

GRAPE VINE

The meeting takes place next Tuesday (March 18) at 7:30 pm at Knox Presbyterian Church.

The guest speaker will be Sean James and his topic is "Cottage gardens in the landscape."

Anyone interested is welcome to attend. For more information, call Max at 853-0001.

You could help!

The Acton Branch of the Canadian Cancer Society is looking for facilitators for a Living With Cancer support group. Find out how you can help by providing emotional and social support.

Call Kelly Ann Backman at 853-5257 for more details.

Blood donor clinic

The town of Acton will be holding its quarterly Red Cross Blood donor Clinic next Thursday, March 20 at the Acton Legion Hall.

The new hours of the clinic will be from 4:30 to 8:30 pm. Please bring your donor card or photo ID.

Eligible donors are between the ages of 17 and 70. Please take a few moments to give the gift of life.

For more information call Joe at 853-4686, or Julia at 853-4896.

Cottage garden time

Spring is just around the corner, so they say. Why not get into planting mode by attending the next monthly meeting of the Acton Horticultural Society?

Bake sale

The Special Needs Drop-in Centre is hosting a bake sale at the Acton Arena this Saturday (March 15) from 8:30 am to 2 pm.

All proceeds will be going to support the Drop-in Centre, which meets Wednesday afternoons at the Acton Legion. Funds raised will be used for refreshments as well as paying for activities and saving up for the group's spring trip.

Learn first aid, CPR

Take the standard first aid and adult CPR course with the St. John Ambulance experts. The next classes take place this weekend (March 15-16) from 9 am to 3:30 pm each day.

As well be prepared for an emergency with the St. John Ambulance adult, child and infant CPR course which takes place the following weekend (March 22-23) from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm each day.

For more information, call Yvon Essiembre, 853-4889 after 6 pm; David Burke at 877-1045; or leave a message at 873-8442.



SINGING MOMS!

The "Trinity Moms" recently took part in Trinity United Church's talent show, displaying their talents in both song and choreography. (Eve Martin photo)

Sometimes, even angels weep

When I was a little boy, thunderstorms terrified me. We lived with my grandmother and I would ask her, "Why is the sky mad?"

"No one is angry," she would soothe, "It's just God and the angels bowling in Heaven. The thunder is the ball rolling down the lanes. The lightning bolts are strikes."

"Lots of times," I'd say, thinking to catch her, "it rains without the thunder and lightning."

"Moichel me darlin'," she'd smile, "oftentimes things happen on Earth that are so terrible, so tragic, that all the souls in Heaven are driven to tears. Those tears fall to nourish the Earth and us. God's tears are a reminder that he suffers alongside us."

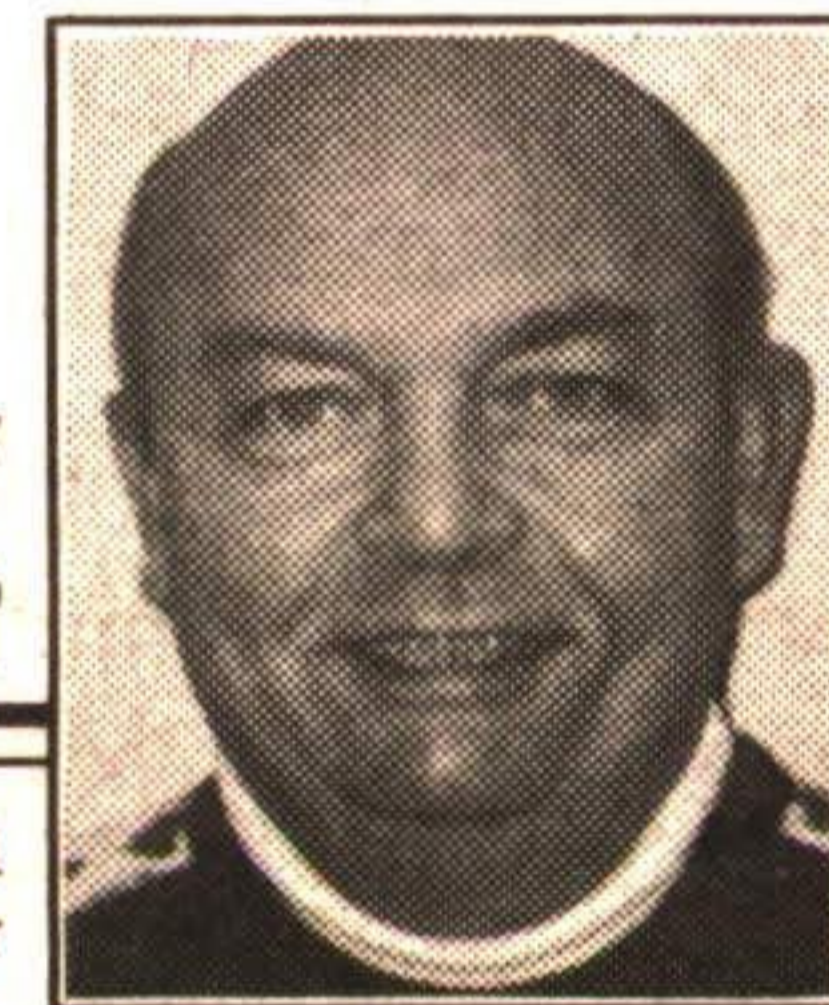
Two years ago, almost to the day, my niece Valerie was diagnosed with leukemia. In the midst of her treatment, her father, my step-brother Joe, died suddenly of a brain tumor. Twelve days ago, Valerie succumbed to the combination of her disease and the side-effects of chemotherapy.

