

Vintage Whine

Going South

By Kate Gilderdale
Stouffville Free Press



Jim Thomas gave me my first freelance assignment when he was editor of the Stouffville Tribune, back when my journalistic credentials could be written on the head of a pin. I will never forget his support and encouragement and feel very fortunate that he and Jean have become special friends.

Our wonderful local pals - Tim and Joey, Joe and Marie, Ben, Nyree, Jasper, Fred and Reg, John and Jan, Jennet, Jack, James and Cynthia to name just a few - have shared our joys and sorrows, and have been there for us through thick and thin.

And then there's Sandy Schell Kennedy, whose incredible volunteer work for so many causes, including the local Terry Fox Run, has made her one of my all-time heroes. Right up there with Sandy is Joe Cote, a long-serving member of the amazing Stouffville Lions Club and one of the kindest, gentlest and most giving people I have ever met.

Of course, I can't throw in the towel without a big thank you to the Free Press gang - Bruce, David, Sheri, Travis, Nicole and Jann, not to mention all our wonderful freelancers - who have patiently put up with my quirky, some might say bizarre, headlines, my elastic idea of what constitutes news and my pathological fear of rogue apostrophes in all the wrong places.

Stouffville gave me opportunities I doubt I would have found anywhere else in the world. My children grew up here, in a house they - and we - still love and will find very hard to leave. It was built back in 1927 by the Schells, and whenever we renovated it, Schell Lumber was where we went for supplies.

And as we prepare to close the door on this house and this chapter of our lives, we would like to thank everyone who made a couple of superannuated Brits and proud Canadian citizens feel so welcome for so many years.

As Mr. Wallethead and I say a fond farewell to the 'ville, I find myself revisiting the circumstances that led us to settle in a town whose name, at the time, no one south of Markham could pronounce or spell and which, back then, most people had never even heard of.

We came to Canada in 1975 with dreams of living in the city, until we realized that our budget would barely cover the cost of a garden shed in the centre of the universe (aka Toronto). In our first year we rented an apartment on Thorncliffe Park Drive while searching for a suitable spot to grow the Gilderdale brand.

When we first got here, we knew a grand total of six people in all of Canada - none of them well. One couple lived on a beautiful farm on 10th Line, on land now occupied by estate homes, and we spent many magical weekends there baling hay, imbibing bottles of Old Vienna by the neck, watching the fireflies and swimming under the stars.

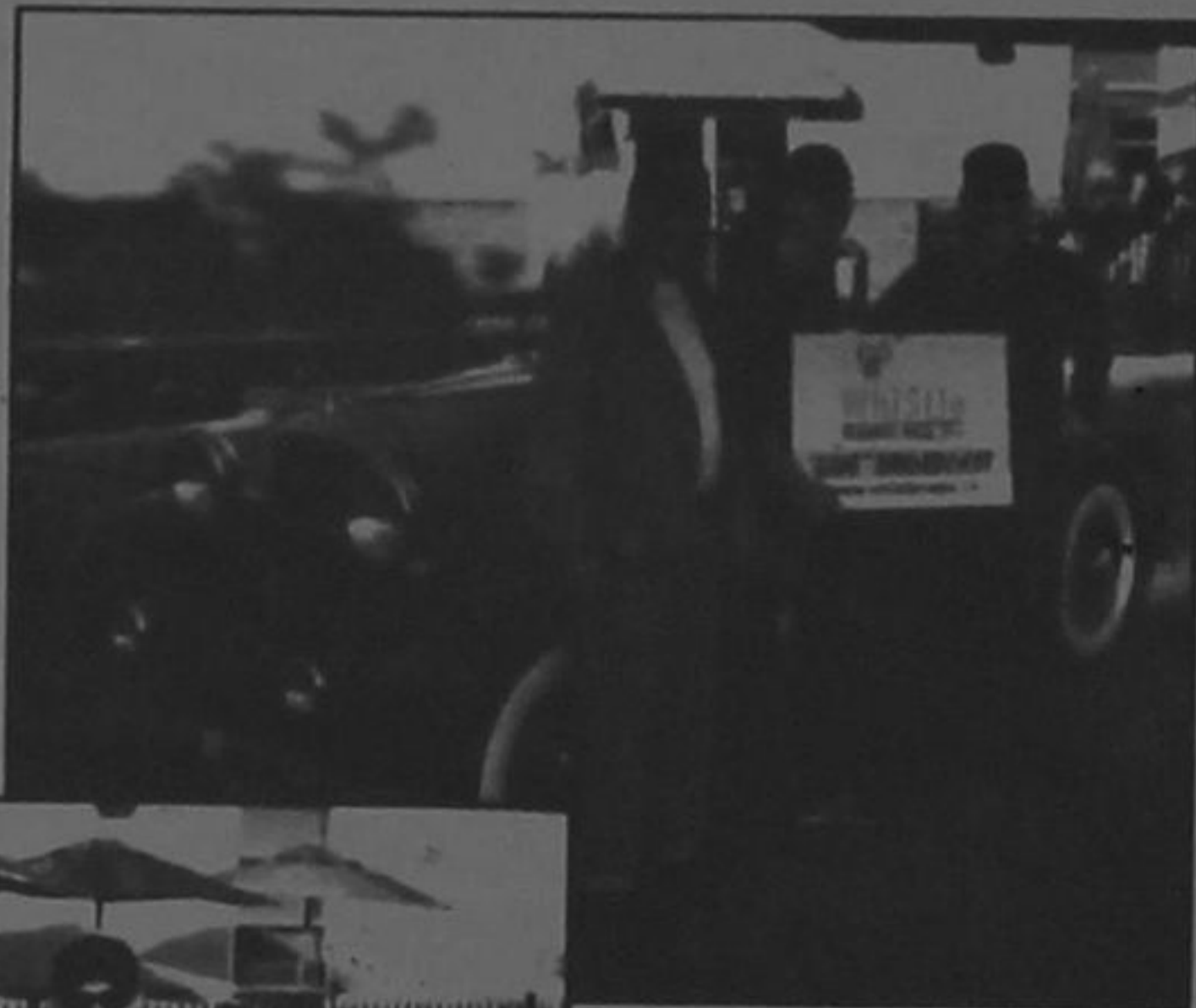
One day our friends told us there was a house for sale on Main Street they thought we'd like. We instantly fell in love with it, but obviously we couldn't live here; it was miles from anywhere - beyond the tree line as one of our Toronto friends put it - and public transit was non-existent.

A few weeks later we moved in, telling ourselves we'd be here for a year or two at most. Thirty-nine years, two children, seven cats and one grandchild later, we are finally decamping for High Park, switching our allegiance from Musselman's Lake to Lake Ontario and our 'hood from Main Street to Roncesvalles and Bloor West Village.

We will leave behind many treasured friends, and we will take with us memories to last a lifetime. This column isn't long enough to list everyone who has made the last four decades unforgettable, but here is just a sample.

Cruise Control

Stouffville Cruise Night at the Stouffville Legion showcases classic cars, trucks and motorcycles. The event, which is open to everyone in the community, takes place from 5 p.m. to dusk on Tuesday evenings and includes a barbecue, 50/50 draws and live music with WhiStle Radio. Pictured are some recently selected cars of the week.



A 1932 Ford Deuce owned by Scott Murray of Stouffville (centre) seen here with Jerry Corbett (left) and Peter Fraunberger of WhiStle Radio.



WhiStle Radio's Jimmy Lytle (left) and Peter Fraunberger (right) with Erle Hoover and his Plymouth 1969 Road Runner 383.

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