



Trying to set a canoeing record on the pool in Acton high school during Sports Day last Wednesday are Grade nine Tammy

Allsop, 14, and Bill Pearn, 15. They recorded 3 minutes and 15 seconds for their fun-filled jaunt. (Herald Photo).

Mexican youth's first Christmas away from home is in Acton

By GEORGE EVASHUK
Herald Staff Writer

Christmas Eve in Acton for Alejandro Guercia is going to be one he'll never forget—it's his first away from his home in Monterrey, Mexico.

Christmas Day too will be something to remember for it's different back home, he said. "Alex" as his mates at Acton high school have named him, came to Acton in October from Mexico's major industrial city to study English.

"My family celebrates the night before Christmas," he told The Herald. Besides his parents, he has two sisters and three brothers and a dog. On Christmas Eve many "aunts and uncles come to my house."

They begin celebrating by gathering around the tree and praying, Alex said. "Then we sit down. . . he paused, searching for the right English word, then decided on . . . chat. . . drink Coke or beer and after this we give out the presents."

Following the opening of presents and a roast turkey dinner, the family goes to midnight mass and following mass, Alex and his next older brother last year went to a

round of parties. He laughed as he wondered what his father would do if he found out when the parties ended. . . but last year it was at six a.m."

"It's like . . . he searched for the right English word again, then decided to stay with his native Spanish by choosing "fiesta." He grinned. "It's OK."

This year he'll be celebrating his first Canadian Christmas—although with roast turkey and a trimmed tree, Christmas in Monterrey sounds like something any Canadian could easily get used to—with John and Marie Shadbolt and their daughters Linda and Judy in Acton. In the rough and tumble verbal onslaught that occurs with two teen-age girls in the house, Alex is learning to hold his own.

He needs to learn English to continue his studies in business administration at the university in Monterrey, he said. Text books and some classes as well are in English and having a good command of English can mean having a better life, Alex told The Herald.

His father believes the best way to learn English is by the immersion method, much as what happened to Alex's brother Ricardo who studied English in Boston.

But unlike his brother who was on a five-month "special English" course, Alex said "I'd like to graduate here. It's a marvelous custom. To graduate in both countries is very good."

His brother Ricardo and a friend, Jaime Montalbo, recently visited Alex at the Shadbolt's for a few days before they returned to Monterrey, and he has fond memories of the time they spent together.

As for snow in Monterrey, it's seen only on the mountaintops, Alex said. Here, "It's nice," he said, "but at first I didn't like it."

And since the first snowfall this season, Alex has enjoyed "skidoing," skating and looking forward to trying skiing. In Mexico he plays halfback on his school's soccer club.

"For me, it's the first year away from home," Alex said. Of course, he'll be thinking of

his family on Christmas day, he said, "but, for example, in my country it's the 24th. I'll

remember them on the 24th. Maybe I'll call them on the 24th."



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EXCHANGE HOUSE

Fun, gala dance at sports night

Acton high school's second annual sports night Wednesday saw fun-filled athletic antics wind up with a gala dance.

Both spectators and participants enjoyed the events in the pool: canoe obstacle race, inner tube relay, water jousting and water baseball.

The boys dressed up like grandmothers for the old ladies race in the gym while the girls donned oversized sweat-shirts and shin pads for the hockey race.

Other activities included a ski race, boxing blindfolded, walking race, still race, floor hockey, and the traditional tug-of-war.

Group sports included a volleyball matches between Acton students and M.Z. Bennett public school pupils and a basketball game between present Acton high schoolers and graduates.

Quieter games were happening in the cafeteria, filled with chess, euchre, checker, darts, bocce and shuffleboard players, barnyard golf, ping pong, hop



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Alejandro Guercia, of Monterrey, Mexico, who is spending his first Christmas away from home at the Acton home of Mr. and Mrs.

John Shadbolt, trims the tree with a little help from Linda and Judy Shadbolt.

Industrial commission

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Mr. Bennett made such assurances at a meeting Thursday with Mr. Gray, Mr. McDermid said.

Provincial sources suggest a regional industry commission would be preferred rather than a series of local community commissions which could result in fierce inter-community competition.

"If you (Halton) do not go out and sell your community," Mr. McDermid said, "you are going to lose out by default."

He said several communities throughout the province have "very aggressive guys" promoting industry within their communities.

An industrial commission could be formed either as a committee of council with a full-time commissioner or as a regional committee with local community commissions as an adjunct.

Mr. McDermid said assistance could be given to Halton for any needed amendment to

Bill 151, the act creating Halton Region, if it does not provide for this service. Regional council would first have to make a statement of definition.

Ottawa-Carleton Region has an industrial board composed of private businessmen and members of council. It is funded both by private and council funds. Sudbury has been given provision for this service in its enabling legislation, Mr. McDermid said.

Halton Hills Coun. Roy Booth elected to regional council this month, said his platform was based on the need for industrial development of Halton and the need to maintain and find replacement employment opportunities.

He said, however, that conversations with regional officials indicate that debate on an industrial commission is not expected before late February or March.

Burlington has been seeking creation of an industrial commission for the past year. A spokesman for the city Chamber of Commerce said several briefs have been prepared and presented to regional council and the body will be making a joint presentation with its sister organizations in Halton in the new year.



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