

# GRAPEVINE

## Block Parents

Acton will mark national Block Parent Week with an information table in Tim Hortons on Monday, from 9 to 11:30 a.m.

Block Parents are volunteers who act as responsible adults in emergencies. Children needing help are taught to go to a house with the familiar red and white Block Parent sign in a window – in fact, anyone needing help can look for the signs.

There are approximately 30 registered Block Parents in Acton and more are needed in almost every neighbourhood. Information about the Acton Block Parent program and registration forms will be available from volunteers manning the booth at Tim Hortons.

## Screamfest

Want to be scared by the pros? Check out the spooky tents – one for big brave kids and one for less brave little kids – at the White Rock Ostrich farm on the Fourth Line, Nassagaweya.

After Dark Productions have set up a very, very scary haunted house complete with professional sound and lighting to ensure a horrific experience. Add in a campfire and treats and you have a great Hallowe'en outing. Call 853-1487 for details.



**DEGREE RECEIVED:** Nancy Rognvaldson Coquard has received her Master of Education degree from Bishop's University in Lennoxville, Quebec. The daughter of Dorothy and the late Clarence Rognvaldson, Nancy teaches computer use to teachers in the Eastern Townships of Quebec.

## Rural well meeting

Worried about the safety of your well water? Learn what you can do to



**NEW EXECUTIVE:** McKenzie-Smith Bennett student council executive members from the left are vice president, Katrina Greenhaf, school vice principal Al Greyson, treasurer Katy Boychuk, and secretary Ashley Fendley. Council president Nigel Williams was absent from the photo.

protect yourself by testing, shocking, caring for and conserving your well water at a public meeting on Wednesday (Oct 25) at the Ballinafad Community Hall.

Halton's hydrogeologist, health department officials and a conservation expert will be on hand to talk about proper testing procedures to ensure your well is safe.

The meeting, co-sponsored by the Hickory Falls Ratepayers and P.O.W.E.R. (Protect Our Water and Environmental Resources), begins at 7:30 p.m.

## Dog done

The doors remain closed at the Red Dog Café, which has been closed for almost a month. At first, a notice on the door said the popular watering hole was closed for renovations.

That notice was replaced with one saying the property is now in lawful possession of Angelo Kyriakoulis, who has not returned several phone messages.

## Fire hall fun

A steady stream of curious kids and their parents got an up close and personal look at the Acton fire station; it's equipment and firefighters on Sunday during an open house.

Kids trained fire hoses on imaginary fires while their dads used fire extinguishers to douse a fuel fire while the firefighters and ambulance crews showed off their specialized equipment and training.

## Brunch date

Don't forget to pencil in Sunday, Oct 29 on your calendar for good food and community chitchat at the Acton Community Brunch.

The all-you-can-eat buffet – just \$5 per person and preschoolers are free – features breakfast fare with homemade desserts.

In exchange for cooking, serving and cleaning up, proceeds from this month's brunch will go Halton Hills Community Support and Information. The brunch runs from 9:30 a.m. 1:30 p.m.

## Read to Succeed

Attention parents of all grade 4 students in Acton. Did you know the library offers a special free program for Grade 4 students and every class in Halton Hills has been asked to participate?

Students will visit the library; those without library cards will get one and they'll learn about some great books. Parents are asked to talk to their child's teacher about the "Read to Succeed" program.



**HAUNTED HAPPENINGS:** This scary duo are just two of the ghouls and goblins waiting for the very brave to check out a haunted house, set up by After Dark productions for Hallowe'en at the White Rock Ostrich Farm in Nassagaweya. – Frances Niblock photo

# Get idiots off the road!!!

I was up north last weekend, closing up for the winter. (Note to those keeping track; my record is perfect. It rained Friday when I got there and Sunday when I left.) Coming home via Highways 7 and 401 convinced me that the time has come for the government, and police, to crack down hard on aggressive and just plain stupid drivers. Here's why.

I've been a salesman for many years. I've driven well over a million miles. In all that time, I've only witnessed eight or nine accidents. Three of them were last Sunday night. My observation is that all three were caused by drivers being irresponsible. In one case a driver ran a red and caused a three car pile-up. In another a woman drove into the soft shoulder, overreacted, put the car into a spin and flipped it onto its side. The last incident, on the 401, was a pure case of following too closely on rainy roads. All were preventable. Thankfully, no one appeared to be seriously injured.

