



**ALLISON KWAN:** Huron Heights student's 99.5 average top in both boards.



**TERESA CHEUK-YING CHEE:** 98 per cent average tops in separate board.

## Top scholars credit hard work for success

BY MITCHELL BROWN  
Staff Writer

Teresa Cheuk-Ying Chee and Allison Kwan have probably never met, but they have quite a few things in common.

They're both 18; they both live in York Region and they're both heading to university this fall — Ms Kwan is off to the University of Western Ontario to study health sciences, while Ms Cheuk-Ying Chee will be attending the University of Toronto to pursue an engineering degree.

They also happen to be this year's top scholars in York Region.

Ms Cheuk-Ying Chee, who just graduated from Fr. Michael McGivney Catholic Academy in Markham, ended her high school career this year with a 98-per-cent average, making her this year's highest-achieving student in the York Catholic District School Board.

Ms Kwan, who attended Huron Heights Secondary School in Newmarket, finished the year with an average of 99.5 per cent, enough to make her York Region District School Board's top student.

No mean feat, especially since they took chemistry, physics, biology, calculus, algebra and other subjects requiring many hours of study.

Is it possible to study that much and still have a normal life?

"I like to think so," laughed a slightly blushing Ms Kwan, who also plays piano and violin. "I've always tried to aim for the top of my school, but this is an added bonus."

Ms Cheuk-Ying Chee is just as modest about the secret of her success. "Maybe the other schools mark harder," she joked. "I don't know. Self-control, I guess. And definitely a lot of hard work."

Both are taking a break from their studies this summer and, while Ms Kwan works part time as a church organist, neither has any plans for the summer, other than taking it easy.

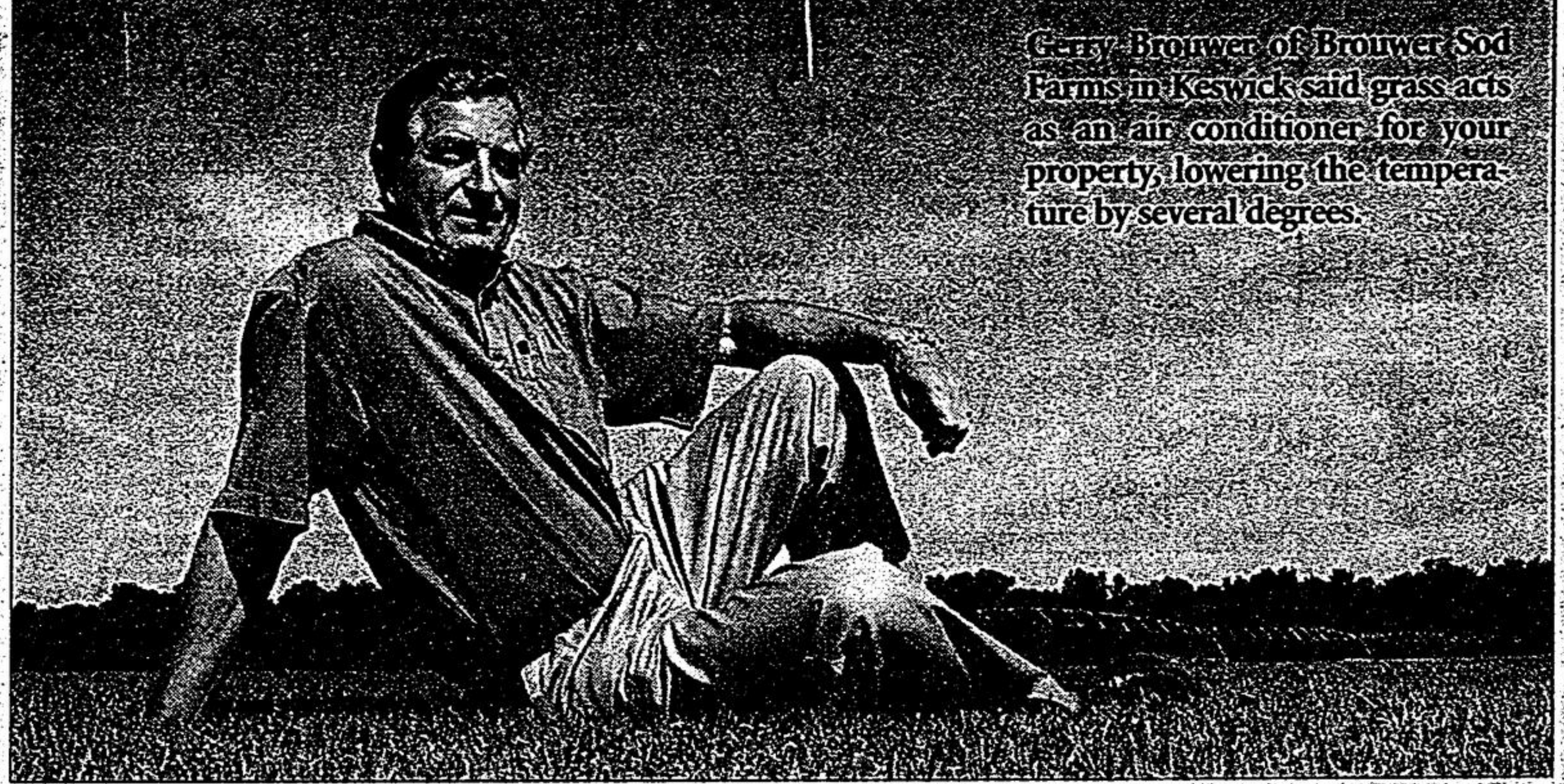
### HEAD OF THE CLASS

*Top 10 students in York Region's public school system:*

- Allison Kwan, Huron Heights Secondary School (Newmarket), 99.5 per cent
- Brian Jla Lee Keng, Vaughan Secondary School, 99.2 per cent
- Victoria Cheung, Thornhill Secondary School, 99 per cent
- David Stanley, Dr. John M. Denison Secondary School (Newmarket), 98.8 per cent
- Clifford Ting, Markham District Secondary School, 98.8 per cent
- Kevin Sung, Woodbridge College, 98.7 per cent
- Roman Zassoko, Markham District High School, 98.5 per cent
- Peter Yu, Markham District High School, 98.2 per cent
- Simon Baxter, Thornhill Secondary School, 98 per cent
- Anuroop Duggal, Woodbridge College, 98 per cent

