

GRAPEVINE



What makes love last?

A lot of "compromise and old-fashioned values," according to The New Tanner editor Hartley Coles, as quoted in a Valentine's Day story in Saturday's National Post.

A Post reporter called Hartley and Irma Coles after learning they had answered an appeal from the Royal York Hotel for couples, married at least 50 years, who celebrated their honeymoons at the hotel.

A marriage certificate dated 1951 or 1952 and proof of a stay at the hotel gets couples a special romantic room rate of \$52 – the going rate is about \$150. The Coles paid \$11.50, and are one of three couples who will return to the Royal York, as the Post put it, to "enjoy a night in the hotel where they first kindled their passion."

Curling champ

Kudos to Joseph Frans of Ballinacree, a member of the John Morris rink that captured the 2002 Nokia Cup Ontario men's curling championship last weekend in Belleville.

The win advances the rink to the Nokia Briar next month in Calgary. Frans is third on Morris' Stayner Granite Club rink.

Tax help

Low-income earners can get their taxes done for free again this year, thanks to local members of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario.

Those with household incomes of less than \$15,000 (\$22,500 with dependents) is eligible for the service that will be offered at the Georgetown library, by appointment, on March 5, 6, and 7.

You can register, beginning February 21, by calling 873-2681, ex-

tension 2411.

Reluctant winner

A 30-year-old Acton mechanic who won \$10,655.60 in a recent LOTTO 649 doesn't want his name released because he owes some people money, according to the Mac's Milk clerk that verified the third prize win in the February 2 draw.

The lucky winner, a married father of two young children, danced in the store when his ticket rang in as a winner. He's a regular lottery player who paid \$84 to play a combination and had five of nine required numbers for the win. If he'd had one more number his win would have been \$20-million. No one won the regular jackpot of \$10-million.

Moosad at Mac's says there's a lucky air about the store these days – another customer won \$25,000 recently.

Blood clinic

Canadian Blood Service officials are planning for an even bigger turnout than normal at next Thursday's blood donor clinic at the Legion.

Clinic officials will increase the number of donation beds to 11 from nine to handle the additional people they hope will come to the clinic, either because of a mailer being sent out to Acton homes, appealing for donations, or because of a Girl Guide and Scout badge program.

After learning about the importance of donating blood and how Canadian Blood Service operates, Brownies, Guides, Cubs or Scouts who bring a first time donor to the clinic can earn a blood donation crest.

Last year, 26 local Guides earned their badge, helping make the clinic a great success.

Water quality grants available to farmers

Farmers and landowners in the Halton and Hamilton watersheds can now get financial assistance for projects that improve water quality on their property.

Conservation Halton and Hamilton Conservation Authority have just announced the availability of \$50,000 to help qualified landowners improve water quality through such projects as septic system repair, erosion control, creek fencing for livestock, buffer strips and windbreaks, milkhouse washwater treatment and silo leachate control.

The funds come from the Agricultural Environmental Stewardship Initiative which is part of a \$10 million, three year national program of

Agriculture and Agrifood Canada. Landowners and farmers can receive up to \$5,000 for approved projects.

The funds are being delivered through the Hamilton-Halton Watershed Stewardship Program established to help landowners protect and enhance creeks and natural areas. Good land stewardship improves the health of the watershed with benefits that include safe drinking water, healthy ecosystems and viable farming operations.

Applications for grants must be submitted by March 7, 2002. More information on the conservation grants are available from Conservation Halton at (905) 336-1158, Extension 263.

Mini editorial

The 'fix' was on

The "fix" was on. That was the reaction of most of the millions of people who watched the judges in the pairs skating competition at the Olympics on Monday night.

Really, no one should have been surprised at the result. The skating competitions at the Olympics are notorious for being unfair and partial to certain countries. Although efforts have been made to clean up the judges' act, it was obvious to the general public certain judges are still as corrupt as ever.

