

The Mississauga Times
People and Events
Business
Real Estate
Classified

This man has polar passion

By JOHN STEWART

"If this is a con, then you deserve the money for your nerve and imagination. If you are on the level, then good luck."
 Mississauga businessman Jim Taylor had a good laugh when he got that first response about his request for funds to help sponsor his planned motorcycle trip to March to the North Pole, but he's not laughing now.

Too many other people in the meantime have considered Taylor's plans a con as well, including the Canadian government.

Taylor, a real estate salesman with Polzler Real Estate in Malton's Westwood Mall, admits he is depressed about the lack of seriousness about his project by the public Canadian companies and the government.

"I'm just about ready to have a nervous breakdown," Taylor said recently as he sat in the basement of his Brampton home.

The 40-year-old salesman has been up until about 3 a.m. every night writing letters to businesses asking them to support his project. It will cost about \$25,000.

**2,000 letters,
80 replies**

Of 2,287 letters he has sent, Taylor has received 80 replies and \$125 has been donated. It cost him \$1,200 to send the letters.

A large advertisement Taylor placed in the Toronto Star cost him \$3,300 but only \$450 in contributions resulted.

Taylor has a gimmick to get public support: he will list names of contributors to his project in a capsule which he will put through the ice and sink at the North Pole. A contribution of \$150 would bring the donor a letter cancelled at the Pole.

Taylor, on a leave of absence from work has spent an estimated \$11,000 on his polar project over the last four months.

He has sold a farm he owned and is now selling his home.

"I won't have anything left when I leave, but I'm not worried. I can always recuperate," he says.

Taylor is irked by the government's lack of support.

He notes that foreign governments think nothing of giving funds to sponsor individuals who make polar trips that will bring glory to the nation.

He says Canadians have never really done anything in the way of Arctic exploration.

"John Kennedy once said, 'Ask not what your country can do for you, but ask what you can do for your country.' In Canada it seems that you can't do anything for your country."

Taylor is an expert in the history of Arctic exploration and has a record of the 756 men who have died in polar exploration since 1553.

He can't see why the government won't sponsor his trip when they "waste" thousands of dollars on projects such as Rochdale College in Toronto.

First solo expedition

There has never been a successful solo expedition across the polar ice from Cape Columbia to the Pole—a distance of 450 miles.

In recent years, teams have made it to the Pole on skidoos, but Taylor has no respect for the way in which these ventures were carried out.

"They had airplanes going ahead to tell them the best way to go.

"They were dropped hot coffee and clean underwear. To me, having an air escort is an insult."

Taylor sees his junket as a throwback to attempts to reach the Pole by the early explorers whom he greatly admires.

A former pilot in the Northwest Territories, Taylor has done extensive research for his planned trip.

He will be riding a 1974, five-gear Suzuki motorbike especially designed by the company for the trip.

A potential advantage of the bike, which will have a special ski attachment for the front wheel, is that it should be able to negotiate the first 150 miles—strewn with pressure edges—much better than any other vehicle.

Pressure edges are formed when sheets of ocean ice collide and a barrier between 20 and 60 feet high is formed.

Taylor hopes that the bike will be able to slip through narrow passageways of the pressure edges. He hopes to save valuable time by not having to make the long trek around the edges.

When he comes upon edges too steep to negotiate, he will use a winch to pull up the bike. For the first 150 miles Taylor will also use three Huskies to pull cylindrical sleds carrying gasoline supplies.



Mississauga businessman Jim Taylor expects to ride his custom-made Suzuki motorbike to the north pole in March, despite a lack of support for the project to date. The rifle will be taken along as protection against polar bears. (Times photo by Ron Pozzer).

A plane will fly out from Resolute, N.W.T. to pick up the dogs once Taylor is through the pressure edges.

The cost of this will be \$7,000, but Taylor says he would not have the heart to kill the dogs or leave them to die on the ice.

He'll use three huskies

Once clear of the edges, Taylor hopes the way will be relatively clear to the Pole.

If a snowstorm should set in and he is unable to travel, he could drift miles off course until travelling conditions improve.

