

GRAPEVINE



DAY OF CHAMPS

The Acton House League hockey season ends on Saturday with its annual Day of Champions featuring championship and consolation games and awards at Acton arena.

The top division players will receive hardware for their dedication and hard work, and a MVP and most improved player will be selected from each team.

Along with finals, the day includes a 50/50 draw, Toonie tosses, presentation of the President's Award, Coach of the Year Award, wrapping up with a coaches' game.

TEAC WORKSHOP

"Are we out of balance?"

That's the question local environmentalists are being invited to debate at an environmental workshop at the Halton Hills Cultural Centre on Saturday (March 27.)

The workshop, sponsored by TEAC, the Town's environmental advisory committee, will look at the challenges facing Halton Hills as it tries to balance land, water and air uses in its natural, urban and farmland areas.

The free seminar, featuring two guest speakers, runs from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. For details call Ruth at 905-877-3676.

YOUTH CASH

Calling all youthful entrepreneurs - there is Regional business development money available to help start up small businesses.

The Summer Company provides hands-on business training and mentoring, and cash awards up to \$3,000, to help students set up and run a summer business.

The My Company program combines business training and competitive loans of up to \$15,000 to help young people, aged 18 to 29, start and run their own businesses.

In partnership with the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, Halton's business development centre is staging its annual business plan competition for high school students, who can win up to \$1,000.

For details call 1-866-442-5866.

NEW ROUTES

All of the new housing in Acton created a lot of new streets for Canadian Cancer Society volunteers to canvass during April's annual fundraising campaign.

The Acton Branch is looking for volunteers to go door-to-door in the Devon Place subdivision, south of Sobeys.

Call Angela Tremblay at 853-5581 for details.

FLAPJACK FUNDRAISER

Pancakes, real maple syrup, maple baked beans and maple sweets are on the menu for Saturday's (March 27) pancake breakfast at the Limehouse Memorial Hall.

The breakfast is sponsored by the Limehouse Women's Institute to raise money for the hall fund.

Pancakes will be served from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., and there will be a bake table and maple syrup for sale.

FAIR SOLUTIONS

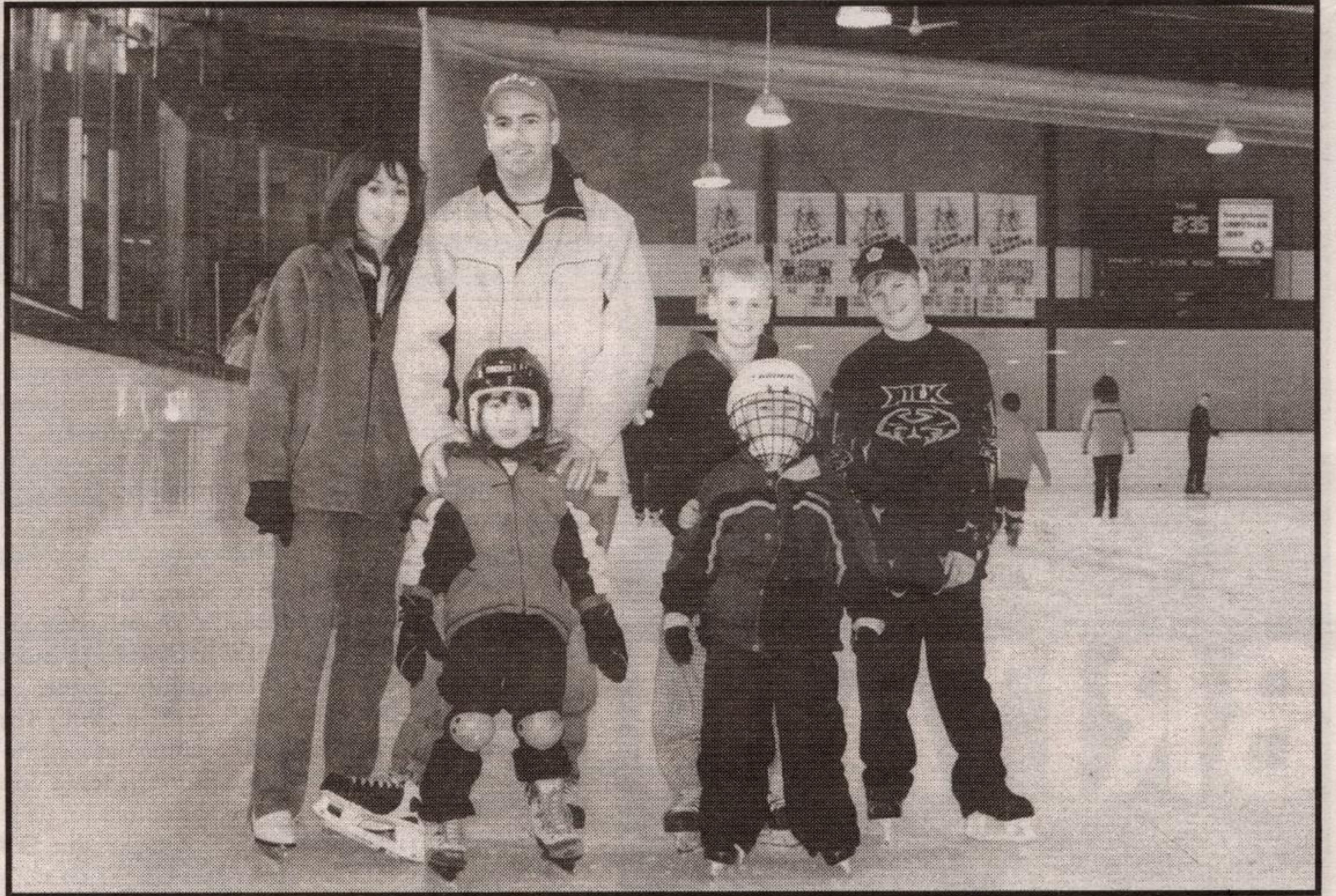
How to move forward after last year's Georgetown Fall Fair melee between rubber bullet firing police and rock and bottle throwing youths will be debated at several upcoming focus groups, two of which are slated for Monday (March 29) in Acton.

