

## Town vows better taxi service

Cont. from Pg. 1

seniors aren't getting the service they need, but added he'd recently seen two taxis in Acton.

The owner of Georgetown Taxi, Wani Khawaja, said his Acton driver quit at Christmas time and he can't fill the position.

Khawaja complained he "doesn't make any money" on Acton calls because it costs \$8 for gas for each trip from Georgetown to answer an Acton call. "The Town knows there's no service in Acton and they're not calling anybody to provide the service. They know it's not feasible for the other guys (other taxi companies) to send a cab," Khawaja said, adding that he had "sympathy" for Acton residents who can't get a taxi when they need one.

Lisa Leblanc at McKAB Taxi, said they offer service in Acton, but like other calls, Acton calls wait in line during the busy hours.

"I hate to have anybody waiting a long time for a taxi but even in Georgetown people sometimes have to wait a half-an-hour," Leblanc said in an interview on Tuesday.

"If I'm busy enough out there (in Acton) I'll keep a car out there all day long."

A spokesperson at E-Z Taxi said sometimes they are so busy that they have to refer Acton calls to the competition.

On Tuesday afternoon staff at Acton IGA attempted order a taxi for a senior and were told it would be an hour-and-a-half before a taxi could get to Acton, leaving the senior stranded.

Stein predicted that the publicity would help improve service in Acton.

"I don't expect that there's going to be a problem now that they all know they are going to do those (Acton) calls."

## Town, union still talking

Negotiations between the Town of Halton Hills and its recreation and works department staff resume Feb. 1.

Steve McKnight, president of CUPE (Canadian Union of Public Employees) Local 73, said the conciliator refused to write a no board report when a deal was proposed at their December meeting.

"Even though members rejected the deal we proposed in December, he wants us to take another shot at it," McKnight says.

Staff have been without a contract since last March and heavily supported a strike vote in the fall.



**SOBERING, YET UPBEAT MESSAGE:** Former heart transplant surgeon Dr. Robert Conn explained the philosophy of his SmartRisk injury prevention program at Acton High school last Thursday. —Frances Niblock photo

## Teens offered smart choice

By FRANCES NIBLOCK  
The New Tanner

There was no preaching, no finger wagging and no don't messages. Instead, there was a very slick multimedia presentation offering choices to teens as the SMARTRISK Foundation's HEROES injury prevention program was staged for approximately 3,200 north Halton students at Acton High school last Thursday and Friday.

Images of blood and gore were kept to a minimum in the SMARTRISK video as the main message to make smart choices — including buckle up, drive sober, look first (before leaping), wear the gear and get training — was stressed.

From his wheel chair, student about the stupid choice he made when he jumped off the roof of his house into a swimming pool, breaking his neck and becoming a quadriplegic.

"This hour (presentation) isn't going to change habits of a lifetime, but the best thing we can do here is get you thinking for yourselves and make smart choices because life is full of risks," Barnes said, stressing that there is a line between smart and stupid risks and each student needs to determine where

their "stupid line" is.

The students appeared to get the message.

"It was a really good presentation and I don't take stupid risks but I bet it will make some other people think twice," said Acton High school Grade 12 student Theresa Clayton.

Grade 12 student Brandi Butler said Barnes' story really hit home.

"You never think that it's going to happen to you and to hear him talk about having to wear a diaper in the beginning makes you stop and think."

HEROES is the brainchild of former pediatric heart surgeon Dr. Robert Conn who formed the SMARTRISK Foundation six years ago after coming to the realization that most of the donor hearts he was harvesting for transplant came from people who were having a great time with their lives one moment and as a result of inappropriate risk, were brain dead the next.

Dr. Conn began to study who and how many people were getting hurt and said what he found "blew him out of the water," and convinced him to put down the scalpel.

"Most Canadians think the number one cause of death is cancer or heart disease, but the number one cause of death for people un-

der 45 is injury. Seventy per cent of the teenagers who die, die from injuries that are predictable and preventable and that's such a huge waste of potential," Dr. Conn said in an interview after the presentation.

Agreeing with the assessment from teens — the highest risk group — that "safety sucks" Dr. Conn began to look for ways to get help teens make safer choices.

