

## Learn to keep Christmas calories down at sumptuous snack event

Christmas Wraps refers, not to decorative packaging or holiday coats but to delicious, nutritious and almost guilt-free festive appetizers.

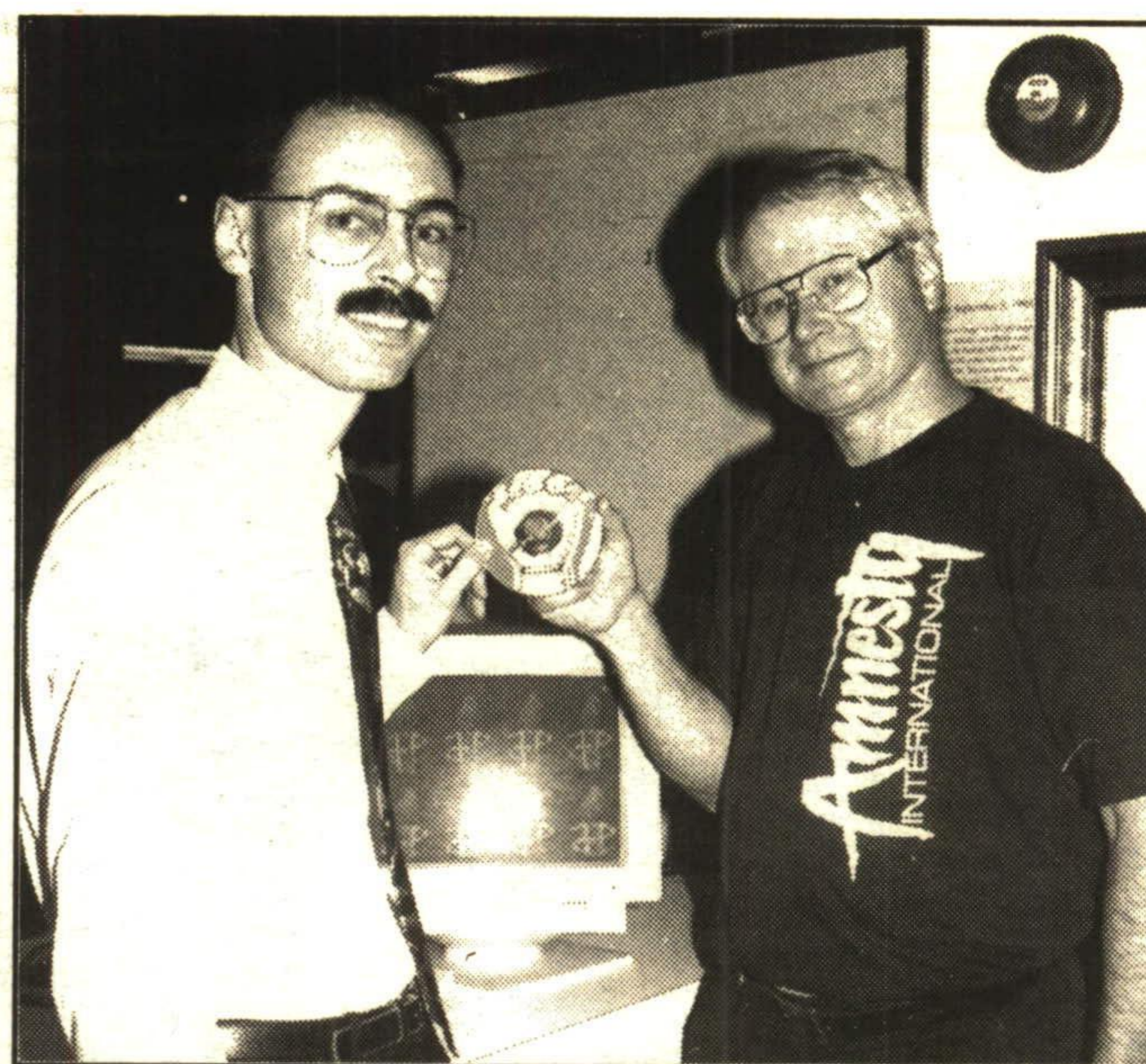
Home economist Faeye Johnston and dietitian Vicki Poirier from the Halton Healthy Lifestyles Coalition will demonstrate how to make these sumptuous snacks on Dec 12 at the

Georgetown Seniors Centre, 318 Guelph St., starting at 7 p.m.

Tickets for the program are \$3 (to cover the cost of samples participants will taste test) and are available at the Halton Hills Libraries or the Seniors Centre.

