

GRAPE VINE

More top Acton students will get medallions

Recently we told you about McKenzie-Smith Grade 8 student Mary Beth Robertson, who was named a Halton Board of Education "Student Excellence" award winner. Three other Acton schools have now chosen their winners.

Samantha Dingwall is a Grade 5 French Immersion student at Robert Little. Her teachers, Kelly Ens and Mary Lou Denny, told us that Samantha has high academic scores and is involved in many extra-curricular activities around school. She is also a talented artist.

M.Z. Bennett's Paul Schiller will receive his Student Excellence award because of his strong academic results and his involvement in many activities. Teacher Una Graham tells us that Paul "always tries hard and his peers respect him; he's a good member of the community."

Michelle Lunau was the Acton High student selected, based on "her academic standing, her contributions to school activities and her citizenship."

The students will be presented with medallions at a ceremony tomorrow (Thursday) in Oakville.

Coffee Day at Tim's

Even if you're not a coffee drinker, you should grab a cup of java at Tim Horton's next Wednesday.

On April 27, the Acton donut shop will be staging its second annual Children's Foundation Camp Day. Full proceeds from the sale of each and every cup of coffee sold that day will go toward sending two Acton children to camp this summer.

Last year a pair of local boys were sent to camp, and owner John Malinosky says that they'll select two girls this time around.

Celebrity servers will include local police, politicians and Hamilton Tiger Cats head coach John Gregory.

Halo up there!

Debbie Pembleton called our office on Monday to report that her son Jason, 16, had spotted an interesting occurrence in the sky on his way home for lunch.

Jason and friend Steve White, both students at Acton High, were walking home when they looked up and saw a thick gray ring around the sun. Jason set up his telescope but it didn't afford him a much better look at the phenomenon.

After Debbie called us, we phoned Steve Stokes at the Toronto Weather Office. According to Steve, the sun on Monday was shining through a layer of ice-crystal cloud about 25,000 off the ground. The reflection, or refraction, of sunlight is called a "halo." Keep looking up, Jason!

That's Life!

Don't forget that Acton High's student-written musical production "That's Life" opens tomorrow (Thursday).

The play, which features 42 cast members, runs through Saturday and tickets are available by calling the school at 853-2920.



TALENTED TYKES! These budding stars were honoured at the annual house league hockey awards night at the Legion on Friday. From left: Kyle Winters (Outstanding Goalie), Chad Artem (Most Sportsmanlike), Mike Kuipery (Best Defenceman), Tim Pembleton (Most Improved) and Tyler Holmes (Point Leader). (Doug Harrison photo)

Let's toss the first rock!

They buried Georgina Leimonis last week. In a scene that has become all too common, family friends and thousands of others packed an East York church. Many were, understandably, overcome with grief. Many were angry and the overall consensus seemed to be that "something" had to be done. Now the infighting and posturing begins to see who will define the "something" that needs to be done.

There appears to be a consensus that stronger gun control laws need to be enacted. I get the feeling however, that the Federal Liberals are missing the point of the people's outrage. Public reaction ranges from "bring back capital punishment" to "bring back the lash" to the predictable, "we must examine the social conditions which caused this incident." The simple truths are being buried by those who would use this tragedy to further their own causes.

People are saying that they're afraid, they fear for the safety of their children, friends and themselves. They see guns and violent crime as being out of control. They lump all politicians into a group of gutless wonders who won't react to the realities of urban life for fear of upsetting the vocal left and losing votes. In a scene reminiscent of the movie "Network" they're saying, "I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take it anymore." It's important that you, the average citizen, get involved in this debate before the moment is hijacked by the forces who have caused our once peaceful country to deteriorate to where we find ourselves today.

I haven't seen or heard much out of Ottawa this week. The little there has been is disturbing. Justice Minister Rock said he is considering making it illegal for anyone but police officers and soldiers to own a handgun. He'd like to ban all guns including rifles and shotguns. He wants city dwellers, who hunt in the country on weekends, to store their weapons outside city limits. The only question is — why?

Does Allan Rock contend that its the average, everyday citizen run amuck who is causing the carnage in our streets? Does he think that it's target shooters, on the way to the pistol range, who are sticking up stores? Does he think that, if he bans pistols, all the gun traffickers will stop selling illegal weapons in

The Way I See It

With Mike O'Leary



our streets and our schools? Does he think that, if he bans pistols, all the gun traffickers will stop selling illegal weapons in our streets and our school? Does he ever think ... period?

Perhaps Julian Reed could try to get through to the Minister that it's the criminals, not the rabbit hunters that we are concerned about. We are especially fed up when we learn that the perpetrators of these crimes have been encouraged to embark on a career of crime by ridiculously light sentences for prior illegal activities. If tight gun laws worked, we would have the safest society on earth. Someone has to point out to Mr. Rock that it's those who have no respect for the law that have to be the target of legislation, not duck hunters. It's not the gun owners who are the enemy, it's the criminals who use guns we need to attack. If Allan Rock can't or won't understand that, then he should step aside. People are no longer content to let the necessary changes to our justice system stay stalled between a rock and the other place.

