



Joseph Drenters of Rockwood and Elizabeth and Jan Berghs, of Baexem, Holland go over ancient records gathering information for a book about their ancestral home.

## Joseph Drenters illustrates book on ancestral home

by Helen Murray  
After years of delving into the history of the Rockwood Academy, Joseph Drenters is taking an active part in a book about his own ancestral home.

The book is being researched and written by Elizabeth and Jan (John) Berghs, of Baexem, Holland, and is about the church and the religion of their ancestors.

The research for the book, Berghs' third, has taken many years, and has involved going through records dating back to 900 A.D. and reading thousands of books in the archives in the Baexem area.

The Berghs recently spent three weeks in this area visiting Drenters, having a working holiday. The four day trip to Philadelphia proved invaluable as they studied art work at the Philadelphia museum, catching glimpses of life in the area. With the Rockwood resident they went over pages and pages of photocopies of records to help the three of them better understand their findings.

"It is a centuries old account of our

common ancestors," Drenters said. He explained the job was not one for amateurs. While he himself is a noted historian and sculptor, Berghs is an "arduous historian of our native country."

Drenters will be illustrating the book, not an easy task. He has gone through scores of other paintings, mainly by Peter Bruegel. Small details mostly in the backgrounds of these works of art illustrate to the historians how life was for the farmer. They have been able to reconstruct the various homes throughout the years, the clothing, utensils and even the role and man and woman.

Hundreds and hundreds of church records and tax rolls have been deciphered (often the old writing is illegible).

It was in some of these old records the Berghs first came across the name Drenters, but it was not until about three years ago, on a chance meeting, that Drenters and the writers got together in Holland.

The history of Baexem is mainly hidden in the church records. Drenters, acting as

an interpreter for the Berghs, explained that Baexem is a parish within the principality of the imperial abbey of Thorn, which is in the bishopric of Liege. The head of the abbey, the imperial abbot of Thorn was a direct subject of the emperor of Germany, in worldly matters alone, Drenters explains.

In 1794, the French brought down the abbey and that was the end of it, according to Drenters.

The historians are not looking for royalty or military in their genealogy, nor are they looking for a fancy coat of arms. They just want to find out about the common folk, the ordinary people of the land.

Drenters pointed out the artist Bruegel came from the same area they did. "Maybe that's why I am an artist," the Rockwood resident said. "We came from the same group of people."

Shortly before the Berghs trip to Canada, a story appeared in the Baexem newspaper about his work on the book. He was quoted then as saying, "I am in no

hurry, my book must be a thorough work." The story went on to mention Joseph Drenters and the Rockwood Academy, and gave a short history of the building which Drenters has worked many years at restoring. In the story, Berghs said Drenters' illustrations will enhance the book.

In his studies of the area, Berghs found ancient arrowheads from the original Drenters homestead. Upon his arrival in Rockwood he presented two framed arrowheads to Drenters so he would have something from his ancestral home.

The book is a long way from being done. Berghs explains in his halting English, but then, they have almost 2000 years of history to go through. Their trip to Canada helped in their quest for information.

The archives of Thorn have about 90 metres of shelves of books, Drenters explains, and the Berghs have gone through all the books from 900 to 1795. A mammoth task, one which surely demands patience and dedication.

# The Acton Free Press



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## First time all workers at tannery on 4-days

For the first time since the start of the severe recession all of Beardmore's production workers are on a four-day work week and the plant is applying to the government to participate in the work sharing program which pays employees part of their wages for the fifth day.

Workers have been informed they are on four-day week this week and next week, Murray Stewart of Canada Packers, Beardmore's parent firm, said in an interview this week.

He cautioned the firm doesn't know if this situation will last longer than two weeks, it will depend on orders.

Four day work week is nothing new for those in the chrome or sole leather part of the plant. They went on a four-day week back in January and remained on a four-day week until April 10 when they went back to five days a week, until April 30.

The upper leather or vegetable division was on a four-day week briefly in February and again the week of April 23.

This is the first time the entire plant for Acton's largest industry has been on four day week and so the first time they were eligible for work sharing.

Stewart said the four-day week doesn't apply to office staff at this point.

He said the firm has sought details about work sharing and management is currently working through applications.

