

# GRAPE VINE

year (39 from 98) as were 12-hour suspensions (one from 18 last year).

## Media class donates \$20

Jocelyn Perras and her OAC French media class at Acton High raised \$40 – half of which will go to Acton FoodShare – by creating personalized Christmas cards.

They took video images of consumers, transferred them to disk and designed a card using the Corel Draw computer program.

The students spent a month on the media-community service project learning, among other things, the technical process. Each card was created in 25 minutes.

## Little interest in courses

Prior to the school Christmas Break, only eight people had responded to the Acton High School Advisory Council's survey on special interest courses to be offered at the school in February.

"I think we'll have enough people to run an introductory course to computers," says a confident Joyce Bradley, Acton High principal.

The school is currently working to get its 55 computers on the local network and linked to the Halton Board of Education. Once that is fully installed, the program will probably be offered to the community, Joyce says.

## M-S-B rink is open

While many of you are likely aware, the outdoor ice rink behind McKenzie-Smith Bennett is open for all skating enthusiasts.

Night skating will be made available this week when Halton Hills Hydro turns the light on.

## 'Our Town' booming

In only its second year, the Our Town Christmas Cheque campaign has more than exceeded expectations.

As of Dec. 19, 274 loans were approved for \$320,000. That compares to 116 loans and \$144,000 in its inaugural year.

"I think it's just unbelievable," beamed campaign chair Jake Kuiken recently. "I think the key was our method of advertising."

Credit Unions in Acton and Georgetown, in cooperation with the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce launched the "shop local" campaign in November.

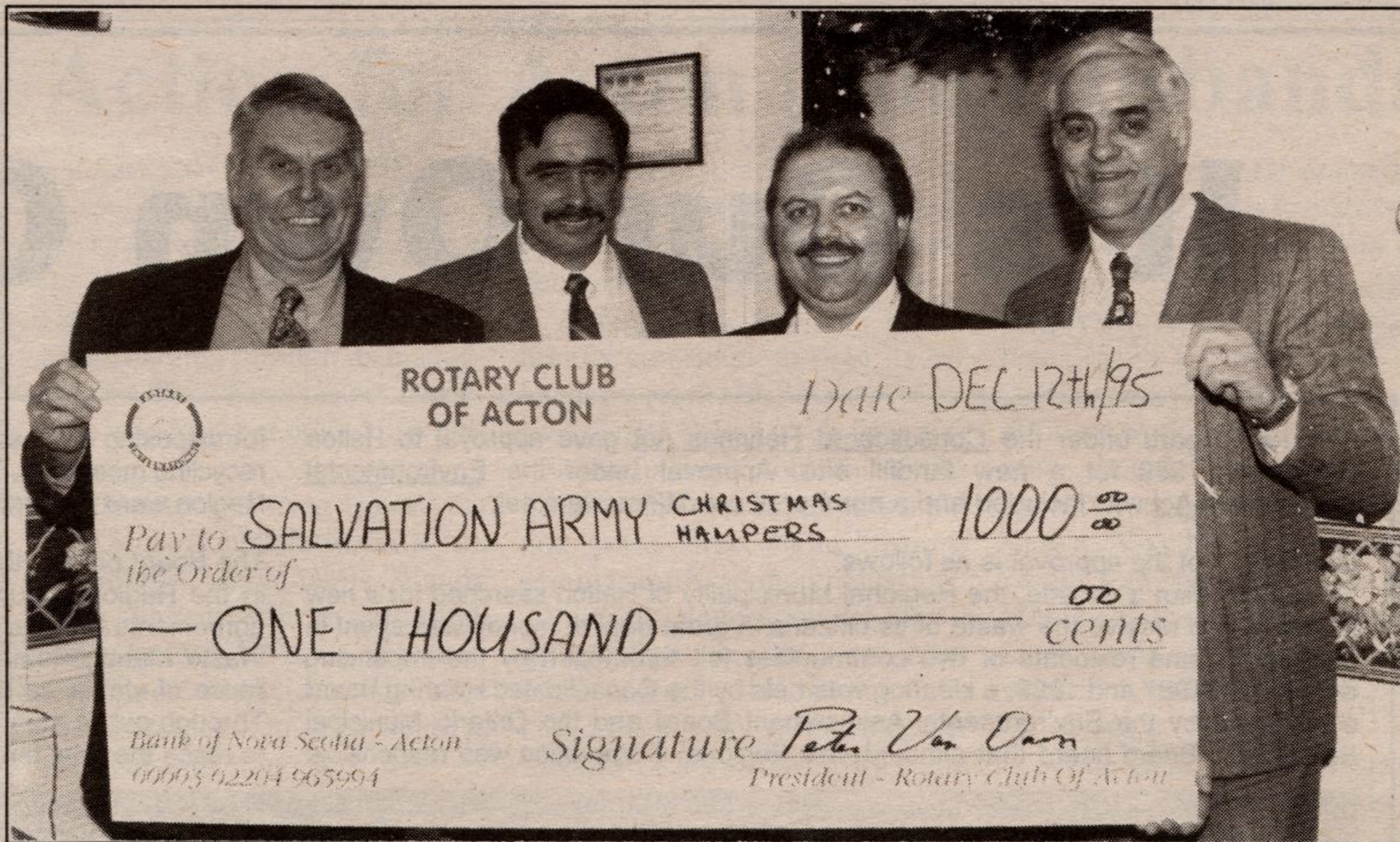
Halton Credit Union wrote loans of between \$500 and \$1,500 to qualified consumers at a zero per cent rate of interest for six months. The money can be spent at the 99 participating local businesses through this Saturday.

