

GRAPEVINE



NEW BOSS

Dave Clement is on his own today (Thursday) as executive director of the social service agency Links2Care.

Until yesterday, he was shadowing retiring executive director Joan Barham, who begins a new life today, filled with family, volunteering and possibly, piano lessons.

Clement, who resides in Cambridge but is familiar with Halton having lived in Oakville for 14 years, said he's "been in non-profit for about 20 years," and is excited by the opportunities presented by the recent merger of Halton Hills Community Support and Information and Oakville's Halton Helping Hands into Links2Care. The agency serves approximately 5,000 clients, from cradle to grave.



RAKU RECOGNITION

Raku pottery pieces by rural Acton artist – and former Acton art teacher – Barb VanSickle are a hot commodity in Halton Hills and in South Korea.

One of five pieces VanSickle entered in the *Artists Among Us* exhibition and sale at the Georgetown Library and Cultural Centre gallery sold on opening night. That show runs until November 27.

After demonstrating her skills on a recent tour with potters of South Korea, some of VanSickle's work sold at an international show and she was invited back for a solo show.

VanSickle's work can also be seen at the Artisans' Gallery co-op in Milton.

BAZAAR & TEA

Face painting, gingerbread decorating, a penny sale, 50/50 draw and lunch – the St. Joseph's Church annual Christmas bazaar and tea will offer something for almost everyone on Saturday.

There will be homemade baking, preserves and religious articles for sale in the Church Hall from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

In past years, the Church's

annual event has been a popular lunch spot for people heading out to the Santa Claus parade.

SMILE, SANTA

Santa Claus will be available for a photo session at the Off The Wall youth centre on Mill Street prior to the parade.

Downtown merchants are saying Merry Christmas early – the Acton BIA is offering a free photo with Santa, one per family, from 10:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.

CRAFT SALE

If you haven't started Christmas shopping yet, check out the annual Acton High School craft sale on November 25.

Along with a wide assortment of hand-made items from talented artisans, there will be a bake sale, lunch and raffle of items donated by some of the 50 juried vendors.

All proceeds from the day, run by the Acton High School Advisory Council, will benefit student activities.

The sale runs from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m., and children under 12 are free, others are \$2.

LIBRARY CONTEST

Was a weekly trip to the bookmobile the beginning of a romance with words that led to a career as a writer with a small town newspaper?

How has the library impacted your life? Ontario residents are invited to tell their personal tales of how a public library made a difference to them or their families in a contest called *Telling Our Stories*.

There are cash awards – \$1,000 for top winners in English and French – and the stories will be featured in the media.

For complete rules and to enter a story go to the Halton Hills library website and click on "Telling Our Stories" or call the library at 905-873-2681.

REFLEXOLOGY HELP

Want help feeling better? Check out a reflexology information session on November 29 at Knox Presbyterian Church with Marg Aitken.

Doing reflexology on hands and feet can help many health problems – find out about those options and other self-help natural solutions, including nutrition, at the session that begins at 7:30 p.m.

GRID IRON MATCHUP

Six Acton athletes suited up for the Georgetown Rebel senior football team in Wednesday's Halton area championship at Ivor Wynne stadium in Hamilton.

Acton didn't field a team this year, so a number of the senior and junior players suited up for the Georgetown Rebels – and the seniors face off in an all-Halton final against Christ the King for the football final.



BOOK BENEFICIERS: North Halton branch of the Lydia Snow Group of retired women teachers of Ontario dropped by St Joseph School on Wednesday, November 8 and donated copies of: 'And you can come too' by Ruth Ohi and 'The Kids Book of Canadian Firsts' by Valerie Wyatt to the school library. Sitting from left to right are students Patrick Conlin, Drake Slater, retired teacher June Doberthien, Cindy Blades and Joy Penttila, students Caitlin Carachi, Colin Masse, Liam McQuarrie. Standing at back is School Librarian Jan Peppiatt. – Submitted photo

Green thumb is possibly gangrene

I despise yard work. I recall when we bought our house over 30 years ago admiring our huge back yard. We have almost half an acre out there. "Why," "the Bride" asked, "do we need all that space?" "So the kids will have somewhere to play," I said with visions of swing sets and slides dancing in my head.

