

A not-so-ordinary life honoured in book about rural mother

Jacket of book that will be the subject of reading at the Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library Sept. 27. The book chronicles the life of Isabel Beach, who lived from 1900 to 2000 near Stouffville.



BY HANNELORE VOLPE
Staff Writer

Author Catherine Ashton's biography of her mother begins at a time when Sir Wilfrid Laurier was Prime Minister, horses and buggies were the transportation of choice and no one had dreamed of the Internet, much less a computer.

Ms Ashton will be reading from her book, *Turning*

Clouds Inside Out: A Country Woman's Life In The Twentieth Century, at the Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library Sept. 27.

The book highlights the life of her mother, Isabel Beach, who lived on the second concession of Uxbridge Township, just east of Stouffville, from the time she married farmer Walter Beach in 1926 until 1999.

Mrs. Beach's life spanned

the entire 20th century. She was born in September 1900 and died in January 2000.

Margaret Isabella (Wallace) Beach made sure to preserve the history of her life in her memories and her daughter has woven them together with reminiscences of others in her book.

Born in Thorah Township east of Cambridge, Isabel, the name Margaret Isabella ultimately used, attended high school in Orillia during the First World War. After studying at Peterborough Normal School, she taught elementary school for five years, the first three at the one-room Roseville school west of Uxbridge.

In 1926, she married an Uxbridge Township farmer, Walter Beach, whom she had met at a house dance on the town line between Uxbridge and Whitchurch townships. They had two children, Beverly and Catherine.

Two of her brothers enlisted in the army during the First World War. They never returned home. She endured the Depression, often called the Dirty Thirties, where women fought to keep their families fed, clothed and together.

Mrs. Beach saw major social changes during her lifetime. During the 20th century, women got the right to vote, to play sports men play and get equal pay for work of equal value.

The book honours an ordinary woman who lived an extraordinary life.

Ms Ashton, a graduate of



CATHERINE ASHTON: Author will read from book about her Stouffville-area mom Sept. 27.

McMaster and of York universities, taught high school and college English literature and communications for 40 years. She wrote a column for the Packet & Times in Orillia for eight years, on behalf of Georgian College, Orillia campus, prior to publishing her mother's biography.

The book "provides many details and insights into the life and times of the 20th century," Mrs. Ashton said. "It's the kind of life story that reflects what Marjorie Anderson, an editor of the Dropped Threads anthologies, called 'the quiet substance of a good life'."

Ms Ashton will be at the library Sept. 27 from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. Copies of the book will be available for sale and signing by the author after the presentation.

