

# Car, money stolen by armed hitchhikers

Giving two hitchhikers a free ride from Eden Mills was expensive for a Guelph driver forced from his vehicle at gunpoint just outside of Acton, last Wednesday afternoon.

Halton Regional Police arrested the two hitchhikers in Richmond Hill Friday and have charged them with robbery and using a firearm in the commission of an offence.

Police say the Guelph man, his name

has not been released, was eastbound on Highway 7 heading towards Acton when one of the hitchhikers he picked up in Eden Mills put a knife to his throat while the other produced a handgun ordering him to pull off onto the Sixth Line. The man then robbed the driver of \$14 and stole his car.

The men, 28 and 18 years old, are both of no fixed address, police say.



The Halton Hills recreation department's ice safety program scheduled for Sunday afternoon on Fairy Lake may have been cancelled but there was still lots to watch as the Northern Telecom Diving Club from Brampton conducted an under ice dive.

# Trio to trial in hotel death

Second degree murder charges against three Acton men will be heard by an Ontario Supreme Court judge and jury. No date has been set.

The trio—Cosimo Mercuri, Michael McCristall and Leonard Cripps—were committed to trial more than 13 months after they were charged in connection with a death in the Dominion Hotel blaze. Provincial Court Judge Douglas Latimer was on the bench at the end of the preliminary hearing Wednesday at Milton.

The preliminary hearing has amounted to about two weeks in court time. The sittings have been over several months because of scheduling difficulties caused in part by the illness of a lawyer.

Preliminary hearings are held to determine if there is enough evidence to warrant a trial.

The charges stem from the August 1979 fire which killed 58-year-old Howard Gibbons. He was a resident in the Dominion Hotel which was also gutted.

Halton Regional Police laid the second degree murder charges against all three men on 28 December 1979.

# Acton's population dips

For the third straight year Acton's population declined, though it was by just four people.

Halton Hills council received a report Monday night from the region which shows Acton's population dipped from

7,067 in 1979 to 7,063 in 1980. Region projections had pegged Acton's 1980 population at 7,500. For 1981 Halton has predicted Acton will have a population of 7,200 and 7,500 by 1986.

# The Acton Free Press

An Inland Community Newspaper

One Hundred and Sixth Year—No. 33

ACTON, ONTARIO, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1981

Eighteen Pages - Twenty-Five Cents

# Tannery waste runoff studied by firm, ministry

A spokesman for Beardmore has pledged complete co-operation with Queen's Park in solving industrial waste problems at the leather tanning facility.

Beardmore has one of 11 industrial waste disposal sites identified as having chemical runoff problems by a consulting firm for the provincial Ministry of the Environment.

A ministry official emphasized in an interview this week that there is no health hazard to the public posed by the Beardmore runoff situation.

Runoff has been found in groundwater and Black Creek ministry regional field representative Ian Gray says.

Late Last October the consulting firm of Gartner

and Lee, Toronto, studied an old dump site, the present disposal site, the filter beds and spray irrigation system at Beardmore, all of which are contributing to the ground water problems.

Beardmore was one of 12 sites in Southern Ontario studied by the firm and problems were found with 11.

Murray Stewart of Canada Packers, Beardmore's parent firm, said the company will co-operate fully with the ministry in solving these problems.

Gartner and Lee have recommended further monitoring of the chemical runoff and other pollution problems at Beardmore in what Gray described as a preliminary report. The 11 sites have been "red flagged" as "potential environmental

problem areas."

Another ministry official, William Dodds, said the runoff is "having some impact" on the water quality of Black Creek and ground water in the area.

Some leachate has been detected, Dodds noted, and added methane gas was found escaping from one of the test holes dug for the study.

It has been recommended the province "expand the monitoring program for surface and ground water quality and gas migration to delineate the extent of the affected area."

Beardmore is preparing a response to the consultant's report so the two sides can determine what needs to be done to solve the problem. The firm's response is due the end of this month. "We are preparing to get back to the ministry. We will be doing whatever we mutually feel is necessary."

The methane gas was discovered close on one of the plant's buildings, and is "no problem really," Gray declared. Since it is confined to Beardmore's property it's totally a matter for the company to handle, Gray added. Stewart said Beardmore is looking at the methane gas as a "safety problem."

## Growing asparagus

# Farmer convicted

by Eric Elstone

Halton Hills farmer John Kiteley had his day in court, however, he is not happy with what happened.

He was convicted of growing asparagus on his R.R. 3 Georgetown farm without a licence. He is the second area farmer to be convicted for that offence in a year.

Kiteley is mainly disappointed with Provincial Court at Milton Thursday because he was not able to use it to expose what he regards as irregularities in a 1978 plebiscite which landed him and other fresh market asparagus growers in a marketing board which he considers to be expensive and not very useful.

Kiteley \$259, which is approximately equal to what Kiteley would have paid if he had gotten a licence for each of the last three years.

"I was hoping to get in comments on the quality of the plebiscite," Kiteley said after the morning trial. "There doesn't seem to be anyone responsible to see that everyone gets a vote."