Acton youth are invited to a focus group at Acton High School from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. The focus meetings are being run by a committee that consists of the Town, Region, Halton Hills Community Support and Information and Halton police.

From 6:30 to 7:30, Acton area adults are invited to a focus group at the Off The Wall youth centre on Mill Street.

Similar groups will meet in Georgetown over the next two weeks, with a final meeting on April 5, when results and recommendations will be debated.

Anyone interested in the focus groups should call Dawn at 905-873-2601 ext. 2276 to register.



RINK RATS: The Acton arena was packed all through March Break as kids and families took advantage of free skating, courtesy of Tim Hortons and the Rotary Club of Acton. On Friday, Caroline (left) and Alan Belanger bought 5-year-old Jacqueline to the rink. Acton's Jeffrey Curry, Aaron Weaver and Adam Colston also enjoyed the ice time. - Frances Niblock photo

Let the games begin!

In the most anti-climactic political event since the anointing of Paul Martin, Stephen Harper won (?) the leadership of the Conservative Party last weekend. As usual, the Tories stumbled during the event.

As I listened to the proceedings on the CBC, I was struck by the closeness of the race between Harper and Belinda Stronach. Turns out the organizers were holding back returns that favoured Harper to create a fictional drama that indicated the race was close. Problem is, they got caught.

Why do the backroom boys feel obligated to meddle like this? This observer came away from the exercise with the sense of being had - again. Could the political strategists really believe Canadians want to be manipulated? If they were expecting to generate some excitement they failed miserably in this scribbler's case. My immediate reaction was the more things change the more they remain the same.

Harper was the only reasonable choice to take on P.M. the P.M. Despite his current difficulties Paul Martin is an excellent campaigner. This is no time for the party to go with a political neophyte. Tony Clement was never a factor.

Ms. Stronach was quick to say she will run for a seat in the next election. I hope she does and is successful. It will be interesting to see how Belinda handles herself in the crucible of Parliament Hill. She may well be a future prime minister but before we accept her claims of business acumen, we need to see proof that her presidency at Magna is due more to ability than parentage. I wish her well.