The death of a loved one, any loved one, is a tragedy. The death of a child hits everyone harder. It's a disruption in the natural order of things. We expect our kids to bury us - not vice versa.

I've learned a lot about love and courage these past two years. I've seen Valerie's mom Pat, and her sister Joanna, totally subject their own emotions and grief to tend to Valerie. Week upon week they would stay in the hospital while the doctors and nurses battled for the life of this child. Families all worry through childhood illnesses. I can't even imagine the anguish a disease like leukemia brings with it. Pray God that some day, research will find a cure to spare future generations this torment.

The Way I See It

With Mike O'Leary



catastrophic events, they don't expect peers to be taken.

I hope that Valerie is remembered not for how she died, but rather for how she lived - for the love and loyalty she had for family and friends. How she delighted in doing the simple things that make us human. Learn from her struggle that life is precious - and fragile. None of us knows how long we have, so give, and take, a full measure of joy every day. If you feel your road is tough, imagine the hand life dealt her. Draw inspiration from the magnificent way she played it. Keep her memory true in your heart and mind. Feel privileged to have been touched by an angel.

There's not much I can write about the hospital for Sick Children that hasn't been said before. Undoubtedly, this facility has the finest staff in the world. Quite frankly, I don't know how they cope with the day-to-day events. Perhaps some measure of the love and respect these professionals earn is this: Pat and Joanna thought to thank the staff of 8A, 8B and the oncology unit for their tireless efforts. That they would remember the staff while dealing with Valerie's funeral is testament to the high esteem and gratitude the family feels for them. God bless them in their work.

Valerie Ruffo was only on this earth for 15 years. She had a smile that could light up a room. She left a legacy of love and laughter that will stay with those who knew for a lifetime. Those memories are her immortality.

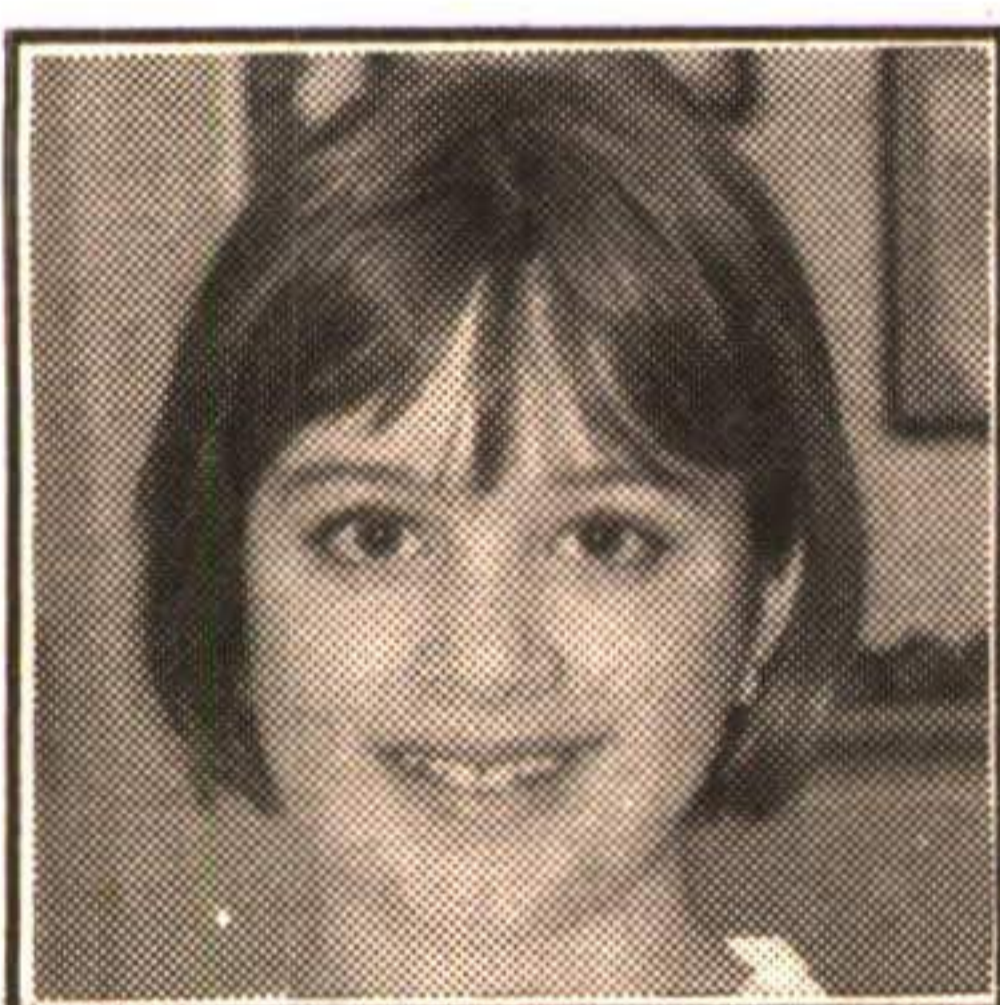
It was cold and damp the day we laid her to rest. As we drove away a gentle rain fell. I remembered that on the day she died, Saturday, March 1, it rained all day and all night.

