

GRAPE VINE

Cookie sales for hockey

Local minor hockey players will benefit from a fundraising event being staged this month at the Acton IGA by the Hockey Heroes of Tomorrow, a minor hockey fundraising organization.

Kelly McArthur, IGA manager, said they got involved "to help out the kids" and because hockey is an important part of this community.

At least half of the proceeds from local "Heroes" cookie sales will be donated to the Acton Minor Hockey Association.

The cookies, chocolate with a vanilla cream centre, sell for \$2.99 per package and will be available all this month at IGA.

Ace art instructor

Kudos to Acton High teacher Sharon French, one of 26 Halton Board of Education educators to be presented with the prestigious Award for Creativity in Education at the Board's meeting next Thursday.

French, head of the Arts and Technology Department at Acton High, is also on the Halton's Art in the Fall Steering Committee, an annual art immersion program celebrating the visual arts that has been staged for the past three years.

French, a Rockwood resident, has

taught at Acton High for the past one-and-a-half years.

The Awards for Creativity in Education are presented annually to Halton Board educators to honour their outstanding achievements. Nine other members of the Art in the Fall Steering Committee will receive a certificate and share a \$700 grant to cover professional development expenses.

'Way Better' way to help

You can help the United Way of Halton Hills and have a chance to win \$1 million cash, one of four new vehicles or an Air Canada Vacations dream getaway in "the Way Better Lottery," a United Way of Peel fundraiser.

Tickets for the March 26 draw are now on sale with more than \$1.6 million in prizes. With only 120,000 tickets to be sold, your chances of winning are better than one in 10. Tickets are \$50 each, three for \$145 or 10 for \$450.

By indicating Halton Hills as your city of residence, the United Way of Halton Hills will receive more than 10 per cent of the purchase price.

Call 1-800-50-BUCKS (28257) for more details.

Rink to open soon

"Two good cold days" were all that were needed to complete the outdoor ice rink at McKenzie-Smith Bennett school as of last Friday. Town Recreation and Parks staff noted the base had been started last week before the cold and windy weather hit. Last year, early snowfalls and cold weather had the rink operational well before Christmas.



BULLSEYE! June Doberthien scored two of them to win a dart challenge at ASSIC's annual volunteer appreciation day held last Thursday at St. Alban's church hall. Presenting June with her prize from Wetherby's is ASSIC director Rosslyn Dowell. (Karen Wetmore photo)

This is getting Mega-boring

Somewhere along the way I got the rules of astronomy mixed up. I failed to realize that the universe revolves around the City of Toronto.

It seems like any time you open a newspaper or turn on the TV, some Metro mayor is screaming about how disastrous the amalgamation of Toronto Councils will be. Gawd! And who in the heck dubbed the plan a "mega-city?" That term is getting really tiring; really fast!

For years now, Toronto politicians have been crowing about their 'burb being a "World Class City," whatever that means. The only thing world class about old Hogtown is the usurious parking rates and the "world class numskulls" in City Hall.

This whole Mega-city moniker is going too far. There'll be somewhere around 1.6 million souls in the expanded city. Know what they call that in the truly large cities of the world, like London, Tokyo or Mexico City? A neighbourhood, that's what.

After turning out the rhetoric, common sense tells me that one administration should be able to deliver services more economically than seven. The real sound we are hearing is a whole bunch of political oxen being gored. The biggest fear the anti-change types have is that the new organization will work. If that happens, taxpayers across the province will be taking a very critical look at how all local administrations are functioning.

Last week, in what some fool dubbed mega-week (did it have eight days?) the Conservatives literally turned the province on its ear. Virtually every program that is funded by taxation was affected.

First, education was taken off our property taxes. I thought that

The Way I See It

With Mike O'Leary



was a good idea. Most Ontarians would agree that we are over-governed. Not many of us considered school boards to be a level of government in their own right. In effect, however, they had evolved into just that.

Last year *The Acton Tanner* made some inquiries about a project in a local school. The Catholic Board tried to respond by phone but we wanted a written response. You have to be careful in a small town that you've got the facts straight. The result was that it took months and months to get any response. We finally enlisted the aid of MPP Ted Chudleigh, who did manage to convince them to send us a letter, which answered only a portion of our inquiry. Ted made it plain that as our MPP, he had no direct control over the Board. Now that the Directors of Education will report to the Province, I think the people's control over the Boards will increase.

