

# GRAPEVINE



## OPEN HOUSE

Preserving precious memories will be easier as of Saturday when Acton's newest scrapbooking store – Scrapbook Crazy – opens at 20 Mill St., East.

Owned and operated by Acton's Fran Van Helvoort, the store will feature supplies and classes to "preserve memories the right way," Van Helvoort said, adding scrapbooking is popular because there is no right or wrong way to do it, and you don't have to be "artsy" to be creative.

The open house, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., will feature a ribbon cutting by local dignitaries, refreshments and a 15 per cent discount.

## THANKS, SANTA

One of the many stories of generous giving this holiday season involved the owner, staff and customers of Blue Springs Spa.

Thanks to donations of toys and services, a local family who recently lost their dad to illness, had a much nicer than expected Christmas, and all those who gave from the heart, had the satisfaction of knowing they made a real difference.

## WRITER CALL

The Ontario Trails Council

wants writers and graphic artists with an eco point of view to help produce its quarterly newsletter, *Greenways*.

The Council is a non-profit organization that promotes the creation, development, preservation, management and use of recreational trails, like the Bruce Trail that runs through this area.

Greenways editor Stephanie Lankin is recruiting volunteers – people with an interest or experience in graphic design and writing, and a general interest in "the great outdoors" – to produce trail news, features and humour.

Call 1-877-668-7245, or visit [www.ontariotrails.on.ca](http://www.ontariotrails.on.ca) for details.

## BOOK BABIES

Parents should act quickly if they want their kids to enjoy free programs at the Acton library. Spaces are still available in three programs beginning next week.

Baby Tales, for six to 23-month-old kids, with a caregiver, begins January 14 at 9:45 a.m. Tales for Twos runs Fridays at 9:45 a.m., and the program for three-to-five year olds, Library Lions Tales, runs Wednesdays at 2 p.m., or Thursdays at 9:45 a.m.

A registration form, including proof of age, is required.

Call the library at 853-0301 for details.

# TOWN DIGEST

## Conservation election

Halton Hills clerk Karen Landry had to get out the ballot box again on Monday night – this time for an election between three councillors to fill two spots on Conservation Halton, formerly known as the Halton Region Conservation Authority.

Conservation Halton is a community based environmental agency that protects local ecosystems in partnership with its watershed municipalities.

Both Councillors Bryan Lewis and Bob Inglis were elected by their colleagues to sit on Conservation Halton – rookie Councillor Mike Davis lost the vote count.

Council also appointed Councillor Joan Robson to sit as its rep on the board of Credit Valley Conservation.

## Speyside answers?

Newly elected Acton Councillor Mike O'Leary hopes the power of the mayor's office will get him, and some of his constituents, answers about the future of the vacant Speyside School on the former Highway 25.

At Council on Monday, O'Leary, noting the school had been vacant for over a decade, said at least three parties had expressed serious interest in

the facility, but received no response from the owner, the Halton District School Board.

"We're all concerned with business – with getting new business into town, and here we have a property that is ready to go..." O'Leary said, asking Mayor Bonnette to write the school board to ask when it will be prepared to put the property on the market.

Bonnette said he'd be pleased to write the letter.

