

from the bookshelf

BY DIANE DINEEN ~ MILTON LIBRARY'S TUESDAY EVENING BOOK CLUB

The Piano Tuner

DANIEL MASON ~ KNOPF 2002

Take a rare and beautiful 1840 Erard grand piano – the kind played by Franz Liszt. Place in a remote hill fort in Burma in the 1880's when Britain was powerful and Shan rebels were attempting to protect their territory. Add a British military officer, a soldier-poet who controls the area around the garrison with unconventional techniques. Season with a beautiful Burmese woman whose loyalties may be questionable. Stir in one English piano tuner who takes the long, long journey to far-away Burma to tune a piano "in the service of the Queen".

Daniel Mason, a 26-year-old medical student, wrote the runaway best seller following a year spent on the Thai-Burma border doing research on malaria. He clearly knows the countryside well and learned much about the customs, history and politics of Burma during his stay. The hill country is presented in all its beauty, its rugged terrain and its complex social structure.

Edgar Drake, a piano tuner specializing in Erard pianos is commissioned by The British Army to take the long and arduous journey to Burma, to travel up into the hill country and to tune the Erard piano belonging to Surgeon Major Anthony Carroll. Carroll is a British officer who manages to keep the peace in his part of Burma using unorthodox methods including poetry readings, piano recitals and regular medical clinics for the local people. As Carroll's techniques are not standard British procedure there is confusion, irritation, anger and suspicion on the part of other British personnel in Burma. There is also the constant threat of rebel uprisings or even of takeover by the French who are in nearby Indochina.

The Tuesday Evening Book Club at Milton Public Library found the descriptive elements of the novel accurate and quite beautiful. They found the fictional journey to Burma longer than necessary, taking up almost one half of the book. During his journey to Burma Edgar met soldiers, bandits, and storytellers; the Book Club felt that not all encounters were directly related to the journey to Burma. Some situations in the book were ambiguous. Was Anthony Carroll a spy or merely an unorthodox British officer? Why did the British military cater to Carroll even to giving him a costly piano if they were concerned about his loyalty? Why did Carroll not send Edgar on his way as soon as the piano was tuned? Did Edgar find a Garden of Eden or was the hill fort the site of a form of cultural assimilation?

Can music be more dangerous than war?

Reviewers have compared Mason's *The Piano Tuner* to Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* or Homer's *Odyssey*. The group felt this was a bit of a stretch as comparisons go but the book was given a 7 out of 10 score and it was seen as an interesting first novel covering a little known period of history in a part of the world unknown to most Westerners.

Canada Post donates \$25,000 to Sally Ann

Canada Post is supporting The Salvation Army again this year with a donation of \$25,000. Canada Post had pledged \$1.00 from the sale of every exclusive Write to Santa ornament and Bear Mail toys sold at participating post offices. The \$25,000 donation will be used to purchase 3,000 blankets that will be distributed to individuals and families in need across the country.

"On behalf of every Canadian who has purchased an ornament or toy at their post office, Canada Post is proud to give this donation to The Salvation Army," said Alain Guilbert, vice-president of Communications at Canada Post. "As much as Canada Post and its employees deliver the holidays for Canadians, The Salvation Army ensures that the warmth of the season is shared by as many as possible. Canada Post is honoured to help."

For most Canadians, Christmas is a special time of year. For some however, it is a reminder of what they do not have and what they cannot provide for their families. "We thank Canada Post for their continued generosity, said Graham Moore, spokesperson for The Salvation Army. "This money will deliver the message that someone cares to many people across the country."

With this year's donation, \$125,000 has been donated by Canada Post to The Salvation Army since the partnership started five years ago. Each year, Canada Post has donated \$1 from the sale of each Holiday Hallmark ornament and Bear Mail to the Salvation Army. Funds from the partnership have been used to:

