

GRAPE VINE

Shopping spree winner

Gwen Whey, a 32-year-old Greenore Crescent resident is the lucky winner of a \$200 downtown shopping spree in the BIA's Christmas Wish List promotion.

BIA chair Roberta Holmes drew Gwen's name Friday, concluding the first-time holiday promo.

"I haven't decided what I'll buy with the money," admitted Gwen on Monday. "I might just do something totally frivolous with it!"

BIA co-ordinator Janis Fread was pleased with the interest in the promo: "Most of the ballots that were entered did serve their purpose — people did go into shops and check out specific gift items."

According to Janis, at least one Acton employer is now getting into the spirit by handing out "Downtown Dollars" for employee holiday bonuses. This should pump a fair amount of cash into local shops this Christmas.

Subway comes clean!

For the second straight year, Acton's Subway sub shop has been rewarded for being the cleanest store in the region.

Gus and Maria, owners of the Main Street restaurant, were honoured at the chain's holiday party on Sunday in Mississauga.

Spotless restaurants are a corporate priority with Subway: Gus explains that all stores are monitored regularly by unannounced,

unidentified "judges" who pose as customers.

"It takes a lot of hard work to keep this place so clean," said a proud Gus on Monday. "There are lots of clean Subways around Ontario, so there is lots of competition. We were really happy to win again this year."

At top of agenda

If you've ever worried that Georgetown issues take priority over Acton's at municipal council, take heart; new mayor Marilyn Serjeantson seems to have us at the very top of her agenda.

Check out this off-the-top excerpt from Marilyn's inaugural address last Monday: "... commitments will be to construct the Acton arena, and to support a population growth in Acton upwards to 10,000 people."

Good luck — and Godspeed!

Christmas winfall

Barbara House is planning "a special Christmas" for her family after the Acton woman won \$10,000 playing Wintario last week.

House, 50, is a mother of three and grandmother of four. Three weeks ago she was laid off from her job as an order processor at Rockwood Gardens. She and her husband, Leonard, also plan to take a vacation with the money.

The winning ticket was bought at Acton Variety on Mill Street.

Office moves

Acton's Salvation Army Family Services office has a new home. The office has moved to 120 Mill St. E., above the Thrift Store.

Office hours are Tuesday and Thursday from 9:30 am to 12:30. The phone number is 853-5610.



LITTERLESS! M.Z. Bennett 'inspectors' Hayley Green, far left, and Kim Freeland, second from right, check students' lunch bags during the school's monthly Litterless Lunch on Thursday. From left: Ryan Jackson, Kory-Lynn Allen, Kristy Haggett, Katie Nuttall, Robin Deforest and Justin Bailey show off their environment-friendly fare. (Doug Harrison photo)

Honk if you resent Noel

No, no, no. You people are becoming too predictable. I don't mean Noel, as in 'ol Noel. I mean Noël — *mitt ein umlaut*.

Again we find, right in the middle of the Christmas season, the annual battle raging on what to call Christmas time. Do you think that wishing someone a Merry Christmas should be perceived as being some kind of religious taunt? If it is taken as such, the problem lies with those who insist that any mention of Christmas is an insult, no matter the good intentions.

In the last survey of Canadians, over 75% identified ourselves as Christians. As such, Christmas should be a meaningful feast. Year after year though, we stand by and watch Christmas become neutered to the altar of political correctness.

What other group would be expected to accept their major feast being camouflaged? Would Jews like Chanukah to be re-named?

The Ayatollah sentenced Rushdie to death for writing what he interpreted as blasphemous remarks. Other cultures, it seems, are not expected to show the same flexibility that we are. Of course, I'll probably be called a racist or some other derogatory name for giving vent to my frustrations over this issue. One is not allowed to stray from the socially correct straight and narrow. You-know-who forbid that anything be said which might upset someone. Well, I'm upset.

We were at Harvey's in Georgetown last week. One of my favourite carols, A Way in a Manger, was softly playing. The sign on the door said "Holiday Greetings" or some similar neutral rush. I remarked to the cashier that the music was wonderful but the sign should say *Merry Christmas*.

"Oh," he said. "That's a cultural thing."

"Exactly," I thundered, "and my culture celebrates Christmas." I intend to continue making my point in every store I patronize. *Not* saying "Merry Christmas" offends me. Why should I spend my money in a place that offends me?

