

GRAPEVINE



Lions, tigers and bears!

Acton arena will take on a Big Top atmosphere tomorrow night (Thursday) as the Acton Figure Skating Club stages Circus Extravaganza. Judging by the rehearsals it will be a great night of double jumps, darling performers and a fire-juggling skater. Johnathan Allen of Georgetown, a former Disney on Ice performer, has a riveting fire-baton routine and will be featured in the show - a scaled-down version of the Club's annual carnival which wowed crowds at the old arena for more than 20 years.

Oakville Ice Expression Juvenile - a synchronized skating team will strut their stuff along with the new Acton Ice Starlettes synchro team.

Student award

Congrats to Acton's Matthew Hanselman, 10, who will receive a Halton Board of Education student excellence award for outstanding academic and extra curricular achievements.

Matthew, a Grade 5 student at Robert Little school, was described as "helpful, trusted and a good role model for younger students."

The Board's annual Celebration of Student Excellence awards ceremony is May 6 in Burlington.

Don't cry wolf

Despite repeated claims of recent wolf sightings in the Acton area, Ministry of Natural Resources officials flatly deny there are wolves in this area and blame the confusion on coyotes.

MNR fish and wildlife technician

John Almond also said "coy-dogs", a rumoured coyote-dog mix, don't exist.

"We don't have any evidence to support any fact at all that there's hybridization between coyotes and dogs. In most cases they're just wild dogs. People see coyotes and think they're seeing wolves."

Several Tyler Transport staff insist there were two wolves in the field south of Highway 7 several weeks ago. Almond said that even if you call them brush wolves, they're still coyotes.

Like ducks to water

Acton Aqua Ducks take to Acton Pool April 16 for the annual swim-a-thon to raise money for the swim club. Team members will gather pledges and attempt to swim 200 laps - that's five kilometres - between 5:30 and 7:30 p.m. The Aqua Ducks hope to top last year's \$1,200 swim-a-thon total which was used to pay the coaches. To sponsor a swimmer call Helen Colvin at 853-0162.

Nominees wanted

There's still time to suggest names for the second annual Halton Women of the Year awards. The nomination date has been extended until April 12, so if you know of a woman who exemplifies integrity and determination - put her name forward for the awards, presented by the Women's Information and Support Centre of Halton. Nomination forms and tickets for the award banquet are available by calling Rosslyn Dowell at Halton Hills Community Support and Information (formerly ASSIC) at 853-3310.



CANVASSERS THANKED: Before the Acton Branch of the Canadian Cancer Society sends its canvassers out door-to-door for April's fund raising campaign, it feeds them and says thanks, in advance. At last Wednesday's canvasser appreciation dinner at Trinity United Church, Acton branch member Marilyn LoTurco (standing) served Acton Councillor Clark Somerville, Mayor Marilyn Serjeantson and Councillor Rick Bonnette. - Frances Niblock photo

I just don't understand!

One of the byproducts of getting older (I'm 41-metric) is that you begin to realize how much you don't know. As a columnist I'm expected to answer all the deep questions of the day. Sorry to let you down this week but the happenings of late have left me confused. Perplexed - even. Let me explain.

I don't understand what is going on in Kosovo. I know that, as a partner in NATO, Canadian planes and pilots are part of the forces bombing the heck out of Serbian military targets. I know the news is full of reports on killings and mass destruction. I see the thousands of refugees and the fear and despair on their faces. Those are the mechanics of the conflict. These are easy to absorb.

What I don't understand is why the situation got to this point. I've been told that the Serb-Muslim war is hundreds of years old. Why is it still going on? Surely the original protagonists have been gone for a few years now. There were, atrocities undoubtedly committed in the past. These are supposed to be justification for even more atrocities committed today? Why? Must today's sons pay for and pay back the sins of the fathers forever?

The Serbs and Muslims are occupying centre stage these days. But old hatreds are all over the world. I am, of course, most familiar with the Irish conflict. We also have the Turks and Armenians, Hutus and Tutsis, Indians and Pakistanis, the list goes on and on. It's tempting to conclude that murder and mayhem are a natural condition in the human psyche. In a way that's true. If we weren't capable of such deeds they would never happen. But I don't believe it's a natural state. It's an acquired perversion. Hatred is taught.

Isn't that an awful reality? People, just like you and I, are committing the most vile atrocities all over the world fueled by the hate they learned as babies. This morning, somewhere in Kosovo, or some other war torn country, a

The Way I See It

with Mike O'Leary



baby was born. He doesn't hate anyone. He only loves. Hopefully, 20 years from now, he still won't hate. From my lips to God's ears.

We've come so far, as a species, in the last 1,000 years. We've made so many advances in science, medicine and the humanities. So why do many still think the way to resolve conflicts is to kill the other guy? Or enslave them.

