

Dan Almond wages war on dyslexia



FRUSTRATED for years by an unknown reading disability, Dan Almond is now a student at the University of Toronto's College of Education, even though he was told in high school he'd never amount to anything. —(Staff photo).

By Denis Gibbons

When Dan Almond was two years old, he was three feet, two inches tall, had a better than average vocabulary and great curiosity. Starting school in England at the age of four, there was no evidence of a problem, but his impatience towards gaining knowledge through the written word was beginning to become apparent.

During grade two, after he had moved to Canada, it became increasingly evident to Dan's parents Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Almond, that although their son had an excellent memory he could not read.

In grade four, officials at the school he attended in Toronto became convinced Dan was retarded and recommended he attend a special class for children with learning disabilities.

Transfer to the class was the start of years of frustration for Dan, which included an inspector's veto of his parents' request to have him taught to read by a thorough drilling in the English language and word-sounding, it culminated in his being sent home from high school at the age of 16 with a note saying

he should not return, since he was doing the school no good—and school was doing him no good!

Teaching student

Today at the age of 25, Dan Almond has his interprovincial auto mechanic's license and is now studying at the University of Toronto's College of Education to become a teacher.

What transpired between the day he left Grade IX at Acton District High School and the day he entered the College of Education is an inspiring story of how a perceptually-handicapped person can improve himself.

Dan first took a course in auto mechanics at the Provincial Institute of Trades and eventually obtained "A" his interprovincial type "A" auto mechanic's license. However, he still recognized the need for improving his education and after conferring with Father Doyle, who was in charge of student affairs at Centennial College, he went to see the school nurse. The nurse in turn referred Dan to the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry in Toronto.

After undergoing eight hours of tests at the institute, Dan was



He believed that his perceptual handicap had at last been defined, Dan became even more determined to realize his full intellectual potential and to do his best to eradicate the myth that perceptually handicapped persons are retarded.

Realized potential

"I always realized my potential was far greater than my academic standing showed," he explained. "Dyslexia can be so

frustrating, because you realize you're not stupid."

Only within the last 15 years has dyslexia been recognized as a perceptual handicap. Correctional studies have been practised for only the last five.

Estimates of the incidence of dyslexia vary, but a conservative estimate is that perhaps five to 10 per cent of the school population has severe enough problems to require special educational concern and provisions.

If dyslexia can be discovered in children at a young age, remedial help can be prescribed, but for Dan at age 26, the only real remedy is persistence and long hours of work.

"It does help to have a wide range of interests," he said "I have to learn a lot from experience, I can't afford to be narrow minded."

Sets example

By obtaining his teaching certificate from U of T's College of Education, Dan hopes not only to secure a job he enjoys but also to set an example for others afflicted with dyslexia.

"I was told in high school I'd

eventually like to earn my Master's degree," he says hopefully.

Further proof of Dan's unfortunate reading disability handicap can be found in his standing at the college since September.

"I've received two A's for my



practice teaching, yet my academic marks have only ranged in the 60-62 area," he explained.

Although a victim of dyslexia, Dan has never had any trouble with co-ordination or depth perception. A sculpture he created while at Centennial College was good enough to appear on display for a year in the school's lounge.

In an effort to provoke interest among parents, who may have perceptually handicapped children, Danny has been making a series of public appearances. He was interviewed on the Elaine Cole Show on CKCO-TV Kitchener last week and hopes to be able to further spread his message by means of an appearance on the Pierre Berton Show.

Dan now lives in Toronto but his parents reside at 148 Longfield Road in Acton, giving their son moral support in a battle he has waged all his life.

The Acton Free Press

Ninety-Seventh Year - No. 24 ACTON, ONTARIO, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1971 Twenty Pages—Fifteen Cents.

Only one reply Day Care ad

The advertisement in the Free Press about a Day Care building program produced only one reply, reported its instigator councillor Peter Marks. Surprised and disappointed he says he will continue to seek information on the subject.

When he had inquired of public health nurses, mothers and others he had had nothing but encouragement. Apparently all agreed on the need for a day care centre in Acton.

However, when it came to responding to the ad, the voices were unheard.

Good grants

Mr. Marks says very good grants are now available for day care centres.

The matter had first been



ROBERT LITTLE students presented a cheque for \$869.79 last week to Acton UNICEF Committee chairlady Mrs. Bill Wilson. Students raised the money during a recent walkathon.

Dragway hearing Feb. 15

Ontario Municipal Board has set Tuesday, February 15 as the date for the hearing on Esqueing township's agricultural holding by-law 24-69 as amended, as it applies to the Toronto International Dragway land, east of Acton.

Solicitors for the dragway complained they received no notice of the original OMB hearing on the by-law, held February 11 and as a result were granted another hearing.

At a second hearing, held June 21, OMB vice-chairman D. Jamieson and H. H. Lancaster ruled that the by-law merited careful consideration and called an adjournment until proper evidence could be shown before the board. He said the municipality must show why the by-law should apply to the dragway.

Meanwhile, the OMB approved the by-law, but reserved its decision as it applied to land on

Rud lunches with Pierre

Haltom Member of Parliament Rud L. Whiting lunched with Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau earlier this week to discuss matters of both national and local concern.

The luncheon was held at the Prime Minister's residence at 24 Sussex Drive. Whiting was recently appointed vice-chairman of Parliament's public accounts committee.

