

GRAPEVINE



LOOKING FOR SUPPER: Acton's Fairy Lake is a great place for a little ice fishing. Corey Clarke and his friend Mark Hilts, both of Limehouse, tried their luck despite Sunday's cold temperatures. - Angela Tyler photo

New brunch crew

The Acton Brunch Committee officially hands over running the popular eat and greet event to the new brunch bunch, Acton Kinsmen and Kinettes, at this Sunday's brunch.

Original organizer Mary Ann Austin said the brunches created a forum for people to get together.

"I'm pleased with the amount of money we raised, but our unbelievable group had the community spirit amongst ourselves and maybe we be just passed it on," Austin said, adding the best part was "creating that atmosphere for people to enjoy themselves."

Lest We Forget

Kudos to the 11 Acton students whose Remembrance Day poems, posters and essays earned them awards from the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 197 in its annual Remembrance Day literacy contest.

The winners received certificates and pins and the top five received cash prizes. The top prize winners advance to the Legion zone level contest.

Legion youth committee chair, Peggy Graham, said the calibre of the work produced this year was "exceptional."

"I think the kids have a really good background knowledge about Remembrance Day - it shows in their work."

Local voice honours veterans

Acton's Marie Zions will sing her way through parts of Holland with the Brampton-based Liberation Choir this spring in a tour to mark the anniversary of D-Day.

The choir is practising its repertoire of religious-based songs and hymns, along with some popular music, in preparation for April's trip.

The choir will record a CD at St. George's Church in Guelph on March 24, following by a concert that night. As well, the choir will sing at churches in Burlington, Brampton and Trenton before their trip.

Zions is a member of the St. Joseph's Church choir and a former member of choir at the Acton Seniors' Centre

Heritage help

The Rotary Club of Acton's commitment to preserving Acton's her-

itage includes a \$5,000 donation to Heritage Acton for on-going renovations to the old Town and fire hall on Willow Street.

Most of the money was raised at the Rotary's popular pre-Christmas wine and cheese party at the Town Hall, and Rotary treasurer, Fred Gordon, said Heritage Acton's work to restore that building deserves recognition.

"We support their work - it's important to Acton," Gordon said, adding they doubled their profit from last year's inaugural wine and cheese party and, in total, donate between \$15,000 and \$20,000 annually to local community groups, teams and organizations, and sponsor a student each year.

Insurance and reassurance

Looking for a little free insurance and/or reassurance? Applications are now being accepted in Acton for the Letter Carriers Alert program that is designed to keep an eye out for the well-being of seniors, singles and the disabled.

Operated by Halton Hills Community Support and Information (HHCSI) in partnership with the Acton Post Office for six years, there are approximately 300 people registered with the program that has letter carriers keep a eye open for piled up mail - possibly signaling something amiss - along their routes.

HHCSI executive director Rosslyn Dowell said they answer about 30 Letter Carrier Alerts a year and the program is like insurance - a program they hope isn't needed, but one that gives people, "often family, some living far away, some reassurance that someone is checking on their loved one on a daily basis.

Gift of life

You can share a Valentine's gift from the heart by donating blood at the Canadian Blood Services clinic at the Acton Legion on February 8.

Your sweetie may not need blood, but someone in Canada needs blood products every minute of every day.

Only 3 per cent of Canadians donate blood, but almost everyone will either personally need blood or blood products in their lifetime.

The Acton clinic runs from 4 to 8 p.m.

Junk food society

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last day, I needed to return to the Winn Dixie to pick up a few things you can't buy here, like instant café latte. I was being drawn into their way of thinking. My dad came in with me and I had to show him the ultimate in laziness. There it was in the Pillsbury freezer section. Sitting there beside my childhood comfort treats, the role of frozen chocolate chip cookie dough was packages of the dough already cut and placed on oven ready sheets. Who was too lazy to cut the cookie dough into slices? On one side you could get a role of pre-made cookie dough or for the same price, get a handy sheet of 18 cookies pre-cut, ready to cook. Wasn't part of the fun slicing the

cookies and eating the left over bits of raw dough?

I had enough by that point. Nobody was listening to me moan anymore. Then when I least expected my family supported me, my sister had done her own test kitchen experiment. With a role of Pillsbury cookie dough, she made them the old fashioned way, slicing the dough into cookies with her own hands. In the end, she ended up with almost 20 more cookies than if she had bought the convenient pre-cut cookies. I guess it's true what they say, good things come to those who are patient. Heck, we got an extra 20 cookies!

