

GRAPE VINE

Reporter on CBC

Our own Frances Niblock, who covered the recent Eramosa township election campaign for *The Tanner*, made a related appearance on CBC Radio last week.

Frances was interviewed on Radio Noon as that program investigated the controversial resignation last Monday of Eramosa reeve Laverne Harris. Fran had written a week earlier that the Rockwood politician might step down after his narrow victory Nov. 14, but the rancorous resignation still caught many by surprise.

In her eight-minute spot last Wednesday, Frances shed light on a long history of political instability at Eramosa Township.

"This was a puzzling and unfortunate situation," the reporter explained Monday. "And there are sub-plots — hints of unhappy developers campaigning to see candidates ousted, a religious controversy involving the deputy reeve and a private citizen..."

This stuff is bound to keep Eramosa in the media spotlight!

Tanner Trivia is back!

The Tanner Trivia Challenge is back by popular demand, and the winner of this week's contest will get a dozen fresh donuts from Tim Horton's on Queen Street.

As you've likely read elsewhere in this issue, Acton's Jamie Taras played a big part in the B.C. Li-

ons' big Grey Cup win over Baltimore on Sunday. Jamie, 28, is a right guard on the Lions' offensive line.

Jamie grew up just south of town and graduated from Grade 8 at St. Joe's (when it was housed in the old Stone School). From there Jamie went on to high school at Bishop Macdonell in Guelph.

Here, then, is this week's trivia question: **For what Ontario university football team did Jamie Taras play?** (Hint: The football team's name is "The Mustangs.")

Call in your answers to 853-5100 by Friday at 4 pm. We'll draw one name as our winner.

Call for nominations

Has someone you know brought recognition to the community in 1994 through sports, academic achievement, artistic talent or community service?

The Town's rec and parks department is seeking nominations for the Municipal Awards Evening slated for March 1, 1995.

Individuals, groups and teams that have "achieved provincial fame or better in an activity unrelated to their livelihood" are eligible to be honoured.

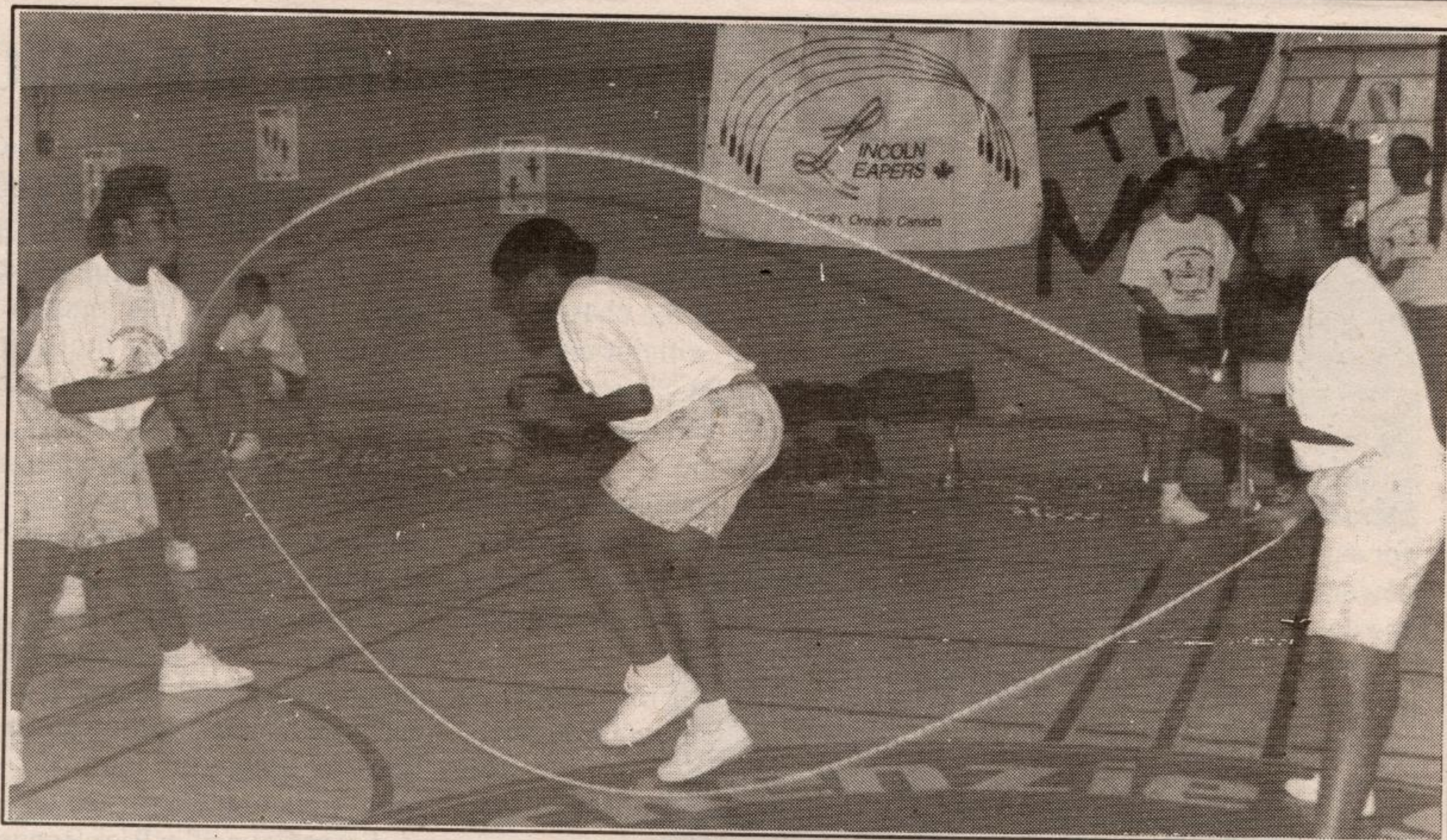
Call 873-2600 by Friday to register your nomination.

