

SPORTS

HOCKEY: *Stouffville resident has fond memories of his professional hockey career*

Hockey was good to Hassard

BY BRUCE STAPLEY
Correspondent

Bob Hassard remembers where he was when Bill Barilko scored the overtime goal that gave the Toronto Maple Leafs the Stanley Cup in the spring of 1951.

A 22-year-old rookie centre who had seen limited action in his first pro season with the Leafs, Hassard recalls sitting on the end of the Toronto bench when the historic marker was counted.

"I had a good view of it from where I was sitting," laughs Hassard. "It was amazing. It was one of the most famous goals ever."

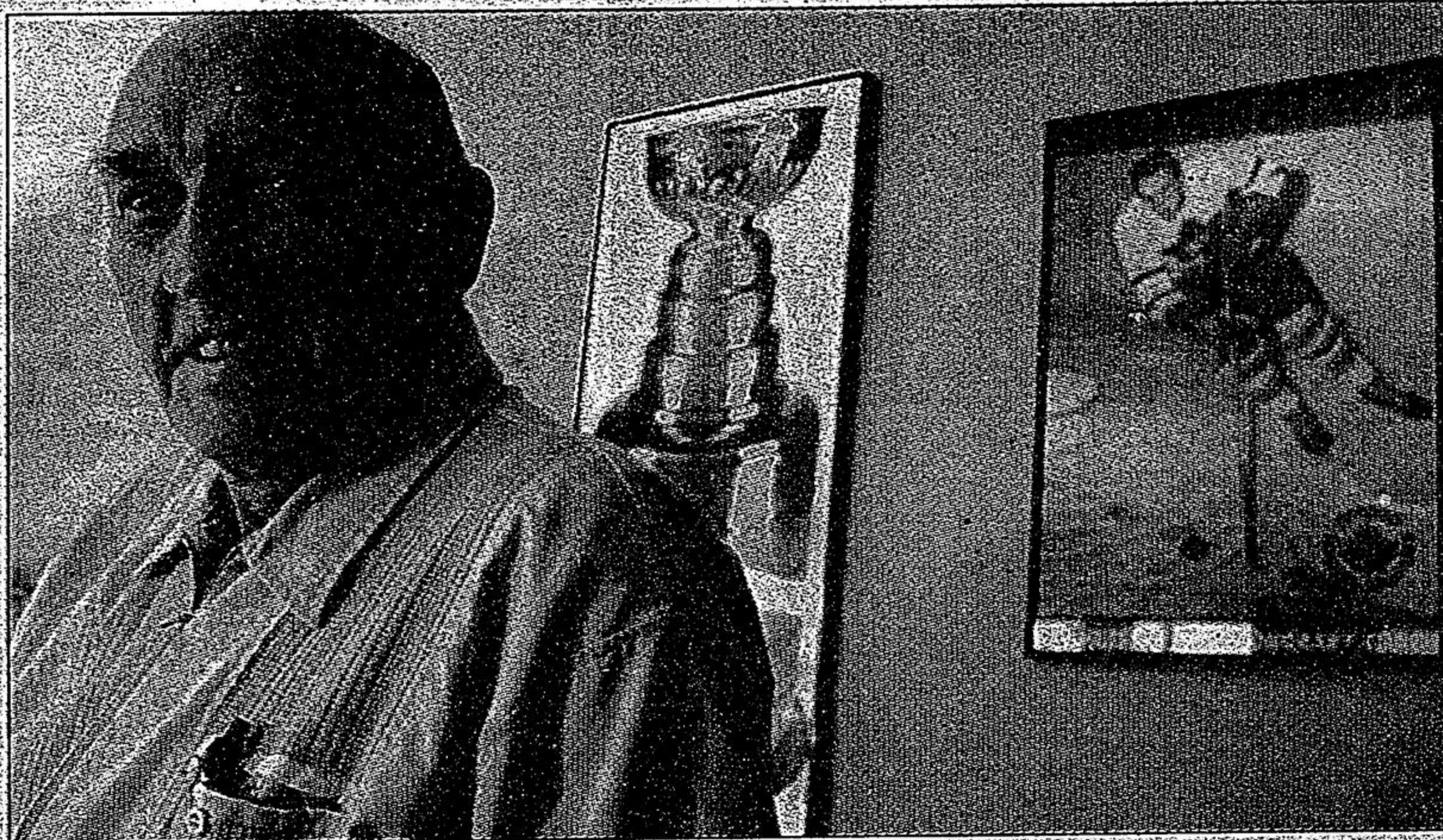
Reminders of Hassard's fling with Stanley Cup glory still grace the walls of his Main Street Stouffville insurance office. They include a team picture of that championship Maple Leafs outfit, along with a picture of the modern Stanley Cup showing his name engraved along with the rest of the 1950-51 Toronto squad.

