

# GRAPEVINE



## SMALLWOOD FOOD

For the past seven years, musicians who call the Smallwood Acres campground home on weekends have staged a concert to help fill the shelves at Acton's FoodShare foodbank.

The price to attend Saturday's outdoor concert was an item of non-perishable food, and approximately 400 pounds of food was donated by residents of the camp, west of Acton.

"We come up here to relax and have fun and so every year we like to give something back to the community," said organizer Sam Lombardo who has been summering at Smallwood since 1991.

"We're a little community here and this jamboree lets us have some fun and help the food bank. It's just that little something that we can do to."

Last year, FoodShare distributed 24,500-pounds of food to approximately 1,000 hungry people.

## FAIR BUILDING UPDATE

Fair building fundraisers are "optimistic" more very significant gifts will be made in the coming weeks to the campaign to raise \$750,000 for a new \$1.6-million building in Prospect Park.

Acton Agricultural Society fundraiser Drew Brown said they're still concentrating on asking for large donations in face-to-face meetings with businesses and families.

The Town is inviting bids to construct a 2,425-square-metre indoor soccer facility, a one-storey above grade pre-fabricated steel building with artificial floor surface. Tenders close August 22.

## SHOW TIME!

Check out the Acton library on Saturday, August 19 at 10:30 for

## Billie brought a ray of sunshine...

*Continued from page 6*

the last litter they would have after 30 plus years of breeding St. Bernards. They told us they couldn't have hoped for a better home for him. The Dude told me, "I know you may not be ready, so it's your choice. If you want, we can get him. If you're not ready, it is okay."

Between tears and still apologizing to Kodi in my head, I went for a walk when we arrived home and contemplated. I felt like I had betrayed Kodi and Shadow. Yet, I couldn't imagine my life without a dog and this one seemed perfect. I tried to think of him not as a replacement, but a continuation of a loving home for a dog who needs loving parents.

After my walk, I came home. "Okay, call the breeder tomorrow and tell him we'll take him, but..." The Dude looked at me waiting for the but. "I get to name him." Now the Dude looked worried. Visions of Tinkerbelle and Butterfly raced through his mind.

a rollicking session of musical storytelling with Doug Barr, one of Canada's favourite children's performers.

His interactive musical storytelling show features wacky lyrics and lots of action for families and kids of all ages.

Tickets, while they last, are on sale at the River Street branch.

Barr performs at 2 p.m. at the Georgetown branch.

## DINEWISE

All Halton restaurants and food take-outs are posting their health inspections as part of the Region's Dinewise anti-dirty dining program, which switched from voluntary to mandatory on July 1.

Prior to the switch, 60 per cent of Halton restaurants, 550 eateries including 21 in Acton, voluntarily post their health department inspections for the public to see, and many, like Gus Galimanas whose Acton Subway is the cleanest Subway in this part of Canada, see the certificates as a badge of honour.

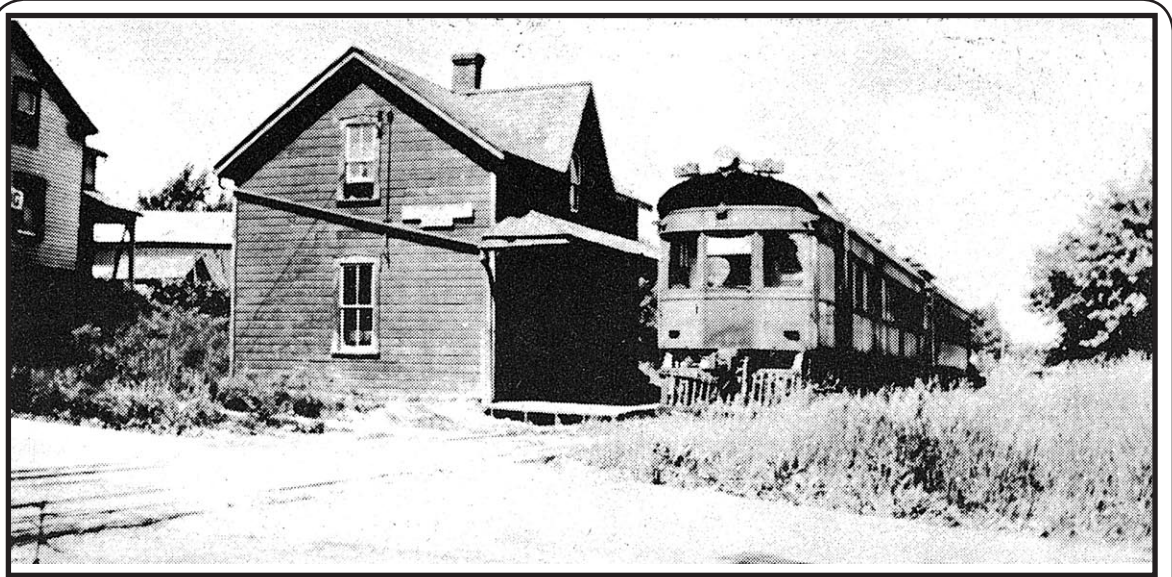
Restaurant inspection reports can be found at [www.halton.ca/dinewise](http://www.halton.ca/dinewise)

## ARTISTS' DESIRES

Structured or un-structured? Individual lessons or friendly studio space? Those are some of the questions that Wall-to-Wall owner Joanna Lordon is asking clients these days as she plans for the fall.

