

GRAPEVINE

Gym aces

Kudos to the Gerrits brothers, Travis and Tyler, of Nassagaweya, who came home with a chest full of medals from their first competitive gymnastics meet recently in Mississauga.

The boys, both of whom have been involved with gymnastics since they were two years old, belong to the Futures Gymnastics Club in Mississauga and are students at Robert Little School.

Travis, 10, had an all around finish of third place in the pre-competitive, age 10 to 13 category, with fourth place finishes in floor and rings, third in vault and parallel bars



Travis and Tyler Gerrits

and second in the high bar.

Tyler, competing in the Interclub, age eight category, also placed third over all with third place finishes in the floor and rings, first in vault, second in parallel bars and third in high bar.

Gymnastics is a way of life for the brothers who have practices – grueling but fun – at least three days a week, that their mom (and former coach) Heather Gerrits says has taught them discipline, commitment, drive and good goal setting.

Religion badge

Congrats to the nine Cubs, Brownies and Guides who received their Religion in Life badges on Sunday during a special service at Knox Presbyterian Church.

The children completed a one-day study session, run by The Reverend Pieter Van Harten and Knox member Jean Brennan, which focused on the Bible and the Scouting and Guiding promises.

The badge earners include: Kyle and Dana Bowman, Colin and Katie Brennan, Katelyn Robinson, Amber Sherwood-Robinson, Tom Rivers, Jesse Ricketts and Phillip Conlin.

Tulip shoots bloom daffodil sales

To the residents of Acton and the surrounding area:

The other day I noticed some green tulip shoots pushing their way through the hard ground and I realized that spring is just around the corner. That means that the Acton Branch of the Canadian Cancer Society is very busy preparing for the April residential campaign and daffodil sale.

In this time of Olympic fever I can liken our trusty band of volunteers to that of a "gold medal" team. We just keep improving our record of helping you, the people of Acton, to donate to this very worthy cause.

I would like to invite you to join our winning team as we always need more help especially in the following areas: Kingham, Greenore, Duby, Berry and Wellington. The rural areas are very big and extra volunteers are always welcome there. If you would like to canvass another area I'm sure we can find a place to suit you. If you would like to help sell daffodils we'd love to hear from you too.

Great strides have been made both in research and in the treatment of cancer during the past few years. This trend can only continue with the help of dedicated volunteers such as yourselves. Please accept my invitation and together "Let's make Cancer History."

Sincerely,
Liz Bailey
On behalf of the Acton Branch CCS
519-853-0585

Cookie blitz

Local Sparks, Brownies, Guides and Pathfinders are very pleased with the great response to their Girl Guide cookie blitz in Acton on Saturday.

The girls sold 45 cases (12 boxes to a case) of the ever-popular boxes of half-vanilla, half-chocolate cookies. That's in addition to the 207 cases they've pre-sold for delivery in April.

This is the last year that Christie's is making the cookies – Dare of Kitchener has a new long-term contract and is currently developing test recipes for a new sandwich-type cookie.

Cookie sales, including the chocolate mint cookies in the fall, are the main fundraisers for the Girl Guides and the \$7 they make on each case helps subsidize the cost of Guiding camps.

If you missed the blitz and the pre-ordering, don't worry. Organizers have five or six spare cases and you can get one by calling Guider Linda at 853-0264.



