

# GRAPEVINE



## Musical gift

A young Cuban boy, Jose Andre, will study music because rural Acton resident David Craig delivered a trombone to him last week.

The instrument secured the boy's chance of further schooling, and the medicines and clothing Craig also took with him to the barrio of Manzanillo, will help the sick and poor.

Craig and four friends (including former Acton pharmacist Gary Barton) have been helping with aid and friendship for more than five years and Craig has trouble balancing his affluent lifestyle and that of the barrio with no running water.

"It's hard to leave," the retired school principal said on Thursday as he packed for a one-week trip, one of six or seven he makes to the remote area each year.

"I also take little treats for the children because they never get any of that kind of stuff - it's pretty primitive."

## Seniors' sale

A country store, Gramma's attic and a bake table filled with tasty and affordable treats will be featured at the Acton Seniors' Centre Christmas bazaar and luncheon tea on Saturday (Nov. 23.)

Along with draws and a penny sale, there will be vendors selling handmade crafts - great for stocking stuffers - at the annual event that runs from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the Acton arena/community centre.

## Youth talk

Want to find out how to make your voice count even if you're too young to vote? Looking for youth-related information on health, transportation, employment or relationships?

Watch for the launch of the Halton Region Youth Advisory Committee (HRYAC), web site on Wednesday (Nov. 27) during a youth advocacy skills building workshop, billed as YOUTH Can Make A Difference.

The new site www.haltonyouth.com is designed to help strengthen the ability of Halton youth to communicate with each other and their elected officials. It received funding from the Regional Chairman's annual charity golf tourney and Halton Police.

The HRYAC is a Halton Council advisory committee, looking at issues and opportunities affecting youths and giving youths a way to express opinions and offer solutions.

## M&M money

M&M Meats is being very generous to local schools this month. On Tuesday (Nov. 26) between 6 and 9 p.m., the company will donate 10 per cent off all purchases (before taxes) to Acton High School, if you say "I'm from Acton High."

Earlier this month, M&M did the same thing for Robert Little School to help it raise money.

## Walk this way

Congrats to Robert Little students who will accept a cheque for \$400 tomorrow (Friday) from the Halton District School Board for the greatest participation in the third annual Walk to School Day last month.

Normally, approximately 90 stu-

dents walk to the school, but 260 students walked for the event - 77 per cent of the student population - earning the school the cash award from the Board. (Principal Don Warren has his eye on a portable stereo system for assemblies.)

## Sweet thanks

A heartfelt gift of chocolates to Acton veterans from a young Canadian-Dutch girl on Remembrance Day brought tears to many eyes that day.

The girl, about 18-years-old, approached Legion Branch 197 President Joyce Buchanan before the Cenotaph service and asked if she could leave a gift bag with her.

"She said it was 'just a little gift from a grateful Dutch girl,' and a card, explained her parents had been liberated by Canadian soldiers, allowing them to come to Canada where she was born," Buchanan said, adding the gesture choked her up as she passed around the treats to the veterans at the end of the parade and explained where they came from.

Buchanan posted the girl's note, signed only Marieki, on the Legion bulletin board, wishing she had asked the girl for her name.

## Brunch time

The servers and cleaners at Sunday's (Nov. 24) Acton Community Brunch will be some of the most graceful to help the Kinette Club of Acton stage its popular monthly feast.

In exchange for the help at the brunch, Acton's The Dance Inn Troop will share in proceeds from the all-you-can-eat buffet (\$5 per person - preschoolers eat free) which runs from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Acton arena/community centre.

This is the last brunch of the year - mark Jan. 26 '03 on your calendar for the next one.

## Rama bound

Feeling lucky? The Acton Seniors' Centre is heading to Casino Rama on Wednesday (Nov. 27) and is accepting reservations for a bus seat.

The monthly trips, including a buffet lunch costs \$5 for Centre members and non-members who are over 19. You can sign up at the front desk at the Seniors' Centre or by calling 853-5951 during the day.