The Wraps recipe is part of a new cookbook entitled, Healthy

Pleasures which has been compiled from recipes by chef/dietitian teams from across Canada, with recipes adjusted to reflect the emphasis on lower fat content, more fibre and complex carbohydrates. The book is in the Halton Hills Library and copies will be available for purchase at the Dec. 12 event.



## For the library

Jim Broughton (right) of the Halton Hills Amnesty International group presents a new Amnesty Interactive CD-ROM to Geoff Cannon, Information Services librarian at the Georgetown branch of the Halton Hills Library. Patrons can borrow it for use on their home computers. The disk offers video images, music and animation to present a global atlas of human rights conditions today, a history of human rights, testimonies from Amnesty files, suggestions for 'What you can do,' an extensive resources list and more. The local group recently celebrated the release of its adopted Prisoner of Conscience in Cuba, and will now work for others throughout the world.

JANET DUVAL photo

"ON STAGE"

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# SENIOR'S CORNER

## A Time To Remember

Christmas is a time for MEMORIES  
No matter how many Christmas Seasons have come and gone there is always one special one. Thank you those who have shared their memories.

CHILDREN AT CHRISTMAS  
- Una O'Callaghan

### CHILDREN AT CHRISTMAS

My memories of family Christmas go back well over seventy-five years, but for me nothing fundamental has changed, except for my role in the drama. At first, I was a wonder-struck child enthralled by the Nativity story and the magic of the season. I am now a devoted grandmother and part-time magician, who helps make it all happen.

Certainly there have been some innovations. As a child, I loved to glue coloured strips of paper into chains which were draped from the central ceiling-light into every corner of the room. Now, soft-sculpture wreaths are more likely to deck the walls, than are springs of holly tucked behind the picture frames. We used to ornament our Christmas tree with fragile glass balls, and scallop their fragrant branches with strings of silver tinsel; then we reverently raised the delicate porcelain angel for her tissue-wrapped year-long sleep, and Mother flew her up to grace the tree-top. Now-a-days, many people colour-coordinate their silken baubles with the tree-lights -- all pink, white, or gold -- and the lighted church in the toy village below the tree may well hold an invisible choir singing carols.

Christmas gifts in my childhood were far fewer, yet perhaps more keenly appreciated, than are today's massive mounds of mystery parcels piled around the tree. These seem to bring an almost bewildering bounty to the children, who rip off the wrappings for more and more marvels.

Still, for the littlest ones of the present day, just as for those of past years, the self-same breathless excitement wakens them on Christmas morning itself. Long before parents are astir, quiet as little mice trying to muffle squeaks and rustlings, the children delve, before the dawn of day, into lumpy stockings and pillow-cases. These they had placed flat and empty at the foot of the bed the night before, and now, as always, Father Christmas has brought the very gifts most hoped for, and surprises as well.

Of course, there comes a time in each generation of children when the older ones begin to hold Santa Claus under suspicion of being "just a story". Then St. Nicholas is summoned from the pages of history and we tell then, as we ourselves were once told: "Yes, there was a real Santa Claus; he is the patron saint of children, the one who inspires your family and friends to bring you presents." And of course, we agree to let the babies believe in reindeers pulling the sleigh high over the rooftops, for a little while longer.

We children of long ago were taught a great truth, which on first hearing we doubted: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Could that really be true? But then, the sight of our parents' happiness, in the gifts we had made for them, proved it to us. With modern communications, today's children are very aware of the world's less fortunate folk, and readily come to their aid by

gifts of pocket-money or time; quite in the style of Good King Wenceslaus -- he who set out "when the snow lay round about, deep, and crisp, and even," to bring food, and wine, and pine logs to his poorest subjects.

Our traditional family Christmas dinner always was, and hopefully will always be, tender turkey and ham, savoury stuffing, crunchy brussels sprouts, crisp roasted potatoes, and onion sauces. As ever, we hunt for silver charms embedded in the Christmas pudding, where our "futures" are revealed.

We learn "who will soon be married" upon discovery of the wedding-ring; "who will grow rich" after finding the symbolic three-penny-bit; and "who will remain a bachelor" from biting into the button. Over all the years, I cannot recall a charm ever being accidentally swallowed. Christmas crackers still emit an exciting smell, thought to be gun-powder, as they are pulled, to discharge paper crowns and mottoes. We play the old games and sing the old carols together, whatever our ages.

Yes, from the time the family kneels together before the Holy Family at the crib in church, through all the following festivities, even old hearts grow young again. Everyone is a child on Christmas day!

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