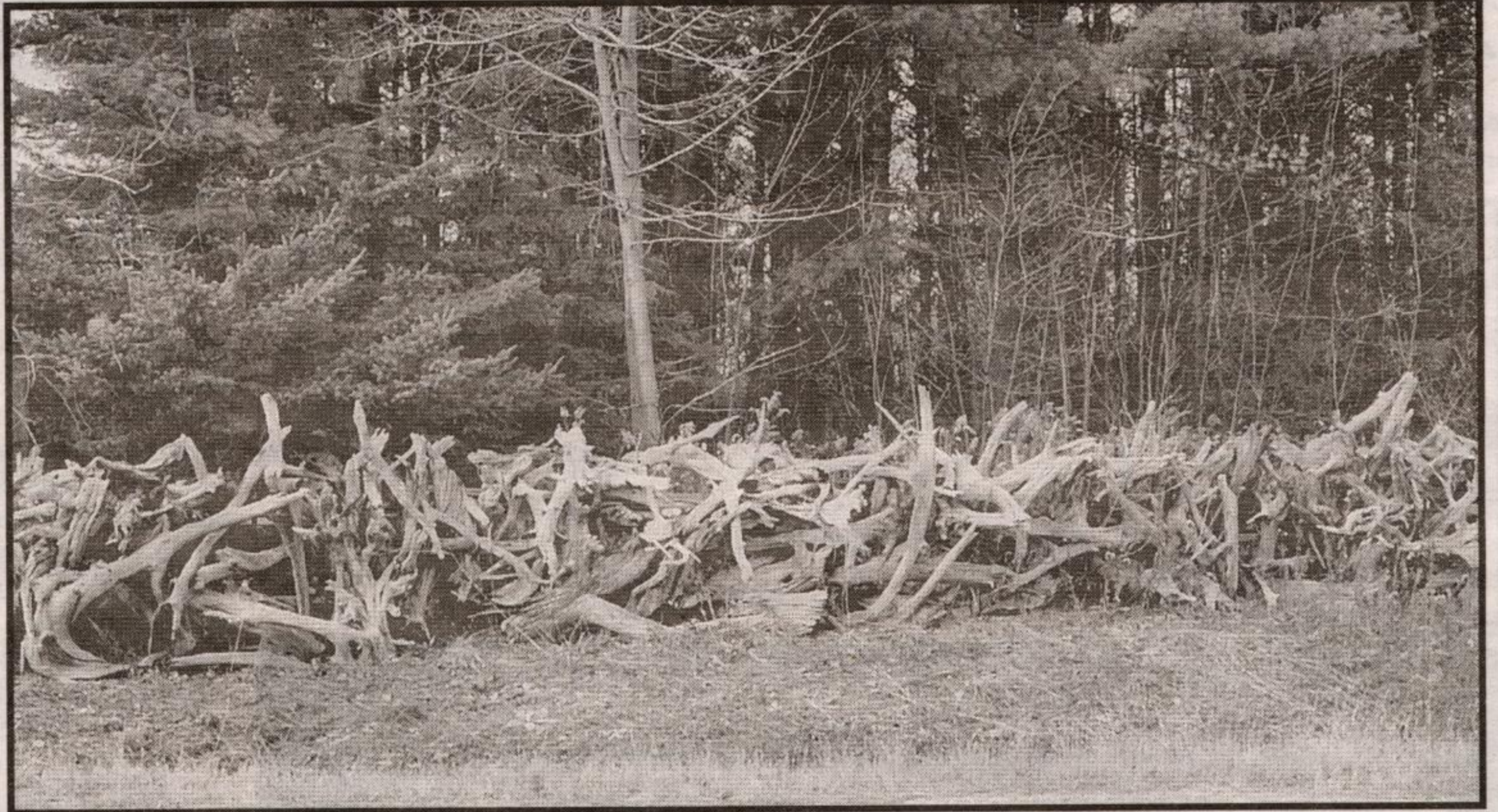
## Signal timing

It will be six to eight weeks before traffic signals are installed at the increasingly busy intersection of Queen Street at Tanner's Drive in Acton East.

Noting that the Town intends to close the existing entrance off Queen Street to the Acton arena, Mayor Rick Bonnette asked for an update.

Rick Henry, the Town's manager of design and development, said the developer, who is paying the whole cost of the \$100,000 to \$125,000 project, has ordered some signal parts, and delivery could take six to eight weeks.

Henry said the timing for closing the existing arena entrance depends on the availability of asphalt.



**GOOD NEIGHBOUR FENCE:** Not many relics of pioneer days exist in this neck of the woods but this stump fence easily seen on Regional Road 15 is an example of how formidable they can be in keeping animals in and out. Nassagaweya pioneers like their Esquesing neighbours hacked their way through dense bush and made good use of all the material available to fence their homesteads.

# Bureaucratic Bafflegab

Have you wondered why you are receiving written privacy policy statements from companies you deal with? Yes, friends, this is as a result of the latest intrusive efforts of the policy wonks in Ottawa. The Personal Information Protection and Electronics Documents Act (PIPEDA for the acronym enthusiasts) came into effect on Jan. 01, 2004.

This legislation is typical of the make-work, spend money thinking that pervades government today. In my mind, it doesn't really address the privacy concerns the electronic age has brought. It will, undoubtedly, become a huge and expensive program which will accomplish absolutely nothing. Sounds like "son of the gun control act" to me.

