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Publisher.....Sandy Harbinson  
 Advertising Mgr.....Linda Harbinson  
 Editor.....Robert Cotton  
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 Production Asst.....Cheryl KostECKi



## A good look in the mirror never hurts

Last Tuesday afternoon a theatre company, The Company of Sirens, performed No Problems Here at Lake Superior High School.

The play, focusing on racial intolerance in education, the workplace and the media, posed questions that should cause each member of the audience to review their own attitudes and behavior towards people of colour.

This company of performers did not come to point fingers at anybody or to make judgements. They came to prick our conscience and help us raise our level of self-awareness.

Racism is about power. It is used by a dominant race to subjugate another race and in doing so maintain power. Denying people their rights and their dignity because of the colour of their skin lowers their self-esteem and people with low self-esteem find it very difficult to fight back.

Racists attitudes have been entrenched in white North America for a long time and although we have come a long way towards changing those attitudes the fight is not over.

In Canada we have great ideas supported in law but these wonderful words mean nothing unless they are translated into action. That action begins with each one of us looking inside and recognizing our biases. We must understand how our actions, which sometimes seem innocent enough, can reflect those biases. The next time you meet, or see, a person of colour, listen to your own thoughts and ask yourself, "Am I making assumptions about this person based on the colour of his or her skin?"

This issue is not about guilt. It is not about labelling yourself or anybody else as a racist. It is about being aware of your own attitudes and changing them when necessary. The demon must first be recognized before it can be exorcised.

Robert A. Cotton

## Volunteers recognized by the Solicitor General

Congratulations and thanks are due, on behalf of Terrace Bay and Schreiber, to three volunteers who have received an Ontario Solicitor General's Crime Prevention Award.

Heather Vandergraff, Wes Fenton, both of Terrace Bay, and Bert Logan of Schreiber, received their awards in ceremonies held in Nipigon, March 28.

The Solicitor General's Crime Prevention Award recognizes the volunteer work of individuals, including police officers, who assist in the creation or implementation of crime prevention programs.

Vandergraff was recognized for being the motivating force behind the Block Parent Program in Terrace Bay. As Chairperson of Terrace Bay Block Parents since 1983, she has been a leader in maintaining the effectiveness of that program.

Constable Logan, Schreiber Detachment OPP, was presented with an award because of his volunteer work in the Terrace Bay-Schreiber Community Against Pushers program. Information received through this program has led to three drug related arrests.

Constable Wes Fenton, Terrace Bay Police Services, was recognized for his outstanding work in bringing the police and the community together. Fenton is involved with The Community Against Pushers program, has taught a course on the safe operation of a snowmobile. He has given workshops and lectures on the drugs and alcohol to the public and in schools. He has also provided background information and advice for programs such as Block Parents and the Babysitting course.

Volunteers who make significant contributions to life in their communities deserve to be recognized and congratulated. They also deserve something else. Our continued help.



## The Volkswagen of guns

*Guns are made of enduring metal. They outlive their owners. They go about their business.*

Roy Meador

How true. And no gun more enduring than the one that so recently achieved superstar status in the Gulf War. The Arme du jour of the entire Middle East. The rifle toted by Republican Guards and resistance fighters. The one with the pistol grip and the trademark banana clip ammunition magazine thrusting out in front of its trigger guard. The Kalashnikov automatic rifle.

AK-47 to its many friends and admirers.