In total 275 workers are affected by the work week cutback.

Beardmore, like many other leather firms here and throughout the nation, have been hurt by the extremely poor economy and lifting of shoe import quotas at the end of last year.



Jodie McFarlane, of Chelsea, Australia, presents Halton Hills Mayor Pete Pomeroy with a banner and lapel pin from the Chelsea town council. Jodie is in Acton as a Rotary Exchange Student. The presentation took place at Councilors' drop-in on Friday. Left to right, councillor Ross Knechtel, Pomeroy, Jodie, and councillors Dave Whiting and Terry Grubbe.

## Merchants join protest on lifted shoe import quotas



Paul Nielsen of the Acton BIA presents a petition to MP Otto Jelinek at councillors' drop in last Friday.

Acton merchants have joined Beardmore and Heller's and their workers in protesting Ottawa's lifting of shoe import quotas.

Last Wednesday night at a social evening for local business people Paul Nielsen unveiled a petition which blasted the federal government for lifting the import quotas. This decision has already resulted in some lay-offs here and the merchants' message warns of dire consequences if the quotas aren't re-instated.

The petition was addressed to Minister of Trade and Commerce Herb Gray and stated the business people were concerned about the present business climate. They noted they've seen unemployment spread; stores and factories close, some forever; farmers go bankrupt and many people suffer greatly.

Nielsen presented the petition to MP Otto Jelinek at councillor's drop-in Friday.

Nielsen collected 20 signatures, noting the petition was never circulated.

Jelinek observed people participation in

protests is the only way to move the government, adding he has seen it work in the past.

Nielsen warned Acton, is really hurting, it's not a recession but a depression and if Beardmore closed, the town might as well be closed too. There is no demand for retail, warehouse or commercial space in town.

He suggested high interest rates are being used to get inflation down, but they are highly inflationary.

Jelinek said he will take the petition to the House of Commons or to Gray personally.

Ottawa dropped the shoe import quotas and that's been detrimental to the leather industry, Acton's economic base since 1844 and for the past 100 years more people have been employed in the leather industry than all other industries combined.

Closing down the leather industry by not re-instating shoe import quotas would be "catastrophic" for Acton. The petition asks the feds to re-instate the quotas.

The petition also asks the government to stop "treating the economic situation as an economic exercise" and to understand that this country is now in a depression. Ottawa is urged to take steps to bring down interest rates and stop adding to the destruction of already shaky industries and businesses.

They note as merchants they are in favor of free enterprise, however governments at every level have interfered in the economic life of the nation. The government is advised by a "fat bureaucracy" which because of their job security they are shielded from the real world. Politicians with their generous allowances and pensions are secure too. However, labor, entrepreneurs, small business and many industries are going down the tube. "The time for a new approach is now."

## Piano is Andreas Thiel's future

by Helen Murray  
Andreas Thiel is never bored.

And it's of little wonder when one considers his day is filled with studies of his grade 11 subjects, his piano lessons, four or five hours a day of practicing, rehearsals for various plays he is participating in and band practice for the Acton High School Band.

He has little time for other things, but all his hard work now will pay off the first time he steps onto a stage to give his first professional piano concert.

Although only 17-years-old, Andreas is making quite a name for himself in the Acton-Guelph area for his talent on the key boards. He recently placed fourth with 86 per cent in a Kiwanis Music festival in Toronto, and is gearing up for another competition next month at the Guelph Spring Festival.

His piano teacher Anya Laurence, from New York, encourages him to participate in recitals at the University of Guelph, where he takes his lessons. The experience is good, he says, because there is always a good attendance.

Andreas first became interested in the piano seven years ago, after looking through his sisters' lesson books. Five years ago he started to take lessons, and last year discovered Anya.

He credits his talents to his mother's side of the family. He explains his Mom, Gudrun, comes from a family of 16 children, and each one of them can play at least two instruments. When they all get together, he says, they have their own orchestra.

Andreas' long term plans are to enter the Manhattan School of Music after high school to study



Andreas Thiel

piano. However, he says, modestly, only time will tell if he is good enough to be accepted in that world. He hopes to study performance and someday be a concert pianist. Failing that he would like to teach music.

