

# GRAPEVINE



## Flu Bug? Y2K bug?

From the Y2K bug to the flu bug, the list of reasons for billing snafus at Halton Hills Hydro (HHH) continues to grow.

On Wednesday, a HHH rep said they had a case of millennium bug bite and the main billing system computer wasn't talking to the bank. January's monthly automatic debit for residential customers was processed almost two weeks late.

Late last year, one Acton business received a bill due Jan. 4, 1900, but HHH spokesman David Smelsky that was a print program problem, not a Y2K issue.

"The issue with the automatic payment is not a Y2K problem. We tried to process the January 1 file out of its normal schedule because of Christmas and our own scheduling caused the problem," Smelsky said, adding all of the billing should be straightened out by this week.

## Lucky sports supporter

Congrats to Acton's Greg Ferguson whose support of local hockey has made him a triple winner. Ferguson, a Town employee at Acton arena, won a new Dodge Dakota Sport truck - valued at \$33,410 - in last Saturday's Georgetown Raider's hockey draw. Ferguson, a father with two young kids and a third on the way, doesn't plan to keep the truck, supplied by Georgetown Chrysler Jeep. The truck was one of 20 used last year to carry drivers in a parade at the Molson Indy.

Ferguson said he'd continue to buy raffle tickets from local sports groups. In November, he won approximately \$400 in an Acton Tanner Peewee 50/50 draw and he won gift certificates to the Red Dog Café and Harrop's in a Minor Atom Christmas raffle.

## MacKenzie

It's not clear who will be writing McKenzie-Smith 100 times on the blackboard, but someone spelled it wrong on 17 spiffy new boys' basketball team jerseys. The reversible shirts proclaim MacKenzie-Smith Bennett - enough to make former principal, the late Garnet McKenzie - give somebody a detention.

MSB phys. Ed instructor Steve Morrison said Friday he hoped he hadn't made the error and would contact the supplier, the same one who did all of the school's T-shirts and sweat shirts (all spelled correctly) this week.

## Calling all parents

Ever had a bad day? Need some help dealing with the stresses of being a parent? The Acton Concerns Group (ACG) can help with a series of three presentations, offered as a resource to help strengthen families and equip parents.

"Instead of complaining about the kids in front of Jug City, we're trying

to equip parents on how to be a good parent, how to handle stress," explained ACG member, Pastor Jamie Shepherd.

Dick O'Brien, a powerful motivational speaker with the Halton District School Board, is the guest speaker at the first session, which is (Jan. 24) at 7:30 p.m. at McKenzie-Smith Bennett. O'Brien will talk about the challenges of parenting in the 21st century.

All sessions are free and there's on-site reserved babysitting provided by the YMCA Daycare at MSB. For more information call 853-2715.

## Red Cross merger

Acton residents using Red Cross services shouldn't notice that the Halton Hills branch has merged with Oakville and Milton to form the new East Halton district.

"I'm very proud that it's been a seamless merger," said former Halton Hills branch manager Marlene Beitz, who said the administrative changes, including three fewer branch managers with one new social services coordinator, will save money and help share staff resources.

"I think that this essentially should work better and the restructuring is continuing," Beitz said, adding services like the lone cupboard of health equipment and volunteer driving program will continue as usual.

## Grand pairs

A number of Acton seniors and primary school students from Robert Little school got together earlier this week at the Acton Seniors' Centre for the first of three planned meetings as part of an intergenerational program. In celebration of the International Year of Older Persons, Halton Hills Support and Community Information (HHSCI) received funding for the program which matches seniors and school children so they can talk about their many differences and similarities in their school, games and toys of yesterday and today.

"We wanted to just get the different generations together to connect and to share experiences," said HHSCI spokesperson Kim Anderson. The seniors and students will get together two more times.

## Pray for Acton

In a united voice, Acton residents will pray for our community at the annual Community Unity Service this Sunday at the Acton Legion. This year's service, hosted by the Acton Ministerial, has a mandate to pray for Acton.

"We are coming together for a common purpose - to pray that our fire, ambulance and police are protected and kept safe and that our business will prosper. We're asking God to bless our community," said Pastor Jamie Shepherd.

The service begins at 10:30 and all are welcome.

# No grants to Santa

To the Editor:

I feel it is necessary to respond to Mrs. C. Owens' letter in The Jan. 13

No. 1 daughter ...

Cont. from Pg. 4

devastated me. I couldn't believe an older man who was a business owner would say something like that and to a woman as well. Then like a black knight, he drove away. He sure wasn't a nice white knight.

Sometimes it's not necessary to treat a woman differently because of her gender, but sometimes we like to be treated special just because we are women. And sometimes guys should just bite their tongue.

Mrs. C. Owens' letter in The Jan. 13 issue of The New Tanner, to clarify statements in this letter.

Although it is true that thousands of dollars are invested in the annual Santa Claus Parade those dollars do not come from the Town of Halton Hills by way of a grant, tax levy or allotment of any kind.

The dollars needed come from kind donations from our local businesses, churches, factories, service groups and individuals. Any shortfall is made up by our mostly volunteer, Acton Firefighters Association.

