

ARTS

New Milton rock band Topp Crime is on the rise

By Stephanie Thiessen
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Its two stages have caught the sweat droplets of such artists as the Rolling Stones, Elvis Costello and U2, to name just a few.

Toronto's famous El Mocambo Tavern is a live music club that's been hosting top names for more than six decades and has been referred to by media as "a launching pad for great local talent."

Last Saturday, Milton's own Topp Crime found themselves performing on one of those very stages.

Each of its five young band members was quick to agree this was their most memorable performance to date.

To add to the excitement, friends and fans packed onto several buses to make the trip to the Spadina Street venue and show their support.

"A lot of our friends and family came out and seemed to have a great time," said rhythm guitarist and singer Derek Champoux, 19. "We sold over 100 tickets."

Topp Crime co-headlined the show with about 10 other groups.

"It was the first time I played outside of Milton, so it was really different," said 16-year-old keyboardist Carl Steinhauser, adding, "It was just a lot of fun."

In the audience was a representative from Sony BMG, which made the show a bit nerve wracking, band members admitted.

Topp Crime was formed about a year ago with Derek, bassist John Challinor III and drummer Kevin Marshall, both 17.

They realized they needed a lead guitarist and called upon Scott Campbell, 17, who readily accepted the post.

"I wanted to be in a band," Scott said. "I like playing and writing music."

But something still wasn't quite right.

"We started writing some songs and playing shows, but we felt like we were missing something," Kevin said.

Carl proved to be the missing link, and joined the band a few months ago. Since then, they've been performing around town at venues including the Hardball Café and Hot Rods.

John and Scott attend Milton District High School while Kevin and Carl are at Bishop Reding. Derek's in his second



ROCKING ON: Topp Crime band members (from left) Scott Campbell, Kevin Marshall, Derek Champoux, John Challinor III and Carl Steinhauser take a break from practising. The group has been together as a full band for just a few months, but have already secured some prime gigs including one at Toronto's famous El Mocambo Tavern.

year of college.

The band recorded a demo CD at the end of September, an experience Kevin said was "pretty cool." They're currently writing more songs in hopes of making a full-length CD.

Topp Crime members described their music as traditional rock with a bluesy and sometimes acoustic and alternative feel.

"I think we try to have a lot of energy in each song," Carl said.

What sets them apart from other high school bands is, well, their talent, said Derek, whose musical influences range from Led Zeppelin to the Beatles to the Tragically Hip.

"Everyone in the band is the best musician at their instrument I've ever seen," he said. "I can trust them — I know they'll do an awesome job."

Bass player John agreed.

