

# GRAPEVINE



## INAUGURAL PLANS

With all the pomp and circumstance of a coronation, the newly elected members of Halton Hills Council will officially take office at their inaugural meeting on December 1.

After being led into the Cultural Centre's John Elliott Theatre by a piper, and hearing the invocation read by former Acton councillor, the Reverend Gerald Rennie, the politicians will swear or affirm the oath of office before Justice Kenneth Langdon.

Among other things, the councillors promise they will "truly, faithfully and impartially exercise this office to the best of my knowledge and ability."

Mayor-elect Rick Bonnette will also make his inaugural addresses before 250 invited guests enjoy a reception.

## ENCHANTED POTTERY

Looking for a unique or memorable Christmas gift?

Check out the workshop of local artisan (former McKenzie-Smith Bennett art teacher) Barb VanSickle, who is holding a Christmas open house at her rural Enchanted Earth Pottery studio on Saturday (November 29.)

From fantasy to functional, VanSickle has created works for every taste and every budget including mugs, garden items, fantasy wizards, Christmas ornaments and vases.

VanSickle's studio, which she opened last month, is located at 6669 25 Side Road, just west of Dublin Line.

Gift certificates are available along with complimentary gift wrapping.

The studio is normally open by appointment or by chance.

Saturday's open house runs from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

## BOOK SALE

Great books at great deals will be featured on Saturday (November 29) as the friends of the Halton Hills Libraries holds a used book sale at the Acton branch on River Street.

The sale runs from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

## SHARING OUR GIFTS

Christmas Day will be a little less lonely for some this year, thanks to a community Christmas lunch that will be held at Trinity United Church.

Organizers hope that people who are on their own will attend the meal, hosted by volunteers from social services, local churches and the Acton community, who are being asked to donate cooked turnkeys and other dishes that just need to be warmed up.

Organizers are extending invitations to guests and accepting referrals. For details call 853-3687 and leave a message.

## CRAFT SALE

There will be treats and treasures from over 30 vendors at the Robert Little School craft sale next Friday (December 5), which is a professional development day.

Staged by the Robert Little Parent Group, the sale will feature baked goods, used books, toys, flowers, Christmas and holiday crafts and more.

Admission is \$1 and that enters you in a raffle of items donated by the vendors.

All proceeds will help pay to expand the playground equipment and buy new sports equipment.

The sale runs from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

## EXCELLENT EQUESTRIAN

Congrats to Acton equestrian Dylan McPhail whose prowess in the saddle earned him a spot on the Canadian team at the Prince Phillip Games in Kentucky this summer.

McPhail, 15, has been riding since a small child and recently added event riding – relay races on horseback involving props – to his hunter/jumper cross country and dressage expertise.

The Grade 10 student at Acton High School described event riding as "fast and exciting," and while modest – "I never dreamed I would compete for Canada" – McPhail allowed that he is a fairly strong and competitive rider.

## TEA TIME

Do scones and cucumber sandwiches tempt you? How about Christmas crafts, gifts and decorations?

If yes, check out Churchill Community Church on Saturday, (November 19) for its annual Christmas Tea that runs from 1 to 4 p.m.

There will also be a bake sale and Christmas wreath raffle.

The church is on the Third Line at the Erin/Halton Town Line.

