



SMOKING HAY: A stubborn straw bale fire north of Acton had fire fighters using heavy equipment to help fight the smoky blaze. Fire investigators (right) are seen checking the area for clues. - Les Schmidt photos

Whatever the weather - it's 'Chilli' as planned for Acton Winter Carnival

By: Jane Dougan

If you notice crossed fingers around town, they belong to Acton Winter Carnival organizers hoping for freezing temperatures towards the end of the week. At least a couple of days are needed to flood and freeze ice rinks before Sunday's 6th Annual Winter Carnival. The rinks are needed for activities planned by the Acton Curling Club and an Outdoor House League Hockey Tournament.

Whatever the weather, there will still be lots to do starting with the Acton Air Cadets fund-raising Pancake Breakfast at 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Town Hall. And free family-friendly events starting at 11 a.m. at Prospect Park include chain-saw ice carving demonstra-

tions and sculpture, and a children's activity "where kids can paint and use ice to build things," said Acton BIA Manager Sheena Switzer. There will still be dog-cart rides and tractor rides for the kids, as well as children's crafts in the Boathouse and bingo in the Dufferin Centre. The Acton Scouts will be overseeing the bonfires, and town councillors will be rustling up barbecued hamburgers and hot dogs.

The great Chilli Cook Off starts at 3 p.m. at the Town Hall. Closing ceremonies are at 5 p.m. at the Town Hall.

To volunteer or for more information, check Facebook (www.facebook.com/ActonWinterCarnival) or get in touch with Sheena by email (actonbia@cogeco.net) or phone (519 853-9555).

Ontario to raise fees charged to water bottling companies

The Ontario Government is proposing to raise the fees it charges to water bottling companies for the use of groundwater.

Ontario currently charges \$3.71 for every million litres of water drawn for all water-taking permits. The Government is proposing to increase that fee to \$503.71 per million litres for water bottling companies who use groundwater.

Wellington-Halton Hills MPP Ted Arnott is questioning where the extra revenue is going.

"No one is objecting to an increase in the fees that water bottling companies pay to the Provincial Government. But where is the money going?" he asked. "How much revenue will the new fee bring in? Will it go into a dedicated fund for water protection, or are we just supposed to trust them?"

Mr. Arnott has been monitoring the issue closely and has argued that any

increase in the fee charged for taking water should be shared with the municipalities affected.

"Since last August, I've been saying that the Government should commit to substantially share any fee increases with the affected local municipalities," Mr. Arnott said. "Our local municipalities are impacted by extensive reporting requirements and an increase in trucks on our local roads. If the Government is unwilling to share the new revenue it raises, people will rightly conclude that this is just another cash grab."

The proposal has been posted to Ontario's Environmental Registry for 60 days of public comment.

In October, the Government announced a two year moratorium on the approval of new or expanded water taking permits for water bottling companies.

Town Council reserves rights to build trail

By: Vivien Fleisher

Council received a request for the removal of a holding provision for Call-dron Gas Bar Ltd. at 10365 Highway 7 in Esquesing with regard to a proposed 18-hole golf course, which was submitted and received site plan approval.

Councillor Jane Fogal explained that the development has a history to it: a hydro corridor goes through it, and she reminded council that several years ago, the municipality was asked if they had any interest in it (for a park etc.), which they indicated they did, even if they weren't planning to build a trail right away. Fogal said, "...we all knew from our experience that our current rail trail is 1 km. long and then it ends, and we had let go the opportunity for a trail 20 years ago and that was probably one of our worst decisions. Everyone else has got a rail trail and we've got 1 km."

After being appealed to the Active Transportation committee, a resolution was passed recommending they open the trail option. Fogal: "Unfortunately, the golf course, if you looked at it, went all over the hydro land. I don't believe at

the time they had an agreement with Hydro to do that. Now this has come back again and I was pleased to find out that staff actually preserved the option to still have a trail on that hydro land.

Senior Planner Jeff Markowiak then explained how they achieved this, saying that Hydro One still owns the corridor, but they ventured into a lease agreement with the golf course that allowed them to encroach and use part of the corridor. Through negotiations with Hydro One and the golf course developer, they secured arrangements through that agreement that would provide for the option of a trail along the hydro corridor where the golf course encroaches should the town decide to move forward with implementation of a trail.

Once the town is in a position to develop that trail, the owners of the golf course have acknowledged that any changes necessary to the golf course to accommodate that trail so the two can coexist would be made at the developer's own expense. The lease agreement has been updated so the town now has the right to go in and build the trail once ready.

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