

GRAPE VINE

High school production was a 'unique' success

Acton High's presentation of "A Christmas Carol" on the weekend was a huge success, according to director Bonnie McDougall.

McDougall, the lone staff member involved in the play, admitted that it was "technically a very challenging show, but in the end everything was just fantastic!

"The play was unique in that virtually everything was done by students; it's the first time I've ever seen that happen."

Student Kyle Fitzsimmons, 19, "spearheaded" the production according to McDougall, and ex-students Jason Vidler (music) and Malcolm Kynoch (set design) came back to lend their expertise. In fact, Vidler pulled off "an electronic miracle" with his keyboard performances of the original score.

Now it's on to Acton High's second play of the year, a musical titled "The Truth About Cinderella." Director Paul Tamblyn will be holding auditions this week.

Wish List draw

Downtown Acton's Christmas Wish List promo is winding down, so there are only a few more days to get your name in for a chance to win a \$200 holiday shopping spree.

The draw for the shopping spree will be held on Saturday afternoon at 5:30, in the parkette at the corner of Main and Mill streets.

To enter the contest, simply visit at least three shops and choose a few things you'd like to get for Christmas. The BIA will send your "wish list" to your chosen Santa.

BIA co-ordinator Janis Fread is urging Actonites to "just take a few minutes and go into the stores downtown; you'll be surprised at what great things you'll find!"

Trivia winner

Joel Petkoff is some kind of football fan! Joel, a 12-year-old St. Joe's student, correctly answered last week's Tanner Trivia question and he'll be awarded with a dozen donuts from Tim Horton's.

Joel - who's a rabid Ti-Cats fan, according to his mom - was drawn at random from among three readers who phoned in the answer to a rather difficult query. Both Wayne Deforest and Bill Pshyk also knew that Acton native Jamie Taras played football at the University of Western Ontario before beginning his career with the Grey Cup-winning B.C. Lions.

Here's another bit of interesting trivia: Joel's grandfather was actually a CFL player himself.

More trivia next week!

RIDE stats

Halton Police stopped 2,030 vehicles in their Region-wide RIDE program between Dec. 1 and 5. The program will run the entire month of December.

Police conducted 16 roadside screening tests, handing out five 12-hour suspensions and four impaired (over 80 mgms.) charges.

Last year 15,773 vehicles were checked, resulting in 26 impaired driving offences and 47 12-hour suspensions. Those offender numbers were up from previous years.



CHRISTMAS DONATION: Members of the Rotary Club and Legion Branch 197 presented Susan Kuechler, middle, Acton Salvation Army family services co-ordinator, with \$400 on Thursday that was raised from last Tuesday's seniors Christmas dinner at the Legion. The money will be put toward Christmas hampers. Back row, from left, Fred Gordon, Jake Kuiken and Al Moss. Front row: Fred Koen, Maymie Dick, Kuechler and Doll Tournour. (Doug Harrison photo)

Rock shoots blanks, again!

The long awaited revisions to our gun laws were proclaimed by "Justice" Minister Alan Rock last week. Some have hailed the new regulations as visionary, while others have seen them as a misfire. One thing is for sure - the low-lives who stalk our streets carrying guns have nothing to fear.

Some of the legislation is exactly what we need and should be supported. Handguns, especially .25 and .32 calibre, should be banned. It's already difficult to obtain a handgun permit. There's no need for "Saturday Night Specials," so why have them at all?

It's also easy to support the ban on military assault-type weapons. Just five years ago, 14 women were murdered at Montreal's Ecole Polytechnique. Had their killer not been as well-armed, perhaps some of the by-standers could have stopped him. That incident alone justifies ridding our society of this type of weapon.

I don't have any problem with raising the age for legal purchases of ammunition from 16 to 18. I'm not sure what it will prove, but I'll bet the onus and penalties will be on shopkeepers - not purchasers.