Taylor is taking all the spare parts for his machine. In case he loses his main supplies, he has emergency rations in the bike itself—for example, raisins in the handle bars and chocolate inside the tire rims.

Taylor will sleep in a lean-to tent that will be draped over the bike. He will sleep in open areas to avoid polar bears.

The greatest physical danger will probably be Taylor's perspiration. If his clothes get wet and freeze, he could be in "real trouble." There is no way to dry off things in the Arctic.

Taylor's sleeping bag has zippered vents at the bottom of it so that he can regulate the heat and ensure he doesn't become overheated and get the bag wet.

In case of trouble, Taylor will be able to call his base camp and set up an emergency beacon to allow rescue.

Taylor fears mental dangers more than physical ones. He has been advised to fantasize a lot and to sing to himself to allay the eerie sounds of the Arctic.

Panic could set in easily

"Panic could set in easily," admits Taylor, who has experience in two Arctic crash landings.

Taylor says he's "not a quitter" and hopes the government will support him to lift him from his "run-down" mental state at present.

He was supposed to start physical training for his trip two months ago, but has been too busy to begin yet because of the financial difficulties.

Taylor is considering writing to American motorcycle showman Evil Knievel for financial support.

Anyone wishing to contribute to Taylor's expedition write P.O. Box 4023, Station A, Toronto M5W 1H8.

Oasis of help for unwed mothers

by Sandy Stouth



Armagh

Seventeen, single and pregnant. It may be hard for some people to understand why it happens in today's society when birth-control devices are so easily accessible.

"The pill isn't the answer," explains Mary Farmery, director of Armagh. "One finds that a girl develops a strange reversal of values, especially when they don't have security in childhood."

For 20 years, Armagh has assisted unwed mothers from across Canada and from every income bracket. The residence, sequestered by heavy foliage on Meadowwood Rd., is enclosed with black iron gates.

"The girls may be reaching out for affection or they may be trying to emulate a parent if they have been displaced in the breakup of the home. There are very many reasons for pregnancies in a single adolescent," says Mrs. Farmery.

Sponsored by the Presbyterian Church in Canada, Armagh was basically a home for unwed mothers until last year.

"The program has expanded to include girls in any situation of stress. We feel pregnancy is only one of the many stressful situations. It may be symptomatic of other problems a girl may have," says Mrs. Farmery.

The home had formerly been a private residence, owned by a well-known family from the county of Armagh in Northern Ireland.

All the rooms of the spacious home are extensively used by the 22 girls and eight full-time staff workers.

A new wing was added in 1956 which includes sleeping quarters and a tiny chapel.

"We encourage girls to come to Armagh anytime

after the fourth month of pregnancy because we not only foresee problems in their own health but also problems in the unborn child's health," says Mrs. Farmery. "Babies that are born malnourished are potential drains upon the community."

Residents of the home are far from listless during their four-month stay. Natural childbirth lessons are given daily, and the girls participate in recreational activities and assist with housework.

"The teaching program is geared to give the residents a good grounding in hygiene, sex education and motherhood.

"We try to stress that Armagh is a learning process which will help her throughout her life," Mrs. Farmery says.

Guidance counsellors, agencies in the communities parents and sometimes courts refer the girls to Armagh. Aside from looking after the grounds and meals, the girls work in teams to do daily chores such as vacuuming and dusting.

"Throughout the pregnancy, the average housewife is used to doing some type of housework. Our program teaches the girls homecraft and they learn how to live in a group on a community basis," Mrs. Farmery says.

Living in a group situation helps give the girls a better perspective on their problems. "The peer group situation is very helpful," says Mrs. Farmery. "They begin to realize their problems are very small potatoes. They also realize they are not the only pebble on the beach."

Two staff workers are registered nurses and a local doctor is on call to assist the girls.

Although there is no age limit, the average age of the residents is 17. Parents usually offer to pay one-third of the cost.

"The highest in our priorities is treating these girls as persons. They need to recognize their capabilities and responsibilities. We do it with a great deal of security and love."

Director Mary Farmery outside Armagh. Times photo by Ron Pozzer.