

## Drinking problem among GDHS students

Drinking among high school students at Georgetown District High School is a mounting problem the consequences of which principal Michael Furlong freely admits, "frighten me."

In an interview last week with the Herald Mr. Furlong noted that drinking among students, particularly at high school dances, has always been a recurring problem but the increase in alcohol-related incidents at GDHS over the past three months "has become a much more serious problem than ever before."

A November dance at GDHS saw so many students drinking the organizing committee of the dance, made up of students, met afterwards with the principal to voice their concern on the situation.

A teacher supervising the dance concurred. He estimated that the vast majority of the 650 students attending the dance had been drinking.

"We've always had a drinking problem at dances," noted Mr. Furlong "but it was always so minimal we couldn't really term it a serious problem. However the number at November's dance was quite high. Although only four were obviously drunk the supervising teacher estimated that the majority

had had a drink, probably before entering the school."

Last week four students finished off a bottle of vodka between morning classes. They returned to school where, in the midst of a science lab, one of the youths became violently ill. The ages of the students ranged from 13 to 15.

"My greatest concern," noted Mr. Furlong, "is that these two instances are just the tip of the iceberg. The consequences of drinking in school become more commonplace frightens me."

"It has reached the point where the students themselves are concerned, not just about the drinking itself but about the potential problems it may be creating."

Mr. Furlong pointed to the decision last week by provincial Attorney-General Roy McMurtry to re-examine the lowering of the drinking age from 21 to 18 as a sign of the seriousness of the problem on a province-wide level.

"I agree with Mr. McMurtry's concern over the problem," he said, "but I'm not sure raising the drinking age will be the solution."

"It would effectively handle the school problem, however I'm not entirely convinced that 18-year-olds can't cope with it. If the age

limit was 18 and that's where it stopped, there would be no problem."

The wide variance in the ages of students enrolled in GDHS is one of the contributing factors behind the spreading drinking problem, Mr. Furlong said. The students range from 12 years old to 20 years old.

"It's inevitable that some of the more impressionable, younger students will, through their close connections with the older ones, become involved with drinking. However they may be totally unprepared or not mature enough to handle it."

Another serious factor is that of non-students coming onto school property during lunch hours or at a dance and providing students with beer or alcohol.

The school is powerless to press charges immediately. A person doing it must first be sent a registered letter warning him not to return. Should he do so and is seen on school property he can then be immediately charged with trespassing.

The most effective means of controlling non-students is frequent patrols of the property by town police but, as Mr. Furlong pointed out, they can't provide continuous patrols.

"If we could solve the problem of the non-

students we would have a lot of the problem licked."

He appealed to the students to "meet their friends somewhere else."

"We must all work together to solve the problem of drinking in the school."

"As long as one student gets drunk, even out of a total student population of 1,900, we have a problem. The implications of that one incident upon the atmosphere of the entire school are critical."

He explained that those students who do have problems "are treated as if they are sick."

The treatment for the growing problem is not strictly found in enforcement of rules such as cancelling of school dances.

"We all have a responsibility to deal with the drinking student, but we must deal with him or her not with a punishment attitude but rather with a preventative manner."

"It's not the fault of the student, it's not the fault of the parent's, it's not the fault of the police and it's not the fault of the school. It's everyone's fault and everyone's problem."

## Halton statistics show young regular drinkers

Alarming statistics came to light recently in Toronto during the inquest into the death of a 15-year-old North York schoolboy, due to alcohol.

Dr. James Rankin, head of clinical research for the Addiction Research Foundation, gave out the figures during his testimony at the inquest.

According to Dr. Rankin, 75 per cent of Canadian school children between 11 and 18 years of age drink regularly.

In Grade 13 the figure has risen to 93 per cent.

Peter Marks, community consultant for the A.R.F. in Halton, related these figures to the situation in our community.

In a recent study done by the A.R.F. in the summer of 74 in Oakville the following question was asked of the students being polled. "What percentage of the students do you feel drink hard liquor per day?"

