

New Beginnings

Greek Odyssey



By Kinjal Dagli-Shah

The Kourvisianos' residence in Stouffville is a lively one at any time of the day.

It's always filled with the fresh aroma of Greek cuisine, the delighted squeals of three children, and often, an array of visiting cousins, friends and neighbours. Jim and Anthie Kourvisianos, along with Tina, 7, Kyri, 4 and George, 3, make for a welcoming family.

The family of five first visited Stouffville when it was "cold and dark," recalled Anthie, 34. "My brother-in-law has been here for about four years, and we would make a few visits every year from our apartment on Danforth. We never thought we'd move here too," she says.

But move they did, when they found this town both affordable and accessible. "We could live in a brand new townhouse here and be close to the family. So we traded in the downtown life. Besides, it's better for the children too. There are parks, splash pads and good schools," said Anthie, a stay-at-home mom. "And I have my own room," said Tina, who chipped in at regular intervals during the interview.

The family exudes warmth, and the large family on Jim's side explains why the children take little time to form an acquaintanceship. Kyri may just invite you on a toy roller coaster ride or a car chase, while George is only too happy to watch fairy tales with you, all the time wearing his cape so you know who the real prince is.

Tina, already a lady, will tell you how glad she is that you're her neighbour. And if you're lucky, like I was, you may just get rewarded with warm homemade cinnamon rolls and the kids calling you 'Thia', which is Greek for aunt.

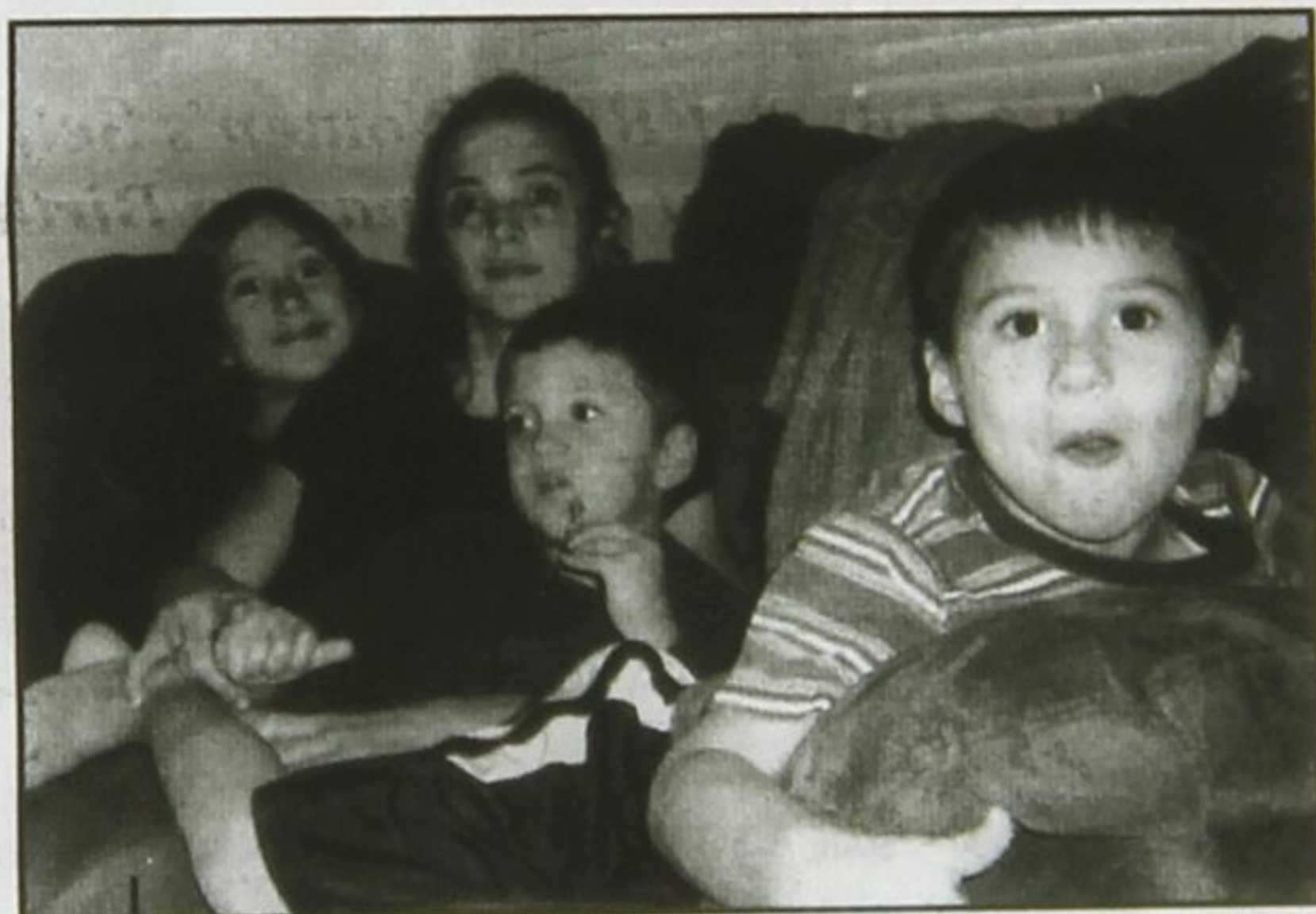
"My sister-in-law is also moving to Stouffville, so it's