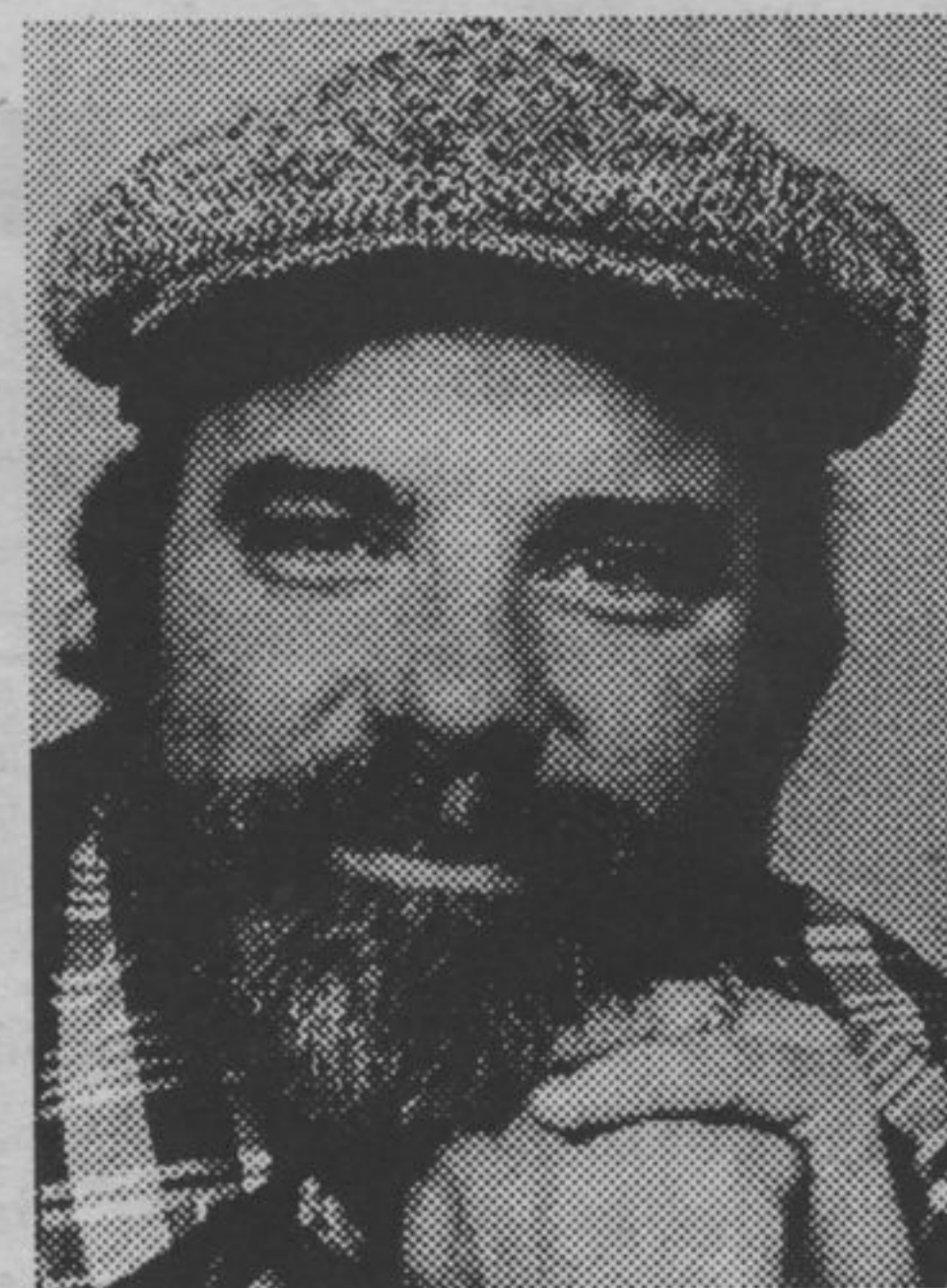
In truth the AK-47 was famous long before a small-time thug named Saddam Hussein discovered it. Russian engineers designed the rifle for their troops more than 40 years ago. Then the politicians took over. They adopted the AK-47 as a kind of insurgents Door Crashers Special. The basic Kalashnikov design was passed along to Russia's many "spheres of influence" including the weapons-hungry Chinese.

In those days of course, there was a world-revolution to foment. It wasn't long before rebels from the rice paddies of Vietnam to the mountain ranges of Nicaragua were prying open crates of brand new AK-47s wrapped in oil-soaked cotton.

The AK-47 was the Volkswagen Bug of the arms world. It offered economy, easy maintenance, not too much weight and awesome firepower. Even non-revolutionaries admired it. The "Kalash"

became a staple in the wardrobes of Miami drug dealers and CIA-sponsored troublemakers too.

Today, the AK-47 is everywhere. We saw its ugly snout peep over the barricades at Oka. The TV cameras panned over mounds of AK-47s salvaged from the ruins of Iraqi bunkers and caravans. The price of an



Arthur Black

AK-47 varies wildly. In the desert sands of Kuwait they're free for the taking. You'll pay about \$50 for a reasonable copy in the gun bazaars of Pakistan. In Honduras, you can probably find an ex-contra in a bar who'll sell you his for \$100. Washington gun boutiques have waiting lists for brand new models. They're asking anywhere from \$750 to \$1,000 per unit. You can't buy one legally in Canada, but the government in South Africa pays \$2500 for every one a citizen hands in, no questions asked.

In Mozambique the death-dealing rifle is so familiar it appears on the national emblem - a hoe crossed with an AK-47. Ironically, that war-torn, starvation-raddled country is also

the only place where the rifle trades for something more valuable than money. In Mozambique one used AK-47 can be traded for a 50-pound bag of corn.

The scattering of what's left of Hussein's army will put more AK-47s on the world market, but they've lost a point or two in the glamour department. They didn't prove very effective against smart bombs, Apache helicopters or F-18s.

Still, a small-time terrorist, be he CIA, PLO or IRA sponsored, has to get his army boot in the door somehow, doesn't he? And what better way than with a gun that's chattered out its own leaden legend in more than four decades of mayhem? I think the AK-47 will be around for awhile.

Which is too bad. There's another, more promising weapon on the market right now that's been somewhat eclipsed by the ominous shadow of the AK-47. It's smaller, lighter, cheaper and even easier to maintain than the Kalashnikov. Does lots more too. With this weapon you can open cans, cut paper dolls, file your nails, tweeze out slivers and pop wine corks. The classic red-handled model has been around for more than 70 years. Next fall, it will be available in a host of colours, including canary, camel, and ivory.

Not the kind of Yuppie hues normally associated with a weapon of destruction -- but then this is more a weapon of construction, despite its name.

That's what I'd like to see: a whole world re-armed.

Every citizen toting a His 'N Her Swiss Army Knife.