

'Scoop' Thomas covered it all

Former Stouffville Tribune Editor Jim Thomas responded in typical fashion this week when informed he had been chosen Whitchurch-Stouffville's Citizen of the Year.

"I was just doing my job," he said of his 41 years reporting news to the people of Stouffville and surrounding area. "I'm really not worthy."

Such is the nature of the man they call "Scoop," the dedicated journalist whose main concern was to make his paper something that reflected the folks living in his town. He wanted to feel proud when he picked it up each week.

"I always tried to maintain a 'people' paper, concentrating on schools, churches and sports and recreation. I was always proud of our product. I could pick it up each week and say 'It's mine.'"

The 60-year-old Rupert St. resident and father of five claims to have had newsprint running through his veins since he was a youth.

"I always liked English and history best in school," says Jim, who was born and raised on his family's farm at Ninth Line and 16th Ave.

His dedication to work was made more evident by the 30 newspaper awards given the Tribune while he was editor, over a span of 25 years.

And neither illness, doctor appointments, spring fever, or even an unsettling automobile accident could keep him from coming to work. "Through 41 years on the job, I never missed a full day of work."

Jim started out part time with the Tribune in 1948, reporting sports while a student at Markham High School.

After a year at business college in Toronto, where he learned to type, he came to the Tribune on a full-time basis. At the same time, he freelanced for both the Toronto Telegram and the Globe and Mail, while reporting on Stouffville area happenings.

He became Editor of the Tribune in 1959, the same year he married his wife Jean, and went on to become Associate Publisher in 1967.

Jim went down to Markham to become Publisher-Editor of the Economist and Sun in 1974, but returned to the Tribune in 1978.

He recently retired as Tribune Editor, but feels he would now like to pursue another career. "It's time for a career change," he says, noting he would like to run for school trustee in the next municipal election.

"I want to spend more time with my wife and family. They've sacrificed a lot through my absence. I worked some long hours." "But I always thought no one could do it just like Jim Thomas, which, I suppose was a mistaken attitude."

Jim looks back with satisfaction on being instrumental in having the name "Stouffville" attached to the provincial government's suggestion of "Whitchurch" for the Town when regional government was introduced in 1972.

"I wrote a stinging editorial. I was very upset over what I saw as the loss of our identity in Stouffville. A copy of the editorial was given to D'Arcy McKeough (Ontario Government Cabinet Minister of the day) and a short time later it was revised."

His other contribution to the Town, he feels, was the introduction of the Citizen of the Year award of which he is now the recipient, 10 years after the idea came to fruition.

"There have been a lot of fine, deserving folks since then," he says.

He adds that while he always took a pro-growth stance, "much to the chagrin of Jim Sanders," it has been that same growth which has forced the Tribune to alter its old emphasis on individuals.

"As the Town changed, the paper had to change too. People hardly know their own neighbor, let alone people at the other end of town. At one point we had 25 correspondents from the different surrounding areas. Now I think there are three."

Jim maintains it was his camera that opened so many doors throughout his career; either his old Crown Graphic, with which he says he shot around 50,000 pictures, or his newer Mamiya.

"My camera has always been my right arm. I'd just put on an innocent look and just keep on walking."

