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Sikh students attacked at OTHS

By Nancy Alexander & Howard Mozel

One student has been arrested and charges are pending against others following a racially motivated assault last week at Oakville-Trafalgar High School (OTHS).

The assault on two Sikh students resulted in one victim being treated in hospital for a fractured skull while the

Criminal charges laid, others pending in racially-motivated assault

other received minor injuries. Both are students at OTHS.

The altercation occurred just outside the school on February 15 as students were leaving for the day.

OTHS principal Larry Dilanni called the incident "ugly and regrettable". He said the occurrence was unique in his five-year tenure at the school in that it

involved racial and religious overtones.

Sergeant Frank Phillips, spokesperson for Halton Regional Police, confirmed the investigation is on-going.

"It is quite sad and very outrageous," says Amrit Rai, spokesperson for the Oakville Sikh Cultural Association. "We're still sorting through the pieces."

Rai - who said racial slurs against

Sikhs do happen in schools - explained that his association is undertaking a two-prong approach to the incident, the first avenue being pressing the police for action

"This is hate crime ... and as such we are pushing that charges be laid," said Rai.

The association is also working to

help maintain an environment for learning, not violence, by asking the board to take a tough stand on those responsible for the assault. Only then, he added, will other young people think twice about even considering such reprehensible actions.

"Students are there to learn and their
(See 'Incident' page A2)

Celebrate our roots for Heritage Week

The Oakville Historical Society is staging four major events to celebrate Heritage Week.

Gloria Oakes of the United Empire Loyalists Association will talk about Ontario's Loyalist roots at an OHS meeting at Knox Presbyterian Church, Lakeshore Road and Dunn Street, tonight at 7:30 p.m. This is a free lecture, however donations will be welcome.

Publications from the society will be available for purchase at this meeting.

The OHS will have three displays at its archives and office at 110 King St., today throughout Feb. 25th, and again on Feb. 27th, from 1 to 4 p.m.

These exhibits include the George Sumner Diaries, from 1867 to 1909. Sumner was a local police constable and well known historical figure.

A Thomas House Museum Sampling will feature personal items and artifacts from this 1830s pioneer cabin, a popular summer attraction at Lakeside Park.

And, there's Oakville: Getting Around, the society's major archival exhibit of transportation from the 1850s to 1950s.

For more information, call the Oakville Historical Society at 844-2695.

Catch Canadian film

The Wednesday Film Festival continues its Winter 2000 run tonight with The Five Senses. This Canadian film is directed by Jeremy Podeswa, is rated AA and runs for 105 minutes.

Each of the five senses is ingeniously explored with witty charm in Jeremy Podeswa's fine feature film. The cleverly structured story follows the lives of five people who each have an intimate relationship to one particular sense. "Warm, funny and perceptive," reports Variety. The Five Senses was named Best Canadian Film at the Toronto International Film Festival.

The Wednesday Film Festival screenings take place every second Wednesday at 7 p.m. at the Famous Players Cinemas in the Oakville Town Centre I, located at Dorval and the QEW.

Tickets are available at the door starting at 6:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$8 for non-members and \$6 for members of the Wednesday Film Festival, Oakville Arts Council, Oakville Centre Big Ticket, Oakville Galleries, Friends of the Library, and Oakville Museum. Membership cards must be shown at point of purchase.

For more information about the Wednesday Film Festival, call 815-5977.

Auxiliary officers wanted

The Halton Regional Police Auxiliary unit is looking for new volunteer officers to round out this community policing program.

A total of 20 auxiliary officers are needed to help meet the increasing demands of the service

To that end, an open house information session has been scheduled for tomorrow, from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. in the south auditorium of police headquarters at 1151 Bronte Rd.



Photo by Peter C. McCusker

LAST SLIDE OF WINTER? The temperatures were okay for the slopes up until Monday, but rising temperatures yesterday and throughout the week, will play havoc with the hills at Bronte Creek Provincial Park. Getting in what might be their final slide of the season are Brad and Margrethe Norman.

Bronte trees make way for washrooms, parking

By Howard Mozel
OAKVILLE BEAVER STAFF

Sixteen trees on the west side of Bronte Harbour are being cut down to make way for parking expansion and new washrooms.

The renovations, which are set to begin this spring, are part of the Bronte Harbour Master Plan, a 10-year blueprint prepared by the Oakville Harbours Development Authority (OHDA) and Oakville Parks and Recreation and approved last May.

According to Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Chris Mark, the majority of the trees are willows in the latter stages of their lifespan. Many of these, Mark explained, are "structurally unsound" and have been trimmed down severely over the years.

Mark explained that the original plan was to move the parking lot further back into a hill but it was determined that this would have had a greater impact on existing vegetation in the area. It was decided, then, to pull the lot to the north.

"For a lot of people, parking is definitely an issue in Bronte," he said. "Residents are telling us this on a regular basis."

Mark went on to say that trees are one of the town's most valuable resources so the decision to remove the willows was not made lightly.

"Unfortunately, to achieve the efficiency of parking we want, the trees have to come down," he said. "It was not something we relish doing."

About 25 new parking spaces will be added as a result of the expansion, bringing the total number of spots to 66. Mark said 23 new trees will be planted adjacent to the site, more than were cut down.

The existing washroom building is
(See 'Trees' page A2)



Photo by Barrie Erskine

Trees like this one by Bronte Beach Park are coming down to make way for new washrooms and more parking.

Rising temperatures prompt flood safety advisory in Halton

Conservation Halton-CH, (formerly the Halton Region Conservation Authority) yesterday issued a Flood Safety Advisory for all area creeks and streams.

With warmer temperatures expected to last through the weekend, CH anticipates localized flooding in low-lying areas.

With waterways expected to rise above normal with high flows and weakened ice conditions, cold water temperatures and unstable banks, CH says all watercourses and ponds should be considered dangerous.

CH is warning everyone, especially children, to stay away from these areas.

The Advisory is in effect through Feb. 28th but will be updated if conditions change.

Teen runs out of time for transplant

Oakville's Christopher Cooling, 17, has lost his battle with acute myeloid leukemia.

Chris died about midnight on Sat. Feb. 19, surrounded by family and friends at McMaster University Medical Centre.

The Oakville Trafalgar High School student who loved snowboarding had battled the disease since last June and his death has come as a shock to all who knew him.

"It's been a difficult week," says his mother, Paulette. "His immune system was very weak and he just couldn't fight any longer. He was a wonderful person and so strong through this. He never complained. I'm amazed at the amount of people he touched. The phone hasn't stopped ringing. I'm sure he's up there snowboarding in heaven."

Paulette and her husband Scott had hoped a suitable bone marrow match would be found for their only child and two bone marrow donor information sessions set for today at Oakville Trafalgar High School on Devon Rd. are still planned. The family hopes people still come out to learn how the registry works so they may be tested for others on the waiting list if they wish.

Visitation will be held today at Ward Funeral Home from 12 to 4 p.m. The funeral takes place at St. Andrew's Church tomorrow (Thursday) at 2:30 p.m.

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