

Batting .500

Scott Williams can find the right bat for anyone. The Grade 11 science student's experiment examines how

the mass and length of the bat affect a swing. It was one of the many experiments on display Dec. 3 at Acton

High School's Science Exposition. (Herald photo)

Bus driver gets probation for assaulting children

A Halton school bus driver charged with sexually assaulting girls between 6 and 9 years old was convicted of a lesser charge, common assault, in Milton Provincial Court Dec. 3.

Ralph Alden Foster, 46, of Milton was sentenced to two years of probation for two counts of assault. Mr. Foster was a bus driver in Milton and Oakville for the Halton Board of Education.

Mr. Foster pleaded not guilty to sexual assault and guilty to assault.

The assaults took place between Nov. 30, 1985 and June 20, 1986. Crown prosecutor Paul Stunt said two girls complained of being touched on their "private parts" at that time.

The oldest girl, 9 years old at the time, said the bus driver put his hand on her clothes and between her legs. A 6-year-old girl said she was asked to sit at the front of the bus with the driver, who put his hands on the back and front of the outside of her pants, Mr. Stunt said.

The lawyer for the accused, Leonard Walker, said the accused did not touch the children below the waist, and that there were "no sex-

ual overtones" to the touching. He called the touching tickling.

Although children were waiting outside the courtroom, no witnesses were called. Mr. Foster did not take the stand either.

Mr. Walker admitted that the accused should not have touched the children. No matter what the intentions, to touch a child under 10 years old is considered assault, he said.

In his recommendation before sentencing, Mr. Walker said the accused "suffered enough". He lost his job and had to move from Milton, Mr. Walker said. Two years probation was recommended.

"It has been a devastating experience to the families and children," said crown prosecutor Stunt, who also recommended two years probation.

Judge Robinson sentenced Mr. Foster to two years probation concurrent for both charges of assault, and, if found necessary, that he receive counselling. Mr. Foster was ordered not to contact either the families or the children involved. A breach of the conditions could lead to further sentencing, Judge Robinson said.

Charged for Sunday opening

Five stores in Georgetown were charged for being open Sunday. The repeat offenders, who were also charged last week, are Loblaw's, Miracle Food Mart and A and P. Charged for the first time Sunday were the Georgetown Fruit Market and Shoppers Drug Mart, police said.

Shoppers Drug Mart in Milton and five Milton grocery stores were also charged on Sunday. Charged stores face up to \$10,000 in fines.

Stores with more than 2,400 square feet of customer space and more than three employees working are open illegally, said Det-Sgt. Keith Robertson of the Halton Regional Police.

Some businesses can qualify for permits and can remain open on Sunday, despite their size and number of employees, he said. Because Acton's Olde Hide House is a tourist related business, it qualifies for a permit.

Opposition to Sunday openings

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"If I signed it (letter), I'm saying I'm not going to shop at any of those stores because they open Sunday. I'm willing to do that if others don't also. That would be such an unpopular thing at this time of year that very few people would go along with it," Rev. Tate said.

"I feel it isn't an important enough issue to say I'm going to inconvenience myself to stay by that principle," he said. "I live in a society that has those values. Am I expected by

God to go to the mountains? We're caught in the world, so to speak. My message is we have to live in the world and it doesn't matter as long as I can put distance between the ways of the world and God in my personal life."

He said he's shopped at fruit stands on Sundays. However, he won't be shopping at the larger retail stores or markets on Sunday because they're breaking the law.

Rev. Lee grew up in Sarnia where working on Sunday was accepted. He said families planned for times off together and families adjusted to

the shift work.

"I think we live in a society today in which there's a tremendous amount of pressure on the nuclear family to emulate the "Leave it to Beaver" idealistic family of the sixties," Rev. Lee said.

But families can survive without a Sunday together every week, he said. It may mean dad is home with the children Thursday afternoons, because he works Sundays. It might be a new agenda for time together.

People are not going to be forced to work any more hours a week than they do now, Rev. Lee said. There's only so much money people have to spend, and just because a car dealer is open seven days a week doesn't mean he'll sell more cars. Some stores may find it's not in their best interest to be open seven days a week.

Chamber takes a stand

The Georgetown Chamber of Commerce doesn't favor Sunday openings, a spokesman said Thursday.

The Chamber supports existing legislation governing store openings said director in charge of publicity Alex McKee.

The decision to oppose Sunday openings was made at Thursday's general directors' meeting. The vote was "virtually unanimous" said Mr. McKee.

Many of the directors felt stores should not be violating the law. That was one of the primary reasons for not supporting the openings, he said.

Also, the Chamber found in a recent survey that 83 per cent of respondents questioned favored existing hours of operation for Georgetown stores, he said.

A number of Chamber members felt that it would be unfair to employees who have families to ask them to work Sundays, Mr. McKee said.

