



**SECRET SANTAS:** Sylvia Mitchell (left) was the lucky recipient of a lovely fleecy blanket, but Sandra Gaudet chose to “steal” it at the Secret Santa pre-Christmas gift exchange at the Acton Seniors Centre. – Julie Conroy photo

**HALTON HILLS SENIORS RECREATION CENTRES**  
415 QUEEN ST. E. ACTON



By Julie Conroy

It's hard to believe that it is now 2013. We managed to survive another *End of the World*. Here's hoping for a healthy and happy 2013.

Just a reminder, if you didn't pay your membership by December 31 your name will be pulled from the drum for the 50/50, a good reason to drop by and renew yours. Anyone 55 plus is eligible to join the Centre. There are lots of interesting programs, social events, trips, and an enjoyable spot to drop in and enjoy a coffee. If you find you have time on your hands, especially during the winter months volunteering is a wonderful way of meeting new people and widening your horizons.

the puzzle table is now set up. It just needs people to take a few moments to add to the puzzle, a great way of spending a few moments while chatting to friends, or waiting for a program to start.

The hiking group is still gathering at 10 a.m. on Friday mornings. If after the holiday season you feel you would like a more strenuous activity, the Wednesday morning exercise classes might be more what you have in mind. Another great way of keeping fit while enjoying yourself is the Thursday afternoon Line Dancing class. I shouldn't call it a class, as it is more like a fun get together, dancing to the music. We do miss Pauline. She started up the class and saw it grow from a few members to

30. Pauline, we look forward to seeing you back in the spring.

The long-awaited computer classes are starting on Tuesday, January 8. The first is *Introduction to Computers* the following Tuesday, *Microsoft Office/Open Office*. If you are a beginner looking to learn about computers, or just some aspect of the computer, check out the complete schedule at the front desk, and sign the appropriate sheet. You can bring your own laptop, or share one of the Centre's laptops.

The Friday lunch on January 11 will be spaghetti and caesar salad, plus desert. Don't forget to sign up by Wednesday, and please make sure your name is not down twice. That has happened several times. When we

are paying a restaurant to supply lunch we have to make sure the numbers are correct.

Three more leaves were added to our Tree of Hope just before Christmas in memory of Donna Rowley.

That makes a total of 154 leaves as of December 31, 2012. Thank you for the many generous donations.

On Wednesday, February 20 there is a trip planned to Carmen's dinner theatre in Hamilton to see *From Opera to Elvis*. There are openings for several casino trips also. If you are interested sign the appropriate sheet.

There was no winner at the weekly 50/50 draw on Friday, December 20, 50/50 so next week the amount to be won should be around \$200.

# Happy New Year

That greeting will be said and heard for at least the first couple of weeks of 2013 as a new year gets under way. But the day celebrated as New Year's Day in modern America was not always January 1.

The celebration of the New Year is the oldest of all holidays. It was first observed in ancient Babylon about 4000 years ago. In the years around 2000 BC, the Babylonian New Year began with the first New Moon (actually the first visible crescent) after the Vernal Equinox (first day of spring).

The beginning of spring is a logical time to start a new year. After all, it is the season of rebirth, of planting new crops, and of blossoming. January 1, on the other hand, has no astronomical nor agricultural significance. It is purely arbitrary.

The Babylonian new year celebration lasted for eleven days. Each day had its own particular mode of celebration, but it is safe to say that modern New Year's Eve festivities pale in comparison.

The Romans continued to observe the new year in late March, but their calendar

was continually tampered with by various emperors so that the calendar soon became out of synchronization with the sun.

In order to set the calendar right, the Roman senate, in 153 BC, declared January 1 to be the beginning of the new year. But tampering continued until Julius Caesar, in 46 BC, established what has come to be known as the Julian Calendar. It again established January 1 as the new year. But in order to synchronize the calendar with the sun, Caesar had to let the previous year drag on for 445 days.

Although in the first centuries AD the Romans continued celebrating the new year, the early Catholic Church condemned the festivities as paganism. But as Christianity became more widespread, the early church began having its own religious observances concurrently with many of the pagan celebrations, and New Year's Day was no different. New Years is still observed as the Feast of Christ's Circumcision by some denominations.



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St. John 4:23 KJV

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