

# GRAPEVINE



## Poster Prize

Congrats to Acton's Travis Baker and Brant Cropper, Grade 4 students at St. Joseph Catholic School whose Explore New Brunswick project earned them a Visions Canada Award on Monday at a ceremony held at Halton Region Museum in Milton.

The pair, whose work showcased the history, natural resources, tourism attractions and interesting facts – did you know chocolate bars were invented in New Brunswick? – received a certificate recognizing their outstanding Canadian project, a family pass to the Museum and a Canadian coin set.

The boys were among 30 award winners whose work, including poems, essays and art, was on display during the ceremony and reception.

## Food for Thought

The Breakfast Club at McKenzie-Smith Bennett School has been a resounding success since it open mid-May – volunteers are feeding a healthy breakfast – cereal, breakfast bars, juice, milk, fruit – to approximately 150 students each Tuesday and Thursday morning prior to the bell.

The program is funded with a grant from the Halton Food for Thought program that helps provide nutritious snacks to students, recognizing that willing, able learners need to be well-nourished.

## Camp Kids

Two lucky Acton boys will be heading to a Tim Hortons Foundation camp this summer, thanks to yesterday's (Wednesday) Camp Day.

Proceeds from every cup of coffee sold yesterday will help send 12,000 kids to one of six camps for a 10-day stay.



**Sisters Kayla-Rae and Kandace Russiani,**

## Dance Divas

Acton sisters Kayla-Rae, 18, and Kandace Russiani, 13, danced very well but did not finish in the top five at the 29th annual Sweetheart of the Year Pageant in St. Louis last weekend.

The sisters, who train at the Ronda Copeland School of Dance in Acton, qualified after competing in a senior dance competition at an international pageant in Niagara Falls in April.

In St. Louis, they took workshop classes and rehearsals with dance masters and performed nightly in a stage show at the "I Love Dance" event.

## Rabbit Alert

Tickets are now on sale for the June 23, 10 a.m., performance of

The Velveteen Rabbit at the Acton library.

Masks, puppets and props will help Erewhon Theatre stage its adaptation of the modern children's classic of a stuffed bunny learning what it means to be alive.

For ticket information call the library at 519-853-0301, or visit [www.library.hhpl.on.ca](http://www.library.hhpl.on.ca)

## Baby Tales

Rhymes and rhythmic music to stimulate your baby's verbal development are offered during the Baby Tales program running July 4 to 25 at the River Street branch of the library.

Baby Tales is geared to babies six-to-23-months and their parents. Registration is required, in person or on-line.

## Diabetes Classic

Organizers of the inaugural Acton Golf Classic for Diabetes Research are soliciting local businesses for donated prizes and hole sponsorships for the tournament, slated for August 26 at the Acton Golf Club on Dublin Line.

All proceeds will go to the Canadian Diabetes Association for research.

## Fashion cares

Raffle tickets are still on sale at Staying Alive Fitness for two passes – valued at \$100 – to a fashion show on Sunday to benefit the Acton Angels.

The Angels are a group of 11 Acton-area women who are raising money for breast cancer research by taking part in the Weekend to End Breast Cancer in September.

The raffle tickets are \$1 each and the winning ticket will be chosen on Saturday.

## Community treats

The Acton Corps of the Salvation Army wants to do something nice for you, and your car, on Saturday.

It's hosting the second annual free car wash and barbecue at the corp's downtown location – enter from Church Street – from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

"We want to make a difference in our community," said one of the organizers.

## Fairy Lake

Fairy Lake – its history, beauty and future plans – will be discussed on June 13 at the annual potluck supper of the Esquesing Historical Society.

Noted local historian and author Mark Rowe will lead a walking tour around the Fairy Lake neighbourhood following the supper that begins at 6:30 p.m. at Knox Presbyterian Church.

The walk begins at 7:15 p.m. and all are welcome.

## Taste of Acton

Great food, face painting, horse-drawn carriage rides and sidewalk sales are some of the highlights of the Taste of Acton on June 23 that will close Mill Street from Main to Elgin from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Hosted by the Acton BIA, the event also includes Samplefest, which offers tasty treats from the menus of five Acton eateries for \$10.

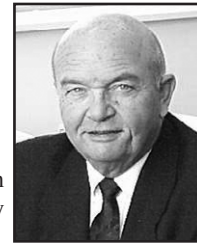


**BRUNCH BUNCH:** Members of the Acton Seniors' Centre helped the Kinette Club of Acton cook, serve and clean up at the recent Community Brunch at the Acton Arena and Community Centre, and shared in the profits. – Frances Niblock photo

## A never ending story

### The Way I See It

with  
Mike O'Leary



It's been a tough two weeks in the city of Toronto. That's how long it's been since 15 year old Jordan Manners was murdered in the hallway of his school. Two suspects, juvenile offenders, were arrested days after the murder. The matter is now before the courts.

