

# GRAPEVINE



## Synchro Bronze

Congrats to Acton's Ashlea Masters, a member of Team Canada I, Nexxice, that captured a Bronze medal at the World Synchronized Skating championship on the weekend in London, ON.

Masters, an Acton Figure Skating Club member for 13 years, has been a synchronized skater for eight years.

Nexxice, that trains out of the Burlington Skating Centre & the Kitchener-Waterloo Skating Club, skated a great performance – the teams' best-ever at 64.85 points – to jump to third place from fifth.

The medal-winning skate will be aired on CBC on April 14 and 21, at approximately 2 p.m.

## Resilient kids

Well-respected motivational speaker Dick O'Brien is the guest speaker at a parenting seminar on April 23 being hosted by McKenzie-Smith Bennett School.

Titled Raising Resilient Children, discussions at the free session include teaching kids to make choices and not to rely on chance, developing personal resiliency as a survival strategy and teaching kids to deal with life's inevitable challenges.

Anyone wishing to attend is asked to contact MSB at 519-853-3801.

Babysitting and free snacks will be provided, beginning at 6 p.m.

## Sweet spring

Maple syrup is the centrepiece of the annual Sweet Taste of Spring at Limehouse Memorial Hall on Saturday.

The Limehouse Women's Institute will host the annual event that includes pancakes with maple syrup, maple baked beans and maple sweets.

Baked goods and maple syrup will be available for sale from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Proceeds go to the Hall fund.

## IODE aims for 90

Acton's Lakeside Chapter of the IODE (formerly the Independent Order of the Daughters of the Empire) hopes it can continue operating to see its 90th anniversary this fall.

With dwindling numbers and aging members (there are nine members in the Lakeside Chapter), president Ernestine Foster said it is becoming difficult to operate.

The IODE provides bursaries to local students, has "adopted" a school in Labrador and has made donations in the past year to the Rotary Club of Acton, the Agricultural Society/indoor soccer facility and the playground project at McKenzie-Smith Bennett School.

Foster said they don't want to disband – they're planning a re-

ception for the 90th anniversary in October – but realize they may have to make that decision.

IODE is a Canadian women's charitable organization founded in 1900, with a mission to improve the quality of life for children, youth and those in need through educational, social service and citizenship programs.

## Hometown Heroes

Earth Day Canada officials are looking for Hometown Heroes – people, non-profit groups, schools and municipalities that have raised awareness or money for environmental issues, grassroots level leaders focused on the future.

Earth Day Canada must receive nominations before April 20. Visit [www.earthday.ca/hometown](http://www.earthday.ca/hometown) or call 1-888-283-2784 for eligibility requirements and application details.

The winner will be named from 10 finalists at an Earth Day gala in Toronto on June 1.

Last year, Ken Crozier, a teacher at Robert Little School, was one of the national Hometown Hero finalists. He was nominated for his environmental leadership.

## Murr tourney

There's still time to participate in the annual Paul Murr Memorial Golf tournament – either as a golfer or sponsor, or both.

Organizers, Murr's friends and golfing buddies, anticipate more than 250 golfers will play on May 14 at the Blue Springs Golf Course.

The tourney is a major fundraiser for the Acton Branch of the Canadian Cancer Society – in 22 years it has raised almost \$600,000 in the name of Acton's Paul Murr, who succumbed to the disease.

Most of the revenue comes from sponsorships and In Memoriams and organizers want to raise more – or at least as much – as last year which was \$53,000, the best year ever.

For details call John McNabb at 519-853-5615.

## Food drive

Acton residents are again expected to be generous and donate thousands of pounds of food in the annual Scout/Guide/Cadet food drive on April 14.

The drive is a major source of donations for Acton's FoodShare foodbank.

Non-perishable items like canned meat, vegetables and peanut butter can be placed in a plastic bag at your door by 8:30 a.m., and will be picked up by supervised youth.

In advance, FoodShare officials said thanks for all donations and said if your donation is not picked up, call FoodShare at 519-853-0457 and leave a message.



