

Whitby's Meredith Cutting is 'The Singing Policeman'



MEREDITH CUTTING, "The Singing Policeman," guest artist at "The Sounds of Music," the Henry Street High School music department program last week. Free Press photo

It's not unusual for this police officer to see frowns turn into smiles, however temporary, when he hands out tickets for speeding.

"Aren't you 'The Singing Policeman?'" is the refrain Meredith Cutting of the Metropolitan Toronto Police force sometimes hears from offenders.

A big man with an easy smile, the 14-year resident of Whitby has been a popular performer since 1973 on television's Uncle Bobby Show which evolved from a duet made up of Cutting and Rob Henderson, then known as "The Singing Policemen."

He no longer does tapings of the show, but reruns, guest spots on other networks as well as local live appearances make him recognizable to many as the one and only "Singing Policeman."

One such appearance was last week at Henry Street High School where, also as guest artist of the music department show, he had previously appeared six years earlier when his brother Jerry was at the school.

"We played together," he beams. He admits most of his shows are

now in Durham Region, including his work as music minister at St. John the Evangelist Church, or pub nights at Whitby General Hospital.

He limits his appearances, for the most part, to Durham Region. It enables him to spend more time

with his family once he's off radar duty in Toronto.

He plays acoustic and electric guitar (is proud of his six collector item guitars) as well as clarinet, sax, oboe, flute and bassoon. On this night at Henry, he's particularly appreciative of his musical accompanists, school students Paul French and Randall Chung on guitar, and son Mike Cutting, 15, on drums, wearing sunglasses. He beams again.

Cutting has kind remarks for the musical programs offered by Henry's Barrie Hodgins as well as the work being done in other Whitby schools. During the show, which also features the Symphonic Band and Jazz Crusaders, he compliments the audiovisual crew.

He likes big band music and jazz as well as pop, rock and folk tunes. He pays tribute to the King, Elvis Presley, and later a 1970's protest

song, the Youngbloods' Get Together.

"I started playing in high school," recalls Cutting, 39, of his now 24-year-old career. "In 1964, I became a folkie - I was inspired by Gordon Lightfoot and Peter, Paul and Mary."

The music of Lightfoot has always been a favorite and is regular fare on Cutting's musical menu. Roger Whittaker, Al Jolson, Nana Mouskouri and 50's, 60's rock make up other offerings.

Cutting says one of his greatest thrills was meeting Lightfoot. I didn't realize until told by a fellow officer that he had been parking his radar car in front of Lightfoot's home for six months.

"Anyway I eventually bumped into him and we later went into his home for a coffee. And we played," He's beaming again.

He likes his "Singing Policeman" image and says it helps the overall image of the police department.

"I once stopped a lady for speeding. After a while she looked at me and then asked 'Is your name Meredith? My daughter recognized your voice,'" she said.

Durham students rate above average in math

Durham Region's Gr. 8 and Gr. 13 math students equalled or exceeded provincial averages in correctly answering tests held in 1985 and 1986.

The findings, presented to the board last week by math consultant Les Dow, showed that correct answer averages for Durham Gr. 8 students at the end of the 1985-86 school year were above Ontario averages in all of the 15 areas examined.

Data was taken from 100 Gr. 8 classes in 50 Durham schools, for a total of 3,031 students. The 15 math test areas included whole numbers, fractions, equations and algebraic expressions.

A sample question in the Gr. 8 test was "30 is 75 per cent of what number?" with five multiple choice answers given. Results showed that 68 per cent of Durham students correctly answered the questions, compared to 54 per cent in the United States, 61 per cent in Ontario and 47 per cent in Japan.

Durham Gr. 8 students exceeded international averages in every area where international data was available.

Results favored males in all but three of the 15 areas, according to data taken from 1,515 females and 1,468 males in Durham.

"However, only in the case of per cent, coordinates and informal transformations (three of the areas) do these differences appear to be of significant magnitude to warrant attention," states Dow in his report.

He said achievement was also

higher in Gr. 8 classes in kindergarten to Gr. 8 schools, according to end-of-year (post-test) results. Date (pre-test) was also taken at the beginning of the school year.

Dow said classes in Gr. 7-8 (senior public) schools showed lower pre-test scores than those in K-8 schools, which suggests that "difference apparent at the beginning of Gr. 8 are maintained at the end of the year."

The Gr. 13 test involved students who were taking calculus and at least one other Gr. 13 math course, a total of 649 students from Durham's 15 secondary schools.