At the very least "Merry Christmas" should get equal billing with the rest of the seasonal platitudes.

In business, no one ever asks "How are Xmas sales?" Even our

The Way I See It

With Mike O'Leary



left wing national media refers to *Christmas sales* or *Christmas business*. Seems no one gets upset as long as money is mentioned in the same breath as Christmas.

Schools have gotten into the neutral holiday spirit in a big way. Nowadays, "Festive Concerts" or "Winter Celebrations" have taken over from traditional Christmas concerts. Perhaps the most ludicrous example of this thinking happened a few years ago.

In an ill-conceived effort to show Christmas in many lands, they had a bunch of little kids doing a kind of tai chi to Silent Night. This was supposed to show Christmas in China. Problem is, they don't do Christmas in China. New Years they do in a big way — but not Christmas.

Several years ago, government decreed that God had to get out of public schools. When you read what is going on in some Metro schools, it's obvious — God left.

It's time we fought to maintain some of our old seasonal traditions. Just because they're Christian shouldn't make them bad or insulting. Let's cross off our list the stores that wish us Merry Xmas. Why would a store have a sign proclaiming Noël unless they have a French-Canadian clientele?

Wish everyone you meet a Merry Christmas.

I trust those who insist on maintaining this neutralized Christmas will not be offended by my equally neutral, non-denominational seasonal greeting — I hope Rudolph craps all over your roof.

Now that we're in a somewhat "Grinchy" mood, perhaps this is as good a time as any to rhyme off a few other wintertime pet peeves.

Don't you just love people who pass you on the right shoulder during a snow storm traffic jam. Don't you sometimes pray for just a smidge of black ice to put these

fools in the ditch? Well, don't you?

Photo-radar. This NDP tax is a sure-fire addition to anyone's list of most-detested policies. Is it just me, or has Hwy. 401 been closed because of accidents more in the last few months than ever before? Yep, cutting down on cops to collect a few more bucks has sure improved safety.

Windshield washers. Why can't they design one that doesn't ice up? This usually happens when you're behind a truck on the 401. Why do wiper blades always leave a huge smudge right in front of the driver's eyes? The passenger side is so clear you can see Buffalo. To see out the driver's side, you have to scrunch down with your nose on the dash. Communist plot? I wouldn't be surprised.

A new personal peeve this year is the lack of heaters at the Acton arena. The "Bride" spends a lot of time down there and I'm tired of hearing about her frozen whatsits. Mayor Marilyn could really score points if she hustled up a few heaters. I don't want to be an alarmist, but if her Honour wants to get those hockey and figure skating moms peeved at her, don't expect the men to get in the middle.

While we've got her attention; perhaps the Mayor could also check out the length of time it takes to get our downtown cleared of snow after a big snowfall. Business is tough enough in this town without asking customers to jump over snowdrifts to get to a store.

Men's toe rubbers peeve me off. You ladies can wear nice high boots and still be considered fashionable. I was brought up thinking that galoshes are for geeks. Look in any office lobby and you'll see the toe rubbers all lined up. Know what else you'll find? Wet, soggy feet, that's what. You have no idea how cold a Canadian winter is until you get a soaker trying to cross a puddle. Wake-up, Canadian footwear designers — men's toes are people too.

That completes my list of winter peeves. I feel better getting it off my chest. Feel free to add your own. Oh yeah, I almost forgot ... if you see 'ol Noel, blow your horn. He won't be sure what it means, and it'll drive him bonkers.

I'm such a little Dickens.

HEY! Have you altered your driving habits for winter?



"Yes, I guess I did that a long time ago. I look at the conditions and drive accordingly. I have driven in a lot of different conditions in different countries and this is no different than driving on gravel in New Zealand. I take it easier and stay back."

Simon Fraser, Hwy. 25



"Yes, definitely. I don't follow as close, slow down and ease up on the brakes. I always have snow tires on. Just common sense stuff. Some drivers are stupid. I worry about them, not me. It's kind of scary."

Sue Vlietstra, R.R. 3, Acton



"Definitely. I slow down, leave early and try to read other drivers better than when conditions are dry. I hate it when people panic when they see snow."

Steve Edgerton, Danville Avenue



"Yes I have. I'm pretty safe to begin with, but I slow down even more now. What bothers me about other drivers is that I see drunk ones and a lot of excessive speed, especially in the morning rush hour."

Susan Fox, Main Street