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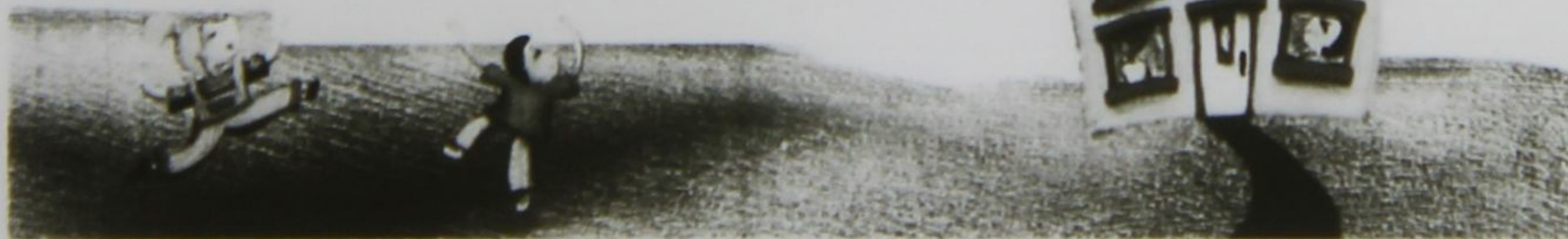
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James Bessey: Artist, Teacher, Friend

By Maura Broadhurst

It was with a heavy heart that the community learned of the passing of James Bessey on Sept. 13 at the age of 90.

Jim Bessey lived a full life that included family, nature, art and community. He touched people profoundly with his simplicity, respect, humour and wisdom and he leaves a rich legacy that echoes the dignity and sincerity with which he lived his life.

He began painting as an adult and was so inspired that he decided to dedicate his life to creating art. Despite a successful career in the business world, in 1972 he decided to commit his time to making a more direct contribution to his community and finding real fulfillment in his work. His painting became his full-time job with strict hours and high levels of productivity.

Jim moved to Stouffville in 1981 and quickly became a force in the community, especially as an artist. He regularly exhibited his work at the Latcham Gallery and it is in his paintings that one could learn more about the character of their creator.

Viewers fell in love with local scenes

depicting barns and homes in all seasons, as they did his paintings of the east coast, his still lifes and his abstracts. His subjects ranged from the Durham Forest to leaves fallen on fresh snow, from the homestead to a single wild iris.

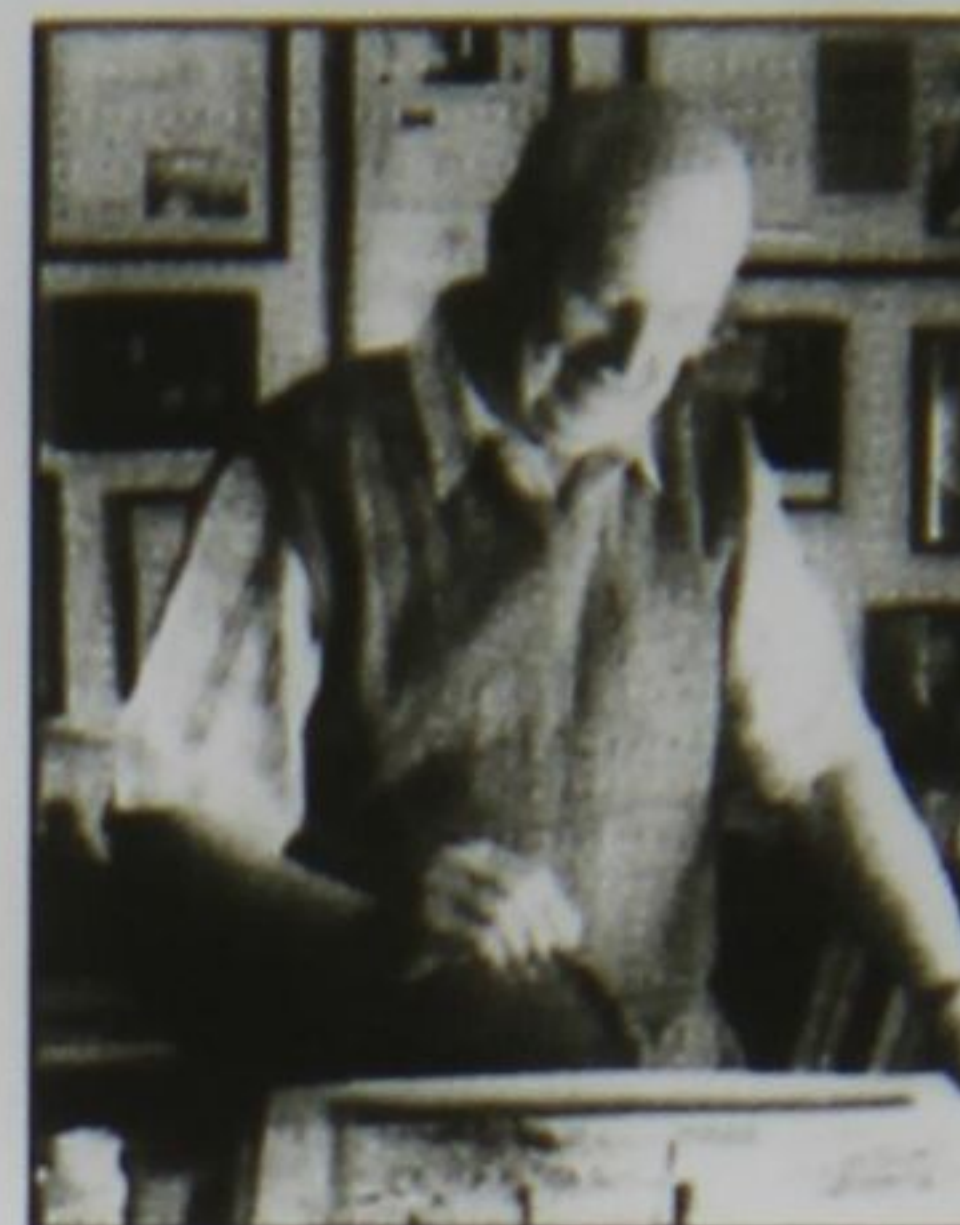
His paintings are simultaneously careful and inviting, brave and life-affirming. Painting was his way of sharing the land he felt lucky to be part of, giving back to his community and participating in and continuing the cycle of life.

Like everyone who knew Jim, I feel so blessed to have been able to call him a friend. Through the telling of a childhood memory, discussions about his paintings or the observation of the world around us, he taught me how to see a little more clearly, how to

live a little more lovingly and how to move through life with grace and a passion for learning.

Stouffville has lost a great man and a great artist, but we are so fortunate that he lives on in those of us who knew him and in the paintings he so generously gave to this world.

Maura Broadhurst is curator at The Latcham Gallery.



TAGGING TERRY

A colourful group of cheerleaders were on hand to welcome walkers, runners, cyclists and bladders back to the Lebovic Leisure Centre after the Terry Fox Run.



Huge crowds participated in this year's Terry Fox Run from the Lebovic Leisure Centre on Sept. 19. It was a beautiful day and a beautiful event. Way to go, Whitchurch-Stouffville!



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