

GRAPEVINE



FLU STUDY

The final 15 to 20 Acton area people accepted in a flu research study for Acton's Purity Life, Canada's largest distributor of natural health products and supplements, will be signed up tomorrow (Friday).

Purity holds the North American distribution rights for Moducare, a patented blend of plant sterols designed to help balance the immune system, that is being tested in a double-blind study.

Moducare consumer response coordinator Susan Watts said they have lots of anecdotal evidence that Moducare lessens the incidence and severity of influenza, claims they hope will be validated by this research study when results are released this summer.

Participants who meet the study criteria - you can't have had a flu shot this year - are paid \$100. For details call Watts at 853-3511, ext. 348.

ARTS WEEK

Acton artists are invited to participate in the inaugural Halton Hills Arts Week scheduled for April 23 to May 2.

The brainchild of Georgetown artist Carol-Ann Michaelson, the nine-day Arts Week festival will include performing and visual arts, drama, musical theatre along with classical and choral music. There will also be a studio tour, and a juried exhibit.

"We don't have anyone from Acton, yet," Michaelson said adding she knows there are many talented artists in the Acton area.

"We want to promote the arts in this area," she said, adding she will contact local schools to invite them to participate.

Artists interested in details can call 905-873-2147.

BY THE NUMBERS

The Town's budget books revealed some interesting numbers for 2003, including:

35,520 - number of tax bills issued last year

109 - staff terminations

100 - new employees on payroll

42,252 - kilometres of Town roads ploughed

852 - tonnes of gravel for road patches

2,337 - hours of snow removal

9,786 - hours of arena ice use

298 - Municipal Award recipients

MINISTRY MILESTONE

Churchill Community Church will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Reverend Emrys Jenkins' ministry on Sunday (February 1.)

Well wishers are invited to an informal tea, from 2 to 4 p.m., at the church at Third Line and Erin-Halton Town Line.

LITERACY HELP

Adults who have trouble reading this can upgrade their literacy skills with free classes offered in Acton by Literacy North Halton.

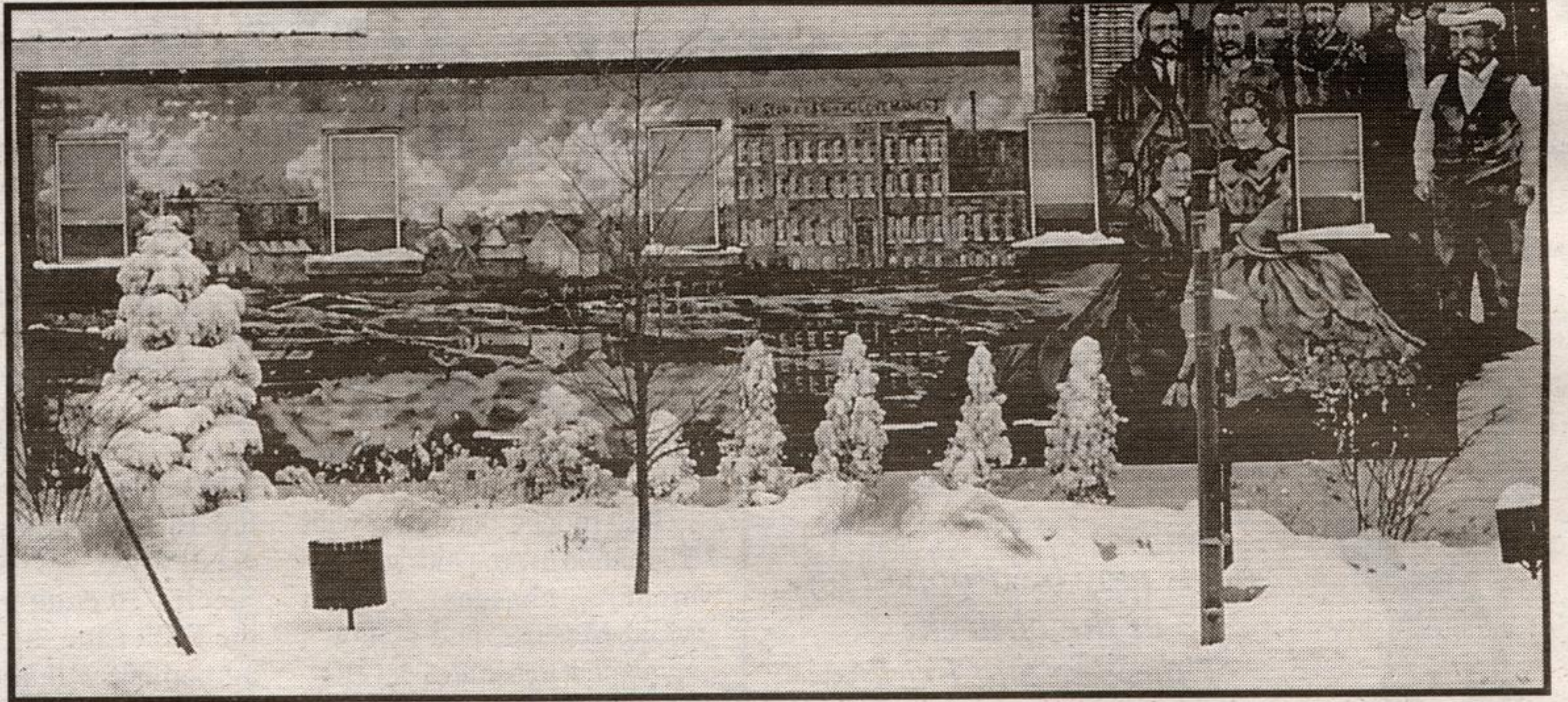
One-on-one tutoring and small classes are also available for math and basic computer skills. For details calls 905-873-2200.

