

# Blankets for babies quilted with love

Writing a weekly column, allows me opportunities to meet many interesting people. Young or old, rich or poor, each has a claim to fame. Each has a story to tell.

Problem is, many are modest, unwilling to reveal what they've accomplished.

Rather, they're content to remain secretly behind the scenes, their achievements unknown.

For this reason, it was good to receive a phone call from a Stouffville friend last month.

"I think you should talk to Luella," the party said. "She's a remarkable lady, doing wonderful work."

I filed the suggestion in my memory bank and later gave her a ring.

While directions were precise, traveling northward into the woodlands of Whitchurch on a pitch-black January night, can pose problems. But not this time. Amazingly, I successfully completed all twists and turns.

Luella Lewis, I would learn, was born on a farm near Goodwood, one of five in the family of Howard and Lucy Harper. She attended public school in Goodwood and high school in Stouffville.

"Parents took turns driving us (to Stouffville)," she said, "a couple of winters, my sister Mary and I boarded in town."

The principal was Lou Murphy. "A group of us still enjoy twice-yearly reunions," she says. "We always wear name tags."

Following graduation from teachers' college, Luella taught in Altona, just east of Stouffville. She had eight grades and 33 students.

Until expropriation in 1972, Luella and Harold Lewis lived in Altona. Harold later built a new home on the Vivian Road where Luella still resides. She has two sons, Tom and Allan, one daughter, Pat, eight grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. A brother Jim lives near Peterborough and sister Mary in Brampton.

While interested in her past, it was the present that intrigued me most. For Luella possesses a generous gift. She makes crib quilts. And gives them all away.

The benefactor of her expertise is an organization called 'Project Linus', named after the blanket-toting personality in the Peanuts



**Roaming Around**  
with Jim Thomas

comic strip.

To date, Luella has completed 600, each one different. She delivers them, 10 at a time, to Rob Croxall at the IDA drug store on Main Street. From there, they're distributed to hospitalized children throughout the GTA, including York Region.

The association is headed by Marlene Stonehouse of Schomberg.

"Luella's quilts are truly beautiful," Marlene said.

Despite her 82 years, Luella never wears of her work.

"I love it," she said. "The only cost is my time and I have lots of that." She says it gives her a good feeling knowing she's doing something for someone else.

As a long-time volunteer at Stouffville's Care and Share Shoppe, she continually collects bits and pieces of material that would otherwise be discarded.

Preemie blankets measure 15 by 24 inches. Blankets for newborns are slightly larger. There are 48 patches per quilt.

Should she tire, Luella takes a reading break, then returns to her hobby. She sometimes completes two quilts a day.

Many letters of thanks have been received.

Before retiring her needle and thread, Luella hopes to complete 1,000 quilts. On reaching this goal, granddaughter Tessa has promised her a party. But even now, Luella has her reward - 600 cozy babies and 600 mothers' smiles.

Jim Thomas is a Stouffville resident who has written for area newspapers for more than 50 years.

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