The young lad's funeral looked to be heart wrenching. His mother appeared distraught and destroyed by her son's death. Parents who have not lost a child can only imagine the depth of her despair.

I wondered what could possibly have been going through the minds of the alleged shooters? What possible motive could lead them to take up a gun and shoot another child. One of the two assailants evidently knew Jordan from the neighbourhood.

That didn't stop some of the Toronto Intelligencia from dragging out some of the trite suggestions. Mayor David Miller trotted out the same old "we must ban all handguns" crap as if that would solve anything. He parroted the same old chestnut when Jane Creba was gunned down on Young Street while she shopped for bargains on Boxing Day!

Miller is not a stupid man. If memory serves me correct, he's a lawyer and a Rhodes Scholar to boot. But he's completely absorbed by the "touchy/feely" philosophy so ingrained in the politically correct generation of today. The gun problems in our cities will not be solved by a group hug.

Miller's suggestion of a ban on handguns shows his complete misunderstanding of current firearms legislation. Buying a handgun today is extremely difficult. The first thing the police ask is why do you want one? Your answer better be compelling and reasonable. Self-defence is not an acceptable answer.

In actual fact, handguns are already banned they're so difficult to obtain legally. Once bought there are conditions as to how and where you can transport it. To a shooting club for instance. Once you are finished practicing you have to return directly home. Break the rules and you lose your privilege of ownership.

The handguns being used in our

cities are, for the most part, unregistered and illegal. While a small percentage come from break-ins at gun shops and legitimate collectors, most are smuggled in from the States where controls are laxer or non existence.

Millar also suggested that customs clamp down on smugglers. Now there's a unique suggestion. Canada customs officers are now being criticized for being too diligent. Ask anyone who has \$20 more purchases than claimed on their customs declaration. Can you imagine the howls of outrage if every car and truck were stopped for a thorough search? Mayhem would rule our borders.

So what is the answer? I wish I had a quick fix but I don't. I do know that you can't solve any problem by attacking or reacting to the symptoms of the problem. You have to attack the root cause. In this case, and many others, I think we have to understand how and why many of today's young people have little or no respect for the lives and/or well being of their peers in particular, and other human beings as a whole.

It's a societal problem. Take for instance the case of Dave Plaskett who has been a teacher at Jordan Manners school for 25 years. While school administrators, the board and even the community claim the school was safe and orderly Plaskett disagrees.

Plaskett claims he, and other teachers were regularly threatened and once a student even made threats on his life. According to Plaskett intruders had easy access, students were bullied and robbed and discipline requests were routinely ignored.

I know many teachers and their complaints are similar to those noted by Mr. Plaskett.

It is interesting to note the response from the Boards Trustee. She said she was unaware of any serious incidents at the school. If there were, she said, it would have

been the responsibility of the principal to inform the superintendent. One thing is for sure, these guys have got the buck passing two step down pat.

The school unions are no help. They are less interested in solving teachers problems than they are at maintaining the status quo. Many schools are turning into a battleground but the unions appear to be content to sit on the sidelines and advise their members to keep their heads below their desks.

Many school administrators are more concerned with public image than instituting policies which might keep their staff and students safe. Those who try to discuss such measures with senior board staff are quickey dissuaded. In the face of such resistance most principals fold. Being a thing-disturber is definitely a career-limiting move.

The sad thing is that nothing has changed in the last decade. When one of my daughters was in high school she told me there was a handgun brought on to school property. I went down to the school and spoke to the principal. At first he denied the incident had happened at all. When pressed he confirmed the presence of a gun on school property.

He said if was an "Isolated Incident," nothing for me to be concerned about. I asked if the police had been called and he looked at me like I had two heads, How would that look, he asked, if our parents saw police cruisers in the parking lot?

I remember thinking at the time; "oh I don't know. Perhaps they would think you care enough about your staff and students to protect them, and to hell with your P.R. concerns."

We must address the real problem with our youth. We can blame T.V., violent video games, absentee parents, political correctness, whatever. But unless we stop reacting to the symptoms of the problem, or better still admit there is a problem, we can expect even more violence and death in schools.

All the hand wringing in the world won't help. A societal attitude adjustment is sorely needed. Now would be too late.

Just ask Mrs. Manners.