

GRAPE VINE

Bad air at M-S-B

Students at McKenzie-Smith Bennett were forced to smell chemical fumes and dodge white dust in classrooms last Monday and Tuesday, caused by the construction of physically linking the two schools.

"Work on the roofing caused the odours. We weren't aware of it," says Tony Amalfa, area manager for the Halton Region health department. "We're looking at ways to avoid exposure and assure that new steps are taken before any further discomfort occurs."

Amalfa says grinding work done last Wednesday caused some dusting. A meeting was held on Monday with school board officials to look at the rest of the work plan for the linking.

"There were no problems with teachers or students," reports McKenzie-Smith Bennett principal Chris Logan. "You have to be aware of these things all the time."

No helmet = \$75 fine

Cyclists beware - the Ministry of Transport has attached a \$75 fine to anyone under 18 not wearing a helmet while riding a bicycle.

Village constable Bill Riddle says this is a great opportunity for youngsters to ask for a helmet as a Christmas gift.

"I wouldn't go on a bike without one," says Riddle. "This will

keep more people out of hospital with head injuries. I did notice more kids wearing a helmet over the summer, though."

Golf tourney raises \$624

The team of Bob McClure, Junior Tibbits and Joan Aitken took first-place at the fourth annual Jack Frost golf tourney at Blue Springs with a score of 37 over nine holes.

A total of \$624 was raised by the 24 golfers. The Star Christmas Fund receives \$274, while the Georgetown and District Salvation Army will collect \$350.

"It was a little cold and frosty," comments greens chair Brian Aitken. "Instead of donating \$25 a person, I think everybody put in a little more this year."

McClure, an Acton resident, also took home best-hole honours.

Credit Union toy drive

The Acton branch of the Halton Community Credit Union is holding a food and toy drive.

Food and new or slightly loved toys can be dropped off at the 273 Queen Street office. Food donated will go to the Acton FoodShare.

Toys will be passed on to the Acton Salvation Army for distribution in Christmas Hampers.

Andy's wreath wins!

Andy's Restaurant took top wreath for Acton businesses participating in the decoration contest held by the BIA as part of the *Deck the Halls* Festival.

BIA organizer Janis Fread announced the winner on Saturday.

Deb MacDougall, who voted for the Andy's wreath, won the draw for a \$200 shopping spree for use at participating businesses.



BOOKWORMS!

The recent book fair at Robert Little provided plenty of reading material for students, including these Grade 1 French kids. From left: Brittany Toletzka, Renee Strickland, Rebecca Roach and J.D. Hartnagle. Books included fiction, non-fiction, activity and science. Also available at the annual fall event were bookmarks, games, posters and puppets. (Doug Harrison photo)

School being 'Royally' screwed

Anyone my age, who is either an ex-Torontonian or a hockey fan, will be familiar with St. Michael's College School at Bathurst and St. Clair. St. Michael's has been providing a quality education to boys for 144 years. The school is a Toronto landmark, but like so many traditions, it's under the gun.

It's not new Canadians or political correctness that is putting St. Mike's in peril. A convoluted real estate deal gone bad and two of Canada's major corporations may sink St. Mike's.

St. Michael's School sits on 18 acres. In 1988 it was decided to sell the existing location and build a more modern school and arena on another site. St. Michael's entered, in good faith, into an agreement with a "shell company" named Bedford Green Estates, for the sale of its properties.

Bedford Green was a joint venture company registered to Loblaw's, Tridel and the Goldman Group. The Royal Bank of Canada held the mortgage.

The sale was to be done in two stages. The first involved the sale of six acres at the corner of Bathurst and St. Clair for \$30 million, with \$20 million down and the balance of \$10 million held by St. Michael's as a second mortgage.

In the second stage, Bedford was to purchase the remaining 12 acres for \$50 million. The new St. Michael's would be built from the proceeds of the sale.

In 1992, Bedford defaulted on its obligations and the Royal Bank seized the 6-acre site. This also put the \$10 million second mortgage, held by St. Mike's, in jeopardy. The agreement for Bedford to buy the additional 12 acres also went down the tubes.

On default, the Royal Bank seized the 6-acre parcel. The Royal then sold the property to Loblaw's, one of the Bedford partners, without offering the property for sale in the public market. Cute eh?

St. Michael's has now gone to court to object to this transaction. Instead of planning their new

The Way I See It

With Mike O'Leary



school, they're stuck with the old school, a probably worthless \$10 million second mortgage, and one-third of their property gone.

