

# GRAPEVINE



## Obey, or pay

Consider this fair warning. Halton cops will target the Highway 7 and Lakeview Road area – the scene of a drunk driving death several years ago – in a crack down on aggressive drivers. The aggressive enforcement campaign is aimed at curbing rising complaints of speeding and reckless driving – 1,500 so far this year in Halton.

All traffic infractions will be enforced, including speeding, seatbelts infractions, and unsafe lane changes. There won't be any breaks for motorists nailed by conventional or laser radar crews in high complain areas.

## Hot hoopsters

Congrats to the seven young Acton athletes who finished in the top ten at a recent Knights of Columbus basketball free throw in Georgetown. After winning at the local level, the sharp shooters competed against 55 other youths in the district level. The winners – from Oakville and Burlington – advanced to the provincial competition. The Acton participants included John Uiterwyk – 6th place, Craig Kirkwood – 5th, Daniel O'Driscoll, 6th, Ray Peterson – 5th, Amy McBride – 6th and Spencer Williams – 5th.

## Painting parents

Congrats to the McKenzie-Smith parents, one student and school board chair Ethel Gardener, who donated their time and talents to a school spruce-up project on Saturday morning. They painted approximately 80 lockers a bright blue before running out of paint, supplied by the Halton District School Board. They will complete the job during March break.

## Block parents

Caring Kangaroo – the Acton Block Parent mascot – will be taking the Block Parents message to Acton Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten students at Acton schools later this month. The 20-member strong organization is recruiting new Block Parents and educating young children and seniors that a house with a Block parent sign in the window is a

safe haven.

The organization would like to have two Block Parents on each street in Acton. Block Parents, who must be screened by police, put the Block Parent sign in their window when they are available to offer their home as a safe refuge in an emergency. For more information call Yvonne Johansen at 853-1843.

## Famine fast

The Acton Baptist Church (ABC) Youth group students will fast for 30 hours this weekend as they raise funds through sponsorships in World Vision's 30 - Hour Famine. The group is confident it will raise over \$2,500 to help children in developing countries, stricken by hunger and malnutrition.

The Acton ABC youth group has added a hairy challenge to the fast, during which they'll drink only water and juice. If they raise \$2,500, youth sponsor Matt Beach will shave his head and if they raise \$3,500, youth pastor Tracy Beach will dye her hair whatever colour the youth group chooses. Pastor Tom Cullen will shave his head if they top the \$5,000 mark. To sponsor a faster or make a donation call 853-9823.