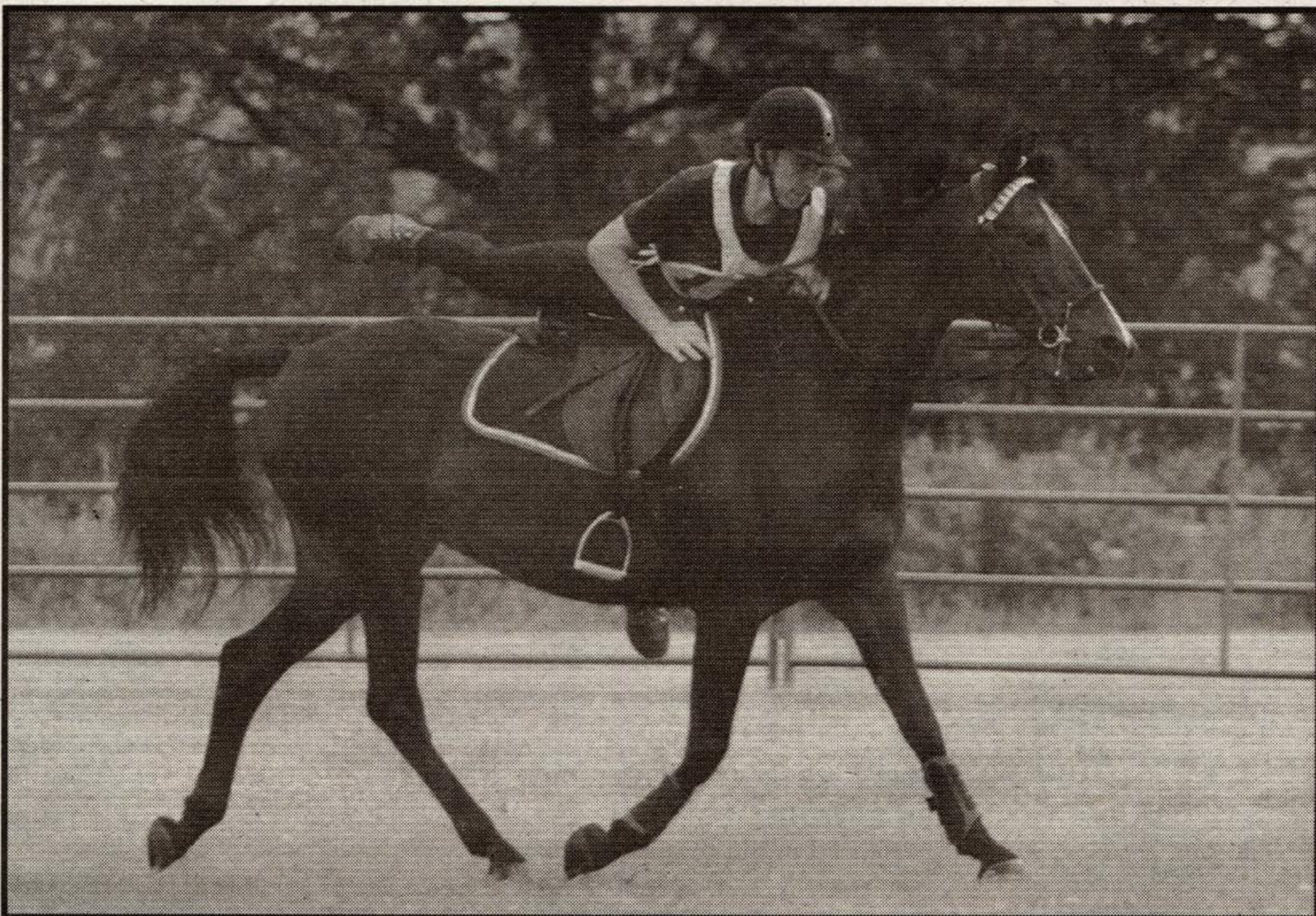
## CALENDAR CALL

Heritage Acton's 2004 historic calendar will be on sale next week, just in time for holiday shopping and stocking stuffing.

This year's edition of the popular calendar offers glimpses of days gone by, mainly from the photographic collection of former Acton pharmacist A.T. Brown.

The calendar also contains a mystery and a challenge for amateur historians. One photo shows the Acton Citizens Band marching on Mill Street, but so far, no one has been able to pinpoint when the photo was taken or parade details.

The calendars are \$10 – proceeds are earmarked for Town Hall/firehall restoration. The calendars will be available at various locations around town, including The New-Tanner office on Queen Street.



**ACE EQUESTRIAN:** Acton's Dylan McPhail, 15, showed fine form as he re-mounted his horse during an event riding qualifier. McPhail advanced to a competition in British Columbia, and then was chosen for the Canadian team that will compete at the Prince Philip Games in Kentucky this summer. – Submitted photo

## Kennedy's legacy never duplicated

It's been said that our attitudes are forged in the cauldron of our life experiences. For those my age, one of the most memorable happenings must be the assassination of President John Kennedy. Last weekend marked the 40th anniversary of the cowardly deed. It hardly seems possible.

