

GRAPEVINE



Toy Drive

Want to make a child very happy this Christmas? Leathertown Lumber can help. Once again, Leathertown elves will collect new toys from customers and staff and donate them to the Salvation Army to distribute to needy kids this holiday season. In past years, Leathertown's Christmas Toy Drive – initially an internal effort that customers asked to join – has spread a lot of joy to local kids. The deadline to donate toys is December 12.

One lump....

Cranberry scones, Devonshire cream, dainty finger sandwiches, crafts, gifts, a bake table, and more – there will be something for everyone on Saturday when Churchill Community Church hosts its annual English Christmas Tea. The popular Church fundraiser runs from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m.

Smile

Acton's M. Susan MacPhail wants to put a smile on your face – actually, she wants to put a sparkling smile on your face. The Registered Dental Hygienist, with over 30 years of experience in dentistry, opened an office at 46 Mill St. East, and is inviting new clients to come check her out.

Christmas Memories

There will be fancy fiddling, seasonal songs and lots of laughs when Canadian fiddle champion Scott Woods and his band play a Christmas Memories concert on December 2 at Acton's Knox Presbyterian Church.

The Scott Woods Band, known for playing old time fiddle, traditional country, swing and Gospel music travels extensively throughout Canada each year, helping to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for churches, charities and other community organizations. For tickets call 519-853-2360.

Policing 101

Interested in learning about the Forensic Identification Unit, the Rescue Unit or the Collision Reconstruction Unit? Halton police has spots available for the upcoming session of the

Citizen Police Academy – an informative and innovative program that runs on Tuesday nights for 10 weeks, beginning January 24.

This voluntary program is designed for those who want to improve their knowledge of police work. For details visit www.haltonpolice.ca

Everybody Dance

Thirty-two Grade four and five students from the Robert Little School Everybody Dance Club will perform tonight (Thursday) at the annual Creating a Scene, Halton Dance and Drama Takes the Stage event in Mississauga. The Robert Little dancers – who will be the youngest performers – will do a routine to music from the movie *Slumdog Millionaire*.

The students will be outfitted in special hats, paid for by the Rotary Club of Acton.

Hello, Santa

Approximately 325 letters to Santa were collected by Acton Post Office elves during Acton's Santa Claus parade on Saturday. Postal elves – two retired posties and one current employee, collected the precious letters all along the route, and will make sure that they get to Santa before Christmas.

Want to drop a note to St. Nick and get a reply? Write to Santa at his NORTH POLE H0H 0H0 address. Each letter with a return address will receive a reply from Santa, thanks to the hard work of the Postal Elves, who help Santa answer every letter in the language it was written, including Braille. Emails are answered in English or French. Santa will get more than one million letters this year, and 43,000 e-mails.

Oh, Santa

The invitation to "tell Santa what you want for Christmas" led to interesting and varied responses on Saturday at the Roxy when hundreds gathered to tell old St. Nick their secret wish list, and have a free photo taken courtesy of the Acton BIA (Business Improvement Area.)

Acton's Joshua Hoffman, 15 months, wants just one thing for Christmas – his mom.



UNDIE SUNDAY: Knox Presbyterian Church holds its second "Undie Sunday" on November 27 to gather new underwear – preferably still in its package – to send to Evangel Hall. Last year, the congregation sent 222 items – new underwear and some gently-used clothing to those in need. Church officials hope this is one project everyone will "really get behind." – Submitted photo

Science Matters

By David Suzuki



A kerfuffle is raised every time a comedian, politician, or businessperson uses the F-word or the N-word. I understand that. But to me, the D-word is the most obscene. I'm referring to *disposable*. Let me explain.

When I was a boy, we were poor and it was a big deal when my parents bought me a new coat. I would quickly outgrow it, and it would be passed on to my sister. My parents boasted that three of their children had worn the same coat. They weren't concerned (nor were we kids) about gender differences or fashion; it was the coat's ability to keep the wearer warm and its durability (now there's a good D-word) that mattered.

We now have an economic system in which companies must not only show a profit each year, they must strive for constant growth. If a product is rugged and durable, it creates a problem for even the most successful business – a diminishing and eventually saturated market. Of course, any product will eventually wear to a point where it can no longer be patched, so the market will continue to exist to replace worn products.

But that's not good enough in a competitive world driven by the demand for relentless growth in profits and profitability. So companies create an aura of obsolescence, where today's

product looks like a piece of junk when next year's model comes out. We've lived with that for decades in the auto industry.

I've always said a car is simply a means of getting from point A to point B, but it's become far more than that. Some cars convey a sense of power, and cars become safe havens when loaded with cup holders, sound systems, and even TVs and computers. Some people even name their cars, talk to them, and care for them like babies – until next year's models come along.

It's similar with clothing, even with outdoor attire beloved by environmentalists. We have a proliferation of choice based on colour, sexiness, and other properties that have nothing to do with function. I don't understand torn blue jeans as a fashion statement, and I wish people would wear their pants till they spring their own leaks rather than deliberately incorporating tears. All of this is designed to get us to toss stuff away as quickly as possible so the economy can keep spinning.

Nowhere is this more obvious than with electronic gadgets. When my wife lost the cord to charge her cellphone, she went to seven stores. None had the necessary plug for her phone. Finally she went back to the retailer that sold her brand only to be told that the cords for the new models don't fit

the old ones and hers was so old, it wasn't even on the market any more. It was a year-and-a-half old.

I remember when I was given the first laptop computer on the market. It had an LED display screen that let me see three lines at a time and a chip that stored about three pages of writing. But it was small and had word processing and a port to send my pieces by telephone. It revolutionized my life. I was writing a weekly column for the *Globe and Mail* and was able to send articles from Russia and even remote towns in the Amazon.

A couple of years later, a much better laptop hit the market. It had an LCD screen, a huge memory, and it displayed almost a full page. I got one. A year later, I got a new model, and then half a year after that, another. Each served me well, but every year, new ones would appear that were faster, smaller, and lighter, with longer-life batteries and more bells and whistles.

Try to get one fixed or upgraded, though. As with digital cameras, I was repeatedly told that it would cost more to fix an old laptop than to buy a new model. This is madness in a finite world with finite resources. At the very least, products should be created so components can be pulled apart and reused until they wear out.

You see why I think the D-word is so obscene.

