

## Esquering trustee prepares to defend integrity

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK

The Georgetown Gemini Esquering school board trustee Ethel Gardiner, both nervous and angry, will be in a Milton court next Wednesday to defend herself against conflict of interest allegations in a case that could affect the voting habits of politicians across the province.

Gardiner, of Georgetown, and four other Halton Board of Education trustees, were accused of breaching the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act by a member of the Taxpayers Coalition Burlington Inc., who claimed that the five trustees should have declared conflicts and not voted

on the Board's \$272 million budget because of relationships they have with board employees, or employees of other boards.

Gardiner, whose daughter is a teacher with the board, had independent legal advice that she could vote on the entire budget after having declared a conflict on the salary and compensation section. Gardiner said that it's important to note that throughout Ontario and since the inception of the Halton Board, trustees have declared conflicts on specific budget items and still voted on the whole package.

"I see voting on the bot-

tom line as a responsibility. I mean if I can't do that, I shouldn't be there," Gardiner said, noting that she followed precedent and did what hundreds of trustees across the province do every year.

In a bizarre twist to the case, the Burlington man, Rod Bird, who initially filed the court papers, now denies that he is a member of the taxpayers coalition, that he filed the papers and that he later withdrew from the case.

Gardiner showed *The Gemini* copies of court documents indicating that Bird did in fact begin the court action in June and then filed a notice to discontinue the action in

July.

"The conflict of interest allegation implies dishonesty and financial gain and that is not the case," Gardiner explained in a recent interview, noting that the hardest thing for her to deal with is the attack on her integrity and her motive for serving as a trustee.

Gardiner refused to comment on the specifics of the case, except to say that it's "disturbing" and that the focus should be on educational issues.

The complaint asks the court to vacate the five trustees seats and ban those holding them for seven years.

## Summer wraps up with awards

The Town of Halton Hills Recreation and Parks Department held their 1996 Leadership Development Graduation ceremony recently, honouring the Leaders-In-Training and Junior Leaders.

The Junior Leaders were honoured for their hard work with special awards going to David Assenheim and Graham McClure. Laurie Ball, Michelle Smyth and Amanda Storey were recognized for their special efforts as Leaders-In-Training.

The awards ceremony, presided over by Development Co-ordinator Kris Goodfellow, was a wrap-up after a summer that saw leaders and leaders-in-training help to keep day campers occupied at locations throughout Halton Hills.

## NEWS SHORTS

### Bomb found on driveway

A Prince Charles Drive family was shaken to find that a crudely made pipe bomb was placed at the base of their driveway.

Family members did not recognize it for what it was when it was first discovered late in the evening of Aug. 4. According to police, one person moved the bomb from the base of the driveway to the side of a garage, alerting police the next day after consulting with neighbours.

Members of the Halton Regional Police Service Explosive Disposal Unit attended and removed the 18" by two and a half inch bomb, which had been wrapped in a white terry cloth towel.

The EDU removed the bomb and attempted to detonate it at a remote, rural location. The bomb squad reported that the bomb did not ignite despite the fact that it was filled with a black substance they believed to be gun powder. Given the size of the bomb, detectives believe that it had the capacity to inflict serious damage had it been detonated.

Investigators with Halton Regional Police questioned the family but could find no apparent motive for the placement of the bomb. Detectives speculate that somebody might have been experimenting with bomb making information available from the Internet.

There are currently no suspects in this crime. An investigation is ongoing. Anyone with information is asked to contact the Halton Regional Police.

### Purse stolen

A thief put a damper on an already damp weekend at the Georgetown Fall Fair, Saturday when a Wilson Court woman had her purse stolen from an exhibit booth.

The purse, containing a quantity of cash, credit cards and identification, was stolen sometime between noon and 1:30 pm on Saturday.

Police have no suspects.

## Terry Fox run on at GDHS despite fears of cancellation

Despite what appeared to be a degree of apathy throughout the community, the annual Terry Fox Run will go ahead in Georgetown thanks to some last minute volunteerism.

Following the death of her brother last summer from cancer, Bonnie Covert said, "it just felt right," when she decided to take on the task of organizing the run.

"My brother was a big

admirer of Terry Fox, so this was something I just had to do," Covert said.

For a time it looked as though Georgetown would not have a Terry Fox Run, with nobody stepping forward to volunteer for the event.

Jon Hurst, organizer of the Acton run, was glad to hear that Covert had come on board. Hurst and others experienced in organizing such an event have made them-

selves available to Covert as she has only 10 days to organize the event.

Covert said the run will go at Georgetown District High School's track, Sept. 22 from 9 am to 3 pm. Because of track rules, bicycles will not be permitted on the track. Alternate arrangements are being made for bicyclists.

For further information or to volunteer, call Bonnie Covert at 877-5626.

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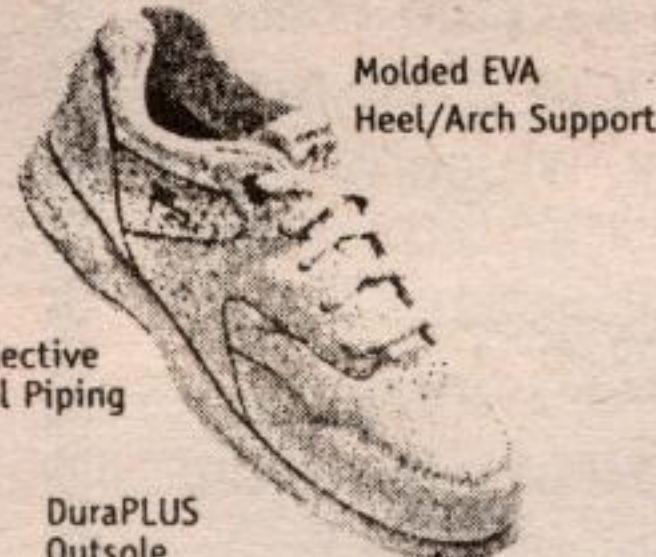
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