

Top sport happy to maintain low profile

BY MICHAEL HAYAKAWA
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In serving on the executives of Whitchurch-Stouffville's minor hockey and youth softball associations, Joe Palma thinks he must be performing his duties in a positive manner if he remains unassuming to the general memberships of both groups.

While the no news is good news scenario is music to the 50-year-old Whitchurch-Stouffville resident's ears, his involvement with both minor sports organizations hasn't gone unnoticed.

Especially by those selecting

Legendary crooner Bob Davies is 2011 Music Town, Ontario recipient/page 7.

the Stouffville Sun-Tribune's Sports Person of the Year as Palma was bestowed with this year's honour.

Upon receiving the good tidings, Palma acknowledged it was a pleasant surprise.

At the same time, it represents the highlight thus far in the time he's been actively involved in minor sports.

"It felt very strange actually, I feel like I should retire now," he said with a laugh.

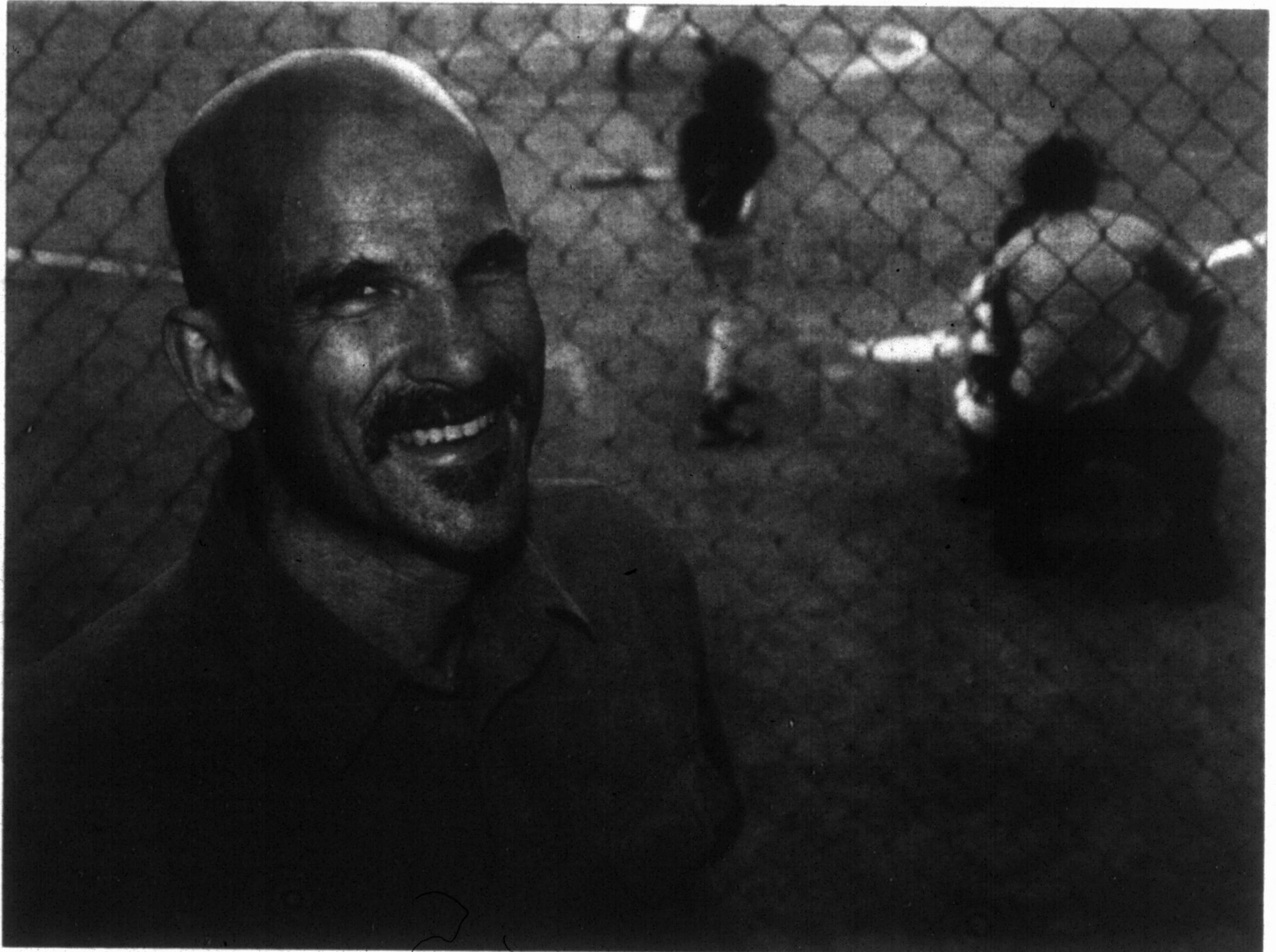
"My roles with the Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey Association and Whitchurch-Stouffville Softball Association are invisible to most of the memberships the majority of the time as it should be."

A Toronto resident before moving to Whitchurch-Stouffville 16 years ago, Palma has been involved in the Whitchurch-Stouffville Softball Association for the past 11, including seven as a coach and the last four as a rep program director on its executive.

Playing one year of house league hockey at the minor peewee level in East York, Palma's introduction to the Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey Association came about rather by accident.

In fact it stemmed from his time in coaching softball.

And he jumped right into the deep end as convenor of the house league's peewee division



Joe Palma knows Stouffville's softball diamonds and hockey rinks well. The youth sports volunteer and board member is the 2011 Whitchurch-Stouffville Sports Person of the Year. He will be presented The Sun-Tribune award at the opening of the Strawberry Festival next Thursday.

STAFF PHOTO/SUSIE KOCKERSCHIEDT

six years ago.

