

# Spirit grad stays in game as Minnesota college coach

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When Tyler Gubb was winding down his collegiate playing career with the University of St. Thomas men's hockey team in St. Paul, Minn. last year, he did not want to lose touch with the game.

With limited options available to play pro, the 25-year-old Markham resident and former Stouffville Spirit forward felt the next best option was to get into coaching.

When an opportunity arose for Gubb to accept such a position he did not have to travel far. In fact, he remains on the St. Thomas campus where he now serves as a full-time assistant coach for the men's team, known as the Tommies.

"I am very honoured that the coaching staff ... offered me a coaching position directly after my senior year ended," Gubb said from his St. Paul home. "I never want to

lose touch with the game and I feel that coaching will be the next best thing to playing."

Gubb said the thought of coaching began in the back of his mind during his Jr. A days that included two seasons with the Spirit (2006-08) followed by another pair in the British Columbia Hockey League with the Victoria Grizzlies and Salmon Arm Silverbacks.

But when he became an upper classman at St. Thomas, he revealed the thought became a little more serious.

Gubb found his way to the Twin Cities school in a roundabout way after spending his first two collegiate seasons on scholarship at Michigan Tech University in Houghton, Mich.

While Gubb had a modest freshman year in which he saw time in 22 games and had two assists, Michigan Tech made a coaching change during the offseason.

With a change in coaching personnel and philosophy, Gubb's playing time diminished significantly to where he played in just three games during the 2011-12 campaign and had no points to show for it.

Seeing the writing on the wall, Gubb sought a change in scenery.

## SWITCHED SCHOOLS

Recalling his first two seasons at Michigan Tech where their road schedule had them travelling to the Minneapolis-St. Paul area when they played the University of Minnesota Golden Gophers, Gubb became enamoured with what the area had to offer.

Combined with his interest as a business major and seeking a school where he could be a major contributor to a program that had a chance of winning a National Collegiate Athletic Association championship, Gubb found St. Thomas,

a private liberal arts school which competes as an NCAA Division Three program in the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.

"They have a nationally ranked business program and I had a burning desire to reside in the Twin Cities after spending a week in the area when playing against Minnesota when I was at Tech," Gubb said, "and they had an elite hockey program."

In his senior year, he was captain on a team that won its conference championship last season after going undefeated in conference play and was ranked No. 2 in the NCAA polls before losing in the elite eight.

This season's team looks even more promising, he said.

"St. Thomas has never won a national championship and I would love to be a part of its first," he said.

How is the new career?

"The biggest transition between being a player and a coach is the relationship I have with the players," he said. "Anytime you go from being a captain of the team to a coach the following year, an adjustment has to be made in how you interact with your players. As a captain, I made sure I was always around the guys, instilling a very close knit, inclusive culture. Now, I have to back off and let the team leaders carry over that culture, while I move into more of a professional role."

Still taking classes at St. Thomas when he's not behind the bench, Gubb is keeping his options open.

"(I) am also in the interviewing process for a few jobs, that pertain to my major, where I would start in June," he said. "Although I would love to come back to coaching at the collegiate level one day, I am anxious to start my professional career," he said.

