

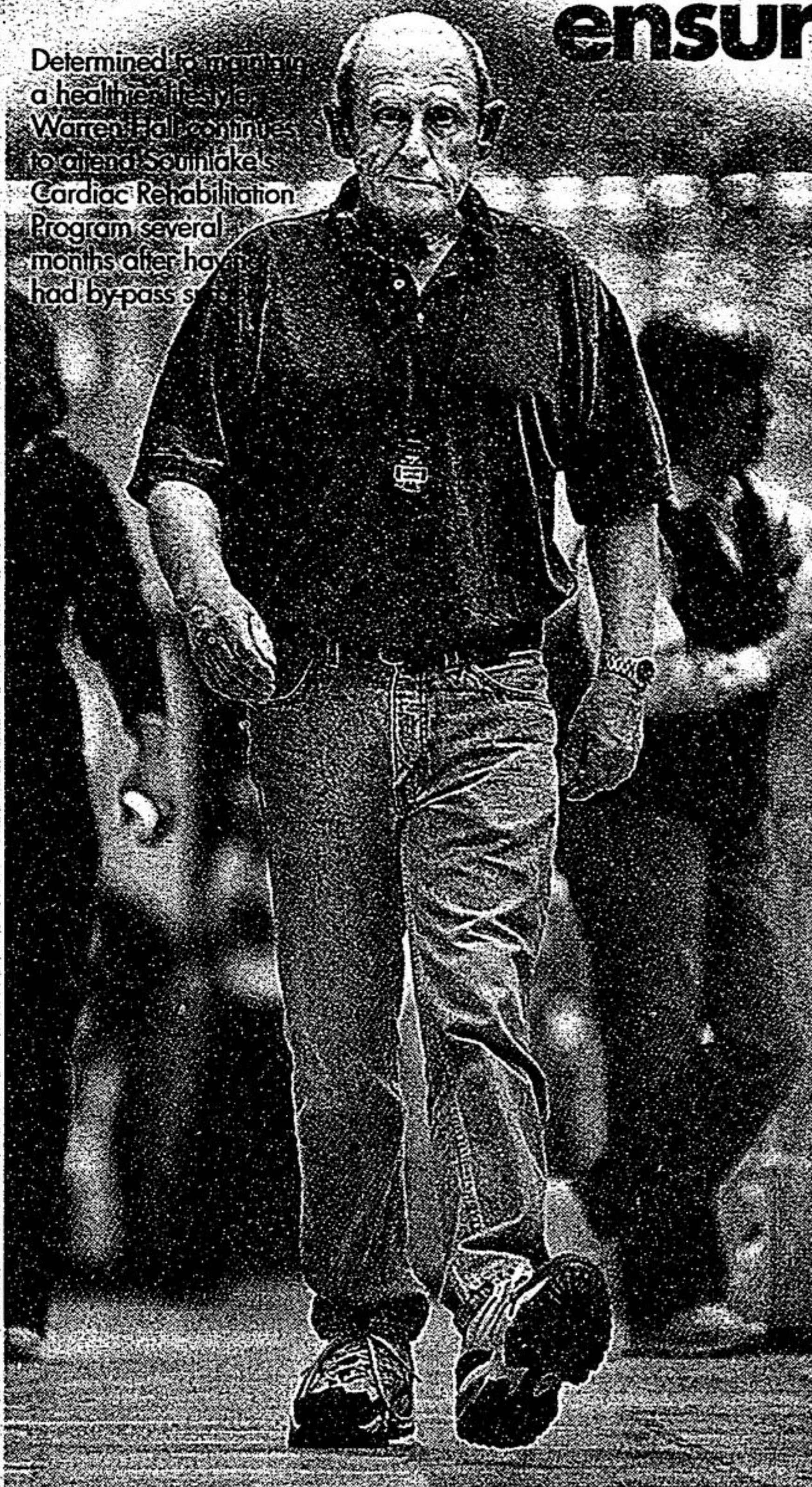
HEART MATTERS

for the residents of York, Simcoe & Muskoka

CARDIAC PRE-HAB & REHAB PROGRAMS

ensure strong recovery

Determined to maintain a healthier lifestyle, Warren Hall continues to attend Southlake's Cardiac Rehabilitation Program several months after having had by-pass surgery.



Warren Hall equates his heart surgery to plumbing. After stress tests were conducted at Southlake's Regional Cardiac Care Program in early March 2004, the 58-year-old Aurora employee at the Works Department was diagnosed with severely congested heart arteries.

"I had a problem," understated the Innisfil resident. "Three of my arteries were plugged—one completely, one at 85 per cent, and another at 75 per cent. I had to have triple by-pass surgery to have three new pipes, just like plumbing."

