

GRAPEVINE



SOUND THE BELLS

Bells will be used to tell the Christmas story at Bethel Christian Reformed Church's Candlelight Service on Sunday (December 23.)

"Sound the Bells" is for all ages, and will feature participants from many of the church's ministries – from Sunday School through to seniors – sharing in Scripture, song and readings.

The service begins at 6:30 p.m., and there will be treats for children. All are welcome.

SENIOR SNOW HELP

Acton area seniors who need help clearing snow from walkways or driveways can call Halton Hills Community Support and Information (HHCSI) for help.

While HHCSI has been able to find workers to help shovel snow in the urban areas of Acton and Georgetown, they need people who could clear sometimes long, rural driveways for seniors, who pay for the service.

If you need help or would like to help, call 853-3310.

TAKE IT AWAY

Come February, Acton residents won't have to wait as long for a bulk collection day to get rid of ratty couches, leaky dishwashers or outgrown swing sets. Halton Council has okayed an enhanced pickup service for white goods and metal items that will give Acton residents two pickups monthly.

The new system will require residents to call Halton to find out which day the material will be collected and, at least for 2004, Halton will continue to collect white goods on the already scheduled bulk collection days.

The enhanced service is expected to increase the amount of material collected by 10 per cent, an \$8,000 cost that will be incorporated in the budget.

CHRISTMAS LUNCH

A small army of volunteers is preparing to help make Christmas less lonely for some Acton area people by cooking and serving a Christmas lunch.

Anyone on their own Christmas Day is invited by the Acton Ministerial Association to the 1 p.m. lunch at Trinity United Church and one of the organizers, Ann Adema, said they are looking for donations of food.

"If people are busy on Christmas Day, but would like to

contribute, they could drop off a donation of food just before 1 p.m., in a disposable container," Adema said, adding they've had two turkeys donated so far.

If you would like to be a guest or volunteer at the lunch, call Ann at 853-3687.

HAPPY HAMPERS

As many as 75 Acton families will have a merrier Christmas this year, thanks to the Christmas hamper they will receive before Christmas.

The hampers are filled with a complete Christmas meal, special treats and some staples – all items generously donated by local citizens, or purchased with donated cash.

The Christmas Hamper program is a joint effort by the Salvation Army, IODE Lakeside Chapter, Rotary Club of Acton and St. Vincent de Paul.

Salvation Army spokesperson Lisa Hale said although the number of families applying for hampers has "steadily increased" over the past five years, so have the donations.

Hamper recipients with children "shopped" for Christmas presents for their kids yesterday (Wednesday), choosing presents from the donated gifts.

LOCAL SCHOLARSHIPS

Congrats to eight Acton High School grads who recently earned Queen Elizabeth II "Aim for the Top" tuition scholarships.

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities scholarship provides up to \$3,500 per year to students who maintain 80 per cent averages, and are available for up to four years.

Halton-wide, 242 high school graduates received the scholarships, two-and-a-half times more than in 2000.

The Acton High School scholarship recipients include; Christopher Galda, Katherine Harder, Kelly Minto, Jake Seigel, Melissa Hanselman, Kyle Larose, Bradley Ridler and Ashley Stinson.

MURDER MYSTERY

Heritage Acton suggests their tickets for a Murder Mystery Dinner at Acton's old town hall might be just the thing to put under the Christmas tree. Tickets for the theatre and roast beef dinner are \$40 per head and are available at Home Hardware, Halton Hills Furniture and the BIA offices on Mill St.



HOME FOR CHRISTMAS: Lay missionary Scott McDonald of Acton is shown with some of his students at the Redemptorist School for the Disabled in Bangkok, Thailand, where he recently completed his three year contact with the Scarboro Missions, a Catholic missionary society. Scott returned home recently and spoke of his work in Thailand at all three masses on the weekend at St. Joseph's Church, Acton.- Photo Scarboro Missions.

Canada hopes for fresh start

Last weekend, in an emotional ceremony, Paul Martin collected the keys to 24 Sussex Drive. Martin, who finally got the job his late father had coveted for so long, wasted no time getting down to business. We have been promised a new, more democratic, style of government. God knows we need the change.

The new P.M. went so far as to say that members of parliament should represent the views of constituents to parliament rather than, as has been the case for decades, M.P.'s representing the governments plans to us. That was music to these old ears. The way the federal government, and provincial ones too, ignored us during the past 30 years has been a major irritant. I hope P.M. Martin will make good on this promise but am not holding my breath waiting for it to happen. Remember that the previous P.M. promised to scrap the GST to get elected and we know how that turned out. Still, hope springs eternal, etc.

