

GRAPEVINE



THE FIVE S'S

Halton Police began a new "high enforcement, educational traffic initiative" on Monday to coincide with the opening of school. Dubbed "Safe Start" its goal is to remind the driving public of the need to be courteous to other drivers and children, particularly at this time.

Every available traffic officer is to be focused on the five "S's": speeding, seatbelts, stop signs, school zones and school buses. "Safe Start" concludes on September 15 but future initiatives dubbed "Safe Arrival" and "Safe Return" will be implemented to ensure the focus on the five S's is maintained throughout the year.

FIRST SERMON

Seminarian Brendan McGrath, a scant two years away from being ordained a priest, gave the homily at the three weekend masses at St. Joseph's Church in Acton. Brendan developed a vocation for the priesthood after graduating in political science from McGill University in Montreal. He has been licensed to preach by the Diocese of Hamilton of which St. Joseph's is part.

Brendan chose as his topic the part faith plays in the Eucharist. The son of Mr. and Mrs. Bill McGrath of Acton, he assisted at a Hamilton parish this summer prior to returning to school in London where 18 seminarians are preparing for ordination for the Hamilton diocese.

LITERACY CLASSES

As students are busy preparing to get back to school for the new semester, it's also a good time for adults struggling with their own literacy skills to register for Literacy North Halton's Fall programming in Acton. Literacy North Halton opens its doors to adult students all year round - providing one on one individualized training as well as small group sessions for adults who wish to upgrade their basic spelling, math and computer skills.

Adults can register now by calling Literacy North Halton at (905) 873 2200. All calls are treated as confidential.

RAILWAY HISTORY

The Esqueing Historical Society is hosting a slide show presentation of the history of the railway era in this area by local author and archivist Mark Rowe on Wednesday, September 13 at Knox Church in Georgetown. Everyone is welcome to the presentation which will illustrate the important part railways have played in Halton Hills since the first rail line went through in the 1850s from Toronto to London.

The Credit Valley Railway which ran from Allandale near Barrie, to Hamilton through Georgetown and the Toronto Suburban Electric Line popularly called the "Radial" are all part of the history of this area. There's no charge for the show.

VON NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

The Victorian Order of Nurses (VON) urgently needs caring men and women to visit lonely and isolated seniors to offer friendship, conversation and outings. It only requires from one to three hours a week and it can make a big difference in a lonely person's life.

Regardless of age, lonely is lonely, the VON asserts, and they've seen the difference volunteers make in the lives of so many. Interested? Call the VON, Volunteers Support Program at 905-827-8800, ext. 2317 or 1-800-387-7127, ext. 2317.

YOUTH DANCE

Youth from 10 to 14 years of age are welcome to the Acton Ladies Silver Bullet hockey team Youth Dance at the community centre (arena) from 7:30 to 11p.m. on Friday, September 8.

There's a \$5 admission and more information is available by calling 905-702-9270.

OLD BEACH SAFE

The summer is rapidly waning but there's still some hot weather ahead for swimming and Halton health officials have again cleared the old beach in Prospect Park for swimming and other water sports.

The latest tests (August 24) showed the Acton beach, the beach at Kelso Conservation Area and three beaches in Oakville have acceptable levels of bacteria and are deemed safe for swimming. Two Burlington beaches were turned down.

Beach quality information is available on a 24-hour bases by calling 905-825-6000 or toll free 1-866-442-5866. Ask for beach information. After regular business hours press 2 for health information.

SALSA BABIES

Can't get your partner on the dance floor? New moms can dance their way back into shape with someone they love in a different way - their babies - and it's all to the Salsa beat.

Classes at the Dance Inn on Mill St., Acton, start September 14 and are appropriate for new moms, with babies anywhere from 2 months and up as long as they are comfortable supporting the baby's weight in some type of carrier. For more information visit www.salsababies.com or call Erin Tate at 519-853-8156.



BRAIN TRUST: The Halton-Peel Cattlemen's Association and Peel Junior Farmers recently joined forces to organize a fundraiser for the Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada. Collectively, the organizations raised \$7,500, which they presented to Michelle Baldwin, of the Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada, in honour of David Thompson, a Georgetown area farmer and former Peel Junior Farmer member, who was diagnosed with a brain tumour in December 2005. At the request of Thompson, the monies will be used by the foundation to further brain tumour research. Shown, left to right: Tom McDonald, president, Halton-Peel Cattlemen's Association; Baldwin; Laura Boughen, president, Peel Junior Farmers; Jackie and David Thompson. - Anne Howden Thompson photo

What's on tap? Water!