The students polled were from nine different high schools in the area. The study done in Oakville gave the following results: 24.4 per cent drink hard liquor per day; 5.4 per cent once per week; 5.9 per cent once or twice per month.

"This alarming rate in the

consumption of alcohol by students is the result of many contributing factors," notes Mr. Marks.

"The lowering of the drinking age to 18 has certainly had its effect but the abuse of alcohol among students is more closely related to attitudes towards the handling of social pressures," he said.

"We have to educate the public to develop personal responsibility in basic attitudes and values. Education is perhaps the only overall effective use against alcohol abuse," explained Mr. Marks.

In a recent interview with the Herald from his Ottawa office Dr. Frank Philbrook, M.P. for Halton, carried that point one step further. "You cannot effectively legislate people's behaviour," he said.

"By trying to control drinking abuse by such measures as pricing liquor beyond reach, which is a form of prohibition, you would increase the crime rate in bootlegging and the making of cheap alcohol."

"I think the basis of the problem is to put the responsibility back to the people. Teach people how to

handle stress in a more acceptable manner," he said.

"If we're getting into undesirable drinking trends due to the lowering of the drinking age, and I'm not absolutely sure yet that is the case, then perhaps the government should take a step backwards. But legislation alone is definitely not the complete

answer," he said.

Dr. Hugh Missildine, a psychiatrist, told a recent seminar in Toronto that "the lowering of the drinking age creates alcoholism by law".

Dr. Missildine found the "excessive liberalism" of today's society was dangerous to personal growth development and potential.

Statistics of a 93 per cent drinking rate amongst Grade 13 students is almost an epidemic proportion figure.

Unfortunately, the public acceptance of alcohol and consequently alcohol abuse keeps the public from becoming appropriately alarmed, he said.

"Social values and attitudes" said Peter Marks will have to change if we are to see a decrease in these alarming figures."



ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS...David Farrow (top) had a secret to tell Santa Claus at last Thursday night's Legion Children's Christmas Party held at Branch 120. No, he wasn't asking for his two front teeth. Much to his mother's surprise (and horror) David wants Santa to bring him a set of crums this Christmas. We're not certain what pretty little Les Shuttleworth had asked for but judging from her expression Santa Claus must have told her it's on its way.

### Early deadlines

The Herald plans to be ready for Santa Claus but we need your help. To allow the staff to head home early Christmas Eve we will be producing the Herald in time for distribution Tuesday morning, December 23; one day early.

As a result our copy and advertising deadlines have all been moved ahead. The final deadline for classified and display advertisements will be 2 o'clock, Monday, December 22.

We would request all our correspondents and news contributors to submit their copy, if it's at all possible, this week.

## Board okays sale of Norval school

The negotiations over the Norval school are finally over. As soon as the documents are signed the Norval school and 4.3 acres of land surrounding it will be officially turned over to Halton Hills for development as a recreational centre for the village of Norval.

After one year of almost continuous negotiations between the Halton Board of Education and the town both sides agreed last week to the latest offer made by the town.

That offer places a \$59,000 price tag on the entire property consisting of both the old and new Norval public school plus 4.3 acres surrounding it. The town is also prohibited by terms of the contract from selling any portion of the property for five years.

Esqueving's representative on the board, Tom Watson, presented the terms of the contract - arrived at the previous week in a meeting between board and town officials - to the Halton board last Thursday during a committee of the whole session.

The board, during its regular meetings unanimously approved the sale.

Since the closing of the public school two years ago the board and town have been negotiating back and forth on a proper selling price for the property. The town originally took a stand that the school, having been built from public funds prior to the formation of the Halton board, should be returned to the public for a token \$1 figure.

The board, however, had the value of the property set much higher, basing their price estimates on the zoning of the property.

Later the town offered to purchase only the schools with a small portion of the land but the board requested that the entire property be sold as a parcel.

With the settling of the Norval issue some attention is now turning towards the other school property available to Halton Hills, Chapel Street Public School.