Accordingly, Mr. Hall was scheduled for surgery. Prior to the operation he was enrolled in Southlake's pre-habilitation program. The pre-hab program, which is supported by a kinesiologist, registered nurse, social worker, and registered dietitian, offers emotional support, education, and exercise to patients awaiting surgery — this has proven to help them recover after their operation.

"I started pre-hab in April in preparation for the operation," Mr. Hall said. "It was a relaxing situation because my family was stressed out. I took different classes with the whole family and the staff informed us about what would happen. We met with the surgeons and anesthesiologist and they put our minds at ease."

Assisted by a qualified surgical team, cardiac surgeon Dr. Charles Peniston performed Mr. Hall's triple by-pass without a hitch.

Following an appropriate period of convalescence, Mr. Hall was enrolled in Southlake's 26-week cardiac rehabilitation program, which is designed to improve patients' overall heart health and to assist them in making healthy lifestyle adjustments. It includes a blend of exercise and education and teaches patients like Mr. Hall how to develop healthy eating habits, how to read food labels, and how to ease into a fitness regime. Serving close to 600 patients a year, the cardiac rehabilitation program is available to anyone who has experienced a cardiac event, such as a heart attack, heart failure, angioplasty, and/or by-pass surgery.

In the case of Mr. Hall, the program has already proven to be invaluable.

"They try and get you to eventually walk three miles in 45 minutes," he said. "I wasn't walking before. It was like going up hill in fourth gear."

"Now, I feel alive thanks to the surgery and the cardiac rehab program. The quality of my life has improved tremendously. The Southlake folks in cardiac pre-hab and rehab and at the hospital are terrific."

Be Still, My Beating Heart

Bharat Datt has the most heart-stopping job in medicine. Literally.

Cardiac surgeons require that the target organ be perfectly still while they perform heart surgery. Akin to an automobile mechanic working on an engine that's running, a beating heart presents hazards for everyone involved. As a highly trained and skilled perfusionist, Mr. Datt's role is to operate the equipment that takes over the patient's heart and lung functions during surgery while the heart is stopped.

Inspired by Southlake's drive to build a world class cardiac facility in a community setting, Mr. Datt left his position at a downtown hospital during 2004 and moved with his family to Newmarket to accept a job at Southlake.

"It was a big decision to leave Toronto, but I was hearing good things about Southlake's cardiac program and the timing was right for my family to move to a smaller community. It's been a good change, both for my career and for my family," confirms Mr. Datt.

Trained both in his native India and the Michener Institute in Toronto, Mr. Datt and the surgical team stop the heart with the help of drugs. Using sophisticated equipment, blood is re-routed away from the patient's body, oxygenated, and cleansed of carbon dioxide and other wastes before being pumped back into the patient's system where the cycle starts again.

"The patient is in clinical hibernation," said Mr. Datt. "Basically we're by-passing the heart and taking over all the heart and lung functions so the surgeon can work on the heart."

The heart is still for approximately 90 minutes during surgery that can last for four hours and more. When the surgeons have repaired the damaged organ, the heart is allowed to spring back into action either on its own or, if help is required, a defibrillating electrical shock is applied for the heart to start beating.

Another integral part of the cardiovascular surgical team is Brenda Koivula, a registered nurse first assist (RNFA) specialist.

Once licensed as a registered nurse with the College of Nurses of Ontario, a nurse may apply for the first assist

program. Prerequisites include certification in perioperative or surgical nursing, five years of operating room experience, a specialized course of study, and a clinical internship with a surgeon mentor that can add up to 250 hours.

Although Ms. Koivula did not have to change employers to become an RNFA, she did require additional training that was financially supported by the Regional Cardiac Care Program.

"I was ready for a career change and the introduction of the RNFA role at Southlake definitely intrigued me. I have an active family, so working close to home is convenient," said Ms. Koivula, who was a clinical educator at Southlake for three and a half years before enrolling in the RNFA program. "With the support of the cardiac program, I now have everything I need to challenge me professionally in my own community."

The role of the three first assist nurses in Southlake's Cardiac Program is invaluable to the surgical team. Their duties begin before the surgery with meeting the patient, reviewing the patient's history, confirming the procedure, answering any questions or concerns, and generally endeavouring to allay anxiety.

During the complex surgery, the RNFAs assist the surgeon in exposing the heart area through the use of retractors, sponging and suctioning techniques, removing leg veins that are used to replace blocked sections of the coronary arteries, cauterizing blood vessels and finally, helping to close the chest and leg incisions. Once the surgery is complete, the RNFA is responsible for ensuring the safe transfer of the patient to the cardiovascular intensive care unit (CVICU).

Mr. Datt and Ms. Koivula believe, as do their patients, that their specialties make a world of difference.

