

Students ace engineering contest

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK
The Acton Tanner

Four "very clever" Grade 7 students at Acton's St. Joseph's Separate School engineered a first place finish at a recent Region-wide engineering and design competition.

The students - Marcus Dagenais, Caitlin Dick, Bronwen Jones and Marko Tonkovich - showed tip-top problem solving skills in a competition designed to come up with a practical and economic solution to a problem Rockwell International was having at its Milton plant.

Both public and separate Halton Boards of Education, Rockwell and the Professional Engineers of Ontario joined forces to challenge elementary students to come up with a new design for cleaning a suspension hook that dipped car parts in paint.

Armed with a video tape of Rockwell's operation and a schematic drawing, 900 Grade 7 and 8 students from 13 Halton schools tackled the problem. It turns out that the Acton student's winning design is similar to what the Rockwell engineers designed, and the student's model is in being used now in some plants.

St. Joseph's team member Marco Tonkovich said he entered the competition for a challenge and was "thrilled" to win.

"Our plan was to heat the hook to melt the paint and then it would be scraped off with wire brushes. Rockwell's system blows the

melted paint off," Tonkovich explained.

Bronwen Jones says she entered the competition because she thought it would be "cool and a challenge."

"We did some research in the library and by calling engineers. We did three different experiments and several

tests to come up with our solution," Jones explained.

Asked the significance, if any, of two women winners in the mainly-man's world of engineering, Jones said, "It shows we are just as good."

Proud teacher Kevin Harkin said he was not surprised that the students took

first place.

"It was pretty heady stuff for the students and for me," Harkin said. "It was a lot of extra work and it was a tough problem but these students are very clever."

The winners received plaques, a trophy and a tour of the Rockwell plant.



FUTURE ENGINEERS: Grade 7 students Marcus Dagenais, back left, Marko Tonkovich, Bronwen Jones and Caitlin Dick came up with a solution to clean paint off a suspension hook for Rockwell International's plant in Milton. The St. Joseph's students' solution earned them top honours in a region-wide engineering and design competition. (Karen Wetmore photo)

Education 'Renewal' meeting

The Renewal Committee at the Halton Board of Education is looking at the education system from the ground up in light of reduced funding.

An evening has been organized for those from the Acton, Limehouse, Georgetown, Brookville, and Glen Williams areas, at Stewarttown school (Trafalgar Road) next Wednesday (June 5) at 7 pm. Kit Rankin, who heads the Committee, and Bob Williams, Director of Education, will make a presentation and field questions. Trustees Ethel Gardiner and Dick Howitt will also attend.

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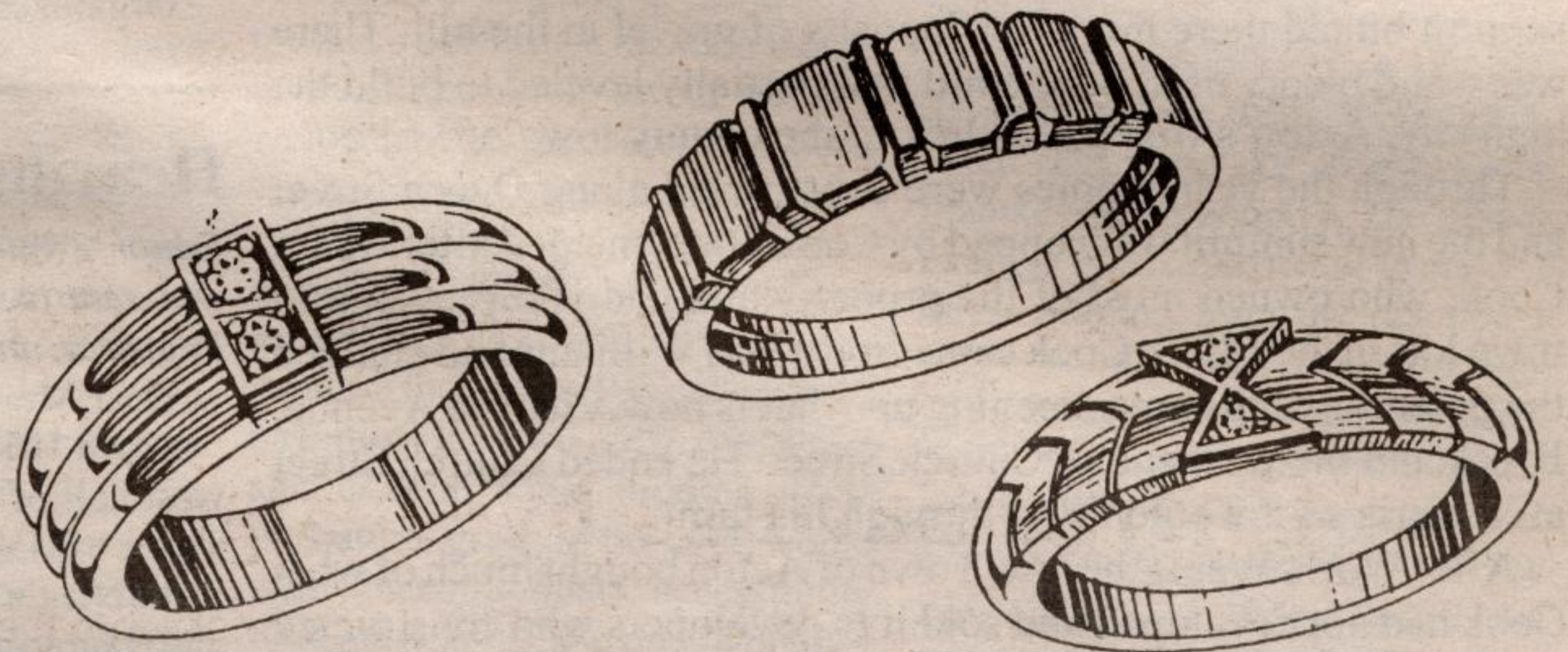
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