"The alternative now is either to go to the legislature or find enough growers to get a new vote," said Kiteley. "I still think, and if I find I have enough strength to continue, I'll find a larger organization to follow up."

The charges were brought against Kiteley by the Ontario Asparagus Growers Marketing Board (OAGMB) under the Farm Products Marketing Act.

Kiteley was in court with his wife Georgena and fellow asparagus farmer and friend Casey Boss of R.R. 4, Acton. Boss was convicted last March of the same provincial offence as Kiteley.

Boss, who ended up paying his fees for last year, disagrees with the asparagus board for the same reasons as Kiteley.

Boss circumvented another round of charges by splitting up his 4½-acre of asparagus into lots less than a half-acre in size. The board can only charge if the lot is greater than a half-acre.

The 67-year-old Kiteley who pleaded not guilty, was convicted of three charges: not having a licence, refusing to allow an inspector measure his fields and not filling out a form.

Justice of the Peace B.P. McDermott fined Kit-

Kiteley has grown about 10 acres of asparagus for 20 or so years.

OAGMB Secretary Dave Lapos testified that a local board may ask the Farm Products Marketing Board to hold a plebiscite. Fifteen per cent must request a vote and the plebiscite must pass by a two-thirds majority, according to Lapos.

Much of the evidence established the ownership of the Lot 16, Con. 7 farm and the illegality of hearsay evidence.

Kiteley's lawyer, Dean Allison of Brampton, put Kiteley on the stand for his defence. Kiteley told the court that the purpose of the plebiscite was to give "the asparagus board control over all asparagus: fresh as well as processing."

"We've passed that stage," Justice of the Peace McDermott advised the defendant. He suggested Kiteley argue the value of the plebiscite with ministry of agriculture or the MPP. "As to the philosophy of the plebiscite, it is not an issue here."

"People change the law," McDermott told Kiteley. "Perhaps you should form an association. An association may have more weight. That's the democratic process. That's what it is all about."

Kiteley did learn something about the plebiscite from McDermott. The farmer believes that two weeks' notice for a plebiscite is not enough time.



Sean Briggs

# Briggs moving, new principal for St. Joseph's

St. Joseph's School will have a new principal next fall following Halton Separate School Board's decision to transfer Sean Briggs to Oakville.

Briggs will become the principal at St. Vincent's in Oakville. A graduate of De La Salle College of Education in Manchester, England, he has been teaching in Halton for 14 years.

Principal of St. Joseph's since 1977, Briggs was a principal in Oakville prior to coming to Acton. He was recruited in England by the former Milton board and is currently earning his Masters of Education at the University of Toronto and has a BA from York University. Briggs and his family live in Burlington.

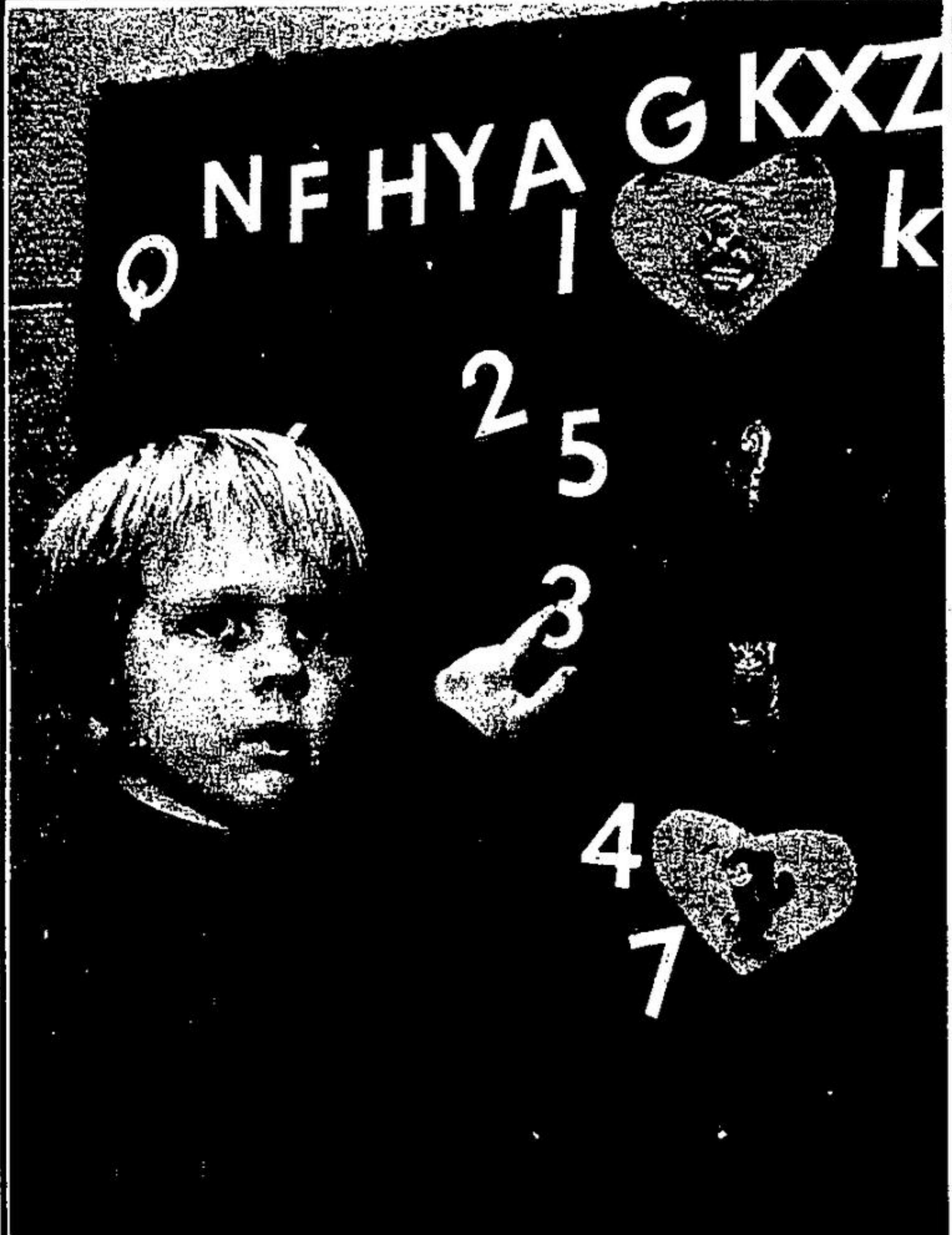
Briggs will be replaced by Fred Springer, a man with 11 years teaching experience and a taste for unusual hobbies.