FASHION FUN

What will the fashionable Acton senior be wearing this spring? For an advance look, check out the Spring Fashion Show at the Acton Seniors' Centre on Tuesday (February 3.)

The \$3 admission includes a Tan Jay of Guelph fashion show with spring fashions to try on, Tan Jay gift certificates and refreshments.

The show is open to the public from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

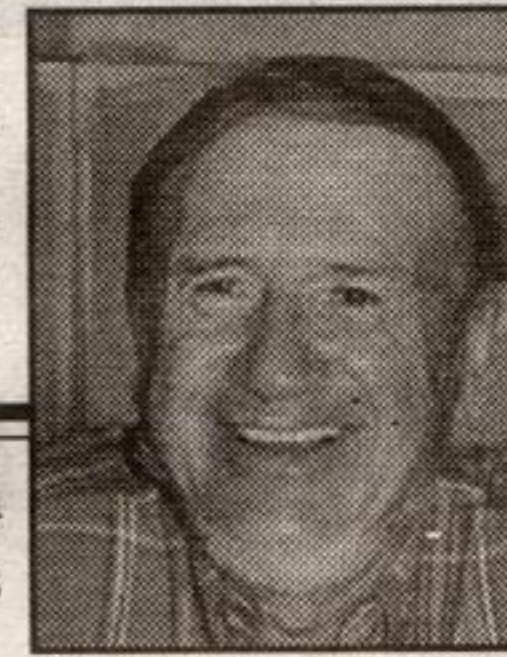


MILL/MAIN MURAL: The mural at Mill and Main Sts, Acton reflect the wintry scene in the downtown on Tuesday morning lots more snow followed this dump, giving the busy corner an ethereal appearance.

From the shivers to war

Coles' Slaw

with Hartley Coles



Those of us who are a mite long in the tooth and shiver when they get the weather reports are hoping 'the' groundhog doesn't see his shadow next Monday, February 2, officially dubbed "Groundhog Day" by people in places like Warton and Punxatawney Pennsylvania where they have their Warton Willies and Punxatawney Petes.

They trade in the old 18th century belief that if the groundhog sees his shadow on February 2 (which also has religious significance as Candlemas Day or the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin Mary) there will be six more weeks of winter. If the groundhog does not see his shadow, the old story goes, we'll have a more salubrious kind of weather over the next six weeks.

Frankly we generally have had enough of wintery weather by February 2, but according to the calendar, Spring does not officially arrive until Saturday March 20. So ready or not, my guess is the flowers won't bloom until May. And before we can tiptoe through the tulips the mercury is going to dip well below freezing many times before that stage.

It has been really cold the past couple of weeks but this scribbler can remember when the mercury dipped well below the zero mark on the old Fahrenheit scale for a couple of weeks at a time. The trees would bang and shriek at night in the intense cold. Milk bottles on the threshold would lift their caps two or three inches high in the glorious morning salute. Real iced cream.

Kids then dressed around the kitchen range. There was an old joke that some of them were branded by the stove maker's name when they bent over too far and their bare butts hit the oven door where the makers name was inscribed. If you know anyone with "Tudhope" branded on their bum that's probably what happened.

To change the subject, did anyone remember it was Robbie Burns Day last Sunday?

Scotland's favourite poet who wrote such brow verse as the New Years favourite: 'Should auld acquaintance be forgot.'

Celebrations of Burns Day used to be fairly common in this neck of the woods, particularly among first and second generation Scots who could understand what the Salute to the Haggis was all about. It was usually recited at Burn's Suppers with great enthusiasm

before the chairman cut the beast when he recited the line 'an cut you up wi' ready slight.' Then it was customary to applaud the speaker, stand and toast the haggis with a glass of whiskey (Scotch of course).

Dinner followed with such delicacies as Cock-a-Leekie soup, Haggis warm reeking, rich wi' Champit Tatties, Bashed Neeps, Typsy laird (Sherry Trifle) and A Tassie o' Coffee. If you survived that an invited guest would give a short speech on Burns entitled The Immortal Memory and it was followed by a witty thank you to the ladies who took their turn roasting the men.