Again, 15 content areas were covered including sets, relations and functions, trigonometry, functions, geometry, algebra and statistics. Durham's average score exceeded or equalled the Ontario average in all 15 areas.

In math achievement data gathered from 368 males and 279 females, males had higher achievement than females.

The study method was the same used in 1981-82 when Ontario took part in the Second International Mathematics Study. The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education offered an analysis to Ontario school boards in 1985-86.

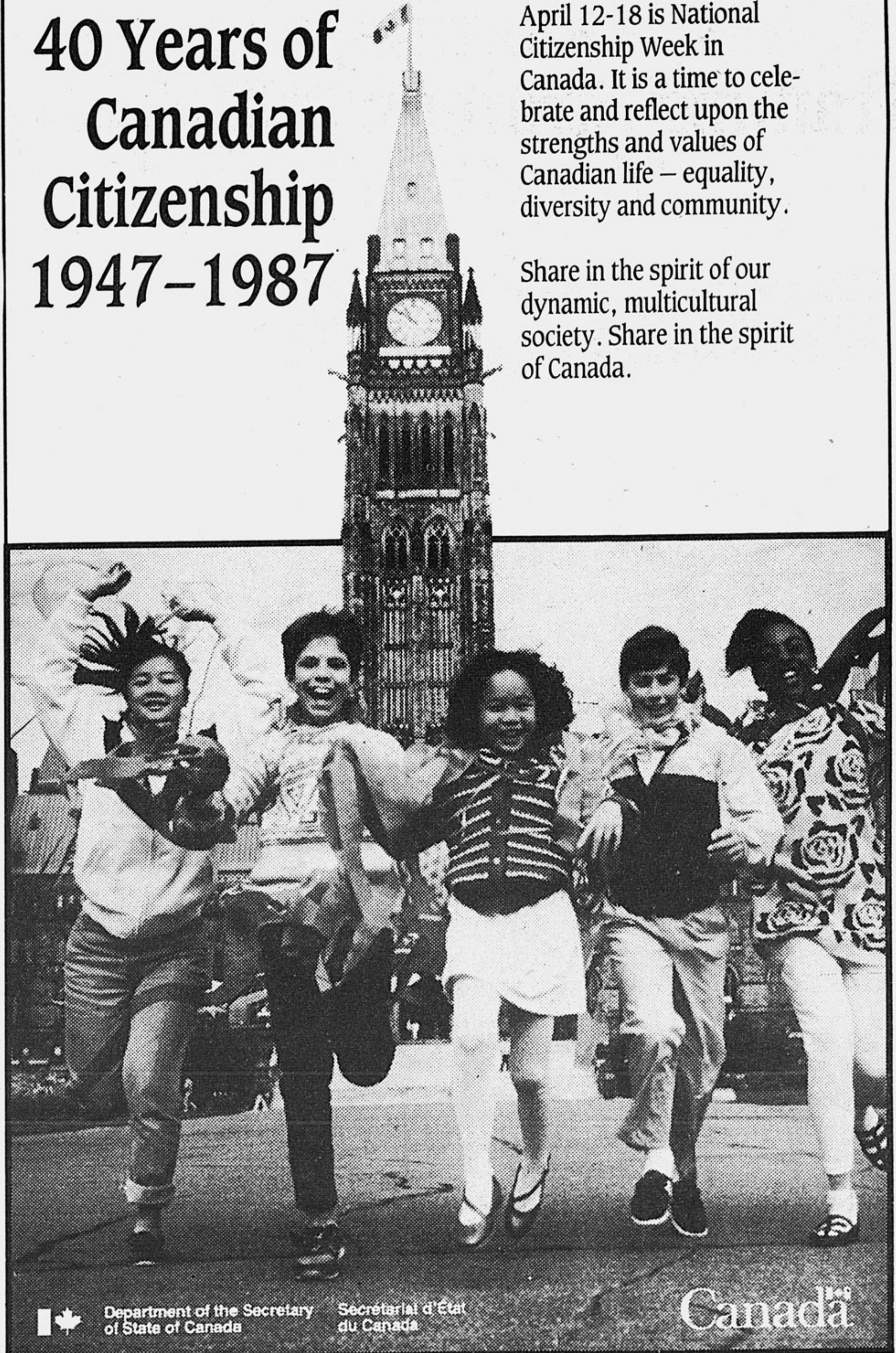
Dow said results of the Durham analysis will be used as a focus for curriculum development.

"This will be especially helpful in developing the inservice activities to go with the implementation of the new Durham second generation curriculum development document for Gr. 7-8 mathematics in May, 1987," he states in the report.

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