

# The Sheriff of Halton Memories of a father

STORY AND PHOTO BY DONNA DANIELLI

Everyone has memories they carry with them of their parents, those treasured moments we tuck away at the back of our minds. For many people, that's where those memories remain, brought out on occasion to reminisce over and relive times gone by. Acton resident Jean Somerville though is a one-woman historical society, carefully preserving the rich and varied history her family has enjoyed in Nassagaweya.

Mrs. Somerville's first book, "The Bands Played on: Music and the Frank Family" told the story of the influences that both her grandfather, William Frank and her father, Andrew Frank had in their communities and beyond. A violin player, William Frank entertained at house parties and dances in Nassagaweya for many years, as well as being a member of the Brookville Brass Band late in the nineteenth century. It was his son, Andrew Frank though, who achieved fame and recognition later with his own group, The Sod Busters. From their first broadcast on CKOC radio in 1931, The Sod Busters were a hit as their listening audience increased weekly throughout southern Ontario and the northern United States.

Mrs. Somerville is now hard at work on her latest book, a historical recollection of her father's entire life. While it will include his musical career, the life of Andrew Frank encompassed so much more. "It was such an interesting life that I felt it should be recorded," explains Mrs. Somerville. The amount of historical data she has to draw on is nothing short of astounding. Not only had Andrew Frank kept playbills, records and posters from his musical career, he also had developed a keen interest in his family's history. His grandfather, Christian Frank had immigrated to Canada from Germany at the age of 17 in 1851. Mrs. Somerville has copies of letters sent from her great grandfather back to his home in Germany, shortly after arriving in Canada, pleading with his family to join him. "He was lonely and had a tough time at first," explains Mrs. Somerville. Contact with the relatives overseas had been lost during the First World War as communication with Germany was frowned upon. "My Dad always wondered if we still had family over there," she says. He asked a neighbour to translate a letter into German for him after the Second World War and sent it overseas. An answer quickly came back and relations were once again established after years of silence, with the remaining family in Thomassing, Bavaria. "Dad was so interested in, and worked so hard at finding his family history that I felt it should be included in the book, says Mrs. Somerville.

"I thought that this has to be recorded, this is history," besides, she laughingly asks, "What do you do with these things if you don't put them in a book?"

Perhaps the most fascinating chapter of Mrs. Somerville's new book will revolve around the career her father undertook after retiring from business, that of Halton County Sheriff. "He was always interested in the community and politics, but didn't have the time because he was playing at dances at night," she points out. "At that time, Dad was selling real estate and cutting back on farming." Andrew Frank was

appointed as the ninth Sheriff of Halton County in 1958 and held that position until he retired from it in 1970. As Sheriff, Andrew Frank was responsible for a variety of tasks, including drawing the names of jurors, keeping track of trust monies, carrying out seizures, writs and possessions, and evictions. As well, he was required to transport prisoners, in his own vehicle from Milton to the penitentiaries in Kingston and Hamilton. According to Mrs. Somerville, the meticulous records that Andrew Frank kept throughout his tenure showed that while he performed 755 of these services during his first year in office, by the time he retired twelve years later, he was performing over 2,500 services each year. "It was just growing so big as the county grew," explains Mrs. Somerville, who points out that her father's dedication to his community didn't end with his retirement. Anyone who enjoys the immensely popular Milton Farmer's Market in the summer has Andrew Frank to thank for the experience. "Dad started the Farmer's Market in Milton after he retired," explains Mrs. Somerville. "He'd gone to market in Guelph years earlier when we had the fruit farm." Mrs. Somerville is also quick to point her father's propensity for including his grandchildren with him on Market days each week, including her own son, Halton Hills Regional Councilor Clark Somerville.

Other aspects of Andrew Frank's life that will be covered in the book include his work as an apprentice barber, a builder, an elder at St. Paul's United Church and as a volunteer with the senior citizen's orchestra. So deep was his commitment to his community in fact, that Andrew Frank was honoured as the Milton Citizen of the Year in 1972. "As time goes by, there fewer people who remember him," says Mrs. Somerville, explaining her determination to complete her latest book. This is no small task, considering that she uses neither a computer nor a typewriter when creating her historical books.

The data collected by Mrs. Somerville in researching her book is a treasure trove, not only for her family members but for anyone interested in the history of Nassagaweya over the past century. Many of the anecdotes Mrs. Somerville shares are peppered with the familiar names of many of area's long-standing families. She is including some of her mother's recipes in the books as well, and adds "I've included stories I've heard about Dad when he was a young lad. I've also included a lot of information about what life was like then."

She may be still at work on this, the history of her father's life, but Jean Somerville has also recently completed a history of her mother's family, the Storeys, which is currently in the hands of her editor. When the Andrew Frank story is completed, she will undertake her next project, based on the life of her great-great grandfather, John Newton, who was the first postmaster of Limehouse. Taking stock for a moment of the tasks she has set for herself, Jean Somerville just laughs and says "I guess I better keep healthy if I'm going to finish it all."

