brownie fly-up ceremonies any more, but he's still very much part of our community and our lives, and his legacy to the town and *The Tribune* will not soon be forgotten.

Early retirement out for husband

Dr. Ed Meade is a registered psychologist and director of the Markham Stouffville Family Life Centre.



A FRIEND IN MEADE
Dr. Ed Meade

Q. My husband is nearly 20 years older than I am and while the age difference has never been a problem before, we are now at crossroads when discussing our financial future. My husband would love to semi-retire and at 55 should have that option. But we have two small children who will cost money over the years — clothes, education, activities, etc., not to mention day-to-day living expenses. I have been at home since our first child was born and don't have the skills to bring in much money. Do you

have any suggestions, how we might solve this financial struggle?

A. Your husband should have realized that deciding to marry a younger woman would probably involve a commitment to raise a young family. It seems to me that the issue of semi-retirement is

more a luxury than an expected behavior for that age bracket.

It is said that to raise one child today takes \$100,000. I can certainly see your concern in wanting to make sure your young family has a secure future. You may consider seeking out a neutral third party at the Markham/Stouffville Family Life Centre to mediate the differences you and your husband have over his thought to retire early.

The Markham/Stouffville Family Life Centre is a non-profit counselling and education agen-

cy started by the people of Markham. It is designed to assist people such as yourself in strict confidence and to offer services with as minimal fee as possible.

To make an appointment call 294-2371 (Markham), 475-0433 (Milliken/Unionville) and 642-0032 (Stouffville).

Dr. Meade welcomes your questions. If your response is published, name and identity will be withheld. Questions should be directed to the Markham Stouffville Family Life Centre, 5871 Hwy 7 East, Markham.

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