

GRAPEVINE

Tree power

P.O.W.E.R.'s (Protect Our Water and Environmental Resources) efforts to raise money to plant trees as a millennium project have born fruit. The north Halton environmental group will get \$40,000 to plant 5,000 in six areas of town, including at least two in Acton, under Environment Canada's EcoAction 2000 program. That program provides money to non-profit, non-government groups working on local level environmental issues.

"We're very pleased with the funding," said P.O.W.E.R. president Barbara Halsall on Sunday, adding they hope to receive a little more money from a millennium partnership grant.

"There's a lot of public interest in the project and the local schools will firm up their participation this week. I think they want to plant a natural area at Acton High school, but the plans aren't finalized," Halsall said.

P.O.W.E.R. will reforest a total of 18 hectares this spring as a millennium project with the help of 1,200 Halton Hills students and volunteers.

Cop shop stays on Mill

The Halton Regional Police Services Board is expected to renew the lease for its storefront station at 38 Mill Street today (Thursday) for another two years at an upset cost of \$14,500. That's the same monthly rent - \$500 - as the past three years with a nominal increase for water and sewer.

A police report said the location is central and has become a known centre for police services, including Village Constable Bill Riddle. Civilian volunteers staff the facility to maintain public access on a regular basis. Police like the Mill street location because it provides heightened police presence within the community.

Cold health help

A plastic vial containing vital health information and stored in the refrigerator could mean the difference between life and death in a medical emergency. The Emergency Information Vial, the brainchild of a Michigan firefighter, is a small kit consisting of a small pill bottle containing a form with instructions for recording

pertinent medical information. The plastic vial is attached to the underside of the top shelf of the refrigerator a safe and fireproof location, and identifier decals are placed at the front door and on the fridge. Emergency services look for the decal and can get valuable accurate medical information without delay.

The Emergency Information Vials are available at Halton Community Support and Information on Mill Street, from police, ambulance and fire officials and at the Acton Seniors' Centre and Acton drug stores.

Stocking stuffers?

Still looking for that perfect stocking stuffer? Consider a coffee mug packed with tasty treats being sold by Acton Junior Achievement (JA), a ticket on a 2000 cherry red VW Beetle being raffled by the United Way of Halton Hills or a donation to the Building Our Future campaign.

The newly formed Junior Achievement company - Premiere Platinum Baskets - sold close to 400 of the gifted wrapped mugs last month and the student run-company looks like its headed for a lot of black ink. The mugs are \$10 each and are available at the olde Hide House on weekends.

Tickets are still available - \$20 each - for the United Way Beetle. In Acton you can get tickets from United Way member agencies, Home Hardware, the Credit Union,

Donations continue

Acton Agricultural Society officials are very happy that cash donations continue to trickle in following a brochure asking for money to help rebuild in Prospect Park were delivered with The New Tanner a month ago.

"It's very gratifying - we've had about 30 or 40 come back with donations and it might make a real Christmas gift to make a donation in someone's name to the Building Our Future fund," said Society spokesperson Janis Fread.

To date, companies and individuals have donated \$55,000, fundraising events have brought in \$14,000 and there are pledges of \$27,000. The fundraising target for a new building is \$350,000.



MONEY GIVEN: Halton MPP Ted Chudleigh, left, presented Acton Seniors president Donna Rowley with a cheque for \$3,700 as Acton Seniors share of the proceeds from his fundraising golf tourney last summer. Seniors' board treasurer Jack MacFarlane holds a plaque presented by the tournament's Golf Committee recording the amount of money donated to the centre over the past three years. - Maggie Petrushevsky photo

To spank or not to spank?

By the time you read this you could be a criminal. The courts are now hearing arguments regarding section 43 of the Criminal Code. This section allows for the use of reasonable force when correcting children. "Spanking" in other words. To me, this is a prime example of the state going overboard in trying to micro-manage our lives.

No, I am not advocating child beating. I believe there is a world of difference between the judicious application of a slap on the rear and any form of abuse.

Those who argue that spanking teaches children that brute force is acceptable are indulging in psychobabble hysteria. Children don't think that way. They associate the spanking with the cause and effect of their actions. Their decision then is whether or not to repeat the transgression.

What we're talking about here is the occasional spanking over serious issues often involving the safety of the child. Playing in the streets or with matches, etc., etc. Daily or frequent spankings are a sign the parent is out of control and could well be abusive.

They key players in the court action are a lawyer and an assistant university professor. (Heaven, help us all.) Cindy Silver, a Vancouver lawyer, supports leaving the law as it stands. Silver grew up in a broken home and lived on social services for a while. She has a profound mistrust in the state and thinks families should try to work out their problems. "Family existed long before government," Silver says. She sees no proof that moderate, occasional spanking by a parent can lead a child to more violent behaviour. Seems like a common sense observation to me.

Alisa Watkinson is leading the fight to repeal Section 43. Watkinson, an assistant professor at the University of Regina's faculty of Social Work (why am I not surprised), believes violence is wrong. That's seldom true. To me, violence infers an irrational lack of control. I don't think parents who discipline their children are out of control. Watkinson is also the author of "Education, Student Rights and the Charter."

