

# GRAPEVINE



## CHRISTMAS LUNCH

They almost ran out of potatoes and had to quickly (and resourcefully) cook a vegetable tray, but the 80 invited guests and volunteers at the second Christmas community luncheon still had a great time.

"It went very well. Everyone had a good time," said Ann Adema, one of the organizers of the luncheon, designed to ensure no one in Acton was lonely or hungry on Christmas Day.

After a full turkey dinner, everyone went home with a gift, fresh fruit and a dessert, and thanks to the organizers, a merrier Christmas.

Adema said the lunch committee will meet later this month to plan ways to make next year's event bigger and better.

## JA VOLUNTEERS

Want to help youth become the business leaders of the future? Check out the Junior Achievement (JA) program, consisting of a group of students that meet at Acton High School.

JA provides an opportunity for local business leaders, educators, parents and the community to work together to prepare youth to be future business leaders. For more information call Jamie at 905-877-4304.

## UNITY SERVICE

The congregations of Acton's churches will pray together at the annual Acton Ministerial Unity Service on January 16 at the Legion at 10:30 a.m.

The guest speaker this year is Pastor Ray Vander Kooij of Bethel Christian Reformed Church.

## STATION CHANGES

The lure of small town life brought Susanne Romanek to

Acton as co-owner, with Ron Dick, of The Station Hotel.

"I come from Beamsville-Jordan, (and) I had no plans of wanting to go and start again in a big city, so this is why I was so happy to find this place," Romanek said.

She hopes renovations will be complete by spring on an English-style pub with "good food, good service and good atmosphere."

## LIBRARY PROGRAMS

There are still some spaces available in the children's programs offered at the Acton library beginning next week.

The various free programs are for children aged six months to five years, and space is filled on a first-come first serve basis.

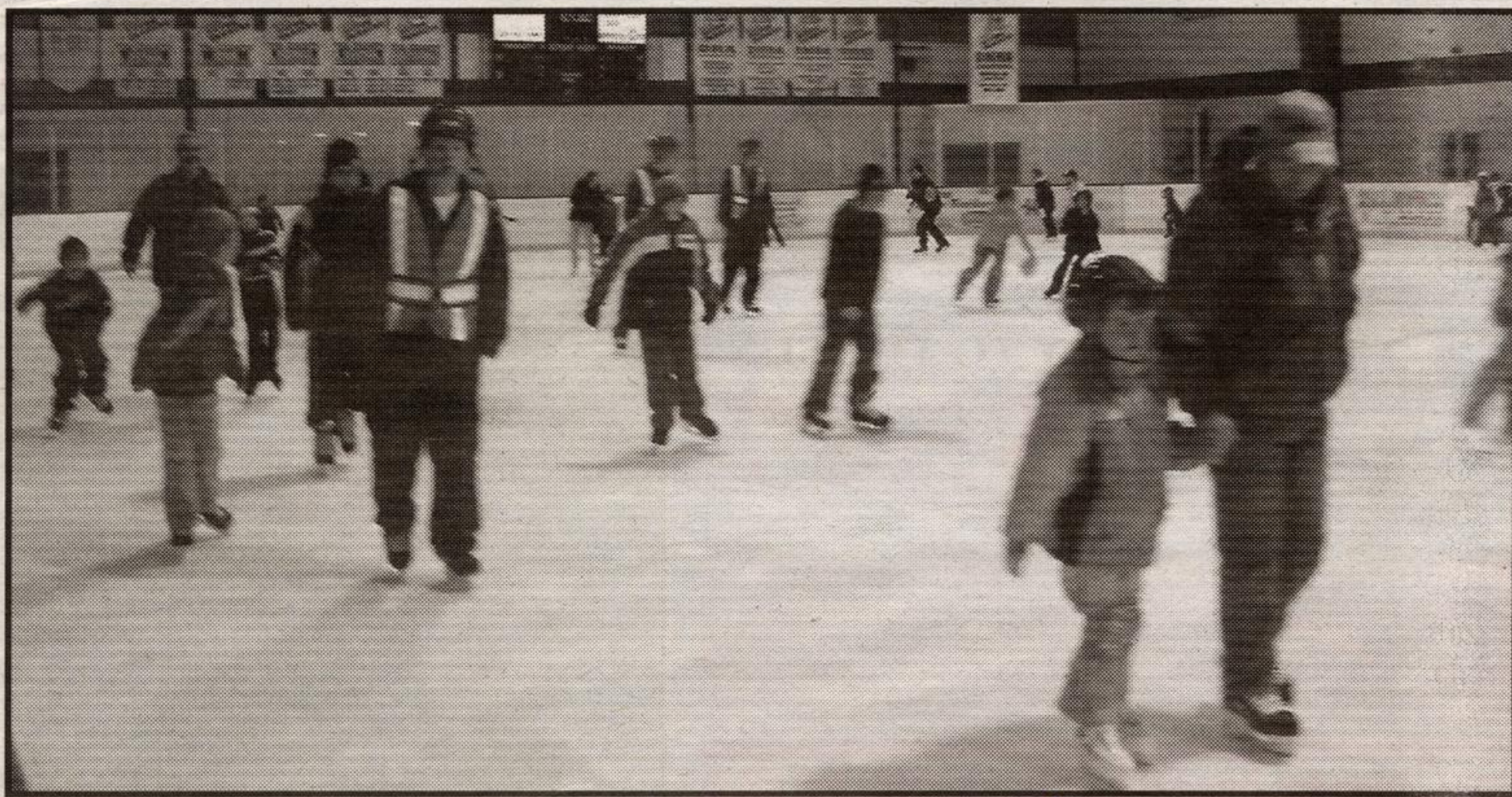
Call the River Street branch at 853-0301 for program availability.

