

EDITORIAL

with Hartley Coles

Those drug busts

Halton Police announced they have shut down four sophisticated marijuana hydroponic operations in the Region over the last four weeks and they are appealing for people to help them identify more of them, which they suspect exist all over Halton.

Marijuana plants seized in the four "grows" had potential street values ranging from \$110,000 to \$470,000, police estimated. Also confiscated in the raids was hydroponic equipment worth \$10,000 in each of the four cases.

If the operations had not been shut down the "grows" could have potentially netted the growers \$2 million every three months since marijuana plants in hydroponic operations are harvested on an ongoing basis. They do not have to depend on the vagaries of the weather.

Halton Police are advising the public that growing and refining marijuana is an ongoing, expanding industry and it is now intruding into local neighbourhoods. Houses used are often rental units and the house and yard unkempt. Neighbours should be aware of houses where residents are only there sporadically and they appear vacant most of the time.

Most of these houses have had the hydro meters "fixed" to redirect the flow of electricity into the residence. This diverts attention from the high amounts of power being utilized to operate the growing equipment such as lights and fans.

There seems to be more tolerance for the use of marijuana now, especially since the federal government legalized its use for medical reasons, but the onus is still on the public to assist police in shutting down these illegal operations. The people who run these "grows" are not interested in supplying "grass" for recreational use, they are after big bucks and they don't care who they hurt in the process. Their influence has spread even into the elementary schools and it is time it was stopped in its tracks.

There are those who contend the illegal operators are much like the bootleggers who thrived during Prohibition, and that like booze, marijuana will one day be legalized for regular use. We doubt it very much.

The world of drugs and yes, alcohol abuse, is one that often leads to personal degradation and dependency. It does nothing to improve life styles except when it is regulated for medical reasons. The sooner these growers are put out of business the better.

'Thanks' and 'giving'

Monday is Thanksgiving Day in Canada, set aside annually on the second Monday in October, "to give thanks for God's goodness and for the harvest."

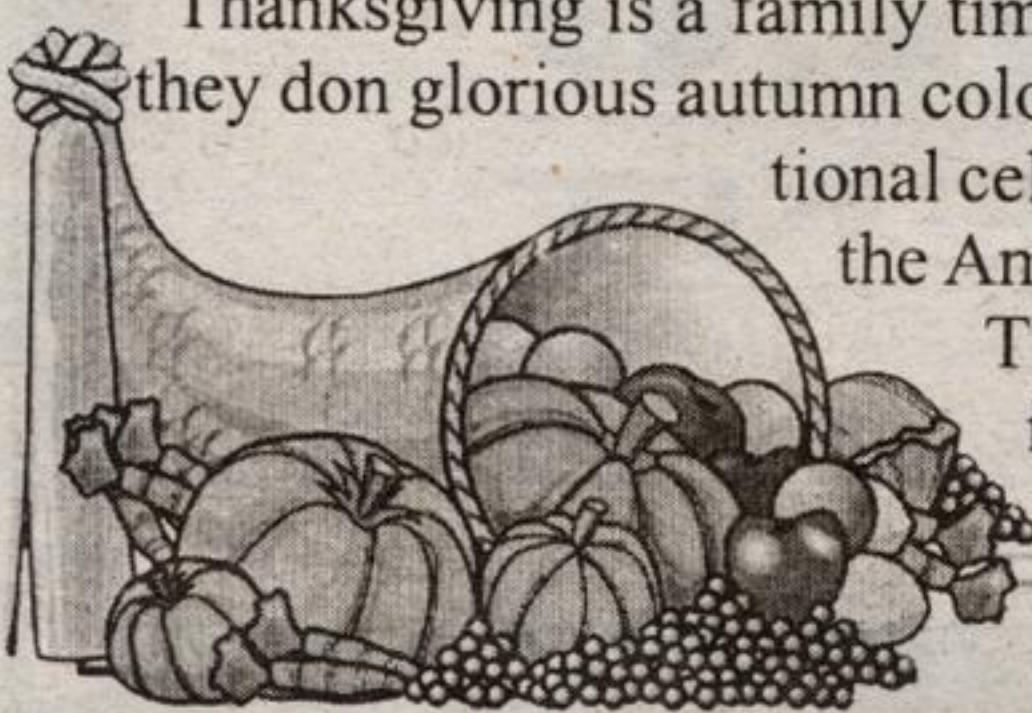
Coming so soon after the September 11th tragedy in the United States, when over 6,000 lives were lost, perhaps we find it difficult to stop and give thanks for our many blessings. It has been a sad and difficult time for so many people. Our hearts go out to them in their time of need. But life must go on despite the terrible cost in lives and damage.