Respectfully,  
William R. Spielvogel,  
Santa Claus Parade Chairman



MAKE BELIEVE: Acton Sparks, Brownies, Guides and Pathfinders had a little dress up fun at their winter camp last weekend, held at Camp Edgewood in Eden Mills. - Frances Niblock photo

# Is Drive Clean a rip-off?

My birthday was last week; an event that I give little attention to since I adopted the metric calendar. Once you reach 40 you only go up one year every 10 calendar years. So I am still 41 and will be for some time. What I did have to do is go through the "Drive Clean" program before I could get my plates renewed.

The folks at Acton Auto Tech were very nice and, I should add, very professional. They took my van in the shop for about 20 minutes. When Trevor, the mechanic, came back in and said "You passed" I felt as good as I did when I was back in school. Relief was probably a better word for what I experienced. So I paid my 30 bucks and went on my way.

Later that week I read that nearly 98 per cent of vehicles like mine passed the test. Meanwhile, in the past year, drivers like me have been taxed an extra \$7.5 million by the government for nothing. I thought the Conservatives were supposed to stop screwing the taxpayers.

Now the minister is talking about "reviewing" the program. Silly me, I would have thought the government would have pre-tested a mandatory program like Drive Clean before rolling it out. And what about the people who went out and spent thousands and thousands of dollars on testing equipment? Is the minister going to ensure that these businesses get some of the money back if he changes the rules now? Businesses, after all, make capital investments based on a potential market. If the government now intends to significantly reduce that market by exempting certain vehicles then I think the government should have to reimburse those who invested in this new technology.

Please, spare me the argument that this program was aimed at saving the environment. The big polluters - trucks, diesel buses and certain industries were exempted. In my opinion this program was instituted so the government could silence the enviro-lobby and claim to be pro-active on environmental issues.

Did you watch 60 Minutes last Sunday? 60 Minutes claims that,

## The Way I See It

with Mike O'Leary



in order to meet the stringent Clean Air Act standards, the gas companies added MTBE to their product. Now, 49 states have discovered the MTBE has fouled ground-water wells after gasoline leaked from storage tanks. The US Environmental Protection Agency is now looking at banning MTBE from gasoline. It is so toxic that one cup can contaminate millions of gallons of drinking water. The New Tanner will be following-up on MTBE and will report any findings which should concern us in later issues.

The obvious point in both of these issues is that government has an obligation to thoroughly pre-test programs, in consultation with the industries involved, before launching programs which in the final analysis may make matters worse. We have to clean up the mess we have made or our environment. There is no argument about that. I don't buy the "cars are the big villains" proposal. The initial years of Drive Clean seems to prove my contention. Hopefully, the government will learn from its mistakes and attack the problem a lot more effectively in the future.

★★★★

On the topic of 60 Minutes, someone at Global TV has a screw loose. The football game ran long so 60 Minutes started late. At eight o'clock, however, Global cut away so viewers wouldn't miss a minute of "The Simpsons". Global viewers missed a delightful, thoughtful, uplifting 60 Minutes segment on Ben Zandner who directs the Boston Philharmonic. It's enough to make you "have a cow - man!"

Incidents like this remind me how much I resent the CRTC and Cable companies who force us to watch Canadian feeds even when the show originates in the states. Isn't it nice to know that our federal bureaucrats ensure that we only get the finest programming? I guess we should look forward to Global cutting away from its big year end interview with the

Prime Minister in favour of the WWF Raw.

Actually, when you think about it, that might not be such a bad idea. Hnnmm.

I see the police are being investigated again. A suspected shoplifter threatened a security guard who tried to detain him, with a knife. The thief then stole a truck, tried to outrun the cops, crashed into one or more cruisers, endangered other motorists and finally slashed the hand of one of the officers who was attempting to arrest him. Now the York Region officers are under investigation because TV helicopter camera filmed them subduing the man. They gave him a few thumps in other words. Small wonder, I'm surprised they didn't shoot him.

I know, I know; we're supposed to treat criminals with kid gloves. I wonder if we changed the "Right to Counsel" caution would that satisfy those who always bash the police. How does this sound?

"Sir/Madame/other gender: I am arresting you for (charges must be read in language of client's choice within seven minutes of event or client must be released.) It is my duty to inform you that you have the right to telephone any lawyer you wish. It is my duty to ask if you are feeling depressed about this, or any other, arrest. 1-800-555-9999 is a toll free number for a Legal Aid psychologist. It is also my duty to ask if all is well with your family and pets at home? 1-800-555-9998 will put you in touch with a free Legal Aid veterinarian. I must also ask you if your car is running. If you don't have a car, one will be provided for you. Are you hungry now? 1-800-555-9997 will put your right through to free Legal Aid food delivery. Do you feel nervous since I took away your gun while I still have mine? If so, would you prefer me to return your weapon or should I throw mine away? Do you understand your rights? Do you want to drive the police car to the station?"

Would that satisfy the police bashers? Probably not. I wonder, why it is that the police are so quickly accused when they're out there trying to protect us? I find it mind-boggling.