

GRAPEVINE

Holiday art

Congrats to Acton's Sabrina Fread, 14, whose watercolour painting of a snowy house graces the front of the Halton District School Board's seasonal card this year. Sabrina painted the log house as part of a Grade 8 art project last year when she was a student at McKenzie-Smith Bennett.

"We had to design a three-D perspective drawing of a house and I drew a winter scene with a log house - I did a really snowy scene with a humble and warm house."

Sabrina knew she was among seven finalists whose work was being considered for the card, but didn't find out she was the winner until a ceremony at the Board offices last week.

Divine signs

Signs welcoming people to the community on behalf of the Acton Ministerial group that represents nine area churches now greet motorists driving into Acton.

The Ministerial paid the Town \$250 to locate two signs on Town property - one on Highway 7 in the area of Churchill Road and the other on Highway 25 just south of the entrance to Superior Glove. The Ministerial is also negotiating with the Ministry of Transportation to locate a third sign at Acton's western boundary.

Ministerial representative, the Reverend Bob Matton of Trinity United Church, said the signs would be like those announcing what service clubs are active in Acton.

"The signs are to promote what we feel are community values in the community of Acton," Reverend Matton said.

Priestly pipes

Juno Award nominee entertainer, Father Mark Curtis - known by some as 'Canada's Singing Priest' will be performing on Sunday (Dec. 19) at Trinity United Church. Fr. Mark captivates with an eclectic mix of contemporary pop, festive songs, country, blues, Celtic folk and ballads - along with stories and laughter. Fr. Curtis will also perform songs from his recent release *The Angels Still Sing*. The show begins at 7 p.m. and is a free offering performance.

The gift of love

You can help make the holidays happy for those in need by making a

donation to the Acton Corps of the Salvation Army, which sent out its annual mailer, asking for donations, last week.

"The mail campaign is the biggest part of our fundraising at this time of year," said Captain Lyndon Hale recently, adding that generous Acton residents contributed over \$10,000 to the Salvation Army kettles last year.

"The Beer Store is going to allow us to have a kettle outside the store this weekend and along with the ones at the liquor store and IGA, we expect to make this holiday happier for a lot of people this year," Capt. Hales said, adding that all money raised leading up to the holiday stays in Acton to help pay for the Christmas toy program, food hampers, emergency services and the children's drop-in.

Chief Scout

Kudos to Acton's Chris Rivers, 14, who received a Chief Scout Award - the highest level of achievement - in a ceremony at the Rockwood Conservation Area last Thursday. Rivers completed the stringent requirements with the Rockwood Scouts after the Acton troop folded.

A Chief Scout has earned the gold level of the Scouting program and also performed over 50 hours of community service and amassed more than 100 kilometres in hiking camps.

"The best part of working to get the award was all of the people that I got to work with during the four years," Rivers said.

Scouting Canada says Chief Scouts have the personal desire to reach a little further, to work a little harder and put even more back into the community.

Need 80 units of blood

Acton blood donor clinic officials have an ambitious goal to meet at the Christmas clinic next Thursday (Dec. 16). It's hoped that 80 donations of blood will be made to help meet the needs of hospitals over this holiday season.

Canadian Blood Services officials remind people that a single donation of blood can be broken down into four components to help save lives.

"People are busy at this time of year, but what a great gift to give. 'Give the Gift of Life' may be a cliché, but you really can help save a life by donating blood," said Acton clinic chair Julia Roehrig.



CAN WE BEAT IT? The Central Ontario division of Blood Services Canada is seeking 800 units of blood to meet the needs of their area during the holiday season. Can Acton provide more than the 80 units required to fill its allotment towards the area total? Acton Blood Donor convenor Julia Roehrig, left, with Canadian Blood Services donor services rep Marianne Clarke says they can. Now she needs donors to attend the Dec. 16 donor clinic between 3:30 and 7:30 p.m. at the Acton Legion to prove her right. - Maggie Petrushevsky photo



SIGN OF THE TIMES: The Acton Ministerial Association has erected signs welcoming visitors to Acton and it's nine churches at two locations in town. Some of the Ministerial members, including, from left, Father Bob Bulbrook (St. Joseph's), Capt. Lyndon Hale (Salvation Army), the Reverend Robert Matton (Trinity United), Pastor Jamie Shepherd (Evangel Pentecostal), Pastor Shawn Brix (Bethel Christian Reform) and Pastor Tom Cullen (Acton Baptist) checked out the sign at the east end of town on Tuesday. - Frances Niblock photo

Oy vey! Here we go again

A condominium complex in Toronto has decided not to put Christmas trees, or a menorah, in their lobby. Seems one of the condo owners is a Jehovah's Witness. Because this family objected to any seasonal decorations the rest of the occupants are denied any type of display. Don't you think this whole idea of having to constantly tiptoe over eggshells, lest anyone be offended, has gone far enough?