only getting better," said Anthie, laughing. Her only complaint is that she misses the convenience of being able to walk to the corner store. "But, on the other hand, it's pretty, we have a backyard, and the kids have enough space to play," she said.

It was several decades ago that both Jim and Anthie's parents set sail on a boat from Athens to Halifax. The families settled in Toronto, and have lived there ever since, bringing up children, and now grandchildren. As second generation immigrants, Jim and Anthie are emblematic of a bicultural upbringing. And while their children naturally have a more Canadian influence, they are very much aware of their heritage and origin.

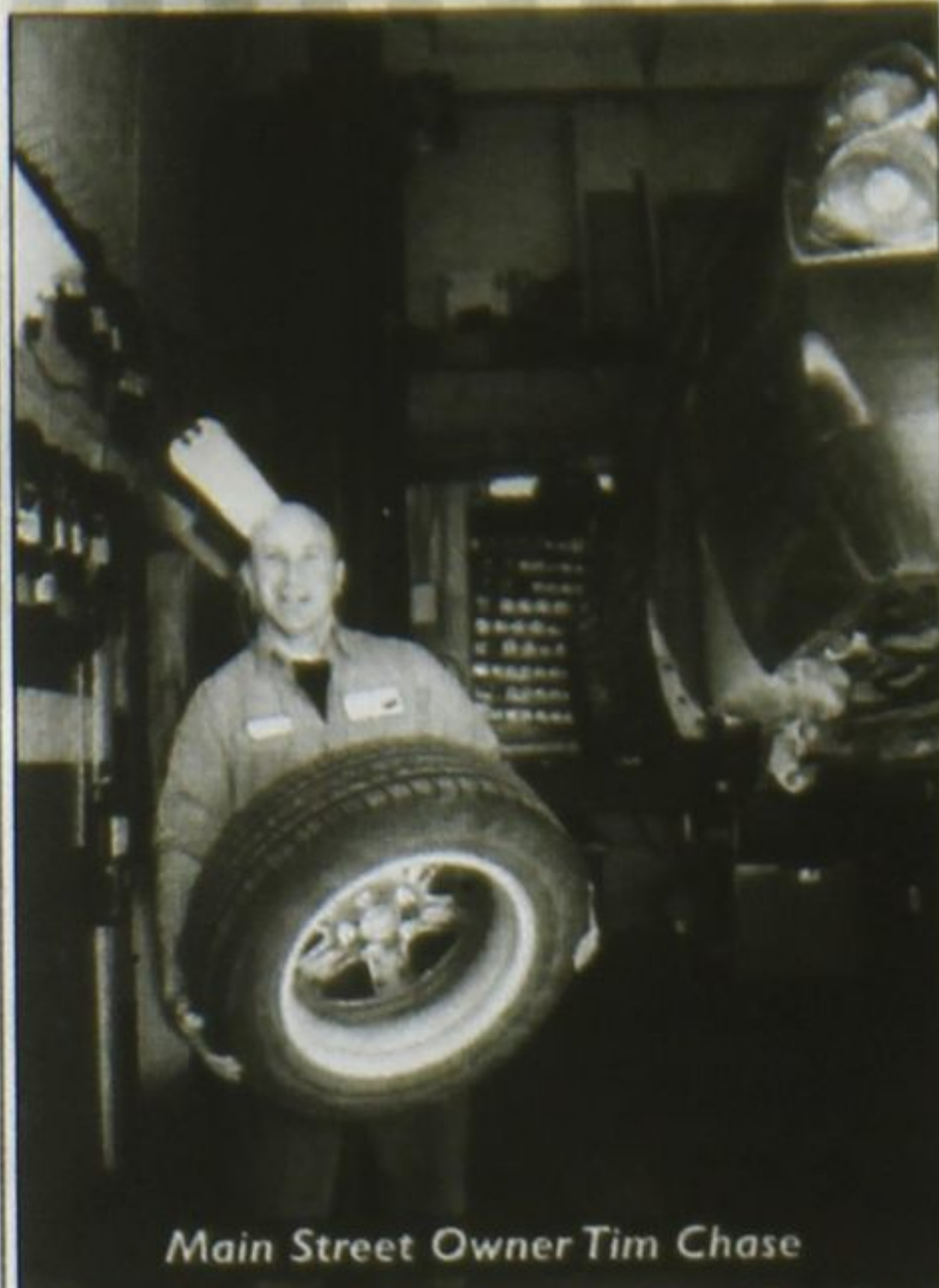
