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George Kennedy Public School student, 9-year-old Craig Ashton, gets a lesson from Bobby the Clown (Barbara Curzon) during the school's Celebrating Canadians day held last Wednesday.
 photo by Simon Wilson/HHTW.

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Young Offenders Act has people worried

By Oksana Buhel
 Many people are expressing concern over the effectiveness of the Young Offenders Act. The federal government is currently tabling new amendments to make young offenders more accountable for their actions.
 "There's a perception the Young Offenders Act errs on the side of leniency," explained Sgt. Mike Kingston of Halton Regional Police Service, Georgetown division.
 "The government is working on tightening up the loopholes. We (the police) are in support of that."
 The implementation of the act has introduced new trends in youth crime. "Crimes involving violence and weapons are definitely on the rise," said Sgt. Joe Martin, media relations officer with Halton Region police. He explained this increase has much to do with society, television and other mediums

which reflect what is permissible. "It's become a status symbol for young people to carry a knife or a gun," Martin stated.
 He admits this trend is also visible with adult crime, but that with young offenders, the tendency towards violence has turned into an "epidemic." "The fact that young people are turning towards more violent crime has become more and more prevalent. This is a major concern for us, and for parents," claims Martin.
 Kingston adds an interesting twist to Martin's findings. He explains that in Halton Hills, the number of offences which are being reported is decreasing, but that of these offences, a larger percentage are violent.
 Kingston insists the perceived leniency in the YOA is not the

only reason more youth-related crimes are being reported. He praises strong support groups which influence people to overcome their fears and report violent crimes.
 One such group is the Parent-Aid organization of Acton.
 The group will be hosting a "teenagers and the law" meeting at Acton High School next Wednesday evening at 7:30 p.m. Speakers Theresa Dompierre and Dennis Kunze, both local probation officers, will be speaking about the Young Offender Act, and answering any questions afterward. Christine Pearson, coordinator of the group, explains that many parents have expressed a desire for this type of information. Anyone interested in the Act, or concerned about its implications is welcome to attend.

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Toebes Citizen of the Year
 Acton resident John Toebes Sr. has been chosen by Acton's Lions Club as the 1992 Citizen of the Year. Toebes will be presented with an award at a dinner and ceremony on April 30 at Acton Legion.
 Toebes has been involved with minor league sports for the last 40 years, specifically hockey, baseball and soccer. For the last 20 years, Toebes has donated a substantial portion of his time to Acton house league hockey.
 Asked why he thought he had been nominated, Toebes modestly insisted, "Oh, I don't know." He also said he was surprised by the nomination.
 The dinner and ceremony is open to the public. Anyone wishing to attend may purchase tickets from any Lions Club member, or by telephoning Dave Pyke at 853-4534.

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