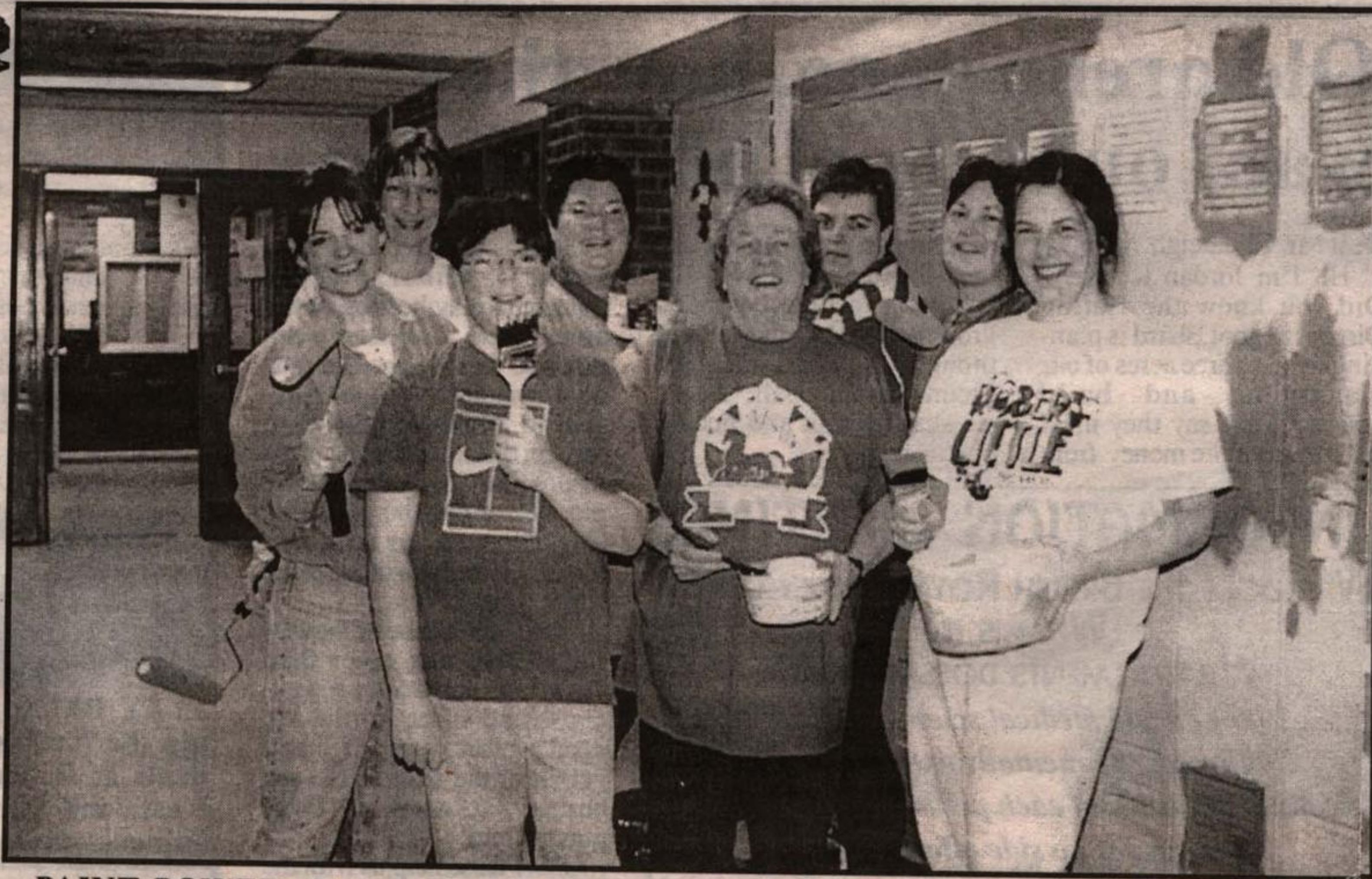
## Cancer campaign

With the firm belief that cancer can be beaten, the Acton Branch of the Canadian Cancer Society is gearing up for its annual April fundraising campaign. Canvassers are needed for the door-to-door campaign and anyone with a few hours to donate is asked to call Liz Bailey at 853-3585.

The campaign officially kicks off with volunteer appreciation chili dinner at Trinity United Church on March 29. Canvassers, who collected a record \$33,362 last year, will knock on Acton doors during April.

"Acton has always generously given to the Cancer Society and we look forward to that support again this year," Society president Cathy Gerrow said.

The Society will sell daffodils on March 30 and 30 and April 1 and the annual antique and craft show and sale is on Mother's Day in May.



**PAINT POWER:** This dedicated group spruced up some of the lockers at McKenzie-Smith Bennett school on Saturday with a couple of coats of much-needed paint. The work crew includes (left to right) Joanne Shuttleworth, Lois Matton, Ben Bailie, Susan McPhail, Halton District School Board chair Ethel Gardener, Bev Bailie and Heather Christie. - Frances Niblock photo

# Mayor's monument - or folly?

The new Georgetown Recreation Centre is over budget? What a huge surprise. The fact that this project will cost 30 per cent more than originally budgeted is supposed to be due to higher construction costs for men and material. It strikes me as odd that the financial pages are not full of horror stories regarding massive bankruptcies in the construction industry. How, after all, could private companies absorb a 30 per cent cost increase and still stay solvent? Unless, of course, you are government and then you just screw the taxpayer a little more.

I am wondering if any of the \$2.2 million increase is a result of lowballing the original estimates to ease passage through council? Sure, costs have gone up. But 30 per cent?

My immediate reaction, as a taxpayer, is not to build the project right now. What's the rush? If the prices go up 30 per cent because there's a building boom doesn't it follow that they would come down by up to 30 per cent if we waited until the construction companies were a little more hungry and material more available.

Acton Councillor Clark Somerville was the only elected official reported to have enough common sense to say it was time to chose between doing either this project or the twinning of Alcott Arena. I was disappointed that the other Acton councillors chose to support this unconscionable price escalation even though they had some reservations. I think Councillors Elliott and Bonnette were wrong.

I have been suspicious of this project from day one. There is no argument that the new people in Georgetown South need recreational facilities. What I don't see is the need to build this type of facility. If we need a pool, why do we have to have two pools? One, a 25 metre pool I assume for competitive swimming. The other, a leisure pool - whatever that is. Why a sauna and hot tub?

Has any marketing survey been

## The Way I See It

with Mike O'Leary



done to indicate a 250 person banquet facility is needed and will, at the very least, break even? I haven't heard any mention of one. I hope this council isn't building this on the premise of - if we build it they will eat.