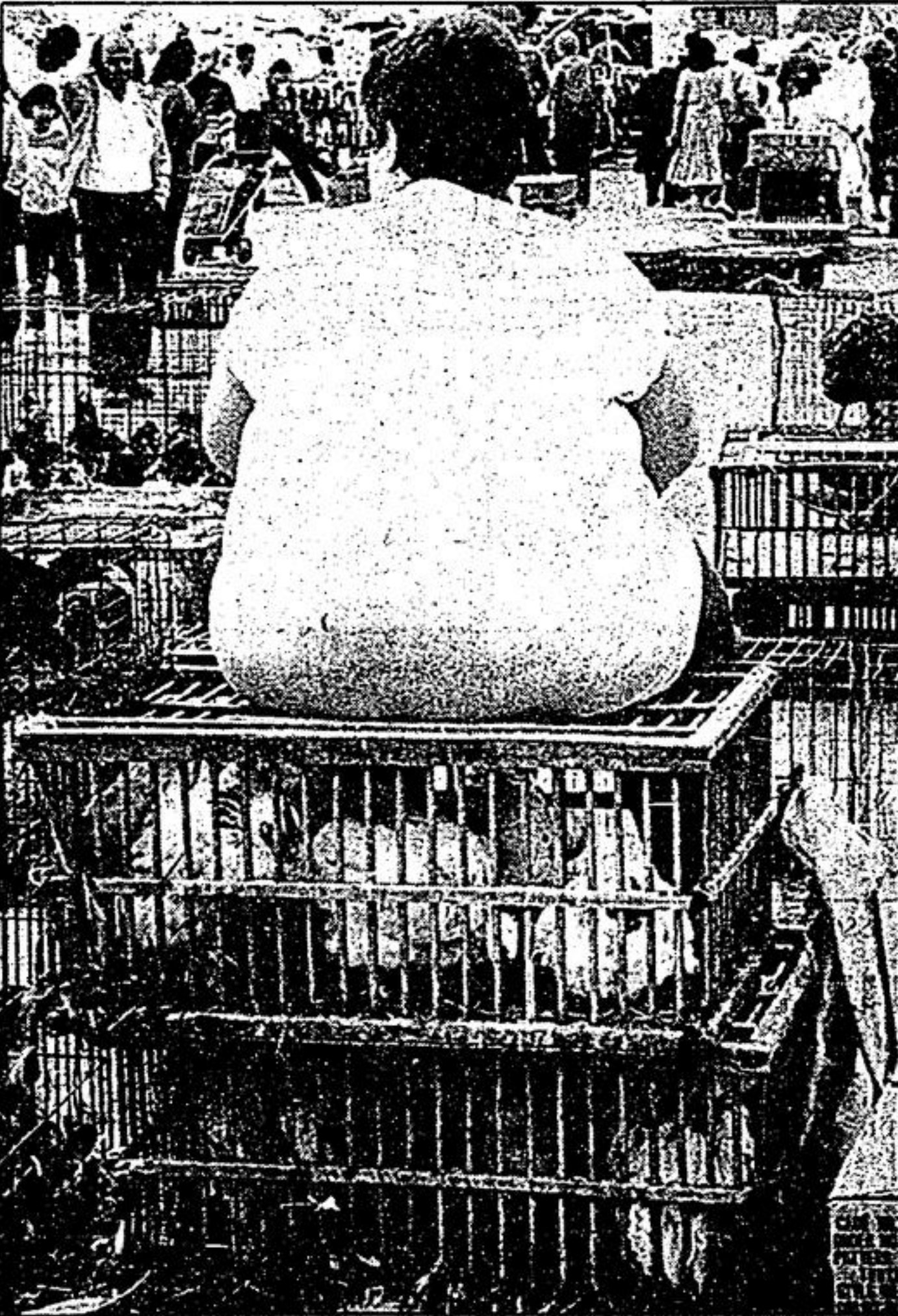
Jim is currently recovering from a car accident that left he and his wife Jean in hospital. Both report their recoveries are coming along well.



Jim Thomas was unanimously chosen last Friday as the Whitchurch-Stouffville Citizen of the Year. Nominations in his favor poured into the Tribune office in recent weeks, offering glowing recommendations about the man they call 'Scoop.' He will officially be awarded next Wednesday night.

Flea market fare

Stouffville Flea Market vendors offered all types of feathered fare for visitors to the Sales Barn on Saturday along with myriad other items for sale. The popular market was busy again as consumers turned out to see what was up for grabs. In the photo at right, a vendor takes a break from the day's activities and rests on one of the chicken cages. Below, Bill Longdon gives this friendly rooster a tummy scratch in between sales. Mr. Longdon operates a booth every weekend at the Sales Barn.



Durham health council thrives

While the Durham Region District Health Council — now in its 11th year — appointed a new chairman and announced its health care volunteer of the year at its annual meeting last Wednesday, York Region is still awaiting provincial approval for its own council.

Catherine Hilge of Oshawa is the new chairman of the group whose purpose is to assess regional health functions and co-ordinate the planning of provincial funding. She replaces Susan Bland.

Betty Schaefer of Ajax and Tom Mangan of Beaverton were named vice-chairmen. Executive positions are on a volunteer basis.

Oshawa's Linda Deatcher was chosen from 24 nominees as the Council's volunteer of the year. Ms. Deatcher, a project co-ordinator for the John Howard Society, is a volunteer with the Oshawa-Durham Rape Crisis Centre.

Conflict 'disturbing'

Conflict of interest rumors involving two town officials has prompted quick action by Whitchurch-Stouffville Town Council.

But the rumors, involving a joint property venture between Ward 1 Councillor Margot Marshall and Chief Building Official Bruce Arrowsmith, are unsubstantiated and vague, says Councillor Marshall.

The issue involves co-ownership of two Stouffville area homes by Councillor Marshall and Mr. Arrowsmith, which the councillor openly admitted to yesterday.

Public records show conflict of interest guidelines have been followed by the councillor regarding the two homes, but the town was expected to pass a policy yesterday to similarly allow staff to remain "impartial" in property dealings with the town.

"I have no conflict of interest at all," said Councillor Marshall in an interview.

She said mortgages for the homes are being held by local banks and said ownership "has never been a secret."

And the councillor vehemently argues that no conflict guidelines were broken in the business venture.

"It seemed to me that the town thought we had bought half of Main St.," she noted.

