

Acton High Concert Band is 60 students-strong, getting better

BY DOUG HARRISON
The Acton Tanner

Peter Wilcox has been told by some that the Acton High Concert Band has steadily improved in each of his six years at the school.

But rather than chalking it up as merely coincidental, the 34-year-old special education-English-music instructor says he's blessed to have the talents of colleague Dave Sale and the 58 to 60 musicians in his company.

"We've been able to improve each year due not only to the fact that (Jazz Band conductor) Dave Sale and I work together, but because we have a lot of kids involved who are committed to school and the music program," praises Wilcox, whose group has

been handed the prestigious spot of opening this year's Halton Music Showcase on April 12 in the Great Hall at Hamilton Place.

Wilcox, who arrived on the scene at the Cedar Road school in 1989, has gradually seen band membership increase, including a rise from about 45 two years ago.

"I really enjoy this school. The kids are very mature, responsible, co-operative, helpful and when people enter the school for the first time, they are welcoming. This may sound biased, but I think this is the best school in Halton."

Wilcox looks forward to the yearly challenge of working with a new band and has relished the opportunity this year of hearing the rewarding sounds of five years

work with his OAC students and grooming the wealth of Grade 9 players.

"It's a pretty even mix," offers Wilcox, who has Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Education degrees from Queen's University. "But it's a neat situation. Sure, the music quality could be better with all senior players, but this set-up allows them to develop leadership skills.

"And the juniors can benefit from the older players. The seniors have to adjust without being overbearing and the juniors have to adjust to playing beside someone older."

The Concert Band practices Tuesdays from 3:30 to 5 pm. However, additional rehearsals, like the one last Thursday to prepare for tonight's (Wednesday) 7:30 to 9 joint performance with the Acton Citizens' Band, will occur.

Wilcox and Co. will also take their annual spring trip, this year to Ottawa and Montreal from May 13 to 17. Past excursions have seen the band play on the east coast, New Orleans, Banff, Philadelphia and Vancouver, to name a few.

As well, the band will continue its tour of Acton's feeder schools this year and fund-raising efforts that include selling cheese, car washes and raffles.

Wilcox, a former music teacher at Frontenac public school in Burlington, sees tonight's concert at the school as a chance for his students to play alongside more experienced musicians, along with being exposed to different styles of music from a different conductor in George Elliott.



PRACTICE, PRACTICE! We caught Acton High Concert Band flutists Anna Cook, left, and Andrea Spoehr, both 16, wrapping up a rehearsal on Thursday in preparation for a joint performance with the Acton Citizens' Band at the school tonight (Wednesday).

Weekend break-ins

Police report two house break-ins on the weekend, but aren't sure if they are related.

Some time between 11 am and 4 pm on Saturday, a Young Street resident returned home to find the door frame had been tampered with. The resident then found a large knife on her bed and a wallet, containing some cash, had been stolen.

On Sunday at 1 am, an Alice Street resident called police when a strange man was found in her home. A visitor, sleeping in the living room, woke to find the man standing over her. The man fled. Police say the man entered through a basement window.

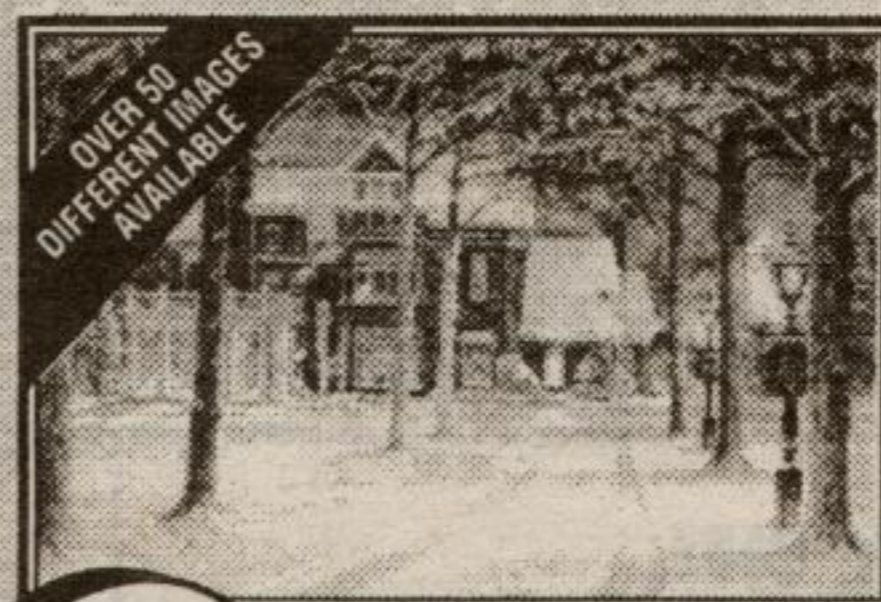
Police are looking for a white male, 5' 10" with a slim build. He appears to be 25 to 35 years old, and was wearing a bomber-style jacket and dark coloured pants.

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