

High School reclaiming barren land

By **FRANCES NIBLOCK**
The New Tanner

With an empowering message that their job is to save the planet, students at Acton High School were urged to get involved with a schoolyard naturalization and tree-planting program by environmentalist Joan Cornfield during a recent presentation.

Cornfield is a member of P.O.W.E.R., the north Halton environmental group that is planting trees in six locations in Halton Hills, including Fairy Lake, as a millennium project.

Cornfield told the students they can and will make a difference.

"You don't even know how much power you have once you get a vision," P.O.W.E.R. spokesperson Joan Cornfield said as she came to lend support to the school's plans to naturalize an area at the south side of the school.

"My vision for you is that in 2050 AD, you're all ancient by then, you bring your kids along and your grandchildren and you look at those trees you planted and you look at millennium garden with its huge trees that help preserve the land," Cornfield said, adding they hope to supply the

school with some money to buy trees and their expertise.

The school's millennium garden will take three-to-five years to develop and could cost \$10,000—all money raised through grants and donations and the "sale" of trees to parents of students and members of the graduating class each year.

Organizers hope the garden will be a community project and are asking parents, local businesses and the community for their time, talent or donations. Already R/M Construction has donated its heavy equipment and Dufferin Aggregates loads of gravel and pocks and Tuitman's Garden Centre has drawn up a garden plan.

Teacher/garden organizer Norbert Axtmann said back in the 60s, 70s and 80s, developers "raped" the land like the school site, but now developers, the Town and school boards are protecting the environment.

"This (millennium garden) is our opportunity to kind of undo a wrong that was done many years ago when the school was initially built," Axtmann said, adding students will be involved in the creation, planning and maintenance of the area.



REHAB PROJECT: Acton High School students and staff were on site last week as the earthmovers began the work. They were, left to right: Instructor Sharon French, Dave Coles, Ian Douglas, Ben Elliott, Sarah Rosenmeier and Spencer Chew. Instructor Terry Roesch. — France Niblock photo

No Trillium grant for Fair Board

The Acton Agricultural Society will have to downsize its proposed new building in Prospect Park if it hopes to have a facility for the September fair.

On Friday, Society officials learned they would not get the \$75,000 provincial Trillium grant they had applied, and hoped, for.

"We're very disappointed, but we weren't hinging everything on the millennium funding," Society president Doug Fread said in an interview on Friday. Fread co-owns AFC Construction, the volunteer general contractor on the project.

"We're costing out a downsized building at this point to see if we can do it with the money that we've got—about \$200,000. The millennium money would have meant for sure we're going (to build) this year," Fread said, adding they should have an answer within weeks.

While initial plans called for the 15,000-square-foot building with a kitchen, storage room and assembly hall, Fread said they could build a 10,000-square-foot building with room for future expansion and still hope to put a shovel in the ground in June.

The Society had a \$27,000 profit from the last fair and

has received \$57,050 in donations to its building fund and special events have brought in another \$17,479. The Town has pledged \$20,000 to a new building.

Without a millennium grant, the Society-sponsored circus that's coming to town next Thursday (April 20) takes on an even greater fund rais-

ing importance.

The Society will receive half of advance tickets sales are hoping the lure of the big top will be a crowd pleaser and a money maker.

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