"Life is about taking risks and if you evaluate the risk and know what your limitations are you can take that risk and not get hurt," Dr. Conn said.

During the presentations at Acton High school Dr. Conn met with local politicians, health officials and teachers and said that while the HEROES program was designed to capture the interest of teens and make them think about the risks they are willing to take, he hopes the program will be a catalyst for action at the local level.

"It's our hope that the bigger impact of the program comes from meeting with groups like this when we reach people who can have influence in the community to begin to look at how risks in the community can be modified to reduce the likelihood of people being hurt."

## Four injured in head-on crash

The Jaws of Life were used to extricate victims of a head-on car crash that occurred at 8 a.m. on Tuesday on Highway 7 between Acton and Rockwood. Four area residents received minor injuries in the crash and were taken to Guelph General Hospital for treatment.

Guelph OPP report 19-year-old Nadine Barrett of Acton was westbound on Highway 7, just west of the Blue Springs Line, when she lost control on the slippery road, crossed over the centre line and crashed head-on into a 1992 Plymouth Voyager being driven by 43-year-old Mark Turner of Guelph. Passengers Marie Turner, 43, and Rhonda Vause, 20, also received minor injuries.

OPP report that all of the victims were wearing their seatbelts, preventing more serious injury, but were un-

able to say who was trapped in their vehicle and had to be freed by the Eramosa Fire Department.

Police said no charges would be laid because of the poor road conditions at the time of the crash.

### Fail-to-remain

A 30-year old Erin man has been charged with failing to remain at the scene of an accident and disobeying a stop sign following a hit and run accident involving two vehicles Thursday night in Eramosa Township. Guelph OPP report a 1989 truck was southbound on the Eramosa Township's Third Line when the driver didn't stop at the intersection of Highway 24 and struck a car being driven by a Rockwood woman, who was slightly injured.

The truck then drove off but a witness got the licence.



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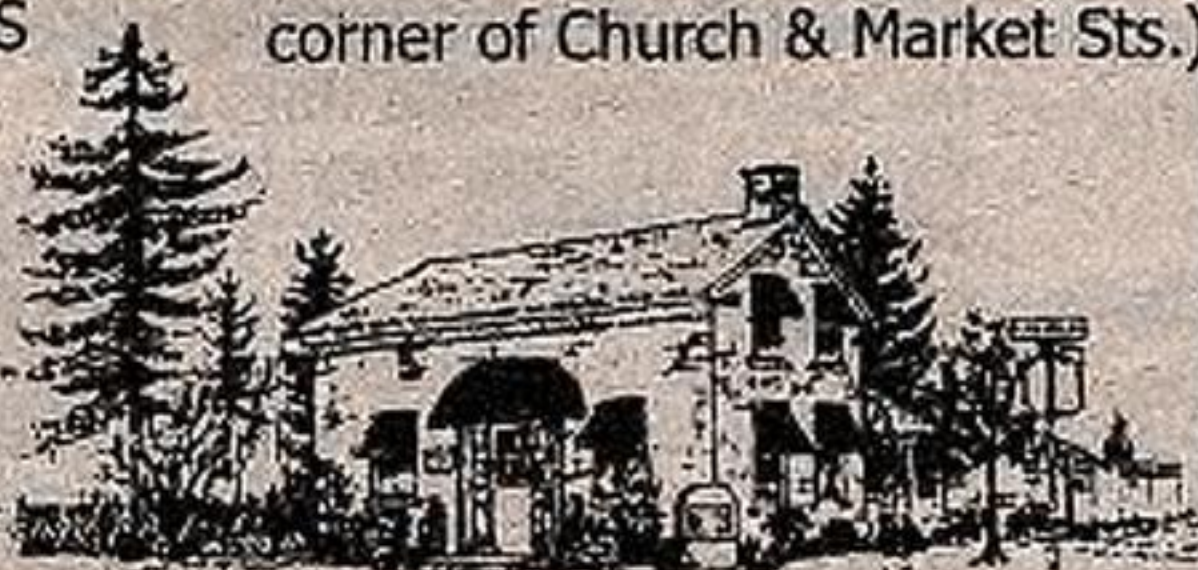
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