

Business community celebrates success

WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE HONOURS LOCAL BUSINESS OWNERS FOR THEIR DRIVE, DETERMINATION, COMMITMENT

BY JOAN RANSBERRY
Staff Writer

Success is knowing how to work with your hands, with your head and with your heart, according to three Stouffville businessmen.

Norm Clements, owner of the Stouffville Country Market, Gary Bouwmeister, owner of A Dutch Touch, and Doug Watson, manager of the Stouffville Co-operative, have been recognized for business and individual success. They are this year's recipients of prestigious awards presented by the Whitchurch-Stouffville Chamber of Commerce.

Almost 100 guests, mostly from the Stouffville business community, attended the 2000 Business Achievement Awards night at Meadowbrook Golf and Country Club Wednesday night.

Good corporate citizen

Norm Clements, the sole owner of the Stouffville Country Market located on the 10th Line, was chosen Corporate Citizen of the Year.

Accomplished in the business world, Clements does not overlook the needs of others. For the past five years, Clements has hosted a Christmas dinner for more than 500 people.

Thanks to Clements' generosity, another 125 dinners were delivered to those unable to attend the big event at the market.

Clements also told the audience about his special grandchild. Born on his 50th birthday, Jennifer Ashley was diagnosed with spinal muscular atrophy and died six months later.

Soon after, Clements launched the Jennifer Ashley Foundation to help families with chronically ill children, both emotionally and financially.

But tragedy struck the family again. Clement lost another grandchild to the same fatal disease.

Today, The Jennifer Ashley Foundation raises more than \$500,000 a year.

Each summer, in honour of his grandchildren, Clements opens his home to hundreds of people, including disabled kids. He makes sure everyone enjoys a picnic.

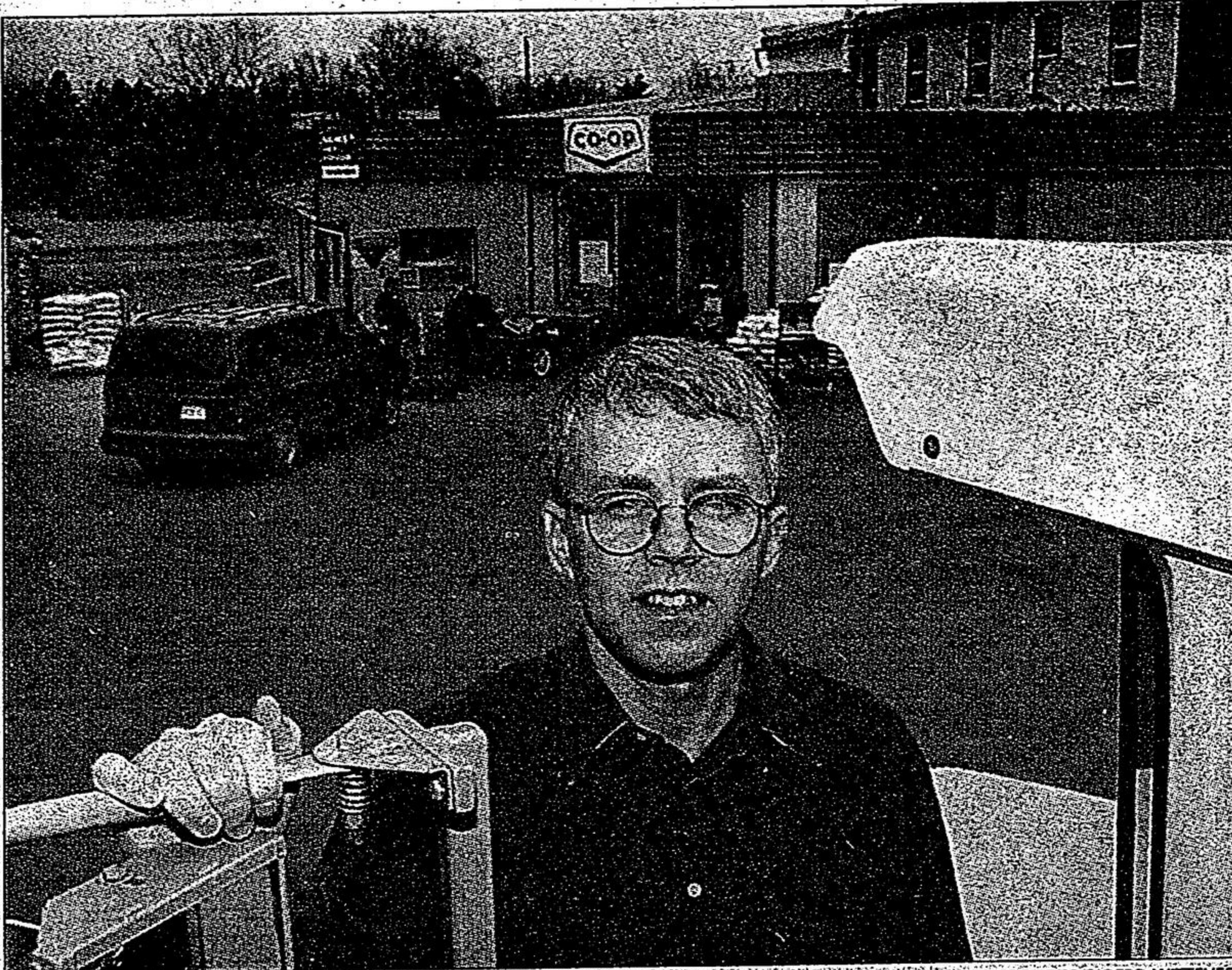
Every Sunday morning, a church service is held at the Stouffville Country Market. Clements makes a point to offer the spiritual opportunity to vendors and customers alike.