**SLATE RETURNED:** The board of management of the Acton BIA (Business Improvement Area) was re-elected to another term at their annual general meeting recently at the Legion. The merchant managers include, front from left: Monica Galway, Norm Paulsen, Chair John McNabb, Yvette Simpson and Mike Papillon. Back: Council rep. Councillor Mike O'Leary, BIA co-ordinator Josey Bonnette, Susan Seads, Heather Wedlake, Bob MacKinnon and Nancy Wilkes. – Frances Niblock photo

## Black sheep of our country

Although I am a dedicated capitalist I usually do not defend the mega-salaries paid to some of the corporate executives today. Don't get me started on the compensation packages awarded out of the public purse.

For instance, the asleep-at-the-switch CEO of the lottery corporation just received a severance package of over \$700,000.

The money paid to top executives today is, in most cases, obscene and impossible to justify. What possible tasks could these people be performing to make them worth these amounts? I have heard that these mega-millionaires are paid so much because they increase shareholders equity.

That may be fact, but all too often they do so by slashing staff, salaries and benefits. They climb to dizzying salary scales by sacrificing the careers of the very people who grew the company in the first place. In the case of public servants, just look at the last few Ontario Hydro chieftans. As a shareholder, I certainly didn't see my equity increase when we changed management.

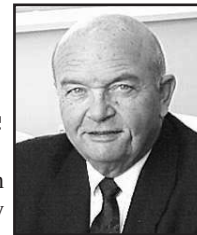
I'm also getting tired of hearing both the private and public sectors saying we have to pay exorbitant amounts "to get the best people." The number of senior executives dismissed, under indictment or in jail proves how well that strategy has worked.

Imagine my surprise when I found myself in the position of wanting to defend Conrad Black of all people. I shed not a tear when Conrad and his missus departed our fair shores to buy a peerage in "jolly old."

Not being impressed with "starpower," I could care less about their extravagant lifestyles or social scene. Let's put these things in perspective. The starving masses in Calcutta probably think you and I live extravagant lifestyles. Luxury is in the eye of the beholder.

### The Way I See It

with  
Mike O'Leary



I am angry that the media is playing, or trying to play, such a large part in the trial now going on in Chicago. In case you've been off the planet the last few weeks, Black is on trial for defrauding the shareholders of his former company Hollinger Int. Instead of sticking to the facts of the case (which are admittedly only exciting to forensic accountants) the media insists on dwelling on the cost of Black's wife's purse, their extravagant lifestyle and other minutia not the least connected with the case.

Even before the jury was selected, snide remarks were being made. Mention was made that, in order to find a jury of his peers, the court would have to scour the House of Lords in England. How can Black expect a fair trial with all this going on? Americans typically despise the English class system except for royalty which they adore. You figure it out.

One of the U.S. attorney's main pieces of evidence is the "non-competition" clause from which Black made around \$35 million. The Americans know darn well that such clauses, while unusual, are not uncommon in business, especially in the case of entrepreneurs with a unique saleable skill.

For all his arrogance, Black is such a person. He had the unique ability to see a good deal in the newspaper business and act on that judgement. You may remember that he started the National Post against all odds. He staffed that paper with the top newspeople and many of the most popular columnists in Canada.

He put much of his own money into the venture. In the end he sold

first half, then complete control of the Post to the Asper Family of Global T.V. Today most knowledgeable people in the newspaper business admit that the Post substantially improved the level of news reporting in Canada.

I always enjoyed reading Black's editorials. I admit I usually did so with a dictionary at hand. Black was never shy about going anyone's particular ox.

Politicians and/or political parties were a favourite target. Nor was Black shy about criticizing the state of news reporting, or the shabby treatment of reporters, in other news organizations. The latter didn't make him many friends but then neither did the former.

I don't know whether Black is guilty or not. The convoluted structure of corporations today makes this case very difficult to figure out. When added to the insatiable need of the Attorney General's office stateside to prosecute corporate CEO's in the wake of the Enron, Worldcom, Martha Stewart scandals, and others, it's hard to imagine him getting a fair trial.

Am I the only one who notices that our government has had little to say about this case. Of course, he's not a Canadian citizen these days although he has applied to have his citizenship re-instated. Convicted murderers who live in Texas deserve our official attention. Black only rates gleeful silence. Go figure.

My hope is that Mr. Black is exonerated, acquitted, emancipated, vindicated, exculpated and so on.

And then, I hope we boot his bony ass back to England. Because, you see, I've never forgiven him for disparaging our citizenship in favour of personal glory on foreign shores. To me, he isn't worthy of being a Canadian citizen again. Let him pay for his own Medicare.

He can afford it.