Like most folks I think I'm a pretty tolerant fellow, especially in matters concerning religion. I respect all religions. OK, the ones requiring you to smoke pot may be suspect. But I for one, am happy the days are gone when part of what defined you as an individual of worth was the church you attended. This feeling of religious tolerance holds for most of the year but come November/December look out. Then, the mere mention of Christmas is enough to set some group off caterwalling that Christmas offends them. Then, the rest of us are meekly supposed to give up our traditions and melt away. Not me. I think the time is long past where we need to say "Gee, sorry you don't like Christmas. Go away."

In recent years the use of the word "festive" has grown like a bad weed. This mushy alternative to Christmas is not supposed to offend anyone. Well, it offends me and I'm not shy about making my feelings known. When I'm in a store that has "Festive Greetings" signs I make a point to ask "When is festive this year." When told it's meant to mean Christmas I ask why we Canadians are made to speak in code? I won't patronize merchants who use euphemisms for Christmas. For example: Swiss Chalet, whose product I enjoy, has a big billboard downtown advertising their festive dinner. Not for me. I won't darken their door in this millenium. I'm really fed-up with the perversion of Christmas by mostly commercial interests. The only way I can think of to get their attention is to hit them in the wallets. Let the folks who celebrate "Festive" pa-

The Way I See It

with Mike O'Leary



tronize them while those of us who celebrate Christmas should support those who have the courtesy to call the season by its proper name.

I believe Christians are far too complacent on this issue. Believe you me the other major religions would not stand for their major feasts being re-named. Tell the Jewish community that the public lighting of the menorah at Hanukkah offends you. You'd be run out of town. Tell the Muslims they have to change Ramadan to Xtodan. Be prepared to duck.

No matter how the revisionists and politically correct try to hide it, Christ is a central figure in society. Christmas is just an example. Much is being made about going into the third millennium. That date is arrived at by counting the years since the birth of Christ. Whether the date is accurate is a matter for another day. So what's next? Do we change B.C. (Before Christ) to B.F. (Before Festive)?

Most people of other faiths take no offence at being wished a merry Christmas. I certainly do not object when my Jewish friends wish me a happy Hanukkah. One of the most pleasant evenings I've had was when Muslim friends invited me to celebrate "Eid" which is the feast at the end of Ramadan. This is supposed to be a multi-cultural society. Why then are Christians supposed to sit idly by when one of our major feasts is denigrated in the name of commerce?

I'm waiting for the politically correct to go after Easter which is, of course, the major Christian holy day. Maybe we could call it Bunny Day. Should the church be forced to recognize Laura Secord as a saint? I mean, where does the madness end and where do Christians draw the line?

I invite you to join me in drawing that line here and now. Wish every-

one a Merry Christmas. The feelings and spirit of Christmas are wonderful. Spread them around. And if someone takes exception to my greeting, well, it's their problem, not yours. Tell merchants who are substituting "Festive", Xmas, seasons greetings, etc." That you don't appreciate their efforts to denigrate Christmas. If we don't stop this nonsense then none of our traditions will be safe in this country.

It's up to you.

★★★★
A tragic accident occurred in our town last week. Mrs. Edna Grahame was struck down as she was crossing Mill St. E. near the Salvation Army Church. As I write this she is still in critical condition. I'm sure the prayers of the people of the Town are with her.

I want to remind all readers to be especially careful when crossing our major roads. The sun is setting earlier every day and it's difficult for drivers heading west to see. Not only pedestrians have to be careful. Other drivers making turns and those opening car doors from cars parked on the street need to be sure the way is clear.

I nearly nailed some lady getting out of a parked car last week. The setting sun was right in my eyes and I didn't see her until the last second. Mill St. is very narrow so when you are parking downtown don't assume the oncoming car can see you. Sometimes, you can be in the right but end up dead right.

Maybe it's my imagination but traffic on Highway 7 seems to be substantially heavier. Drivers today are so aggressive that we all have to use extreme caution. With the mild weather the kids are still bombing around on bikes. No one would want to live with killing a child, especially two weeks and a bit before Christmas. Please speak to your children and warn them of the dangers on the road these days. An ounce of prevention etc....