Miriam Bedard, the biathlete hero of the Winter Olympics, is a gun owner. Why should she and other law abiding citizens be forced into a greater bureaucratic papershuffle? This will do absolutely nothing to deter those who would go into a restaurant and cut down an innocent woman.

The proposal for having an automatic sentence for carrying an illegal gun has been proposed by many people. You may not agree with the terms but why can't we have such a law? It would apply to everyone. I have spoken to hundreds of people and not one can give me one good reason why someone should carry an illegal weapon, much less use it. We have to get gun-toting crooks off the street.

We have mandatory sentences in other areas of the law. Blow over .08 and your driver's license is gone for a year. The judge has not latitude. If your car is caught in photo-radar, you're going to get a fine

even if you're not driving it. If we catch someone with an illegal gun, why can't we cart them off to jail for a specified sentence right then. No bail, no appeals, no excuses. Why can't we?

Why doesn't Allan Rock tell the judges to impose the penalties already in the law. Under section 85 of the Criminal Code, criminals using a gun can be sentenced for a minimum of one and a maximum of 14 years. Such a sentence must be served consecutively. That means that if convicted of robbery with a gun, the perpetrator would get, say, three years for the robbery and the sentence for the gun would be served in addition to the original sentence. Care to guess what the usual sentence is under section 85? In 80 per cent of cases studied, the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics found that offenders get one year. The judges are sending a clear message: *use a gun — no big thing.*

Last week Julian Reed spoke about the poverty of the spirit and the Young Offenders Act. He spoke about Canadian values, respect for the other person, tolerance and our sense of fairness. I'm developing a real respect for Julian Reed. He seems to recognize the need to represent us to Ottawa as opposed to the vice-versa attitude of our last M.P. In order for him to know how you feel, you have to call him at 877-2900. We are all quick to condemn our politicians as gutless. Shouldn't we be just as quick to support Julian Reed who says he will fight for the things we hold dear? The battle for more realistic criminal justice system will be won or lost in the caucus room where policies are debated and adopted. You can be sure that those who believe that criminals should be mollycoddled will be making their views known. So should you!

You may well think that these issues don't affect you and that politicians don't care or won't listen. Have you ever complained that "special interest groups" are running this country? Have you ever wondered how they manage to have such an influence on public policy? They phone, they write, they demonstrate and they don't give up. The government is listening right now. If they hear only silence then we can't complain if the current situation continues. It's your country ... how it's run is up to you!

HEY!

Have you caught spring fever yet?

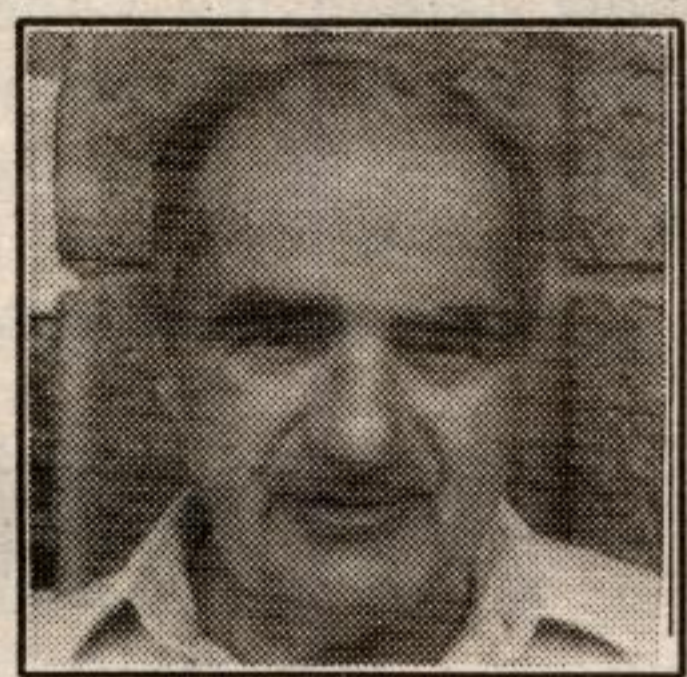


"Yes, as soon as a warm day comes I get the urge to go out digging in my big vegetable and rock gardens. It's nice seeing the tulips and daffodils coming up. I have the summer off, so I'm just going to enjoy the weather."

Eunice Harding, Rockwood

"Yes I have. I've taken my golf clubs out of my trunk and I'm ready to go. I play the local courses — Acton Meadows and Blue Springs. Blue Springs is an excellent course and I can have a fun round there. I'm thankful the long winter is gone."

Jim McKeon, R.R.2, Acton



"My cat just had a kitten, so that's real spring fever for me. I'm going to do some gardening and raking soon. I'm just looking forward to the warm weather and getting outside. It's been a long winter inside."

Sharon Steckley, Mill Street

"I've got pneumonia, but I don't know about spring fever. I came back from Florida a month too early. I love to go outside and do things. I've got 10 acres of land, so I have to do something. This is my first year of retirement, so I'm going to start golfing."

Fred Kirton, Rockwood