Not having read the book, and

The Way I See It

with Mike O'Leary



not having the slightest interest or intention of doing so, I will refrain from comment other than to say the title alone gives me chills.

As a parent, few things disgust me more than an adult who would physically or mentally abuse a child. We have laws that cover these crimes now. I would support any effort to vigorously enforce them. But it's a big stretch from child abuse to the state saying a parent can't spank a child as part of the child raising process. Too many people see the state as the panacea for all the problems in society. Now think about that for a moment. Do you really want to put the same folks who drove this country to the brink of bankruptcy in a position of direct influence over your children?

The politicians have been strangely quiet on this issue. No wonder, it's a lose/lose situation for them. Should Section 43 be struck down most people will just ignore the law. There is nothing worse than an unenforceable statute. It results in selective enforcement which diminishes the entire population's respect for our judicial system. I'll bet most politicians would wish this whole case would go quietly away.

This question is driven by a small group who would lead you to believe they know better than you how to raise your child. All parents have their own style of raising children. While there are some obvious constants my observation is that what works for us may not work for you, and vice versa. There are too many dynamics to the family unit to take a cookie cutter approach. But don't think that the know-it-all's won't continue to press their own agenda. I guess when you have all the answers you have an undeniable urge to share all that insight with the rest of us po' folk.

My observation has been that all these people who assume they know everything about raising children are never there when you need them. If

your kid is running a temperature and throwing-up all night well, the parents can handle that. If you child is afraid to go to school don't bother the busybodies with trivial issues. If your kid gets in trouble with the police it must be the parents' fault. If, however, one of the know everything's little darling runs amok.

It is obviously the fault of everyone but them. Funny how that works, isn't it?

I am sick and tired of the over-the-wall depictions of anyone who has ever spanked a child as being some kind of monster. A perfect example was in one of Heather Bird's column in The Sun. She was writing about the child whose body parts were found in an Etobicoke Park. Evidently this child was abused because there were bruises on the arms the police found as well as defensive wounds. Bird then wondered if anyone else found it "ironic" that this tragedy occurred while the court challenge to the law "which makes it legal to assault children in this country provided you use the right amount of force" - proceeded. I don't find anything ironic about the death of this or any other child. Nor do I think it clever to try and lump a parent who is disciplining their child in with a sadistic murderer while trying to make a point. It's insulting to our intelligence is what it is.

Ms. Bird obviously supports Ms. Watkinson in her legal efforts. Ms. Watkinson goes so far as to think spanking sometimes leads to more violent acts, even murder. My observation is that the worst kids I've ever met are those who grew up with no discipline, no limits and no comprehension of the word "no". Children who are so self-centred will often react irrationally when life and reality smack them in the face. It is these children I worry about.

Ms. Watkinson admits she spanked her children and finds the memory painful. I spanked mine but I don't dwell on it. Looking back, I prefer to think of the good times we all had. Funny, so do my children.

LETTERS

Writer says MP should lower gas prices, GST

To the Editor,

Dear Mr. Julian Reed, MP
I received your letter some time ago about gas prices. I was most disappointed by your answer. You mentioned alternative fuels. I have a neighbour who purchased a new diesel vehicle, and he says it would have cost \$5,000 more to get alternative fuels.

I am on a low income and do volunteer driving such as Meals on Wheels, but will be unable to do so if your government won't do something

about the high price of gas.

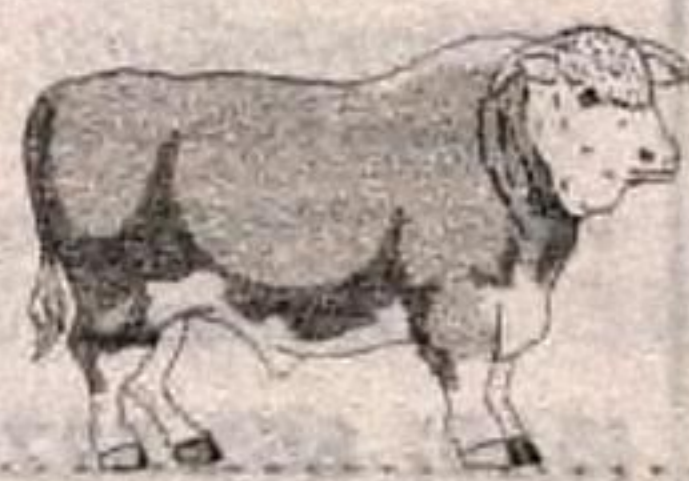
I am not able to buy a new car every two or three years or have a limousine or a chauffeur to drive me around.

My car is 13 years old, in good condition, and I can't afford another. Get off your Ivory Towers and do something, by lowering gas taxes and take the GST off gas prices completely to help people on low incomes.

Douglas N. Anderson

P.S. I expect a more intelligent answer this time.

WHAT'S YOUR BEEF?



Put it in a letter to the Editor!

Deadline is Tuesday at noon.