



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Keith Everett with a seven-year-old female hawk, one of three birds he uses at the regional landfill site in Milton.

## Bird of prey keeps pesky gulls away

By BRAD REAUME  
The Champion

Perched on top of a 20-foot high pile of wood chips a sleek, brown Harris Hawk surveys the skies.

Seeing the menace, only two seagulls fly within human sight, both wheeling and drifting with the wind some distance away from their natural enemy.

The natural art of falconry has modern applications.

Hawks are used to control scavenger birds at Halton's landfill site. According to Keith Everett, who bills himself as The Birdman, birds are attracted to any food source. They also like airports because of the large infield grass areas which they can use to feed or roost. Seagulls will fly several hundred miles inland to get food, he said.

Halton's landfill has all three strikes

against it. Garbage is a rich food source, the Burlington Air Park is only a few miles to the west and both are fairly near Lake Ontario, where the seagulls spend most of their time. In addition the landfill is surrounded by agricultural property, which, especially during plowing, attracts scavenger birds.

The recent cool temperatures get the birds moving because their bodies need food to generate the heat to keep them warm, Mr. Everett said. Despite their need

for food the vigilant Harris Hawk need only remain perched in view to keep the seagulls away.

Mr. Everett said he got involved in falconry during family trips to visit an uncle in England.

That knowledge, plus some time working on the tarmac at Pearson International Airport, earned him the opportunity to learn more as part of the Pearson bird control program. He has since branched out

• see HAWK on page 12

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