



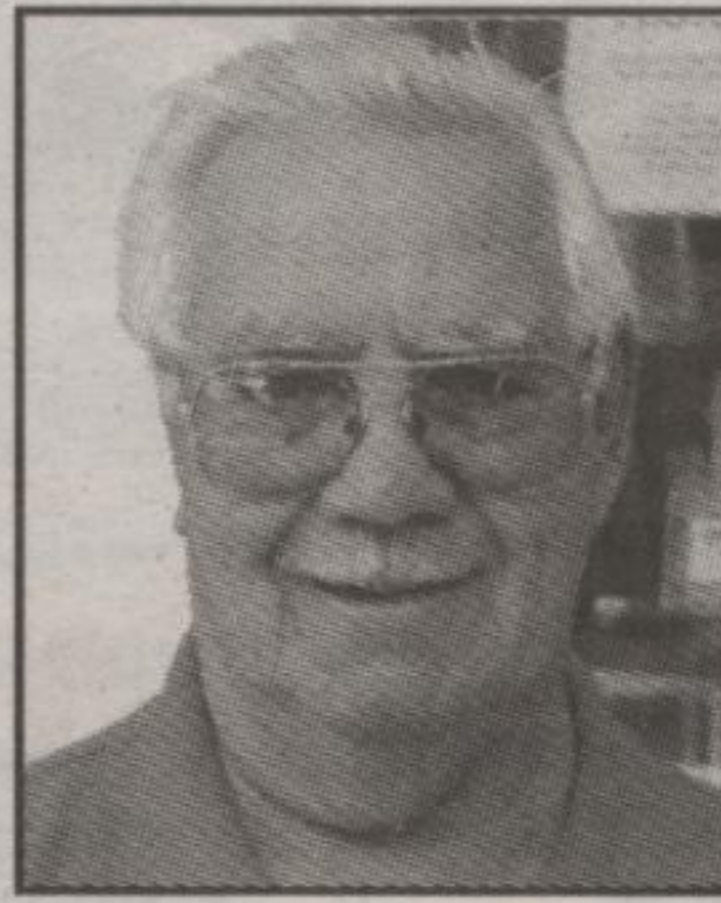
What garage sale?

Shannon Bancroft, 2, was the only one not paying much attention to Saturday's Cystic Fibrosis garage sale held on Noble Court. The sale drew huge crowds and raised \$4,100. Coupled with proceeds from an auction/dance more than \$16,000 was raised for CF.

Photo by Christine Smyth

What You Said

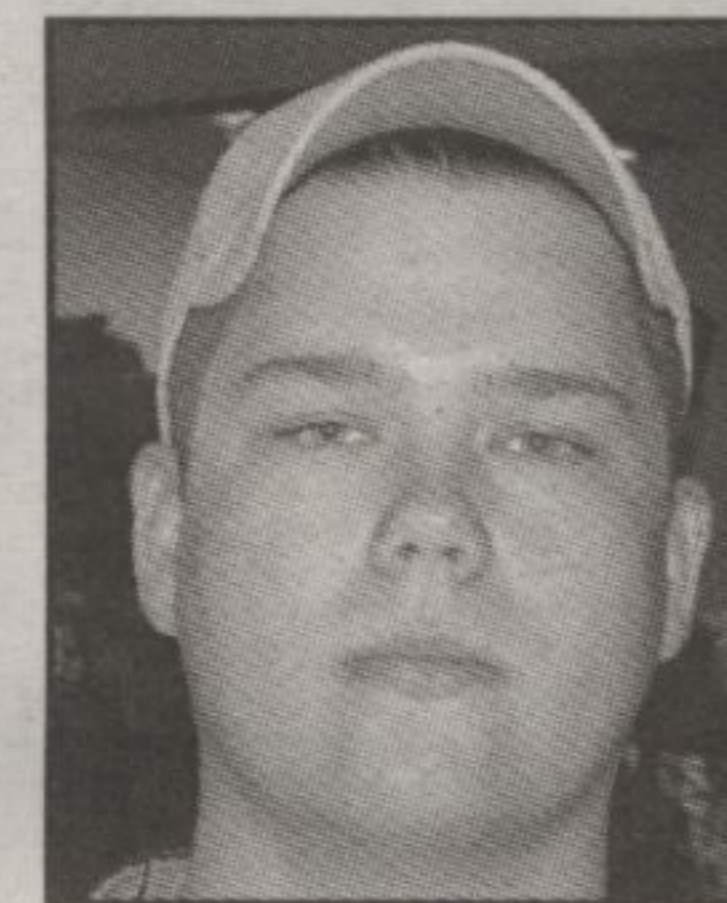
'Who do you hold responsible for the current turmoil in the education system?'



