

Comparing musical notes

Grade 8 student Evan Abercrombie (right), trumpeter Jim Gardiner (left) and trombonist Gordon Wolfe of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra Brass Trio compare notes during the Trio's first-ever visit to Centennial Middle School in Georgetown recently. The Trio, which also included Gabriel Radford on the French horn, stood in for three 40-minute interactive performances with Centennial music students.



Photo by Eamonn Maher

But Parks and Rec director's personal lawsuit can proceed

Town can't sue citizen for defamation—judge

Citizens are free to criticize governments without fear of being sued for defamation, a judge has ruled in dismissing an action by the Town of Halton Hills against a resident for comments made on his website.

Justice David Corbett of the Superior Court of Justice ruled that the freedom of expression guarantee in the Charter of Rights and

Freedoms prevents governments from pursuing such actions.

It is the second time this year an Ontario judge has dismissed a defamation suit brought by a municipality against a citizen for the same reason.

The previous case involved the Township of Montague suing a resident for \$50,000.

Comment about public affairs and government lies at the core of freedom of expression, and any legal restriction would have a chilling effect, Corbett wrote in his 25-page judgment.

"Governments have other, better ways to protect their reputations," he wrote, ordering the town to pay \$5,000 in costs to defendant Al Kirouac who runs an Acton-based website.

The town, along with parks and recreation director Terry Alyman, jointly sued Kirouac for \$120,000, alleging he wrote derogatory comments about Alyman in connection with his work for the town. Corbett's ruling did not affect Alyman's portion of the lawsuit, which is still before the courts.



TERRY ALYMAN

Public officials have the right to sue for defamation, but governments do not have private reputations to protect, Corbett wrote. "Litigation is a form of force and the government must not silence its critics by force," he added.

Kirouac said in a recent interview that his lawyer, Ryder Gilliland, offered to settle with the town without costs three weeks ago but was refused. Now the town is on the hook for \$5,000.

Gilliland also successfully defended Donald Page in the Township of Montague case. He termed both decisions "an important victory for free speech ... and democratic principles."

Lawyer John Schaljo, who represents both plaintiffs, said Alyman will proceed with his case. The town must decide if it wants to appeal Corbett's decision. Schaljo called Corbett's ruling disappointing, but "I can't say it was unexpected."

—By Torstar News Service



EARTH DAY CELEBRATION

APRIL 29th, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Robert C. Austin Operations Centre
11620 Trafalgar Road, Georgetown

Plant a tree for Earth Day

Thousands of trees have been sold to Town residents at our Annual Earth Day event. These trees are planted on private properties throughout the municipality. This year we will continue the momentum by encouraging residents to purchase a tree. 1000 trees are available in nine varieties.

Did you know that planting a tree is a simple way to clean up our environment? Trees play an important role in helping to maintain a balance in the earth's ecosystems. They improve our neighbourhoods, communities and lives. Trees provide habitat for wildlife. Trees absorb carbon dioxide and provide essential oxygen to the air and create a more beautiful environment in which we live.

Contribute to the growth of trees in our community!

You can make a difference to the environment!

Special thanks to our sponsors:

- McDonalds Georgetown
- The Ultimate Bean
- Tim Hortons
- Real Canadian Superstore

For more information, please contact Wendy Edwards at (905) 873-2601, ext. 2610 or Email: wendye@haltonhills.ca

Come and enjoy . . .

- Trees at a subsidized rate of \$5.00 (inc. Tax). CASH ONLY. Four per person, no limit after 10 a.m. Nine varieties including Red Maple, White Pine, Scott Pine, White Spruce, Red Oak, White Birch, European Beech, Downy Serviceberry, Common Chokeberry.
- Master Gardeners from the Georgetown Horticultural Society will be available to answer questions.
- FREE Compost and Wood Chips. Bring along a shovel and container for pick-up. A non-perishable food donation to the Georgetown Bread Basket or Acton Foodshare is requested for each gallon container of compost.
- Environmental Displays by the Town's Environmental Advisory Committee (TEAC), Willow Park Ecology Centre, Healthy Options for People and the Environment, Georgetown Horticultural Society, REEP (Halton Residential Energy Efficiency Project), the Litter Free Task Force and the Cancer Society.
- Colouring Contest with prizes.
- Breakfast and BBQ served by Mayor Bonnette and Members of Council - waffles, hamburgers, hotdogs, sausages and refreshments for \$1.00 each.
- Free draw to win a tree, Free Energuide draw from REEP, Litterbags from the Litter Free Task Force, Book Sale with all proceeds going to charity.
- Enjoy musical entertainment by "Riverband" performing a unique blend of finger style guitar and harmonies.

New radio equipment will improve reception

Halton Regional Police will install radio equipment at the Acton fire station and on its radio tower to solve communication problems experienced by police in the Acton area.

The deal between the Town and Halton Regional Police Board, will see the board pay the Town \$1,000 a year plus pay for the installation of their equipment and the re-enforcement of the radio tower to accommodate the additional antenna masts.