Uxbridge residents irked by noise

DEB BODINE CHAMPION Correspondent

Complaints about certain recreational activities within the Township of Uxbridge have prompted Council to re-examine its noise bylaw.

The Scarborough Rod and Gun Club and the Goodwood Go-Kart Track came under heavy artillery from neighbouring residents at the committee and Council meetings last Monday.

The gun club, located on the 3rd Concession in Uxbridge since 1966, has applied for a permit to construct an 80 ft. tower which throws the targets for international skeet and trap shooting competitions.

A contingent of angry residents appeared before the public protection committee not only to oppose the tower, but to complain about the increasing sound levels originating from the club.

Andrea Weleff, who lives northeast of the club, told council that "in 10 years, I can state for a fact the noise level has increased at least four-fold, especially in the past two or three years."

As a physical education teacher, Ms. Weleff said she is "all for sports" but suggests that the monitoring of this sport has been poor.

Nick Barisheff moved to the area in 1985. The noise bothered him so much he paid more than \$1,000 to have a one-day sound study done in 1986. The measurements on that day indicated a level of 80 decibels. The Ministry of the Environment guidelines specify 70 db as acceptable for existing gun clubs and 50 db for new ones.

The township noise bylaw, however, specifies 95 db as the acceptable level.

Mr. Barisheff suggested to council that the Scarborough Gun Club be required to conform to the latest environmental standards.

Although the club's hours are restricted to limited daylight hours Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday during the summer, and weekends only during the winter, the residents claim the shooting takes place from early in the morning until late at night, and sometimes on prohibited weekdays — a charge the president of the club, Cliff Thompson, vehemently denies.

The gun club representatives also denied a charge from the residents that their members are loading their own shells with more powder which results in a louder sound.

Mr. Wells stated that "it blows the shot pattern all to hell" and Mr. Thompson said overloading a cartridge would endanger the person shooting. He argued that most shooters underload rather than overload.

But Ms. Weleff told those in attendance she has been informed by students who are employed at the club that members do put more powder in even though they are not supposed to.

"I think it's the 'macho' factor," she hypothesized. "It makes a bigger noise."

Mr. Thompson told council by denying the tower they may be

"killing the goose that can lay the golden egg." With Toronto in the running for the 1996 Olympics, he said the Scarborough Gun Club would be one of the most practical sites for the skeet and trap shooting event.

"It brings in one tremendous boost to the economy," he said.

No action has been taken by council yet regarding the tower.

On another noise matter, Goodwood resident John Grimsdich invited council members to conduct their next meeting in his backyard to experience firsthand the noise coming from the nearby go-kart track.

He said he has no objection to a go-kart track, but does object to the increased sound levels which have resulted from more powerful machines.

And since the establishment has started racing small motorcycles, the noise has increased tremendously, residents claim.

There are two levels of motorcycle racing — production bikes and modified machines.

Spokesman for the track, Randy Ellison, said if council wished to establish a decibel limit, they would adhere to it.

"We don't want to upset the neighbours," he said. "Part of the technical inspection will be, if a bike is too loud, it simply won't run. It's a simple procedure with a sound meter."

He said, however, it would be difficult to get down to 70 db by the next meet July 9, since it would take some experimentation with the bikes, but he said 80 db would be possible by then.

Ellison and track owner, Mario Petti appeared before council to request permission to continue with the remaining six races on the agenda for this year, even though motorcycle racing is contrary to the bylaws of the township.

A suggestion was made by Regional Councillor Don Jackson that the track be permitted to operate at an 80 db level for 1989 and a 70 db level starting in 1990 to allow time to adapt the bikes.

In light of that suggestion, council recommended that Councillor Susan Para and Regional Councillor Don Jackson meet

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Town seeks tree-trimming list

Whitchurch-Stouffville Town Council wants a say in how its trees are maintained.

As a result, council will direct the engineering co-ordinator to commission local hydro officials to submit a detailed work plan before any tree trimming is performed on town property.

The move follows a letter presented to Council during its June 13 meeting, informing council members that hydro workers had commenced tree trimming in the beginning of June.

"It's our trees and our property. I think we should have some say in it," said Ward 6 Councillor Jim Sanders.

Mayor Fran Sainsbury agreed. "I think our staff should sit down with theirs and develop a better method from a public relations standpoint," she said.

However, Mayor Sainsbury was quick to point out that, while trees are important "if they ever went down on the primary lines, residents would be without hydro for many, many days."

And Ward 4 Councillor Wayne Emerson, who is the town representative on the hydro commission, indicated he was not given a list of what was to be trimmed this year.

Members agreed that as a council representative, he should insist on being kept informed.

"I think if they're going to have a contract, it would only be a public courtesy to notify us of the date it will begin and the area to be affected," concluded Mayor Sainsbury.

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