## PA Day fun

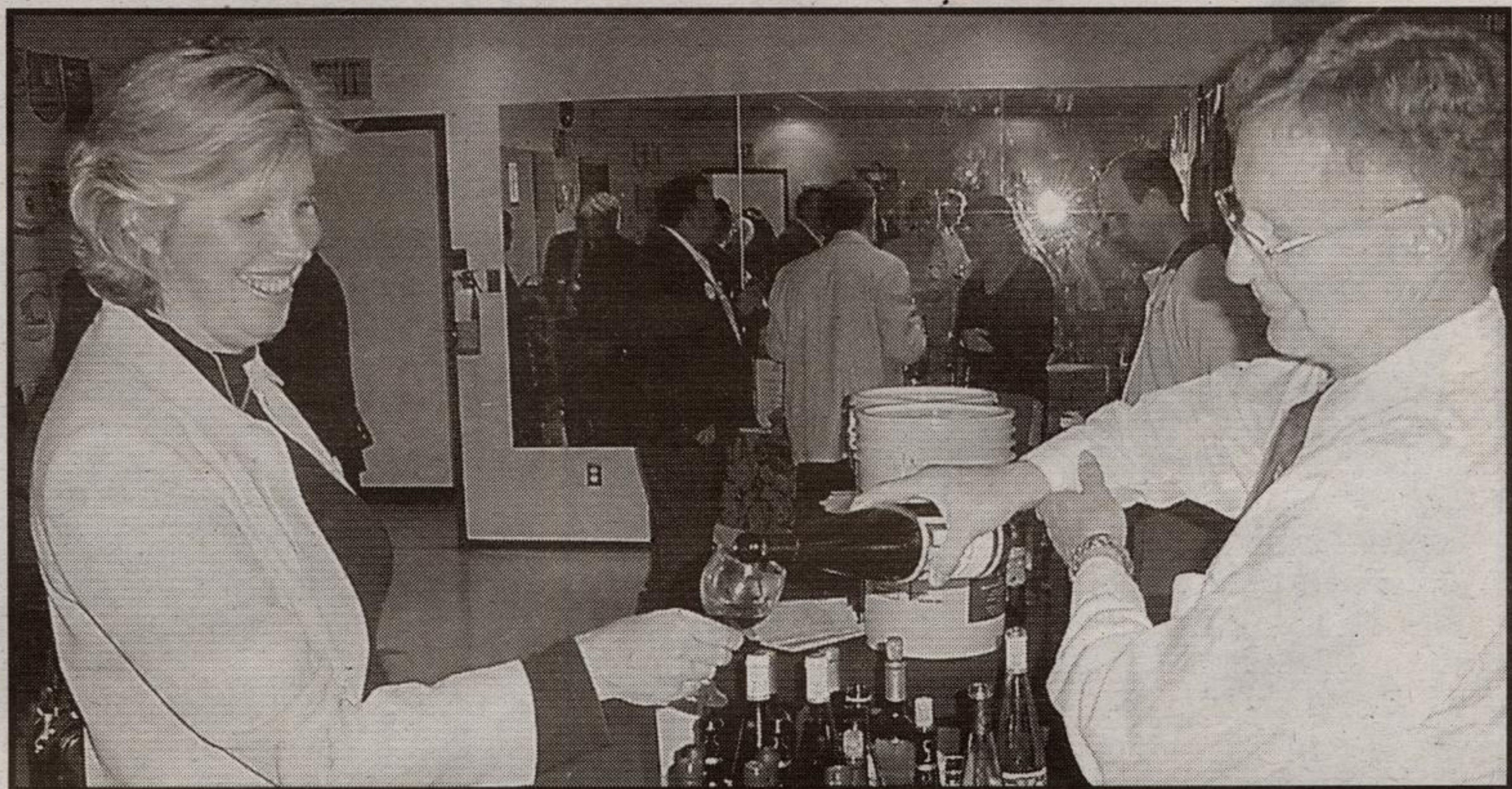
Arthur the Aardvark is hosting a P.A. Day party at the Acton and Georgetown branches of the library on December 6 for kids aged five and older.

Crafts, games and fun activities will keep the kids busy from 2 to 3 p.m. Parents can register in advance at either branch. In Acton call 853-0301.

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The library will also accept applications next month for children's programming slated for the New Year. The library has programs for children aged six-months to five-years-old and spaces are filled by a lottery.

Application forms will be available between December 3 and 28 at both branches. Parents should be prepared to show proof of their child's age.



**FINE VINTAGE:** Kathleen Hartnagle tries some vintage wine from Andrews Scenic Acres Winers, poured by the winery proprietor Ted Andrews, at Acton Rotary Club's annual wine and cheese night at the old town hall. - Ted Tyler photo

## 'ZAP - YOU'RE FROZEN'

It was, I think, Pierre Trudeau who first uttered those words to mock the federal Tories during an election campaign. Of course, right after winning the contest, Trudeau imposed his own wage and price controls on us. But I digress.

Last week Premier Eves dusted off his magic wand and rolled prices back to May 2002 levels. Then, in a desperation move to save his government, he also promised us a rebate for anything we were charged above 4.3¢ per Kwh since May. So Ernie not only "Zapped" the rates he "Kapowed" the unconscionable charges we paid during the summer. Ernie, is trying for the superhero title of Mightyprem.

I found it very interesting that the Premier also ordered an inquiry into the extra charges that have done so much to drive-up our bills. In particular, he is looking at costs of administration, losses (if anyone finds lost kwh, please turn them in to Halton Hills Hydro) and the odious GST the feds are charging.

I was not surprised to learn that Hydro One is sitting on more than a billion dollars, which they intended to give back by way of rebate. I interpret that to mean they have been knowingly overcharging us so they can dole out a few Sous down the road in the guise of largesse. That's an old liberal trick that, quite frankly, is beneath this government. At least, it seemed to be with our last premier. The Conservatives still form the government - don't they?