Ammunition restrictions have had little or no effect since passed by the Ontario legislature. Such laws let politicians posture and preen about how much they care about the violence problem. Most sane people pay scant attention to this type of self-serving twaddle.

I'm not impressed with the mandatory four-year sentence for using a firearm in the commission of a crime. There is no mention if this sentence is consecutive instead of concurrent. Without substantial change to our loosey-goosey parole laws, these four years will be reduced to mere months. Usually the gun charge is completely plea-bargained away. Will this change?

The same is true of the "lifetime prohibition" against possession of a firearm for those convicted of 10 serious offenses. If these hoods cared about court-ordered lifetime prohibitions, they wouldn't be using a gun in the first place.

Clauses such as these are pure window-dressing unless and until there are serious consequences for breaching the regulation.

The Way I See It

With Mike O'Leary



There are proposed minimum sentences for possession of a restricted weapon without a permit or possession of a stolen weapon. No details though, so big deal. There is mention of up to 10 years in jail for possession of smuggled guns. How much do you want to bet the 10 years adds up to 90 days or less after the courts get finished? Don't forget that Rock and his buddy Almand think jail time is a waste of a life.

I'm still open to the idea of a national registration for all firearms, including rifles and shotguns, but I can't see what it will accomplish. We already have a national registration and prohibition on handguns. Has the system safeguarded us from illegal use of these weapons? Not bloody likely!

I need to be convinced that such a national registration would curb crime, and the slaughter of our citizens, before I could support it.

I see a couple of problems with the national registration of rifles and shotguns. First, I see a new bureaucracy being born. I see hundreds of millions of borrowed dollars slurring down the drain. The police don't have the personnel or computers to administer this system so new money must be found.

If the feds set the fees at \$100 or so per gun, they invite massive civil disobedience. No one is going to spend a hundred bucks to register Grandpa's old .22, which is probably only worth \$20.

Nor will they get rid of these guns, or they already would have been turned in during one of the amnesties.

The other problem with registration fees is that they are an easy way for governments to raise taxes. I guess these guys don't think we've noticed the increases in fishing licenses, car registrations, etc. over the last few years. On the other hand, if fees are low, they won't cover costs. Slurp, slurp.

It's estimated that it now costs

\$7 for the government to collect \$1 in taxes. If they administer the registration, this thing might break-even. Government won't do that though - it might make sense.

There are signs that the feds intend to prosecute the victim if a gun is stolen. Let's suppose some crook breaks into your house and steals your gun. Mr. Crook then uses your gun in a robbery. Now you, John Q. Citizen, are in trouble because you obviously didn't store your gun properly. The turkey who broke into your house, stole your possession and used it in a crime will get legal aid. You will be crucified!

The Ontario Handgun Association's Larry Whitmore is playing into Rock's hand. Whitmore contends that people will hide their guns and there will be widespread non-compliance. Maybe so, but he's letting Rock deflect the focus from criminals, who are the cause of the problem, to irate hunters, who are not the ones shooting police and shopkeepers.

If they catch you fishing out of season, they take your equipment, your car, your boat, and anything else you have with you. Then they fine your pants off.

If they catch you holding up a store, they take your gun, slap your wrist and spend thousands of dollars trying to figure out how society went so wrong. Odd eh? Why do we protect the carp more than the cop?

But the statement that annoyed me most was Rock's decree that these proposed amendments aren't open to discussion. "This is final," he said. When did Rock get elected Emperor?

No law in this country has a chance if the people don't support it. The widespread smuggling of cigarettes and liquor is evidence that Canadians won't be pushed any more. Rock should check with ex-Emperor Muldoon.

I'm one of many who needs more proof that this legislation will curb gun crime. I hope MP Reed will address this issue and demonstrate how criminals will feel the full force of the law.

Until then, I will not support Mr. Rock's proposals. The Emperor, you see, has no clothes, and his law has no teeth.

