

# Storied history for cherished plow

A single-furrow walking plow is positioned atop a front-lawn pedestal at 65 Manitoba St. in Stouffville. To passersby it's merely an ornament. But to Jim Rae it's an object of beauty — a part of his past.

"I purchased it with the first \$20 I ever saved," he recalls, "and came away with two dollars change."

Now 91, Jim remembers hurrying home from Lemonville Public School, hitching up 'Frank' and 'Dobbin', taking hold of his father's plow and turning many furrows. The family farm was located on the north side of Bloomington Road, west of Hwy. 48.

Jim entered his first competitive plowing match at age 11. He was the youngest entry in an 18-and-under class and came second. Joe Tran of Atha, later a world-class plowman, placed first. The year was 1932.

"There were no tractor classes back then," remembers Jim, "all entries were horse teams."

But Jim wasn't happy using a hand-me-down plow. He wanted one of his own so, with cash in hand, he visited Alf Pugh, a Stouffville Cockshutt dealer and selected the implement of choice.

"My grandfather, (a former reeve of Whitchurch Twp.), tied it to the running board of his model T Ford and brought it home," Jim recalls.

Following completion of Grade 8, (senior fourth), Jim took to farming full-time.

"I couldn't attend continuation school in Stouffville because I didn't have a bike," he says, "and my father couldn't afford to buy me one."

During the Second World War, Jim served with the Royal Canadian Air Force. While absent from the farm, Jim's father, Stewart Rae, put his son's walking plow to work. Later, Jim purchased a farm of his own, now the site of St. Andrew's golf club on McCowan Road. There, the implement saw use only for plowing gardens.

The farm purchase price? Two hundred dollars down and a \$5,000 mortgage, smiles Jim. He remained there 41 years.

Besides caring for pigs, sheep and chickens, Jim had another interest — Red Pole dual-purpose cattle. This activity took him on many long-distance trips, including Australia, New Zealand, Jamaica and twice to England.

Away from the farm, Jim has been equally active, including trustee at Lemonville public school; elder and trustee at Lemonville United Church; president of the Stouffville Co-operative Association; councillor, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville; member of the Stouffville Library Board; the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum Board and the Lemonville Community Centre.

Jim is justly proud of his family that includes sons Jim of Manchester and David, Mt. Forest; daughters Karen of Stouffville and Lynn of Newmarket; seven grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. Wife Evelyn (Beach) passed away eight years ago.

But a 70-year-old single-furrow plow will always remain his baby — an \$18 purchase he continues to treasure.

*Jim Thomas is a Stouffville resident who has written for area newspapers for more than 60 years.*



## Roaming Around

with Jim Thomas



Jim Rae shows off his 75-year-old plow planted in his front yard — note the new handles.

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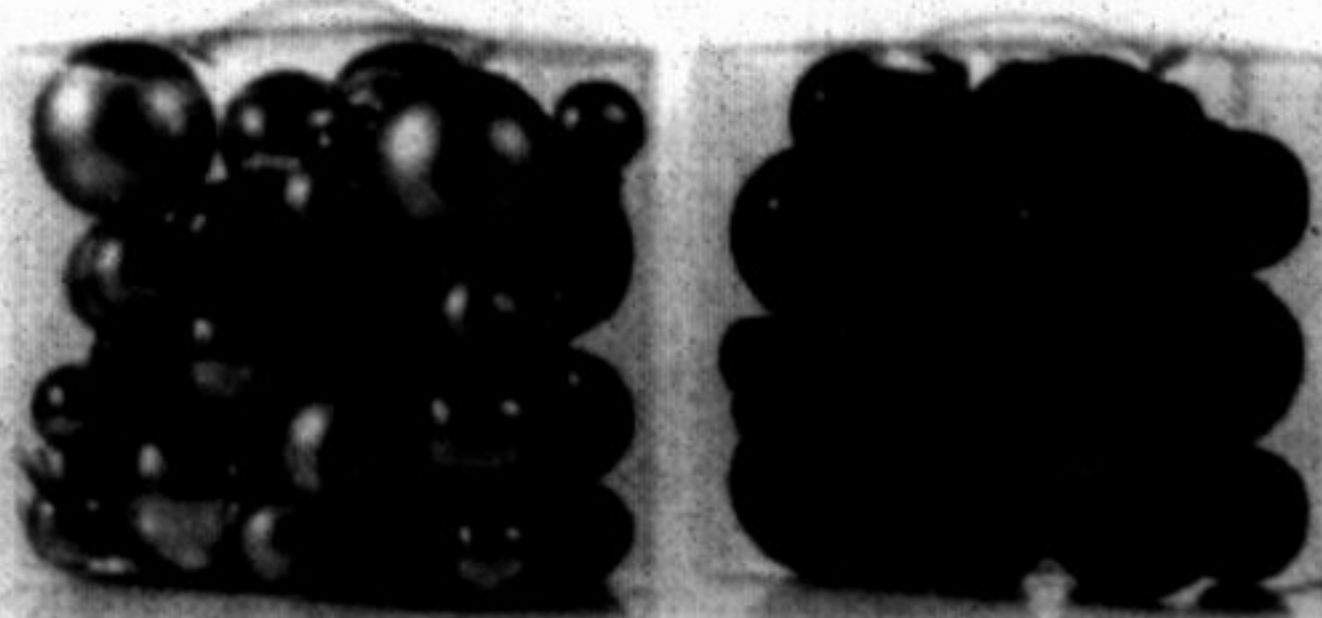
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