Shel Lawr, retired, Georgetown
"I blame the unions. They have way too much power and their abuse of that power is disrupting the system, interfering with the education of the kids."



Grace Scott, retail, Georgetown
"I feel it's a shared responsibility. The teachers, unions and government people all use the same tactics with no results but to disrupt the system."



Stephen Lenstra, student, Georgetown
"The teachers. They continually want more, yet the government won't budge. I think teachers should examine their motives—they say they're worried about the good of the students, yet their actions disrupt the system."



Deanne Smith, Georgetown
"I think it's the teachers. They're asking for too much, and seem to forget that they chose that vocation, yet they're not happy with it."

Region stepping up plans to curb teen smoking

With 18 per cent of surveyed retailers willing to sell tobacco to minors, Halton Region has stepped up its enforcement and education activities plus lent its weight to the proposed new federal Tobacco Youth Protection Act.

Under the Tobacco Control Act, it is an offence to sell tobacco to anyone under 19 years of age. To enforce this act, the Regional Health Department operates an undercover 'sting' operation to catch those who sell cigarettes to minors.

The department hires youths aged 15 to 17 who visit local retailers, under supervision by public health inspectors, and attempt to purchase cigarettes. If cigarettes are sold, the youth reports the incident to the inspector waiting outside, who then issues a warning to the seller and returns the merchandise.

In two to three weeks, a second compliance check like the first is carried out. If a second sale occurs, a charge is laid under the Tobacco Control Act.

The worst offenders in Halton are restaurants, with 38 per cent surveyed willing to sell to minors—up from 29 per cent in 1999.

Halton-wide, variety stores jumped from 6 per cent to 12 per cent over the same period. Halton Hills variety stores increased by the largest percentage in the region—from zero per cent in 1999 to 25 per cent in 2000.

"The numbers clearly showed a significant problem in Halton of a willingness by retailers to sell to minors," said Halton

Many local variety stores selling tobacco to minors

Medical Officer of Health Dr. Robert Nosal, who explained that these statistics will help target enforcement efforts.

Grocery stores, however, dropped from 33 per cent in 1999 to 16 per cent in 2000. Gas bars also dropped from 19 per cent to 6 per cent.

Nosal outlined how a total of 39 warnings were issued to retailers who sold to minors. After a second visit by a hired youth, three-quarters did not sell cigarettes, although 10 still did. This landed them a \$182 fine. If, on a subsequent visit, a retailer sells to a minor once again, they will be prohibited from selling cigarettes for six months.

Nosal said it is encouraging that the majority of retailers complied with the law, but finds the others "disconcerting."

In step with the Health Department's efforts, Regional chair Joyce Savoline plans to write to Halton's Members of Parliament requesting their support for Bill S-15, the Tobacco Youth Protection Act.

The Act seeks to establish a levy of \$1.50 per carton of cigarettes, which could conceivably collect \$360 million a year towards a planned non-profit Canadian Tobacco Youth Protection Foundation.