Like most taxpayers, I'm concerned about social programs, such as welfare being funded by property taxes. On the other hand, I've always thought that our city governments give us the biggest bang for our buck. Perhaps now, our local politicians can get their teeth into the welfare issue and stop more of the waste. I think most of us, for instance, were outraged by the case in Toronto, where a convicted rapist awaiting deportation, was collecting welfare. Don't get me started about the probability of legal aid funding his appeal.

I'm not sure how the municipalities are supposed to fund GO Transit. Do we pay in proportion to the number of riders who use the system, miles (kilofeet for the metrically inclined) of track or what? In fact, if you think back on what you've read so far, we've heard a lot of rhetoric but the facts are pretty skinny. Perhaps we should all calm down and wait for the real numbers to come out before we go into a mass Chicken Little Syndrome.

One thing is for sure: I'll curse Bell Canada forever for creating an "Us Against Them" syndrome. I'm talking about the habit many political/media types have fallen into of classifying us as either "416" or "905" dwellers. According to some Toronto-types, if you're a 416-er you have a social conscience, good manners and fresh breath. 905-ers, however, are money-grubbing, fire-breathing cheapos who are hell-bent on enjoying the good life while feasting on the carcass of what the gentle 416-ers have built. This, of course, is mega-crap.

The system we had was broken. Folks hit the tax wall a few years ago. Cuts to the existing programs have been made so a radical change was necessary to avoid a round of tax increases. I like the fact the Tories resisted the urge to simply tinker with things. The tax engine needed re-building. This will also discourage the opposition parties from scheming to reinstate the status quo.

No one is going to starve or freeze unless they want to. We still have a generous social net. If the changes flop, Harris et al will lose the next election. Hang on - it's going to be a wild ride for the next few months. But let's not declare the new system a failure until we hear the rest of the story.

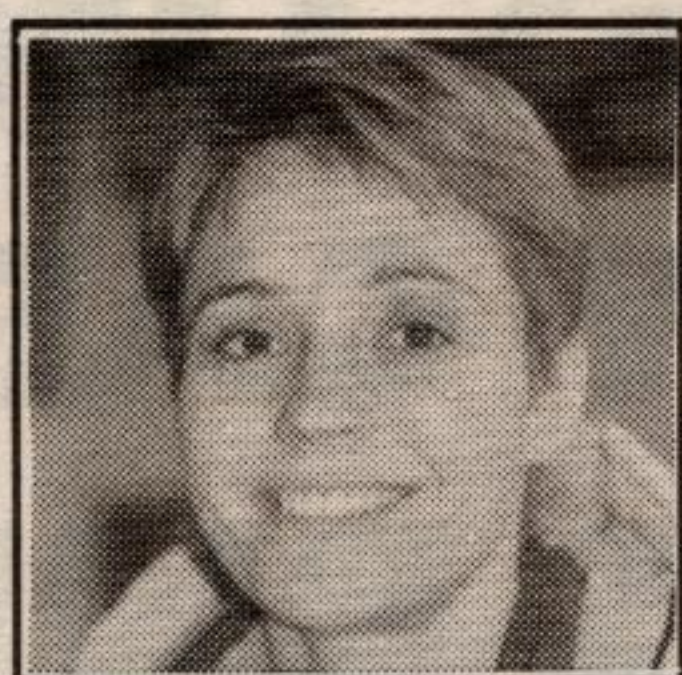
HEY!

If you could be anywhere else right now, where would it be?



"I would like to anywhere it's warmer than plus 25 degrees Celsius, dry and cheap."

John Sharples, McDonald Boulevard



"The Bahamas sound greatt. I need some warmth."

Jeannie Edwards, Danville Avenue



"I hear a lot of warm comments about Jamaica. It's 34°C there this time of year."

"Ruth-Anne Cottrell, Guelph (formerly of Acton)



"Give me downhill skiing anyday. I like extreme - it's wild and crazy!"

David Moore, Sixth Line Nassagaweya