



Focus is on substance abuse at high school

By FRANCES NIBLOCK
The New Tanner

A wrecked car, a drug-sniffing dog and a parenting expert helped Acton focus on substance abuse this week, using Acton High School as a community information centre.

Heading into the first long weekend of the summer, the school, Acton Concerns Group, parent groups and local businesses wanted to offer students some smart choices.

Monday morning, a smashed white Ford Topaz sat in the school's parking lot inside a yellow police barrier. While the car was not damaged in a drunk driving accident, it was a stark testament to the possible outcome of stupid choices.

Student Dawn Vanderstarren is on the school steering committee that organized the week's events. She described substance use at Acton High school as "not that bad compared to other schools...we don't have the designer drugs," and hoped parents

and students would benefit from the week.

Fellow committee member, student Amy Crocker said they won't reach some students, but can provide as much information as possible.

Offering students smart choices

"If I can just make, say a user, aware of what could happen and let them think about what could happen, that would be just amazing," Crocker said.

Vice principal Bill Taylor said during discussions about alcohol at grad events, they learned the key age for people being at risk of substance abuse is in Grade 7 and decided to be proactive and not reactive to the societal problem.

"The first level of change is always awareness, so a lot of people will bury their head and say this (substance abuse) doesn't happen - we know that's not the case. So, the first level is awareness and then comes change," Taylor said, adding he hopes the wrecked car at the front

of school opens some dialogue between parents and their children.

On Monday, a public health nurse ran a computer program for students that, using their weight and the number of drinks they plan to consume, to calculate how long it would take them to sober up.

On Tuesday, six Acton High School students competed in the non-alcoholic Ultimate Mix contest at Milton Mall, and yesterday (Wednesday) all students attended a M.A.D.D. (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) assembly.

Prior to Tuesday night's presentation by parenting expert Patricia Morgan and an OPP drug dog demonstration, visitors to the school browsed through information kiosks set up by various groups offering resources including ADAPT, Halton Recovery House, the police, a parenting program and Halton Hills Community Support and Information, among others.

During the lunch hour today (Thursday) students were able to simulate the effects of impairment with special vision goggles.

"Just before the May 24 weekend we wanted people to make good choices," Taylor said, adding "these type of activities are high-impact, low on preaching and high on hands-on."

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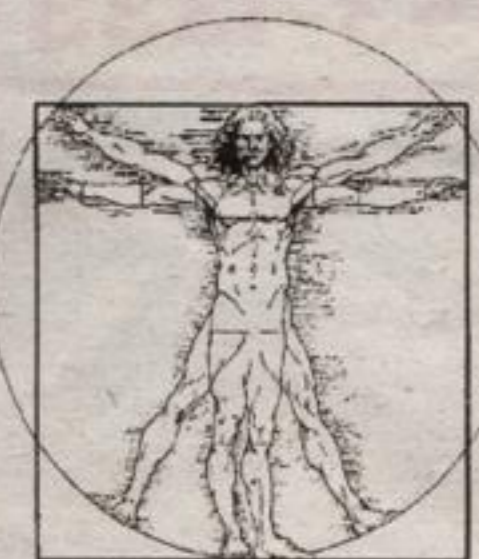
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SMART CHOICES: This wrecked car greeted students at Acton High School on Monday to draw attention to the school's substance abuse education week. Student organizers Dawn Vanderstarren (right) and Amy Crocker helped vice-principal Bill Taylor plan events for the week. - Frances Niblock photo

