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VOLUME 6, ISSUE 7

SEPTEMBER 19, 2003

Increased fair security

BY GLORIA HILDEBRANDT

Security will be greater at the Acton and Milton fall fairs, in order to prevent a repetition of the raucous disturbance that occurred at the Georgetown Fall Fair on September 6. "Additional measures will be taken," declared Halton Regional Police Chief Ian Algar to Halton Hills councillors on September 8. What these measures are, beyond an increased police presence, were not determined by press time. Police and fair organizers are still deciding strategies.

Thomas Trotter, a Georgetown resident in the Fairgrounds area, gave Council a chilling eye-witness account of the incident at the fair. "At 11 p.m. I heard chants of 'Kill the cops, kill the police,'" he said. He described the pickets of his fence being pulled off and thrown at police, and the split rails of another fence being hurled as javelins at police cars. Full bottles and cans of beer and liquor were also thrown. "This means that beer was in the kids' backpacks all day," he points out. "Six hundred people at Park and Charles taunted officers who held their ground." When a fire pumper truck was

brought in, the mob was told they would be sprayed if they didn't disperse, he added. The water cannon was used and around 1:00 a.m., the crowd left.

Barbara Jennings, another resident of the Park area, was awakened in the middle of the night by a helicopter flying low overhead. Going outside to investigate, she asked a teenaged boy who was walking away from the park what was happening. "Corrupt cops," he told her, "they're shooting all over the place." Then Mrs. Jennings noticed him weaving drunkenly from side to side along the sidewalk.

A news release sent to the media on September 7 by Halton Regional Police states that fair organizers asked police to "remove some trespassers who had already been ejected earlier in the evening," due to fighting. As some arrests were being made, the police were surrounded by a growing crowd of youths. Additional police were requested from Peel, the O.P.P. and York Region, which brought the helicopter. Members of the Halton Tactical Rescue Unit fired rubber bullets on the ground in front of

the crowd before the Fire Department was asked to use water spray. In total, nine teenagers from Halton Hills were arrested.

Mr. Trotter summarized what happened in this way: "Twenty-five feet of my fence were destroyed, and my gardens were trashed by people defecating and urinating on them. It was a nauseating event. This was a riot."

Mayor Kathy Gastle responded, "We will put a strategy in place so this doesn't happen again."

Regional Councillor John Day declared, "This shows that the needs of youth have to be addressed. This is a wake-up call." Expanding on this, Mr. Day says, "We need to place more emphasis on providing activities and support for our youth. There are very few places in town where they can congregate without someone telling them to move along. They have even fewer places where they are welcome to be themselves."

Councillor Jane Fogal pointed out, "If there were 500 kids involved, then one thousand parents should be asking 'where was my kid at 1:30 in the morning?'"



PHOTO BY REID KENNEDY

A Grrrreat Opening

As the Giant Tiger mascot observes, Halton Hills Mayor Kathy Gastle and Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce President Norm Paget are checked out by cashier Debbie Smallwood after the new store hosted a Grand Opening on September 13th. The Acton retail outlet was Giant Tiger's 126th store opening across the Canada.

Inside this month's Compass

SHOEBOX MEMORIES

On March 16, 1853, several gentlemen gathered for an inaugural meeting to set up a Halton fair. One hundred members joined the fledgling Halton Agricultural Society and raised \$305 in prize money for the first county fair, which was held in October 1854.

