

# Stouffville

# Close-Up

## Local artist and soap firm help new Guides campaign

KATE GILDERDALE  
Correspondent

When 1990 was designated as the Year of the Environment, The Girl Guides of Canada decided they should come up with a special product which would strongly endorse an anti-pollution, pro-recycling philosophy.

The end result was an environmentally friendly soap, made by Taylor Soaps Perfumes Limited, featuring a specially commissioned painting by Gormley's Pie Menger on the box, truly a local success story for both Pie herself and the soap company owners, president Jim Taylor of Gormley and Jim's son, vice president John Taylor of Stouffville.

It all started with the advertising agency which handles the Taylor Soaps account. Explains Jim Taylor: "They had been working with the Guides and came up with the concept of soap. They came to us and said that the Guides were trying to promote the theme of the environment, and they thought soap would be an ideal product to use."

To fit the theme, Taylor Soaps created a vegetable oil-based soap, which contained no animal products. "The soap is completely biodegradable, and will not cause any harm or pollution to the environment, unlike some detergents which will never break down and will always cause a certain amount of pollu-

tion and foaming of water," notes Mr. Taylor.

"The packaging is all made from recyclable material which gets away from our problem of disposing of a lot of packaging." As a result "it doesn't have to be

to create an appropriate painting. Since the Taylors passed the Menger Gallery every day, knew Ms. Menger and were familiar with her work, they suggested approaching her.

"John stopped in here one day last fall," she recalls. "He asked if I'd ever done any landscapes with a bubbling brook, but I didn't have anything that specifically featured a brook, although I'd done things like lakes, creeks and streams." John Taylor asked if she would give him some photographs of her work so that he could show them to the Girl Guide commissioners.

"He brought them back and I didn't hear another thing until January," notes Ms. Menger. "I figured it was either a dead issue or they'd found someone else by then." The next time he came in, however, he asked if she would come down and meet with Girl Guide representatives in Toronto.

"I took three paintings with me and they liked my work. We hit it off at once and they said they would like me to paint something for them." She agreed to submit three paintings for them to choose from, and told them they would be ready in a month.

"They chose the one I did first, which took me a week. I called John and asked him to stop in and see if he thought I was on the right track with it. He showed it to them and they loved it," says Ms. Menger.

The painting, entitled "Water

destroyed; it just gets recirculated all the time." The idea of making pollution-free products is not new to the company, he stresses.

"We were pioneers in the anti-pollution area. We tried to market a phosphate-free detergent about 18 years ago for clothes

and dish washing, but we couldn't get to first base with the stores. Our timing was just too advanced."

When the Girl Guides said they wanted an attractive box for the soap, it was agreed that a Canadian artist should be approached

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photo/ANNETTE BUCHKOWSKI

Gormley artist Pie Menger (right), was honored by the Girl Guides recently when they chose one of her paintings to adorn boxes of soap the organization plans to sell in addition to its annual cookie campaign. A local family manufactures the soap.

for Tomorrow," was from a photograph she took in Minden in the summer of 1989.

What gave her special pleasure was the fact that it wasn't until after they had commissioned her to do the work that the Guides discovered she was one of the Keirstead family.

"The Taylors didn't tell them, and at the end of the interview after they had asked me to do it and I was leaving, I gave them one of my brochures and invited them to come and visit the gallery."

Knowing that she had won the commission on the strength of her work alone was exciting for her, she acknowledges.

"Pie was delighted, because she put everything she had into it," observes Jim Taylor. "It's a really beautiful picture."

The original painting of "Water for Tomorrow" will hang in the Menger Gallery until mid-April, when it will be shipped to its permanent home at the Girl Guides' Merton Street headquarters.

The soap itself will go on sale

at Girl Guides stores in Toronto and Newmarket, sometime in May, advises Chief Commissioner Joan Howell.

"Then in the fall we will have more boxes available, and we will be asking girls to sell them

in certain locations. We plan to build sales up gradually," says Ms. Howell, adding the soap and packaging tie in beautifully with the theme we're working on."

The soap will not usurp the annual Girl Guide cookie fundraiser, she stresses. "It doesn't replace the cookies, we wouldn't dare do that."

Says Jim Taylor: "I think it'll be quite a successful program. Soap is a product almost everybody uses."

He believes it's fitting for the company that it is involved in such a worthwhile project in the year it celebrates its 125th anniversary. "My grandfather started the business in 1865, and I'm the third generation, with my son now in the business as well," he concludes.

**'The Guides came to us and said they were trying to promote the environment.'**

**'They chose the first one I did, which took me a week...they loved it.'**

## Stouffville senior always lends a helping hand

BRUCE STAPLEY  
Correspondent

Mahlon Shantz is a man with a mission.

The 76-year-old Baker Hill resident has dedicated his retirement to visiting and comforting the elderly in their residences and at three Stouffville area nursing homes.

At the request of either Parkview Home, Green Gables Manor or Bestview Health Care Centre, the former refrigeration service man will make one-on-one visits to seniors, cheering them up and helping them talk about any problems they may have.

Mr. Shantz, a Mennonite lay preacher, all his adult life, who studied palliative care at Durham College several years ago, started taking an interest in seniors when he and his seven children would visit the homes of elderly members

of their church in Kitchener back in the 1950s and '60s.

An amateur photographer in those days, Mr. Shantz would prepare an audio-visual presentation for seniors in nursing homes. His material would include nature photos, and shots of such events as Christmas parties.

But in recent years, nursing home officials, short on staff members able to find time for effective one-on-one counselling, have called upon Mr. Shantz to fill the void.

And he treats it as very serious business. "It's what I feel I must do," says Mr. Shantz, who sat on the board of directors of Markham-Stouffville Hospice in 1989. "I have committed myself to this type of thing. It's my retirement project."

Mr. Shantz says he has been coming around to see some of the same people for three years.

He says many elderly people have just been allowed to "dry up inside" and often respond well to his attempts to awaken their inter-

est in living. "Some of these people have something remaining under the surface, but no one has stirred it up," he says.

There was one fellow who had dried up at the age of 96. I would just say a few words into his ear, and he would slowly digest it, and gradually come to follow what I was saying, and interpret it faster and faster.

Eventually, he would start to talking about lay preaching he used to do years ago. He would only be able to go on for about five min-

utes at a time, but that's the way it is so often. There are small victories."

Another man in his 90s, who was upset because he had been moved to a new room with unfamiliar surroundings, ended up accepting the switch after Mr. Shantz convinced him that he could easily come to see the new setting as home.

"I told him nothing had really changed, that was important. He ended up so happy that he went and embarrassed me by telling the manager all these flowery things about me. I had simply given him a sense of home, of comfort, that things were okay," says Mr. Shantz.

And he often finds it a rewarding experience listening to the responses of the seniors.

"You present them with an idea. Sometimes it's just bone-tlingling what they can come up with. It makes you feel good," he concludes.



MAHLON SHANTZ  
Man with a mission