"It's rewarding to have a job where you can come to work and help save a life each day," Mr. Datt said.

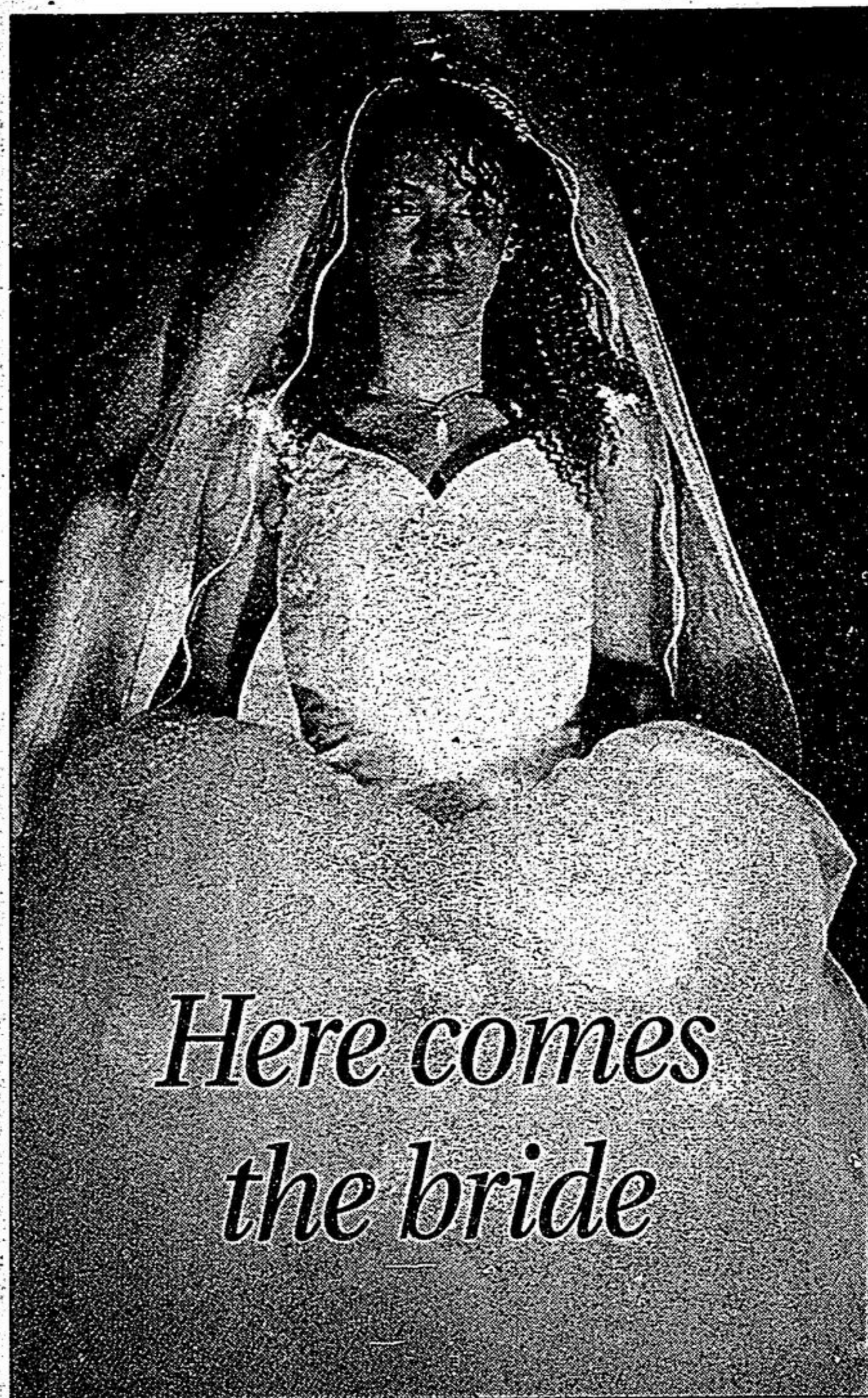
"The opportunity to participate in patient care from the preoperative through to the post-operative phases is gratifying," Ms. Koivula affirmed. "It's a privilege to be part of a highly skilled team that is able to deliver such a proficient level of patient care."



Bharat Datt, Perfusionist



Brenda Koivula, (RNFA)



Here comes the bride

STAFF PHOTOS/BILL ROBERTS

Husbands and brides-to-be kept exhibitors busy at last weekend's York Region Wedding Show at Premier Ballroom in Richmond Hill. The show included a fashion segment highlighting the latest bridal styles. Among the exhibitors was Pradeep Dharmawardane (below) of Ontario Golden Chefs, who spoke next to an ice sculpture.



Models display fashions by Alice Ko.