There have always been jerks on the road. These days though, the fool-factor seems to be increasing exponentially. For instance, one hot shot sped past me and five or six others on two-lane Highway 7. The result? He picked up five or six places in a 50 or 60 car strung-out line. He passed us going uphill into a right hand curve. He was blind to opposing traffic. Pass one or two cars, sure. But put his/her live in jeopardy, as well as others, for no real gain is just stupid. On a two-lane road you often have to just "go with the flow."

Anyone who drives the 401 will have had this experience. As I approached the airport, traffic was moderately heavy. We had intermittent rain so I was staying two or three car lengths behind the van in front of me. The road wasn't bad and the left lane was moving at about 115 kph. I was keeping up and we were passing the line in the centre lane. The road ahead was tail-lights as far as you could see.

Suddenly, a pick-up roared up behind me. His lights reflecting off the mirrors, almost blinded me. After a minute or so, he dropped back, cut right two lanes, accelerated up the inside lane then cut back left

## The Way I See It

with Mike O'Leary



two lanes in front of me. Why this fool thought this was some sort of accomplishment defies comprehension. Yet it happens all the time.

The province has its "road ranger" program on the superhighways. By copy of this column, I am asking MPP Ted Chudleigh to see if we can't get tougher laws for "road rage" retards. I say we give them something to rage about. I would support legislation allowing police to suspend aggressive drivers on the spot. Tow their car and let 'em take a cab home. Treat them like drunk drivers. Let's see how fast they can go on the old S.L.E. (shoe leather express).

Drivers who change lanes back and forth to pick-up one or two spaces are worse than fools. They are fools who are putting your life, and mine, are at risk.

Don't get me wrong. I don't enjoy traffic jams any more than the next guy. But I'm sick, fed-up-to-the-teeth with arrogant drivers who think the 401 is a cross between the Indy 500 and a slalom run.

I don't want to hear any more psychobabble, no more excuses, no more efforts to justify aggressive drivers. Our highways are a shared resource and no one has the right to expect the rest of us to get out of the way because they want to drive 20 kmh faster than the flow.

I say scoop their cars and grab their licences. Make notifying their insurance companies that they have an idiot as a client part of the package. I'd have the cops shoot them in the leg, so they couldn't even run fast, but the bleeding hearts in this country probably wouldn't go for it. Pity.

One way or the other we have to get aggressive drivers off the road. It's a matter of life or death. Maybe yours, maybe mine.

★★★★

When did we become a nation of protesters? Pick up any paper, watch

any TV news show and you see one group or another protesting almost everything. Locally, the latest protest march was by students objecting to provincial literacy tests. Too bad. The literacy tests should have been started 25 years ago. If they had, perhaps the last two generations of students would have received a decent education in grammar, spelling and punctuation.

They paid for it, you know, and are still paying. Once out of high school, all my children had problems composing essays and doing presentations in university. My second career was as a ghost writer, and editor.

It's not that parents didn't try to fight the trends. I spoke to any teacher who would listen about literacy. Mostly I was pooh-poohed. The head of the English department at Bishop Reding defended the practice of not marking grammar or spelling on science, math or arts projects and papers. French teachers were complaining that children with little or no knowledge of English grammar, couldn't grasp French grammar. No one listened.

Parents should be concerned, and asking tough questions, about reports that the tests are too easy. The last thing kids need are dumbed down tests aimed at making the educational establishment look good.

Adults who support kids skipping this test are not doing them any favours. My girls came to realize that the system let them down. I hope this generation doesn't suffer the same fate. Literacy has to be taught from the earliest grades. It's not.

I did notice that students who skip school to pretest government mandated tests are not punished. Students, in Durham, who skipped school to protest the absence of extra-curricular activities were suspended and a note attached to their file, or they had to attend a brain-washing session. Of course, there would be no political agenda here. It was probably just a difference in policy between the two boards. If you believe that, I have some swampland near Moosonee I'd like to interest you in.