"One of my players was Kevin DeRocchis and his father, Bruno, was the Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey Association house league convenor at the time and he approached me regarding co-convening the peewee division that coming winter," Palma said. "Long story short, the person I was

to co-convene with stepped down just before the start of the season and I had a steep learning curve to climb."

Through the years, Palma served as a division convenor before moving up to becoming house league convenor and eventually his current role as vice-president of house league hockey operations, a posi-

tion he has held the last two years.

Don Easter, the association president and last year's Sports Person of the Year recipient, said Palma's selection was well warranted.

"He has made significant contributions to the community's youth through his involvement with both softball and minor hockey," he said.

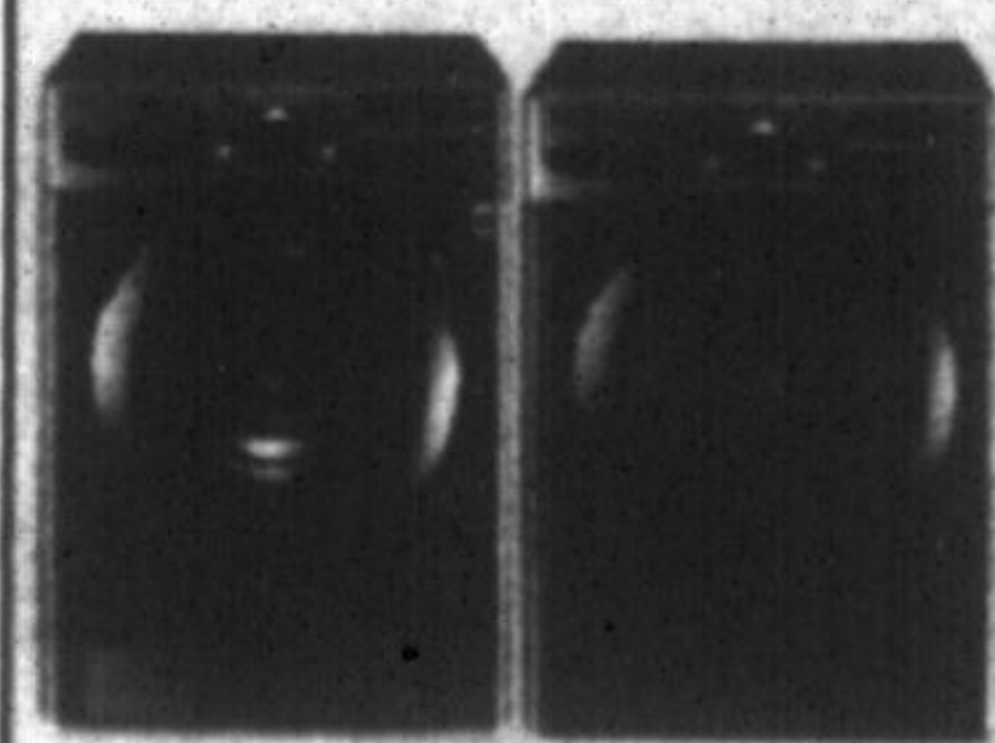
"On the hockey side, Joe has been a member of our board of directors for several terms. As vice-president he is responsible for directing the 600-member house league program. He has taken a leading role in the implementation

See SPORTS, page 30.

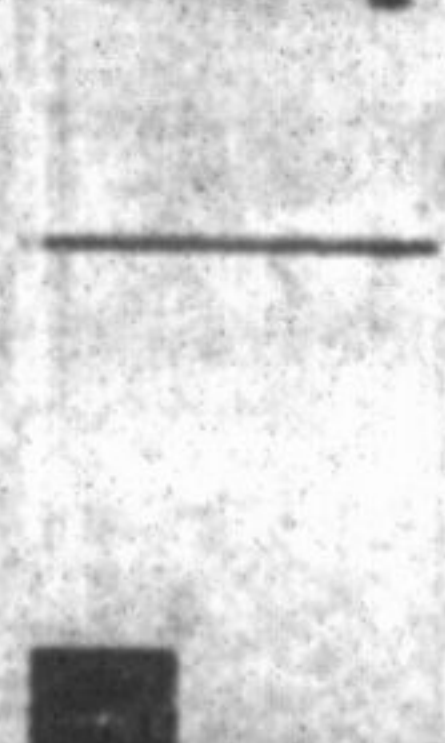
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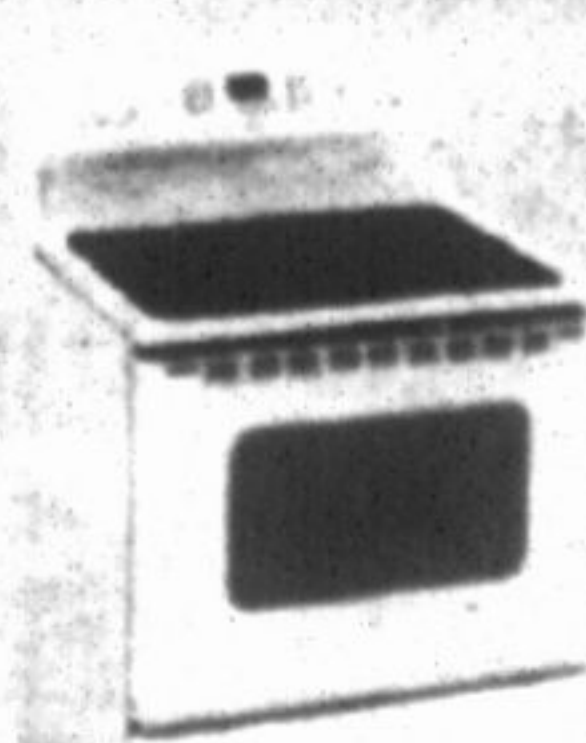
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