## EUCHRE GAMES

Euchre players are reminded that there are monthly games at Acton Seniors Recreation Centre. Next one is on Wednesday, January 19 at 7:15 p.m. There are card games at the Centre every Thursday with Cribbage and Canasta in the morning and Bid Euchre at 1 p.m.

## ACTIVE LIVING

Halton Hills Recreation & Parks is offering water exercise, cardio, yoga, pilates, dance, kung fu and balance ball programs throughout Halton Hills. There is still plenty of room to sign up and make 2005 your year to be active. For information on how to register for these and many other programs please call the Program Hotline at 905-873-2601 ext. 2275 or visits the Town website at [www.halton-hills.ca](http://www.halton-hills.ca)



**SKATE ACTION:** Popular recreation over the Christmas holidays was free skating at the Acton arena courtesy of the Acton Rotary Club. There were seasoned skaters and some parents brought children to try out their blades for the first time.—Frances Niblock photo.

## Students & staff produce success

Just before Christmas I wrote about the Christmas Concerts at Acton's schools. Part of that column dealt with the special relationship that was evident between students and staff in the music department. I also mentioned that Acton High is well known and respected for its science, math and technical departments. I thought you might be interested in how and why our students are excelling in these areas.

I have never shied away from leveling deserved criticism at the educational bureaucracy when I see programs instituted which don't enrich our children. Conversely, I do not hesitate to applaud the efforts of staff and students when they excel. I think you'll be impressed with the accomplishments of the Technological Design Department at Acton High School.

I wish, and Principle O'Hearn may want to consider this a suggestion, that the school offered a credit course in Real Estate Transactions. Not only would it prepare young people for the biggest purchase of their lives but they may graduate someone who could actually sell Speyside School. That's the industrial slum that's been vacant for over a decade on Hwy. 25 and 15 Side Road. It's possibly the only property in Halton Hills that has gone down in value over that time not to mention being an eyesore for neighbours. But I digress.

I met teacher Norbert Axtmann at a municipal awards evening last summer where four of his students were receiving municipal honours. More on that later. Good programs begin with good teachers and Mr. Axtmann is certainly qualified. In addition to an excellent academic résumé, Mr. Axtmann won the Prime Minister's Award for math, science and technology in 1995. As you will see further on, success begets success.

Mr. Axtmann describes the course as follows:

The Acton High School Technological Design Program provides students with opportunities to apply the principles of basic design to technological challenges in industry, engineering, architecture, manufacturing, and graphics. Students develop problem-solving and design skills through use of technical drawings and illustrations, model building, testing and marketing. They also become aware of consumer, business, and environmental issues in the creation and marketing of products or services, and the educational requirements of design-related careers. Automated

## The Way I See It

with  
Mike O'Leary



manufacturing using computer numeric control (CNC) is also being introduced as the program now has a CNC Router.

The major emphasis is our program has always been Architectural and Interior Design, but 2 years ago we received a new computer lab which allowed us to upgrade our software to include Mechanical Design and Drafting in our program. We now have access to "state of the art" software programs such as Softplan, AutoCAD 2005, Inventor 8, Mechanical Desktop, and Revit.

The program is constantly in a "state of flux" as we are able to push the envelope of learning further and further with each new group of students. Even at the grade 9 level, students are completing tasks using CAD software and the CNC Router that only a few years ago would have only taken place at the senior levels.

Over the years our program has received recognition from the Halton Board of Education, The Town of Halton Hills, the Hamilton-Halton Homebuilders, and Skills Canada where we have received numerous medals at both the Provincial and National levels. We also represented Canada three times at the VICA (Vocational Industrial Clubs of America) Technical Skills Competitions, finishing twice in the top 10 and once in the top 15. Over the years, this program has allowed students (male, female, adult & even learning disabled), to set, and reach for new experiences and goals.

I mentioned I met Mr. Axtmann's students at a municipal awards evening. Municipal awards honour residents for excellence in the fields of sport, academics and cultural pursuits. That evening Kasimir Kosakowski, Matt Locke, Matthew Simpson and Angela Henderson received medals.

