

GRAPEVINE



Best blooms

Communities with the best blooms will be celebrated next weekend in Stratford when the winners of the Communities in Bloom contest are announced.

Six delegates from Halton Hills, including the mayor, will attend the ceremony, wrapping up provincial and national contests designed to encourage neighbourhood beautification and foster civic pride. This year's theme was "People, Plants and Pride... Growing Together."

"We're pretty pleased with how great Halton Hills looked for the judging. It went well," said Warren Harris, the Town's manager of parks and cemeteries.

"Next year we hope to broaden the scope and maybe have people decorate their mailboxes and have commercial store windows spruced up like some other communities did this year," Harris said.

Read on

The late Douglas Quinn's love of books lives on in the children's department of the Acton library.

When the avid reader from Acton passed away last September, his family asked that remembrances be made in his name to the library. With the subsequent donations, the library purchased a 17-volume set of Wildlife and Plants of the World books.

"Douglas was here all the time with the (grand) kids. We wanted to put something back in the community," his widow, Helen Quinn, said on Friday as the reference books were put into circulation.

Still at the library....

The lottery for this fall's pre-school programs is September 22. To register for programs offered to kids aged six months to five years, you need to bring proof of your child's age.

All of the programs begin next month.

RESPECT

Forget about arguing, bargaining and confronting your kids. Try teaching responsibility and co-operation with some new parenting skills offered at a Secrets of Discipline seminar October 2, in Acton. The presentation by educator, author and behavioral specialist Ronald Morrish is sponsored by the Acton Concerns Group. The presentation, which will be followed by a question and answer session, is billed as "parent-friendly, practical, effective and immediately applicable."

The presentation begins at 7 p.m. at McKenzie-Smith Bennett School.

Lucky fans

Fueled with franks and soda donated by IGA, 18 lucky Acton residents and their guests were bused to Saturday's Blue Jay ball game af-

ter a "tailgate" party at the Red Dog.

The fans were winners in the Acton BIA (Business Improvement Area) summer sports draw, sponsored by 16 local businesses.

The crew wasn't hard to spot at SkyDome — they took an Acton BIA banner and tied it onto the railing in front of their seats during the game, which the Jays won 3-1 over Detroit.

Fast girl

Kudos to Acton snowmobile racer Tiina Duncanson who set a world record at the recent Canadian Snowmobile Grass Drag championship.

Travelling at 145 km/h, or 90 mph, Duncanson, a member of That Girl Racing Team, covered the 500-foot track in 5.39 seconds on her 500-cc sled.

After races on the holiday weekend, Duncanson and her husband Peter, who is team mechanic, head to Minnesota for a meet that draws top racers from across North America.

Cable changes

Cogeco cable will close its Acton production studios on Main Street for good this December, but the company says the change will mean more, not less, programming for its local customers.

"We'll continue to cover Acton events with our mobile production unit and we're keeping up our commitments in Acton," Cogeco spokesperson Maureen Tilson Dymet said on Friday, adding system upgrades will give viewers a multi-screen effect and there will be new cable shows launched this fall.

Cogeco is moving its production facilities to Milton. No local jobs will be lost with the changes.

What a deal

A good deal just got better. Until the end of the season, the cost of "renting" a space at the Acton Truck Sale has been cut in half to \$5.

The final Saturday morning trunk sale is September 29.

Bye, Kimberly

Kimberly Rogers, the "youth manager extraordinaire" at Halton Hills Community Support and Information is resigning and everyone is invited to say their fond farewells at an open house at the Off The Wall youth centre next Thursday (September 13).

Rogers is leaving to work for the Halton Social Planning Council on its literacy program.

"Being part of bringing youth services to Halton Hills and opening Off The Wall were highlights of my four years as youth services manager," Rogers said, adding "working with an absolutely wonderful community" made her job a lot easier.

The open house runs from 4 to 6 p.m.



CHEQUE MATES: The grateful recipients of profits from last year's Acton High School reunion picked up their cheques at the Legion last Tuesday. Spreading the bounty to four local groups were reunion organizers Sandy Bowman (left) and Gail McDowell (far right.) Accepting the cheques totalling \$7,000 are, from left, Kathy Sanford (Heritage Acton), Frank Spielvogel (Legion Poppy Fund), Doug Fread (Acton Agricultural Society), Kimberly Rogers and Joan Barham (HHCSI.) — Frances Niblock photo

I'm officially fed-up!

I'm slow to anger, but when I get teed-off, well, just watch out. Mark Twain said "When angry count to four; when very angry — swear." Editor Coles refuses to allow me the journalistic latitude to use extremely descriptive words so bear with me while I let loose with a dollop of vitriol. These then are just two of the things that have caused me to blow a fuse — recently.

Cable sucks! I mean it; since Cogeco took over our local cable company, the service stinks. I'm a good cable customer. I take everything but the Playboy channel, which the bride won't let me have, even though I only want it for the articles. Last week the cable gods moved the movie channels from the 70s to 201, etc. Vaguely I remember reading about that. Last Wednesday night though, I couldn't get my movie channels.

What to do? What to do? Eureka. I thought, I'll call those nice folks at the cable company to see whasssup? (I'm nothing if not contemporary.) Honest to God, it would have been easier to call the Pope than to find a live person at Cogeco after 6 p.m. First you hear a really annoying recorded voice telling you all of the "technical support representatives" are busy and the wait will be "more than 15 minutes." Nine months is more than 15 minutes.

