

GRAPEVINE

Ready for your closeups?

Congrats to Acton dancers Emily Loewen, 12, and Leah Holmes, 9, who will appear in a movie being shot this summer.

Both girls train at Centre Stage School of Dance in Georgetown with co-owner Kelly Paddle, who was hired to choreograph *King of the Camp*, a made-for-TV movie.

Paddle selected six of her Georgetown area students for paid roles, and Loewen and Holmes are among 20 unpaid extras who will appear in the film about a summer camp romance.

Loewen, the reigning Leathertown Ambassador, has been dancing since she was three, and is "thrilled" to be making her debut on the big scene.

Rehearsals for opening and closing dance numbers and a lunchroom scene began on Monday in Georgetown. Loewen's and Holmes scenes will be filmed over several days in August at a summer camp south of Orillia.

Firefighters' calendar

Astride a limited edition firefighters' Harley-Davidson, suited in protective gear and in a dress uniform with a couple of Dalmatians – those are just some of the poses members of the Acton Firefighter's Association struck on Sunday for a calendar to raise money for a burn camp for young Ontario teens.

On Sunday, photographer Leanne Fuchs posed various Acton firefighters with various pieces of fire fighting apparatus in Prospect Park and other Acton locations for the calendar, which is a fundraising effort by the spouses of members of the Acton Firefighter's Association, including Leigh Scully who said the firefighters were somewhat reluctant, but good sports when asked to pose.

The calendars will be on sale at the Acton Fall Fair, beside the Acton Firefighter Association's food booth.

Scam warning

At least one Acton business owner was informed by mail last week that she'd had won 625,862 Euros – \$ 882,464 Canadian – in the Loteria Del Atlantico, and to claim her prize, she had to fill out a form that asked for her banking information and next of kin.

Along with congratulations, officials looking seals and verification numbers, the "winner" was asked to sign a declaration that she'd hand over 10 per cent of the prize and asked to keep her win a secret until the claim was processed as part of security protocol.

Police advise never give anyone your banking or other personal information, and that no legiti-

mate lottery would operate in that manner.

Unsafe swimming

The Old Beach in Prospect Park was one of three Halton beaches where high bacteria levels made the water unsafe for swimming.

That's the third week in a row that Halton Health Department tests have showed high bacteria levels at the Fairy Lake beach, underscoring the need to call Halton's beach hotline to check before swimming.

The information at 1-866-442-5866 is updated weekly or as conditions change.

Curious George's visit

Curious George will be visiting the Acton branch of the library on Thursday July 26 and Saturday, July 28, and children aged three-to-five are invited to a Curious George party featuring stories, crafts and the monkey himself.

For details, call the River Street branch at 519-853-0301.

Kids are invited to bring their own popcorn to free movies that are screened on Fridays at 2 p.m.

Included in the lineup are *Charlotte's Web*, *Harry Potter* and *The Series of Unfortunate Events* featuring Lemony Snicket.

No registration is required, but seating is limited.

Duffers donate

Thanks to generous donations from members of the Acton Ladies Golf League, there is more food on the shelves at Acton's food bank.

At their "Christmas in July" golfing event earlier this month at Acton Golf Club, league members were asked to bring a non-perishable food item, and they collected 311 pounds of food for FoodShare.

"We don't need any more candles or knickknacks to exchange as gifts, and we all want to help a good cause, so we collected donations for the food bank and raised money for breast cancer," said organizer Fran Reid, adding they will continue raising money for breast cancer with a raffle for a power golf cart in August.

The Way I See It

with
Mike O'Leary



Will be back



♪♪ Cruising down the river... ♪♪

Acton knew her as plain Maisie Roach worldwide she was Mazo de la Roche

"Has anyone every written a novel using Acton as the setting?" a reader asks. She obviously never knew much about Mazo de la Roche, the enigmatic icon of Canadian literature, who lived in Acton from 1905 to 1908. At least two, and probably three of her internationally acclaimed Jalna series, which sold over 18 million copies, used Acton as the setting.

Over the three year period from 1905 to 1908 the acclaimed author was plain Maisie Roach who lived on Main St. in Acton, a fact she completely ignored in her autobiography. *Ringing the Changes*. But Daniel L. Bratton in his book, *Thirty Two short views of Mazo de la Roche*, brought new insights into the controversial lady who enthralled generation of readers.

One of her books, *Delight*, was certainly about Acton, covering the years she lived here, Bratton writes, and he believed de la Roche used Acton's geography in *Possession*, transferring it to a lakefront setting in the mythical town of *Brancepeth*.

"The physical setting of the novel bears "remarkable resemblance" to Acton with its inclusion of the hotels, the large tannery, glove factories, the park with its race track bordering the mill pond, nearby quarries and grey stone farmhouses nestling in the hills," Bratton wrote.

Coles' Slaw

with
Hartley Coles



But why wouldn't de le Roche mention Acton in her autobiography? Is being left out of it more noteworthy than being included?

Bratton thinks so.

Mazo must have been 26-year-old when she moved to Acton with her family and cousin Caroline. Her father, W.R. Roche was the proprietor of the Acton House, a hotel which he rebuilt around 1905 after a fire has destroyed the original stone hotel at the corner of Main and Mill Streets, now the site of Halton Hills Furniture and Appliances; it has also been the site of a Bank of Nova Scotia, Acton Creamery and the Bell Telephone Exchange as well as Bill Yundt's Pharmacy, after the Acton House met with a similar fiery fate. Acton's Early Days refers to the Roche family as Roach, suggesting the Gallic equivalent may have been pretentious in local eyes.

Bratton says it is simply literacy licence, a Mazo obfuscation, keeping Acton's identity a secret, part of a game she played in real life as well, altering her surname, referring to her cousin Caroline as her sister - and deleting nine years from her age. However, the feeling in

Acton has been that Ms. de la Roche's pretensions extended to concealing the fact her father ran the Acton House with its bawdy, raucous patrons, not very high on the social scale.

Since the career of W.R. Roche spanned such jobs as cigar salesman and clothing cutter, facts she also avoided mentioning in her autobiography, there may have been some truth in the local feeling. The family were members of St. Alban's Church and active in social events that included parties at the Beardmore residence, Beverly House, the elite social centre of the village.

The Roche family lived in the brick house now occupied by the DeMelo Chiropractic and Wellness Centre at 25 Main Street North. Acton's Early Days says older residents recalled seeing the Misses Roche "driving about town with a Shetland pony and two wheeled cart." In his book, *Halton Sketches Revisited*, John MacDonald notes Mazo de la Roche was already successful at selling her stories to magazines while living in Acton... and at least two of her novels used Acton settings."

So yes, there have been novels using Acton as the setting by one of the most acclaimed writers of the 20th Century. There may be others this writer is not familiar with. Perhaps some reader knows of another. Meanwhile, there's a tremendous amount of material available to write another.