



Rotary exchange student settles into new life

Jodie McFarlane doesn't know what she wants to do when she graduates from high school, but she is sure this next year will play an important part in her decision.
Jodie, from Edithvale, a suburb of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, is Acton's third Rotary exchange student in as many years, the second from Australia.
Arriving a few weeks ago, on her 17th birthday, Jodie was plunged headlong into a Canadian winter, complete with sub-zero temperatures and more snow than she's ever seen. But it doesn't bother her. She's a skier and is looking forward to the challenge of Canadian slopes. She's already been cross-country skiing.
Jodie's first few weeks at school were quite a change from life in Edithvale. Last November she was attending a private all-girls' school, where uniforms were mandatory. The system was a lot stricter at home, Jodie says, and the overall attitude of the school is different. There are also regular schools in Australia, she says.

The first day of school in Acton was "scary," Jodie recalls. It was difficult to find her way around the first few days, but she got used to it.
In her short time in Acton, Jodie says Canada is much like Australia, except for a few very noticeable points. The school and the bitter cold are different than at home, but she's also learned of the high unemployment here, much more than down under.
In Australia, teenagers must be 18 to get their driver's license, as a result, they are much more dependent on their parents or older friends. While on her year long stay in Canada, Jodie is not allowed to drive a car anyway.
Her trip to Canada did not come overnight. She explains that she first heard about the exchange program three years ago, but was too young to apply. But she knew she wanted to go some place in the world and waited her turn.
When she was 10-years-old, Jodie spent nine months touring Europe in a van with her family. She doesn't remember too much about the trip, but it

was enough to introduce her to the world of travel.
Admittedly, Canada is not her first choice of countries. Denmark was her first choice, and Canada was her second. Finland was third choice. Jodie had hoped to go to French Canada, in order to learn a second language, but learned Quebec does not accept exchange students.
When she returns to Australia Jodie will be entering grade 12. She thinks she would like to become involved in the medical aspect of sports, but is not definite as to her future. She thinks her year in Canada may change any plans she has, however indefinite.
Jodie's first host family is John and Anna Arnold. While she's only been gone from home a few weeks, Jodie has already received several telephone calls from anxious parents. Having a father who works for the Australian telephone company helps the phone bill quite a bit.
The trip from Australia was a long one for Jodie. She had to fly from Melbourne to Sidney, where she met 160 other exchange students on their way to North America. On January 16, she left Sidney for

San Francisco arriving on January 16, one hour before she left—she crossed the international date-line. A small stop over in Honolulu gave them a chance to stretch their legs.
A night in San Francisco preceded a flight to Chicago, where many of the students went their separate ways.
A several hour delay in Chicago kept many Canadian families in Toronto airport waiting, until 2 a.m., when Jodie's long voyage was over.
She admits her first night she slept like a log, after two days of travelling, but the next few nights were hard ones, having to get used to the time change and a new bed.
Over the next year, Jodie hopes to see western Canada, and maybe the Arctic. She also hopes to see some of the United States.
For Jodie, her year is just beginning. She has plans for the next 12 months, and is hoping to make them materialize.

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Recession, winter lays-off about 80