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IDLE PURSUITS

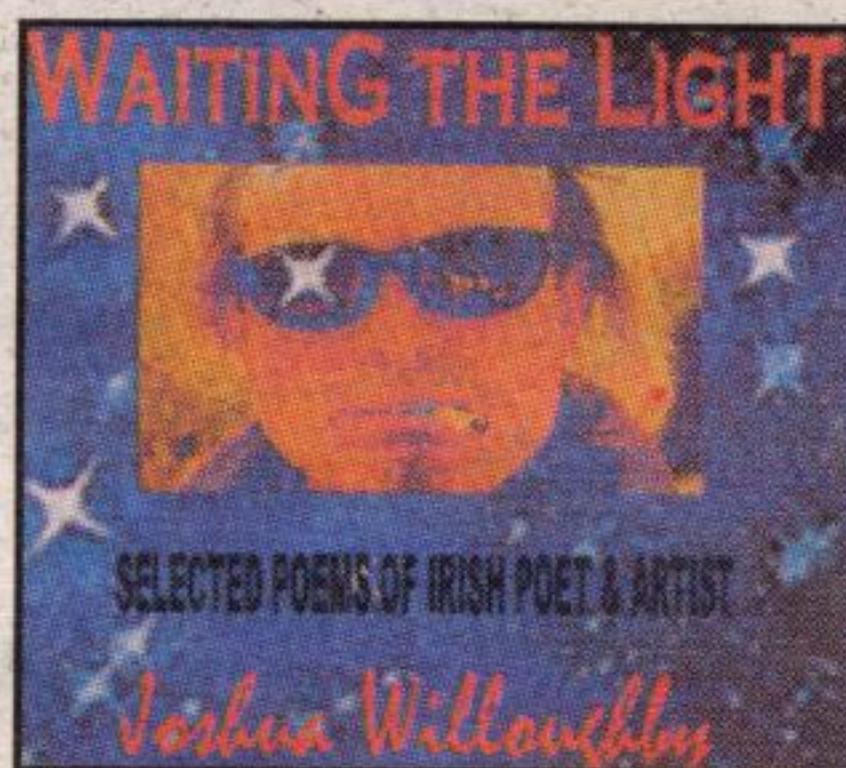
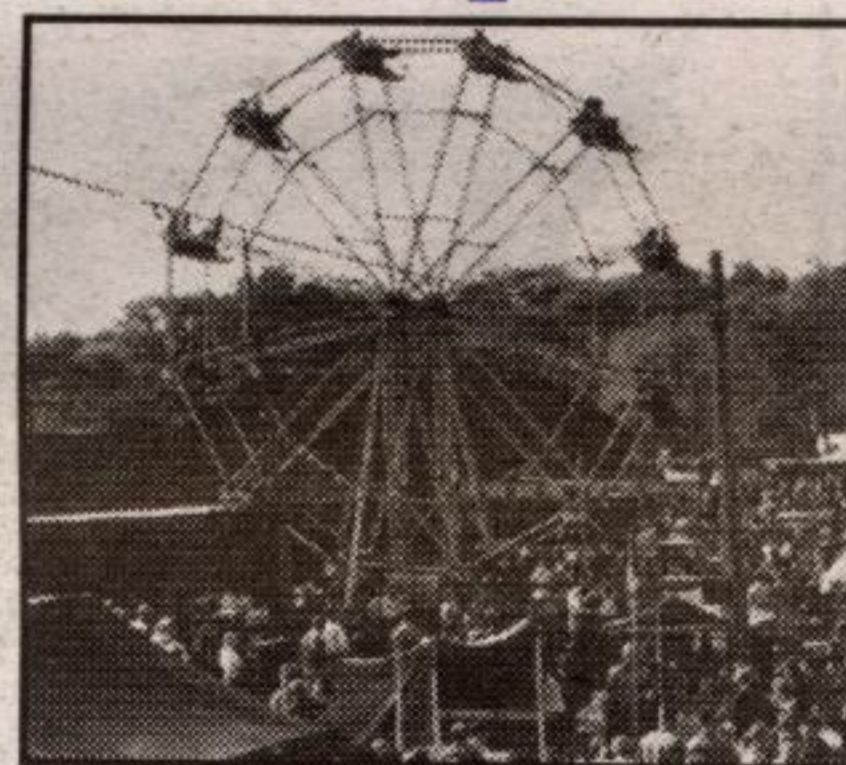
Joshua Willoughby's CD of poetry, *Waiting the Light*, is mainly new, but includes some pieces that are about 10 years old. His deep voice holds a hint of roughness that nevertheless caresses his well-chosen words.

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COMMUNITY CORNERSTONE

Lois Fraser is a driving force behind many community projects and activities in Georgetown and Halton Hills. Every year, her company, Fraser Direct Distribution Services, holds a book sale to benefit local charities.

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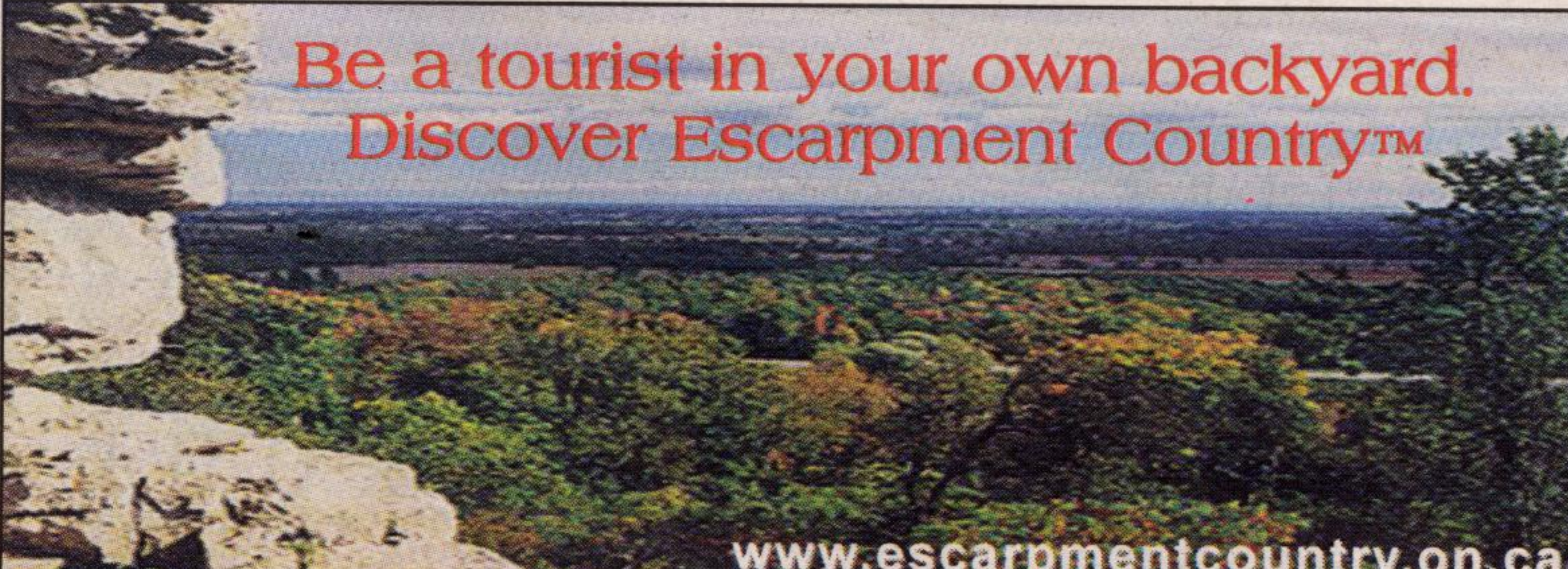
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