Synchronized sign-up

The Halton Hills Association of Synchronized Swimmers is a new athletic club and they're offering a registration session Friday night from 8 to 9, right after the annual Water Show at the Acton Indoor Pool. All are welcome.

The squad will be swimming out of both the Acton and Georgetown pools in the coming year.

For details call Candi Wolter at 853-1544.



FANCY FOOTWORK!

These talented jump-ropers from Columbus, South Carolina, known as the World Champion Double Dutch Forces, dazzled a matinee audience at McKenzie-Smith on Friday. The squad, winners of 63 state titles and 23 world events, teamed with the Lincoln Leapers for the show. (Doug Harrison photo)

Do rights cause wrongs?

The entire country seems to be talking about the Robert Latimer case. Mr. Latimer was convicted of second degree murder in the death of his daughter Tracy, aged 12.

The facts of the case are straightforward: Mr. Latimer confessed that he took his daughter, put her in his truck, ran pipes from the truck's exhaust to the cab, and watched her die.

There seems to be wide acceptance that Robert Latimer acted with the best of intentions. Tracy was born with cerebral palsy. Her life is described as one of pain, operations, deteriorating health and despair. At least this is how others perceived it. Unfortunately, Tracy couldn't talk.

Mr. Latimer couldn't bear to see his daughter suffer any longer, so he took, in his estimation, the best way out. I don't know if this is a good précis of the situation or not. What is true is that we only have Mr. Latimer's word that he was driven by compassionate motives.

Tracy didn't ask to have her life terminated. Only God knows how she felt about her existence.

The pro-euthanasia crowd were fast to jump on this bandwagon. They contend that the severely disabled or ill should have the right to end their suffering. In this case, however, there is absolutely no proof that Tracy Latimer had any choice.

Mr. Latimer has never said that his daughter asked to die. My neighbour may have said it best: Latimer sent his daughter to Heaven and himself to hell-on-earth.

Many people who are similarly disabled think Robert Latimer got off too easy. They are outraged that "society" is taking the attitude that we can kill those who don't have a "quality of life" that is generally accepted as being meaningful.