*Top student in each of York Region's Catholic high schools:*

- Teresa Cheuk-Ying Chee, Fr. Michael McGivney Catholic Academy (Markham), 98 per cent
- Paolo Tommasino, Cardinal Carter Catholic High School (Aurora), 97.4 per cent
- James McMullan, Sacred Heart Catholic High School (Newmarket), 95.5 per cent
- Julia Anne Amabile Cautillo, Fr. Bressani Catholic High School (Woodbridge), 95.2 per cent
- Elaine Lae, St. Robert Catholic High School (Markham), 94.83 per cent
- Scott Dermody, Brother Andre Catholic High School (Markham), 94.17 per cent
- Melissa Saccoccia, St. Joan of Arc Catholic High School (Maple), 93 per cent
- Elyse Bernard, St. Elizabeth Catholic High School (Thornhill), 92.67 per cent
- Nadia Santoli, Holy Cross Catholic Academy (Woodbridge), 91.17 per cent



STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

## Many are green behind ears when it comes to lawn care

BY LISA QUEEN  
Staff Writer

In a perfect suburban world, a lawn would be a manicured oasis of beauty.

Lush green blades would provide cool relief to the tender feet of neighbourhood children escaping the burning asphalt.

Weeds and brown hay-like patches would be banished.

Would it surprise you, then, whether you're a devotee of lawn care or treat its upkeep as just another routine chore, that few of us really know what the heck we're doing?

Now, relax. These kinds of articles pointing out deficiencies usually play on people's guilt.

You know, you've obviously been doing something horribly wrong, that's why you're not rich enough or thin enough or your kids aren't good enough.

But we're just talking grass here, not world peace.

So try some of the tips and see if you can improve your lawn. If they don't work, snow will be around in a few months to cover your mistakes. There's always next year.

First of all, just because at the moment you have an arid patch of property resembling the Sahara desert on a bad day doesn't mean your lawn is beyond repair.

Experts advise July and brown lawns in Ontario go hand-in-hand.

Your grass is in a natural state of dormancy and will rebound when we get a bit of rain.

So, when the inevitable water bans are inflicted upon us, don't feel you have to start sneaking out in the middle of the night to turn on the sprinkler.

"There's certainly a lot of things that people have a misconception on when it comes to lawns," said Claus Zander, vice-president of Zander Sod Co. in King Township.

The trick, he advised, is to enjoy, or at least work with, nature's little imperfections such as lack of rain.

"We all like to have a nice lawn. The perfect lawn is a tricky one, because nature isn't perfect. But it's perfect in that it's not perfect," Mr. Zander said.

According to Gerry Brouwer, owner of Brouwer Sod Farms in Keswick, a lawn isn't just a showpiece. In fact, grass acts as an air conditioner for your property, lowering the temperature by several degrees.

*One big mistake homeowners make when mowing is cutting too short.*

Front lawns of just eight average houses have the cooling effect of about 70 tons of air conditioning, according to the Nursery Sod Growers Association of Ontario. Not bad, since a central air unit for an average house has a three to four-ton capacity.

Meanwhile, the association says grass also helps control soil erosion, conserve ground water, enrich soil, discourages pests like rats, mice, mosquitoes and snakes, releases oxygen in to the environment, acts as a pollen allergy control, reduces noise levels by as much as 40 per cent, cuts down on glare and acts as a natural protective break against wild fires.

OK, so maybe we are talking about something approaching the importance of world peace here.

Going on the assumption you already have grass on your property — and if you don't, you will have to decide whether you want to

Gerry Brouwer of Brouwer Sod Farms in Keswick said grass acts as an air conditioner for your property, lowering the temperature by several degrees.

seed or sod — there are a few elements of lawn care in which you'll have to pay attention.

In no particular order, they are watering, mowing, fertilizing, weed control and pesticides.

When it comes to watering, many homeowners stick the sprinkler on for a little while every night or spray their lawn with a garden hose before going in for the evening — wrong.

Mr. Brouwer and Mr. Zander both say a less frequent, deep soaking is much better than several shallow waterings.

A heavy soaking allows the roots to grow as deep as four feet.

During a drought, the roots are then able to draw water from deep in the soil. A good watering once a week is plenty.

Because different water pressures or sprinkler sizes make it difficult to know just how much water your lawn is getting, place a can on a flat portion of your lawn and wait until the water is an inch deep before turning off the sprinkler.

Mr. Brouwer said grass doesn't require as much rain to do the same job as the sprinkler or hose.

"I think it's like snow, there's more body to it. Tap water seems to evaporate more quickly."

Mr. Brouwer warned never to water your lawn in the middle of the day, because the water acts like a magnifying glass, allowing the sun to burn the grass.

Mr. Zander prefers watering in the morning. An evening soak leaves grass wet overnight and if the temperatures drop, it could lead to diseases.

But a lawn can go as long as four weeks with no water.

One big mistake homeowners make when mowing is cutting too short. Mr. Brouwer suggests a length of two to three inches, with three better than two.

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*Maureen Hall age: 40 occupation: account representative*

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