It's no reflection on the athletes. It simply continues to give figure skating a bad name.



WINTER RETURNS: Wintery weather dodges in and out of this area like the rhythm of a pendulum, replaced by soggy, warmer climes that create havoc for skiers and snowmobilers. The camera caught this line of homes along the Dublin Line on one of those perfect winter days with the mercury just below freezing and the sun shining brightly in a blue sky, casting warm shadows on ankle deep snow. - submitted photo

The good, the bad and the ugly.

I've been looking forward to the Olympics. I always enjoy Olympic games but admit to a preference for the winter edition. It's a Canadian thing, I suppose.

Canada expects to do well at these games with some pundits touting we may win 20 medals. That would really be something for a country our size. As I write this Sunday night, 20 looks like a reasonable goal. I whooped and hollered as Cindy Klassen won a bronze in speed skating in the 3000m, a distance she was not supposed to be a contender at. It's great when unexpected medals come along.

Last Saturday Jennifer Heil missed a medal by 1/100th of a point. It must be heartbreaking to come up short by such a minute margin. Still, being 4th in the world in your sport isn't chopped liver, either.

I'm always proud of the Canadian kids we send to the Olympics. Well, almost always. This year's team looked fantastic as they entered the stadium. They received a long loud ovation from the crowd. Although I may have picked a different flag bearer, Catriona Le May Doan did a great job. I thought it a bit of a coup that the American team chose Roots Canada, who designed our last two Olympic uniforms, to outfit their 2002 team. We're obviously the fashion leader of the winter games.

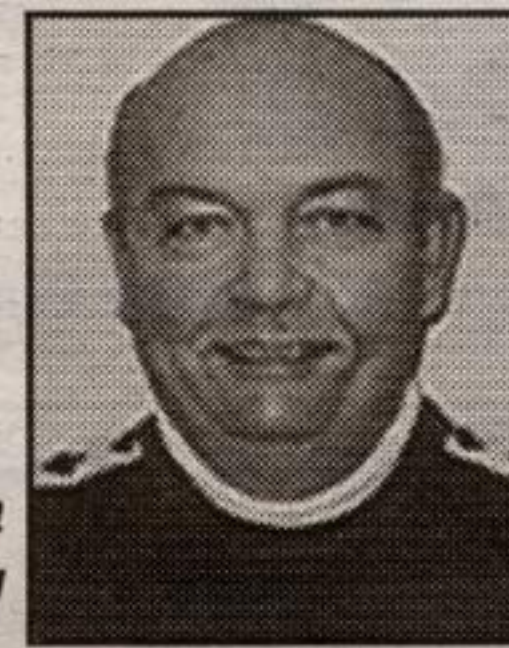
Americans are often rightly accused of being Jingoistic. There was some concern that the opening ceremonies would become nothing but a red, white and blue cheering section. Didn't happen. The ceremonies were dignified an artistically pleasing. I liked the "Child of Light" theme. It seemed so appropriate with all those eager athletes in attendance.

I thought the presentation of the flag from "ground zero" was handled brilliantly. The solemnity of the procession coupled with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir's Performance of the American National Anthem ensured there wasn't a dry eye in the house. There was some criticism about remembering Sept 11. The Olympics are supposed to be apolitical. The reality of Sept 11 is not political. The generation represented by these athletes will fight this war. It would have been a travesty to have ignored the event that has so changed our world. These Olympics also give the nations participating an opportunity to show terrorists that free nations cannot be intimidated. A collective "up yours" if you will. Well done!

I remain amazed that the "culture vultures" continue to dominate the opening ceremonies of major sporting events. Can you imagine the uproar from the artsy-fartsy crowd if, before the three tenors started their

The Way I See It

with
Mike O'Leary



concert, the audience had to watch three rounds of wrestling and pay \$800 US for the privilege?

