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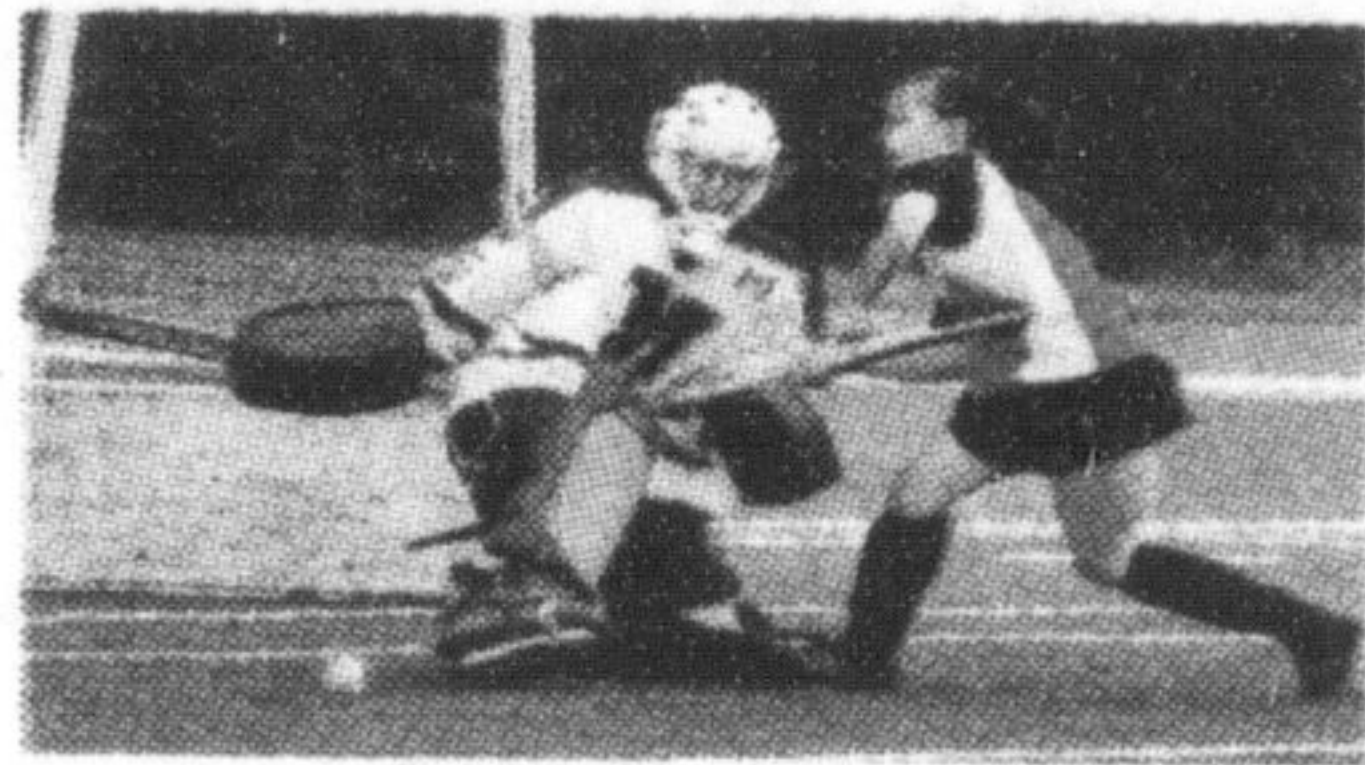
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A Metroland Media Group publication • Vol. 151 No. 65

Thursday, October 21, 2010

56 Pages • \$1.00 (incl. G.S.T.)



GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

Robbie McLaughlin successfully took his first solo flight Saturday afternoon in a single-engine Cessna 152 at the Burlington airpark.

Fourteen-year-old pilot takes first solo flight

By Christina Commisso
 CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Robbie McLaughlin found it funny his dad had to drive him to the Burlington airpark, seeing as the 14-year-old was en route to his first solo flight.

On Saturday afternoon, under the bright fall sun, McLaughlin took off in the single-engine Cessna 152. For the first time since the Milton resident began flying lessons at age 10, the two-seater plane had one sole occupant.

"I'm pretty confident I know everything I need to. I'm ready to go," said McLaughlin a day before the flight.

The Milton District High School student wasted no time getting behind the steering wheel, or yoke, of the plane. Less than a week after his 14th birthday, the minimum age required to fly on his own, McLaughlin took off from Burlington Executive Airport's runway and for about five minutes he circled the facility.

His parents watched nervously on the ground as the teen completed a circuit, which can consist

of deep turns, spins or a stale, slow flight. Once McLaughlin successfully made it back to the ground, where a group of family and friends anxiously waited, the feelings of worry turned into joy as his parents gave him a big congratulatory hug.

"The teachers at Hawthorne Village Public School all thought it was pretty neat I could fly," said McLaughlin. "I'm pretty sure some of them didn't believe me at first, so I had to bring a picture of me in the plane to school as proof."

• see FLYING on page A20

Ground broken for new high school

By Christina Commisso
 CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Following years of negotiations and planning, construction has started on Milton's newest high school.

Last week, local and regional representatives gathered with Milton's school board trustee and high school students to officially celebrate the groundbreaking of the public high school, which will be located at the corner of Fourth Line and Louis St. Laurent Avenue.

"It's always a great occasion when you can break ground at a new school," said Halton District School Board (HDSB) Trustee Donna Danielli. "When I looked around the crowd and just the array of people there... what really came together for me was the partnership that goes into building a school in the community."

It took some time for a shovel to hit the ground at the
 • see SCHOOL on page A4

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