

- A Balancing Act - HIGH SCHOOL AND HOCKEY

By John Hopkins

When it comes to planning his future, Stouffville Spirit star Simon Gysbers has tried to keep as many doors open as possible. And that has led to a delicate balancing act.

For the past three years Gysbers has tried to maximize his hockey skills playing for the Spirit in the Ontario Provincial Junior 'A' Hockey League while also completing his high school education.

By all accounts the hard work has paid off. Next fall the 18-year-old from Oak Ridges will attend Lake Superior State University in Sault Ste Marie, Mich. on a scholarship. And on Nov. 22 Gysbers learned he had been named to the National Hockey League draft list, and that he was one of 40 players selected for the inaugural Canadian Junior A Hockey League Prospects game, which will be played in Yorkton, Sask. on Dec. 7.

He attributes much of his success on and off the ice to hard work and discipline.

"I had a concrete schedule, and that kept me going," said Gysbers, who graduated from Cardinal Carter High School in Aurora. "I was constantly working, but I stuck to it. I learned a lot of discipline, and that's going to help me [in university] next year."

According to Spirit general manager Ken Burrows, there are 15 players on the current

team roster that are currently also attending high school. The league is open to players between the ages of 16-20.

For almost all of them, Burrows said, the goal is a scholarship to a U.S. school.

"It's very hard," he acknowledged. "They're at the rink five or six times a week."

One of those players is 18-year-old Brock Ouellet, who is taking Grade 12 classes in Stouffville.

"I've gotten accustomed to the balance [between hockey and school]," said Ouellet, a Lindsay native who is in his third year in the league. "Maybe in my first year it was a bit of a challenge, but I'm getting used to handling both."

Ouellet said he gets strong support from the Stouffville coaching staff, and the team has a tutor available for any players who require some extra assistance. Although he is currently only taking two courses, he said his school

and hockey schedules keep him busy, and out of trouble.

For Gysbers, the balancing act became particularly tough around exam time and the league playoffs. On those occasions, he received support from a predictable source.

"My Mom would calm me down a lot," he said. "She always had some words of wisdom for me. She'd just do those things that moms do."

Although Gysbers has already finished high school and doesn't go to university until next fall, he hasn't slowed down. He is currently taking an English course by correspondence through Seneca College and will also take a psychology course next semester.

"That will give me a bit of an edge when I go away next year," said Gysbers, who is eyeing a career in business or marketing. But, he added, "I want to take hockey as far as I can. I want to keep my options open."



Simon Gysbers



Brock Ouellet

December at the Latcham Gallery

By Maura Broadhurst

If you have never been to an opening of the Latcham Gallery's annual exhibition of artwork by SDSS students, mark Dec. 17 on your calendar.

That afternoon, from 1 to 3 p.m., the graduating art class will host the opening of its exhibition, *Beyond Images 2005*. The students are not only the artists of this exhibition, they are also the curators, promoters and designers.

Each fall the graduating class works with staff and volunteers at the Latcham Gallery to learn how a professional art exhibition is organized and delivered in a public art gallery. They help secure donations, determine the layout of the artwork, hammer the nails in the wall and help with the lighting. They also choose a theme for the exhibition, design the image for the invitation and organize the opening party.

Prizes donated by the Stouffville Lions Club will be awarded to students at the opening. We would like to thank Giles Chevrolet Oldsmobile and JVK Life & Wealth Advisory Group for sponsoring this exhibition.

Dec. 17 is also our monthly Free Family Day at the gallery's Studio Art Bunker in the basement of the Silver Jubilee Building. This month's activity will be making decorations, wrapping paper and cards for the holidays. Drop by any time between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. to make your originals to take home and use.

Over the holidays children can participate in our Holiday Break Winter Workshops. Each day from Jan. 3 to Jan. 6, the gallery will run two-hour workshops in the morning and the afternoon. Children can make snow globes, create a printed cover for their new diary, design their own 2006 calendar and more.

For more information or to register please call the gallery at 905-640-8954. Spaces are limited so don't delay. Each workshop costs \$10 per child.

On behalf of the Latcham Gallery staff, board and membership, we wish everybody a safe and happy holiday season. We hope to see you at the gallery in the New Year to see the exhibitions, take an art class or simply to visit.



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