

GRAPEVINE



Name that bear

The 5-foot bear at the Acton library – this summer's reading camp counsellor – needs a name and Acton children are invited to enter a contest to give him one. Summer camp is the theme for two reading programs at the River Street branch, Camp Read-A-Lot for kids who can read on their own and the Bearly Readers Read-To-Me Club is for children not yet reading. Children keep track of what they read, or what is read to them, and get special rewards after completing a month's reading. Camp Read-A-Lot readers are invited to meet Tuesday afternoon at 2 p.m. at the Acton branch until Aug. 11 for club meetings.

On Fridays children aged six and up are invited to drop in for a quick craft and this month the Acton branch has two contests including guessing the number of marshmallows in a jar and naming the camp counsellor bear.

Joy in Mudville

Town Council has improved its baseball record to 1-13-1 following a 12-12 tie with Glen Williams during last week's Canada Day celebration. Acton Councillor Clark Somerville smacked in the tying run – to the eternal gratitude of his fellow teammates who really didn't want to suffer another loss.

Musical search

St. Alban's Anglican Church is looking for a new choir leader and organist following the recent resignation of Andrew Dewhurst who had been at the church for seven years.

Dewhurst has moved to a church in Cambridge and long-time St. Alban's member Betty Oakes is filling in until a permanent organist can be found.

Stitch wizards

Competition is tough again this year for the second annual Viewers' Choice contest at the Needle Gnome on Main Street South. Contestants have until July 15 to enter any piece of their handiwork that involves stitching – everything from cross-stitch to afghans to needlepoint – and the work will be displayed in the store until Aug. 15 for shoppers, browsers and visitors to vote on. The first prize is a \$50 gift certificate from the Needle Gnome, with a \$25 certificate for second prize and \$15 for third prize. Store owner Renata Georgeff said this year's contest has generated great interest with over 30 entries so far, including one from last year's grand prize winner, Acton's Phyllis Gibson.

Calling all Coronation Street fans

If you're a Coronation Street fan mark July 25 on your calendar because that's when Wetherby's holds its annual Coronation Street giftware and memorabilia sale, including many scratch and dent items at great prices. The annual sale draws Coronation Street lovers from far and near to shop, chat about recent events on the Street and to check out the latest giftware in a marquee in Wetherby's garden. The afternoon event includes a Coronation Street quiz with a draw for prizes and refreshments.



FAIR FUNDRAISER: Posters advertising the 1914 Acton Fall Fair in glorious colour are being sold by the Homecraft Division of the Fall Fair Board to aid the building fund. Homecraft president Renata Georgeff, left, and past president Theresa Lockerbie, right, unroll a poster for Fair President Ron White, centre. The original was given to the Acton Fair Board by the Dills family, former publishers of The Acton Free Press. Cost is \$14.95, tax included. They are available at Home Hardware, Acton Pharmacy and The Needle Gnome in Acton as well as Dottie's Diner in Rockwood.

Jane Doe opens can of worms

Much has been written about the Jane Doe decision which judged the Toronto police to be "grossly negligent" in their investigative techniques of the so called "Balcony Rapist" during the mid-'80s. Jane Doe (a pseudonym) was the fifth victim of the balcony rapist. For privacy reasons (she is a victim after all) her real identity is protected.

According to news reports, Doe has similar physical characteristics to the first three victims (hair, race, etc.) Her apartment location also fit the pervert's M.O. According to the judgement, two Metro investigators decided not to issue warnings about the serial rapist in Doe's neighbourhood due to a "stereotypical discriminatory belief that as a woman she, and others like her, would become hysterical and panic and scare off an attacker." The judge found that these actions had the effect of the police using Doe and others as "bait" to catch the rapist. Now think about that for a moment.

Firstly, I find it hard to believe that in the mid-'80s the Toronto police, or any police, didn't take rape seriously. Certainly today sexual assault is a most serious offence. I think that when our politicians dropped the term rape and lumped this cowardly attack in with other sex crimes they, not the police, downgraded this crime.

But what I find interesting is the judge's conclusion that, by not publicizing the possibility of future attacks the police, *ipso facto*, caused Doe to be "bait." "This they did in the face of the almost certain knowledge that the rapist would attack again and cause irreparable harm to his victim," Madam Justice Jean McFarland said. "In my view their decision in this respect was irresponsible and grossly negligent."

MacFarland found that Doe's constitutional rights were breached by the police officers. She found that "in the

The Way I See It

with Mike O'Leary



circumstances of this case, the police failed utterly in the duty of care they owed (Jane Doe)."

Whilst Doe and her supporters see this decision as a great victory, and perhaps it is, I think it opens up a whole other can of worms. If the decision stands (it could be appealed) the police will be open to suits for damages if they don't warn the people when they may be in danger. As Doe herself observed, this decision will make it easier for others to sue police for their actions during investigations.

Regular readers will know that, for years, I have been writing that dangerous pedophiles should not be released into the community without some notification. Several years ago we had one here who had many previous convictions. Who knows how many others were or are here? I think it's generally acknowledged that pedophiles cannot be cured. Therefore, if a pedophile with several convictions comes to town, would not the police have "almost certain knowledge" that he will re-offend? Many of these slimeballs have 10, 20 or more previous convictions. If the police keep the information secret but watch the guy, aren't they, by the Jane Doe rules, using the children as "bait?"

Such an attack on a child would certainly cause "irreparable harm." Will the Halton Regional Police now, as a matter of policy, start advising the community when a violent offender moves to town? I intend to ask. I'll let you know the answer, if I get one. In the past all I heard

was gobbledegook about privacy laws.

How will this decision change the Young Offenders Act? Now, violent teens, even murderers, are released without ever having their names, or pictures made public. Doesn't this decision mean that the justice system owes it to us to advise us if there is a psychopath in our midst? Surely, this decision is not meant just to apply to Toronto police. Would the good justice not expect all police and other law enforcement agencies to conform to the standard she has set? Do our wives and children deserve any less protection than Doe? I think not!

The problem is going to be – where do we draw the line? I don't need to know that the guy down the street lost his licence in a spot check. By the same token, if he has had four or five convictions, is a raging alcoholic who has been caught driving while suspended shouldn't I know not to let my kids play on the street?

So, is frequency to be the test? Not necessarily. If a killer moves in I'd like to know so I can take precautions.

The police publicized the Scarborough rapist case. He moved to St. Catharines and escalated his crimes to kidnapping, rape and murder. Should they not have gone public in that case? Did the publicity push that pervert over the edge to even more violent crimes? Is publicizing ongoing investigations always a good idea?

The police forces are between a rock and a hard place on this issue. With everyone second guessing them after the fact, they can't win. It will take political action to resolve. But for some reason, our politicians seem reluctant to upset the criminal element in society.

Perhaps this case will force the issue. On hearing the verdict Doe said, "That was a really big win."

'Ya know – it just might be. For all of us.

Public Survey On Old Arena

(check your responses)

- Are you in favour of restoring the old arena in Prospect Park as a community building?
- As a community building with an ice surface?
- Or are you in favour of tearing it down?
- Do you reside in Acton?
- In rural Acton?
- In Georgetown?
- In rural Georgetown?
- In Rockwood?

Please place your ballots in boxes provided at The New Tanner, Acton IGA, Acton Pharmacy, Home Hardware, Andy's Restaurant, Royal Jug City, or the Trunk Sale.

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