

# Netminders vying for top spot in friendly rivalry

By **STEVE LeBLANC**  
The Champion

The Milton Merchant goalies didn't have much in the way of competition this past week so they continued their battle against each other.

Facing just 19 shots apiece in back-to-back games against inferior opponents, losing simply wasn't any kind of threat for Daniel Jacques or Jeremy Wenzel.

So the netminding partners — who collectively boast a division leading goals-against average of 2.81 — turned their attention to loftier pursuits.

In other words, raising the bar yet again in their ongoing quest to finish as the West Conference's top tender.

Wenzel inched ever closer to grabbing that honour away from his teammate Tuesday at Memorial Arena as the defending league champs blanked Niagara 6-0.

Beaten just once by Hamilton the previous evening in a 4-1 win in steeltown, Jacques maintains his frontrunner status, but only by a slim margin.

They sit neck-and-neck in the record department as well. While Jacques suffered through both losses, two of the three ties came with Wenzel between the pipes.

Each has one shutout while together they've turned in eight one-goal performances.

In the latest of these near-flawless showings Jacques was nearly ideal through the first and final periods. His lone giveaway came at the tail end of the second to Mark Mazzetti.

Milton fired 53 shots the other way but were largely ineffective against veteran cager Jamie Bachorski, who stopped all 19 shots in the opening frame and did a great job keeping his Kilty Bees in the game.

Ryan Eby, Nathan Gillies, Chris Rowan and Geoff Schomogyi were the marksmen, with Ryan Robichaud drawing two assists.

Playing against his ex-teammates for the first time, scoring leader Ed McGrane helped set up the game-winning goal.

Among those in on a little brawling action were 14-year-old rookie Adam Sturgeon and star blueliner Matt Bannan, who got the better of Mike Burgoyne to preserve his unblemished fight record.

The Merchants' defensive unit showed strongly and created a lot of quality scoring chances.

Tuesday at home they managed an identical number of shots and improved to 27-2-3 — still tops in the West.

Bannan used his fierce slapshot to drive a couple of nails in Niagara's coffin. Also tallying twice was Gillies, who buried the biscuit with upstairs wristers — the first time on a picturesque coast-to-coast rush.

Singles went to captain Kevin O'Flaherty and Mike Wheelihan. Dropping back to the blueline, in light of a one-night defensive shortage (Ryan Carrigan was suspended and Chris Bahen was

fighting illness), Dave Csumrik made great passes all night and finished with three helpers.

In the only noteworthy fight of the game — attended by a precious few fans — Robichaud pummeled Mike Drezek although both were assessed only double-minor roughing infractions by referee Ron MacLean.

**Merchant notes:** Ed McGrane, Kevin O'Flaherty and Geoff Schomogyi all sit top eight in West Conference scoring with 66, 65 and 63 points respectively ... Nathan Gillies recently surpassed the half-century points mark. He and fellow sophomore Mike Wheelihan remain contenders for the Most Improved Player award ... The Merchants host Oakville tonight and finish 1998 league play with road trips to Niagara and Burlington early next week.

## Springers look good

• from RUST on page 20

of nagging injuries, Alicia Robinson swung to a fifth-place finish on bars in the Senior 1 loop.

At the Junior 1 level, five seemed to be the magic number as both Valerie Massel and Christine Chadwick took that same spot on bars while Alexis Stoffels finished fifth on beam.

In their first year of provincial qualifying competition, the newest Springers proved the could make the grade.

Nine-year-old Jaimi Fellows received fifth-place ribbons for her efforts on beam and floor — where Shannelle Vailloo and Christina Chimonides ended up one and two spaces back respectively.

Said Campbell, "Overall, I was very pleased with the team's performance. With a few refinements, we should see even more Springers up on the podium."

## Many are sidelined

• from REP HOCKEY on page 21

decisions.

With only two lines the Hurricanes couldn't get anything going offensively in a 3-0 loss to Mississauga. Shots on goal favoured the victors 24-8.

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— from the Baha'i writings

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11:45 a.m. — Sunday School  
6:30 p.m. — Gospel Service

Wednesday 7:30 p.m.  
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And the Word was made flesh  
and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory,  
as of the only begotten of the Father.  
John 1.14

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10:45 a.m.

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Pastor Rogge continues the Sermon Series  
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6:30 p.m.