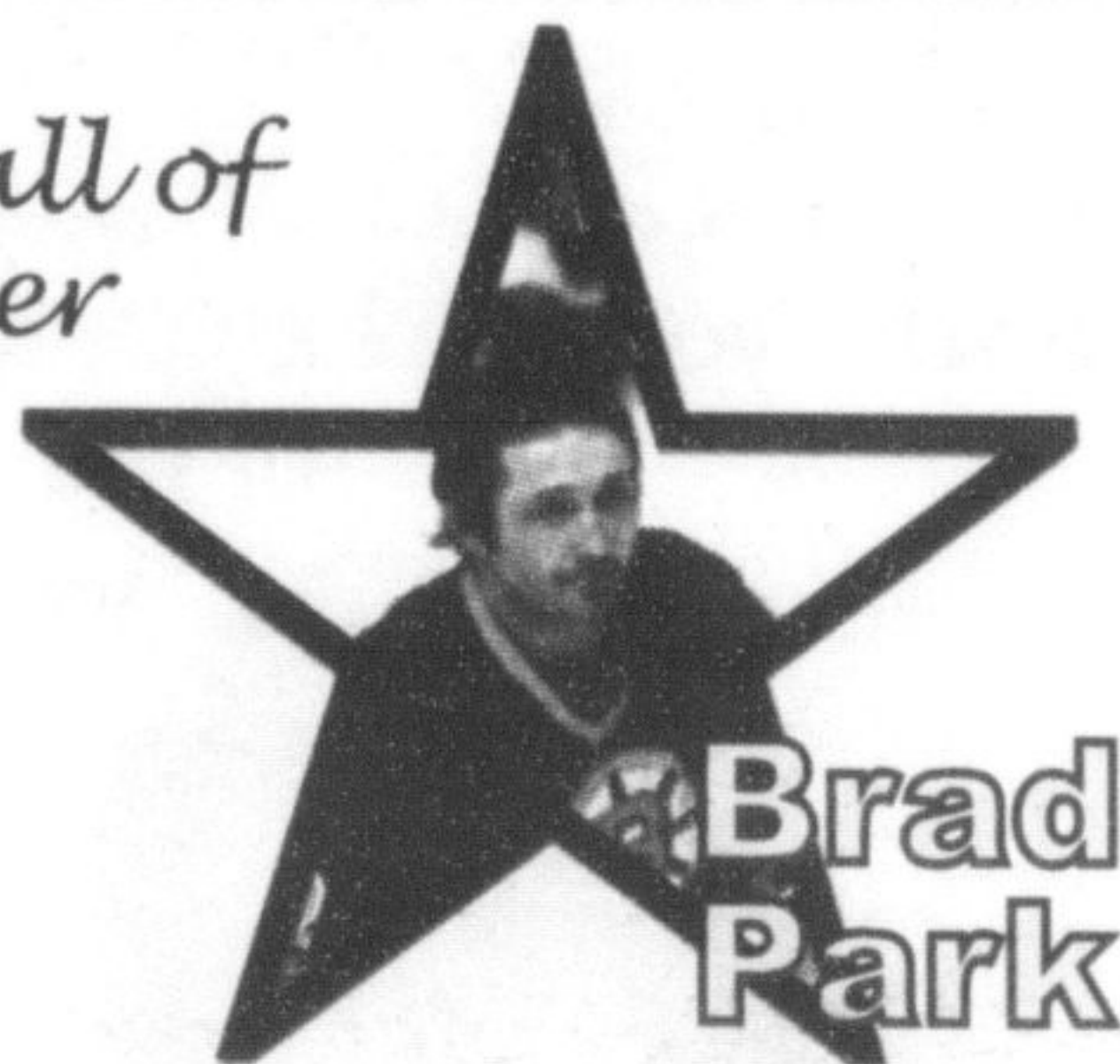
"We're a very talented band, especially Carl — he's unbe-

