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A Metroland Community Newspaper

Third Section

Wednesday August 2 1989



Photos: ANDRE WOLBERT

Our judges tease the photographer as they prepare to catapult spoonfuls of ice cream in his direction. Shown from left are Jason Rennie of Stouffville District Secondary School, Kelly Chambers of Unionville High School, Ryan Kennedy of Brother Andre High School, Rachelle Cheshire of UHS, Jennifer Sando of

Markham District High School and Beckie Trumphour of MDHS. Hidden from the camera is Paul Embregts of BAHS.

Age isn't key for this piano teacher

JOANNE HENEY
 Correspondent

Eighteen-year-old piano teacher Chris Lear doesn't expect his students to call him Mr. Lear, believing that you don't have to be an authority figure to get good results from kids learning music. He should know; his nine students, who range in age from six to 15 years, have all been extremely successful in their exams, adjudications and in music fairs, and he proudly adds, "I haven't had any failures yet."

Chris himself has an impressive background in piano which he started playing when he was only six. He's now working on his Grade 10 level.

In grades 4 and 6, he received the highest marks in his divisions, and last year he won the Markham adjudication in the Senior division. He received first class honors as well as the highest mark in a recital in which he played four pieces, and this year at the Lions Club Music Festival he came away with first

place in the List B category.

"I will be starting my first year at the University of Toronto in September—taking Commerce. Some day I hope to combine the business aspect with my piano background and open up a music school."

Chris' teaching career began when he was in Grade 11 at Unionville High School. He says, "I decided that I would take on one student and see what happened." It turned out that his first student was his sister, Danielle. "I started teaching my sister first and helped her to get ready for an exam."

Out of curiosity, Chris marked Danielle, using the Conservatory criteria, and graded her as an 80, which was the exact mark she received when she took the exam.

Chris feels his age is a benefit to his teaching because it makes it easier for his students to relate to him and feel more comfortable.

His teaching style leans more toward being persuasive than demanding. "I have to draw the line somewhere, but what I try to do is persuade them to practice and not demand that they practice."

"I try to make them want to practice by allowing them to play pieces they like. When they get to choose, they are then playing something they want to play."

One of Chris' students is 12-year-old Erika Brauch. Erika started taking piano lessons when she was about seven years old and has been taught by Chris for the past 2½ years. Erika's mother Susan comments, "She enjoys music and a lot of that love for playing the piano has been instilled by Chris."

Last year, she received an 87 on her Grade 3 exam and 81 and 82 at this year's Lions Club Music Festival.

Chris notes, "Erika is a pleasure to teach because she's competitive and is a hard worker with a lot of natural ability."

In September, Chris will be taking a year off from his music studies so that he can devote his time to adjusting to the workload of university, but he will still teach and will always continue to play.

ICE CREAM DREAM

Local students gathered for a Focus contest last week to determine their favorite vanilla ice cream

What better way to shake off that summer meltdown feeling than with a scoop of ice cream? Everyone has their favorite flavor of ice cream, but Focus decided to judge ice cream based on a taste test of vanilla.

While vanilla isn't everyone's favorite flavor, it's a good one for judging because it's a "bare bones" flavor of ice cream.

Focus invited seven youths from the Markham-Stouffville area to an ice cream taste test. Vanilla ice cream was brought in from eight different stores and placed in unidentifiable containers. It was tested by Kelly Chambers and Rachelle Cheshire of Unionville High School, Beckie Trumphour and Jennifer Sando of Markham District High School, Jason Rennie of Stouffville District Secondary School and Paul Embregts and Ryan Kennedy of Brother Andre Catholic High School.

The ice cream came from Cool Delites in the Sunkist Plaza, Flavours on Main St. Markham, Sweetables in Stouffville, Baskin Robbins in Markham, Laura Secord and Woolco ice cream bar in Markville Shopping Centre, Burgs on Hwy. 7 Unionville and The Parlour off Main St. Unionville.

Results showed our judges don't have expensive taste when it comes to ice cream.

Some of the comments from our unscientific survey included "tasted like maple syrup", "tasted like gas" and "the ice cream was yellowy and sort of tasteless."

It was agreed, however, that if the judges didn't have to try eight varieties of vanilla at once, they would probably have enjoyed each individual ice cream much more.

The results of our contest are shown in the table at right. It's surprising! The results when the label is taken off the ice cream. See how the judges' findings compare with your taste in ice cream.



Kelly Chambers (left) and Rachelle Cheshire try a sample of one of the ice creams on the judging block. Judges were instructed to rinse with water between each taste.

1.	The Parlour, off Unionville Main St.	130 points (out of 175).	\$1.25 per double scoop.
2.	Sweetables, A and P Plaza, Stouffville.	120 points.	\$1.70 per double scoop.
3.	Woolco ice cream bar, Markville Shopping Centre.	119 points.	\$1.25 per double scoop.
4.	Laura Secord, Markville Shopping Centre.	115 points.	\$2.25 per double scoop.
5.	Burgs, Hwy. 7 Unionville.	113 points.	\$2.05 per double scoop.
6.	Cool Delite, Sunkist Plaza Markham.	112 points.	\$2.10 per double scoop.
7.	Baskin Robbins, Hwy. 7 and McCowan Rd. Markham.	106 points.	\$2.75 per double scoop.
8.	Flavours, Main St. Markham.	95 points.	\$1.95 per double scoop.



Photo: ANDRE WOLBERT

Pianist and piano teacher Chris Lear says he'll never stop playing. The 18-year-old Unionville resident will attend the University of Toronto in the fall, but will continue to play and teach piano lessons to younger people. He started teaching two years ago and hasn't looked back since.

You're missing out

A battle is brewing in Stouffville over the town's bid for a new civic centre outside the downtown core. Details of that story are in the news section of today's Tribune.

If you're receiving the Focus section on its own, you're missing news of Stouffville, Uxbridge and surrounding areas. Other highlights of this week's news section include news of burn victim Shane Stapley's short visit home on Saturday and a story about a public meeting being called to discuss the results of a recent library study.

To get the whole story subscribe to the Tribune's news section. Subscribe by calling the distribution department at 640-2100.