## Fewer impaired charges

Maybe the "Don't Drink and Drive" message is finally sinking in.

During their RIDE program through December, Halton Region police stopped 17,110 vehicles and handed out seven impaired charges. In December 1994, 22 impaired charges were laid and 18,686 vehicles were stopped.

Roadside screening devices were also down substantially this



**ROTARY CLUB DONATION:** The Acton Rotary Club recently presented a \$1,000 cheque at Tim Bri Teahouse to the Salvation Army for its Christmas hamper campaign. From left: Doug Fread, John Lomax, Rob Charette and Rotary president Peter Van Dam. (Doug Harrison photo)

# Am I ever glad that's over!

We went to my sister's for dinner on Christmas day. Buuurrrrrpp! Had a great meal. How come my sister couldn't cook like that when we lived at Mom and Dad's?

Why do we over-eat at Christmas? Then, the next day, swear to the heavens never to do so again? Until next Christmas that is.

My New Year's Resolution is to embrace multi-culturalism and become more politically correct. Seriously! I've given it a lot of thought.

For instance, we have to change this image of a jolly fat guy breaking into our houses every Christmas Eve, while "the Missus" (Claus, of course) stays home to do the dishes and mind the elves. It's sexist. Really it is.

Starting in '96 I say Santa and "the Missus" should alternate. It's only fair. Next Christmas she'll be at the reins. This annual slight of women will not be tolerated any longer. One year it'll be Santa and the next "Sandra Claus."

This whole reindeer thing has to change to reflect our multi-cultural society. Large numbers of Canadians have enough difficulty understanding snow, let alone Rudolph et al. Next year's sleigh will be pulled by a team consisting of a llama, elephant, water buffalo, zebra, camel, kangaroo and tiger. Rudolph will be replaced by a yak.

Santa's pipe has to go! Liberal Health Minister Diane Marleau has uncovered a tobacco industry memo, which proves that cigarette manufacturers have secretly been funding S. Claus Inc. In return, Santa smoked the dang pipe. He's giving a bad example to the kiddies so he has to give it up. Of course, Sandra has never smoked.

Obviously, this whole elf thing is a blatant case of discriminatory hiring practices. S. Claus Inc. has been ordered to file an employment equity plan. By next Yuletide we expect to see all sizes and shapes of workers on Santa's shop floor.

The elves have determined that this reference to their height has caused them substantial pain and suffering. They are launching a class action lawsuit against S. Claus Inc. for \$800 million. They

## The Way I See It

With Mike O'Leary



have also formed a union and want to be known as toy technicians. They are demanding an increase in pay, four weeks paid holidays in a warm climate and double-time for holiday overtime. S. Claus Inc. is to immediately begin paying U.I. and Workman's Comp. The toy technicians want a dental and pension plan. Strike action is contemplated.

I don't see changing the story of Jesus' birth in a manger. I don't want to tempt fate or incur the wrath of a local Italian priest.

The minor characters, however, could be more inclusive. About those three Wise Men. Couldn't only one of them be a university grad? Another would be a community college student. The last would be a person who, due to a learning disability and indifferent teachers, dropped out of high school but worked his way up to be king.

The hotel worker's union is concerned that the constant portrayal of the innkeeper turning away Joseph and Mary is bad for its image. They would prefer that the innkeeper only be following orders from corporate headquarters, who wouldn't accept Joseph's credit card. It was, the union asserts, not the front-desk clerk's fault that the son of God was born in a barn.

When questioned, local innkeeper Nick Kecic was aghast at the idea. "No way," he said. "Why would anyone turn away that kind of business? All those shepherds

and visitors from out of town would need rooms, meals, and some spirits to warm them. The kid with the drum could play a few sets. There'd be dancing and toasts to the new parents."

Just the thought of such a big party put visions of sugarplums dancing in 'ol Nick's head. Don't be surprised to see a huge star hanging off the Station Hotel's TV dish next year. Just in case!

The sheep and cows in the manger are toast. It's just too un-sanitary. The local health board would never stand for it. Besides, wouldn't it take away from the whole story if one of the overseas visitors (formerly the Wise Men) slipped on a cow patty while coming forward to adore Him? There'd be frankincense and myrrh all over the place. And while we're at it – what the hell is myrrh? Couldn't they have brought him a blanket and booties instead?