• see TUNES on page B3

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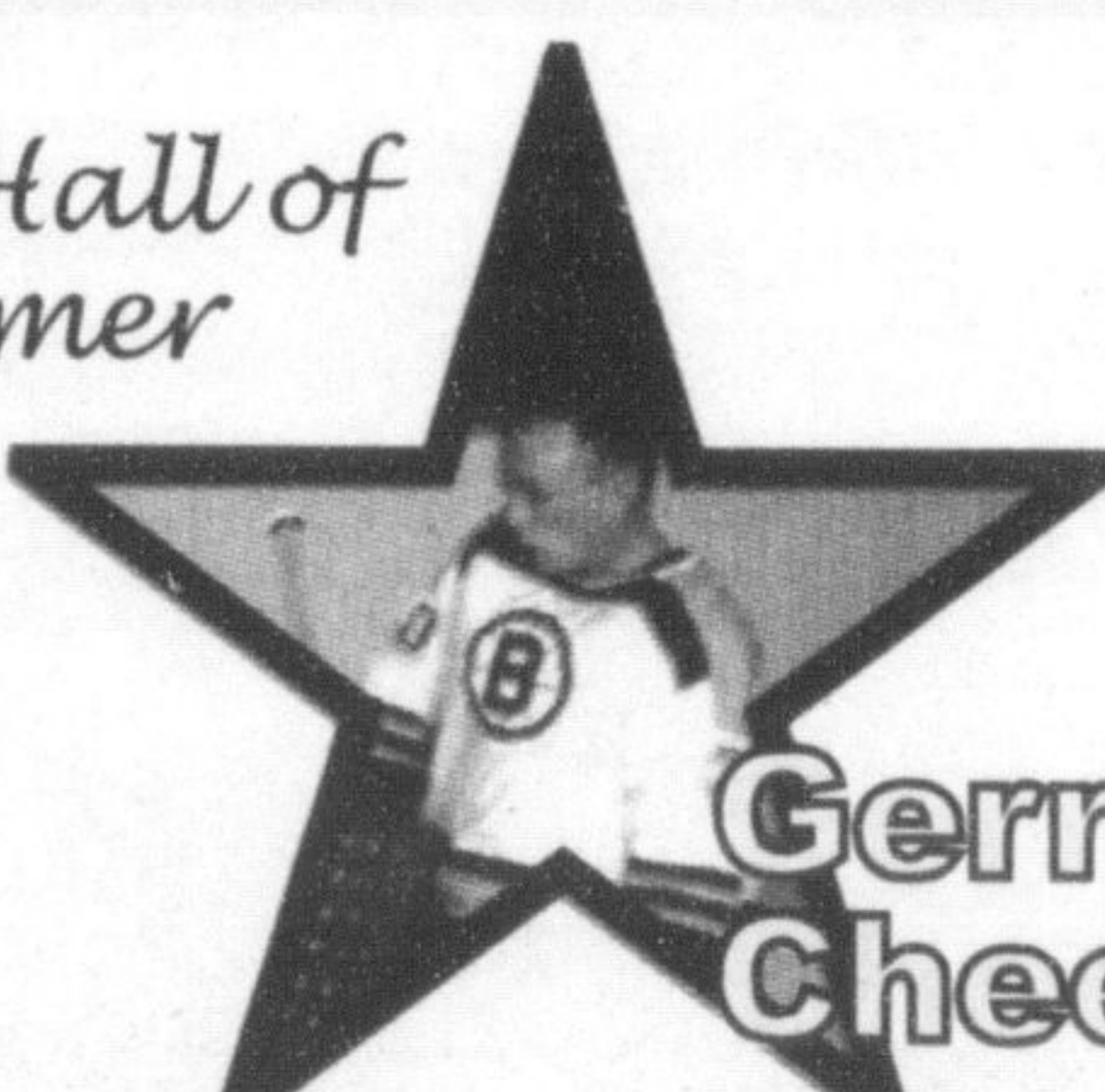
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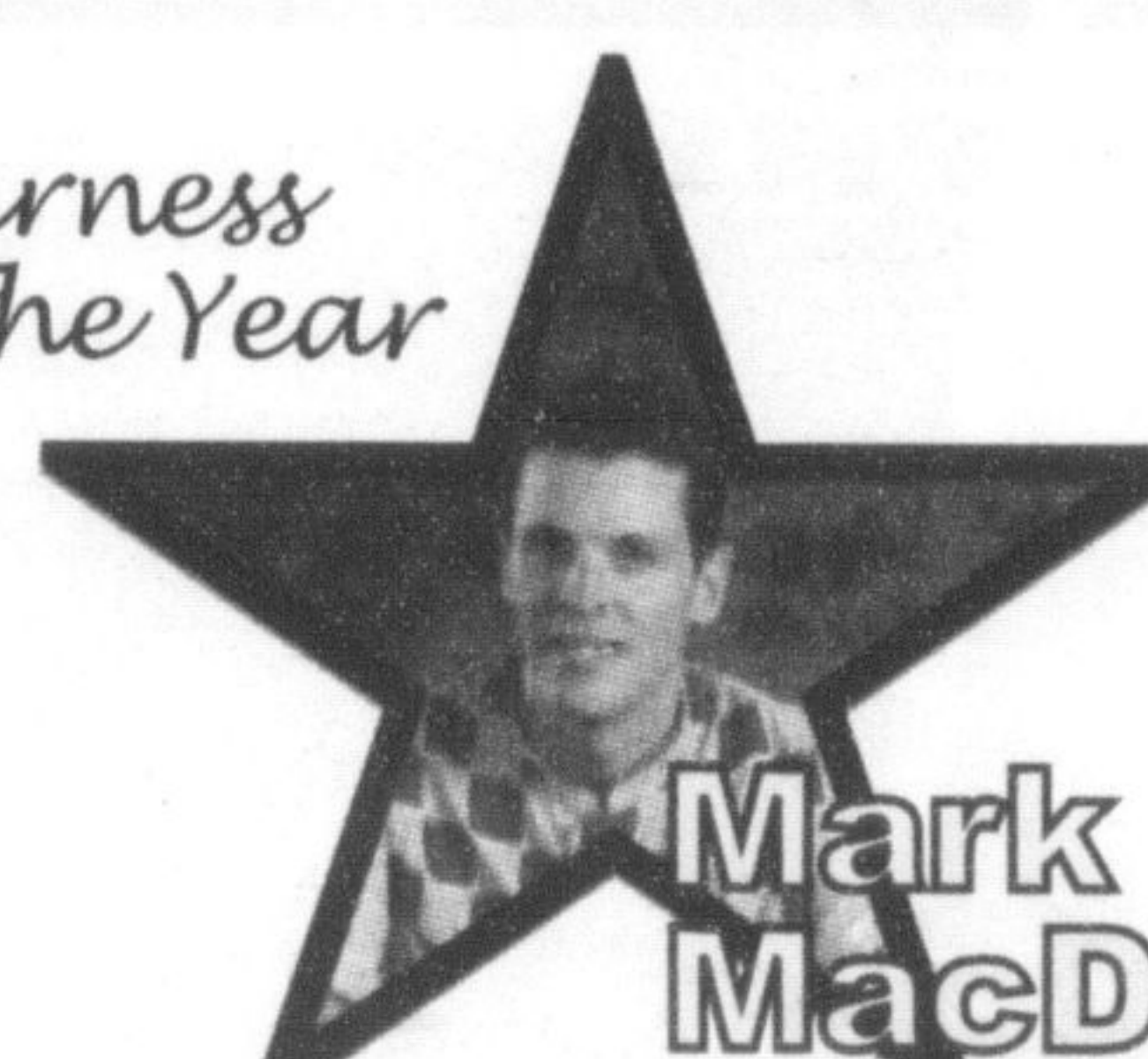