Georgetown trustee Ernie Bodnar said at Thursday's meeting that neither the board nor the town have addressed themselves to the Chapel Street issue "but I imagine that it will be discussed in the near future."

## Georgetown Knights of Columbus set the pace

The Georgetown Knights of Columbus Pieta Council No. 6025, through the generosity of the people of Halton Hills, presented a cheque of \$3,798.09 to Mauri Vallee, a regional director of the Canadian Arthritis Society, last week.

Mr. Vallee, a guest with the Knights of Columbus at their December 9 meeting said, much to the surprise of many members, that the Georgetown Knights of Columbus had been the first council in Ontario to campaign on behalf of the Arthritis Society.

Since the Knights of Columbus began to campaign in 1968 the response has grown tremendously. Also, because of this venture, many arthritis cures have been discovered.

Mr. Vallee presented a film at the meeting on the work that the Arthritis Society is doing in the way of research and treatment. He also gave a

report of the help which the Knights of Columbus have given to the society. The

Knights of Columbus throughout the whole of Ontario have contributed more

than \$500,000 since the adoption of the Arthritis Society as their principal charity in 1972.



NOW THAT'S DONATION. The Georgetown Knights of Columbus presented a cheque for \$3,798.09 to Mauri Vallee, regional representative of the Arthritis Society. Helping the Arthritis Society is the chief charity of the Knights of Columbus. From left to right stand; Karl Klein, Grand Knight, Mauri Vallee; William Kent, chairman of the Arthritis Society campaign for Georgetown and Doug Tucker, vice-chairman for Georgetown's campaign.

## Farmers, citizens all voice concerns on problems created by drive-in

The Ontario Municipal Board hearings into the proposed drive-in at Ashgrove continued on Tuesday.

Mr. Barry Allen who owns a 100-acre site in Ashgrove wants to develop 25 acres of that site for a drive-in theatre. The Official Plan of Esqueving has the land designated as rural and agricultural.

Mr. Allen, through his solicitor Monty Hyde, has been seeking an amendment of the land designation for 25 acres of the site. The remaining 75 acres he proposed as a possible orchard.

The Tuesday morning session began with the cross-examination of town planner Mario Venditti by Solicitor Monty Hyde. Mr. Hyde centered his cross-examination around the point that any drive-in site in the Esqueving area would have to be by

amendment to the Official Plan.

Solicitor Hyde called Anthony Miles of Damus and Smith, a firm of consulting engineers who have prepared a traffic survey for Mr. Allen. Mr. Miles testified that, in his opinion traffic would be of a Level D rate, a condition of stable traffic flow.

During his cross-examination by the town's solicitor Ray Steele it was pointed out that the population figures used in the traffic report were incorrect. Mr. Miles concurred that if this proved so then certain areas of the report would have to be corrected, but this would have little effect on the traffic computations, according to Mr. Miles.

The afternoon's testimony began with Solicitor Dick Howlitt calling Henry Stanley

of the ministry of agriculture and food. Mr. Stanley testified that the land on the proposed site was "prime agricultural land with soil of the Class I and Class II variety suitable for growing almost anything."

Mr. Stanley pointed out that in the Code of Agricultural practices set up by the ministry "if at all possible, prime agricultural land should be kept in blocks so as not to interfere with the non-farming members of the community."

Mr. Stanley's testimony centered on the value of the land from an agricultural point of view. He voted "on the 100-acre farm adjacent to the drive-in the farmer uses liquid manure which might not be compatible with people sitting in their cars."

During Mr. Hyde's cross-examination Mr. Stanley pointed out that the proposed

orchard on the remaining 75 acres would not be profitable if drive-in patrons could have easy access to it, as Mr. Allen had suggested.

Solicitor Steele called Rob Austin to testify in his capacity as town engineer. He estimated that road improvements around the drive-in site would run about \$135,000 per mile with an additional \$575,000 for an asphalt surface on roads presently with just a gravel top.

Next to be called was Frank Crans, principle planner for the Halton planning department. He testified that in his capacity as planner he did not believe that the surrounding agricultural community would be compatible with a drive-in theatre.

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