



## Ambassadors thanked

Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette (centre) recently recognized Miss Acton Fall Fair Sarah O'Hearn, 17, (left) and Georgetown Fall Fair Ambassador Emily Dobson, 16, with a presentation of gifts and mementos for their year representing the two local agricultural societies.

Photo by Ted Brown

## Acton bank holdup believed part of spree

# Police arrest 'Under Armour' suspect

Police have arrested the man they believe to be the "Under Armour bandit" responsible for 17 bank robberies throughout southern Ontario over the past year, including one in Acton.

The suspect was dubbed the "Under Armour bandit" because of the clothing logo seen on the cap he was wearing during several robberies that spanned from Aug. 29 2006 through Jan. 6 of this year.

Joseph Vrbanac, 34, of Kitchener was arrested by Peel Police at 6 a.m. Friday and is facing numerous counts of robbery. He was held for a bail hearing.

Halton Regional Police, along with a number of other police services, worked together to identify the suspect in the robberies.

At a press conference hosted by Halton Police Friday morning, the arrest of the suspect was attributed to the "great working relationship between all of the police services involved in this investigation," said Peel Regional Police Detective Sgt. Bruce Chapman.

At the press conference Halton Police intended to announce a \$10,000 reward from the Canadian

Banker's Association for information leading to the arrest of the man responsible for the robberies, but instead, news of the arrest was released.

The Acton robbery occurred Dec. 27 at the Mill St. E. Scotia-bank.

A lone man entered the bank at 12:35 p.m., told the teller he had a gun, and demanded cash.

After the teller turned over some cash the man fled and was last seen

heading towards Church St.

Halton Police believed that robbery was the work of the "Under Armour bandit" because of the description of the suspect and the similarity between the method used to rob that bank to others attributed to the suspect.

Police have also linked the suspect to two robberies in Milton (August 29 and Dec. 19, 2006) and one each in Oakville (Dec. 5) and Burlington (Nov. 10).

## Space still available for groups to register for annual open house

The Cooperative Program Planning Committee of Halton Hills will be hosting a Community Open House on Saturday, February 17 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Georgetown Market Place.

This event is a good opportunity for community organizations to showcase their group to the residents of Halton Hills.

The Community Open House is focusing on promoting the Halton Hills community. The community

groups participating in the event will focus on the "Halton Hills—Keep Exploring" event theme and will also be providing information on their organization.

Space is still available to register for the event.

If you are interested in more information about the event, please contact Joy Thompson, manager of recreation services, Town of Halton Hills at 905-873-2601 ext. 2263.

# Newspaper nets two SNA awards

The Independent & Free Press garnered two second-place finishes in the 2006 Suburban Newspapers of America editorial contest last week.

Hundreds of newspapers from across North America take part in the yearly competition in which newspapers are judged in a variety of categories.

The Independent & Free Press, which has a circulation of 21,220, this year earned runner-up finishes in Class C (16,001-36,000 circulation) for Best Front Page and Best Editorial Page.

The Gaithersburg Gazette, based in Maryland, was named winner of the Best Front Page while the Bayside Times Ledger (New York) won first for Best Editorial Page.

Newspapers from Metroland Media Group Inc., the parent company of The Independent & Free Press, managed a total of 58 winning entries in this year's awards which were judged by members of the American Press Institute, based in Reston, Virginia.

This year's contest drew a record 3,600 entries.

# Seniors' centres feel financial pinch

Continued from pg. 1

Leaning on a cane at the podium, Ohashi said. "Age, health concerns and physical limitations, just like myself, are a major factor among the seniors. The younger members have little to no interest in volunteering."

When questioned as to why that might be, centre president Clarence Gough paused and then suggested that, "a lot of them don't like to admit that they're seniors."

Gough said this increasing reliance on the older seniors to perform physical labour and demanding support work is becoming an issue of risk management, facility security, health and safety and liability. He added the reliance on volunteers at both the Halton Hills senior centres is unheard of in other municipalities. He pointed to the recent Older Adult Centres Association's survey which suggests that an equivalent centre of Georgetown's size should have at least three administrative assistants.

The Acton Seniors Centre has become a victim of its own success. Dave Dodgson, president of the Acton Seniors Centre told budget committee his centre is growing so rapidly that it needs the current part-time co-ordinator position to be expanded from two days to three days a week.

The co-ordinator is responsible for the overall operations of the centre and works with several volunteer committees to provide programs and services.

Membership at the centre has increased by 40 per cent since 2004 with daily attendance increasing by 23 per cent. Total membership is now about 335. The centre is willing to contribute \$3,900 to the overall \$15,400 additional cost of the co-ordinator services.

"In order to maintain the positive influence in our community, we need more professional and closer support from our co-ordinator. The co-ordinator simply does not have enough hours in the week to do the things being asked of her," said Dodgson, "...and in our opinion this support is critical."

He, too, pointed to the survey, which suggests a centre of Acton's size lacks this support and should have twice the amount of help that it has now. He said it's necessary as the centre reaches out to the community for fundraising help.


"Because I believe quite strongly that we cannot continue to tap the seniors for operating and expansion costs," he said. Budget committee will discuss the requests during the discussion of the operating budget, likely on January 29.

(Cynthia Gamble can be reached at cgamble@independentfreepress.com)



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