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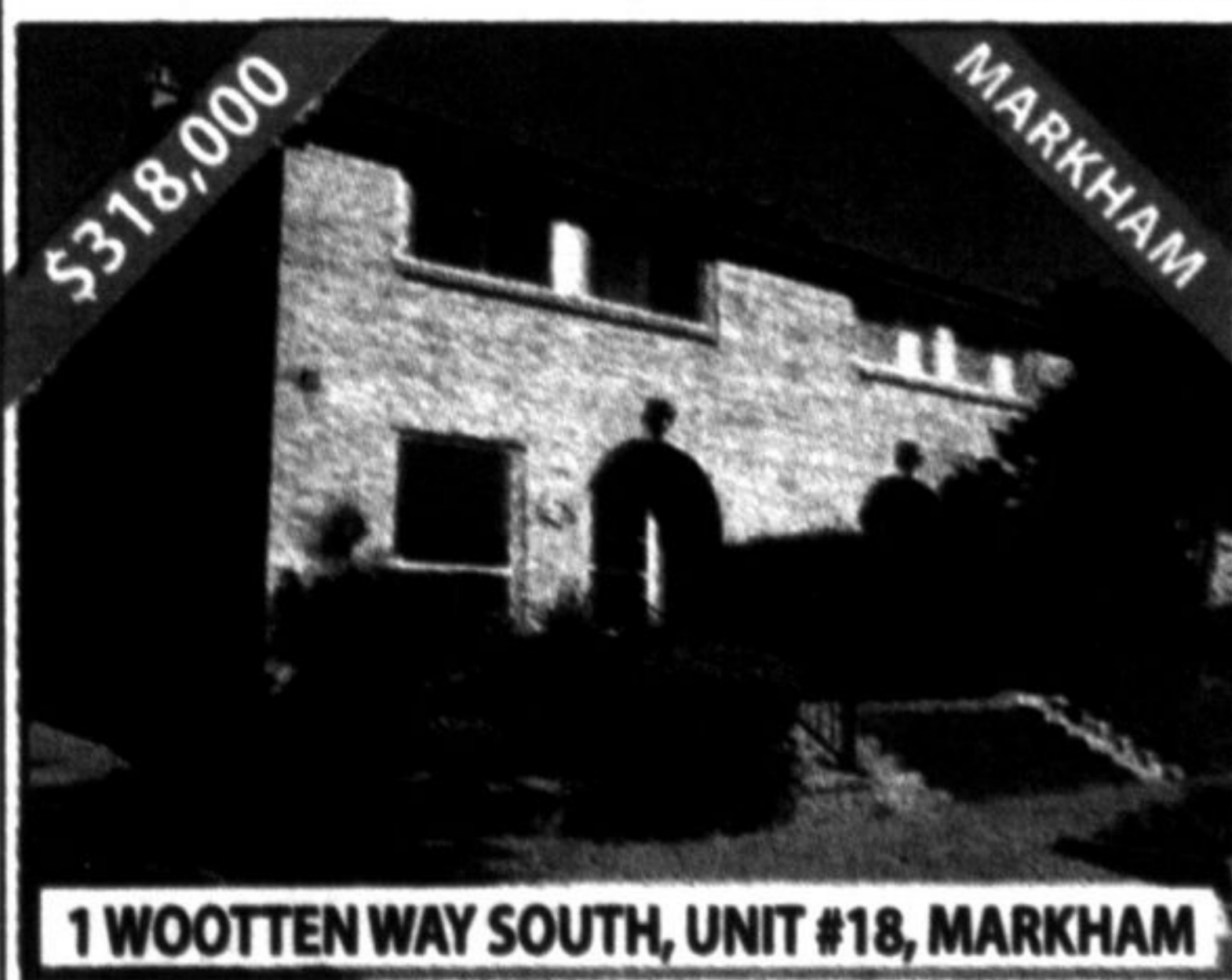
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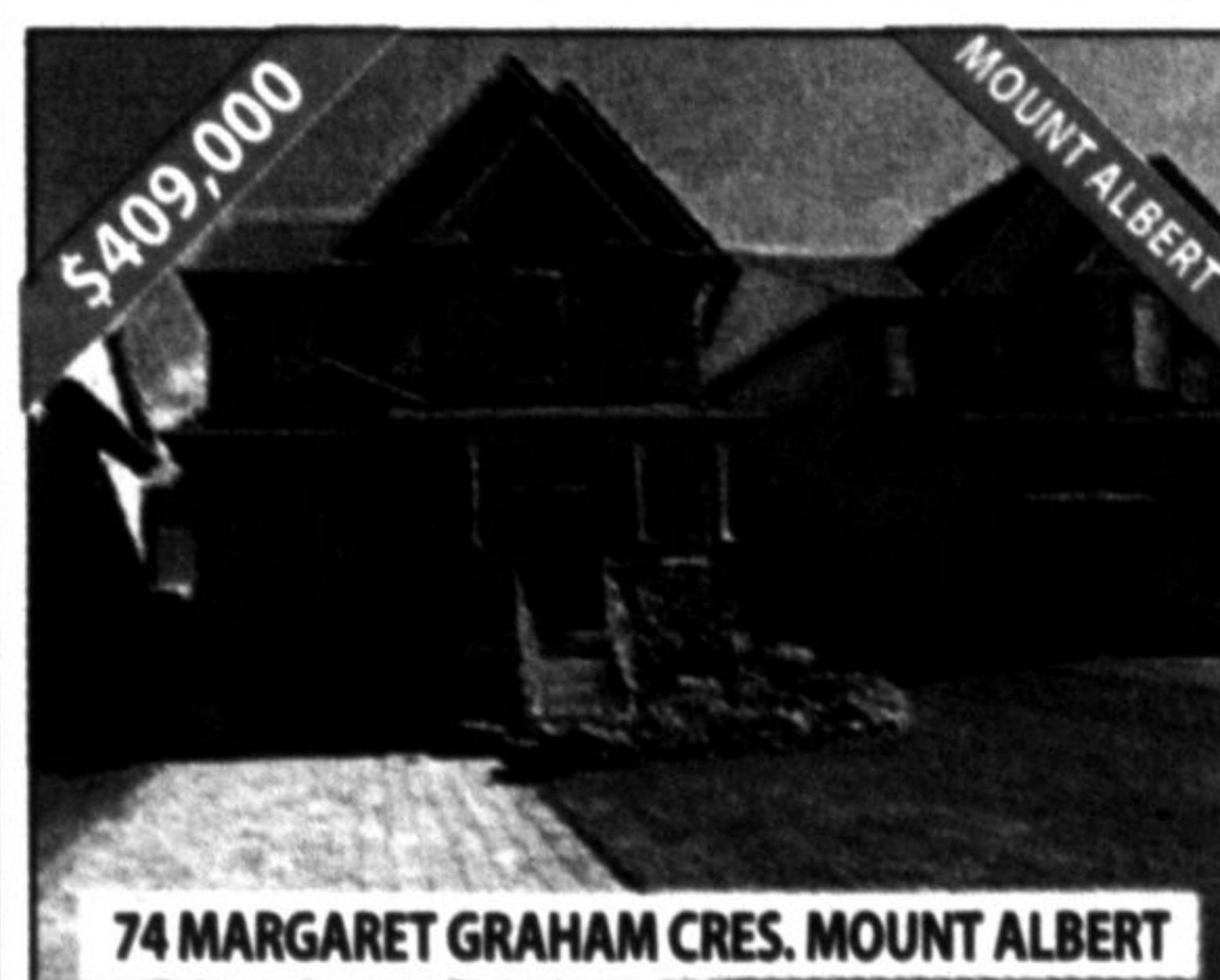