If you own a business, any business, you should become familiar with the provisions of the PIPEDA. If you do not comply, unspecified lawsuits and the awards of punitive damages may result. The actual facts are that, should you run afoul of this legislation, the legal fees to defend yourself will probably bankrupt your company. Expect little mercy. No one is as dedicated as a government lawyer, in high dudgeon, with an unlimited budget, pursuing a hapless business person over a perceived wrong. Meanwhile, child molesters, murderers and rapists are treated as clients rather than wrongdoers but we peasants don't understand the priorities. After all, isn't privacy at the top of your personal agenda?

Of course, the first thing the Feds did was to exclude themselves, provincial and territorial governments and their agents, plus, it appears, the press, the artsy-fartsy crowd and the literati. In other words, the usual suspects. Rest easy, though, because even though they don't fall under the terms of the PIPEDA, your provincial government has enacted similar legislation to confuse and bedevil civil servants across the province. That's where your tax dollars are going.

In addition to the above exceptions, businesses are allowed to give out some information. For instance, companies can divulge an employee's name, title, business address or telephone number. That's a relief. I could imagine a customer calling and asking who their sales rep. is?

## The Way I See It

with  
Mike O'Leary



"I'm sorry, I can't tell you" would be the reply from the anonymous person answering the phone. "May I say who is calling" the company spokeshingie might inquire? "Sorry, I can't tell you that" the customer would have to reply. "All-rightie then," the company would reply. "Have a private day." It's enough to make a bureaucrat drool. But thankfully, that won't have to happen. Yet!!

What, you might ask, is considered to be personal information under the act? At first glance it covers age, name, weight (?) medical records, ID numbers, income, ethnic origin, blood type, opinions (?), evaluations, comments(?), social status (?), employee files, disciplinary action, credit records, loan records, existence of a dispute between a consumer and a merchant and intentions. OK - everybody clear and on-side here? By the by - intention, can be interpreted to mean an employee's stated intention to purchase, for example, a house. (My question marks in brackets.)

The above proves one thing, This act was conjured-up by people with too much time on their hands who consider it perfectly reasonable to force (underline force) business to keep onerous records, for no pay, and waste valuable productive time. Of course, the concept of productivity is completely foreign to much of the federal bureaucracy.

Here's a heads-up for you. Each organization must, in addition to printing and distributing its privacy policy (or put on its web site), appoint an internal privacy expert/commissioner. Friends, if you are asked to take on this responsibility run screaming from the room. It would be bad enough to have to deal with the anal-retentive navel gazers who conceived this drivel, but you also have to deal with irate customers, and, if asked, supply them with a list of other companies/individuals you have shared (what a stupid use of the word) information with.

Companies must now obtain the consent of individuals before giving that information to others. There are three types of consent.

(A) Express consent/permission (also known as opt-in). Pretty straight forward except you will never design a consent form that covers all contingencies.

(B) Negative-option (opt-out). The individual must direct the organization, not to give out their information. Isn't it interesting that this option, which the government has forbidden cable T.V. companies to use when raising rates, is perfectly acceptable for privacy issues. Shows how seriously the gov't. really considers the matter.

(C) Implied consent. For example, if you have used the 407 since Dec. 26, 2003 you have agreed they can use your information for their stated purpose. That notice was on an invoice for period ending Dec. 20<sup>th</sup>, 2003 and not received until after Christmas. Cute – eh?

It is the responsibility of the company to ensure the client (see a trend here?) fully (underline fully) understands how their information will be used. To be safe you need a Miranda-rights type of declaration that your customer should have to sign.

Why, I ask, would anyone set-up a business in this country and extend credit to customers. This unwieldy legislation is going to cost corporations billions. I think it will be a job killer with one reservation. There will be more jobs created in the federal public service.

Not to depress you entirely, but, as you read this, Ontario is drafting its own legislation which, if stronger, will supercede the federal rules. Hey – what the Hell – it's only money.

We needed some privacy protection. We had ridiculous judicial decisions, like the one stopping police from using thermal-imaging cameras to catch marijuana grow houses. "But why?" you may ask. "Cause the cameras might pick-up someone having a bath. No, I'm not kidding! That issue is not addressed in the PIPEDA.

I'd tell you who to call to object to this colossal farce but I'm not sure I'm allowed. For more information go to [www.privcom.gc.ca](http://www.privcom.gc.ca). But for God's sake, don't tell anyone I told you.