I recall one Burns Supper I attended in Guelph which was organized by Dr. and Mrs. Buckner when the doctor was practicing in Acton. Their son-in-law, a Mr. Savannamamuto who was an Asian with dark skin got up to give the reply. When Mr. Savannamamuto stood up I expected to hear English a la Peter Sellers playing in the movie "The Millionaires." Instead out came this glorious Scottish accented English that would charm a Scotsman out of his kilt.

The lesson is, "Never judge a book by its cover" and assorted other maxims.

Thought I was finished with the story of Peter Gibbons but new information about the U.S. Civil War and Canadian participation has cropped up in a new book.

Perhaps you'll remember Peter Gibbons enlisted with the Confederate Army and fought for the South in the civil war. And is buried in the Catholic cemetery on the Dublin Line. He farmed near Speyside and retired in Acton. Later on he received a medal for his efforts for the Southern armies.

Thousands of Canadians had fought for the Northern Armies in that conflict and I supposed Canadian sympathies lay with the Union Armies of the North. A new book by Toronto Star news editor Adam Mayers, titled Dixie & The Dominion, turned that theory into a loop.

Escaped slaves who called Canada

"The Promised Land" were deemed safe here but news reached the Canadian parliament in July 1861 that the Northern army had been routed at the battle of Bell Run, the first big conflict of the civil war, a spontaneous cheer was raised in the House for the South.

Mayers suggests that as strange as it seems, Canadians were able to separate slavery from the cause of the war fought between 1861 and 1865. "This apparent absurdity allowed public opinion to support the South, but opposed slavery, be anti-Yankee, but for close trade ties with New England."

Slavery had been banned in the colonies for about 70 years but Mayers figures the explanation for Canadians' support of the South lay in mistrust of Northern motives in waging the war. The growth of the U.S. during the first half of the Century was viewed with alarm by both Britain and Canada.

The U.S. bought Louisiana from France and Florida from Spain. "They picked a fight with Mexico and ended up with Texas and California," Mayers writes, noting they added Oregon and the Pacific Northwest in a deal with Great Britain.

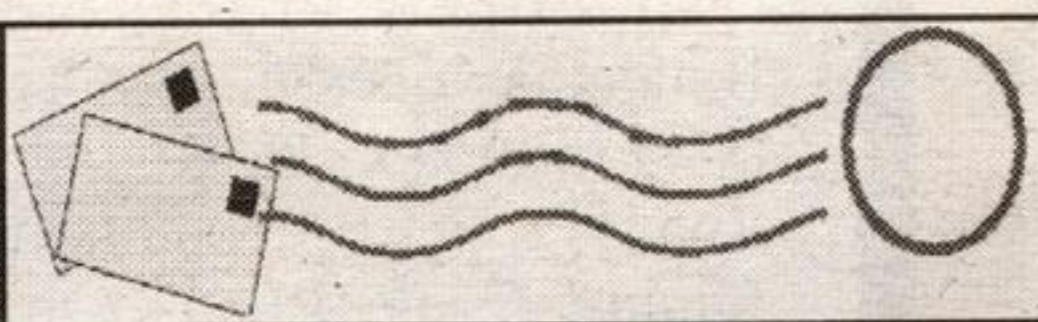
President Abe Lincoln said the war was not about slavery but saving the union so to the Canadian elite it was another American Revolution. They felt Southerners had the same right to leave the Union as the original Thirteen Colonies had to break away from Britain.

Anthony Trollope, English novelist, visited Canada during the war and was puzzled by the strong public opinion favouring the South. He ascribed it to 'strong dislike to the aggression, the braggadocio and the insolence they have felt upon their own borders.' Britain, meanwhile, saw a strategic advantage for her North American colonies in a divided union.

Even though the South lost, pro-Southern feeling lasted well after the war. When Jefferson Davis, ex-president of the Confederacy, came to Toronto on May 30, 1867, after his release from prison, more than 1,000 people greeted him at the foot of Young St. different treatment than what he received in the northern U.S. where he was 'hooted and cheered at.'

A month after Davis arrived in Toronto, Canadians were celebrating Confederation, July 1, 1867. And Peter Gibbons was on his way home. Now you know the rest of the story.

Letters



Publishing article on police was wrong

To the Editor,

The article regarding "more police on streets" in your January 15 edition front page should not have been printed as written.

Your reporter should have checked with the Police and, as indicated by the letter from Ms. Galway (January 22 edition), the Acton BIA.

You say the New Tanner only reported the facts. It is certainly not a fact that Police told the unidentified (not surprising) business owner they would not respond to her concerns because they were not on her property.

This is obvious nonsense, as the Police would have told your reporter if she had bothered to check.

Unfortunately this type of reporting creates the false impression that Police don't want calls from the public reporting suspicious activity. The Police can't be everywhere at all times. They need, welcome and will respond to citizens' calls to alert them to potential problems.

Yours truly,
Michael West,
Chair, Nassagaweya
Community Consultation
Committee.

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