

GRAPEVINE



Unity service

Acton Christians are invited to pray, sing and play together on Sunday morning at the annual Service of Christian Unity, hosted by the Acton Ministerial Association at three locations.

The theme this year is "Be Opened" and the guest speaker at the main service at the Legion is Commissioner Christine McMillan, Salvation Army Territories Commander for Canada and Bermuda Territory.

For the first time, organizers are staging a youth concert for teens and young adults at Knox Presbyterian Church, featuring the *Youth Worship Band* from Oakville and Rockwood's Glen Soderholm, a singer, song-writer/recording artist and pastor.

As in past years, there will be puppets along with prayers at St. Joseph Catholic School, where the children's unity service also includes games and a guest performances of the family act, the *As For Me and My House Family Ministry*.

All services begin at 10:30 a.m.

Harmony Bandstand

Tickets are half sold for the March 23 and 24 performances of the Royal City Ambassadors at the River Run Centre in Guelph.

The Ambassadors will present songs from the 1950s and 60s in a show billed as Harmony Bandstand – "lots of laughs and great singing," according to Acton's Don Lindsay who has been an Ambassador for more than 25 years.

Lindsay, a member of the Area Code 519 quartet that will perform during the shows, can be reached at 519-853-2057, or at Home Hardware.

Caregiver support

Support for people caring for schizophrenics is available on the third Thursday of each month at the North Halton Mental Health Clinic on Willow Street.

The Halton-Peel Regional Office of the Schizophrenia Society of Ontario hosts the Family Support Group for friends and family members of people with serious mental illnesses.

The monthly sessions offer help and information on resources available in Halton in a safe and non-judgmental manner. The meetings begin at 7 p.m.

Call 905-876-1647 for more information.

Teacher award

Nominations are now being accepted for the first Premier's Awards for Teaching Excellence, an award designed to acknowledge the teachers, principals, vice-principals and education support staff who "excel at unlocking the potential of Ontario's young people."

Nominations for the award,

sponsored by the Ministry of Education, will be accepted until January 31.

For details, visit www.ontrio.ca/teachingawards

Andrews excels

Not wanting to get rusty while waiting for her university competition debut this weekend in Texas, while home for Christmas, the Acton High grad Kaitlyn Andrews competed at a University of Toronto track and field meet where she won the 20-pound javelin toss with a throw of 13.94-metres, her personal best in that event.

Andrews also won the shot put with a toss of 14.19 metres.

She is studying kinesiology in Texas, and competes at her first indoor event in Arkansas this weekend.

Farm summit

Maverick Halton MP Garth Turner is convening an emergency agricultural summit on January 23 in Milton to pressure Ottawa to help family farms that are "facing a crisis for survival."

A press release from the Independent MP said the point of the meeting is to reinforce the key role of the agricultural industry locally, and to prompt Minister Chuck Strahl to fulfil election promises.

The Peel, Halton, Wellington and York Federations of Agriculture will have officials at the summit, along with representatives of the chicken, beekeepers, fruit and vegetable growers associations.

The meeting runs from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., at Heritage Country Park.

Bottle drive

Leave your empty bottles on your porch this Sunday morning if you'd like to help a local select hockey team – with players from Acton, Eden Mills, Rockwood and Georgetown – raise money with a bottle drive.

Sports store closes

High rents prompted Inside Edge Pro Sports to close its Sobeyes plaza store last week.

Acton's Phillip and Nathan Marzo, father and son partners have consolidated operations at the Milton sports store they opened in September.

The Acton Inside Edge opened in April 2005, and Nathan Marzo said they never intended to close, but an opportunity to sub-let came up just before Christmas, and they didn't have enough time to find and open a new location in Acton.

Marzo said they faced rent and maintenance fee increases of 25 per cent this year, and Acton "isn't growing by 25 per cent a year," and lower rent in Milton has reduced their overhead by 60 per cent.

All gift certificates and skate sharpening cards will be honoured at the Milton store.



WINTER WHITE: It didn't take long during Sunday's storm to turn the creek by the library into a winter wonderland. – Frances Niblock photo

And for another thing...

Several topics have been accumulating in my file and this week appears to be a good time to address them.

My confidence in being able to pick a winning sports team is sagging. Take my beloved Leafs... Please! Consider last Saturdays blow-out at the hands of the Vancouver Canucks. I switched channels after our boys were down 4-1. The final score was 6-1. It's a bit early yet to start practising "Wait 'till next year." But I am becoming somewhat depressed.

Things didn't improve much in the New Year's college bowl games. One of my much anticipated contests was the Sugar Bowl matching my favourite Notre Dame (naturally) against L.S.U. Although the Irish looked good in the opening minutes, L.S.U. came on strong and creamed my lads 41-14. There was no joy in Mudville. Notre Dame missed so many tackles I suppose we should be grateful the score wasn't even more lopsided. Notre Dame has now lost 9 straight bowl games. Big sigh here.

The big news in the soccer world is that David Beckham is jumping ship from Real Madrid (is there a Just Joshing Madrid?) To the Los Angeles galaxy for yet another maniacal sports salary. Beckham will obviously sell some tickets in star-struck L.A. and wannabe-seen-in-Toronto. It says here that soccer, as a spectator sport, will stay off the fan's radar in North America. That prognostication should pretty well assure soccer's success given my track record.

For your information surveys of American sports fans report that pro football is No.1 followed by baseball. Pro hockey

The Way I See It

with
Mike O'Leary



is tied with golf in 7th place. This being Canada our hockey numbers would be higher and curling might beat out golf. Soccer (football as the fans insist on calling it) isn't even a blip on the survey.

I am tired of playing gas station roulette. The price swings this past month have been outrageous. On several occasions the posted price per litre changed as I was driving by. It's bad enough that the price changes between the time I drive to Milton and when I return 20 minutes later. To change it on the fly just adds insult to injury.

I sympathize with our independent gas station operators. While the corporate stations get a credit when the price drops, the independent operator gets bupkus. Independents buy their gas at a fixed price on delivery and pray the corporate stations don't drop prices the next day. To stay competitive, independents have to match the lower price and lose money on every litre or sell at their regular mark-up and watch sales plummet. Either way spells disaster for the little guy.

I have some bitter experience with this type of predatory pricing. My Dad had a service station in the late '50s and early '60s. He was wiped out in the gas wars of '62-'63. The look of utter devastation on his face when the end came is forever etched on my mind.

Big Oil profits the last few years have been obscene. Government

doesn't help with their excessive taxes. For government to say there is no collaboration between companies, no price fixing, they must assume we are all mentally deficient. No wonder we only have two outlets selling gas left in town.

In this computerized world it wouldn't be that difficult to level the playing field. There are only two or three refiners that distributors purchase products from. If prices are going to change let the independents get the same price subsidy as the corporate outlets. All that's needed is the political will to get tough with these oil cartels. Alas, so far all we've seen is political won't.

I despair that nothing will change and the independent operators will gradually fade away. When my Dad had his service station gas was 39.9c a gallon and seldom changed more than a penny. Last week on my travels I saw a spread of 15c a litre between an independent and a corporate outlet. While I admit that's the exception to the rule, it demonstrates the underlying problem is re-occurring and must be fixed.

I don't ever want to see a look on some other father's face like the one I saw on mine. We must lobby our politicians before it's too late.

I watched with some sadness the official ceremonies for former President Gerald Ford over the holidays. I remember him as a decent, principled man who had greatness thrust upon him rather than one who pursued it relentlessly.

It was said that when President Ford pardoned Nixon it

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