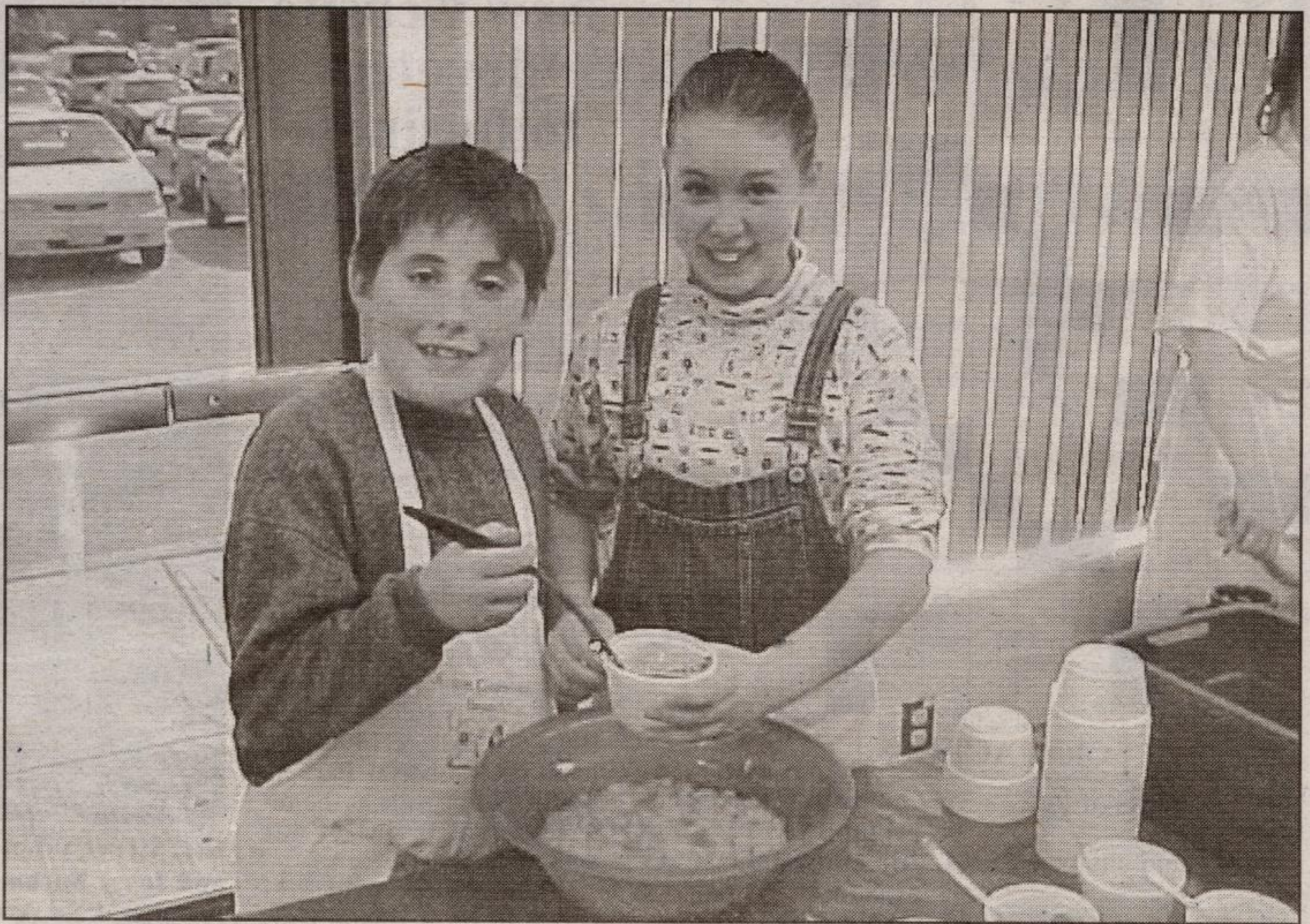
THE GIFT OF LIFE: Ernie Waller gave a bit of himself by donating blood while Mona Forbes looms on at the Acton red Cross Blood Clinic at the Legion last Thursday.

Dutiful donators

The "fantastic" turnout of Acton area donors at last week's blood donor clinic left area co-ordinator Julia Roehrig "very appreciative" and "thrilled."

"Way to go Acton," Roehrig said as she reported 95 units of blood were collected from 107 donators, including "tons" of first-timers; there because their children wanted to earn a Blood Services badge.

Thirteen members of the local Scouting/Guiding movement earned badges by bringing a new donor to the clinic and Roehrig said those donations helped make the clinic a huge success.



HELPING MOM: The monthly community brunch was held at the community centre again this past Sunday. This month, the proceeds are to be distributed throughout different organizations by the Kinettes. Jamie MacNeil, 10, left and Kayla VanDenEnden, 11, helped their Kinette mom's by serving at the desert table. – Angela Tyler photo

Olympics are over and we won

What a great Olympics, and to make things even better, Canada won the whole dad-gummed thing. Granted, Germany, the USA and Norway collected more hardware but we won the games. Here's why.

Whose team was the world talking about? Canada! Whose athletes conducted themselves with the utmost class and sportsmanship? Canada! Whose team uniforms were the most sought after therefore winning the fashion wars? Canada! Besides, after 50 years we finally reclaimed the world hockey crown in an exciting finale with the Americans. It's as plain as the nose on your face – we won the Salt Lake Olympics lock, stock, and barrel.

Shortly after 5:00pm last Sunday a resounding cheer echoed across this country. Finally; no shootouts, no letdowns, no excuses. We exorcised the hockey demons that had plagued a generation. One game that united the country as it hasn't been since Expo 67 and the Centennial celebrations that accompanied it.

I would like to congratulate the carloads of local citizens who took to the streets rejoicing over the win. Although I suspect their revelry was fuelled as much by partying as patriotism, it was glorious to see people celebrating Canada. It's something we should do more often. I hope we all continue to appreciate this land and each other. We do, after all, live in the best country on earth.

