



Yosef Drenters in his studio.

# Yosef Drenters dies at 53

The man who made it his lifelong project to restore the historic Rockwood Academy, Yosef Gertrudis Drenters, is dead at the age of 53. A familiar figure in Rockwood he was well known in Halton Hills and area.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at the Church of Our Lady, Guelph, last Friday morning for Drenters, who died last Tuesday after a brief illness. His work as a sculptor was internationally known but his home was at the old Rockwood Academy, a private school for boys in the 19th century, which he was restoring. The school is on 7 Hwy., on the outskirts of Rockwood.

Yosef Drenters bought the school in 1960 and has been gradually restoring it and using a section of it for his studio. He had a keen interest in the school and its founder, William Weatherald, which took him to England for information about this English Quaker.

The school was opened in 1850 by Weatherald who emigrated to Canada. It remained open until 1882. Among the distinguished students who attended the Rockwood Academy were the Hon. A. S. Hardy, the fourth premier of Ontario, Sir Adam Beck, one of the founders of Ontario's hydro

system; and James J. Hill, the railway magnate, builder of the Union Pacific, born and raised across the road from the academy.

Yosef Drenters became well known when his sculpture at Expo 67 in Montreal won a \$25,000 commission, but he had been making a name for himself in artistic circles beginning in 1958 when his work was exhibited at the Massey Library at the Ontario Agricultural College. The CBC also made a documentary about him in 1960. His work attracted the interest of Elizabeth Gordon, wife of former federal finance minister Walter Gordon, and she promoted it extensively.

Drenters' work, which took the unusual form of fashioning old farm relics and metal into pieces of art, was not without its critics, some of whom called his works "totems." However, the art world was intrigued by many of his sculptures and his work is in the collection of the University of Guelph, the Hirshorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, DC, and in many others.

The MacDonald Stewart Art Centre in Guelph held an exhibition of his works last December entitled Images of the Madonna, which covered his career from 1958 to 1962,

focusing on one part of his work, the Madonna Figure. A devout Catholic, Drenters held a special love of interpreting his faith in his works. A figure he sculpted was carried by a nephew ahead of the caasket in funeral services Friday.

Drenters entered the seminary in his native Belgium intending to become a priest, but left to cultivate his artistic bent. His interest in religion was evident in the small stone chapel he constructed in the garden of the old academy and he signed his works in the form of a chalice, or inverted Y forming the base with a D on its side forming the cup.

Drenters opened the academy to the public on occasions and was generous with it for community and other fund raising events.

He was the son of Hendrika Drenters of Rockwood and Joseph Drenters, who died in January of this year. The Drenters family settled in Eramosa township where the father Joseph was a farmer and blacksmith.

Burial was in Marymount Cemetery, Guelph.



Yosef Drenters, right, and a helper show one of his unusual weathervanes.

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# newsmakers

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## Heller's unionized

Frank Heller and Company workers in Acton and Georgetown plants recently became a certified bargaining unit of the United Food and Commercial Workers union, Ontario Council of Leather Workers.

The announcement of the certification was made last week by Bud McIvor, business administrator and negotiator for the Ontario Council of Leather Workers.

The new union local hasn't been given a number, McIvor said it will probably be number 116.

There are 111 members in the local and the certification took place October 30.

McIvor said "something came up in the plant" which prompted people to feel it was the right time to organize Heller's workers.

Earl Fountain, Heather Weston, Janet Regular and Stephen Jones have been named to the bargaining committee and an executive will be elected after the first collective agreement has been won.

No talks have taken place yet, McIvor said, letters of notification regarding the certification were just recently sent to the company's management.

## Severance for Grandson

Grandmothers don't play favourites with their grandchildren.

Lillian Mitchell proved it at Halton Land Division this week, when she asked for and received a severance to create a lot for her grandson.

In 1960 she received a similar approval for a lot for her other grandson. As lawyer Dick Howitt commented at the Land Division Committee meeting, "Mrs. Mitchell is running out of land and running out of grandsons."

The lot to be severed is 7.5 acres, while Mrs. Mitchell will retain 4.7 acres, at the corner of the Sixth Line and 20 Sideroad.

Both the Town and Halton Region recommended the application be rejected, saying it does not conform to the Halton Hills nor the regional Official Plans.

The regional planning report said the land is not within a hamlet or rural cluster, and is a non-farm residential development.

Howitt argued it was a case of infilling, and pointed out there are approximately 30 houses in the area. He said the severance would square up the L-shaped land owned by Mrs. Mitchell.

## Permits keep booming ahead

Building permits continue to boom ahead of last year.

Until the end of October permits totalled \$12.8 million as opposed to \$4.9 million in '82.

This year 56 houses with a value of \$5.4 million have been built or started compared to 19 with a \$1.2 value, last year.

Two additions to P. Graham Bell Associates on Armstrong Avenue, Georgetown total \$570,000. In Acton, Achilles Motors plans a \$25,000 addition and stores and offices will be added to the plaza at Meadvale and Highway 7, Acton, at a cost of \$50,000.

In the first ten months of this year, The Town has collected \$36,385 in permit fees, \$64,718 in lot levies, and \$13,677 in plumbing fees. In addition \$43,138 was paid to the region in lot levies.

## Donations boost work of Nhamr

In the last three months North Halton Association for the Mentally Retarded has received several donations, which the board of directors has listed in their quarterly bulletin.

The Kiwanis Club and the Georgetown Post Office who jointly sponsor the annual fun day ball tournament, supported by many groups and individuals, netted the NHAMR \$2,300.

