

GRAPEVINE



Library excellence

Kudos to the Halton Hills Public Library for its pioneering Halton newspaper index project that received a prestigious Angus Mowat Award of Excellence award earlier this month.

The library offers the full text of complete newspapers – four, including The New Tanner – on the Internet, and other newspapers are indexed. There's a rich database – over 200,000 birth, death and marriage entries – that draws hundreds of hits per day.

"What we're doing is something that effectively, for users, replaces the need to go to microfilm for back issues and there's nobody in Canada doing that," said Deputy Chief Librarian Walter Lewis of Acton, who wrote the search engine software.

Halton Hills' newspaper project has generated a lot of interest from other libraries in Ontario who will be allowed to share the technology.

The library home page is located at www.hhpl.on.ca.

lices to Willow Street, freeing up an apartment.

CMHA executive director Marion Wright said while it's a cost-saving administrative change; it will also offer a "safe, comforting and supportive" drop in.

"Especially in smaller communities, we've always found that there has been some unjustified fear around individuals with mental health problems, and by-and-large, it's a very stable group who are quiet and also need support."

Wright said they expected to be open for business by the end of the week.

Mill Street muscle

The Acton Jiu Jitsu Club has outgrown its Boat House location in Prospect Park, and as of March 1, will be sparring and grappling at 5 Mill St., East, in a leased storefront beside Forever Youngsters.

Sensei Linda (Squires) Bromley, who with her black belt husband Peter Bromley, has operated the club with 23 students for a year-and-a-half, plans to offer additional classes – including self-defense for women, moms and tots class, day-time adult classes, after-school for kids and possibly special needs – once she gets settled at the new location.

"The loyalty and support of my students and their families – we're a team, a big family – means we are growing again and I can't wait until we're in our new location."

Bromley, president of the Canadian Jiu Jitsu Association, is bringing the Canadian championships to Acton on the first weekend in May.

Synchro success

Congrats to Acton's Bronwyn Marshall and Rockwood's Jenn May, members of Ice Image, the Burlington senior synchronized skating club that captured a bronze medal earlier this month at the Milan Spring Cup in Italy.

Marshall and May, both university students, have skated with the team for two seasons. Last year, Ice Image placed fourth at the worlds and second at the nationals. They'll challenge for the Canadian championship in Kitchener next weekend. A first or second place finish earns the team a trip to the worlds in Minneapolis in April.

Although the Italian crystal cup team received for its third place finish is beautiful, Marshall and May treasure small papiermache boxes, given in thanks, by the poor Croatian team.

Ice Image members and the Canadian contingent brought many Croatian skaters to tears by cheering and clapping for them during their routine – something no one had ever done.

That night in their rooms, the Croatian skaters – who finished last in the competition – made the heart-shaped boxes and presented them to the Canadian team at the closing ceremonies.



VISITORS FROM MARS? Nope, just two Canadian girls who like to assert their individuality with spiked hair and earrings in unusual places. They were spotted by enterprising photographer Ted Tyler as he looked for unusual photos during the weekend.



Slots success

Congrats to Acton's Fred Archibald who won 20 large (that's \$20,000 in high-roller talk, so I'm told) playing the slots at Mohawk last week. Archibald was down to \$48 of his initial \$1,000, and ready to head home when he slipped a \$2 chip into the slot machine and the bells started to ring.

"I knew right away as the numbers came up and the bells went off and the staff came and took my picture with a souvenir cheque," Archibald said, describing himself as a recreational gambler.

Archibald, who earlier won \$4,000 at Mohawk, hasn't decided how to spend the windfall.

Mental health partners

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), in partnership with two other agencies, has opened a new joint office on the main floor of the old Town Hall, owned by Heritage Acton.

The office will offer one-stop-shopping for mental services, including a clinic and drop-in which is currently located Knox Presbyterian Church. The North Halton Mental Health Association will operate the clinic and Re-Entry Homes, a supportive housing agency, will move its of-

Democracy has been hijacked

Sometimes I think "What's the use?" I, and many other Canadians, regularly get our shorts in a knot over the antics of our government. Occasionally, I give myself a kick in the pants to remind myself that we are in this situation because too many of us pay little or no attention to how our money is being spent. I thought I could not be shocked by what our government does. And then you have a week like the last one.

The billion dollar boondoggle at Human Resources Development Canada (HRD) just won't go away. The Prime Minister, for whatever reason, has chosen to keep Minister Jane Stewart in her post. The PM at every opportunity, decries the hubub and pretends the missing millions is no big deal. He borrowed my line of a few weeks ago and proposes that the missing money is analogous to us po' folk failing to balance our cheque book and overspending our budgets. The fat that we have to make amends for our mistakes and most often apologize profusely to our creditors, doesn't apply, of course. Politics means never having to say you're sorry.

The next time MP Reed tries to con us that the Liberals are fiscally responsible you might want to remember the following.

You and I are funding a "performance art" exhibit at the Canadian Culture Centre in Paris, France. French Actresses dress up as sluts and talk dirty to visitors. From, what I understand, that's it. No mountains; no Mounties. Just a few beavers being flashed around. Makes you proud to be Canadian, doesn't it?

Part of the HRD spending orgy involved \$200,000 for a musical fountain in PM Chretien's riding. There was, however, absolutely no porkbarreling involved in this exercise. The PM has assured us of this. So there! One assumes that the hookers in St. Maurice will now have a place to congregate and talk

The Way I See It

with Mike O'Leary



dirty to the passers-by. The good Citizens will rejoice that their government has brought art and culture to the masses.