Now, isn't that a nicer Christmas story? This type of multi-cultural, politically correct, inclusive journalism demonstrates how I will be writing in '96. It's my New Year's Resolution.

Of course, I've never kept a resolution before, so I don't see why I would start now.

It's just that when I started to write a new year's column and looked back on '95, I saw child murderers, personal tragedy, economic cutbacks, muddleheaded politicians and the like.

For me, '95 was a lousy year but '96 is looking pretty good. I'm optimistic. As for last year – I'm just glad it's over! A column on 1995 would be a litany from hell.

And my new improved Christmas story? Well, I thought we'd start the new year with a chuckle. Next week is soon enough for ranting and raving.

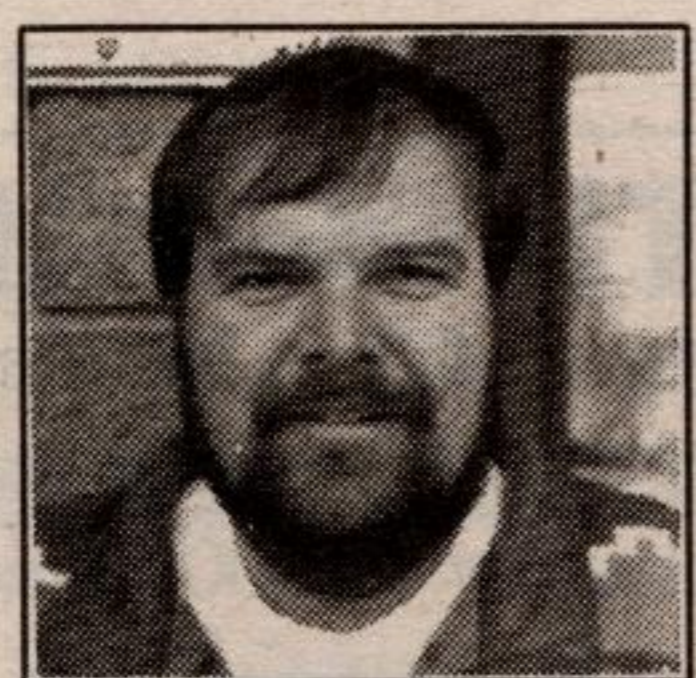
Hope you had a giggle. Happy new year.

# HEY! What is your New Year's resolution?



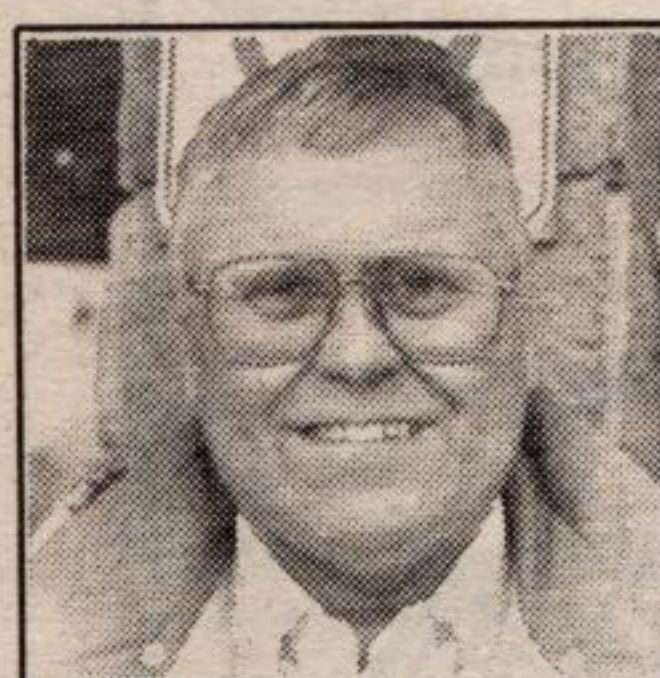
"To save more money. I tend to spend a little more than I should, so I have to start to budget. Other than that, I haven't given it much thought."

Tracey Wilkinson, Knox Street



"Lose weight and look for a full-time job. I've got a stationary bike and rowing machine, so I'll be working on them. I'm also looking for clerk or accounting work."

Vern Hitchcock, Belwood



"Lose weight. I'll try dieting and walking it off. I've actually been on a diet and lost 35 pounds. It's hard."

Robert Holmes, Birchway Place



"To spend less money in 1996. This time of year is tough because you want to buy a lot of people gifts. I always seem to go over budget."

Annette O'Quinn, Cobblehill Road

## Same time last year ...

Action for Acton community group chair Wendy Blair is confident for the group's potential in 1995 ... Three variety stores in Acton and Rockwood are subject to armed robberies in the same week ... Nellis Construction hockey team wins the Acton Novice tournament.