

Groundhogs around?...

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if it was cloudy, rained or snowed on Candlemas, the rest of the winter would be mild.

An old saying goes:
*If Candlemas be fair and bright,
Winter has another flight.
If Candlemas brings clouds and rain,
Winter will not come again.*

Ancient beliefs also held that creatures which hibernate were able to predict the arrival of spring when they emerged from their dens, an

honour reserved for the badger, the bear and hedgehog. However when German immigrants to the United States settled in Pennsylvania they transferred that honour to the indigenous groundhog.

So Groundhog Day emerged on February 2 and merchants among the "Pennsylvania Dutch" knew a good thing when they saw it. So we have Punxsutawney Phil. Every February 2 in Punxsutawney Phil is pulled from his den by his keepers and he whispers a prediction in their ears, which they announce to thousands of expectant celebrants.

In Canada we have Warton Willie who follows the traditional route of looking for his shadow. If he sees it, the story goes he'll run for his den and we'll have six more weeks of cold winter weather. If he fails to see his shadow he'll stay up and enjoy the mild winter.



BIRTHDAY BASH: Members of the Acton Citizens' Band took time from learning a new piece of Mozart music to have a piece of Mozart cake – with punch – at a party to celebrate the famous coomposer's 250th birthday last Wednesday at the band hall. – Frances Niblock photo

Acton cleans up at Chamber awards...

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adult staff, buying children's books and adult fiction, and designing and delivering programming.

The Entrepreneur of the Year award honours someone in business between one-and-three years, with fewer than 10 employees.

It recognizes good business ethics, superior customer service and demonstrated innovation and creativity.

Cieslok was an easy choice for the committee – her Mill Street spa has developed a devoted clientele since it opened in November 2003.

"What a huge honour," Cieslok said on Tuesday, noting there was some pessimism about how a spa would go over in Acton before she opened.

"But, I knew that most people want to look and feel good and like to be pampered. I hire people who have been trained to give 100 per cent superior service, and my goal is to provide the best service to my clients that I can," Cieslok said, adding the spa has undergone two expansions to add new services in the past and they are currently working on a new more private hair cutting/colouring area.

Limehouse citizens can be proud of the work they have done in their community that earned them the Civic Pride award, including restoration of the Limehouse Kilns, development of a community garden and restoration of the former church, built in 1876, into the village run Limehouse Memorial Hall.

Limehouse resident Mary

Shier said it was "very exciting" to win the award.

"The projects are all about ordinary people who just wanted to make their community a better place," Shier said on Monday, adding the Limehouse Millennium Garden began as a derelict piece of land that was turned into a well-tended garden with benches and walkways.

She said the Limehouse Kiln Society has completed restoration of a powder magazine and is now working on restoring a draw kiln, and the Hall, which the community assumed responsibility for in 1997 from the Women's Institute, has undergone major improvements, including a new roof and washrooms.

Each of the three finalists for the Business of the Year award has a long history of superior customer service and community involvement.

MacMillan's Frozen Foods, owned by Roy and Linda Martin, has been in business west of Acton on Highway 7 for 22 years.

MacMillan's supports local hockey, soccer and curling, and has generously donated to the Acton food bank, the Christmas Hamper Program, the fall fair, church breakfasts, school breakfast programs and the Acton

Firemen's Ball.

MacMillan's nominator said, "Their pride in the business and the local community has been one of the foremost thoughts. They believe that it is the business that serves the community – not the community that serves the business."

The Halton Hills Speech Centre has been in business for 10 years – growing from a small private practice with two speech pathologists to a group of 19 pathologists.

The centre serves schools, seniors' residences, hospitals and private patients, and a stack of testimonials attached to the nomination attest to the centre's superior customer service, professional and practical approach and friendly and encouraging staff.

In one testimonial, the parent of the client wrote, "...I have marvelled at the camaraderie and efficiency of your operation. Not only has it provided my children with professional guidance they needed, but also instilled a deep seated sense of self-esteem that will benefit them a lifetime."

The centre supports community hockey, soccer, gymnastics, the United Way, Heart and Stroke Foundation, Ronald McDonald House and Operation Christmas Child.

Arend Roos began what is now Vision 2000 Travel Group in Georgetown in 1976, and the company has grown to employ 15 full-time and several part-time employees, most who live in Halton Hills.

Vision 2000 supports local sports groups including soccer, hockey and softball. Its charity of choice locally is Georgetown hospital and it also supports the Salvation Army and Red Cross.

Vision 2000's nominator wrote, "In an incredibly fast-changing travel environment, their many long-term clients are a testament to their ability to adapt, innovate and constantly move forward."

The Business of the Year winner will be announced at a Chamber awards dinner on February 24, at North Halton Golf Club.

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