He has served the board the past five years as vice-principal at Georges Vanier in Oakville and also previously taught at Holy Rosary in Burlington and Assumption High School. He and his wife and two sons live in Burlington and are active in the Holy Rosary Parish.

Springer holds a brown belt in judo, is an accomplished flute player and organist and is also an amateur radio operator.

A graduate of St. John's and Central High School in Burlington, Springer holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Guelph and a Masters of Education from Brock University. He is a graduate of Hamilton teachers' college.

Trustee Irene McCauley reports Springer is quite happy about coming to Acton and is "excited" about the prospect of helping open the new St. Joseph's next year.



Matthew Normington is one of about 17 Acton youngsters who will have to wait a year before he is allowed to join a kindergarten class. Matthew's fifth birthday falls after the new cut off date for enrolment. For 11 years Halton Board of Education welcomed to kindergarten in September youngsters whose fifth birthdays fell in the following January or February. Under pressure from the Ontario Ministry of Education, Halton and other boards fall in line with the rest of the province. The new deadline is December 31. Matthew is attending the Honey Pot Nursery School. The board estimates 500 Halton children are affected by the change in date. Photo by LYNDA HILL

# Leathertown logo approved propose walking history tour

Acton moved a giant step closer to becoming Leathertown last Wednesday night when preliminary approval was given for a logo design and the idea of a permanent historical walking tour with

plaques, photos and displays was hatched.

About 15 people attended the second Leathertown meeting and the steering committee made good on its founding meeting pledge to get the major promotional project off the ground quickly. The next Leathertown meeting is March 4 at the library.

Merv Fryhltka presented a number of possible logo designs and a stylized stretched hide with a banner proclaiming Leathertown across it was accepted. The favored color scheme was dark brown on light brown.

Fryhltka has now taken the logo back for refinements, such as making Leathertown just a single word instead of two, and lettering style, which he says will be easily legible, but also rustic. Also arches above and below will be added to the logo with Acton possibly being printed in the top arch.

The steering committee will seek input on the logo from the community and school children to see if there are any good ideas for additions to the logo.

The steering committee is moving quickly on the logo to demonstrate that Leathertown isn't just another promotion idea which will be studied and forgotten and so the community will have something to identify with.

Fryhltka, whose firm is working on the logo at a minimal cost, said the logo must be a design which will be quickly and easily identified. Some in attendance thought the stretched hide wasn't original enough and looked too much like a number of leather industry corporate logos. Ideas such as

triangles or other geometric shapes or a cow for the background were tossed about at the meeting, but when there was no consensus the stretched hide was adopted.

Chip Petrillo noted the logo can be added to or subtracted from in the future, adding things like a glove, urged in a letter to this newspaper by a reader, could be added.

Larry Greaves emphasized with everyone in town starting to talk about Leathertown time was of the essence to get "something done soon." Leathertown is much more than a business boosting concept, the aim is to develop community identity and pride in the leather industry and history of Acton.

The idea of a museum was only briefly discussed after a local industrialist, Don Demmings, sug-

(Continued on page 2)



**inside**

Halton Hills Community Centre was closed out of the books. (Continued Monday night after calling the name of a local bar. More on page 2.)

Acton's prominent shopping in downtown Acton was almost lost. It was zipped across the road and after it was put up. Details on page 2.



Scouts and Guides held their annual Church parade Sunday afternoon. For more photos from Scout and Guide week turn inside.