On the first Sunday of the millennium, Clements hosted a church



STAFF PHOTO/JOAN RANSBERRY

Norm Clements (above) of Stouffville Country Market receives his Corporate Citizen of the Year award from chamber secretary Lisa Jones. Doug Watson (right) of the Stouffville Co-op, celebrated his company's Business of the Year award.



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

service at the Country Market, enabling more than 1,000 Stouffville residents to worship together.

A Dutch Touch

There's been a special Dutch influence in Stouffville for years. And it comes to us from the Bouwmeister family.

Gary Bouwmeister, owner of A Dutch Touch, was recognized by the local Chamber of Commerce as the Business Entrepreneur of the Year award.

Gary Bouwmeister got his first grass-cutting job at age 10. His customer was more than satisfied with the work and Bouwmeister was invited back. This especially pleased his father.

An accomplished landscaper and businessman, the senior Bouwmeister taught his son all about strong ethics, hard work and having the good sense to recognize that the customer is the most important player in any business arrangement.

As a young adult, Bouwmeister attended Humber College. After

graduation, he bought an old pick-up truck and, with a limited number of tools, a little knowledge acquired at college and lots and lots of energy, he launched his lawn maintenance and landscaping business.

Sticking to the principles taught to him by his father, Bouwmeister has seen A Dutch Touch grow by leaps and bounds.

Over the past three years, the company has more than tripled its sales volume and today, A Dutch Touch employs 40 people.

While accepting his award, Bouwmeister recognized his father, other family members and in particular, he thanked his wife for her ongoing support.

The Stouffville landscaper has won numerous awards of excellence throughout Ontario.

Over the past two decades, Bouwmeister has shown he cares about his adopted home by taking part in enriching the quality of life.

He has donated trees to Stouffville schools, made a landscape gift for the gazebo in downtown Stouffville and donated work and equipment for the York Durham Heritage Railway.

As well, Bouwmeister has sponsored many events, projects and charities and helped local service clubs.

In particular, the Mobility Transit Golf Tournament receives special support from A Dutch Touch.

Co-op celebrates 58 years

Next week, the Stouffville Co-operative Association will pause to mark its 58th birthday.

On behalf of the Co-op, its manager Doug Watson accepted the Business of the Year award.

A few years ago, the Co-op expanded from a single store location with sales of \$5.9 million to a diverse operation that manages gross business sales in excess of \$10.7 million.

The Co-op now operates two retail locations, one in Stouffville and one in Uxbridge, each stocking in excess of 7,000 products.

The Co-op also has a fertilizer blending service.

As well, the award-winner has a thriving feed operation and a service that involves soil sampling and field grid mapping, while its petro-

leum division includes a bulk plant, three tandem trucks and a burner service department.

While the Co-op is a growing business, moving forward with the technological times, it still values its roots, Watson pointed out.

The Co-op is founded on a strong and growing membership base.

Proud of the Co-op's long association with its members, with the agricultural community and with Whitchurch-Stouffville, Watson asked the audience to recognize the hard working and dedicated staff.

Several workers have been with the Stouffville Co-op for more than 20 years, while one employee has been there for more than 36 years.

Volunteer recognition

The chamber also recognized the volunteer efforts of the following people, who have helped out at golf tournaments, networking meetings and dinners in the past year: Joan Marshman, Sandy Johnston, Jim Boynton and Cliff Dunkeld.

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