



George the Giraffe, George Kennedy School's mascot takes a peek at the awards won by Brendan Alexa (left) and Kris Glaude. Principal Steve Fraser congratulates the two youngsters.

Students honored at George Kennedy

By JANET DUVAL

Teachers at George Kennedy Public School chose two students for special honors recently.

Grade 4 student Brendan Alexa received the Jason Leonard Citizenship Award at a special assembly, and Grade 5 student Kris Glaude won the Chuck Pinkerton Arts Award.

The Jason Leonard Award was established seven years ago when Jason, a Grade 4 student at the school, drowned in the Credit River at Norval just days after school ended in June.

This year's award recipient is active on sports teams and in the school Chess Club, where he is known as "The Queen." That means he's second best on a team which swept a regional tournament this year.

"Brendan is one fantastic kid," says his principal Steve Fraser. "Besides participating in school activ-

ities, he volunteers for things, is helpful to other students and teachers, and he's well behaved. He tries to be a good citizen, a real example to his peers."

Kris Glaude's award is in recognition of his special talent for drawing and painting. He says he has always liked to doodle, and has had A Plus in Art "ever since Kindergarten."

"His skills will continue to grow as he goes on in school," says Steve Fraser. "He's popular, well behaved, and he has a lifelong skill to enjoy in his art work."

Chuck Pinkerton, a champion of the arts, taught an entire generation of students at George Kennedy. A painter in his own right, he died just months after his retirement in 1988. The award was established by fellow staff members in his memory.

Donkeys hold coyotes at bay

By ROB KELLY

Rural north Halton livestock farmers having problems with coyotes would probably do well to invest in the single most effective guard animal known to protect shivering sheep from packs of prowling predators.

A large and trained dog? Some sort of exotic jungle cat bred to bear Ontario's weather extremes? An armed escort to shepherd the flock?

None of the above.

The answer is a donkey.

Yes, the proud and fierce donkey will probably rid rural pastures of the growing menace of coyote and coy-dog predation. And what's more, the Ontario government will help pay for your beast.

That, without quite the same spin, was the message provided by Bruce Buckland, a Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) representative who appeared before Milton council's committee meeting Monday night. Buckland was there to answer questions, largely raised by Milton's rural councillors, about what can be done to stem the rising trend of coyote and coy-dog kills affecting area farming.

Coy-dogs are the crossbred result of dogs, usually wild ones dumped in the rural area but often too just free-running rural pets, mating with wild coyotes.

The coyote population in rural north Halton appears to be thriving, at least based on the amount of livestock the animals are killing. In 1989 there were 38 confirmed coyote and coy-dog kills. In 1990 there were 47. Farmers claim insurance damages for their

dead animals. In 1990 the cost was \$13,770, a cost borne entirely by MNR.

Buckland, admitting the rate of coyote kills in the area seemed "very high," said one of the best ways farmers have found so far to deal with the threat is by having donkeys in the same fields as sheep. "It works better than sheep dogs," he said.

A Barrie area sheep farmer who had 35 kills in one year had none registered after putting donkeys in his fields, Buckland said. The ministry will pay farmers \$150 toward the cost of a donkey, which Buckland estimated would run to roughly \$750.

The animals apparently will not suffer the presence of coyotes and are fully capable of killing them with powerful kicks.

Buckland also pointed out that the donkey will graze contentedly in the same field as sheep, which means farmers don't have to feed them.

It was the only relatively new solution he could provide for the coyote and coy-dog problem. The ministry currently pays 50 per cent of the cost for hiring a trapper to work private lands where coyotes maintain a presence, he noted. Beyond that, there are precious few other avenues open to MNR to deal with the situation, he said.

Although the ministry currently pays half the trapping cost, "our budgets are shrinking," Buckland noted. The Cambridge office has but \$4,000 for so-called predator control in its annual budget, and that is spread over four counties and regions. Buck-

land pointed out. As well, "it has been indicated to us we may lose the predator control budget entirely."

One of the reasons the ministry will only pay 50 per cent of the trapping expense (previously it was 100 per cent) is that the shared cost forces farmers who practise poor animal husbandry to develop better habits, Buckland said.

Some farmers incorrectly believe a single strand of electric wire strung along a fence will stop coyotes when it won't, Buckland stressed. Others persist in putting unprotected sheep in fields which they know are frequented by coyotes.

Milton councillor Bill Johnson asked if a bounty on the animals would be an effective control weapon. Buckland said no, since usually animals are taken from a large area, not a specific site where problems exist. Also, no more animals were taken under bounties than under controlled hunt conditions, he said. The ministry no longer sanctions bounty hunting.

Buckland felt one of Halton's control problems stemmed from the fact that so much of the area is off limits to hunters for most of the year, providing the opportunity for coyotes to thrive.

Council voted to contact Minister of Natural Resources Bud Wildman regarding a possible bounty on the animals. Only the ministry can grant permission for a bounty hunt, and Buckland indicated such permission is unlikely.



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