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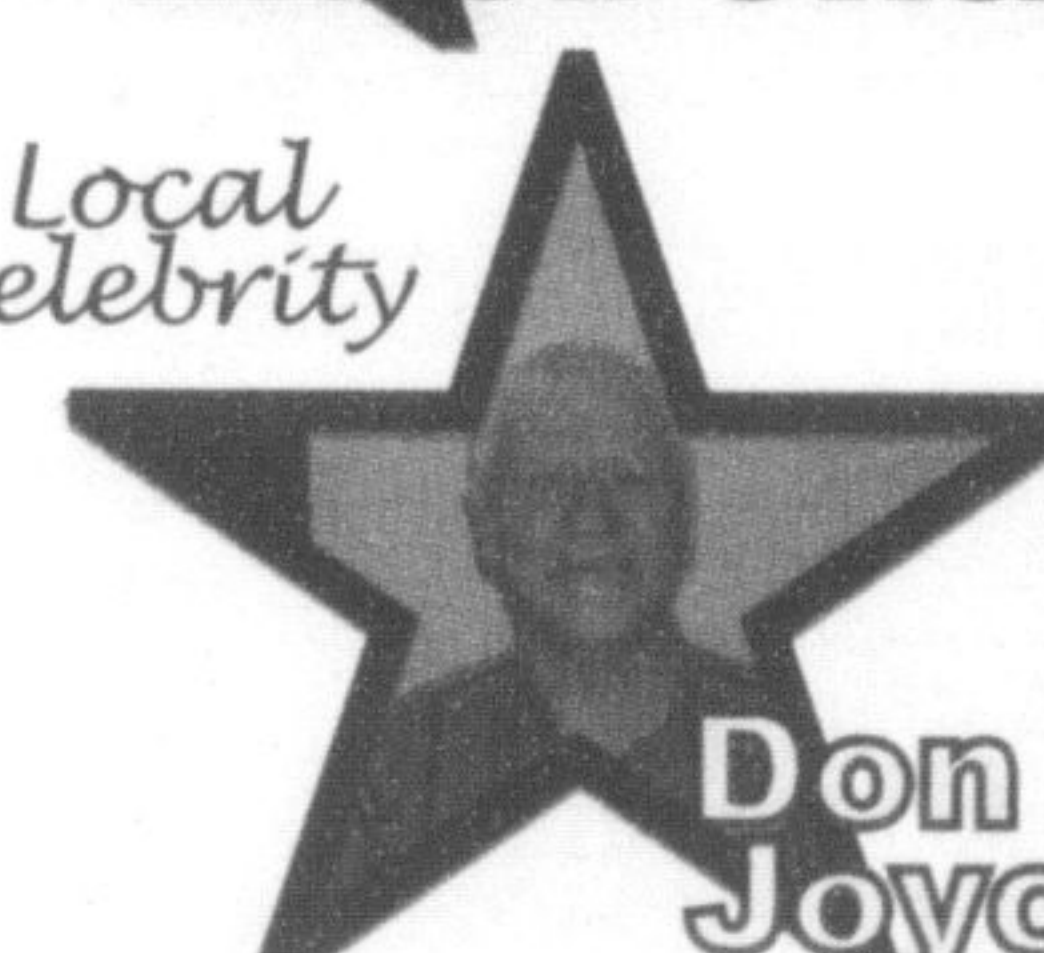
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Gord Stellick

