

# GRAPE VINE

## Royal Mini Mart sold

After 22 years at the helm of Acton's Royal Mini Mart, Don Gray has sold his business to Acton newcomer Rafi Calcuttawala.

The deal closed Monday, much to the relief of Don who says he is ready to work part-time, three days a week for the new owner.

Rafi, an engineer from Pakistan, says he plans to make some changes at the store including longer hours to serve commuters and students.

## Hostile reception

Acton's current cut-throat video pricing war is a message to Chris Pang, of Toronto, who will open Acton's ninth video store within weeks in the IGA plaza.

An Acton merchant, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told the Tanner that the owners want Pang to know that they intend to put him out of business before he starts.

The source says at least one Acton store is renting videos for 49 cents and another has a two-for-99 cents offer in an effort to show Pang that this town isn't big enough for all of them.

## No pussy footin' around

Two Acton felines, Labelinka's Allegro (Mischa) and My Blue Heaven (Gershwin), came away big winners from the recent "No Name Cat Show." The two-day event in Milton attracted cats from

across Canada and the United States.

At just eight months of age, the two Balinese not only earned their Championship titles, but each also was awarded a "Best Premiere in Show."

All of this followed an exciting kitten career in which they earned several top-10 placings in shows throughout Ontario. Bred by Madge and Bill Turner of Acton, Mischa and My Blue Heaven are owned by Acton's David and Susanne Keith.

## Teen turmoil?

Need help coping with raising a teen? Acton's Parent-Aid can help with friendly advice and calm support. The next meeting of Parent-Aid is Wednesday, Dec. 9 in the teachers' lounge at Acton High School. Everyone is welcome.

## Deck the Hills

Acton's Eastern Avenue will look more festive this week thanks to the B.I.A. Some new Christmas decorations, snowflakes, will be installed along the street as part of the Holiday spruce-up.

## Seasonal splash

Water babies and divers and St. Nick will be featured at the 19th annual Acton Christmas water show on Friday at the Indoor Pool.

Recreation and Parks swimmers will show their new skills and Santa Claus will make an appearance to hand out candy. Admission is free. Show time, 7 pm.

Acton pool staff are also getting ready for a Christmas Spirit swim on Saturday, Dec. 12 from 2-4.

The admission fee will be waived if swimmers donate a can of food for the needy.



CELEBRATING SEVEN! There was pizza, balloons and good deals as Acton's Elliott family celebrated the seventh anniversary of their Pre-View Video store with a gala party on the weekend. Robin and Paul are shown here with their children Matt and Jennifer the Lion. (Frances Niblock photo)

# Winter in the Twenties

Memory plays queer pranks. I can remember the summers, springs and falls of my childhood in warm detail, because they were full of activities. When I think of past winters, there are many blanks, black holes in my mind, perhaps best explained by a psychologist.

Winter was never my favourite season, and the older I grow, its scant appeal diminishes. I agree with a local farmer who quipped: "Winter is eight months of cold and snow, followed by four months of poor sleighing." Not original, but right on the button, in my judgment.

I remember old-time winters meant a constant battle against cold and chilblains, a daily struggle with long-legged combinations that had to be folded at the ankle under black stalkings. I never mastered the art as my sisters did, so my stalkings always bulged unbecomingly. Sometimes in milder weather we donned fleece-lined bloomers that bunched horribly under dresses and skirts. I envy today's youngsters toddling to school in snow suits and warm boots that keep out the cold and snow unlike our dreadful old rubbers. Those rubbers surely were the devil's invention. I hated them, especially when ploughing through snow drifts that yanked off our footwear as if by human hands.

However, even winter had some bright spots. I remember my 10th winter when I was blessed with a new sleigh for Christmas. It was called Flyer and it was my most treasured possession.

I spent every spare minute mastering my Flyer until it handled like a charm. My favourite means of locomotion was a prone position, tummy-down on the sleigh, mitts gripping the steering device. I couldn't steer sitting up, in fact I was too cowardly to risk this stance, despite the jeers of my companions who whizzed down hills guiding their sleighs by foot manipulation.

Our choicest and strictly forbidden hills were old Main Street North

from the railway tracks down to the school creek. It was a marvelous run when the snow was packed firm by cutters and sleighs and the infrequent car. We recognized and ignored the dangers of this well-travelled route.

One crisp, cold night, I sneaked out with my Flyer to go sledding with the gang. For an hour we had a wonderful time skimming down from the tracks and toiling back again up the glistening slope. Our fun lasted until a horse and cutter jangled into view. Startled by the sight of racing vehicles, the horse shed and galloped away over the tracks, out of control.

My joy vanished. I was terrified and shivering with guilt. I knew there would be bodies lying in the snow, and I was partly to blame. The rest of the gang fled, leaving me alone on the road. I grasped the ropes of my Flyer, and slowly, every step enforced, crept up the hill to learn the worst. Once over the tracks I perceived two figures, a man and a woman, moving slowly.

"Are you all right? It was my fault, and I'm sorry!" panted the solitary culprit.

The couple, whose name I did not learn, assured me they were unhurt in spite of a tumble from the runaway cutter. They said the horse would head home, and they were going to phone for transport by a neighbour. I have never known such relief and gratitude and I vowed from that night on, old Main Street North would be off limits for me and my Flyer. I kept my vow, although the gang taunted me mercilessly. I figured if I had a guardian angel, I should not overwork him.

This caution did not extend to another sport that would have added

grey hairs to my mother's golden brown head, if she had known of it. Until I was 12, I used to hook rides on the back of sleighs and wagons carrying loads of turnips to the Station. Our purpose was more felonious than recreational. The trick was to hoist oneself up high enough on the sleigh to knock off a turnip. Practice made almost perfect. One late afternoon, I scoffed a dozen turnips and trundled the loot home in triumph, armed with a tale that the vegetables had fallen off overloaded sleighs. Mom did not openly question the fabrication, but she accepted it because a turnip added flavour to cold-weathered soup.

Kids are natural scroungers, some more so than others. Until I edged uneasily into adolescence, I could scrounge with the best of my peers. I remember a year's-end pursuit that must have sent local shopkeepers well-nigh bonkers. In the last week of December we collected calendars, going purposely from store to store. As if it were our right to request give-aways.

The most prized calendars featured old-world scenics encrusted with a crystalline substance like snow. Our annual quest was incomplete without one of these treasures. Today's scroungers would fare ill compared with my generation, who could hike through the snow to four grocery stores, three clothing shops, two shoe stores, two drug stores, and at least two butcher shops.

Winter and the Twenties had its traditions that we kids enjoyed, but most of us were glad to see the end of "eight months of snow and cold, followed by four months of poor sleighing weather."

## PETUNIA PATCH

With Esther Taylor



# HEY!

Have you finished your Christmas shopping?



"Actually I'm about a half-way done. The major gifts are out of the way and I just need stocking stuffers. You have to do a lot of price comparing this year to find the best deals."

Diane Hancock, Main Street South

"No I haven't finished my shopping. I haven't even started and maybe I might not do it at all because I'm on a government cheque now and money is tight."

Wayne Hogben, Young Street



"No I haven't finished but I have bought two presents already. I have another 10 people to shop for, but I probably will wait and get those gifts at the last minute."

Dianne Greavette, R.R. 1, Acton

"I finished some of my shopping but I still have presents that I have to get for people. I'm having lots of fun shopping and don't have too many things left on my list."

Lloyd MacDonald, R.R. 2, Acton

