

GRAPE VINE

outside Ottawa. Gary, remembered as deputy fire chief in Rockwood and an employee of Acton's Leathertown Lumber, and his wife moved to the Ottawa area to open a micro brewery.

Reprieve for Acton X-Ray

Acton's X-Ray clinic will be open for at least one more month. The operator, Diagnostic Imaging Associates of Windsor, had planned to close the clinic last Wednesday but have extended operations for another month. Clinic staff complain they are in the dark about what is happening — DIA officials give them the same answer they regularly give the Tanner, "No comment". Apparently there are negotiations underway that could see a radiologist buy the business and keep the clinic open.

An apple a day

Acton Scout leaders very pleased with the success of their annual Apple Day sale on the weekend. Acton Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Venturers raised over \$1,000 by selling 15 bushels of apples. After paying for the apples, they made a \$700 profit. Leader Karl Heidi said the money would be used to buy supplies for the troops, new equipment and to pay for outings. The generous Scouts also donated two bushels of apples to FoodShare, Acton's food bank.

Video

Acton's Mary Daley got a nice surprise when she returned from a summer-long vacation. She was the big winner of Video Station's July draw for 20 free movie rentals. Daley, who said it is the first prize she has ever won, had forgotten about the contest until she was told she had won.

Oh you beautiful doll!

Doll-making instructors from Europe and the United States are booked to come to Acton next year to teach specialized classes at the Doll Emporium on Mill Street. The Doll Emporium is presently undergoing major renovations with a second storey is being added to provide classroom and demonstration space for the new School of Dollmaking, which will open in December. Carla Snels, daughter of owner Elisabeth Snels, tells the Tanner they hope to remain open while the construction is underway.

Right-of-way wrangle

Ali, owner of Jug City on Mill Street, is spending a lot of time with lawyers and planners these days. They are working on a proposal to tear down the garage and building behind the variety store and laundry coin wash to make way for two or three new stores. The plans are at a very preliminary stage and the next step is to negotiate a new right-of-way to stores and apartments that back onto the Willow-Church parking lot. Good luck Ali; that area could use a major spruce-up.

What ever happened to?

Word has it that former Rockwood resident Gary Lawton is having a lot of success with the suds at Hart Brewery in Carleton Place, just



SURPRISED AND PROUD! Effie and Andy Katsilieris were presented with the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce Business of the Month award for October. Executive director Terry Jackson said Andy's Family Restaurant has received the most award nominations of any business to date. (Frances Niblock photo)

Christmas cake making — a family operation!

I used to loathe those kids who came to school in October boasting smugly that their mothers had made their Christmas cakes already, months in advance of the annual feast. Being prepared was admirable, but why carry the rule to the extreme?

In our family, for various reasons, we were accustomed to last-minute activities, a habit that dogged us all in later life. Our mother rarely initiated the ritual of making Christmas cakes until the last week of November, more often the first week of December. In retrospect, I can understand why. With four young daughters shadowing every move, it was a wonder she ever summoned fortitude enough to begin the struggle with sticky raisins, nuts, currants and maraschino cherries.

It was taken for granted that her offspring, even the youngest, should have a hand in operation cut-up and stir. Our tasks around the kitchen table were to chop up the sticky raisins and nuts, without snitching the goodies. As the eldest, I was expected to police my sisters' handiwork — no mean feat — which left me almost no opportunity of sneaking some nuts for myself. One sibling, more nimble-fingered and quicker-witted than the rest of us, pirated the most loot, usually without being detected. If we squealed and mom questioned her, she would roll her big brown eyes, shake her head, and sit there a picture of innocence. While hankering to boot her several wallops where they would do the most good, I had to admire her performances, which I could never emulate. When I sinned I always got caught, so I transgressed rarely, it being less trouble.

I disliked mincing sticky raisins that mom called sultanas. They stuck to knives and fingers, taking twice as long as the rest of the ingredients to prepare. Maraschino cherries were a different matter. We all loved handling them, smell-

PETUNIA PATCH

With Esther Taylor



ing them and tasting them when mom turned her back.

The kitchen rang with accusations and counter-charges.

"Hey mom, Esther stole a cherry."

"No I didn't, but you did, your mouth is sticky."

"Mo-o-om, Babe has two cherries in her mouth."

"Leave the child alone. She's only a baby. You're old enough to know better."

We learned early that there were certain advantages in being the youngest of the family.

At long last, the fruit and nuts were ready for the big mixing bowl that Mom had brought with her from England. At this point in Operation Cake, her face glowed pink, even the tip of her nose. No wonder, surrounded by four little savages who now jostled for position in the stirring line-up. Babe got first stir, natch, "because she's the youngest." As the most senior cook, I dipped my spoon in last and stirred the mixture so vigorously that the bowl almost upset.

The next step required silent prayer and caution, after the cake pans were filled to hopeful levels. Now it depended on the Monster, an old cook stove without an oven dial. That stove kept us warm within its limits, but as a baking aid it left much to be desired. Mom never knew for sure how her buns and cakes would emerge from the oven.

Once the door closed on the cake pans, the assistant cooks were ordered to make themselves scarce. "Read, sleep anything — but I don't want you thundering about the kitchen until those cakes are done."

What a suspenseful wait as the kitchen filled with the indescribable aroma of baking sweetness. We hoped, but dare not voice it, that the smallest cake would burn a little on top, so that we could persuade our harassed parent to cut it in advance. Wise to the guile, mom warned: "I don't care if it's burned to a cinder, we aren't touching one cake until Christmas."

She might have remained adamant, deaf to our combined pleas, if the youngest had not added her shrill entreaties. Confronted by Babe's imploring countenance, mom relented. When the cakes were decanted, she tut-tutted at imperfections, but thanked God they had not fallen in the middle.

Selecting one cake, excessively brown from the uneven heat of the Monster, she brandished her knife, and then cut with a flourish five even slices. It was a moment of sensuous delight that silenced four little savages. Other mothers might make their Christmas cakes weeks early, but they couldn't taste like ours still warm from the Monster.

One hears little these days about the family ritual of making Christmas cakes. Most of the householders in my limited acquaintance buy their cakes at the supermarket or bakery. There are devices now that mince fruit and nuts automatically. None of the kids I know have ever chopped up cherries or helped to stir. A pity. I'm glad I lived in the years when making a Christmas cake was a family operation, complete with sibling arguments, maternal tolerance and wry English amusement.

(This column originally appeared in the Acton Voice in 1985.)

HEY!

What do you think of the move in Halton to market value assessment?



"I think all Acton residents will suffer because they are basing the tax rate on 1988 when the economy was booming and land values were up. I couldn't sell my house now if I wanted to."

Debbie Dunn, R.R. 4, Acton



"I think that it is very unfair to make Acton residents pay more taxes just to equalize taxes in Milton and Burlington. It's not fair and a lot of people might lose their homes because of it."

Gloria Dunne, Mill Street



"It's just another way the government is trying to get money from the little guy that can't afford it. It's just another way to tighten the screws on the little guy. It's not fair."

Allan Adams, Duby Road



"I don't think this is the right time to raise taxes with the way the economy is. It doesn't sound like it's fair, even if they plan to phase it in over four years."

Tim Stanley, Queen Street