

Groundhogs out and about?

It's Candlemas Day

Today, (Feb. 2) is Candlemas Day and, of course, among weather prophets it's also called Groundhog Day, a mixture of the sacred and the profane.

Candlemas commemorates the ritual purification of the Virgin Mary, 40 days after the birth of Jesus. It's an ancient feast in the Chris-



tian Church.

So how did the groundhog get involved in Candlemas Day?

Candlemas is one of the four "cross-quarters" of the year, according to ancient tradition, occurring half way between the first day of winter and the first day of spring. Medieval Christians believed that if Candlemas was sunny the remaining six weeks of winter would be cold and stormy. But

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NEW ZEALAND BOUND: Acton area resident Pamela Gilverson has been practising on the Grand River at Cambridge for the Outrigger World Sprint Championships in New Zealand. See the full story on Page 13. - Photo supplied

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Acton wins big in Chamber business awards



ACE EMPLOYEE: Dedication, hard work and superior customer service earned Acton library supervisor Marie Vickery the 2005 Employee of the Year award from the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce. - Frances Niblock photo



ENTREPRENEUR HONOURED: Kristine Cieslok, owner of Acton Blue Springs Spa and Salon, was selected as the Entrepreneur of the Year by the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce. The award honours new business with fewer than 10 employees that demonstrate business innovation and creativity. - Frances Niblock photo

Limehouse picks up civic pride award

By **FRANCES NIBLOCK**
The New Tanner

You can add modest to the attributes that earned two Acton women top honours from the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce in its annual business achievement awards.

Kristine Cieslok, owner of Blue Springs Salon and Spa was voted Entrepreneur of the Year by a Chamber sub-committee on Friday, and veteran library staffer, Marie Vickery, was selected Employee of the Year.

The Civic Pride Award was garnered by the Limehouse community for its multi-works in the village, including restoration of the lime kilns, development of a community garden and restoration of the Memorial Hall.

In a new Oscar-style format, the winner of the Business of the Year award will be announced at a Chamber gala later this month.

Three finalists were selected from seven nominations and the winner was chosen by secret ballot - the finalists are Acton's MacMillan's Frozen Foods, Halton Hills Speech Centre and Vision 2000 Travel Group.

Acton's Marie Vickery reacted with "disbelief" when informed of her selection as Employee of the Year, an award designed to honour

the employee who has made a significant impact and contributed to excellence in the community through exceptional customer service.

"I was speechless," Vickery said on Friday from the children's library on River Street, where she has opened the world to many children through her love of books.

"I have kids of kids that came to Story Time coming now," she laughed when asked about her career, which began 23 years ago.

Vickery said the best part of her supervisor's job is a sense of community - of working where she lives, and seeing children she taught in library programs growing into readers.

"Girls stop in on the first day of school and show off their new dress and then they're back doing university projects," Vickery said, adding the worst part of the job is "unproductive meetings" and never having time to finish a book before it's due.

Vickery's job includes supervising student pages, *Continued on page 2*

5.1% tax increase proposed by Town

The Town's proposed 2006 operating budget requires a tax levy of \$20.5-million - a 5.1 per cent per cent tax increase over last year, or \$51 more for a Town tax bill of \$1,053 for a house assessed at \$300,000.

Two per cent of the 5.1 per cent increase is dedicated to the Town's multi-year road improvement program, leaving the Town's budget committee little room to afford expanded programs or additional staff.

With a Regional tax increase of 3.2 per cent, or an additional \$44, the Town increase of 5.1 per cent, or \$55 more than last year, and no change in the education tax levy, the total tax bill is \$3,362, or an overall 2.9 per cent increase on a property assessed at \$300,000.

During nine hours of debate on Monday and Tuesday, the budget committee - all councillors and the mayor - made a long list of additions

and deletions to the budget to try to reduce the potential increase, yet not cut services or programs.

Councillors started Monday's meeting facing a five per cent increase, but added \$201,600 to the budget and pushed the potential increase to 6.1 per cent.

Those projects came in the form of requests to increase the base budget, which represents the costs necessary *Continued on page 3*

ACHILLES
Mazda
Address
357 Queen St. E. Acton
Local
519-853-0200
Toll Free
1-866-620-3248
Parts Hotline
519-853-5613
Email
info@achillesmazda.ca
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