"We had a frank and open discussion," Whiting said. "The agenda was set by those of us at the luncheon and we covered a broad range of topics."

Domed stadium for works yard

The formation of a citizens' centennial committee was noted by council Tuesday. Mayor Dudy and councillor Coats, who'd been slated to line something up for council, expressed satisfaction that planning had started.

These citizens have more time than we have, said the mayor. Perhaps they'll be coming to council.

We're going to have a domed stadium for Acton, he reported. It'll be in the works yard to cover the sand and salt.

It's also possible a citizens' committee will be formed to investigate blasting. A committee might make recommendations to council.

Councillor Marks pointed out public opinion has been raised on blasting and people would like to see something done about the problem.

Council decides on liquor vote

Liquor lounges in Acton? The voters will decide.

At the next town election in December 1972, voters will be asked if they favor the sale of liquor here on licensed premises.

The liquor vote, discussed before by council, passed unanimously Tuesday on motion of councillors Bill Coats and Norman Elliott.

The two questions on the ballot will be:

1. Are you in favor of the sale of liquor under a dining lounge license for consumption with meals on licensed premises?
2. Are you in favor of the sale of liquor under a lounge license for consumption on licensed premises?

Committee level

When the questions were formulated by the administration committee of council at its meeting Nov. 30, there were three of them.

Omitted in council's resolution was the one which referred to the sale of beer and wine only, under a dining room license.

Council felt "Liquor" also covered beer and wine.

Before the vote, deputy-reeve McKenzie asked if the administration committee had explored the wisdom of holding the liquor vote in conjunction with the regular election? In Georgetown it was separate.

Councillor Coats said they thought it would be better then.

Separate staff

Clerk-administrator Joe Hurst reminded council there would have to be separate staff for the liquor franchise. Only the cost of booths is saved by having the two votes together.

The voters' lists are also different. For the liquor issue, a voter must be of legal age and a town resident for at least a year.

Said Mr. McKenzie: Last year we said we'd do it if someone footed the bill! Why the change?

Mr. Coats: The feeling was if we could find someone fine! There's a feeling this time Acton will benefit. In conjunction with a regular election it's not a great expense.

Councillor Masales: A year ago we didn't want to push. I'm in favor of the people voting.

Is there any revenue to the town? asked Councillor Greer.

Excellent facilities are required, replied Mr. Coats and the revenue would be from increased assessment.

Heller Co. purchases Mason Knit plant

Officials of Frank Heller and Co. Ltd. leather manufacturers, have completed arrangements for transfer of their facilities to the Mason Knitting Building on Guelph St.

Workers began moving items Monday from the present location in the rear of the Dills Publishing building on Willow St.

Company president Ron Heller said last night the plant will shut down operations at its present site December 17 so that heavy machinery can be moved and manufacturing resumed at the new location in the new year.

The company operated by Ron Heller and Fred Dawkins finishes and embosses tanned leather. Recently, it has experienced substantial growth in fabricated leather-like products.

One man was killed and two others injured in a two vehicle accident at the junction of 17 Sideroad and the 10th Line Esqueing on Monday at 7:25 a.m.

Deceased is Jurnie Westendorp of R.R. 2, Erin. Milton O.P.P. report Mr. Westendorp died at the scene.

According to O.P.P. officials, Westendorp was driving his car eastbound on the 17 Sideroad. There was a curve in the road and as Westendorp rounded it, his car and a dump truck driven by William Bell of Kleinburg collided, sending the car half way into the ditch.

Girls hurt

A daughter of the deceased Abbie, 15, received massive head injuries and was taken to Toronto's Sick Children's Hospital. Another daughter Jantina, 16, suffered head injuries and was taken to Georgetown Memorial Hospital.

Police lay theft charge

A 13-year-old Acton boy has been charged with break, enter and theft following investigation at Hinton's, Symon's and Moss Hardware during the past two weeks. The boy will appear in juvenile court.

Another 13-year-old admitted to police taking goods from Canadian Tire.

Also this week police interviewed two 12-year-old girls in connection with shoplifting.

Monday, Eatons reported to police an attempt to cut the glass on the lower half of their front door.

Extend Christmas lighting

Acton's Christmas street lighting will be extended, following council's donation Tuesday of \$300 to the Chamber of Commerce for seasonal decorations.

"How will the money be used?" asked councillor Chapman.

Councillor Coats explained replacing bulbs in present decorations alone costs \$150. He thought not all the \$300 would show up in lights this year. More lights will likely be ordered for Christmas 1972.

Mayor Dudy referred to the gigantic tree at the town office, only extension to the town's exterior decorating scheme this year.

Single accident Saturday noon

Only accident in town during the week occurred at noon hour Saturday at Main St. and River St. Drivers of the two cars involved were Harry Walker, Orton, with \$100 damage to the rear end of his car, and Francis Masley, Tyler Ave., Acton, with \$200 damage to the front of his car.

Fines levied

Fines were levied in court in Milton Monday in several Acton cases including \$50 for careless driving; \$150 for mischief; \$40 for shoplifting and \$50 for causing a disturbance.



THE MASON CO. PLANT which closed this year when the company ran into financial difficulties has been sold to the Frank Heller Co. which will begin operations there