Local Celebrity



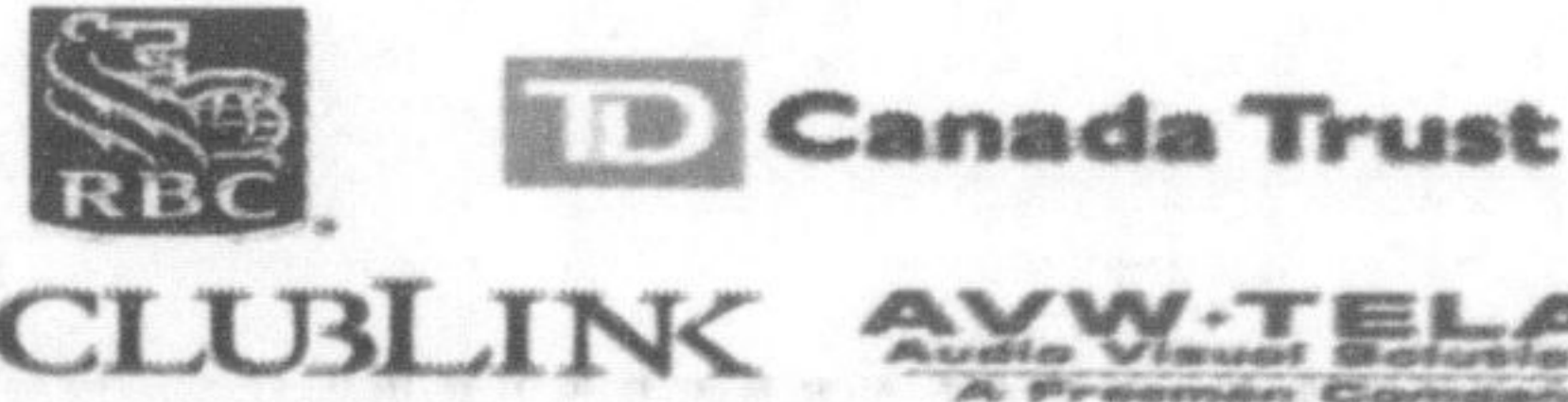
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