Who will take the responsibility to decide what the threshold of acceptable quality of life is? Do we rely on the courts, the medical profession, interested on-lookers, or God save us all, the politicians?

The Canadian Medical Association has already said that doc-

The Way I See It

With Mike O'Leary



tors shouldn't be in the death business. The courts recently ruled that drunkenness is a reasonable defense for sexual assault. Put your life in these hands at your own peril.

Would you be comfortable with a Sergio Marchi as Minister of Executions? Would you want 'Ol Noel deciding whether or not your life should be snuffed out?

Some parents of disabled children say Mr. Latimer was right. Other parents of equally disabled children say he is guilty of murderous infanticide. The debate rages on.

Could Solomon decide this issue? I doubt it. Why then, do media and politicians seem determined to conduct a national referendum on the legitimacy of mercy killing. If killing is the most heinous assault, isn't "mercy" killing an oxymoron?

I have known some severely disabled people. They don't want me, or anyone else, to decide if their lives are worth living. That would smack of pity — they deserve respect, not pity.

The whole quality of life argument is fraught with danger. I think that the poor in Calcutta have a horrible existence. Does that give me the right to nuke them? How should we decide who lives and who dies? It's not easy to play God and every time mere mortals try, we make a lousy job of it.

I'm not sure that the hue and cry on the Latimer case doesn't have more to do with his prison sentence, as opposed to his guilt or innocence. It's difficult to see him going to jail for 10 years when we have Homolka coming out in four, and Budreo prowling the streets after only six years.

If Latimer goes free, however, does that make it open season on the sick, the handicapped and the infirm? There are many more lives at stake here than just Robert

Latimer's and his family. These are dangerous waters.

Look at the explosion in abortions. Our birth rate has fallen to an all-time low. At the same time, Statistics Canada reports that in 1992 (the latest figures available), 100,492 abortions were performed in this country.

To put it in perspective, that's a ghost town as big as Oakville. There is one abortion for every four babies born.

Spokespeople on both sides of the abortion issue seem shocked. Did many foresee over 100,000 abortions per year when the old law was struck down? In the last 25 years, it is estimated that over 1,500,000 abortions have been performed.

Are the two issues related? I think they are. Twenty-five years ago the government said that some forms of life are expendable. The right of the mother to control her body supersedes the right of her child to live. Now we find ourselves trying to rationalize that a father can take his child's life because he decides her life is not worth living.

Where do we go from here?

Earlier this month, a Nobel Prize-winning geneticist said that new tests can determine if a fetus has any genetic faults. He contends that if science discovers a problem in the womb, the woman has a "right" to an abortion. Some are even heralding genetic testing as a cost-saving procedure. No need for costly medical treatment, you see, if you abort those likely to get ill.

One of the examples this geneticist offered, was dyslexia. Is this where we're going? You can lose your right to life if you get your mords wixed?

I don't think we should even allow these issues to be questioned. Unborn children, and now the disabled, are deemed to be disposable. This year, it's one disabled child. How many next year?

The Book of Genesis says that after creating human beings and our world, God was pleased. When God looks at how easily we kill each other in war or for greed or convenience, I wonder... does God cry?

HEY! Started your Christmas shopping yet?



"No. I usually wait until the last week. I don't care for shopping. I've done it that way every year and been successful. My wife does most of the shopping, so I just look after her more or less."

Keith Andrews, Cobblehill Road

"Yes! I usually start in September, because I'm working and don't have enough time near the end. I'm nearing completion because I've known what I wanted to buy. I've even started some Christmas baking!"

Janet Butler, Norman Avenue



"No! It's a Christmas tradition for me to do my shopping at the last minute. I would like to do it earlier, but don't have the time. There really should be a law stipulating you can't have your Christmas lights up before Dec. 1."

Jim Monaghan, Rockwood

"No. I decided I wouldn't do it this year, because I just got laid off and I better hold on to what money I have. I would love to go shopping, but it's not a priority now — paying rent and bills are."

Julie Campbell, Cook Street

