

GRAPEVINE



Reid touts Vancouver

Former Acton native Reid Hendry has become the “face and sound” of Vancouver in that city’s just released tourism video called *It’s You ... Vancouver*. The production is billed as among the world’s first professionally produced destination films in a music video format. It features a song by Reid’s band *Watasun*, which was filmed at various iconic Vancouver locations. Check out the video at www.watasunmusic.com

Free tax clinics

Lower income Acton area residents are invited to have their income taxes done, for free, this month and next, courtesy of the Canada Revenue Agency’s Community Volunteer Income Tax program. Locally, it will be offered at the Links2Care office on Mill Street.

Those who qualify include single people who earn less than \$25,000, and couples who earn less than \$35,000. For details, call Cathy at 519-853-3310.

Auto efficiency

A recent Town report on a farm tax deferral program prompted talk of how did we ever live and prosper without the wide array of technological devices and apps out there these days? The report said it takes one staff a full week to process just over 500 farm bills with a value of \$402,000. The Town’s automated tax software allows one staff member to produce over 19,000 tax bills valued at over \$90-million in a week, with fewer errors.

Football officials wanted

Ever wanted to be a football ref? If yes, the Lakeshore Football Officials Association is looking for you. The Association promotes and develops football officials to work all amateur football – including high school and rep. teams in Halton, Peel, Niagara and Flamborough. Males and females at least 16, that want to become Lakeshore Football officials can contact the recruiting co-ordinator at lfoa_recruiter@hotmail.com

Maple Madness

The sticky sweet harbinger of spring – maple syrup – is flowing and both Mountsberg and Crawford Lake Conservation Areas are firing up for two

syrup festivals. Beginning Saturday and running until April 9 on weekends, March Break and holidays, Mountsberg welcomes visitors to its sugar bush which has been producing maple syrup for 150 years. Mountsberg stages the Flap Jack Olympics on Sunday, March 4.

It is Sweetwater Season at Crawford Lake where the watery sap from 500 trees will be transformed into maple syrup at the Sugar Shanty. For detail visit www.conservationhalton.ca or call 905-854-2276.

Diamond Jubilee Medals

Do you know of an outstanding member of the community who deserves to be nominated for a Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Medal?

The medals pay special tribute to Queen Elizabeth’s 60 years on the throne and honour her life-long commitment to her responsibilities by recognising those who have made significant contributions to Ontario and Canada.

Over 2,000 Ontarians will receive a Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Medal. A nomination form is available at Ontario.ca/honoursandawards

In like a lion out like a lamb

Can animals predict weather? If March comes in like a lion, it will go out like a lamb, or is that saying just another folksy belief that there is a balance in weather and life. So, if a month came in bad (like a lion), it should go out good and calm (like a lamb).



March is such a changeable month with warm spring-like temperatures and late-season snowstorms, underscoring the saying. The Farmer’s Almanac has a lot to say about March weather:

- A dry March and a wet May? Fill barns and bays with corn and hay.

- As it rains in March so it rains in June.

- March winds and April showers? Bring forth May flowers.



ULTIMATELY INNOCENT: Three wrongly convicted people – Romeo Phillion (left) Tammy Marquardt and Anthony Hanemaayer – joined human rights activist, lawyer James Lockyer (standing) at the Absolutely Acton Speakers Series presentation on Sunday at the Acton Town Hall Centre. – Ted Tyler photo

Innocent until proven guilty?

Can you provide detailed information about where you were, say on December 9, 2011 and provide times of when you were where, who you were with, and can it be verified? December 9 might be a little vague for you to remember, so how about January 22, 2012? If you were accused of a crime, can you account for your whereabouts to show that you did not do it? What would you do if you matched the physical description of one of Canada’s worst criminals, and were convicted of one of his crimes, because you couldn’t prove exactly what you did on a certain day?

On Sunday, I attended the third event in the Absolutely Acton Speaker’s Series at the Acton Town Hall Centre. The guest speaker was well-known Toronto criminal lawyer James Lockyer, an advocate for the wrongfully convicted. I was fortunate once before to meet him very briefly, and I was eager to hear what he had to say about his work with the wrongfully convicted.

Lockyer doesn’t appear to me as a stereotypical lawyer. When I mentioned the event and him in conversation a week or so ago, I described him as the lawyer you see on T.V. with shaggy hair. Then I placed my hands by my head and physically described the long, curly hair. Instantly they knew who I was referring to.

However, within moments of him beginning his speaking engagement, I knew his



By
Angela Tyler

shaggy hair but this was an extremely intelligent person, absorbed in details as a lawyer should be, yet as a story-teller of three peoples’ journeys in our justice system he pulled the listeners in.

First, was Anthony Hanemaayer. In 1987, Hanemaayer was convicted of a crime in which Paul Bernardo finally admitted to years later. When police interviewed Hanemaayer he was asked to provide detailed information of his whereabouts on the night of the crime. He said he was with his girlfriend as he was every night. It wasn’t enough, and it was one of the things that contributed to his conviction. In 2008, he was acquitted and in 2010, the Ontario Attorney General informed him that he would not be financially compensated for it.

Next was Tammy Marquardt. Tammy’s son Kenneth died in 1993 of what was later determined to have been caused by an epileptic seizure. However, for 13 years she spent her days behind bars in general population, named a baby killer, because of former paediatric forensic pathologist Charles Smith. He had originally determined that Kenneth died of asphyxiation caused by his mother who was alone at the time with her son. Her murder

charge was withdrawn in June 2011 as a result of Smith’s discredited findings.

In the years that followed Kenneth’s death, Tammy’s two other sons were taken from her by Children’s Aid and adopted by a family together. Annually, Tammy would write her children as she was legally allowed to. They were never given those letters. Her sons found their birth mother through Facebook, and she spent her first Christmas with them this past year.

Romeo Phillion was the final chapter in Lockyers story. Phillion was imprisoned the longest. He spent 31 years in federal prison after being convicted of the murder of an off-duty Ottawa fireman.

What made this engagement so powerful was Anthony, Tammy and Romeo came to Acton to share their stories, invited by Lockyer. On the small refurbished Town Hall Centre stage, perhaps slightly uncomfortable and awkward, they faced the crowd who heard their stories that could have been the plot of a John Grisham novel. However, for them it was not only a story they had told hundreds of times. It was – and is – their life. After listening that afternoon, I don’t agree with the phrase wrongfully convicted. It just isn’t enough for what these people endured. The sad thing is there are hundreds more just like them, only with different stories. This is one of the reasons I am glad Canada doesn’t have the death penalty.