How the hell can the computer tell how long the wait will be? Aha, I thought, this is just a transparent ruse to dissuade customers from toughing it out. Not me, I vowed; for six hundred and some bucks a year, I want a real mouth-breather to tell me what happened to my movies.

So I waited — and waited — and waited, until I thought their stinking elevator music would drive me into a drooling lump of protoplasm. Finally, after 35 minutes a real person, at least I think it was, answered with the ubiquitous "May I help you?" As tempted as I was to scream "Yes — please strangle yourself!" You will be proud of me for saying, with some restraint: "I'm in Acton, we're not getting our movie channels, is there a problem?" "One moment, please," he said. Forty minutes later, I hung up. The bride wanted the phone. Lucky for me or I'd still be waiting for that paper-hanging-son-of-a-b — to come back on the line.

In 25 years this was the third or fourth time I've called the cable company, so it's not like I'm on

The Way I See It

with Mike O'Leary



any chronic complainers list. Why are they so mean to me? My Irish heritage is pushing me to blow up a building, or at least a truck or two, but I'm fighting the urge. I must tell you that maintaining control in the face of such vacuous indifference is a serious challenge (several deep, cleansing breaths here).

Do they know how to spell "customer service" at Cogeco? I know I called after 6 p.m., but don't the rocket scientists down here realize most people don't turn on the TV until after dinner and that's when we notice any problems? Ergo, that's when we need the most "technical support representatives" on duty. It seems pretty basic to me.

I almost forgot. When you first call and get through the "If you want service press four rigorole you get a recorded male voice, which tells you confidently they are not experiencing any problems in the "Burlington, Oakville and surrounding areas." What about us? Was North Halton wiped out by a thermonuclear explosion and we just haven't noticed? Or, even worse, do those twits down there think we're an Oakville or Burlingtonian? Yeah, well come up here and call me that to my face cable boy and I'll kick your ass back down the Escarpment so hard your legs will look like rabbit ears sticking up over your head. If we don't rate a mention on their recording, maybe our service should be free.

What a bunch of chauvinists. All the other annoying voices are women, but the "techie" automation is male. It Cogeco trying to subliminally tell us that "the Man" says all is OK so it must be? Girls, I say we get our signs and picket the damn place. Surely, in this enlightened day and age, a woman is equally capable of recording an announcement that all is well. Who has Judy Rebick's phone number?

In the end, all turned out well. I called my neighbour, Dave, who told me about the switch. I guess he reads his mail. Actually, after all that, not everything was OK. There wasn't one decent movie on the five movie channels. I wonder if the cable guys have a deal for all the National Film Board rejects? Even the

CBC wouldn't air most of this video diarrhea, but that's a story for another day. Say — how much is a dish?

Secondly, here's a message for Senator Vivienne Poy: keep your claws off my National Anthem. Listen sweetie, the only reason you're in the senate is because your sister-in-law kissed enough butt to get the Governor General's gig.

This Canadian has had enough of the politically correct crud. Senator Poy claims women are marginalized by words "in all thy sons command." She wants the anthem changed to "in all of us command." No dice lady, in fact I object to the work "command." I have no intention of being "commanded" by anyone to do anything. (Except the bride of course. I love it when she gets assertive. But, I digress.)

How about the line "with glowing hearts, we see thee rise"? Wasn't that line written with women in mind? My god woman, it could have been lifted out of a Harlequin Romance novel.

The truth is we will never satisfy the Vivienne Poy's of this world. Any words will offend someone in this picayune society we have allowed to develop. Christmas is offensive, manhole covers are offensive and now the anthem is offensive? Give me a break.

I'll tell you what's offensive. Go to a ball game and see the pitiful few folks who sing the anthem. That's offensive. What about the parents who allow their little terrorists to sit with their hats on during the anthem? That's offensive. What about the jerks who boo the anthem when it's sung in French or English, depending on the city? That's offensive. But what I really find offensive is shallow P.R. exercises like the one Senator Poy has launched.

If Senator Poy wants to be concerned about the anthem then maybe she should command it be sung in every classroom every day by everyone. Maybe she should be concerned that, in a survey, over 40% of Canadians admitted they don't know the first line of "O Canada."

It starts, "O Canada." Pitiful, eh?

Lastly, my warehouse Christmas sale will be held at 12 Wallace Street, next Saturday, September 8, starting around 9 a.m. We'll have lots of new and exciting Christmas gifts for you. Shop early, and often. See you there.

Waste energy...

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The average fuel efficiency of today's new vehicle fleet is actually the same as it was way back in 1980 in the days before cell phones, compact discs, email and the internet. Has fuel efficiency technology fallen that far behind? No, in fact a recent report by the US National Academy of Sciences found that using today's technology, vehicle manufacturers could increase fuel efficiency by 30 per cent.

What are lacking are the incentives and regulations to do so. Ve-

hicle manufacturers have vigorously fought new fuel-efficiency regulations especially for major moneymakers like SUVs, which don't have to meet passenger-vehicle emission requirements. Ironically, nature figures predominantly in most SUV advertising. One campaign actually shows trees gathering around a new SUV and the phrase, "Even nature can't contain its excitement." Try to remember that on another smoggy day.

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