

# GRAPE VINE

awareness in Acton, and for drawing a positive spotlight on our town. Organizers of the event were quick to thank the students, staff and the many volunteers who made the event such a success.

## Watch for Santa!

The Kinette Club of Acton and Power Entertainment are expecting a visit from Santa on Sunday (Dec. 15) and Dec. 22 from 1 to 4 pm.

Come have your picture taken with Mr. Claus! A cash donation or a new toy donation towards "Operation Santa Claus" would be greatly appreciated.

## Citizens' Band performs

The Acton Citizens' Band presents its annual Christmas Concert at the Band Hall at 85 Wallace St. this Sunday (Dec. 15) from 2 to 4 pm. Afternoon tea will be served.

Admission is free but a donation of non-perishable food will be appreciated.

## Ski lessons offered

The Halton Hills Junior Ski Club, in cooperation with the Glen Eden Ski Area, is offering an eight-week lesson package Saturday afternoons from Jan. 4 to Feb. 22.

For \$175, skiers receive lessons from certified instructors, lift pass and transportation by bus from Acton or Georgetown. Rentals are available for an additional \$88.

Registration takes place at the Georgetown Marketplace Dec. 13 and 14. For details, call Claude Willis at 873-0350 or Don Morris at 877-5956.

## Memories recollected

The Esquesing Historical Society invites all those interested to come out and enjoy an evening of recollected Christmas memories at the Glen Williams Town Hall, tonight (Wednesday) at 7:30 pm.