In June 2004, AHS students cleaned up at the Hamilton-Halton Homebuilder's Student Design Competition. For the competition students were required to design, and then prepare a complete detail working drawing package for either a Small House (up to 1400 square feet) or a Custom House (up to 4000 square feet). Specific criteria for

each design was provided by the homebuilders, including the building lot specifications, restrictions, the family requirements, and zoning restrictions. Students were judged on design, appearance, use of space, and the correct and complete production of the detail working drawings.

This is the third consecutive year that Acton students earned the top two awards in each of the two design categories, and also received numerous honourable mentions.

Matt Vanderleest - 1<sup>st</sup> place in the Small House Design

(Matt is currently in the Architectural Technology program at Humber College)

Ryan Dunlop - 2<sup>nd</sup> place, Award of Merit in the Small House Design

Samantha James - 1<sup>st</sup> place, in the Custom House Design

Ryan Lindo - 2<sup>nd</sup> place, Award of Merit in the Custom House Design

The following students won honourable mention at the awards in various categories:

Mark Boycott - Honourable Mention in the Custom House Design

Kyle Harding - Honourable Mention in the Small House Design

Jennifer Haslem - Honourable Mention in the Custom House Design

Erica Larsen - Honourable Mention in the Small House Design

Matt Locke - Honourable Mention in the Small House Design

Tim Pembleton - Honourable Mention in the Custom House Design

Jennifer Wieck - Honourable Mention in the Small House Design

Matt Youngblut - Honourable Mention in the Custom House Design

The students at Acton High have a long tradition of doing well in competitions.

In 2003 Brian Rauwerda won the Ontario Gold Medal in Architectural CADD while Greg Demand earned the Silver in Mechanical CADD. At the Halton Skills competition, also in 2003, Brian Rauwerda and Greg Demand won Gold medals while Angela Henderson and Byron Poulos won Bronze. In fact Acton High School's enviable winning record goes back to 1988 and beyond.

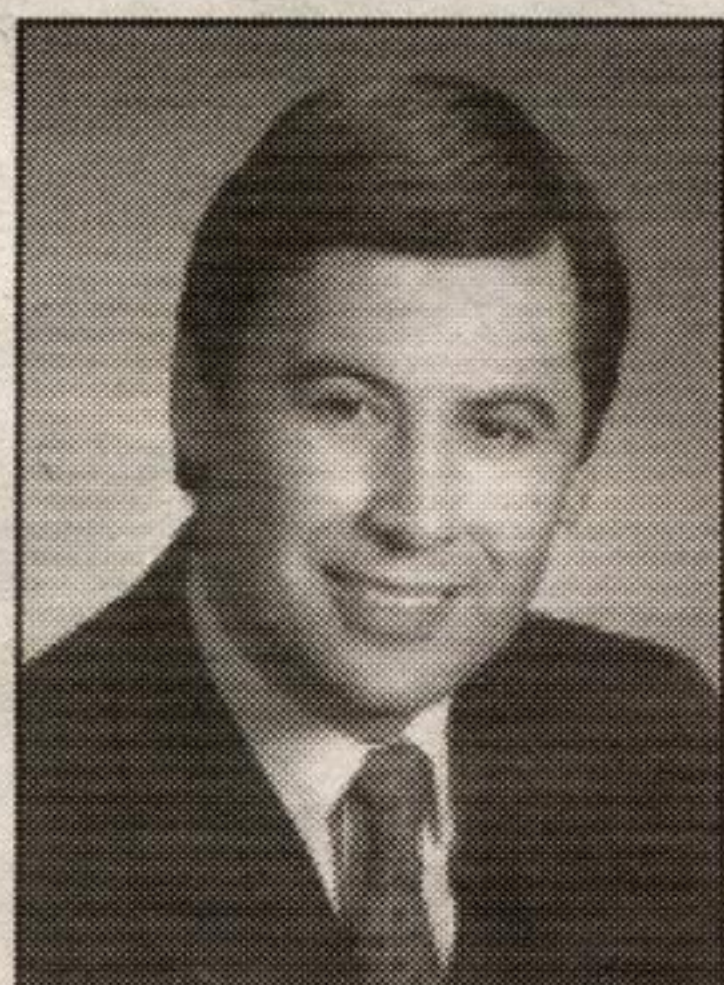
Congratulations to the students and staff of Acton High School. Awards of excellence are the things that help build school pride and spirit. Thanks to all the students for their hard work and the staff for their dedication.

Now, if they only had a football team.

## Tsunami Disaster

# Chong urges public to give generously

Wellington/ Halton Hills MP Mike Chong joined those who encouraged constituents to donate generously to Tsunami disaster relief funds. He announced Monday that his constituency office in Fergus would accept donations for the following aid organizations.



**Mike Chong**

East in Fergus.

Chong noted that "we do not endorse the above groups."

Donors should contact the organizations directly for information on how funds are distributed.

Canadian Red Cross  
Save the Children Canada  
UNICEF Canada  
Oxfam Canada  
World Vision Canada  
CARE Canada

Doctors without Borders  
Donations can be dropped off during regular office hours (Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) at Suite 5, 200 St. Patrick St.