



One BIG happy family

It's a wonder they all fit in the Stone School

The entire St. Joseph's School family, students, teachers and even some parents, gathered at the site on Mill St. West where excavation work has already begun, Thursday morning to watch an unofficial sod turning ceremony. In the photo on the left Father Ralph Diodati, Trustee Irene McCauley and Principal Fred Springer perform the sod turning. There wasn't an official ceremony to mark the start of work on the long-awaited school but everyone co-operated with the Free Press so the occasion could be commemorated on film.

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Fire destroyed the interior of the Dave Craig home on the Fourth Line of Esquesing Thursday. Fire officials put a price tag of \$60,000 to \$70,000 in damages to the home.

Family homeless after blaze

The David Craig family is homeless after fire swept through their rural stone house Thursday. Halton Hills Fire Chief Mick Holmes estimates between \$60,000 and \$70,000 in damages to the Fourth Line Esquesing home. Although an electrical fault is suspected, the definite cause is unknown, he said. The fire started about 1.30 p.m. in the entrance-way to the cellar, the chief said, which was located in the middle of the house. Flames spread out in all directions from there, he said.

No one was home at the time of the blaze, Holmes noted. The family lost all their furniture, including many antiques, and all their clothing. Holmes describes the house at the time of the fire as being very, very, hot, and the interior was completely scorched. Firefighters were at the scene for almost three hours Holmes said. He admitted he did not know where the family was staying. A passing grader operator spotted the burning house and reported the call to the fire department.

Marlene Lott Ottawa-bound



Marlene Lott will be attending the Adventure in Citizenship program in Ottawa next month.

Marlene Lott has been chosen to represent the Acton Rotary Club at the Adventure in Citizenship program in Ottawa next month. Marlene is a grade 13 student at Acton High School. The program runs from Monday, May 17, to Thursday, May 20, during which time the students from all across Canada are billeted in Rotarian homes in Ottawa. On the agenda for the four day visit is a dinner with MP Otto Jelinek, a tour of Ottawa, question period in the House of Commons, meetings, discussions, and tours of the RCMP "N" division, the Bank of Canada and the Supreme Court of Canada. On Thursday, all the participating students will receive their citizenship certificates. Marlene says she has never been to Ottawa before. She explains in some schools there are contests for the interested students, but in Acton, she says, Marg Tamblin of the Student Services asked her if she would like to go. Ted Hansen, from the local Rotary Club interviewed her. "I think too many people comment about politics without knowing anything about it," the 18-year-old said. "I want to have a little insight into it before I vote." Eventually Marlene would like to go to university, but that is at least one year away. There are so many things she is interested in, she says, that, she is not sure about any one thing. "I don't want to throw myself into a university course before I know what I want to do," she explains. She plans to work and travel for a while, she says, probably in Europe, and find out what she wants in life. Marlene's adventure in Ottawa starts May 16, when she flies to Ottawa and meets her adopted family for the week.

McCristall appeals conviction

by Helen Murray

Michael McCristall is appealing his manslaughter conviction and his two-years-less-a-day prison sentence.

Co-defendant Cosimo Mercuri, found guilty of second degree murder, has filed a prisoner's notice of appeal, but, explains his lawyer Michael Moldaver, there has been no solicitor's notice of appeal. Moldaver said it is likely he will file an appeal within the next few weeks.

Moldaver explained if no lawyer's notice of appeal is filed, Mercuri would have to defend himself. McCristall was found guilty of manslaughter in the death of Howard Gibbons after a five week trial in Milton Supreme Court of Ontario. Mr. Justice Coulter Osborne sentenced the Acton resident last Tuesday.

John D. Smith, defence counsel for McCristall during the lengthy trial told the Acton Free Press he discussed his client's case with appeal lawyers Brian Greenspan and Jane Arnup, who are proceeding with the appeal. They are also trying to get McCristall out on bail pending the appeal.

Smith warned however, that it could be some months before the Ontario Court of Appeals actually looks at the case. By this time, he said, McCristall's sentence could be served and the whole matter will be academic, except to clear his name.

The Brampton counsel admitted the judge was very fair towards his client in his charge to the jury, and "we do not have anything to complain about." (in the proceedings of the trial). However, he feels Greenspan and Arnup will base their appeal on the fact the judge told the jury there was thin evidence against McCristall and the Crown had not proved his guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. In the charge, Smith explained, the judge told the jury the Crown did not prove anything more than suspicious circumstances.

Smith said Greenspan and Arnup will look to see if the jury's decision of manslaughter was a justified verdict in light of what the judge said.

"We will never know what went on in that jury room," Smith said, "... we should have had an acquittal."

The lawyer said the only reason he could see for the manslaughter verdict was that the jury must not have believed McCristall when he said he did not say "we just have to cover up for Cosimo a little longer."

Smith noted though that it is rare that a court of appeal will overturn a jury verdict. The only other route the court of appeal could go was to discover there was enough evidence for a new trial. Smith contends, however, a new trial is "highly unlikely". He thinks they will look at overturning the jury's

verdict. Smith explained that McCristall does not even have to be present in the courtroom during the appeal. In actuality, he could be released from prison without ever stepping into a courtroom again, Smith said.

Greenspan and Arnup are specialists in appeal work, Smith noted and often take on the more interesting cases. He stressed, however, it could be several months before the appeal makes it to court, and then it will be Osgoode Hall in Toronto.

McCristall, along with his former boss Cosimo Mercuri and fellow worker Leonard Cripps were charged with second degree murder after Gibbons died in a fire in the Dominion Hotel on August 19, 1979. Cripps was acquitted in the fourth week of the trial in a directed verdict when Mr. Justice Osborne ruled there was insufficient evidence against him.