"Jim and I enjoy Greek music and dancing, and some of the foods that I learnt from my mom are the Greek-style lentils and the famous souvlaki. As a child, I used to visit my grandparents in Greece every summer. But I haven't been there since nine years ago," said Anthie, adding, "I'd love to plan a family vacation and take my kids because I still have aunts and cousins living there."

But until that plan materializes, visits from local family and friends abound, and there's much to look forward to at the Kourvisianos' home.



Anthie Kourvisianos snuggles up with Tina, 7, George, 3 and Kyri, 4 in their new Stouffville home.

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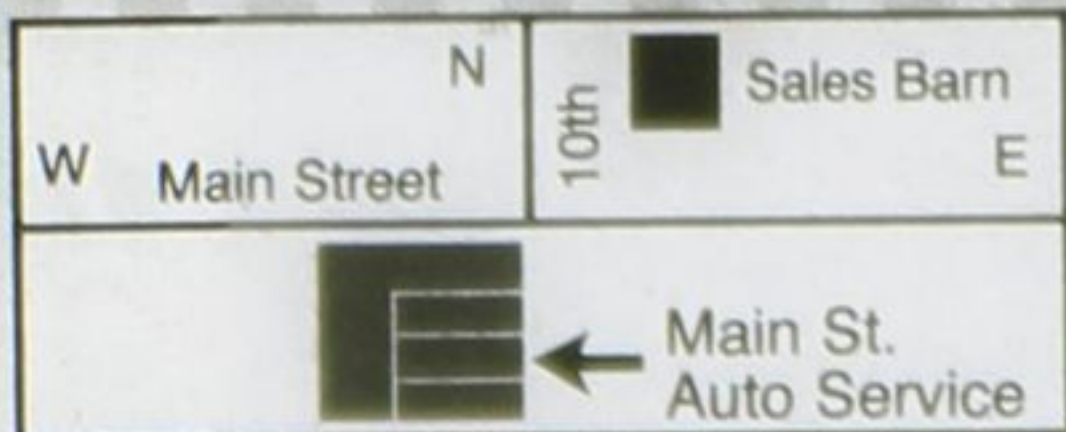
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