The speeches last Friday night proved who was ready for the vicious thrust and parry of a federal election. Harper and Clement are obviously hardened pros. While Mr. Harper has come a long way in improving his public presence, I thought Tony Clement was the clear winner.

Clement's speech was a real barn burner, especially the big finish. I'm not sure why he chose to speak from the middle of the crowd on the floor rather than from a traditional podium on stage. It certainly threw the CBC commentators for a loop. "He

The Way I See It

with Mike O'Leary



isn't going to speak from the podium," they gasped. I suppose if the stunt was good enough to shock the stuffy CBC it couldn't have been that bad an idea.

Ms. Stronach's speech was a far distant third. At the start she announced she was throwing away her speech and instead would speak "from the heart". Then she proceeded to consult notes through the whole thing. Her cadence was way off. Telling us she "gave up a great job to do this" was, I suspect, an attempt to demonstrate she could be trusted to be a good prime minister. Not sure how that works.

Ms. Stronach made an excellent point when she observed that government ministers are not asked if they have any relevant experience before being given departmental control of budgets in the billions. The whole system of so many ministers from this province, so many from that, has always been a bad idea. Wouldn't it make more sense to appoint the most competent MPs as ministers and create some high profile make-work projects for regional politicians to salve to their tender feelings of the folks in the provinces? Recent events in Ottawa would seem to prove this point.

Mr. Harper, to my mind, got off to a weak start and is trying too hard. His first day as leader he likened the Liberals to "cornered rats" over the sponsorship mess. Gee Steve, that's a little melodramatic don'tcha think?

Oh well, at least he didn't show up for his first press conference in a muscle shirt riding a snowmobile. That, at least, is an improvement.

We note, with sadness, the passing of Mitchell Sharp who was 92 years old. Sharp has been a constant on the Canadian political scene for most of my adult life as MP, Minister, and later, advisor to the Prime Minister.

When I first started to travel for

business I regularly drove the 401 between Toronto and Cornwall. I would often see Mr. and Mrs. Sharp in service centre restaurants as they commuted to Ottawa. This was, obviously, before MP's started living like pashas.

Over several months we developed a nodding relationship. You know, the kind you have when you regularly see a familiar face. One particularly stormy night I screwed up my courage and said "Good evening, Mr. Sharp," as they walked past my table. He stopped and asked if we'd met. I explained I'd seen him on TV and in the papers. We chatted a moment then, as they left, I told him to watch the road as conditions were treacherous.

Mr. Sharp thanked me but then Mrs. Sharp gave me a huge grandmotherly-like smile and cautioned "You drive carefully too young man." I never forgot the incident and have often reflected upon how the famous are just folks like you and I. Over the years I have often wondered if we wouldn't have a better country if ministers would mingle with the plain folks instead of cooing like royalty.

My last recollection of the Sharps was of them hunching up their coats and heading out into the storm, his arm around her shoulders.

Rest in peace, Mr. Sharp. And thank you.

Lastly I note that Ontarians ranked third in litres of alcohol consumed per person. I was surprised that we out-chugged folks in the Maritimes. So I called a Newfie friend and told him about the survey.

"It's a bloody lie," he bellowed. "We spill more than youse drink up here, and then Granny and Cousin Ferd lap it up so nothin's wasted." Still, I pointed out, cirrhosis deaths were lower in the low consumption Maritimes.

"That explains it" I was told. "We don't die from a few beers." So what I enquired, is the leading cause of death on the Rock. "High blood pressure," he said, so what causes that, I asked. "Answering damn fool questions about surveys from the mainland," he thundered.

Well, I'm glad we got that cleared up. Cheers!

RENAMING STREETS

Halton Hills Council is holding a public meeting next Monday, March 26 at the Acton Legion, Wright Ave., Acton at 6:30 pm to discuss the proposed renaming of Main St., Park Ave., and George St. in Acton, as well as Mary St. and Arthur St. in Norval.

Ballot

Are you in favour of changing Acton's street names?

YES _____ NO _____

If so, why? _____

If not, why? _____

NAME _____

STREET _____

PHONE# _____

Please either bring this completed ballot to The New Tanner office or next door to Radio Shack by Monday, March 26 at noon or email it to thenewtanner@on.aibn.com NO PHONE CALLS PLEASE.