The recession and seasonal downturns in certain sectors of the economy have resulted in about 80 workers being laid off and nearly 200 more being on shortened work weeks in the past couple of months at Acton and area industries.
This newspaper contacted 21 local industrial firms surveying their labor situation last week.
While there is some bleak news, the local work situation isn't as bad as might be expected and in fact a few firms have hired in the past few months.
The leather industry, by far the area's largest employer, has been the hardest hit by the recession.
At Beardmore, 160 workers are on four day work weeks and about 15 were laid off but four have recently been called back. Of those four workers, some are on four day weeks and the rest on five days.
Heller's laid off 25 workers just over a week ago in all areas of their operation.
Superior Glove has had between 20 and 30 workers on four day work weeks since December according to Frank Geng. In addition, in the past month about 15 workers have either quit or been laid off. He noted things are "tight" in the auto industry, a major customer of Superior's work gloves, and although orders have been coming in more briskly the last two weeks Geng still isn't convinced the economy is starting to turn around. He said he'll be waiting another week or two before deciding if the shorter work weeks should affect more of the 100 person work force or if more lay-offs are necessary.
The poor economy and weak auto sales, have also resulted in three people being laid off at Blow Products.
After a busy summer season Building Products cut back production in the winter and in November laid off about 20 workers. Beginning last month the firm started calling workers back as business began to pick up again. Usually the plant has about 69 workers and there are 60 now. Most of the laid off employees are back now and the rest will return when the plant is up to full capacity. It isn't known how soon all the workers will be recalled.
It's a different story at Marzo Glove where they haven't had any layoffs. With 15 employees, Marzo Glove actually expanded in 1981 and four new jobs were created last year.
Canada Battery is another firm which hasn't been hit by the recession. George Tichbourne said they have been growing, eight new workers have been hired in the past six months, and there are about 20 employees in the plant now.
There haven't been any layoffs at Toronto Wood Treating, but until just recently they haven't been hiring either. This firm has 15 employees and has just hired two more as they gear up for the spring boost in sales. Workers haven't been on overtime since the summer, but from now until May will be working a little overtime.
As is normal for this season, Acton Precast Concrete has some layoffs. During peak times the firm has five employees in the shop, it's down to two now. There won't be any hiring until March.
There haven't been any layoffs at Acton Steel, but it is a small family business. Last year the firm did

hire some temporary help for a while.
Holly Industries is always on a four day week, but it's 40 hours. There are five workers and no layoffs.
Hornby Box and Pallet has been fairly busy lately and so has called back two of the four workers laid off about a month ago. Those two workers were only off a week or two. Hornby Box employs between 25 and 30 workers depending on how busy the firm is.
Leathertown Plastics, a young local firm, has only four workers including the owners and one part-time employee. They've had no layoffs, and in fact expect to hire two workers later this year.
Indusmils always has layoffs this time of year. There are 40 workers on the job now, in the summer there's usually 60. About 10 workers who were laid off were called back recently and seven are still off.
Keates Organs has had no layoffs, in fact that busy firm has taken on a couple of new workers in the last little while. There are about 20 people working at Keates now.
Lavoie Knitting was busier before Christmas, then slowed down, but business is back to normal now. With about 11 workers, Lavoie doesn't anticipate there will be any cut-back coming for at least another couple of months, if at all.
Commercial Shearing has had no layoffs and none are anticipated for the 20 workers there.
There have been no layoffs at A.P. Green and none are anticipated for the 15 employees.
Plastics Eighty, a small firm which recently moved to Wallace St. from Commerce Cres. has five full-time and nine part-time workers on a seasonal basis. There have been no layoffs and no cut-back of hours.
Davies Truck has five employees right now and two were laid off in December.
The recession has been felt at Ajax Engineers which recently laid off nine workers after going to a four-day work week earlier.



Scottish dancers from a Guelph club, including Bob and Norma McGregor of Acton, entertained at Saturday's third annual Burns' Supper at Knox Presbyterian Church. Story and more photos on page 3.

