

EDITORIAL

with Frances Niblock

Academic excellence available here too

There's nothing like an academic awards ceremony to make you feel hopeful about the future. The 150 or so students honoured last week by Acton High school – an eclectic group of very bright, motivated teens – are the leaders of tomorrow, but they don't often get the public praise they deserve.

The jocks and the troublemakers – rebels without a clue – attract a lot of attention, but the students who demand more of themselves, who have already learned the value of hard work and who aren't stung by the labels of "brain" or "nerd", often achieve their academic excellence in near-obscurity.

Well, as proud parents and families and teachers clapped wildly and snapped photos, these students nervously marched across the stage and into the limelight to pick up their certificates – and better still – cash awards from a long list of very generous local businesses.

Halton Board of Education Superintendent Al Greyson, calling the awardees the "cream of the crop" said they should be commended for their courage to make a commitment to excellence. He also suggested the students had the responsibility of turning their accomplishments into positive public relations for their school.

In a candid comment moment Greyson admitted that until recently he knew little about Acton High school, which he called a "hidden treasure" in Halton. He said some people think that because Acton is small it can't possibly provide the education people want for their children and that the student honourees are living proof that is not so.

Many of the student awardees were multiple winners and two are among the top 25 per cent of mathematics and chemistry students in Canada.

While some of the Acton High school students might not have the sophisticated veneer of students from larger areas of Halton, they lack nothing in their unflinching search for excellence. Bravo.

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FUN AND INFORMATION: Friday night had the return of Kinette Teen Dances at the Legion. Over 200 teens attended with proceeds going to the Acton Youth Centre. - Angela Tyler photo

DIYer seeks professional help

By ANGELA TYLER
The New Tanner

Awesome Interiors, Canadian House and Home, This Old House, Hometime, Home Savvy, Room for Change, Kitchens and Bathrooms, Cityline, Before and After, Design for Living, The Decorating Challenge, the list of television shows is endless. We have become a culture of home do-it-yourselfers.

It's unreal the number of t.v. shows and magazines that are dedicated to this. You can't avoid it either. You may think you can just flip through the channels and pause for a moment, but they hook you. They tempt you with wonderful sounding ideas, free tickets for shows or even contests to win big dollar renovations.

For some, the need to paint and remodel has almost become an addiction. I can see it now...meetings of the DIYA (Do-It-Yourself Anonymous group) will be scheduled at the same time as the Cityline Home Day rerun (Saturday's at 12:30 noon), to avoid further temptations. Chairing this weekend's meeting will be me. The topic, no matter how fed up you are with your living room carpet, do not attempt to get creative...hire a professional.

I've fallen victim many times, being over-inspired after being glued to such shows. Good Friday, around 9 p.m., me, a great deal on paint and a spare bedroom that was drab compared to HGTV standards. However, with all my painting, re-doing vinyl floors, fabric deals and my trusty sewing machine, nothing can compare to my carpet fiasco.

It started out simply enough. My carpet was wearing badly, a bad colour for a big furry dog and I had enough. The more I thought about it, the more I wanted it gone, but under the carpet was wafer board. Then the

worst thing possible could happen: I went to Home Hardware and picked up their new DIY idea book. In it was an amazing floor with wafer board that had been stained. After showing the picture to practically everyone I knew, I was feeling like Super-decorator-woman and ready to recreate this.

On Canada Day I had my first step towards a complete DIY emotional breakdown. I had no idea what a horrific job it was to remove 50 square yards of 10 year old carpet by yourself. And of course, I had to start my project very late in the day. Between hundreds of staples, underpad that was falling apart, dust and more dust combined with tired muscles I was on the verge of tears when I discovered that builders are not always careful about the stuff under carpet. There were gaps between the wafer board, plaster slopped all over and bright blue paint gobbled where the plaster wasn't. There was no turning back.

The next day, I had a panic trip to my paint friend Cathy. More bad news, my stain idea was officially inconceivable thanks to the disaster left from the builders. My only option was paint, so I did.

I nearly killed myself between the paint/urethane fumes along with the heat advisory in July. With the help of an area rug my sister remembered she had and some overdone, but much needed encouragement, I believed I was able to make it work for the short term.

I avoided people asking about how my 'project' went or wanting to see it. The few that I did allow past the front door, soon realized I was not telling tales. I had all sorts of comments from the shocked but supportive, 'it's not that bad' to my dad's tell it like it is comment of 'it looks awful'. Heck, even my dog hated it.

It was awful and I had to do something. After endless hours of searching and weighing my options, I broke down and decided on carpet again.

The end was near. The only person left to view my flooring embarrassment was Dave, the carpet guy. I warned him on the phone. When he did see it, he knew too it was awful. He never said a thing, although he did have a dumb grin on his face.

Four days later, my nightmare was over. Dave was my flooring hero. He had my Berber superbly installed and my home was sweetly scented with the aroma of new carpet.

However, my memory of this trauma seems to be short lived. A couple of days ago my friend Fred asked me if I had any new projects on the go. I told him I had been contemplating trying my hand at finishing the drywall in the laundry room. There was a really neat one in a magazine on the weekend. Just because it's the laundry room doesn't mean it shouldn't look good, right?



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