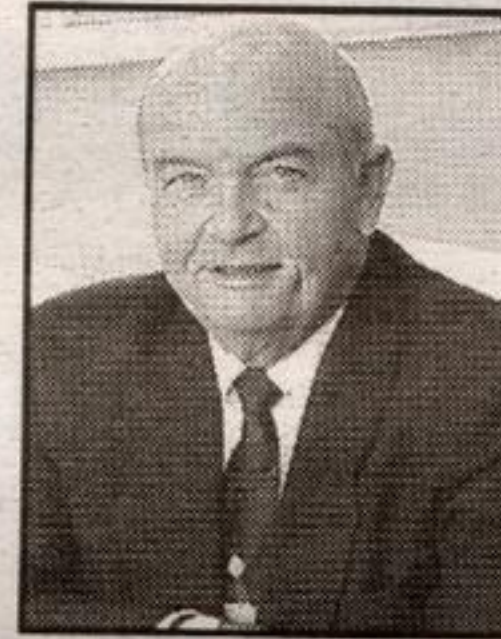
Chretien went out in typical style. On his last day he bragged that his "good friend" President Bush assured him that Canadian firms would not be frozen out of the lucrative business of rebuilding the infrastructure in Iraq. Problem is, Bush denies any such promise.

The truth is that President Bush can't stand Jean Chretien, a feeling shared by many, if not most, Canadians. Our best shot at repairing the damaged relationships with the Americans is through the efforts of Prime Minister Martin. Chretien, by taking credit prematurely, has effectively boxed Martin in. If Martin is successful in convincing the Yankees to share the reconstruction contracts with us old "Cretch" will take the credit. If Martin fails, our former P.M. will claim that all was well when he was in charge and that the new guy must have screwed things up. Score one parting shot for the Shawinigan Kid.

Much has been made of the big changes the new P.M. made to cabinet. There are some very good choices: Ralph Goodale should be an excellent Finance Minister notwithstanding the P.M. actually

The Way I See It

with Mike O'Leary



controlling the purse strings. I think David Pratt will do a decent job in defence as should Joe Volpe in Human Resources and many others. All in all it looks to be a solid team.

I could do without Anne McLellan as deputy P.M. and Minister of Public Safety. She was, in my opinion largely responsible for the screw-ups in Justice after the Allan Rock debacle. Minister McLellan has been a staunch defender of the billion dollar boondoggle, a.k.a. the gun control mess, so that tells you how little judgment she has. Don't be surprised if she proposes to control terrorists in this country by licensing them.

John McCallum was a lousy Defence Minister; so why keep him on in Veteran's Affairs? Haven't we punished our vets enough? David Anderson in Environment is another loose cannon as far as I'm concerned. I see Judy Sgro in Citizenship and Immigration as being, at best, mediocre and at worst a disaster in waiting.

O.K. – someone explain to me why we're sending Alan Rock as ambassador to the U.N.? I thought we liked the U.N. Expect to be at war with most of the world by the May two-four weekend.

Few tears were shed when Sheila Copps got the boot. Besides being almost totally obnoxious, her program spending was, at best, questionable. "Tequila Sheila" took a lot of flak over the great flag giveaway program. Actually, I thought that was a good idea. We should fly the flag more. It was silly politically correct programs like that calendar that identified every obscure celebration and special interest day or week, but forgot to include Easter, that ranked her high on my dorkmeter.

David Collenette fumbled every job he was given. No loss there.

Same with Jane Stewart; she of the missing three billion at Human Resources Development Canada. We won't miss Elinor Caplan assaulting our ears over the airwaves. Actually, few of the departing ministers will be missed.

One notable exception is John Manley who was very capable as Deputy P.M. Finance Minister and in charge of homeland security. Manley will be missed but he'll be back when the new P.M. decides to pack it in. He still sees himself parking his slippers at 24 Sussex.

I suppose the price we have to pay for finally getting, what appears to be, a capable Prime Minister is an endless stream of maudlin platitudes extolling the virtues of our recently retired Prime Minister. Remember friends, it's considered to be rude to gag in public, especially at Christmas.

Citizen Chretien has promised to refrain from publicly commenting on the action of the new government. Fat chance! Oh, he may route the comments through one of his former minions so the fractured syntax won't be as apparent, but the message will be unmistakable. He will continue, as he has for the last few years, to do everything he can to sabotage Paul Martin's government. He will be antsy that Martin will quickly show how inept the Chretien team was. That won't be hard to do even with Chretien sniping from the sidelines.

I feel optimistic about our new Prime Minister. Canada deserves an effective leader on the world stage. Domestically, he's making all the right moves to restore confidence in our federal politicians. The first thing he did was to acknowledge there is, indeed, a problem. That's a good start.

Mr. Martin, give us peace, order and good government. Admit to the mistakes of the past. (Gun control would be a good start) and fix them. Tell us the truth.

Bring a breath of fresh air to federal politics. Canadians will support you at the polls. The process is up to you. Determining your effectiveness is up to us. Hopefully, we'll both end up happy.

Driving now commute...

continued from page 6

decided facing two extra sets of lights would be quicker, so I escaped the additional construction and delays by going through downtown. As I turned the corner at 'the lights' I was starting to gloat and do my little happy

dance, then I saw it. The cars were lined up almost all the way to Giant Tiger. A train had come to a complete stop and blocked the crossing. With a quick U-turn I was off to go back through the industrial park and through more construction.

Man, I hate commuting!