In addition, the Kiwanis Club's annual Laborfest came up with another \$1,000. Other donors listed from July 1 to September 30 includes Eramosa Brass, B. Fomena, McKersie Funeral Home, V. Bludd, Miracle Mart, Evening Star Babekaba, and V. Bludd.



# Hunters bag 226 deer in annual hunt

## Concern expressed about shots fired near schools

Preliminary reports to the Ministry of Natural Resources suggest last week's controversial deer hunt was an almost incident-free success. Hunters bagged 226 deer in the entire Cambridge district.

But a number of area residents are voicing concern after hunters were seen near two local schools.

Brian Downs was in charge of Acton High School last Wednesday when one of his colleagues reported that he had heard gunshots in a cedar bush about 500 feet behind the school.

"Some of the kids (at the rear of the school) saw the deer pop out on the edge of

the playing field, then pop back in," says Downs.

The hunter tracking it also came to the edge of the wood and then disappeared.

"Then about four shots were clearly heard," says Downs.

"Sometimes, especially during better weather, kids go out for a walk there during lunch or between classes," says Downs. The incident happened about 11.30.

"It scared me to hear someone could be hunting that close," he says. "All it takes is one stray shot."

Police were called but the hunter was

found to have the property owner's permission says Downs, as a municipal by-law requires. By-law also prohibits hunting within 500 feet of a dwelling.

A pair of hunters were spotted near Speyside Public School on Monday, Nov. 7, by Milton councillor Bill Johnson and a CBC film crew.

They were scouting in a car when they spotted the hunters dragging a carcass within sight of the school.

"It was within half a mile of Speyside School and there were children playing outside," says Johnson, who mounts an annual campaign to distribute no trespass-

ing signs before the hunt.

The 300 hunters given licences for the Nov. 7-10 hunt were restricted to the use of shotguns which generally have an effective lethal range of about 100 yards. But Johnson and Downs are both concerned that a tragic accident could have occurred near the schools.

Nancy Tilt, a biologist with the Ministry of Natural Resources who run the hunt, had not heard reports of the school sightings. She said to date only a few trespass complaints have been received, none involving charges.

The annual hunt is designed to cut the deer population she said as well as to provide recreation for hunters. This year 226 deer were bagged and brought into the ministry's check points for the Halton, Wellington, Waterloo, Hamilton-Wentworth and Brant areas.

The ministry says the hunt is necessary to respond to complaints of crop damage, caused by deer from farmers. Tilt says there were 360 road kills by vehicles in 1982 and that unconfirmed reports to the ministry's field officers suggest the actual figure could be double that.

She says safety is a major concern with the ministry and added that while she had not heard of the school sightings, "Personally I think it is a little too close to a school. The hunter (in Acton) should have been more careful."

# Betty Fisher is chairperson

Betty Fisher has been elected chairperson of the Halton Board of Education.

Fisher, Georgetown's trustee on the board, was acclaimed to the top post Thursday evening. She replaces Len Auger, who resigned last month and moved to Ottawa.

In nominating Fisher, trustee Bill Priestner commented on her contributions around the board table both as a trustee and as vice-chairperson the past 11 months.

In an interview with this newspaper, Fisher noted "The biggest honor to me was for him (Priestner) to nominate me. He is the perfect example of excellence in trusteeship and to have him say "You have the ability to do the job" means a lot to me. It means more to me than anything."

Fisher's new duties as chairperson include the signing of financial documents, accounts, etc., correspondence with taxpayers, chairing the board meetings, and attending public functions away from the board which give the board high visibility.

Her position of chairperson is only until December 8, when the annual elections within the board are held. She has already said she will be running for the position then also, but does not know if anyone will be challenging her.

In the meantime, Fisher points out, she wants to continue the chairperson's duties as Auger did: having the board work as a co-operative group of people; have good

working relations with the trustees and staff; good relations between the board and the electorate; have good accountability to the taxpayers concerning finances; quality, excellence of education that they deliver to students.



Betty Fisher

While the position of chairperson will require more hours than her previous post, it will not be a full-time job, Fisher explained. If something important requires her attention while she is not at the board office, the secretary will notify her.

Fisher stresses however, that chairperson is secondary to needs and wants of her own constituents in Georgetown. She is a trustee first, they are her primary focus.

"It is really an honor to be chairman of such a talented group of people," Fisher said of her colleagues. "This is probably the most talented and gifted board and it is a thrill to work as chairman with them." She continued that this part term "has been my most exciting term because the people are on top of things."

As chairperson of the board, Fisher admits she will not be speaking at the board table about particular issues, unless she relinquishes the control of the meeting to the vice-chairperson. However, this does not mean she will not have input. The chairperson and vice chairperson have influence in executive committee. She still has a vote on issues at the board meeting, Fisher stressed.

The Education Act does not require an interim vice-chairperson be elected so for Thursday's meeting Milton Trustee Ivan Armstrong took over Fisher's former post and at the next meeting, trustee Len Crozier will act as vice-chairman.

## Whiting elected Vice-president

Rud Whiting was elected regional vice-president of Brampton-Georgetown Federal Liberal Association, at the annual meeting, November 9.

The newly chosen executive consists of President Richard Weller, Executive Vice-President Bob Callahan, Regional Vice-President Brampton Linda Reid, Regional Vice-President Bramalea Adib Shehid, Treasurer Ed Smith, and Secretary Tom Carey.