Lordon said she's "sniffing out the need" for classes and lessons and will offer space in the basement of her store during the afternoons or evenings to artists who are looking for a "friendly studio atmosphere."

For details call 519-853-4814.



**CIRCA 1920?:** A radial car train stops at the Acton station on Main St. S. enroute from Toronto to Guelph. Usually two or three cars, the radial was the GO Train of its day but failed when the Great Depression hit. The last train ran in August of 1931 and it's said thousands of people lined the route at intersections to bid adieu.

## Traces of 'Radial' railway still exist in this area

*July 23, 1914 - The rails have been laid on the C.N.R. electric railway from Toronto to Georgetown and the work will soon be as far as Acton. (An item in a Milton newspaper in July of 1914)*

Only a few now living will remember the Toronto Suburban Railway which ran from Toronto to Guelph with numerous stopping off points between. There were stations in this area from Limehouse to Eden Mills and apparently, like the Polar Bear Express, which runs from Cochrane to Moosonee, the motorman would stop along the track pretty well anywhere to pick up passengers.

The Acton station was located where the Mackenzie & Chapman law offices are now at 33 Main St. S. When this scribbler was a toddler he can vaguely recall boarding the train for a ride to Eldorado Park which is located near Churchville, now Brampton, on the Credit River. The attraction for this kid - donkey rides. And it might have been a Hewetson Shoe Co. picnic. My father was employed there for years in factories in Brampton and Acton.

There were stations at Limehouse, as mentioned, at Dolly Varden, Blue Springs Park (now Blue Springs Scout Reserve) and numerous stories recall when the electric cars stopped to let off passengers at Tony Seynuck's dance hall. If you follow Crewson's Line south from Crewsons Corners to its end and take a footpath west along the hilly overlook, the old dance hall foundations can still be seen.

Patrons of the dance hall wouldn't necessarily have to be able to do the fox trot, the two step, the Charleston or any other of the vigorous dance

steps of the 1920s because there was another attraction - bootlegged liquor. Throats parched by Prohibition were able to slake their thirst with the best bootleggers could brew or distill.

Crewson's Line is, of course, the boundary between Milton and Halton Hills now. In those heady days it was the division between Esquesing and Nasagaweya townships. The road was not much more than a goat's path. When the Law approached by car, the revenuers could easily be observed. If they came along the tracks, the dance hall, overlooking the valley, was like an observation post.

If train schedules conflicted with dances the young people and imbibers of the time would book a truck to take them to the dance and back - everyone standing in the back like cargo. Those were heady days and the Toronto Suburban Railway thrived with passengers and freight.

Then came the Great Depression, little money, better roads, trucks delivering freight, bus lines - the Toronto Suburban familiarly known as "The Radial" closed its doors in August, 1931, 14 years after the first train ran the line's length in April, 1917. When World War 2 arrived the rails were taken up and used for war material.

It is a twist that a son of Acton, Sir Donald Mann, a legend in Canadian railway construction and part of the team of Mackenzie and Mann, was a lynchpin in "The Radial's" construction. He bought the Toronto Suburban Street Railway in 1911 when it was a small suburban street line that operated in Toronto between Keele and Dundas Streets and in Weston.

Mann, whose grave in Fairview Cemetery, Acton, records his place in history, soon bought and surveyed an extension to

Guelph. According to John McDonald's book, Halton Sketches, construction began in 1912 and grading was completed in 1913. "Although the road bed was built to relatively high standards some sources indicate that the railway was one of the cheapest built railroads in the world," the bank observes.

Mackenzie & Mann's baby, the Canadian Northern Railway, took over control of the Toronto Suburban in September, 1918. Later financial difficulties saw it acquired November 15, 1923 by the Toronto Transportation Commission, the TTC as it's known. A month later Halton Sketches says it became an asset of the Canadian National Electric Railways.

Traces of the old "radial" line can easily be seen throughout the area but its most prominent feature is the Halton County Radial Railway Museum on the Guelph Line, west of Acton and south of Rockwood which was constructed on the railway's road bed. It's ironic that the Town of Milton, where the museum lies, is now hampering its expansion. The Town is demanding a \$97,000 fee for development of a building to house historic electric railway cars which are slowly disintegrating outside.

Railroading had its golden era when trains were the fastest and most comfortable mode of travel. The automobile took over and rail lines all over the country were torn up. Now as congestion in the "Golden Horseshoe" gets worse and gridlock takes over, there are plans afoot to bring new life to existing railways. It again may see the railway become part of modern life in this neck of the woods.

-Hartley Coles