Given that the games are being held in Utah, the only religious based state in the union, wouldn't a religious ceremony have been more appropriate for the opening festivities? A mass-wedding for instance. Given the Mormons proclivity to polygamy there would be 88 brides and 11 grooms. Know what the Mormon said to his 11 wives? Do any of you *not* have a headache?

But I digress.

What is it with the Indians? It seems every time there's any public function we trot out the natives to beat on drums and burn vegetation. Last Friday the opening ceremony featured five chiefs giving a ceremonial welcome to five athletes. The chiefs spoke in their native languages. None of them smiled. There was no translation.

I can't help but wonder if the Indians really weren't saying "strap on those skis, white-eyes, and get the rest of these palefaces off my land. Did they tell you the Little Bighorn is just northeast of here? Wanna play games? Let's play scalp-em." But that probably didn't happen.

Here's a viewing hint. The CBC coverage is far superior to NBC's. But then, I despise Bob Costas. He's a toad.

I hope you enjoy the Olympics as much as I do. I'm really looking forward to our men's and ladies' hockey teams both winning gold. We should also do well in figure skating and I'm especially pulling for Elvis to take gold. Remember, however, it is figure skating where it's impossible to figure out the judges. That's where the sport got its name you know. From the competitors looking at the marks awarded and saying, "Go figure." True story – really! Would I lie?

The bad news this week is the determination of the provincial Tories to self-destruct. Firstly, there's the so-called leadership race. Don't these guys realize they have to work together after the vote? They should be so tough on Dalton McGuinty.

Secondly, the Tories are hell-bent on privatizing Ontario Hydro. Huge blunder here. Ontario built its economy on cheap, plentiful hydro 93 years ago. Hydro should remain a public utility.

I heard Energy Minister Jim

Wilson on CFRB last week. He had reams of rhetoric but few facts. He couldn't/wouldn't tell host Randy Taylor how much our hydro costs will go up. He did say rates are guaranteed for 5 years. Big wow! One thing is for sure, we're going to get screwed!

Consumers will have to pay down Hydro's existing debt, pay for electricity and transmission, pay down the debt of the new companies plus pay for a profit. And the Tories expect us to believe that our electricity costs won't skyrocket? Who do they think they are – Liberals?

I say these plans should be put on hold until an election can be held on this issue. The Tories have no mandate to make this change. I'll confess, I wondered what John Day was smiling about when he won the Liberal candidacy in this riding. Now I know. He'll have a new job if the Tories privatize hydro.

Ted Chudleigh should worry less about electing Eamie Eves as leader and more about our hydro rates. His supporters may not vote for another party but I can see them staying home come the next election. Hell hath no fury like an electorate betrayed. Don't believe me? Ask Brian Mulroney.

I don't buy for one minute the argument that privatization will be good for us. Look what happened to natural gas and still is. Because of the mild winter, consumption is down so we should be saving money. Right? Not so fast oh naïve one. Last month Union Gas hiked the cost of gas by 8.5%, the gas inventory surcharge went up a whopping 108%. Union Gas is like a hooker, they got it, they sell it, they still got it. If you don't use their gas they just charge you the profit and keep the gas to sell you later. The same thing will happen with hydro – guaranteed.

To be fair, if MPP Chudleigh would like to challenge this column, I offer him this entire space. But we expect to see facts, not party puffery. If that's all he has, save the ink. We won't print anything that's purely propaganda.

Lastly, the ugly. Tango Airlines. I fear Robert Milton is out to destroy Air Canada. He's arguing that he has to expand Tango's low priced service. Why can't he just cut the fares on Air Canada? Instead, he proposes to expand the Tango fleet.

I'm out of space but this is a situation we'll discuss again. I've always been proud to see Air Canada's red and white colours, wherever I travelled. Tango's purple planes mean nothing to Canadians.

Canada needs a flag carrier airline. We don't need Air Can President Robert Milton and his schemes. He should Tango right out of town. Life's too short to dance with ugly airlines.