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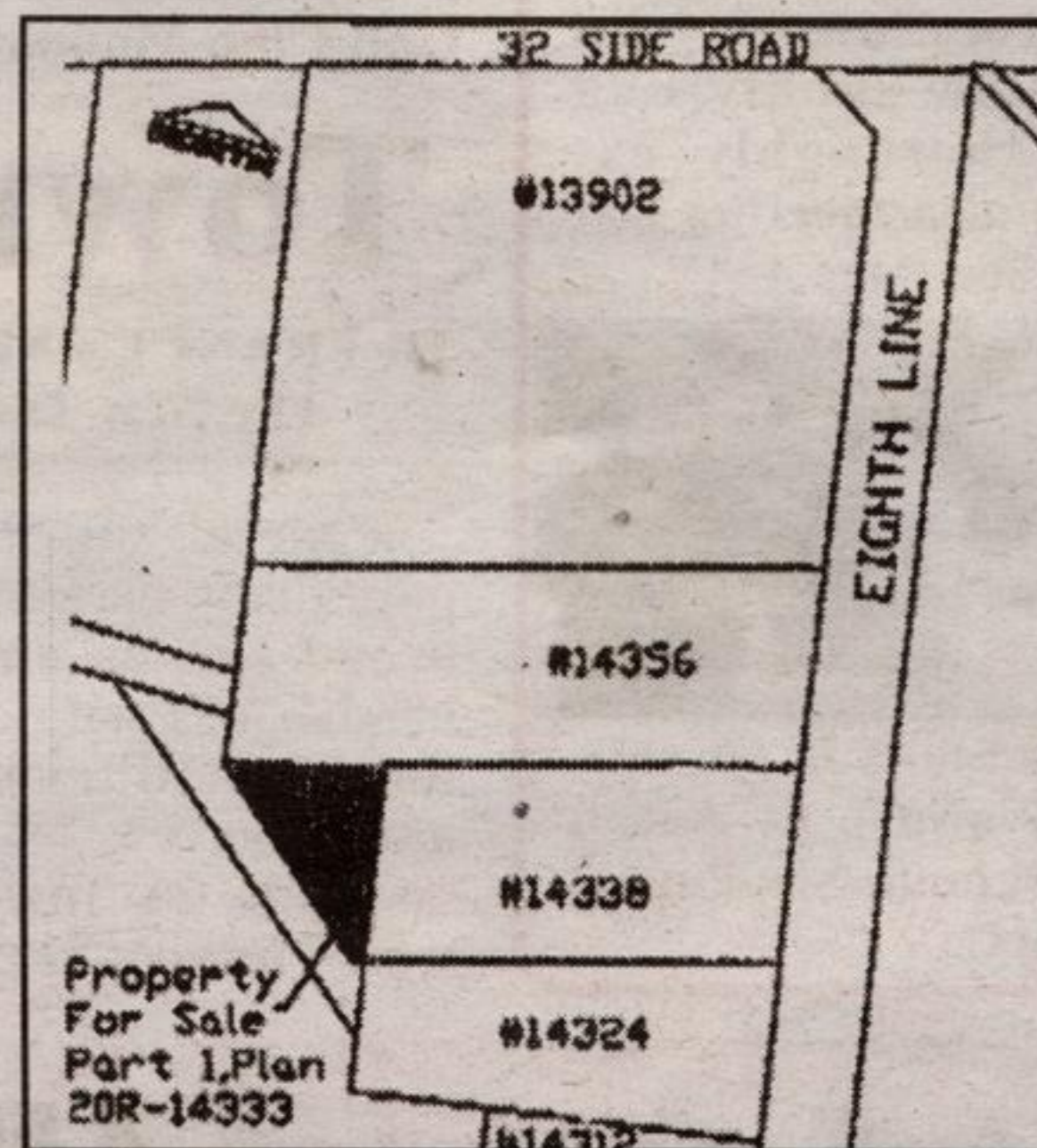
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SALE OF PROPERTY

At their meeting of November 21, 2001, the Council for the Town of Halton Hills declared Part 1, Plan 20R-14333 on Part of Lot 32, Concession 8, as surplus to the Town's needs. Notice is hereby given to the public of the proposed sale of Part 1, Plan 20R-14333 being 859 square metres of land-locked property to an adjacent resident. The property is disposed in accordance with the Real Disposal By-law No. 95-066 and Council will discuss the by-law approving this sale of land at their meeting on May 27, 2002.

For further information, please contact: Mr. Ted Drewlo, Manager of Public Works, (905) 873-2601, Ext. 2602



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