

GRAPEVINE



Youth centre home

The former Sweet Dreams Bakery at 45 Mill Street is now home - as of Monday - to Hanging in Halton Hills, a seven-month Youth Canada Services project to develop an Acton Youth Centre. Ten formerly unemployed Halton Hills youths who started work on Monday will develop and implement plans for a youth drop-in centre, evaluate the youth centre in Georgetown and find ways to make money to run both centres.

Volunteers thanked

Kudos to all of the Acton volunteers who will be honoured tonight (Thursday) by Halton Hills Community Support and Information (HHCSI - formerly ASSIC) at a volunteer recognition dinner at the Ballinacree Community Hall.

The volunteers are an invaluable resource to HHCSI, contributing over 6,000 hours last year. The agency honours volunteers at five-year intervals and those who have five, 10 and 15 years of service as of 1998 and 1999 will receive heartfelt thanks and special recognition with long-service pins. Acton's Janet Butler, Ed Footitt, May Hoare and Eleanor Hurley will receive awards for 15 years of service.

Jazz & Java

The Acton High School Jazz Band and Grade 10 singing sensation Rita Matton will provide lively entertainment during Blackwater and Jazz - a fundraiser for the Acton Agricultural Society's building fund. The Society hopes to raise \$300,000 for a new building in Prospect Park. The event - to be held at Acton High School on May 2 - features a concert and coffee in a café setting. Tickets are \$5 will be available at the door or by calling 853-5245 or 856-9760.

Fair building location?

The three possible locations for a new Acton Agricultural Society building in Prospect Park are "wonderful" according to Society spokesperson Janis Fread, who hopes the options are within the fundraising capabilities of the Society which lost its indoor fair space when the arena

was torn down.

The three options came out of a workshop and several public meetings held during a master plan study for Prospect Park. The final report of that study is expected next month.

Fread was unsure if the actual drawings showing the three suggested locations would be available for Society members at a meeting on Tuesday to discuss fundraising.

Student excellence

Kudos to St. Joseph's Catholic School student Kristina Verlingo who will be honoured with a Sharing the Spirit award by the Halton District Catholic School Board.

The Grade 8 student was chosen by school staff for her outstanding academic and extra-curricular activities.

"She's a lovely, wonderful young lady," said proud principal Jim McGeragle.

"Kristina is caring and involved and never has a bad word to say about anyone. If someone is having difficulties, she's the first to offer assistance," McGeragle said, adding that Kristina tries out for everything and always gives 100 per cent effort. Kristina will receive her award at a ceremony at Bishop Reding High School in Milton on May 12.

Benefit concert

The memory of former Crewson's Corners toddler Emma Darlene Hunter, who died from cancer January 3, 1997, will be honoured at a fundraising concert to benefit cancer research on Saturday in Norval.

Emma's parents, Wendi and Hugh Hunter of Acton are staging the family concert for The Hospital for Sick Children in memory of their daughter.

"It took us two years to get to the point that we could do this," Hugh Hunter said adding, "we always wanted to do something for Sick Kids to say thank you."

The concert, featuring music for all ages, gets underway at 7:30 p.m. in St. Paul's Parish Hall. For information or tickets call the Hunters at 853-1383.



ALL ABOARD! Former Beardmore employees, including members of the 25 and 40 year Pioneer Club, board a bus to a gala dinner at the Four Seasons in Toronto last Saturday. More than 1,600 employees enjoyed the evening's festivities. See next week's Tanner for more photos of the door prize winners. -Ted Tyler photo

Justice denied

"Sadly, the justice system failed to protect Alison in the first place." With those words Lesley Parrott rightly put the spotlight on those who must share in the responsibility for the death of her daughter. The politicians, lawyers and judges who insist on putting the rights of the accused before those of the victim. The trial of Francis Carl Roy once again demonstrated how skewed our criminal justice system has become.

Had Roy been sentenced to a proper term for his first two violent attacks on teenage girls, or at least been forced to serve the sentence given, would Alison Parrott be alive today? Are the rights of a convicted criminal worth the life of a bright young girl? For most of us the answer to that question is a no-brainer. Unfortunately, many in authority seem to fit that bill and continue to let violent offenders loose on an unsuspecting public. They even go so far as to protect the privacy of these animals to prove the flawed logic of rehabilitation works. This in the face of numerous studies which prove there is no cure for sexual predators. They are prepared to defend their position to your last child. The arrogance would be laughable were the results not so tragic.

Those who followed the trial, and most of us did, were outraged to learn that Alison's killer had a history of violent rapes on children. He was in fact on parole for these crimes when he lured Alison to her death. These facts were withheld from the jury who only had a sanitized version of this man's record presented to them. Justice David Watt ruled that these prior crimes would be "prejudicial" to the defense.