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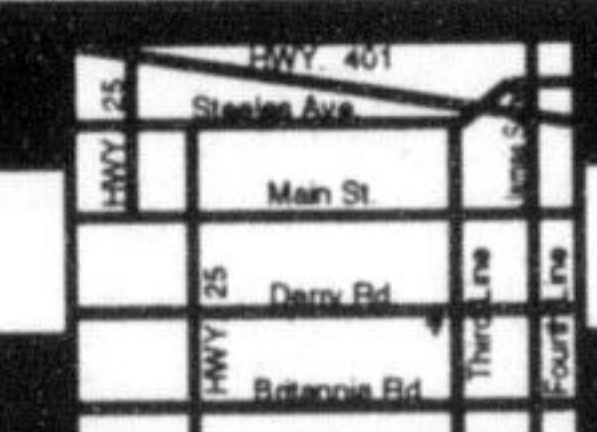
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**SUNDAY SERVICES**  
8:00 a.m. - Holy Communion  
9:10 a.m. - Informal Eucharist  
10:30 a.m. - Sung Eucharist

**CHRISTMAS EVE:**  
5:00 p.m. - Eucharist, Carols & Church School Pageant  
7:00 p.m. - Sung Eucharist, Anthems & A Christmas Story  
11:00 p.m. - Sung Eucharist, Anthems & Sermon

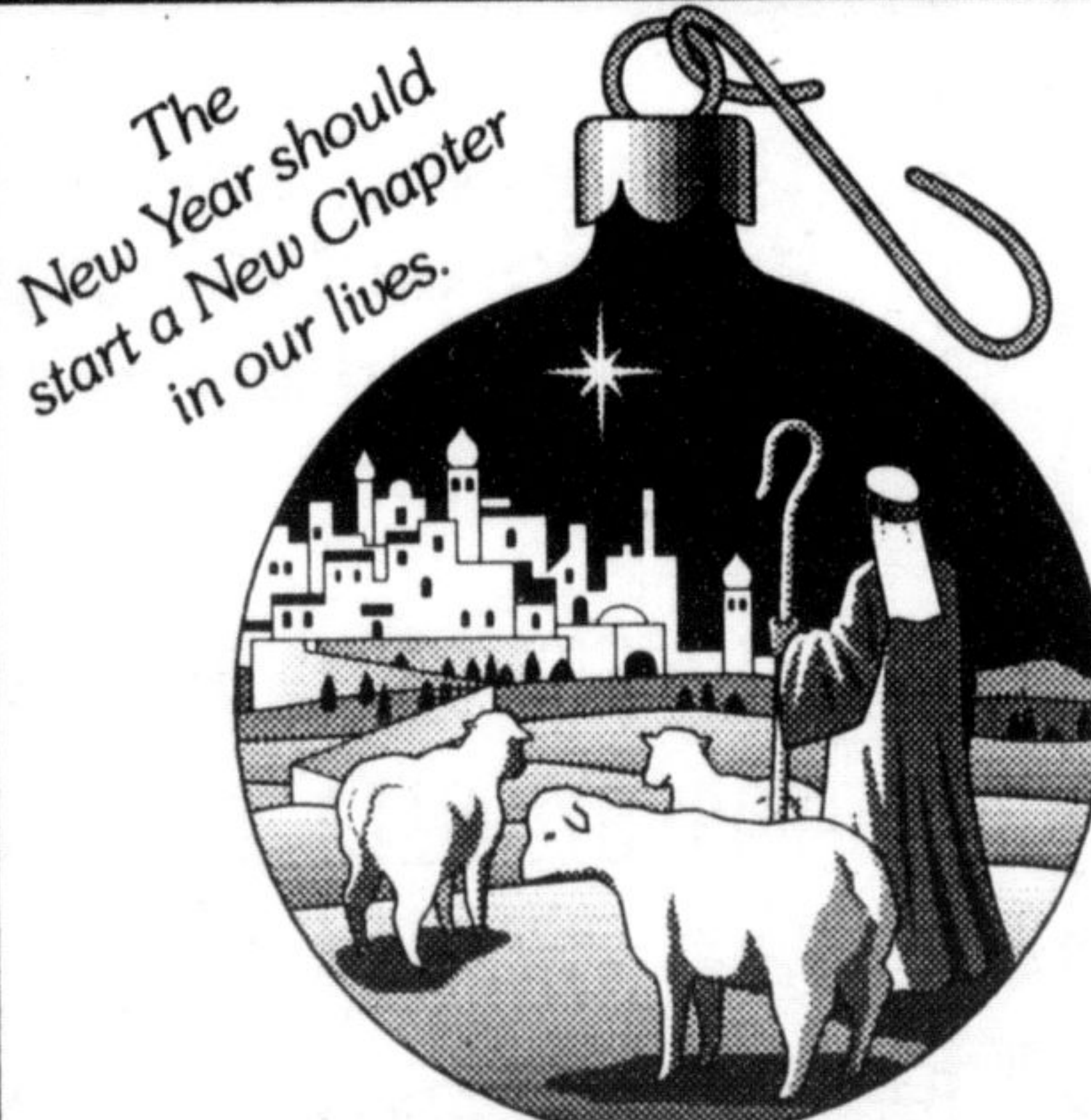
**CHRISTMAS DAY:**  
10:30 a.m. - Eucharist

Nursery Program, Church School & Coffee Hour

**WEDNESDAY**

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