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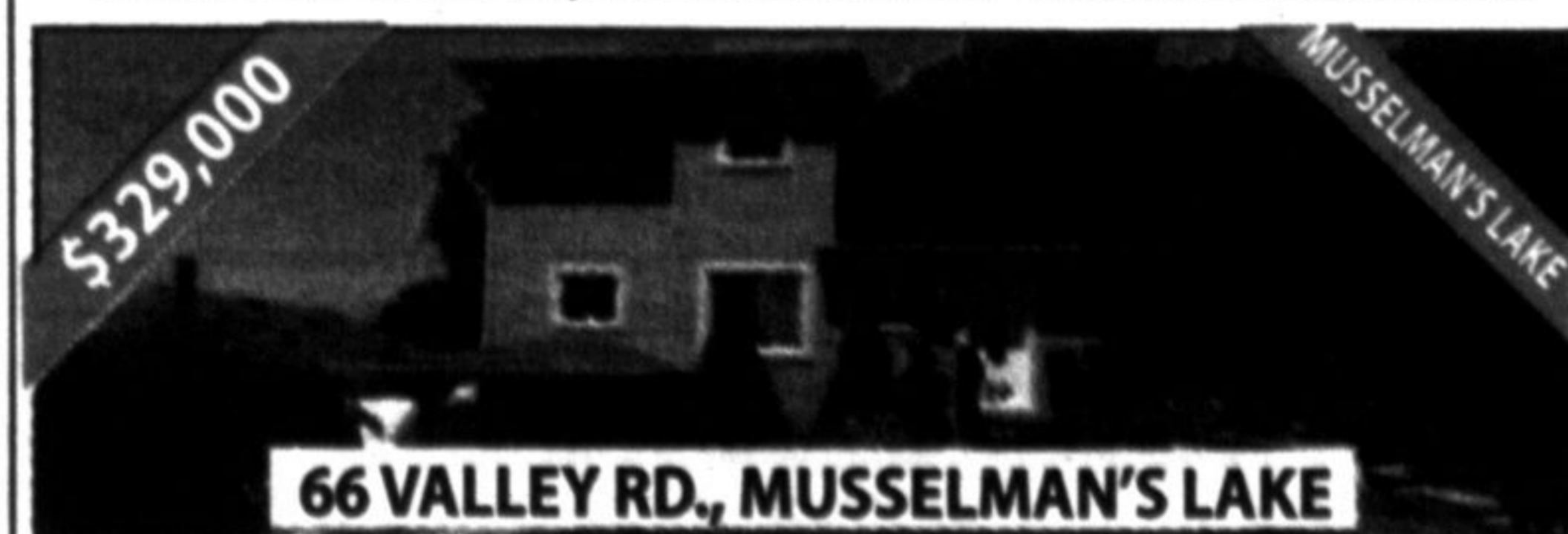
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