There is still so much to be thankful for in Canada.

We need a Thanksgiving to remind us that Canada is one of the best countries in which to live. We need a Thanksgiving to remind us that all is not perfect in this world and we've got a lot of work to do in order for it to be better.

There are many prophets of doom out there willing always to look at the bleak side of events. They feed on depressing headlines and do their damndest to promote anxiety. The "thanks" and the "giving" are forgotten.

Thanksgiving is a family time that even the trees celebrate as they don glorious autumn colours. Although much of our traditional celebration has been borrowed from the Americans, who wait until the fourth Thursday in November to observe it, Thanksgiving can be a time when we can recapture some of the "thanks" and "giving" for which the day was set aside.



COMMUNITY BRUNCH: Members of the Catholic Women's League (CWL) and Acton Kinettes were in the serving line as the Acton Community Brunch started going again Sunday after a summer recess. Serving the hot brunch were, left to right, CWL President Helen Fowler, Jane Vicary of the Kinettes, CWL members Marie Zions and Shelley Elgar. The Kinettes are in charge of the monthly community brunches and different organizations assist over the year.

My mom: a tower of strength

By: ANGELA TYLER

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. This past Sunday, the 10th annual Run for the Cure in support of Breast Cancer Research is expected to bring in a record \$12 million in pledges. Over 23,000 people ran in Toronto alone.

In 1994, my grandmother passed away in March. It had been a long few years for my family. A few years earlier she was still driving her little Dodge car, working every single day of the week, caring for her home and smoking a few packs of cigarettes a day.

Unfortunately, her health started to diminish and her short-term memory loss had increased. By the fall of 1993 she was hospitalized in St. Joseph's Hospital in Guelph and died shortly after being transferred to a home in Milton.

It was a hard time for my family. My grandmother had been such a large part of our lives. My parents had been devoted to her care. Every day they drove to Guelph, sometimes two and three times a day to help with her care and to visit.

The spring brought a time for healing. We missed her and, of course, felt the loss, but our lives were to move on. It was that spring my mother discovered she had a lump in her breast.

When she and my dad told my sister and me, I couldn't understand it.

My mom was the healthiest one of the family. She was our hidden tower of strength. How could she possibly have cancer? I knew there was a history of it in her family, but not my mom. She didn't smoke or drink. She ate healthy and even did aerobics a few times a week.

I think in my head I ignored any thoughts of cancer. In my head she was just going to see some doctors to make sure it was just a cyst or maybe a bump. It was just a precaution. That was until they did a biopsy.

I don't really know what my mom was thinking through this whole ordeal. She told us what the doctors told her after each of her visits. My parents weighed her options and treatment options. All through this my mom kept this amazing composure. After the biopsy, it was decided that the lump had to be removed.

At the beginning of June, she was checked into St. Joseph's Hospital for surgery. The same hospital we spent six months with my grandmother.

The morning of her surgery, I went to the hospital as soon as I could to be with my dad while he waited. The only thing I can remember of that day was the doctor coming out to talk to us after the surgery. The only thing I

remember hearing was "it was cancerous." At that point it was no longer what I thought in my head, it was reality in its harshest form. How could my mom have cancer?

Following tests, it was confirmed the growth was cancerous. However the good news, if there could be any at that point, was it had not spread to the lymph nodes.

Banded and sore along with a drain tub for the fluid from her arm, my mom returned to work the following Monday... mere days after her surgery. Once when the VON came to the house to change her bandages, she had to wait a few minutes for my mom as she was late leaving the office. She was unbelievable.

The summer was spent like the spring; our family healing. Every day in August my dad drove my mom to her daily radiation treatment in Hamilton at the Cancer Clinic. She completed her five-year treatment of Tamoxifen and has even participated in some research at the clinic. She has offered a shoulder to lean on and a friend to talk to when she hears of others who are stricken with this.

Every time she returns from her visits at the cancer clinic with a clean report I celebrate inside and I am so thankful. My mom was lucky. She didn't just beat it; she knocked it down and continues to do it every year.



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