

GRAPEVINE

SANTA IS COMING

The Acton Santa Claus Parade will be held on November 15 starting from MacKenzie Smith Bennett School at 1 p.m. This year's theme is 'A Teddy Bear Christmas'. Don't forget your letters to Santa, as postal workers will be walking the parade and collecting them. The Halton Regional Police will also be there to accept any unwrapped toy donations for their 'Toys for Tots' program.

SAVING LIVES

The Acton Blood Donor Clinic held on October 23 had a great response with 63 people willing to donate, and 41 of them being first time donors. There were a total of 53 pints of blood collected. The next clinic will be on November 17 at the Acton Arena from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. The Canadian Blood Services is still in great need of blood and is asking anyone who is eligible to please donate.

TRAVELLING TO PARIS?

Join French travel expert, Patricia Fargeon of Planet France, as she presents her inside tips and not-to-be-missed spots for your itinerary when planning a trip to France. Patricia will be speaking at the Acton Library on October 29. Tickets available at the Library Service Desk, or call 519-853-0301

AUDITIONS

On November 8, Century Church Theatre, Hillsburgh. Auditions for "Dead on Nine", a murder mystery by Jack Poplewell, directed by Martyn Worsnop. 10 a.m. at the Theatre.

Production dates March 20-29. Call 519-855-4586. Details at www.centurychurchtheatre.com

SUICIDE PREVENTION COALITION ANNUAL MEETING

On Friday November 7, Halton residents are invited to attend the Halton Suicide Prevention Coalitions's Annual Meeting and Community Workshop. The focus of this year's event is inclusivity and connecting those at risk of being marginalized with the supports they need.

The annual meeting will feature two speakers - Baldev Mutta who has worked for the last 23 years developing an integrated holistic model to address substance abuse, mental health and family violence within the South Asian community.

Attendees will also hear from Dustin Garron.

Following workshop, the Coalition is also offering a free safe Talk training session, which helps prevent participants identify people with thoughts of suicide, and teaches them how to engage individuals in need and connect them to further help.

The meeting will be held at the Oakville Conference Centre, 2515 Wycroft Road, Oakville 8:30 a.m. The safeTALK training session details will be held at the Halton Regional Centre, South Auditorium, 1151 Bronte Rd., Oakville from 1 to 4 p.m.

Spaces are limited and registration is required. To register for either the meeting or the safeTALK session, please visit halton.ca/suicideprevention email accesshalton@halton.ca or dial 311.

Praise for retiring parade organizers



Bill and Diane Spielvogel - File photo

If you're watching November's Acton Santa Claus Parade, give a cheer to retired firefighter and Parade Chair Bill Spielvogel as his car goes past. Bill's wife Diane also deserves a special thank-you. She'll be at a corner with her grandkids and great-grandkids, refilling the candy baskets. For 30 years, Bill and Diane have been volunteering year-round, up-front and behind the scenes, to put the Santa Claus Parade together. This is their final parade as organizers; Bill's retiring as Chair. Bill was part of the committee formed in 1985 when the Acton Firefighters Association took parade management over from the YMCA. He was nominated Parade Chair in 1986 and held the position ever since. It's been "a labour of love", as Diane says.

It's part of their history. A parade wouldn't work without a band, and the Acton Citizens Band has led the Acton Parade since the beginning. Diane's father (also a firefighter) was in the Acton Citizen's Band. So was Bill's father, and Bill. The families know the pride in cheering as the parade passes, watching out for that special person. It's the same today with Bill and Diane's three daughters, six grandchildren and (almost) 12 great-grandchildren. (The twelfth is due in February 2015). "They're all so proud of their Poppa. They usually all come to watch, except for those that are out west."

There are six bands this year. "The Acton Citizen's Band leads the parade; an-

other band brings in Santa Claus. That leaves four bands to be divided amongst other participants." Diane has special memories of the year the popular Burlington Teen Tour Band took part—"they're that large that we had to ensure there were no vehicles parked on either side of the parade route". New bands are up and coming, and there are requests to participate from across North America.

Preparation starts again as soon as Parade Day ends. "When the bands are paid, they're given a thank you letter and a printed request to consider the date for next year!" There are mailings to go out including early appeals for funding. In the summer, reminders go out to participants. Each year, Bill and Diane choose a parade theme; this year, it's Teddy Bear's Christmas. As confirmations come back, Bill and Diane lay out the order for the procession. Cogeco videos the Parade, but "they

like information ahead of time" so once all entrants are in and the route finalized, Diane writes a blurb on each. A self-described "hoarder", she is sorting through 30 years of parade-related paperwork sorting what needs to be passed on to whoever takes over. Diane worries that costs that are going up, with factors like the requirement for an increased police presence. "It can't be done for much under \$10,000." But that's for next year's Chair to worry about.

The 2014 Teddy Bear's Picnic Parade is just ahead and it's going to be fantastic, thanks in large part to Bill and Diane. Don't forget to look out for them on parade day—as Diane says, "When you get stopped on the street and people say 'Great Parade' it's really nice".

Thank you Bill and Diane for your 30 years of commitment to bringing Santa to Acton and enjoyment to thousands of young at heart.



HAUNTED HIGH: Acton High School will be hosting their annual Haunted House on October 30 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. This year's theme is Terror Tales. - Submitted photo

HAUNTED ASYLUM: Trick or Treaters beware - this house at 329 Queen Street has turned their garage into a Haunted Insane Asylum. Come talk a walk through if you dare. Donations to Links2Care would be appreciated - Marie Shadbolt photo

