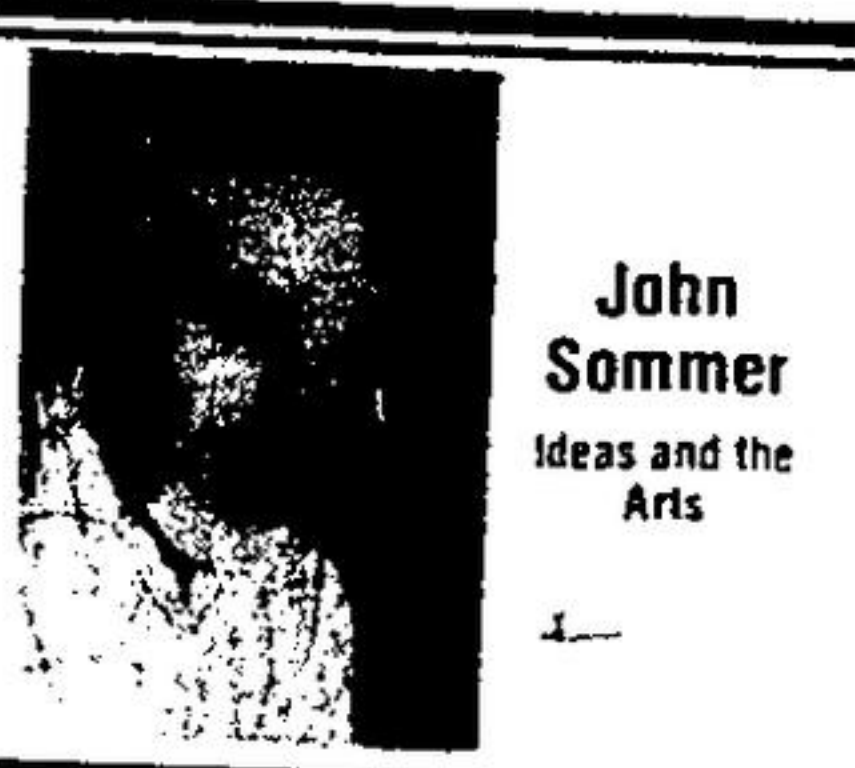


In 1989

213,000 people used cultural centre



John Sommer
Ideas and the Arts

In October 1981 the Halton Hills Library and Cultural Centre on Church Street in Georgetown opened with a week-long celebration presided over by the then mayor of Halton Hills, Peter Pomeroy.

In the years since, the Centre has become so much the focus of the cultural life of our community that it is impossible now to imagine the town without it.

I talked to the administrator of the Cultural Centre, Hank Huhtanen, and to the chief librarian, Betsy Cornwell, recently to find out more from them about this unique gathering place in our midst.

Did you know that about 213,000 users walked into the Cultural Centre last year to partake in a bewildering assortment of activities, from borrowing books, talking books, records, films and contact tapes, to a great variety of programs for children and social hours for seniors, to meetings, talks and lectures, to a computer data information centre that is rapidly becoming everybody's resource at no cost to the user? Did you know that soon the town's newspapers will be all indexed, which means that anything ever printed in them will be on instant recall? Did you know that the John Elliott Theatre in the Cultural Cen-

tre is used an average of about 100 nights a year, either for performances or rehearsals, and that for performances an average of about 85 per cent of the seats are sold?

Many professional companies, like the Ontario Ballet Theatre last year, have come to the Centre since it opened, but the major theatrical happenings on our state-of-the-art stage are locally generated, with Globe Productions, Georgetown Little Theatre and several regional dance studios providing the larger share of the lively entertainment offered. Some of these performances are raising funds for a variety of worthy causes. Further features at the John Elliott Theatre are two three-week summer classes for about 20 children each. Our recreation department hires professional teachers, as a part of the department's recreational services, to teach these children everything there is to know about the production of a play, from the writing to the casting to the staging and acting and eventually performing. For three weeks these children are actively engaged in the creative process and everything connected with it. What a splendid way to spend a part of one's summer!

The art gallery at the Centre, (it was the Congregational Church up to 1913 when it became the Georgetown library) is host to about 15 art exhibitions every year, with most of them featuring local artists. I always want to shout with joy when I look at this beautiful old church, so nicely restored now to serve future

generations. It's the best of all the gothic revival churches in town and it is most fitting that it is used for art exhibitions, since it is itself a work of art. The ugly plastic windows that were installed about 25 years ago, to preserve the stained glass windows behind, are a severe blemish. I hope that a generous soul will donate clear windows one day, and return our historic treasure to its original perfection.

Every summer since 1984 the Friends of the Halton Hills Libraries have invited an artist of Canada-wide renown to have an exhibition here in town, and artists like Robert Bateman and Ken Danby have followed the call. This yearly event has put Georgetown on the artistic map and has also been partly responsible for the town turning into a tourist attraction lately. The art gallery at the Centre is also used for chamber music concerts (its acoustics are first class), lectures and seminars, and last but not least, weddings. Yes, you can rent this lovely space

for your very special wedding reception!

In a small, thick-walled room behind the reference library the town archives have been installed, watched over by Walter Lewis, who is constantly adding to the collection. This little room is filled to bursting point with valuable documents pertaining to the history of Halton Hills, also with hundreds of artworks that have been donated to the town by artists and private collectors. It's up to us now to provide space for these items to be out in the light of day where we can all enjoy them. I propose that we make an Historical and Art Museum our project for the year 2000.

Halton police are looking for witnesses

Halton Regional Police have charged 51-year-old Antonio Maurantonio of Bloor Street East, Mississauga, who also is known as Doctor Tony Mauro, with four counts of sexual assault, four counts of assault and one count of fraud under the Criminal Code of Canada as well as practising medicine without a licence under the Health Disciplines Act. Police are continuing the investigation and ask that anyone having had contact with this subject contact Detective Constable Parcher at 845-7171 ext. 216.

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