These two incidents are just the tip of the iceberg on how just this one level of government consistently mismanages the trust the people give them on election night. If this were private industry, the shareholders would be demanding instant dismissals and significant jail time for actions which I think are fraudulent. It's not just the Liberals, the Conservatives, when they were in power, were just as bad. Our democracy has been hijacked. We now live in an oligarchy.

What are the biggest concerns in your life? Most would answer health care, education, the price of gas, Quebec, or other such important issues of the day. It seems to me that our elected members have one concern and one concern only. How to get re-elected. How to save their own miserable jobs and continue to live their lives of perks and privileges. The PM even uses the chance of re-election as a stick to keep the caucus in line. I find the whole scenario disgusting.

It's not supposed to be this way you know. Ideologically, we are supposed to send an MP to represent us at the national or provincial level. Instead, we end up with a highly paid mouthpiece who represents what a few powerful politicians have decided is the best thing for us. I still remember Garth Turner trying to sell the GST with it was common knowledge that over 80 per cent of the people in this country opposed it. The GST was rammed through anyway. This is a Democracy?

My friends, our country is facing

some serious problems. Premier Harris said that the ease with which kids can get guns is "very, very scary." instead of reacting to the real problem, the Feds have spent over \$200 million trying to get John Q. Public to register his or her sport rifle. While this legislation do anything to stop the alarming rise in gun crime? No. Will the Feds listen to the people and attack the problem? No. Instead, they will, and are, trying to sell us a pig in a poke that this gun control nonsense will actually improve things. They can't admit they made a mistake because that may cost them some votes they might not get re-elected. Don't even get me started on the Young Offenders Act.

I think we need a wholesale revision of our parliamentary system. I'd like to see the prime minister elected by the people rather than a few hundred political hacks. I would like to see term limits. I don't think it's anything to cheer about that the PM has spent 30 some odd years living off the public teat. Somebody should tell him to get a job. Please, don't tell me he's only in Ottawa to make this country better. He's in Ottawa to get himself and his cronies re-elected. The man makes no apology when he says so, time and time again.

I don't know how to effect significant change. I do know that electing the same old tired troop to power time and time again is not the answer. As editor Coles pointed out two weeks ago, your government thinks spending \$1 million on an anti-war rock concert or \$21,000 on a web site beaming out images of fish is responsible management of your money.

You will be I'm sure, delighted to know that the inspirational exhibition of Canadian culture, now playing in France, will be shown in Ottawa later this year. More government job creation. Sigh!

POLICE BEAT

Generators stolen

Three generators, valued at \$9,000, were stolen from Ed Stewart's Farm Equipment around 11:15 p.m. on Feb. 17. Thieves cut a padlock on the front gate, then forced a door to the building to get at the generators. A small dark coloured Ford or Nissan pickup was seen leaving the scene.

Township drug bust

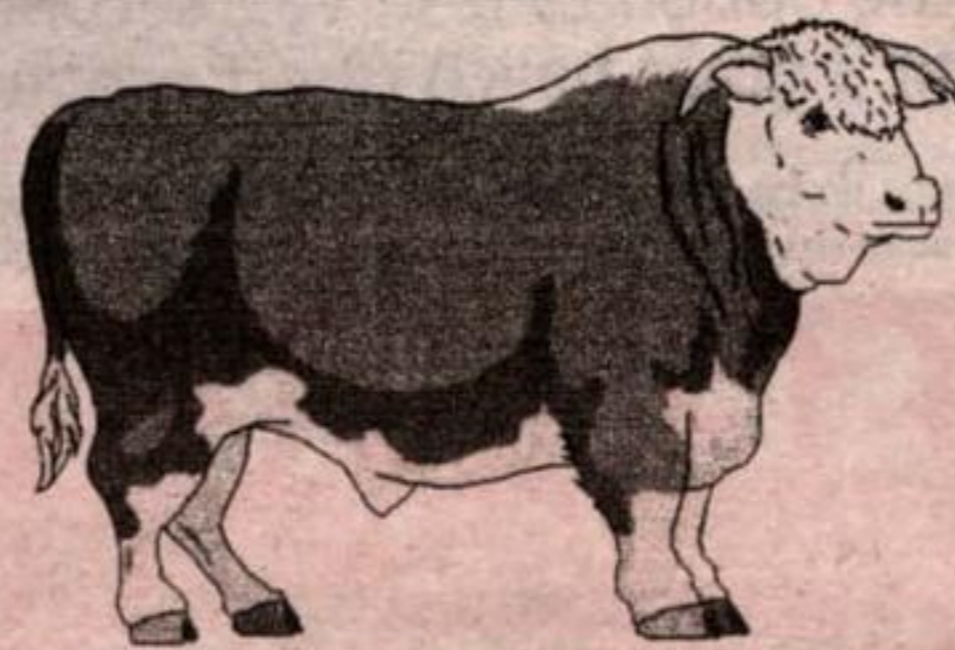
Three Erin Township residents have been charged following execution of a drug warrant at a Township

residence north of Hillsburgh on Feb. 17.

Police seized more than 1,500 marijuana plants, hash oil and growing equipment valued at around \$256,000. Wellington County and London joint forces located a hydroponic growing system in the basement of the home on Highway 25 and charged the residents of the home.

Charged with production of a controlled substance and possession for the purpose of trafficking were

Joseph Morris, 25, Nathan Huizenga, 26 and Shilah Bradbury, 23.



WHAT'S YOUR BEEF?

Put it in a letter to the Editor!

Deadline is Tuesday at noon.