As the years have rolled by, the mystique of John Kennedy has grown larger than it was in life. Our girls are all aware of the Kennedy legacy. Perhaps it's just because the Kennedys have suffered so much tragedy that their story is repeated. Certainly, his actual presidency, was not so spectacular as to demand such attention.

Before Kennedy, I had little interest in who was president of the United States other than as an answer for a history quiz. For that matter, I had little interest in who was P.M. of Canada. Kennedy changed all that. Actually, T.V. changed people's perception of politics. Kennedy was just the catalyst.

My mother first stirred my interest in John Kennedy. She was so excited that an Irish Catholic had a real shot at the presidency she literally demanded our family follow the campaign. To understand why an Etobicoke housewife would be so dedicated to an American politician you have to understand the times. North Americans were very much ghettoized along ancestral and religious lines. This is a concept my daughters have trouble understanding let alone accepting. Kennedy was a hero to all the Irish simply because he had a serious shot at the big job. It was as if he could, in one fell swoop, lift the whole Irish diaspora out of the century-old morass of social and political apartheid they had been consigned to.

Television became a medium for social change during the Kennedy-Nixon debates. Poor old "Tricky Dicky" appeared sans makeup with a five o'clock shadow. He sweated profusely under the hot lights. That one event, in my opinion, cost him

### The Way I See It

with Mike O'Leary



the eventual election. Both men had sound policies but Kennedy looked like a winner. And so, glamour politics was born.

From the time of his inauguration Kennedy captured the imagination of the country and the world. Here was a young, good looking war hero with a beautiful wife and two adorable children. It truly was Camelot. Kennedy challenged his country and the baby boomers of the world to improve society. We should, he said, become less insular and instead use our talents to improve the lot of those suffering in poverty. He convinced us we could accomplish these lofty ambitions. He appealed to the best parts of our psyche. I have never felt such optimism. The world would, indeed, be our oyster.

The first demonstration of his mettle came with the Cuban missile crisis. Krushchev mistakenly thought the young president would fold under pressure. Kennedy, steered by service in the war, not only stood fast, he forced the mighty Soviets to back down. His resoluteness mirrored our feeling of invincibility. Nothing could defeat us.

I remember feeling relatively calm during the Cuban missile crisis. While the daily news was full of developments, my peer group never felt any great danger. I remember when my girlfriend's parents, who were vacationing in Florida during the worst days, called home to report barbed wire on the beaches, machine gun emplacements on hotel property and armed patrols along the shoreline. I also recall hoping they wouldn't cut short their vacation over such minor inconveniences.

Those were heady days. Bobby Kennedy took on "The Mob" and corrupt organized labour. Civil Rights were a prime concern of my

generation. Vietnam had not become a disaster - yet. The forces of good were on the march. "We shall overcome." And then it was over.

I was in math class at Ryerson. It was our first period after lunch. Our teacher got a note at the door and didn't say a word until the lesson was over. We could hear noise outside but didn't have a clue as to what had happened. I never forgave that woman. For days afterwards, we boycotted her class, until administration told us we would all be failed unless we returned. We did, but the atmosphere was tense for the rest of the year.

We were glued to the television for the whole wake and funeral. Our parish church stayed open 24 hours a day. It was seldom empty. Those images, now familiar to most of the planet, were burned into my memory for all time. It truly felt like there had been a death in our immediate family. It was the loss of our collective innocence and the shattering of a magnificent dream.

I saw Jack Ruby shoot Oswald on T.V. I remember thinking "Damn – now we'll never know why." I could have cared less about Oswald. I, and most of the world, would have gladly shot him. But I knew we'd never get the answer to our questions. And we never have.

We've never been able to recreate Camelot. I thought Pierre Trudeau, and later, Brian Mulroney, might have. But they turned out to be huge disappointments. No one has captured the collective imaginations of our children as Kennedy did ours. That's probably the most damning indictment of our generation, we have been unable to produce a real leader.

These 40 years have raced by in a heartbeat. The memories of those times is still fresh. The loss of what we might have accomplished lies heavy in my soul.

Oswald killed more than the man. He killed the dream. But at least we had that one brief moment. One moment when we were truly part of Camelot.