

SPORTS

"Quote/unquote"

*'It's a story of growing up,
on a bigger platform.'*

— Tom Byckowski... see story below

Local native, star athlete releases first book

By **EAMONN MAHER**
Staff Writer

A Georgetown native who is currently in his second year at Western University has written a book that includes many connections to his time growing up in this area.

Nineteen-year-old Tom Byckowski, a second-year English major at Western, was a standout hockey and baseball player during his time here before the family moved to Etobicoke four years ago.



TOM BYCKOWSKI

So, it's understandable that some of those locals who knew Byckowski well might be a little surprised that his book has absolutely nothing to do with sports. It's actually a science-fiction fantasy novel called *Oura* that is the first in a four-part series about two teenage

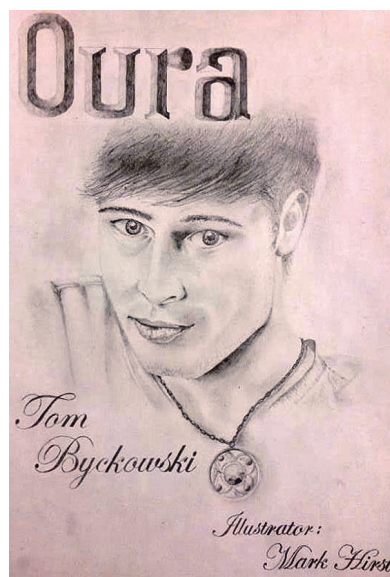
brothers with special telepathic abilities called Mindwalkers.

"People will recognize names like Cedarvale Park in the book. It evolves in my transition from being in Georgetown to moving to Toronto and the growth and responsibilities that came with it and who you become," said the St. Michael's College graduate, whose long-time friend and local resident Mark Hirst designed the cover for the book.

"It's a story everyone can relate to because at some point in our lives everyone has a change from the person they once were, to the person they are about to become. It's a story of growing up, on a bigger platform."

Byckowski, with dad Bill serving as head coach, was the shortstop with power at the plate for the Georgetown Eagles' AAA baseball teams that won Canadian championships as peewees in 2007 and at the bantam level in 2009.

He still plays recreational hockey and this past summer was a member of the Guelph



Silvercreeks' junior baseball team, but sports is no longer his number-one focus, as the intro on his twitter feed would suggest: "Born on the diamond, resurrected in lines of ink."

Last year, he turned down a baseball scholarship offer to attend the University of British Columbia and while he may still pursue that avenue, it would seem he's become im-

mersed in Western's literary community, where he often talks with professors from the English Department about the direction of his book writing.

The idea of Tommy the author may sound strange to some, but it's something he had plenty of time to ponder while dealing with the effects of an estimated six concussions he's suffered since Grade 5 -- five of them occurring while playing hockey.

"The worst one happened in Grade 9. It was my third concussion," the St. Catherine of Alexandria elementary school grad added.

"I couldn't play sports for a while and couldn't even participate in gym class at school. It felt like I didn't have anything to offer as a person because I couldn't do what I loved the most. That's when I realized I needed something more than sports to fall back on when I got older and that's when I got the idea of writing a novel."

The self-published book is available on Kindle and Byckowski has had a few hundred

"likes" on *Oura's* Facebook page. He's hoping that the yet-to-be-entitled, half-finished second book will be available in paperback and should be ready for publishing in the summer, having had discussions with a potential publicist to get more exposure.

"I'm really excited about finishing the second book because I'll already have something to show a publisher, and there's a good and bad side to that," said Byckowski, whose younger brother Robert is a member of Canada's junior national baseball team.

Bill is a scout for Major League Baseball's Cincinnati Reds and mother Barbara, an investment advisor with RBC in Milton, came up with the title *Oura*.

"Not many people in the writing industry are going to take a 19-year-old seriously, but I'm just going to keep working at it and if someone does take you seriously, it's a big thing. For now though, we're going to stay self-published and see where it goes."

Rebels, Jags win convincingly

Georgetown Rebels' forward Mitchell Davey (12) has his scoring attempt blocked by the Craig Kielburger netminder during a Halton high school boys' hockey tilt last week at Alcott Arena. The 2-4 Rebels unleashed an offensive barrage on the winless Milton school in a 9-0 victory with goals going to Jake Payne (3), Nick Campbell (2), Jake MacNeil, Chris Brydie, Brock Haynes, Michael Goddard. Brandon Phair earned the shutout. Also last week, Christ the King's varsity boys improved to 6-1 with an 8-0 trouncing of visiting Assumption of Burlington.

Photo by Chris Carvalho



Raiders edged by Blades

The Georgetown Raiders dropped a one-goal contest to the Oakville Blades and were iced out of their scheduled home game in Ontario Junior Hockey League play over the weekend.

The 18-15-2 Raiders remain just five points back of the Buffalo Jr. Sabres for top spot in the OJHL's West Division heading into the two-week break for the holidays.

John Adams and Ryan Smith, shorthanded, scored for the Raiders in the 3-2 loss to the Blades, who netted the winning marker with just under five minutes to go in the third period.

Georgetown's home tilt against the Milton Ice-Hawks was postponed due to the ice storm.

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