

# Need public input to solve doctor shortage

BY MAGGIE PETRUSHEVSKY  
The New Tanner

Public documentation of how lack of doctors has adversely affected individuals' health will be necessary if Acton's doctor shortage is to be taken seriously, a local physician says. "There's a shortage of doctors all over Southern Ontario," says Dr. George McWilliam. "But the feeling is the Province isn't particularly concerned about it. Especially

for those in the Toronto area. People here are seen as relatively affluent and mobile. If they have to drive 20 minutes to a doctor, so what? "They aren't taking into account the lack of transportation in this community. Seniors who don't drive, or stay-at-home moms with kids. How are they supposed to get to Georgetown or Guelph to a doctor or to the hospital in an emergency?" McWilliam questions. Discussions with Dr. Don Trant, chief of staff at Georgetown and District Memorial

Hospital, confirmed that the application to make Halton Hills and underserved area is proceeding, McWilliam says. However, since Acton and Georgetown are one political unit, recruiting will be for the entire town, not just Acton. "Halton Hills is down about 16 to 18 doctors according to the population," he says. "Of those, about six are needed in Acton." Although the application is made, there are no guarantees it will produce results, espe-

cially since everyone around the area is in the same position of need. The only way to make the government sit up and consider the shortage as serious is to get the public involved. "We need to get letters from residents detailing how the shortage of doctors has affected their personal health care situation," McWilliam says.

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Volume 2 No. 49  
Thursday, December 9, 1999

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## What's Inside



Mayor Serjeantson and Acton councillors congratulate Dr. George Elliott as the recipient of an Ontario Heritage award at Town council Monday. See Page 3.



Over 300 seniors sat down to a Christmas turkey dinner, an annual gift from Rotary and the Royal Canadian Legion. See Page 6.



Bowling on your 90th birthday? One Rockwood bowler enjoyed it recently and also savoured a cake on the occasion at Acton Bowling Lanes. See Page 10.

## Four charged after high speed chase

### R.I.D.E. program starts in Halton

Halton Police Public Safety Unit started its 1999 R.I.D.E. program last Friday with spot checks in Aldershot (West Burlington). The unit moves into Halton Hills on Dec. 16 and 22, to Milton on Dec. 11 and 122 and all districts Dec. 31. The R.I.D.E. unit operates in addition to year round checks by district officers. The additional program is funded by the Province. If you are stopped in a R.I.D.E. check and have been drinking "you will be dealt with in the appropriate manner," police warn. The slogan is "If You Drink - Don't Drive."



**HOLIDAY ART:**The watercolour art work of Acton's Sabrina Fread, 14, graces the front of the Halton District School Board's holiday greeting card. Sabrina drew the snowy log house scene for a Grade 8 art project last year at McKenzie-Smith Bennett school. - Frances Niblock photo

### Young offenders find it 'wasn't worth the drive'

Four or five Young Offenders from Toronto found it wasn't worth the drive to Acton early Sunday morning after leading five Halton police cruisers on a drug and alcohol-fuelled 11-kilometre high-speed chase through town. Speeds reached 140-kilometres an hour before the driver, who was later charged with being impaired, lost control of his dad's 1999 Grand Am on 15 Side Road, just east of Fourth Line. No one was injured as the car slid off the road and the youths, who tried to run, were arrested. One suspect may have gotten away. The youths have also been charged in connection with a number of mischief and vandalism incidents in Acton and the description of their car matches several incidents that are still being investigated. The incident began when an officer attempted to breakup a fight involving a number of youths at the corner of Bower Avenue and Mill Street just after midnight. An unidentified victim was struck with a golf club and the youths drove off when the officer arrived on the scene. Police chased the fleeing vehicle along Young and Queen Streets, south on the Fourth Line and east on 15 Side Road until the car went off the road at a bend, narrowly missing a tree and hydro pole. A small quantity of drugs was found at the scene. The 17-year-old white male driver has been charged with impaired driving, dangerous driving, breach of recognition, and assault with a

weapon (the golf club). The driver and two of his passengers, 16 and 17-year-old males from Toronto, are charged with mischief under \$5,000 in connection with vandalism at the Boat House in Prospect Park. Five windows were smashed at approximately 11 p.m. A fourth youth from the car is charged with mischief under \$5,000 after someone smashed the window of a school bus parked near the Boat House. All but the driver appeared in court and was released with January return dates. The driver was held for a bail hearing. "How did they get to Acton at 11 o'clock at night? Asked Detective Sergeant Jackie Gordon. "It's a strange, strange story."

## Acton will lose 'big time' if Province downsizes

By FRANCES NIBLOCK  
The New Tanner  
Acton will be the big loser as the provincial government forces the four regions in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) to downsize, according to Acton Councillor Norm Elliott.

Last Thursday, Municipal Affairs Minister Tony Clement said amalgamation and reducing the number of politicians in the GTA is "on the radar screen" and regions, like Halton, will have to reduce the number of politicians and develop plans to reduce service overlaps.

"If there's one area of Halton that's going to get hurt by that, it's Acton," Elliott said on Monday night. "It's the smallest community in a town in Halton. Acton will lose big time if they do something in Halton Region before the 2000 election."

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**Injured thief**  
A thief who cut himself breaking into the River Street library dripped blood throughout the office area as he searched for cash. Between 40 and 50 CDs and cash - total value \$850 - was taken during the break in overnight Thursday. The suspect smashed a basement window on the north east side of the building to get in. Police have a suspect and the investigation continues.

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