

EDITORIAL

Ho, Ho, Snow

This time of the year the days just fly by, with events in the calendar pushing and shoving each other until their appointed day comes round. A few weeks ago it was summer, followed rapidly by Thanksgiving and Halloween. Next week will bring Remembrance Day and in a blink it will be Christmas. Our forebears were smart to load up as much activity as they could for us in the cold season. The rural world of the nineteenth century saw the deep crisp snows of winter as a blessing not a curse. In a world where travel by road was a major hardship, snow acted as instant road-fill, levelling the gaps created by giant potholes, and enabling horse and cutter to make swift passage from one farmstead to another. Winter was also a time for leisure when the land slept beneath a white blanket and farm chores were reduced to the minimum necessary to feed and clean the animals in the barn.

It is no accident that Christmas is celebrated at the winter solstice when the days are the shortest and darkest. The ancient Britons had worked out that having a major feast in the depth of winter achieved several things. Firstly, people were encouraged to save up large quantities of food-stuffs for the feast, for consumption at a time, when in the normal course of events they could be starting to run out of the necessities of life. Secondly, the feast broke up the monotony of short dark days when there was no real work to focus the spirit. The earliest Christian missionaries were wont to ban out of hand any pagan rituals they chanced across. The feast of mid-winter was not something that the missionaries were thrilled about. It was unashamedly hedonistic; lots of drinking and kissing. You get the picture. There were some half-hearted attempts to ban the festival but there was stout opposition and the festival stayed.

They say inspiration comes when you're thinking of something else. In this case the something else was deciding on the timing of the Mass for the birth of Christ. Someone had the genius to suggest that rather than ban the mid-winter feast (and make themselves hated by at least a few of their parishioners), that they should just hi-jack it, declare it to be the Mass for the Christ and try to tone down any suggestion of too good a time being had.

Elements of the old mid-winter festival still survive, such as feasting on the meat and drink of the land, and kissing all the girls under the mistletoe. It explains why there are two Christmas spirits, Christ and that other fellow in the funny red suit. And why there are two sections in the greeting card stores, Xmas cards and 'religious' Xmas cards. And that coy distinction always makes me want to spit.

Milton blood donor clinic needs more donors

Only about 3.5 per cent of the eligible Canadian population donates blood, yet every minute of every day, someone in Canada needs blood. Call 1 888 2 DONATE (1 888 236-6283) for clinic or eligibility information or to schedule an appointment to give blood at this clinic:

Thurs., Nov. 17, 2005, 2 - 8 pm.
Milton Sports Centre, 605 Santa Maria Blvd.

By making a blood donation, you can help save up to three lives.

Canadian Blood Services is a national, not-for-profit charitable

organization that manages the blood supply in all provinces and territories outside of Quebec and the Unrelated Bone Marrow Donor Registry. Canadian Blood Services operates 42 permanent collection sites and more than 15,000 donor clinics annually. The Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Health provide operational funding to Canadian Blood Services. The federal government, through Health Canada, is responsible for regulating the blood system. For more information, visit www.bloodservices.ca.

Milton course on stress management

The Canadian Mental Health Association, Halton Region Branch offers a number of educational mental health programs each year. Coming up in November 2005 is one such program: "Stress Management".

"Stress Management" is a four-week course that examines the causes of stress in our lives and provides practical, usable solutions. The program is being offered in Milton at 388 Main Street East, and begins Monday, November 7th. Topics include stress and the workplace, coping with change, dealing with difficult people and finding balance.

The cost is \$80.00 and includes a "Coping with Stress" booklet.

For more information or to register for these upcoming courses, call the Canadian Mental Health Association, Halton Region Branch at 905-693-4270. CMHA Halton is a United Way member agency.

Encouraging today's youth

Nominations are now being accepted for the Ontario Junior Citizen of the Year Awards

The strength of our community lies in solid citizens. Today's youth are tomorrow's leaders. If you know a young person, aged 6 to 17, who is involved in worthwhile community service; a special person who is contributing while living with a limitation; a youth who has performed an act of heroism; or a 'good kid' who shows a commitment to making life better for others, doing more than is normally expected of someone their age -- help us recognize their contribution -- nominate them today!

Nominations will be accepted until November 30.

Contact this newspaper or the Ontario Community Newspapers Association at www.ocna.org or 905.639.8720.

ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE - NOMINATE SOMEONE TODAY!



ONTARIO JUNIOR CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARDS



PHOTO BY STEPHEN BAKER

In Memoriam

Unveiling 34 new names on the Donors' wall plaque at Milton Hospital are Mario Charpentier, Chaplain, Pastoral Services and Donna McLaughlin, Director of Development for the Milton District Hospital Foundation.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the editor

I found the (Dorland-Haight) full-page ad in last week's issue to be in bad taste and before you write me off as a uptight prude

I'm not and neither is my 26 yr. old daughter who also thought it was not appropriate.

Laurie Norrie
Georgetown, ON

THE HALTON COMPASS

Published by MRK Communications Ltd.

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Real Estate Sales: Elaine Thomas
Distribution & Circulation: Echo Distribution

The Halton Compass is published weekly on Friday. Copy and advertising deadline is Friday at 5pm prior to publication. All editorial and advertising content is copyrighted and the sole property of MRK Communications Ltd. The Halton Compass is distributed to homes and businesses throughout the rural and urban communities of Halton, encompassing Acton, Erin, Georgetown, Kilbride, Milton, Rockwood, rural Oakville & Burlington and surrounding areas.

Circulation: 50,536 Homes, Businesses and Subscribers



Compass Subscriptions:
52 issues per year: \$104.00 plus GST

Cheques payable to:

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