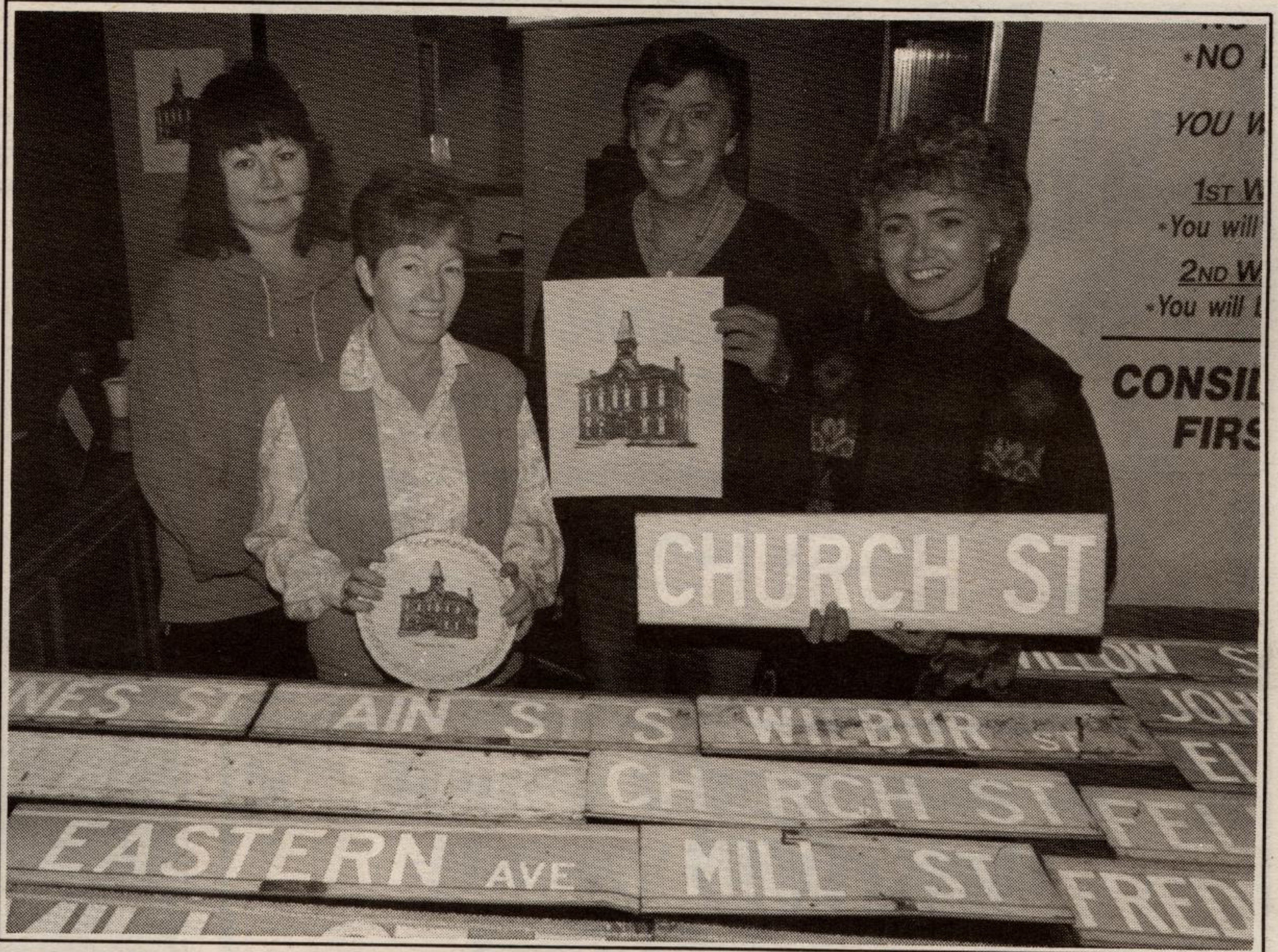
## Award winning group

Congratulations to P.E.P., (Parents Encouraging Participation), the parent group at McKenzie-Smith Bennett, who recently received an Award of Merit from the Credit Valley Conservation Authority.

P.E.P. organized a Green-a-thon fundraiser for the school in October, which was enormously successful and well-received.

The Conservation Authority recognized the group "for organizing the largest single day Yellow Fish Road Storm Drain Marking project, which involved hundreds of students going into the community, painting yellow fish beside storm drains, and going door to door educating residents that storm drains and anything we put into them, empty directly into Fairy Lake and the Credit River."

Acton Councillor Norm Elliott, who presented the award, praised the group for raising environmental



**BUY A PIECE OF ACTON:** Heritage Acton and the Acton BIA were selling plates, prints and the old downtown street signs at the former Hoops, Pockets & More building last Saturday as part of the downtown festivities. From left, Angela Warwick, Kathy Sanford, Dan Dolliver and Janis Fread display the merchandise. Fread still has some signs left for-sale - call 853-0239 for details. (Eve Martin photo)

# Shopping locally makes sense!

You know that the Christmas season is on top of you when the junk mail fills the blue box every other day. The chains and big box stores are trying very hard to entice us to drive to them. I think though, before you go running off to Brampton or Mississauga you should shop locally first.

Granted, you might save a buck or two by driving to some so-called "discounters." Local merchants, however, are sometimes able to negotiate on price to meet competition. Then, factor in the cost of gas, wear-and-tear on your vehicle, and the time it takes going back and forth. Suddenly, the anticipated bargain isn't that great a deal.

In one way, shopping locally is an investment in your own future. Most of us are aware that David Crombie and his "Who's on First" committee are pushing for one big G.T.A. We'll be little more than a pimple on the rump of a monster G.T.A. If we are to strike out on our own we'll need a healthy, vibrant commercial sector to prove we are a community in our own right. For local business to survive, they need our patronage during the Christmas season.

For many young people, a local store is their first place of employment. Every store that closes or cuts back on hours represents a significant loss of employment opportunities. If you shop locally, you can tell your kid to "get a job" knowing there is a reasonable expectation of one being available.

If you want another reason to shop locally, check out the sports pages. The majority of amateur sport teams are sponsored by local business. Now I would never say that business people are so crass that they would demand a quid pro quo for their support. Unless it

## The Way I See It

With Mike O'Leary



says "Salvation Army" on the sign however, the business is meant to be profitable. How can we expect merchants to sponsor our teams, donate to charities, support school function and projects and pay taxes if we don't spend our money with them?

If you voyage out to the giant mall to shop, you'll be surrounded by strangers. If you shop locally, chances are you'll see a neighbour, a friend or someone you've met at school. I suppose I'm sounding like a Norman Rockwell painting, but I know these things happen. I did all my shopping in town last year, was very happy with the selection and was not as stressed out as other years, when I have ventured out to a "major mall." Of course, if you have to exchange something, it's much easier when you shop in town too.

