

GRAPE VINE

hobby has evolved into a business which will also include sales of finished and unfinished furniture, reclaimed building products and antique tools.

Companion pass

Good news! GO Transit is extending its "companion pass" offer until the end of June to try to lure more commuters, including those in Acton, to leave their cars at home.

Monthly pass holders can take a friend along — free — on GO buses and trains on weekends and holidays until Sunday, June 27.

Gifted gather

Kudos to Acton's Katie McGrath, who took part in the fifth annual Connections Conference for gifted students in Milton last Wednesday.

Katie, a Grade 10 student at Bishop Reding Separate School, spent the day with other gifted students attending a variety of workshops, seminars and presentations.

Valued volunteers

Acton volunteers, the backbone of many local social agencies and services, will be honoured at a special appreciation night in Georgetown on Tuesday, April 20.

Sponsored by the North Halton Volunteer Centre, the event marks national Volunteer Appreciation Week and is a chance to say a very public thanks to the 1,200 Acton and Georgetown residents who work as unpaid volunteers with local groups.

Teen law

The confusing and frustrating Young Offenders Act will be explained to concerned Acton parents at tonight's (Wednesday) Parent-Aid meeting at Acton High School.

Two probation officers will visit ADHS to discuss the Y.O. Act with members of the parent self-help group.

The meeting begins at 7:30 pm in the teachers' lounge.

Cops and kids

Five Halton police officers are becoming regular fixtures at Acton High as police try to improve relations with teens.

Halton Police has expanded its "Drop-In Days" program to Acton High on Tuesdays from 1:30 to 3:30 pm.

Village Constable Bill Riddle says the program allows him, and the other officers, to show students that they are "human."

The "Drop-In Days" program is a community-based policing program that recognizes that schools are communities within themselves, with unique problems and concerns.

Antiques R Us

Acton's Mike Jung will open The Acton Joinery antique store at 11 John St. on May 1.

Jung's furniture refinishing



HAPPY 80TH, BING!

Friends and family gathered Saturday at Trinity United church to wish Bing Ramsden a happy birthday. The Arthur Street man, 80-years-old on April 8, was born in Kentucky and moved to Eramosa in 1939. The Ramsdens moved to Acton in '73, where Bing continued a long-time association with the Citizens' Band. Posing here are, left to right, son Gord Ramsden, daughter Joan Ramsey, Joan's husband John, Bing's wife Jessie, Bing and daughter-in-law Brenda. (Elizabeth Kessler photo)

A square deal for our children

In today's Canada, all too many children are victims of the cost-of-living syndrome which dictates that, in order to make ends meet, both parents must work outside of the home. For single parents this cost-crunch can be even more acute. The situation which many well-meaning folk find themselves in seems perilously close to being a no-win situation and despite their attempts to cope, everyone ends up suffering.

Part of the crisis has to do with the lack of daycare facilities. Parents certainly want what's good for their youngsters but when they start looking they discover that qualified daycare and babysitting is often expensive or perhaps not even available in their neighbourhood. As well, many do not quite know what it is that they are looking for. What to do when you must keep a roof over your head but you can't find a place for the kid? You do the best you can, but in the end you likely end up taking whatever and whoever is available; the end results may be far from satisfactory and sometimes they are tragic

— as was the case here in Acton recently. But what else should we really expect in such a "beggars can't be choosers" situation?

To be truthful and fair, there are some wonderful caregivers out there and they are not all in qualified centres. There are people who open both their hearts and their homes and the end results are happy kids and certainly more relaxed parents. But more than enough parents see that finding the right caregiver can be a bit like playing Russian roulette. Here's a *sixpack of suggestions* which may help parents to assess a potential daycare placement.

1) Visit the home or centre when it is in operation and stay for a morning; trust your personal reactions to the overall atmosphere.

2) Check to verify what procedures are in place should emergencies (fire, accidents, etc.) arise.

3) Ask about daily menus and food preparation in general.

4) Ask yourself if the general surroundings and play equipment are suitable for children.

5) If you place your youngster, be sure to make a couple of unannounced visits, one of them during the first two weeks.

6) Be sensitive to the way your youngster is reacting to the new placement.

Be upfront in talking with the potential caregiver about your concerns and your child's needs; people who genuinely care about kids will both recognize and respect your approach. Should you get a negative response — beware!

WORD'S WORTH

With Eric Balkind



HEY!

*Is day care still safe?
Are there adequate regulations?*



"No. In-home care is best. I think there should be a program where senior citizens would help the children. It would keep them busy and give them something worthwhile to do."

Victoria Vodden, Eramosa

"I think the government should support it more. Times are still tough and everyone needs every bit of help they can get. They probably need more supervisors. Two supervisors to eight kids is a lot better than one. Kids get out of control very easily."

Kelly Scott, George Street



"I've had no problem with it. People think if you have a (day care) certificate, you're responsible for everything that goes on and you're not. Nobody's perfect."

Bev Boisvenue, Greenore Crescent

"It's hard to trust people nowadays. (Day care management) doesn't go into people's backgrounds enough. There's one in Milton that has too many kids for the supervisor, but they can't hire more people because they didn't have enough money."

Sue-Lyn Clegg, Mill Street