Grandma was right.

HEY!

What will you be doing during March Break?

(asked at St. Joseph's school)

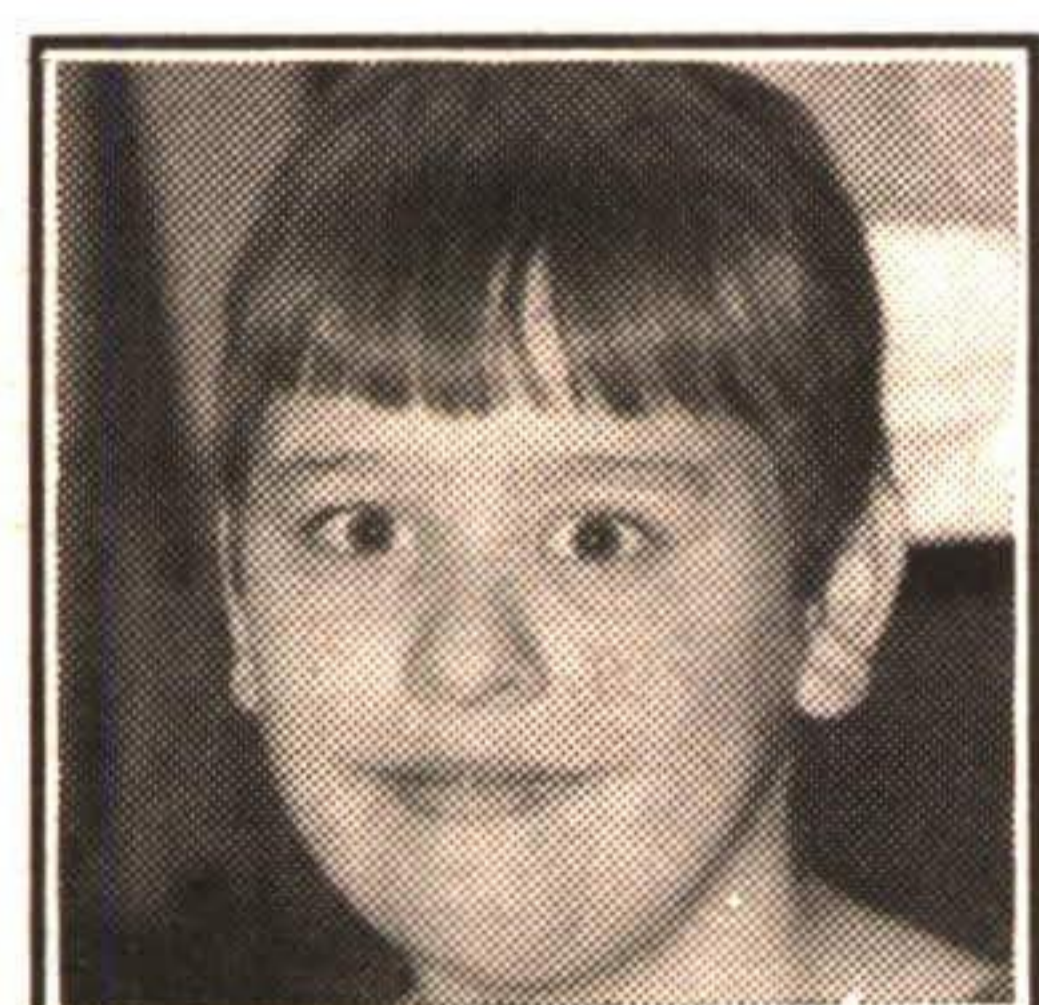


"I'm going to go to horseback riding camp and I might go to my uncle's cottage in Parry Sound."

Brittney Dee, Grade 6

"I'll probably build bikes and camp and go canoeing, fishing, dirt biking, four-wheeling and last but not least, go to the stock car races!"

Jason Ivory, Grade 6



"For March Break I might be playing with my friends down the street and maybe going to my aunt's farm in Dundalk. We're going to feed all the cows and chickens."

Heather Clark, Grade 6



"I want to go downhill skiing. We're going to go up north and go cross country skiing, but I'd rather go downhill - it's more exciting."

Patrick Byrne, Grade 4