A murder most foul

Robert Latimer lost his appeal to the Supreme Court last week and began serving his sentence of "Life without parole for 10 years." Dutifully, the mainstream media began a campaign aimed at securing him a pardon. Over the next weeks and months I expect extreme pressure will be brought to bear on the P.M. and Cabinet to grant clemency under the age old tradition of "The Royal Prerogative of Mercy."

Why? Why should this man be given any consideration? He freely admits that he purposely ran a hose from his exhaust into the cab of his truck. Then he placed his loving, helpless daughter in the vehicle and turned on the ignition. If that isn't premeditated murder then what is? Some want to term this a "mercy killing." That is, without a doubt, the most idiotic oxymoron ever coined. There is nothing merciful in killing another person let alone your own child.

Robert Latimer first denied his crime. Then, faced with overwhelming evidence he changed his story to portray himself as committing the ultimate act of kindness. I can't understand why a seeming majority of Canadians buy into his story. The only proof we have of his intentions is his word. Friends, the prisons are full of people who swear they are innocent regardless of the evidence. Yet Latimer is taken at his word, without any seeming consideration for his victim. Why? Is it because Tracy Latimer is every parent's nightmare?

Disabled from birth, there is no doubt Tracy led a difficult and painful life. It was her life though, and there has been no claim that Tracy ever showed any inclination to ending it. On the contrary, Tracy could use the radio and enjoyed music. She could recognize family and friends and expressed joy at seeing them. Her mother was considering sending Tracy to a regular high school so she might interact with other children her own age. She liked bonfires. Tracy loved being rocked gently by her parents. Is this a life to be considered irrelevant? If the answer is yes, then God help us all for we have truly lost our way.

The Way I See It

with
Mike O'Leary



Mr. Latimer said you have to walk in his shoes to understand his actions. There is no doubt he has had a rough road to hoe. As a father myself I can't even imagine his situation. Again, though, why is this all about him? Why hasn't anyone been championing Tracy? What must her thoughts have been when her dad picked her up that last time? Were her last conscious moments filled with confusion, betrayal, terror? Does anyone think she was grateful? Why doesn't anyone want to wheel in her chair? Why is the victim in this case all but ignored? We give refugees full protection of the Charter as soon as they set foot on our soil. Why isn't anyone championing Tracy's rights? Do disabled children have fewer rights than able bodied ones?

Mr. Latimer's lawyer pointed out it is outrageous that Mr. Latimer's sentence is almost equal to that of Homolka. I couldn't agree more. The problem, however, is with her sentence - not his. The whole comparison is a red herring. Homolka should be in jail for life, actually she should be hung - but that's another story. However, the N.D.P. Attorney General of the day bought into her battered-wife story and made the deal with the devil. Comparisons on any level between the cases are specious. No, it's worse than that, it's dishonest.

Robert Latimer will never serve 10 years. I don't mind that. What I do resent is him being the poster boy for those pushing euthanasia. Had Mr. Latimer disposed of a litter of mongrels in this way many of those championing his cause would have the S.P.C.A. on him like a junkyard dog on a bone. He would be vilified and pillared. Few, outside other disabled people, raise a voice for Tracy. Even her father, who to this day

shows no remorse for killing his daughter, when asked by the press shortly after his sentence was upheld about Tracy said: "This isn't a time to think about her." Heavens no, we can't muddy up the debate by thinking about the real victim. Let's all concentrate on good ol' Bob and mercy killing. That's our brave new world.

I often listen to C.F.R.B. I became so angry last week when the hosts of one segment wouldn't entertain any point of view other than support for Latimer. If you can't see that Latimer's motives were honourable then you have no compassion, they claimed. I don't know what the man's motive was and I don't care. Lofty ideals are not a licence for murder. We will never know if Robert Latimer killed his daughter to spare her pain or to free himself from watching her suffer. There's a world of difference there.

I've written before about Judith Snow whom I met through my brother and Frontier College. I don't think Judith has had a rain-free day in her life. She's confined to a wheelchair and takes heavy medication to live and function. Judith is a respected lecturer and author on the rights of the disabled. She is a teacher and counsellor to parents of disabled children, school boards and governments. The woman has, as they say, a presence that inspires the soul. "Can't do" is not in her vocabulary.

When this case first came to light Judith said, "Save me from those who claim the only way to help me with my pain is to kill me." Judith travels in Tracy's chair. Will no one listen to her?

I feel little compassion for Robert Latimer. My compassion is reserved for Tracy. I will remember her in my prayers. She was, after all, the victim. We must not let her memory be shoved aside to further the cause of killing; mercy or otherwise.

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The Spring Gift Shows are on so I will be away for the next issue or two. This will leave lots of space for letters on today's column. No anonymous or signature withheld by request letters will be accepted on this topic. Talk to you soon.