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## Siena VanHoekelen named Citizen of the Year



Seventy four year old Siena VanHoekelen has been named Georgetown's Citizen of the Year. The very active senior will be honored at a special dinner ceremony on March 5.

By JANET BAINE

Siena VanHoekelen jokingly says she'd rather go to Heaven, but being Georgetown's Citizen of the Year is a nice stop along the way.

Mrs. VanHoekelen, at 74, has more energy than many people half her age. Up at 6 a.m. each day, she goes to daily mass and limbers up at exercise classes twice a week.

By 10 a.m. Thursday her modest home on Cleaveholm Dr. was filled with the smell of oatmeal cookies. Dozens sat cooling on the table while pans of butter tarts were almost ready to go in the oven. No point going to the bother to bake just a dozen cookies at a time, since there's always someone around who likes sweet things, she says.

In the old days when her nine children and eight step-children were at home, she'd make "a mountain of cookies" every other day. Mrs. VanHoekelen is quick to add she never had 17 children in her house all at once, since those from her first marriage had mostly grown up when she moved to Georgetown in 1968 with her second husband, Edward.

She loves to laugh and share what she has with other people. Her neighbors are recent immigrants, and she made sure they had a Christmas tree and toys for the children.

When she has time for herself, Mrs. VanHoekelen also enjoys knitting. An afghan she made is being raffled off at a dinner she is organizing next Tuesday to raise money for the senior centre in Georgetown.

Mrs. VanHoekelen can coax blossoms out of plants that you would never think could bloom: a fern, for instance, and a monkey's tail.

While she always sets aside some time for herself, Mrs. VanHoekelen keeps busy with numerous community activities. Three pages of volunteer activities accompanied her nomination for Citizen of the Year, selection committee chairman Mani Mitera said.

"I don't know how she can do everything," he says.

Mrs. VanHoekelen volunteers at the Halton Health Unit, St. Vincent de Paul, and the Red Cross. She is a

member of the Catholic Women's League, the Parish Council of Holy Cross Church (where she started a seniors group), and fund-raising chairman for the board of directors of the seniors centre.

In 1951 she came to Canada from Holland, and still has her Dutch accent today. She lived in British Columbia for 17 years, but didn't have much time for volunteer work because she had children at home. But when she moved to Georgetown in 1968, Mrs. VanHoekelen found time to help others.

Six years ago, her second husband passed away and she threw herself into volunteer work.

"I filled my days with doing volunteer work for my own good feeling. I didn't want to sit home feeling sorry for myself," she said. But all her life Mrs. VanHoekelen has worked hard and helped other people.

She looked after children for 10 years for the Children's Aid Society, while their mothers learned how to cope better.

Now most of her time is dedicated to helping seniors. She is the bartender during Happy Hour at the Bennett Centre; next time she's going to wear her bunny suit, she jokes.

Of all the things Mrs. VanHoekelen has volunteered for, she enjoys working with seniors at foot-care clinics operated by the Victorian Order of Nurses and visiting shut-ins and people at the Bennett Centre.

"I always loved the old people. They depend on you. I met so many friends there," she says. Since nearly 75 herself, she can relate to them, she adds.

"There are lots of little things I have done. You kind of forget until somebody mentions it and you say, oh yes, I used to do that, too," she says.

Mrs. VanHoekelen thanks her good health, because without it, she wouldn't be able to help other people, she says.

None of her family members live in Halton Hills, and all but a brother-in-law are too far away to come for the Citizen of the Year dinner.

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### 13-year old charged with shooting incident

A 13-year-old Georgetown girl has been charged in connection with a January 27 case in which a youth had a gun pointed at his head.

Shortly after noon, as he was walking behind Georgetown Memorial Arena a 13-year-old was grabbed by another youth, police said.

As one of the suspects held the youth, a second suspect pointed a firearm at the victim's shoulder.

The trigger was pulled six times -- the weapon was un-

loaded, police said.

On Tuesday, police interviewed three area youths at the Georgetown detachment in connection with the incident.

The young offender -- who could face up to three years in jail if convicted -- has been charged with pointing a firearm and assault with a weapon.

The other two suspects -- one male, the other female -- were released unconditionally.

The accused is to appear in Milton Youth Court March 15.

Valentine's

## Sweetheart Dinner

Make it a night to remember  
On Thursday February 14th come and treat your special someone to an evening of great fun and fine food.

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