Mercuri was found guilty of murder and sentenced to life imprisonment, with consideration of parole after 10 years, and McCristall was sentenced to the Brampton Correctional Institute, with a recommendation of treatment in an alcoholics' program.

Both men are being held in the Hamilton-Wentworth Detention Centre until their 30 day appeal period is up.

Doctors split on walkouts

Two of the area's seven doctors have already decided they won't be accepting appointments from patients next Tuesday and Wednesday while two others are awaiting further developments in negotiations between Queen's Park and the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) on the current fee scale wage dispute.

Two other physicians have reported they will be accepting appointments as usual while one other doctor declined to comment.

Yesterday (Tuesday), in the wake of the OMA announcement of a province wide two-day walkout or days when doctors don't accept appointments, the Free Press sent questionnaires to each of Acton and area's seven physicians. All were picked up in the afternoon and all but one was filled out. Dr. D. Van der Bent did not answer any of the six questions and wrote at the bottom, no comment.

Dr. Samuel Ng and Dr. P.K. Wong, of Glenlea Clinic, both reported on April 13 and April 19 (the dates set by the OMA for walkouts in the Acton, Rockwood, Guelph, Kitchener-Waterloo areas in the rotating walkout campaign) they accepted no regular appointments, but were available for emergencies.

Dr. Jane Hosdill, Rockwood, said she was available for appointments April 13 and in for her usual office hours on April 19.

Dr. W.T. Pun said he was handling appointments on both April 13 and April 19, while Dr. G.A. McWilliam answered he took appointments all day April 13 and in the morning on April 19. Dr. B. Moore took appointments April 13 and took appointments in the morning on Monday, but was available for emergencies in the afternoon. These three physicians, along with Dr. Van der Bent form the Acton Medical Group.

As for next week, when the OMA has called for a two-day walkout on April 27 and 28 as well as an area walkout for April 30, Dr. Moore and Dr. McWilliam have reported they haven't decided what to do yet, they are waiting to see how negotiations go. Dr. Pun says he will be in the office as usual as will Dr. Hosdill.

Mr. Ng won't take appointments on April 27 or 28 and won't be in town on Friday. Dr. Wong says he will be available for emergencies only.

Asked if they support the OMA in its wage dispute with the province Doctors Moore, McWilliam, Hosdill and Wong all answered yes.

On the same subject, Dr. Pun reported he is happy with his wages but does support other OMA members who need higher wages because of higher office overhead and expenses in other areas. Dr. Ng answered "yes, all the way."

Asked about support for OMA's tactics in this

wage dispute Dr. Ng said "yes, but the OMA's tactics have been 'too soft' compared to a union." The provincial government's offer is "unfair", Dr. Ng wrote, adding the OMA has been lacking a negotiation strategy and policy to follow; there are too many "black sheep in the fold"; and the OMA should have done more in the area of public relations before this.

Dr. Pun wrote he supports the OMA's tactics and Dr. Moore and Dr. Wong answered the same way. Dr. Hosdill said she doesn't support "tactics that directly involve patient care."

Dr. McWilliam answered yes, noting "unfortunately the only bargaining tool available to doctors is withdrawal of services, although I am unhappy at having to do that."

inside

The region is also against paying to put up a fence between townhouses and a pond where a boy drowned. See page 6.

An allergy forced a child out of Brisbane School. See feature on page B1.

Halton Hills is going to lift the historical site designation on the town hall. Details on page 2.

A new group has been formed to aid farmers. More on page 2.

Toughlove is coming to Halton Hills. See pages 5.

A merchant discovers just how honest people really are. Turn to page 5.

Remember Acton's Citizens of the Years. See photos on page B2.

A tracking dog sniffed out an escaped prisoner in a field near Acton. Details on page 7.

One local man was convicted while another was acquitted in a deer poaching case. Turn to page 8.

Jerry Sprackman's plaza pan is dead. See page 8.

Turn clocks ahead

Don't forget to turn your clocks ahead one hour before going to bed Saturday night. If you don't you'll be late for church this Sunday morning as Daylight Savings Time comes into effect this Sunday, April 25 at 2 a.m.

Halton Hills declared Daylight Savings Time Monday and we will revert to Eastern Standard Time at 2 a.m. on October 31.



Cast of You're a Good Man Charlie Brown rehearse. Left to right John DeJong, Kim Heaps, Carolyn Gibson, Val Taylor, Jennifer McLean, Gina Mancini, Julie Mellor, Sharon McBride, Jaye Gerth, Scott Nolan, Kirstin Jarvis, Josie DeVirgilio, Diane Dilbey, and Nicola Grillo (sitting). The show runs this Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. More photos on page 3.

Tentative dates set for trial

Tentative dates for the trial of Bradley James Fendley, 21, of Georgetown, were set for Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday June 14, 15 and 16 when he appeared briefly in Guelph Provincial Court Tuesday morning. But the dates had not been confirmed by the time this newspaper went to press.

Fendley is charged with first degree murder in the death of Donald Joseph Berriau, 30, who was found dead in the living room of a farmhouse on the Sixth Line, Erin, Wednesday, March 24, Berriau, a

former resident of Georgetown, had been shot.

Although counsel for the accused and the crown agreed on the dates, the court was still not sure whether a judge would be available on the dates agreed upon. The dates must agree so figures who are involved in the trial can appear from Georgetown, Burlington and Toronto.

It is expected the enquiry will take from two to three days, the presiding judge was assured.



I'm a Born Again Canadian... might as well... I'm already down on my knees.