Thirty years ago Woody Guthrie wrote a song called Where Have All the Flowers Gone. The verse is a repeated question: "When will they ever learn? Good question."

Perhaps we should send a copy to Presidents Milosevich and Clinton.

Why are we so quick to dump on the cops? I don't understand. The police are the good guys. Their job is to protect us, keep our communities safe and enforce the laws our society enacts. So why are we so quick to think they're irresponsible?

Before going on I should admit a certain bias. I like and respect the police. Most of them. As with any other group, there are a few jerks. The vast majority are hardworking folks who want to make a difference. To make things just a little better. Lots of times it's a rotten job. How would you like to tell someone their loved one is hurt? or dead? You'd think we would give them the benefit of the doubt.

Two weeks ago a man with several drunk driving and other convictions stole a car. He was, allegedly, drunk at the time. The car had been left running, with the keys in it, in the driveway. The owner and his buddy chased the thief. After a few blocks they blew past a cop. How could he know what was going on?

He gave chase for less than 90 seconds. The thief lost control of the stolen car and crashed. He killed a much loved priest, Rev. Ilce Mioviski. A terrible tragedy.

So whom do we blame? The cop. Go figure.

The thief had no licence. He was under suspension at the time. - for drunk driving. But we can't blame him for the tragedy. After all, he was drunk.

How about the guy who left his car running in the driveway. Shouldn't he carry some of the blame? Makes you cringe, doesn't it. We've all done it - left our car running unattended. You see it every day, summer and winter, at the coffee shop. "Hey," we say. "It's only for a minute." Know how long it takes to steal a car? Not long when the keys are in it. "Oh," we say. "I lock it." People, give your head a shake. By definition, crooks don't play by the rules. If they're going to steal your car do you think they'll think twice about breaking a window to do it? You think it won't happen to you? I'll bet the guy whose car killed Father Mioviski thought the same thing.

The first announcement from the government was not to increase the penalties for running from the police. It wasn't to get tougher on those who drive under suspension. Nope, the first thing announced was new guidelines for police chases. Isn't the subliminal message that somehow the cop was to blame?

The police will welcome new guidelines. Wouldn't you? Right now they're damned if they do and damned if they don't. If I was a cop and a car took off I'd be tempted to let it go. Why put my life and career on the line. Luckily, most officers use their training and do their best to capture the offender. You can bet that their safety and yours is uppermost in that officer's mind.

So let's give our police a break shall we? Let's assume they are acting in our best interest, because that my friends, is the truth.



Terrible injustice...

this proposal at this time. "We value our independence (both geographically and economically) and the fine tradition and history that the hundreds of volunteers, from both Acton and the surrounding communities, have spent countless hours over the years building up," said Prentice. "It's pretty hard to consummate a successful marriage if the parties have to be dragged up to the altar," remarked Hunak. The town staff believes that such a marriage would streamline operations and end duplication. The respective organizations are already very well run, and their executives strongly believe that it is in the kids' collective best interests for them to continue their separate ways. It's hard to imagine how you can end duplication when the subject matters you're talking about is hundreds of boys and girls. Furthermore, kids like to play with their friends; it promotes collegiality and teaches them many important values that they'll need for later in life.

Both Acton House League Hockey and the Tanners association have been enthusiastic supporters of girls' hockey and other interest groups. "When ice time was needed for the new Halton Hills Twisters Girls Hockey Association (which we understand has few girls from Acton playing) a couple of years ago, it was the Tanners and us who got together and proactively offered up some of our ice allocation," stated Hunak.

The hockey associations operate within the guidelines and the rules of the provincial and federal governing bodies: the Ontario Hockey Federation and the Canadian Hockey Association. Furthermore, their po-

sition on not wanting to amalgamate is supported by the Ontario Minor Hockey Association, which is the association of which they are all members. The OMHA's Executive Director has expressed a willingness to come to the next ice users meeting, scheduled for April 13th, to communicate its position unequivocally to Mr. Stover.

At this time of year, with the hockey seasons of members teams coming to an end and kids looking longingly at the soccer fields and ball diamonds for the upcoming spring and summer, the town staff should not be raising the anxiety levels of families in Acton and the neighbouring communities of where little Susie or little Johnny will be playing hockey next year and who will be her or his teammates; their friends or strangers from the other side of Halton Hills. For the good of all kids in Halton Hills and surrounding areas, let's hope that reasonable heads prevail and that the town staff puts aside its parochial view and works together with the ice user groups in the spirit of utmost co-operation, compromise and mutual respect to put an optimum ice allocation framework in place for the coming year. The kids of this area deserve nothing less.

Yours truly,
George Hunak,
President,
Acton House League Hockey Association

Steve Prentice,
President,
Acton Tanners Hockey Association



WHAT'S YOUR BEEF?

Put it in a letter to the Editor!

Deadline is Tuesday at noon.