In addition, if Loblaw's is allowed to proceed, the original plan for the whole site allowed for a road to be built along the northern boundary of the 6-acre site. This road, if built, will be eight feet from the classrooms and 30 feet from the arena entrance. In other words, the useability of the existing buildings would be put in jeopardy. St. Mike's is in a mess.

I bring all of this to your attention for a few reasons. In the past few weeks, the major banks have again reported record profits. The Royal alone declared a profit of \$1.26 billion, which is a record for a Canadian bank. Amidst all the applause, shouldn't we stop to consider the business practices the banks are employing while racking up these profits?

Liberal MP John Nunziata wrote the Federal Finance Committee chair that "skyrocketing (bank) profits are a direct result of consumers being nickel-and-dimed by banks, who take a piece of the action every time money moves in this country."

I'm no big fan of government intervention in the marketplace, but considering the banks have been reaping record profits through the last economic depression, per-

haps it's time for more regulation.

We give our money to the banks with the understanding when we want it back, we'll get it. It's a contract based on trust and honour. If a bank doesn't conduct its business honourably, should we trust them with our money? The bank's dealing with St. Mike's might prove to be legal. The question is - was it honourable?

The Royal may think it has more resources than St. Michael's. It may have more money and more lawyers, but St. Mike's has its grads. There are also all the grads from other schools taught by the Basilian Fathers. Most of us have a tremendous loyalty to our school and our teachers. If we all decided to move our personal and corporate accounts from the Royal, the impact would be dramatic.

Yeah right, you may think. Who would change banks because their old high school teacher was carpet-bagged in a real estate deal? Well, I would - and I didn't even go to St. Mike's.

Some 35 years ago, one of my teachers took the time to encourage me to succeed in academics. Sports were my primary interest, but Father Mohan opened my eyes to the world of words. There are thousands of alumni who would question dealing with the Royal if it doesn't conduct itself in an honourable way with St. Mike's.

The Royal Bank may not understand a loyalty that can't be bought with dollars or dividends. It's there, though. It was accumulated over 144 years by teachers like Father Mohan, Father Ted Lindsay and Father Flanagan.

They got our respect the old-fashioned way - they earned it!

HEY!

Your reaction to Ernie Eves' mini-budget?



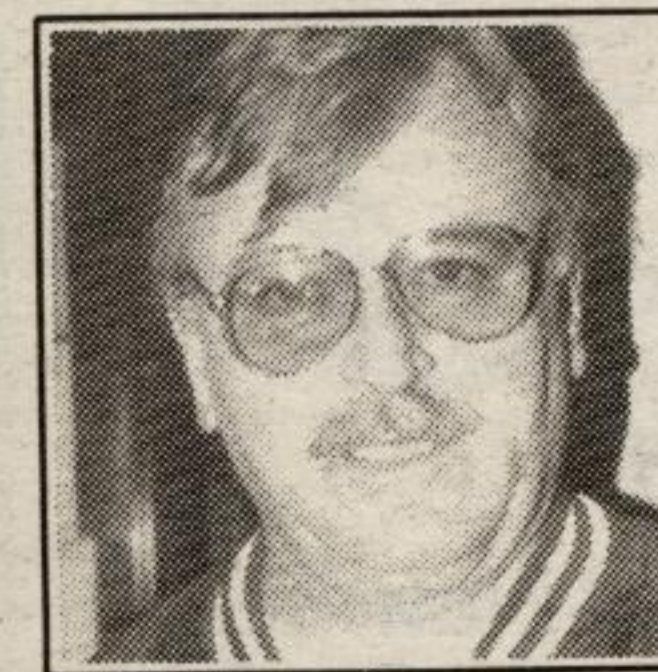
"It wasn't the greatest news. Unfortunately it had to be done. I think it's too many cuts too fast. It's not only the government doing it. Every business is in the same boat."

Connie Umbrallo, Hwy. 25



"I have four kids and I'm not happy with it. They're cutting in the wrong places, but it had to be done. However, it doesn't directly affect me now."

Debbie Juric, Dublin Line



"I love it, it's about time. The cuts aren't in the right area. We have to stop immigrants from coming in. That's where all the money is spent. It's going to hurt a lot of people. People in hospitals won't get proper treatment."

David Gamsager, Greenore Crescent



"I agree we have to cut the deficit, but unfortunately education and hospitals have to take the fall. I think there are other ways of cutting. I wouldn't want their job, though."

Joan Lowrie, Peel Street

Same time last year ...

Al and Janet Cunneyworth have their plans approved to build a butcher shop and apartment at their Main Street home ... Acton resident Mac Sprowl is chosen to sit on a quarry-complaints committee... Acton Councillor Rick Bonnette is miffed with the new alphabetical seating arrangement at council meetings.