I see where the United Church brass came out last week asking their congregations to eliminate/reduce the consumption of bottled water. I was confused. With all the problems in our society today why would they pick on bottled water of all things?

I will admit that I am not a bottled water fan. I have great confidence in our town water supplies notwithstanding the Walkerton tragedy of a few years ago. My girls are another story, but I think it's more a matter of convenience rather than concern over water quality or taste.

This is not to say I have never been in cities where the water quality was suspect. Some places on the prairies have a high alkali content which led me to believe the inhabitants had a cast iron stomach. Mexico's waters have long been known to be highly suspect. When I was in a place where I had concerns over water quality my Irish resourcefulness solved the problem handily. I substituted beer. It made the toothpaste taste odd but nothing one couldn't get used to. But I digress.

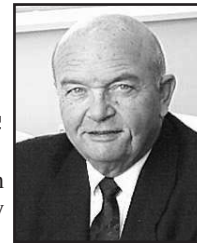
At first I thought the United Church "aggressive suggestion" was an environmental problem. We all see empty discarded water bottles almost everywhere. I think that is more a case of social irresponsibility more than anything else. Still, I wouldn't object to a deposit system, perhaps .50 cents a bottle, so the people involved at least think twice before fouling our streets and sidewalks.

The bottled water industry points out they are using only 2% of all plastic bottles produced. That still adds up to an extra thousands of tons of waste that no one seems to be responsible for. Except, of course, the slob who are too lazy, or stupid, or both, to take care of their own waste.

Another concern of the church is that we continue to have a high standard of public water supplies. They don't want to see our water supplies privatized. I submit, how-

The Way I See It

with
Mike O'Leary



ever, that any move in that direction would be political suicide. Recall, if you will, the hue and cry when the previous Tory government tried to privatize hydro.

The taxes on bottled water were another area of concern. For instance we now pay about 1,000 times as much for bottled water than we do for an equal amount of tap water. That's not all tax but the amount is relative to the overall cost.

The problem the United Church saw was that this was "exclusionary." I couldn't understand that. But then a member of the congregation said she was afraid we would lose our source of good free tap water. Anyone who is familiar with the cost of public water supplies today knows it is far from free. Bottled water is a discretionary expense. It's distribution is so widespread it's certainly not any kind of status symbol, if it ever was.

There are situations where bottled water is advisable. If you are on a well water system where the quality is suspect - better to be safe than sorry. As a reminder, all well water should be tested by the Region. Samples can be left at the regional offices in the Sobeys Plaza here in town.

Other examples where bottled water is advisable are cottages where there is no well, offices with no water supply, trade show/convention floors, etc. I'm sure there are other situations which indicate bottled water is advisable. But I don't believe these are the uses the United Church is referring to.

The United Church then asked a rhetorical question: What's next? Oxygen? Actually, there are oxygen cafes now in cities like Tokyo and New York. That's mostly because the air pollution is so bad that some

folks there feel the need to refresh themselves.

That's why I can understand the United Church's stand if they had confined themselves to the obvious pollution problem. The rest of the problems they see I consider to be specious.

I resent having to pay up to \$2.00 for a bottle of water at public events where all of the drinking fountains have been disconnected due to health concerns. But you gotta do what you gotta do.

At least the van doesn't run on bottled water. Or coffee.

I've been burning all summer over the escalating price of gasoline as have most of us. It seemed that every time a duck flew across the sun in the gulf states our gas jumped.

I don't blame the service stations. I blame big oil. I also blame the speculators that play the gasoline futures market on the various commodity exchanges across the country.

Last week I saw gasoline in the mid-.80 cent range. The highest I saw on the way back from the north was .93-.94 cent. This came after a summer where I got downright giddy when gas was 99.9 cent thinking I got a good buy.

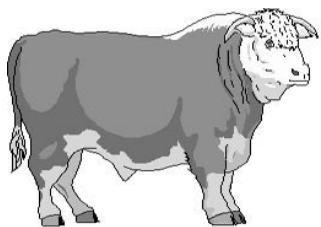
It's obvious the various levels of government don't have the testicular fortitude to take action on this problem. Nor does anyone seem to have the courage to put a stop to tying the price of natural gas and hydro to the price of oil.

Our only hope seems to be the commodities exchange officials. Perhaps they can/will regulate Big Oil which seems to be the benchmark on which all energy costs are based.

For better or worse, our homes and businesses are dependant on reasonable priced energy. Higher prices can only be passed on so far until the economy starts to crash.

I think we're at that point right now.

What's Your Beef?



Put it in a letter
to the Editor!

Deadline is Tuesday at noon.