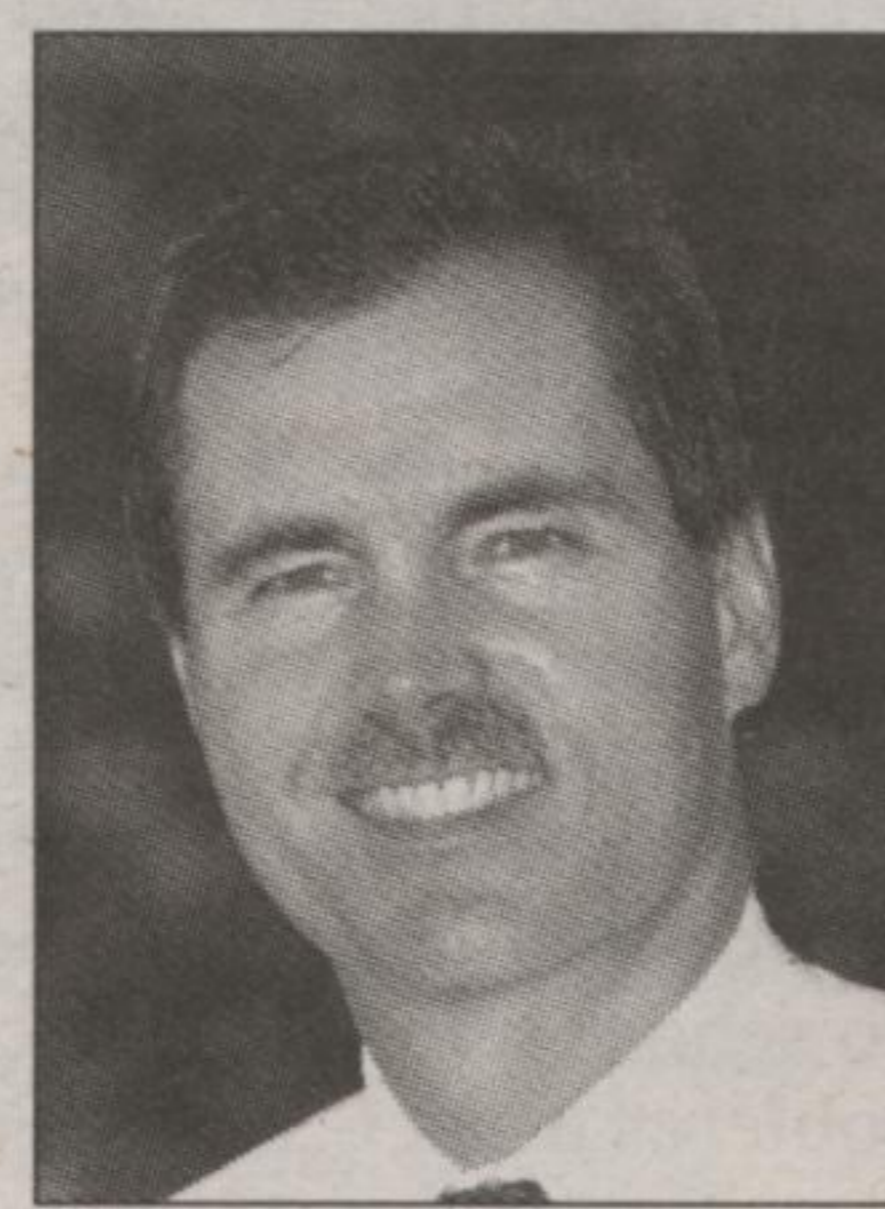
The Bill also calls for the distribution of educational tools to prevent tobacco use; advertising campaigns; conferences for peers and other groups; research monitoring of tobacco products throughout Canada and much more.

"If there is ever a bill that should be passed in the House of Commons to deal with youth smoking, it's this proposed Act," said Nosal.

The stakes are high: nationally, 27 per cent of young males and 31 per cent of young females smoke and one third of these smokers tried cigarettes for the first time while in elementary school.

Halton's own Student Drug Use Survey found that the following rates for youths aged 12 to 19: 28 per cent for males and 28.3 per cent for females.

'The numbers clearly showed a significant problem in Halton of a willingness by retailers to sell to minors,'
—Halton Medical Officer of Health Dr. Robert Nosal



As a result, Savoline will also write to federal Minister of Health Allan Rock on behalf of Regional Council indicating its support for the proposed legislation. According to Nosal, the Bill has unfortunately been politicized because of its origins in the Senate.

"I really don't care where it comes from," he said. "I just want some action on it."

Area residents are also being encouraged by regional officials to write letters of support to their Members of Parliament requesting passage of the Bill in the House of Commons.

The template for Bill S-15 was similar to California legislation which has been in place for several years and resulted in a 6.9 per cent youth smoking rate in 1999—a stark contest to Canada's current youth smoking rate of 29 per cent.

Regional council's support for the Bill is only the latest in a long line of Halton initiatives directed at smoking cessation, enforcement and education. They range from Stopping When You Are Ready—a support service for pregnant women who want to quit—to Motive8, a program that teaches Grade 8 children the dangers of drugs, such as tobacco.

Other programs include educational support for teachers and schools, free quit-smoking clinics, the annual awareness campaign and youth quit-smoking contests. Negotiations for the Smoke-Free Public Places By-law, which Nosal says needs to be strengthened, are ongoing.

—By Howard Mozel, special

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