Part of the extra cost is supposed to be covered from the 1999 surplus. This is a lousy idea. In my experience it is bad management. The capital reserve fund will suffer as will efforts at tax rate stabilization. In the future, we all may have to pay even more property tax to make up this shortfall. So it's pay me now and pay me later. Typical governmental thinking.

Another proposal to finance the Taj M' pool is to use money from the Halton Hills Hydro restructuring to offset the deficit. If this is seriously considered I think the businesses in this town should explore the legality of such an action. If hydro has a surplus then it should be returned to its customers. Halton Hills Hydro must not be allowed to become a cash cow dedicated to funding the grandiose schemes of empire building politicians. My friends, we have to say enough some time and I think that time is now.

Mayor Serjeantson has been promoting this project from the first. She pushed for council to accept the revised plans and the additional 30 per cent cost. She seems convinced the community expects council to do a good job which we can be proud of. I think that sentiment is claptrap. I expect the town to provide the services and facilities we need at a reasonable cost.

This council seems to have missed, or is ignoring, the trend over the past five years where government tax less. Right now they are saying we'll have to pay an extra \$19 per year, for 10 years, just for this project alone. I'll bet the real costs will be even

higher. Remember, these estimates are done by the same folks who are now looking at a 30 per cent budget increase before shovel one is in the ground.

Eight dollars of that increase is for debenture costs and something euphemistically called "operating costs." Does this mean that they know now that this facility is going to lose money to the point where it needs a special levy over and above what we already pay for Parks and Rec? If so, isn't it financially imprudent to forge ahead and build a white elephant?

A final observation. The twinning of Alcott arena is \$300,000 over budget. In other words, the overage alone would have fixed up Acton's old arena. The town did, to be fair, throw in \$20,000 for the Agricultural Society to build a replacement structure. Draw your own conclusions.

I think the Council's decision to spend \$560,000 for a new lobby at Alcott but removed \$520,000 to repair and expand the parking lot speaks volumes about their priorities. It's all about optics, isn't it? The people using the twin arena won't mind substandard parking when they can stand around the lobby feeling proud.

Let's keep first things first. You can't have a decent ribbon cutting in a parking lot, can you? If just wouldn't be civilized. One's Latte would get cold.

★★★

Tomorrow being St. Patrick's Day, it would be entirely out of character for me not to wish each and every one of you the happiest and greenest day ever. My gift to you is this Irish blessing. "May there always be work for your hands to do. May your purse always hold a coin or two. May the sun always shine on your windowpane. May a rainbow be certain to follow each rain. May the good saints protect ye and the devil neglect ye. May the hand of a friend always be near you and may God fill your heart with gladness to cheer you."

Erin go braugh!

## LETTERS

### Wear a maple leaf on March 19

Dear Editor,

In the past couple of weeks you have had two interesting articles on patron saints. Canada, too, has a patron saint. Ours is right out of the Bible. St. Joseph, who was entrusted with the care and raising of Jesus, has somehow taken on the care of Canada.

I suspect the choice of St. Joseph for Canada had something to do with the devotion of the first settlers in

New France. His feast day is March 19. So wear your tartan and thistle on St. Andrew's Day, your leaf or daffodil on St. David's Day, your red rose on St. George's Day, your shamrock on St. Patrick's Day and maybe, just maybe, a maple leaf pin on St. Joseph's Day.

Sincerely,  
Rev. Robert Bulbrook,  
Pastor, St. Joseph's Parish, Acton.

### Needs space to play

Following is a letter to The New Tanner, the Halton District School Board, the Mayor and Minister of Education.

Dear President of School Council:

The Halton District School Board is planning on building homes on three acres of our playground. Our class at McKenzie-Smith Bennett would appreciate if they leave our school yard alone. Almost every day we play on the field.

I agree we have a large amount of space but we play there and it means a lot to us. We need a lot of space so we can play soccer. They are not only taking our soccer field but they are also taking ice rinks, baseball diamonds and cutting down 13 trees.

They are doing something wrong

because cutting down trees give us less oxygen. We need your help. We need you to help us save our land.

The board says they need to sell the land so they will get more money. Of course we need money for our school but we need space to play, too. We won't have all of the fun like we used to have playing soccer. We need space to play and to get exercise.

Do you realize what they are taking away from Acton children? We disagree with them taking almost half our soccer field. You can try to change the rules if you wish to.

Please do not let them take any of our playground away!  
Kendall Brown  
4/5 BLT



## WHAT'S YOUR BEEF?

Put it in a letter to the Editor!

Deadline is Tuesday at noon.