I'll admit, as last week's column showed, I was nervous about our hockey chances. I questioned Gretzky and Coach Quinn. I was wrong. The team peaked at just the right time. Gretzky's rant deflected a lot of pressure from the players and coaches allowing them to prepare for "the game!" Mea Culpa. Everyone saw, however, the huge sigh of relief from Gretzky just before the medal presentation. I'm not so sure he'd have bet the farm on the outcome of last Sunday's battle, but I promise next time to be a little more stalwart in my support. I'll predict a win instead of praying for one.

My euphoria over the men's gold in no way diminishes the pride I felt when the women snake-bit the Americans. The yanks, who were the favourites, employed some pretty questionable motivational techniques. Putting our flag on the floor of their dressing room, if true, was really in poor taste. I still find it hard to believe. But it did give Hayley Wickenheiser the opportu-

The Way I See It

with Mike O'Leary



nity to deliver the best shot of the whole tournament, on or off the ice, when she rhetorically asked the Americans if they wanted the Canadian team to sign it. I don't think I'd want that lady mad at me.

Unfortunately, for the ladies, they will now toil in relative obscurity for the next 4 years. This, in spite of the fact that women's hockey is one of the fastest growing sports in Canada. But then, soccer has huge numbers of players but pro soccer teams have been less than successful. Perhaps next week we'll look at women's hockey and, space permitting, think of some suggestions to make their game and other amateur Olympic sports more saleable.

The Winter Olympics always leave me with several indelible images. The two hockey victories were my favourite moments. A close second had to be Aussie short track speed skater Steven Bradbury's gold. Bradbury, who was so far behind he was in a different postal code, captured the gold when all the skaters ahead of him crashed. The stunned look on his face was priceless. He also had the good graces to tell a world wide TV audience "I'm not sure I deserve this – but I'm keeping it." Our guy won the bronze and a five stitch slash in his butt when his skate cut him as he fell.

My Olympic Hero Award is a tie between cross-country skier Beckie Scott and speed skater Clara Hughes.

Scott won our first ever cross-country medal in the 5km pursuit. She wasn't supposed to be a contender in this event. Scott went to great lengths to proclaim herself "Clean". I thought this odd at the time. Turned out, later on, the two Ruskiies who beat her tested positive for drugs. Scott's result stays the same because the positive tests were after other competitions. But all Canada knows her bronze is actually a gold.

'Ya gotta love Clara Hughes. Not only is she Canada's first summer and winter medallist she's just so darn nice. So Canadian. If you look up unpretentious in the dictionary her picture is there. And yet she is

obviously a fierce competitor. She was great at the Summer Games in Atlanta and outstanding in Salt Lake. We'll hear lots more from this lady in the future.

None of the athletes let us down. A few faltered but they deserve our support for no other reason than they made the team. I wish the Canadian officials had acted with the same dedication to sport.

During the whole Sale, Pelletier brouhaha, skate Canada appeared timid and ineffective. I have the distinct impression that, if not for the media, the whole mess would have been swept under the rug and our athletes would have suffered. The Volunteer President of Skate Canada, Marilyn Chidlow, was clearly out of her depth. The CEO sat comfortably in Ottawa instead of going to Salt Lake to personally intervene. The whole lot should be fired.

I've always thought Dick Pound was a bit of an elitist. When he brushed aside Beckie Scott's accusation of drugs in her sport, he did the lady a great disservice. Subsequent events proved Scott right. Dick Pound owes her a public apology. Hint to Beckie: Don't wait by the phone for his call.

It seems the Salt Lake Organizing Committee did a great job. No complaints about traffic, line-ups or the unprecedented security measures. This is amazing when you consider the monumental scandals surrounding the awarding of the games. Like Calgary, Salt Lake set a new standard for future games to aspire to.

A few closing thoughts on the Closing Ceremonies. What the heck was with the dinosaurs? Bizarre. Has anyone heard – was Gretzky supposed to be there when the Dino-Duo introduced him? Willie Nelson singing "Bridge Over Troubled Waters"? Is he still having problems with the IRS? Why would you have a Tap-Dance solo in a stadium holding over 40,000 shivering souls? It must have been like watching an ant while perched on a ladder. Kiss? I won't even go there.

The Children of the Light theme was brilliant. The high point was the children singing "Happy Trails To You." Roy Rogers must be smiling.

And somewhere, on a cloud in Heaven, Father Flanagan is cheering and screaming "I told you so, I told you so."

Congratulations Team Canada. And Thank You!