

# Sentencing for school vandals adjourned until October

## Principal asks for 'restorative justice' meeting

The sentencing of the two Acton teens who plead guilty to ransacking Robert Little School was adjourned until October 28 so they can fulfill a suggestion from school Principal Bob Tadman in his Victim Impact Statement for some "restorative justice."

Andrew Tressel and Chris Wilkinson appeared in the Ontario Court of Justice in Burlington yesterday (Wednesday) for sentencing, but the Crown agreed with their lawyers that the meeting between the two, school officials and students should be completed prior to the pre-sentence report. At the last hearing in June, the Crown was looking

for jail time and their lawyers were looking for discharges.

Although they were initially charged with Break and Enter with Intent to Commit Theft, Theft and Killing or Injuring an Animal, other than Cattle, the charges were amended to one count each of Break and Enter with Intent to cause Mischief over \$5,000. The killing an animal charge relates to fish – "cherished classroom pets" that died when their aquarium was damaged. The vandalism spree that saw the library and nine of 19 classrooms ransacked caused \$22,485 in damage and closed the school for two days.

Principal Tadman

said the incident was a "disconnect" between Tressel and Wilkinson and the community, and a meeting could help them reconnect.

"The fact that they gave themselves permission to do all that (vandalize the school) reflects a disconnect they have with their community," Tadman said on Wednesday, adding simply punishing the two would not help them reconnect and put a face on the action that they took, and the results.

Tadman said he's not sure what form the meeting with the two will take, or which students will hear them make their statements, but he doesn't want it to happen at a whole school assem-

bly, which could have a "zooney" atmosphere. He also suggested Tressel and Wilkinson might be able to help with school beautification this fall.

He also suggested that Tressel and Wilkinson may speak to a representative group of students

with prepared questions who would then speak to their fellow students.

"It needs to be done with care and dignity in a way that really accomplishes that reconnecting for them," Tadman said.

At Wednesday's hear-

ing, an order prohibiting Tressel and Wilkinson from contacting each other or being on any Halton District School Board property was amended so they could prepare and present their statements to the school.



**RANSACKED:** Two Acton teens who plead guilty to charges of Break and Enter with Intent to Cause Mischief over \$5,000 will be sentenced on October 28 after they speak with students and staff at the school in what has been described as a restorative justice meeting.. - *The New Tanner file photo*



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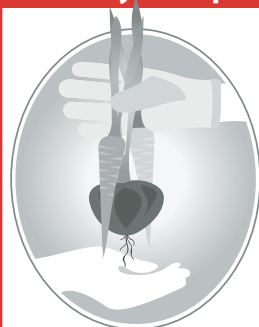
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