Citizens can expect more cuts in winter maintenance service

Residents have noticed reductions in the level of service for winter maintenance (snow plowing, removal, sanding and salting) and can expect more reductions in the future as costs escalate, Halton Hills engineer Robert Austin says.
Attending Friday's councillors' drop-in, Austin answered questions from two residents as well as councillors Terry Grubbe, Dave Whiting and Ross Knechtel.
Anita Ockenden, who has written two letters to this newspaper in recent weeks regarding snow plowing, said it was nice to see downtown streets cleaned up "somewhat".
Grubbe countered she knew of at least one family downtown which wasn't happy with snow removal operations. A resident, annoyed by the noise of town equipment cleaning snow away from curbs, called her every hour on the half-hour from 1:30 to 6:30 a.m. complaining.
Austin said only one week this winter has snow not been removed downtown, and then it was delayed because the weather forecast called for another big storm. Snow removal was delayed to save money.
Winter maintenance costs have been climbing at a rate of 11 to 13 per cent each of the past six years for labor and fuel etc., but provincial subsidies have only gone up about five per cent annually. Council matches the provincial subsidy, so Austin has been forced to cut-back.
There have been cuts in levels of service in other areas of works operations, but they haven't been noticed by residents.
The engineer warned residents will notice more cut-backs in the future too.
Mrs. Ockenden observed the town has never looked this bad in winter before and taxes just keep climbing up, so why is service being cut.
Out of each \$1 a person pays in taxes only 14 cents goes to works, Austin explained, and he must stretch that 14 cents out to cover many things besides winter maintenance, including road work, grass cutting, garbage collection etc.
He explained the town has 14 plow routes and sets of equipment and if the storm is of equal intensity all over Halton Hills then within 15 minutes of trucks leaving the Trafalgar Rd. works yard plowing has begun in Acton.
Standards, such as how much snow must fall before plowing begins, are contained in a thick manual from the provincial Ministry of Transportation and Communications. Criteria includes the type of snow, temperature etc. Two inches of fallen snow is the standard for arterial road plowing, three inches for residential streets, Austin noted, adding if there is only a little snow fallen and the temperature is rising then roads are salted.
Last year Halton Hills spent \$175,000 on winter maintenance for 180 miles of road, almost \$1,000 a mile. Winters when the town saves on plowing the money can't be spent the next year because works

crews are performing other chores and still must be paid and if the town isn't plowing there is usually a lot of sanding and salting taking place. For instance, last winter there wasn't a lot of snow plowing, so the money had to be spent on rural road grading and culvert thawing. Last year the town budgeted \$54,000 for gravel road grading and spent \$75,000.
Sidewalk clearing is the responsibility of the homeowner, the town doesn't do it. Mrs. Ockenden

noted students are walking to school on the roads and Knechtel countered even where sidewalks are cleared kids are still walking on the roads. Downtown sidewalks, which are interlocking paving stones, can be salted because they are stronger, but concrete walks can't be salted by the town, the salt destroys the walk.
For seven years, Austin said, Halton Hills has been talking about having a bylaw requiring residents to shovel the sidewalks

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inside
A local man is \$10,000 richer. Turn to page 2.
It's been suggested the Georgetown and Acton firms merge. Details on pages 2 and 4.

Struck by disease, Pat now wants to help others

For well-known Acton resident Pat McKenzie, life has changed drastically. Gone are the days when he took long walks for granted, and when he was free to do as he pleased.
Former school principal and town councillor, he has been struck with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, (ALS) a disease that affects the nerve cells that control muscles in the brain and spinal cord. The result: weakened muscles, of increasing severity, muscle wasting and an abnormal amount of tenseness in the muscles.
The disease was diagnosed last year after he went to the doctor complaining about always walking "as if I was drunk," McKenzie said. It has been an uphill battle ever since.
The rare disease has been known for over 120 years, but still there is no known cause or cure. It strikes those between the ages of 40 and 70, and affects twice as many men as women. Doctors claim there is no relationship between lateral and multiple sclerosis, a more common muscular illness.
ALS is also known as "Lou Gehrig's disease," a Hall of Fame baseball player who was afflicted. Also, a former player for the Montreal Canadiens, Dave Balon, was hit with the disease.
McKenzie says it seems to affect the more active people, such as athletes, policemen, etc. Because he

(Continued on page B4)



Pat McKenzie



Free Press places third in provincial competition

The Acton Free Press has placed third for general excellence in the Ontario Community Newspaper Association's annual Better Newspapers Competition.
Judges picked the Free Press third behind the Arrprior Chronicle and Bradford Witness in the field of 35 entries in circulation class three, 3001 to 5000.
Class three was the biggest of six classes of Ontario community newspapers judged for front page; composition and layout; editorial page; news and features; sports; local advertising; classified advertising and photography. The mandatory entries were the March 4 and July 1 issues and the dates weren't announced until the end of 1981.
The Free Press was one of six Metroland Printing and Publishing newspapers to win awards. Others in the group picking up prizes were the Georgetown Independent, Brampton Guardian, Mississauga News, Oakville Beaver and Burlington Post.
Publisher Don McDonald and editor Gord Murray will be presented with the award early next month at the annual convention in Toronto.