I don't buy the argument that "there's no selection in town." With the stores in downtown Acton and Georgetown, plus the malls, you have literally hundreds of shops to choose from. The "Our Town Christmas Cheques," available at the Halton Credit Union or Chamber of Commerce, will be honoured by over 75 businesses. Why max out your credit cards and pay their usurious interest rates? Local businesses are trying to make it as easy as possible to shop with them. Why not give them a try?

Coming back to the "bargoon" issue, consider this. Many stores in Georgetown market their "low price" policy. Sometimes price isn't the biggest issue. I enjoy finding

that just-perfect gift in an interesting little gift shop I've discovered. Our town has plenty of these. Thousands of people come to the old Hide House every year. Know why they think it's "worth the drive?" Selection, quality, value and service - that's why! Why go out of town for second best?

I do have one problem with some local merchants. It's this whole politically correct Christmas lunacy. I was in a local coffee shop the other day. They're selling "festive cookies!" Now, I don't know what a "festive" is, but I'll never buy one of those damn cookies. I'm fed up with the argument that using the word "Christmas" is offensive to some. *Not* using it is offensive to me - especially when they're trying to make a buck out of the Christmas season.

"X-mas" is another term that bugs me. Last time I looked, we are not celebrating the birth of Malcom X. I think that if a store wants my Christmas patronage, they should have a *Christmas* sign. Just a word of advice for our merchants, you understand.

Festive season? Indeed! X-mas? Bah-Humbug. It's Merry Christmas or bye bye Charlie Brown as far as I'm concerned. I don't think we have to make a big scene but a quiet word to the person in charge is appropriate. I hope you'll join me in stomping out this mushy, stupid "festive season" crap. It's a good winter activity. It'll warm your feet and your heart.

★★★

Speaking of early Christmas presents, Carl B. Hiltz gave us all one. He's the guy, of course, who smucked Paul Bernardo in the eye. Hiltz may be charged.

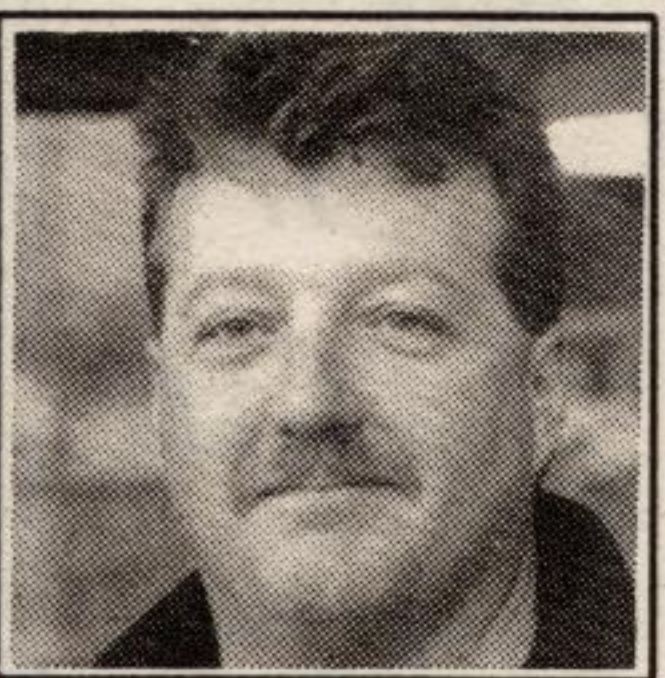
He should get the Order of Canada.

# HEY! Are you shopping locally during this Christmas season?



"I'm already done all my Christmas shopping. I try to shop locally, but I find there's not a lot available. What is may not be what I'm looking for and can be more expensive. It's really sad, because I would like to support the local businesses."  
**Debbie Schlieper, Mill Street**

"There's not a lot of variety in Rockwood, where I live, so I spend most of my shopping time in Guelph."  
**Scott Gibson, Rockwood**



"I wish I could. Whatever your needs are, they don't seem to be available. Store owners try, but some just don't have the capacity. Acton's in the middle of a triangle of Guelph, Milton and Georgetown and people will often go there first."  
**Terry Winters, Danville Avenue**

"I shop locally all the time. I hardly ever go out of town. The shopping is pretty well enough for what I need, although some of the stores have been closing down."  
**Barb Gagnon, Elizabeth Drive**