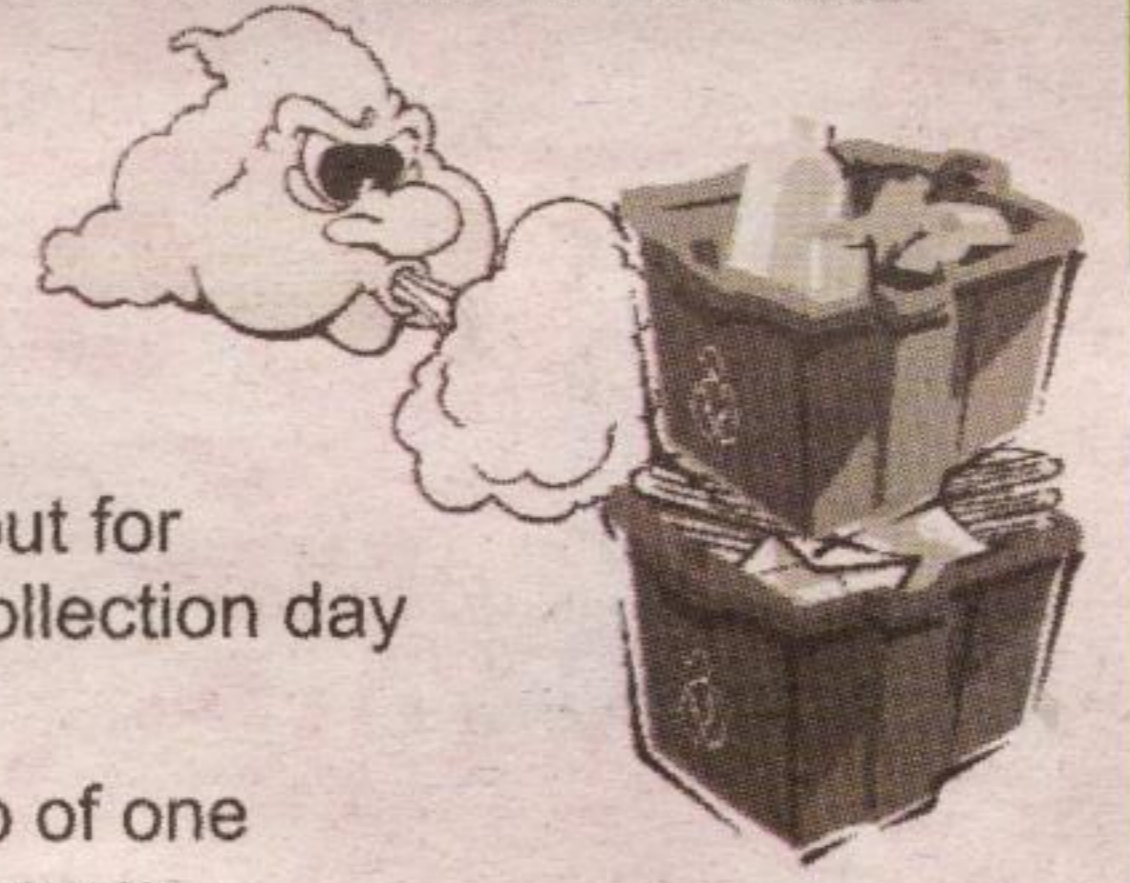
- Provide winter boots and snowsuits for needy children;
- Expand a Vancouver shelter's capacity by purchasing mats for use during the winter months;
- Provide educational materials, toys and warm clothing for children at L'Abri d'espoir, a Salvation Army shelter for women and children in Montréal;
- Provide temporary food and shelter to needy families when they have to travel to be near hospitalized family members;
- Purchase new beds for the Agape Hospice in Calgary.

The Regional Municipality of Halton
A Partnership That Works!



Help Keep Halton Beautiful Blue Box Recycling Tips

You can help reduce litter with some simple steps to prevent your recyclables from taking flight on windy days. Please ensure your blue box materials are placed curbside in a secure manner.