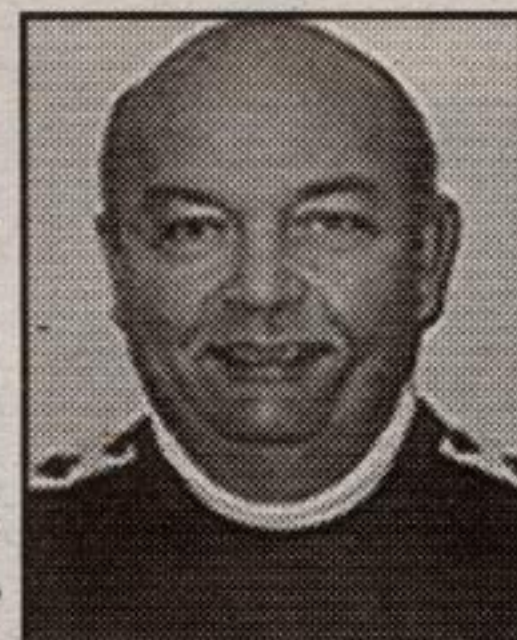
I would hope the government would appoint a no-nonsense auditor to look at this mess. I humbly suggest Mr. Al Rosen who just released a no-holds-barred report on the Toronto District School Board. Revelations of executive compensation programs earlier this year at Hydro One proved that this organization is out of control. Out to lunch (on expenses of course) might be a better description.

To be fair, when Hydro One executive compensation scandals were exposed Premier Eves acted quickly to re-organize the corporation. The operative words are "were exposed." I find it hard to believe the cabinet was unaware of these contracts. If, for some reason, cabinet was kept in the dark then even more heads should be rolling down University Avenue. Time will tell.

Rumblings around town indicate our own Halton Hills Hydro has been very profitable. If, in fact, H.H.H. is sitting on a substantial surplus it should be returned to us

## The Way I See It

with  
**Mike O'Leary**



without delay. To be prudent, H.H.H. must have a reasonable reserve for equipment replacement and unforeseen expenses, such as ice storms. If one dollar, however, is transferred from H.H.H. to Town coffers it's a hidden tax we should not stand for. Hopefully, our councillors or senior staff at H.H.H. can shed some light on this situation. I have expressed concern from day one that some at the Town might see H.H.H. as another revenue source. Many of us would like some assurances that this is not the intent.

The political reality of today is that times are a-changing. For years we paid utility bills and took little or no notice. Not any more - No way, José. My perception is that most Ontarians have hit a tax wall. If any politician isn't getting that message loud and clear I suggest they start monitoring Workopolis.

The Provincial Government ignored public opinion when they bulldozed through hydro privatization. They reminded me of the Muldoon government when they passed the GST. Premier Eves may well have saved his MPPs from demerol but the issue is far from forgotten. Before I decide whether to support next election I'll wait for the details of what's planned for the years after this temporary freeze on rates comes off.

I trust our MPP Ted Chudleigh knows the energy crisis is a multi-headed hydra. The next revolt could come with our natural gas bill. The provincial government has given Union Gas permission to back-charge us for gas we used almost two years ago. For most homeowners it will mean an estimated \$120 this winter. In total, Union Gas is expected to collect "recovered adjustments" (can you believe that terminology?) of \$109 million. Businesses will be harder hit.

As a regulated utility Union Gas sets its prices based on cost forecasts. Wholesale gas prices increased during the cold winter of 2001-2002. Now, Union Gas wants more money from us to compensate them for that gas price spike. I haven't seen any information that Union Gas' profits dipped \$109 mil-

lion during that period. I assume that, if prices fall below the projected rate, Union Gas would call that "unanticipated revenue." You and I would call it "profits."

I don't understand why the province didn't tell Union Gas that business has its ups and downs. Are we now in the business of guaranteeing a corporation's profits? If so, I would like MPP Chudleigh to get to work and pass a bill guaranteeing my company's profit margin. Wouldn't you?

This issue is far from dead. At best, I think Mr. Eves has bought himself about a kwh of relief. If the Tories don't follow through with an understandable plan for the future, they're in for trouble. They may well find the results of the next election shocking.

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I noticed the Canadian government is re-examining our aid to Swaziland. It seems the feds are disgusted with King Mswati who is reported ready to spend \$50 million on a luxury jet while 250,000 of his people are said to need urgent food aid. Truly, this is an obscene situation. I am pleased our federal government is finally cracking down on these tin pot despots. But I don't think the feds should limit their scrutiny to Swaziland or even the African Continent. That would be racist.

I think it my duty as a loyal Canadian; to report an even greater misuse of power, also financed by your tax dollars.

I know of a country where more than 250,000 people are homeless and starving. Where many may freeze this winter for lack of fuel. Where it's military is sent out in decrepit helicopters which may crash into the sea consigning all aboard to an unmarked watery grave. Where it's people stagger under an oppressive tax burden.

I know you will not believe this but the ruler of this enslaved nation bought not one, but two luxury jets for his and his cohorts' use. \$100 million on executive perks.

The ruler of this land is none other than Jean Chretien. I look forward to our MP J Reed reporting back to us on what measures will be taken to safeguard our tax dollars from his misappropriation.

The inhumanity of these fiscal follies is unimaginable. It is exceeded only by the hypocrisy of those who say these excesses are unacceptable in Africa while applauding the same conduct at home.