

Undies flapping in the breeze with celebration

My wife's envious. Almost daily she looks up and down our street and views amazing projects other wives' husbands have accomplished.

Then she looks at me and sees a dupe who can't replace a light bulb, weed a garden or make a bed.

All these admitted inabilities and yet she still expected me to somehow erect a backyard clothesline that's been on her honey-do list since September.

Oh the self-confessed aguish of her falling victim to such an unskilled work mate.

Although now out-of-season to hang clothing outside at minus 15 C, my mother did it and so undoubtedly did my grandmother. They'd haul in garments so rigidly stiff one would think the would-be wearers were still inside. But smelling a whole lot better. Ah yes, one has to agree, nothing beats shirts and socks; brassieres and bloomers dried in the great outdoors.

Failures aside, there's more to



Roaming Around

with Jim Thomas

consider than incompetence when erecting one of these elongated contraptions.

First, of course, is price. Stouffville's Canadian Tire has a huge number of diverse models on display, including now-common umbrella styles. The cost ranges from \$14.79 to \$159.99. They also come in various lengths and colours.

I purchased a 250-footer minus two rollers and two posts. These were leftovers from an earlier ordeal. I requested yellow,

my wife's favourite hue but the choice was somewhat limited. I was forced to select silver.

"Does the purchase include installation?" I asked the clerk.

"Afraid not," she replied with a smile. "You're on your own."

Woe was me!

However, prior to embarking on my backyard endeavour, I had to learn if, in this day and age, clotheslines are actually legal. I can recall that, in some Canadian provinces and U.S. states, the very thought of panties and undies flapping in the breeze caused near riots in many up-end neighbourhoods.

But, I discovered, storms of protest in Ontario were officially quashed several years ago, thanks to a proclamation issued by former premier Dalton McGuinty.

"I want parents to have the choice to use the sun and the wind to dry their clothes — for free," said McGuinty.

With this declaration, my final chance for respite went out the window. Still, wife Jean, always conscious of other people's feelings, felt it only fair to contact

neighbors and obtain approval of our project. None of those approached were opposed.

While I'm not suggesting it could happen in law-abiding Stouffville, there are, in some towns, prowlers by night who get their kicks out of preying on luckless clotheslines and escaping with all they can carry. Chances of arrest are extremely slim since no one's the wiser 'til morning. By then, the culprits are usually long gone.

There's also an annoying noise-level that must be considered. Unless the pulleys are regularly oiled, squeaks and squawks of taking in and taking out can awaken everyone on the block. To keep the peace, good public relations is extremely important.

On the positive side, a smooth operating clothesline represents a sizeable money-saver. Up to \$30 a year if dryer-use is reduced by 25 percent. That's a reduction worth considering.

And we have.

A clothesline often tells a story — a newborn, (diapers); a profession, (uniforms); hotel tow-

els, (vacations) and slobber bibs, (pets). It can also point to a family's desire for cleanliness.

Washings hung thrice weekly have seemingly replaced the once-popular Monday morning routine.

However, the worst occurred last — the actual installation. Since our compact roll of wire contained no understandable directions, I, plus two assistants, wife Jean and son Barry, had to undertake the task through trial and error, a laborious trial and multiple errors.

The grand finale of it all, both ends came together with a 24 inches overlap.

Good reason for much celebration. I, along with significant verbal advice, had finally exceeded all expectations.

Although the heavily loaded clothesline has a huge sag in the centre, this problem can easily be corrected with the overdue removal of my winter woollies.

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

CONGRATULATIONS

to the winners and a special thank you to everyone who purchased raffle tickets at the 5th Annual Hockey Night in Stouffville to benefit Markham Stouffville Hospital.



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(L-R) Lindsay Milne, Alexandra Milne, Jo-anne Marr, President & CEO, Markham Stouffville Hospital, Colin Milne and Michael Milne

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