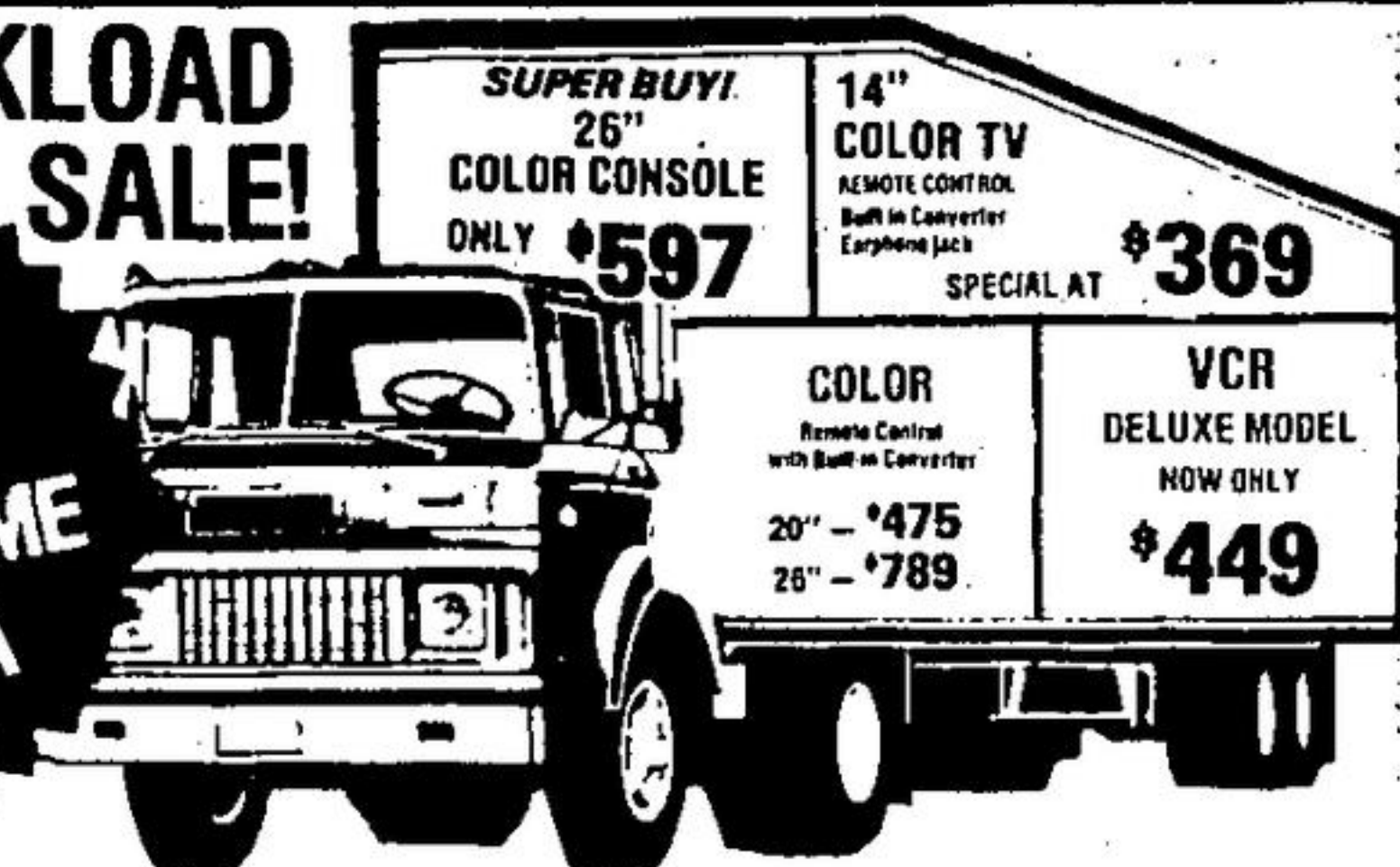
But directors still favor Sunday openings for stores that are tourist-oriented, he said.

It's important for the Chamber to let people know its position on the issue, Mr. McKee said. That's why the topic was discussed at their meeting.

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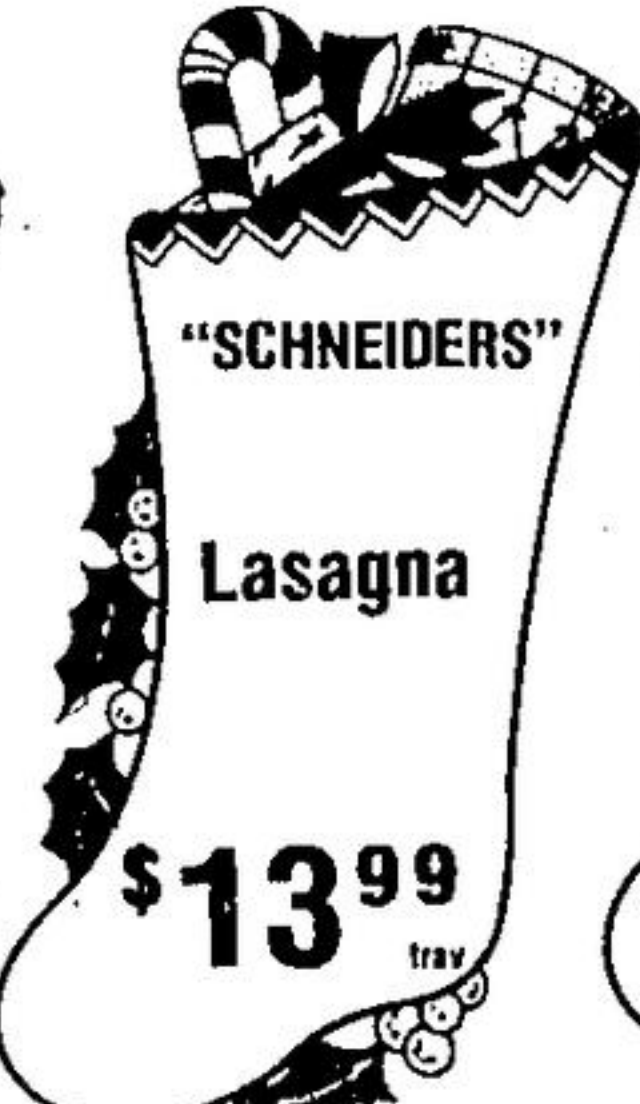
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