Within days our children did find a place to have fun with their friends. They played on the street! Ah the best laid plans of mice and men. "The Bride" is cursed with a wonderful memory so, for all these years, I get absolutely no sympathy from her as I toil away at yard duties.

One smart move I made at the beginning was to suggest "the Bride" plant the gardens. Her taste in flowers has always been somewhat eclectic. These days, since she works for a landscape company, she feels a solemn obligation to patronize their retail outlet. The result is a riot of colour with most of the species which will grow here represented.

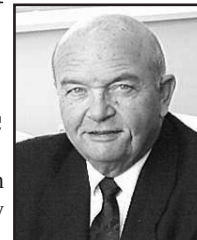
The funny thing is when we drive around she invariably points out monochromatic gardens or those containing two or three contrasting colours. When I ask her why she doesn't use fewer plants she informs me she hasn't got the heart to kill the annuals we have. I immediately start to think in terms of roundup but I could never get away with that. All this, while fascinating, is straying from the topic of my yard duties.

For most of the years we've been in Acton I eschewed motorized assistance for my yard work. Granted, I did have a power mower (Mom drowned all her stupid children) but it took two and a half hours to mow the ponderosa. I shovelled the snow by hand and raked the leaves. It was, I thought, the manly thing to do.

As the years rolled by, and my knees and ankles got worse, I finally succumbed to the siren

The Way I See It

with
Mike O'Leary



call of machinery. First came a garden tractor. While it looks somewhat ridiculous in our small front yard it pays dividends in the "back 40." I've cut mowing time down to 40min. Three years ago I finally broke down and bought a snowblower, followed soon thereafter by a combination leaf blower/mulcher.

Of all the jobs I despise, raking and bagging leaves is really high on my list. Our home faces northwest. As any Gordon Lightfoot fan knows, the gales of November come from there. The result is that we get not only every stray leaf on our street in the back 40; we get every unclaimed leaf between here and Barrie there.

I actually looked forward to the first season where I could use my leaf mulcher. No more, I thought, would I face the drudgery of raking my back yard. What was worse was the repetitive stooping, scooping and packing leaves in the bags. I say bags (plural) 'cause these days I fill about 35-40 of those suckers.

Is it only me or do you find the paper bags we use today less than acceptable. Because recycled paper doesn't have the tensile strength for yard bags they have to be made from new paper. In other words, we are cutting down live trees to make yard bags to cart away our leaves and garden waste. This makes sense?

The first season I used the mulcher I walked around sucking leaves up where they fell. Observing all this "the Bride" commented it appeared I was "vacuuming the lawn." While our children thought that was humorous, I had a different reaction.

It soon became obvious that it made more sense to rake the leaves

into piles. It was easier to do that than to cart the mulchin' machine all over. That, however, negated any anticipated advantage of not having to rake.

The other difficulty is that this month tends to be wet. Wet leaves tend to cement together. This clogs the mulcher which results in constant stops to clear the machine. Since this is a family newspaper I won't tell you the consistence of this gloop but you can imagine.

Over the years I have considered different ways I could avoid the annual leaf harvest. My scheme to replace all my trees with plastic trees remains high on my list. Using crazy glue to attach each leaf to the tree was unworkable. It wouldn't solve the problem of errant leaves. Besides, where would one purchase crazy glue in 50-gallon drums.

As I write this it's been raining a lot over the past week. Because of that I suppose I'll have to go back to the old system of stooping and stuffing yard bags. I can feel my back stiffening already.

Performing mindless jobs like this gives one too much time to think. Where are my children when this chore comes around every year? When my kids were small, and thought jumping in leaf piles was oh so much fun, my trees were also smaller. Now that both children and trees are mature I'm left to have all the "fun." This shows bad planning on my part.

Be that as it may, I will somehow get the leaves mulched. It may come down to what I did last year. Running my tractor over the lawn and telling myself that the leavings are good for my grass.

Quite honestly I'm looking forward to winter. I snowblow the white stuff into piles and mother nature looks after the rest. If leaves would just melt, I'd be a much happier man.

I wonder if a flame-thrower would work next year? Hm-mmm!