Right now, he says, he has a lot of options open for him.

His short term plans are to play in a restaurant or bar to gain experience. Acton high school teacher, Suzi Beeber, is a former professional singer and the two have talked about putting an act together.

Andreas has not confined himself to one type of music. He started off just playing easy listening music, but now, thanks to a wide range of exper-

ience gained right in Acton, he can play most types, including classical. He has even attempted to write his own classical pieces, but admits he is not keen on writing at this point in his life.

Besides the recitals at the University of Guelph, and the Kiwanis Festival, Andreas has also participated in various high school productions, including the latest You're a Good Man Charlie Brown, and church plays such as It's Cool in the Furnace, this past weekend's Moses and the Freedom Fanatics, and the Boar's Head dinner.

With one hour practice, Andreas and Halton MPP Julian Reed put together a piano-singing duet for last November's Wintario pre-show. Reed, at the time, said he was amazed how the high school student could just step in at the last minute and do so well.

Of all the infamous pianists, Andreas says he most admires the work of Brahms. He is starting to play some of his work and feels it is what he plays best.

This summer, Andreas says, he is going to Connecticut to study with—a friend of his teacher's, from Paris, who has studied with a lady who studied with Chopin. This teacher is supposed to be one of the best, Andreas says, and he will be learning the Chopin method. So far his plans only have him slated for one week, but if it is financially feasible he would like to go for two. He hopes to stop in New York on the same trip.

As for singing, Andreas says, again with his modesty overshadowing reality, he says "I try."



Robert Little school principal Ron Chatten really gets involved. Last week, during Education Week, the morning kindergarten class held a clown day. Most of the youngsters dressed to suit the day. Left to right Michelle Beaton, Stuart Gian, Jody Archibald, Chatten, Matthew Brain and Elliott Goldman.

## Town won't support liquor permit for the Yugoslavs

The Canadian-Yugoslav centre have proved they are not good neighbors as far as Halton Hills general committee is concerned, and will not receive the town's support when applying for a special occasions liquor permit.

Nick Cajic of the centre attended a general committee meeting last week seeking the town's support for the permit. His centre had been charge and taken to court by the town twice this past winter over infractions of the noise by law. Organizers got off on a technicality.

Cajic told the councillors if they did not receive the permit they have to consider moving their recreation centre.

Mayor Pete Pomeroy pointed out last year Cajic made a lot of commitments to council as far as the property and the neighbors were concerned. He asked why the centre felt the permit was warranted after the noise problems last year.

Cajic told the mayor the first complaint was on July 4 when 1,500 people were at the centre (for the opening ceremonies). His committee was not prepared for the complaints and he was laughed at by other members when he told them of the neighbors' concerns. Now, he said, his committee members

are taking the problem seriously.

Pomeroy pointed out the noise did not ease off after that. "As a taxpayer, you have a responsibility to your neighbors," Cajic agreed, and said they want to prove that.

Cajic told general committee he did not realize it was a residential area when the land was purchased in 1980. He admitted had he known of the trouble his centre would cause the land would never have been purchased.

Councillor Pam Sheldon pointed out she had seen no indications that the noise would be regulated during the 17 events scheduled for this summer. Cajic answered that there would only be the one large crowd of 5,000 to 6,000 people in early July. All the other events would only have about 300 to 400 people participating.

Councillor Russ Miller wanted to know what precautions had been taken against the noise. Cajic admitted his committee promised to keep the noise down. "I come here and make a promise," he said, "and I have to depend on others." Cajic said a machine which would help keep the noise levels down was too expensive.

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### inside

Halton Hills envisions an administration building and 26 major projects in Acton and area for 1983-87. Details on page 2.

Halton Police are planning a Meet the Force Day in Acton soon. More on page 3.

An education needs task force has been proposed for Halton. See page 4.

The town has a new planner. Slory and photo on page 5.

Rents are up at the Diplomat Apartments. Turn to page 5.

It's been suggested the overnight parking ban be in effect during the winter. Details on page 7.

AMHA awards photos on page 81.

The town's reviewing its noise bylaw after failing to convict the Yugoslavs twice. Turn to page B3.

RR2



Was going to sow some wild oats...but my marketing board cut my quota.