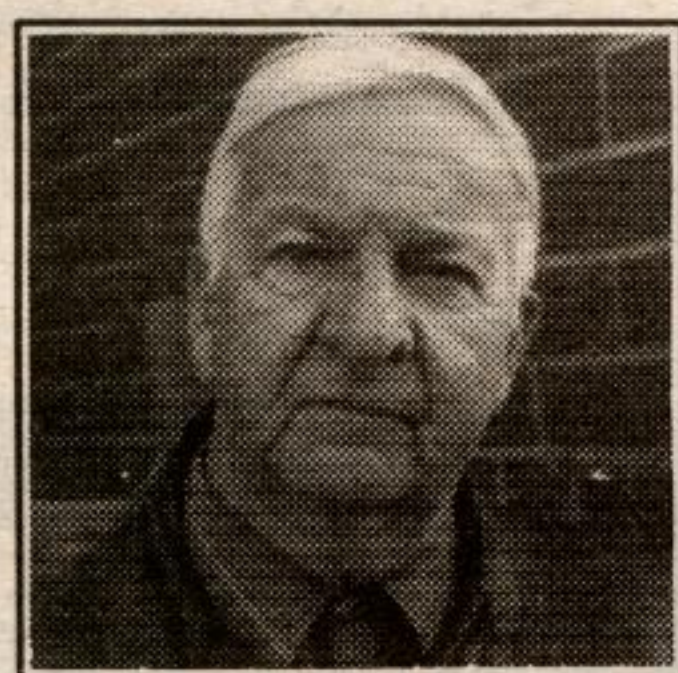
HEY!

What's your beef?



"Gun laws. I feel if you hunt it's okay to have a gun, but (the feds) want to make sure you belong to an organization or gun club. They're trying to set one rule for everyone. If a person wants to collect guns, it's pretty harsh to ask them to get a licence."

Sandra Snyder, Holmesway Place



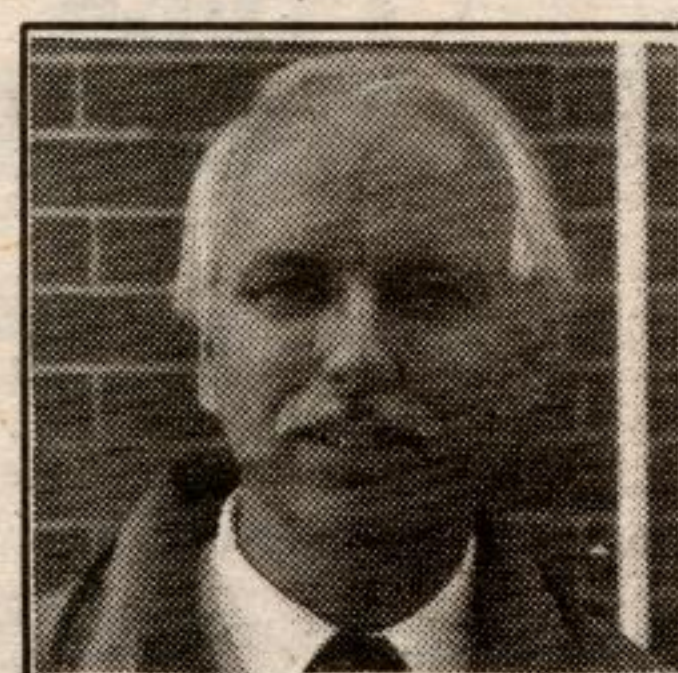
"Paul Bernardo. The judge can't make up his mind on a site for the trial for the safety of the culprit. I say put him in prison. They've got inmates that are judge and jury as well. He'll get his just dues."

Don Ryder, Bower Avenue



"Lack of family-oriented and women's services. There needs to be more awareness among politicians that families are the nucleus of our society. There's little to promote the well-being of my daughter in the way of services."

Sally Laing, Lake Avenue



"No beefs. I can't complain. Right now I'm quite content and life's great. But I would like to see Acton grow. I think it would be all right if the government got on the move with it."

Claude West, Acton Boulevard