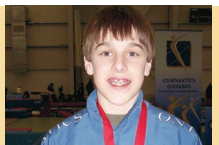


# SPORTS AND LEISURE

Local gymnast Gillies  
off to provincials

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Halton Hills' Community Newspaper

Recipe of the week:  
Crock pot borscht

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## Sports Hall of Fame to add five new members

EAMONN MAHER  
Staff Writer

Five more inductees will enter the Halton Hills Sports Museum's Hall of Fame at a gala ceremony in June as the newly-established organization welcomes its second group of award recipients.

Three athletes and two builders were recently selected from several nominations submitted by members of the public in recognition of the inductees' achievements as residents of Halton Hills. Last year, four builders and two athletes were enshrined in the Hall of Fame's inaugural ceremony.

For 2008, two longtime volunteers in Acton youth sports will be welcomed into the builders' category— John Toebe for his work with the minor hockey house leagues and Aqua Ducks' swim club founder Gerry Ockenden.

A couple of former Canadian champions are among the trio of athletes to get the nod, in squash player Melanie Jans and gymnast Katie Rowland. Hockey player Adam Bennett developed through the Georgetown Minor Hockey Association and became a first-round draft pick of the Chicago Blackhawks.

Pictures and profiles of the inductees will be displayed in the HHSM's Resource Centre, located in the upstairs hall of the Mold-Masters SportsPlex, later this year.

Tickets for the gala induction ceremony at the John Elliott Theatre are \$30 each and can be reserved through HHSM secretary Glenda Nixdorf at 905-873-1360.

### Adam Bennett

Forced to retire from the pro ranks at the age of 25 due to a knee injury, local native Adam Bennett still has many fond memories of his career and continues his involvement today coaching youths.

Bennett, who turns 37 on Sunday, rose up through the Georgetown minor hockey system and played on the last Jr. B Gemini team before being the second player taken in the Ontario Hockey League draft by the Sudbury Wolves.

After a fine three-year stint with the Wolves, the 6-foot-4, 205-pound defender was selected sixth overall by the Chicago Blackhawks in the 1989 NHL Entry Draft,



MELANIE JANS— Squash

five picks after the Quebec Nordiques chose Mats Sundin.

Bennett played just five games in his rookie campaign with the Hawks but traveled and practised with the team on its



ADAM BENNETT— Hockey

run to the Stanley Cup finals against Pittsburgh, learning from the likes of Chris Chelios.

Unable to catch on with Chicago, he moved on to the Edmonton Oilers and was playing a regular shift before a collision with the Rangers' Nick Kypreos effectively ended his playing days.

"It was a short career, unfortunately, and I expected to play a lot longer, but that's just part of being in a contact sport," said Bennett, who coaches his two daughters, Kaitlyn, 10, and Jillian, 8, in the North Halton Twisters' organization and operates his own popular 3 on 3 Hockey leagues around the GTA.

"There were some high moments and some tough times and through all that I was fortunate to be with a lot of good people and learned how to present myself in a professional manner."

### Melanie Jans

The main squash court at the Georgetown Racquet Club is named after its most successful player, Melanie Jans, who began playing there at age 11 and went on to become Canada's top-ranked female for many years.

Set to celebrate her 35th birthday in July, Jans retired from national team competition in 2006 and is now the squash pro at the Vancouver Lawn & Tennis Club.

Her triumphs included several Canadian senior and junior women's titles, and a double gold-medal performance at the 1999 Pan-American Games in Winnipeg, which she called the highlight of her career. Having also claimed Pan-Am gold in 1995 in Argentina, Jans needed to beat American veteran Demer Holleran twice in 1999— first for the individual title and then three days later for the team championship— and did so convincingly.

"I just worked so hard that day to beat my opponent and all of my training leading up to that was geared to this one match," she said. "It felt great to play really well on the day when you needed it the most."

The University of Toronto graduate, ranked 25th in the world at one time, said she's fortunate to be able to continue her involvement in squash through instructing adults and juniors in her current job and is studying for her Life Coaching Certificate.

### Gerry Ockenden

For someone whose swimming background consisted of spending summer afternoons in his youth splashing around Fairy Lake in Acton, Gerry Ockenden turned out to be the ideal head coach for the Aqua Ducks' competitive swimming program.

When the former Acton youth swimming club folded in 1987, Ockenden volunteered to "temporarily" take over deck duties so that his two children, Jason and Julie, and other youngsters could keep active.

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