I'm at a loss to understand this. If facts involving the accused were based on rumour or innuendo I can see keeping them back. This person had established a pattern of attacks like this. With the DNA

The Way I See It

with Mike O'Leary



evidence putting him at the scene why was he allowed to get on the stand and lie his face off? Is this what passes as justice these days? Sadly, yes.

If you are picked up for drunk driving a second time you are not allowed to conceal your first conviction. In fact, if you have a history of DWI your sentence is much harsher. Is that where we're at? Have we come to the stage where drinking and driving are considered more heinous than the murder of a child? The rules of evidence seem to say so.

The Justice (not what I would call him) also suppressed the fact that the killer had a 35 mm camera and forged press pass. Alison was lured from her home by someone claiming to be a photographer. The articles suppressed were found by the police in Roy's home. Are we now to assume that if police find evidence linking the accused to a crime it is to be excluded as prejudicial?

I am not mollified by those who were quick to point out that the jury brought in a right verdict even with the exclusions. Had the jury found the defendant not guilty I'll bet these same apologists would be dumping all over the Crown for not proving its case. For them, the accused is the only consideration.

The jury system was established in England as a safeguard for the common people against being falsely accused and punished by the gentry. Perhaps it's time for another revolution. Today's self-proclaimed gentry (bureaucrats, politicians, lawyers and social activists) tend to dismiss the objections of common folk (that would be you and I). The killer's law-

yer immediately called the public anger over this case an "histrionic reaction." The cementheads we pay to run our justice system said "See! The system works!"

I was so angry last week I couldn't write about this case. I was disgusted, flabbergasted, sick-at-heart, pissed-off, etc. I was not indulging in any kind of hysteria at all. And no, the system does not work. If the system worked Alison Parrott would be 24 years old and busily establishing herself in life. If the system worked her name would not be added to the list of innocents sacrificed at the altar of progressive rehabilitation.

Don't be fooled that because the Supreme Court established this precedence there is nothing to be done. Parliament is the highest court in this country. You must hold our politicians responsible for fixing this mess. Julian Reed is our Federal MP. His local number is 875-3393.

Justice Minister Anne McLellan has promised to review this matter. Unless there is a groundswell of public opinion I predict that is all she will do. It's up to you to take five minutes of your time to register your opinion. If you are as angry as I am you can fax MP Reed at 875-1060.

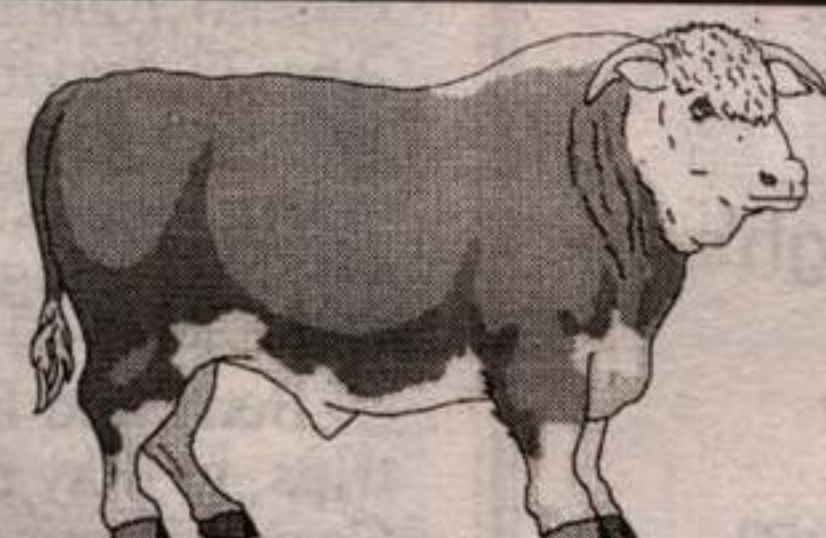
There seems to be a perception in the community-at-large that, because there was a conviction, justice was served. Not true. The Parrotts got law, not justice. Justice would have been served if we had never heard of Alison Parrott. Alison will never stroll the streets again. Her killer may well do so. This, they call justice.

In this country Alison's killer is not even sentenced to a firm 25 years. He can apply for a judicial review in 15. It's not good enough. We have to protect our children. How many more have to suffer? How many more have to die before we demand a change?

Please someone tell me. How many more?



COOKIE SIR? Members of the Acton Guiding movement sold their famous Girl Guide cookies to shoppers at the new Acton Home Hardware store on Saturday. Terry Schick of Acton got helping deciding how many boxes to buy from Guides Jennifer Berry (left) Stacey Van Opstal and Rhiannon Roehrig (right) - Frances Niblock photo



WHAT'S YOUR BEEF?

Put it in a letter to the Editor!

Deadline is Tuesday at noon.