Anyone interested in purchasing Mrs. Somerville's first book, "The Bands Played On" is encouraged to contact her at 519-853-1549.



Acton author Jean Somerville poses with a copy of her first book and a photo of her father, Andrew Frank. Mrs. Somerville is currently at work on her next book, a historical recollection of her father.

## Sami Jo's Road to Torino

BY SAMI JO SMALL, TEAM CANADA'S HOCKEY GOALTENDER  
& 2002 OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALLIST

Travelling and living out of a bag has become the story of my life. We're constantly on the road, and this next month will be no different. We leave tomorrow for a European tour starting in Copenhagen, passing through Sweden and then ending up at the Olympic site in Turin, Italy. It will be a great opportunity for us to visually prepare for the Olympic games in February as well as play against the top



four countries in the world at the Pre-Olympic tournament, and who knows, maybe even try some great Italian food!

Since my last update, our roster has been shortened, I've flown to Winnipeg and Toronto, had Darren, my boyfriend, visit me in Calgary for a weekend, and spent more hours on a bus than I care to remember. It's been a very trying month, not only physically, but emotionally as well. I've come to see my teammates like family, and am constantly amazed at the incredible personalities on our team.

Hockey is going well; however, I haven't played many games recently. At the end of September I had seven starts and Kim and Charlie were both at three.

These coaches pride themselves on creating a "fair" process; therefore, it meant that in the eleven games that Team Canada played in the month of October I only got to start once. I'll be the first to admit that it sucks to sit on the bench; however, I've really tried to use this month to do the "extras" that it takes to acquire new skills. Staying after practice, doing extra workouts on game days and trying to stay focused on my goals. The most difficult part was not, having to do workouts at 10 o'clock at night while my teammates waiting on the bus devoured their post-game pizza, but watching game after game as the other two goalies played marvelously showing their skills to our evaluators. And no, I never thought of being a Tania Harding and taking them out of action...well, not out loud at least. Our team had a great month, finally beating

some of the male teams.

My one game went well, losing a close 3-2 game to a Midget AAA boy's team.

All the goalies are now at eight starts that means I can look forward to some more games in November and not just intra-squad games.

Jennifer Botterill, my roommate, and I were fortunate to get to travel to Winnipeg for a press conference announcing our game

there on Jan 1st. I grew up in Winnipeg so it's always nice to get the opportunity to go home for a weekend. Time away from the team and the hockey environment always refreshes me, however, being in Winnipeg does even more. I got to hang out with my family and my friends and, at least for the weekend, forget about all the pressures associated with trying to win a gold medal. They all showed me such a good time that's it's a good thing I made it back on the plane in one piece!

We had a night in Calgary and then hopped on a bus bound for Regina. Bus trips with our team are always fun, despite being cooped up in tiny quarters for hours on end, but this one "takes the cake". It included movies, games of Sudoku, and the best part: a "bake-off". Much to my delight there was selection after selection of baked goods that the girls had brought to try to win the crown. (Jen and I didn't have time to prepare an entry as we were in Winnipeg for the weekend). We served as waitresses dispensing all 22 entries to each person as the bus made its way across the prairies. I'm not sure if this is what happens in the NHL, but let me tell you, this was definitely the highlight of my trip! There were all sorts of entries, but in the end, the cookies entitled "Score with Goyette" won the crown. Also, as an aside, I gained 10 pounds and didn't have to eat for the rest of the trip!

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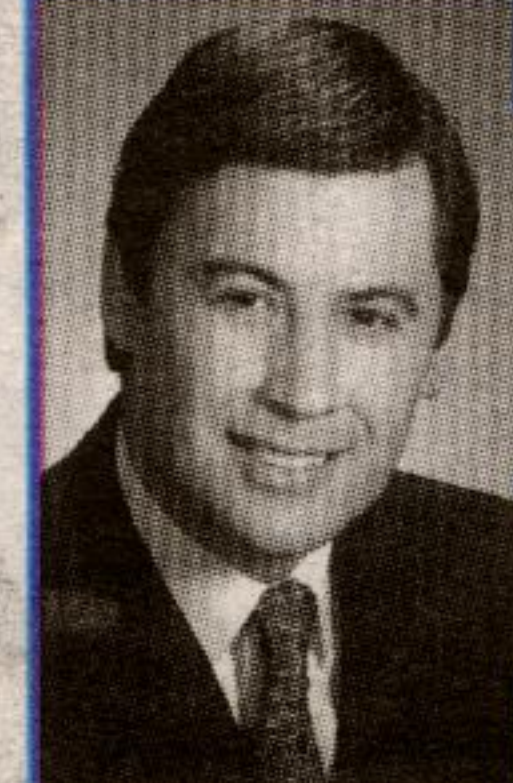
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