Hassard had helped the Toronto Marlboro seniors to the Allan Cup in 1949-50.

The season following the Leafs 1951 Cup win, he went on to lead Toronto's American Hockey League farm team, the Pittsburgh Hornets, to the Calder Cup. Hassard was the Hornets' top scorer.

In his only full season with the Leafs in 1952-53, Hassard scored eight goals and added 23 assists, putting him among the team leaders, just 13 points shy of the National Hockey League's top 10 scorers.

"I remember I had as many assists as (Teeder) Kennedy," he says with a grin.



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Stouffville resident Bob Hassard, shown here with photos of the Stanley Cup and his time spent with the Toronto Maple Leafs, says he was fortunate to have the opportunity to play in the National Hockey League.

It was during the 1952-53 season that Hassard scored a somewhat historic goal of his own.

Mere seconds after one of his goals entered the net, Hockey Night in Canada made its television debut from Maple Leaf Gardens.

After stints with the Leafs and Chicago Black Hawks over the next two seasons, Hassard played in the American League for another three seasons before going back to senior hockey in 1958.

He won his second Allan Cup as a member of the Whitby Dunlops in

1959, then was with the Bradford team that took an OHA Intermediate 'B' championship in 1961, followed by two Intermediate 'A' crowns in 1963 and '64.

Hassard continued to play senior hockey through 1966, after which time he skated for a season with an NHL Oldtimers team.

While playing down his on ice contribution during 109 games with the Leafs, Hassard takes pride in being one of the select few to play in the old six-team NHL.

"I was happy enough just to play

a few games. I was proud of that." Hassard grew up playing shinny on outdoor rinks in Toronto's west end.

"After school, as soon as we could lace up our skates we'd be out on the ice."

He recalls how he never played hockey in an indoor arena until he was 14.

"I put my stuff over my shoulder and went to try out for the bantam Marlboros. I made the team."

He helped the Marlboros to the Toronto Hockey League bantam

title in 1944, and was with the Marlboro team that took the THL minor midget crown the next year. He played with the Junior A Marlboros from 1945-49, being signed to that team by the legendary Conn Smythe, who was manager with the 1950-51 Cup winning Leafs. Harold Ballard was running the Marlboro organization in those days.

"He treated me well, he was good to me," Hassard recalls of the man who would go on to become the controversial owner of the Leafs.

Hassard, who has called Stouffville home since 1949, involved himself for several seasons as a rep level coach with the local minor hockey system in the 1960's. One of his proteges was former NHL star Keith Acton, whom Hassard coached as a nine-year-old pee wee.

"I see him in the summer and I still call him kid," says Hassard. "He still calls me coach."

Hassard, who has three grown children and nine grandchildren, says he doesn't have much interest in the NHL these days.

"I watch the odd game, but I don't know who's who anymore." He continues to see former Maple Leafs captain George Armstrong on a regular basis. The two were roommates with the Hornets.

Hassard considers himself fortunate to have had the chance to play the game he loved for money despite the fact players' salaries were a fraction of what they are today.

"It was a nice way of making a living. It was better than working with a long handled shovel."

Mobility Transit golf tourney still has some openings

They're guaranteeing perfect weather, a generous prize table, and a chance to win a new car at the fifth annual Whitchurch-Stouffville Mobility Transit Golf Tournament.

The tourney is scheduled for June 8 at the Maples of Ballantrae Golf Course.

Golfers will get the chance to shoot a hole in one for a new Buick, while a closest to the pin contest is offering the free use of a Mercedes Benz for a week.

A special helicopter ball drop will see numbered golf balls dropped in the area of one hole, with the ball landing closest to the hole winning the grand prize.

Organizers say tickets for the tournament are going fast.

"We had 126 people out last year and we're already up to that number this year," said Wayne Feasby, who along with Wilf Morley is co-chairing the event.

Feasby said golfers who have been drawn to past tourneys by the large prize table wouldn't be disappointed this year. He's also confident the good weather enjoyed at previous Mobility Transit tournaments will continue.

"We always have perfect weather. I guarantee it."

The two major sponsors for the tourney are Bouwmeister Landscaping and Mercedes

Benz of Canada.

Tickets cost \$150 or \$500 for a foursome. The price includes lunch, dinner, carts and prize.

Hole sponsorships are available for \$200. Call 640-4596 for further information.

Tickets for the helicopter drop can be purchased from Morley or Feasby, as well as at Farmer Jack's and Williamson Motors in Uxbridge.

Art in the Park

July 17th & 18th (Friday in Uxbridge)

Plan to attend one Fine Art Show and Sale