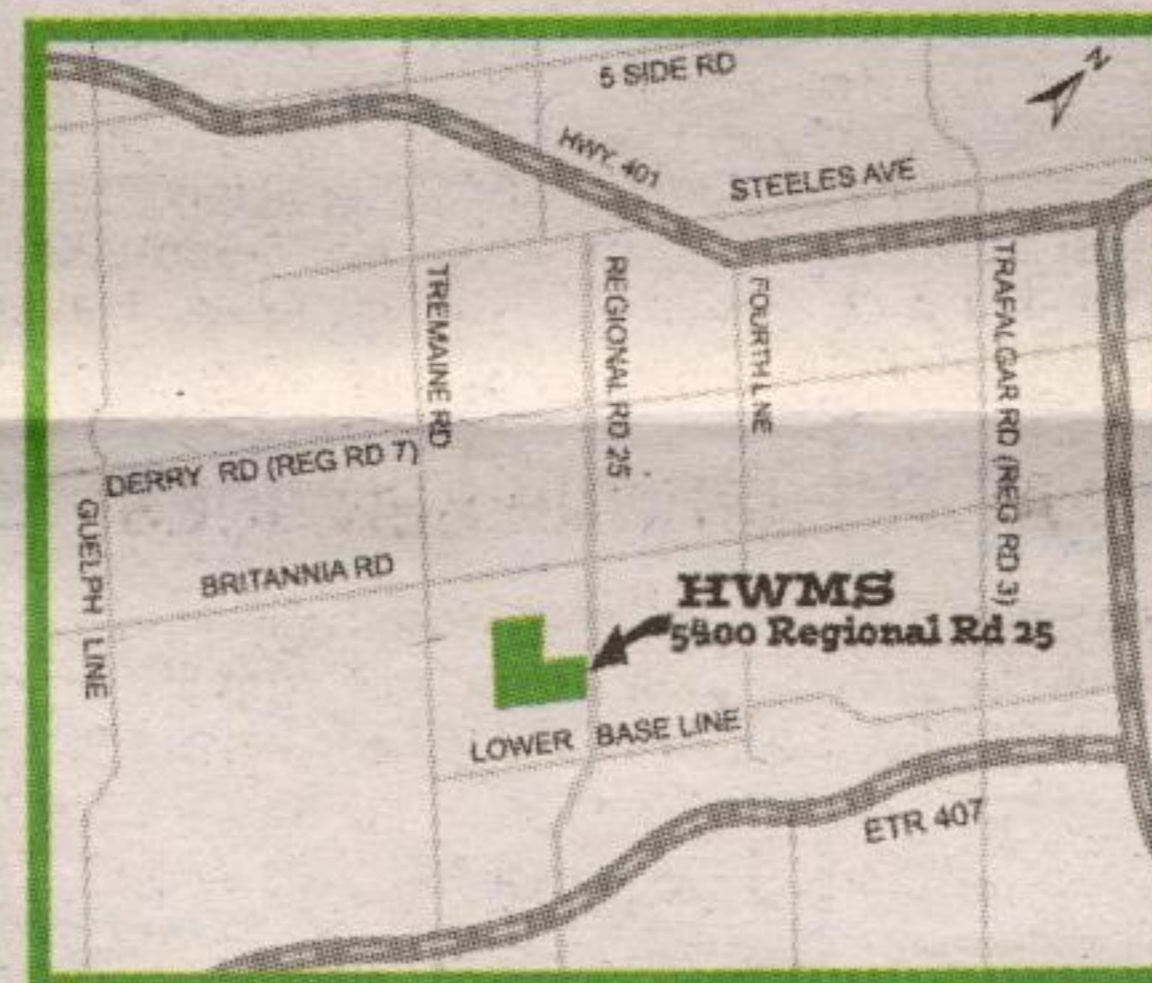
- On windy days, place your blue boxes out for collection by 7:00 a.m. the morning of collection day instead of the night before.
- If possible, stack your blue boxes on top of one another to prevent papers from blowing away.
- Fill boxboard boxes with other boxboard material.
- Place heavier items on top of lighter items.
- Flatten and tie large cardboard boxes and place securely underneath or between your recycling boxes.



Yard Waste Collection Ends

Yard waste collection is now complete for 2004

Yard waste can still be taken to the Halton Waste Management Site.



5400 Regional Road 25, Milton
Monday to Saturday
8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Fee: \$5/vehicle up to 150kg and 98 cents for every kg thereafter.
(Commercial loads \$98/tonne)

Yard waste collection will start again in April 2005.



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Bid documents for the services listed below, addressed to the Manager of Purchasing, 1151 BRONTE ROAD, OAKVILLE, ON L6M 3L1 will be received until 2:00 p.m. Oakville time on the specified closing date. Bid documents can be seen or obtained through the Purchasing Division of the Corporate Services Department, same address as above, telephone 905-825-6000, extension 7011. If long distance charges apply, dial toll free 1-866-4-HALTON (1-866-442-5866).

Documents will be available for pick up on and after Thursday, December 9, 2004, and there is a non-refundable deposit of \$16.05 (includes GST). Bidders who request documents to be shipped from the Purchasing Department must include a handling fee of \$10.70 (includes GST) for this service. Bid Documents are also available to download from Halton's web-site at www.region.halton.on.ca/bids for a non-refundable deposit of \$10.70 (includes GST).

Under no circumstances will facsimile or late bids be accepted or considered. Lowest or any bid not necessarily accepted.

Halton Region relies on this advertisement to provide public notice of this business opportunity and is not obligated to notify any potential bidders in any other manner.

P-041-04

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR FOOT CARE SERVICES AT POST INN VILLAGE LONG TERM CARE FACILITY IN OAKVILLE, ONTARIO

CLOSING: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2004

A. URBANSKI
Commissioner of
Social and Community Services

A. MINDENHALL, CPPO,
Manager of Purchasing Services

www.region.halton.on.ca/bids

1151 Bronte Road, Oakville, ON L6M 3L1
905-825-6000 Toll free: 1-866-4-HALTON (1-866-442-5866) TTY 905-827-9833
or visit us at: www.region.halton.on.ca