For more information, e-mail cashton@sympatico.ca

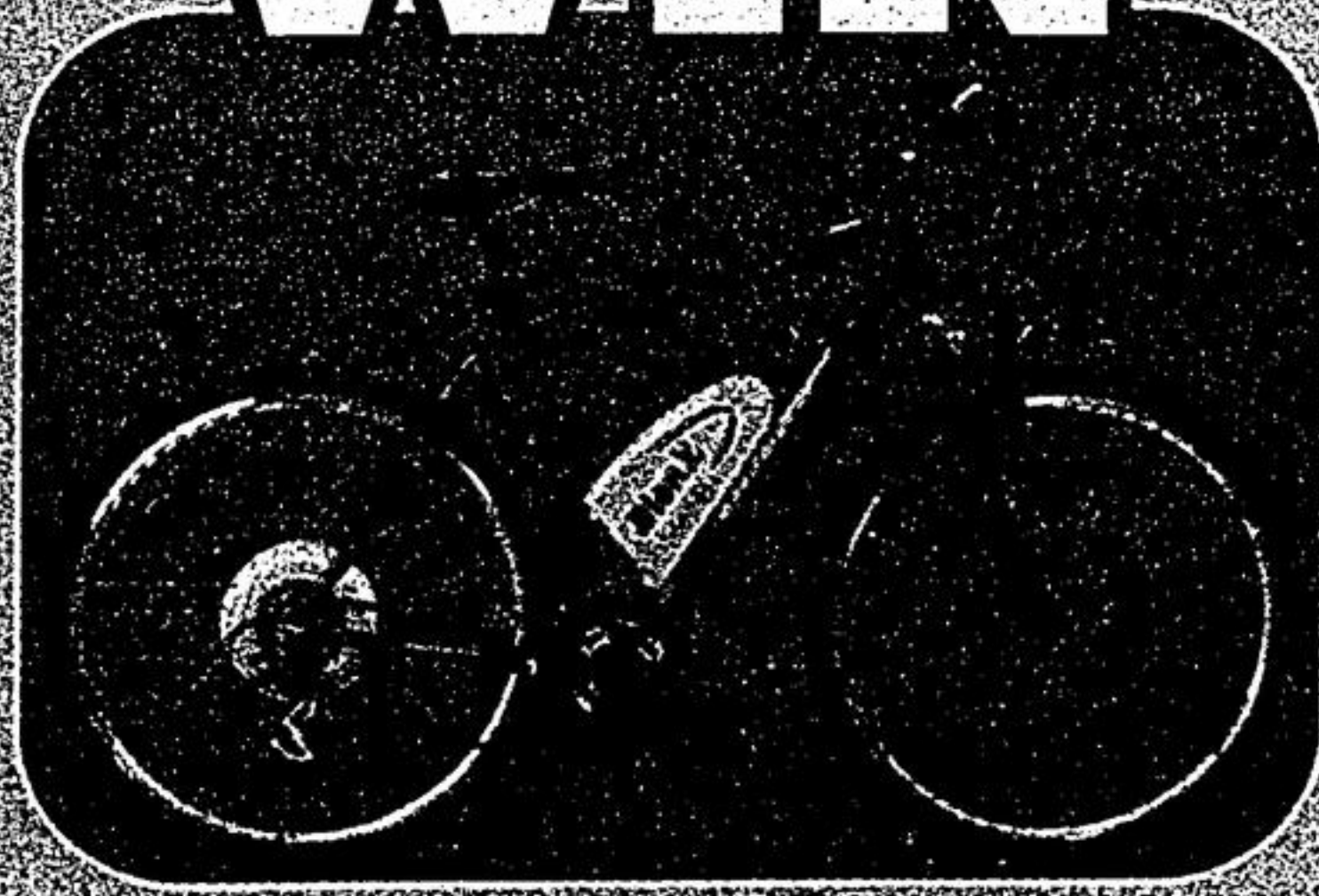
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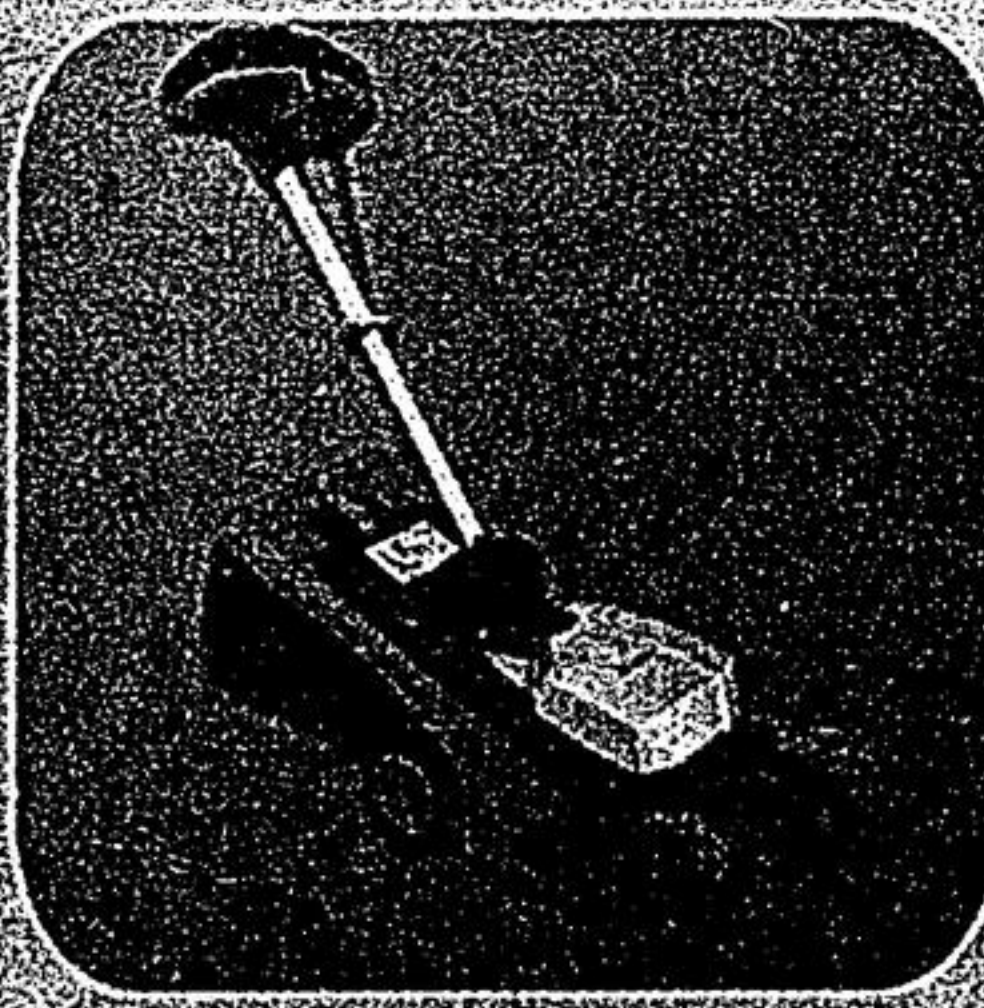
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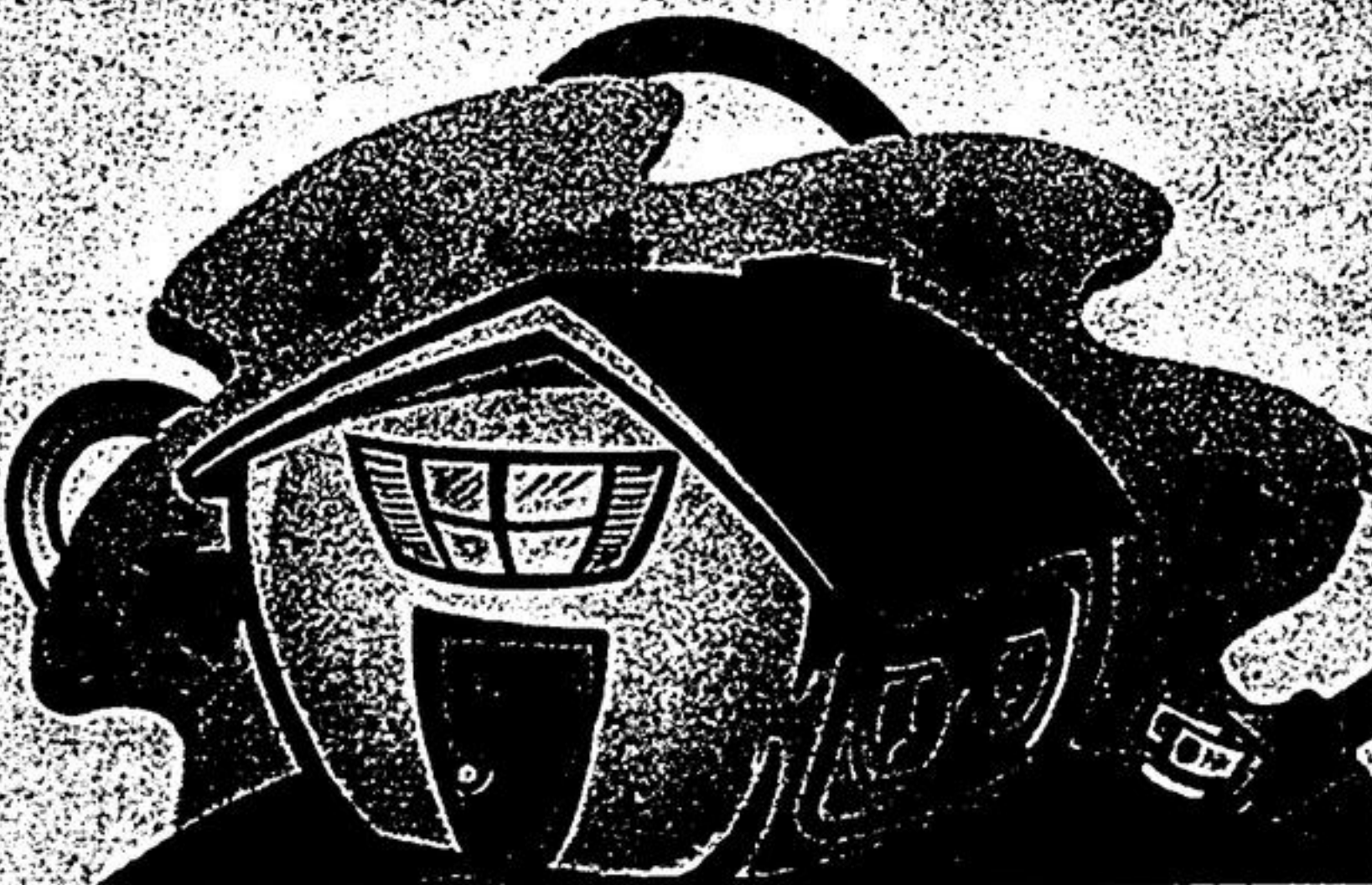
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Librarians screen movie about their movies

Who says librarians don't have fun?

A group of them will gather at the Whitchurch-Stouffville Library Oct. 1 to screen a new movie about their trade.

The Hollywood Librarian: A Look at Librarians through Film is the first full-length documentary film to focus on the work and lives of librarians.

It will be shown in libraries across North America from Sept. 29 to Oct. 6.

Everyone is welcome to the Stouffville screening, which begins at 7 p.m.

For more information, call 905-642-READ.

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