

GRAPEVINE



Gold EcoSchool

In October, 45 per cent of the computers in classrooms at Robert Little School were left on overnight, wasting electricity. Eight months later, implementing energy conservation measures under the EcoSchools program dropped that number to 10 per cent.

Now students and staff at Robert Little have achieved gold level certification from EcoSchools Ontario, one of just three Halton schools to do so.

Last year, Robert Little School earned a silver EcoSchools Award for environmental education. Ongoing work on energy conservation and waste minimization projects bumped the award to the highest level this year.

The school is expected to receive its certificate at a board of education meeting in October.

Fitness dedication

Congrats to Acton's McKenzie-Smith Bennett and Robert Little Schools, and Limehouse Public School – three of 58 Halton schools that received CAHPERD (Canadian Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance) Quality Daily Physical Education Recognition Awards last Wednesday for their dedication to physical fitness.

Robert Little School qualified for the gold (the highest) award, and MSB and Limehouse for the diamond award.

At the ceremony in Burlington, CAHPERD president Grant McManes said the fantastic programs and initiatives of the schools help deal with the "physical inactivity crisis" that plagues Canadian students.

Safe swimming

The first test results of Halton beach water quality showed it was safe to swim at all seven public swimming areas monitored by the health department, including the Old Beach at Prospect Park.

The summer sampling began June 5 and will continue weekly until the Labour Day.

Officials don't release actual bacteria counts, but water with more than 100 E. coli per 100-millilitres of water is unsafe for recreational swimming because of the risk of intestinal and respiratory infection.

Beach water quality information is updated weekly, or as it changes, at 1-866-442-5866 or at www.region.halton.on.ca/health

A history of beach closures due to unsafe results prompted Halton to close the Boathouse Beach in Prospect Park after the 2003 season.

Blood clinic

Local Canadian Blood Services officials want to remind their faithful donors, and invite new ones, to book an appointment to give blood at the clinic on Thursday, June 21 at

the Legion.

To book an appointment 1-888-236-6283.

Free help

Public health nurses will help new parents unravel the mysteries of parenthood at a series of free workshops on infant care and parenting. Call 1-866-442-5866 for details.

Power talk

The air will be thick with talk of renewable energy at the Limehouse Memorial Hall on June 20 when guest speaker Jo Coombe, vice-president of Bullfrog Power, talks about a healthier environment at a meeting hosted by the North Halton Ladies Investment Club and Protect Our Water and Environmental Resources (POWER.)

Bullfrog Power is the only electricity retailer in Ontario that buys power generated exclusively from wind and generators that meet the government's EcoLogo standard for renewable energy.

The free meeting begins at 7:30 p.m.

Sunday concert

The talent of local youth will be on stage at Bethel Christian Reformed Church on Sunday during a Living in Celebration service featuring the band More Than Conquerors.

The concert will also feature a solo by Acton singer Stephanie Kroezen and a drama presented by church youth.

There is no admission, but free will offerings will be accepted to the concert that begins at 6:30 p.m.

Cheque, please

On Saturday, the provincial government comes to Acton bearing a big cheque – for \$100,000 – for the Acton Agricultural Society.

The Trillium Foundation grant will help pay for the state-of-the-art artificial turf in the new building the Society will share with indoor soccer clubs in Prospect Park.

Although the new \$1.9-million facility doesn't officially open until September's fair, some activities are being planned for Canada Day. Dignitaries will be on hand for the Trillium Foundation ceremony at noon on Saturday, and to cheer at the first game on the new indoor pitch – an exhibition match between the Acton and Georgetown Soccer Clubs at 11 a.m.

Fastest female

Congrats to Acton's Marcia Baker, a Peel teacher who had a great finish in Streetsville's annual Bread and Honey Festival road race on June 3 with a time of 1:01:53.

Baker, 34, finished first among the women running the 15-k circuit and 27th in a field of 527 entrants. This was Baker's first meet after competing in the Boston marathon in April.



LIGHTS, ACTION: Crews from a Toronto film school invaded Blue Springs Funeral Home on the weekend to produce a 10-minute short film for a project. The crew placed a "Under New Management" sign out front during the filming, sparking a number of phone calls to owner Ian Pasmore. – Frances Niblock photo

Names in the news

Some controversial names have been in the news of late. Perhaps you will remember them.

Splashed across the front page of the Star last week was a grainy sketch of Omar Khadr. He is the Canadian incarcerated by the Americans in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The Americans allege he threw a grenade during a 2002 gun battle in Afghanistan. An American medic, Sgt. Christopher Speer, was killed during the engagement. Another American soldier was wounded and subsequently lost an eye. Khadr was 15 at the time.

What, you may ask, was a 15-year-old Canadian doing fighting in a foreign war? The answer may have everything to do with his family background. The CBC in a documentary a few years ago linked the Khadr to Al-Qaeda. They are supposed to have a close personal relationship with key leader Ayman Al-Zawahiri.

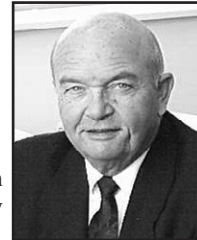
You may recall the father. He was imprisoned in Pakistan when then-Prime Minister Chretien intervened to have him released. Chretien was successful. The elder Khadr returned to fight with the terrorists and was subsequently killed in 2003, when a Pakistani military helicopter shelled a residence where he was staying with senior Al Qaeda operatives. But the family's ignominious saga didn't stop there.

Omar Khadr's older brother Abdullah was released from a Pakistani jail in 2005, but was arrested two weeks after he returned home. He remains in a Toronto jail, fighting extradition to the U.S., which accuses him of supplying weapons to Al Qaeda. I think there's a trend starting to surface here - don't you?

Omar Khadr's case was abruptly dropped last week, not because he was proven innocent but rather because of semantics. Khadr had been designated as an "enemy combatant" in the original indictment. According to a law signed by U.S. President George W. Bush last year, only "unlawful enemy

The Way I See It

with
Mike O'Leary



combatants" can be brought before a special war court.

It's that kind of wordsmithing that drives ordinary people right 'round the bend.

I grant you that one of the tens of thousands of lawyers should have caught this. (The law draws a distinction between those without rights on the battlefield and those who might be lawfully waging war against the Americans. As an enemy combatant, Khadr would have the rights of a prisoner of war.)

Khadr remains locked up while the Pentagon considers an appeal.

But it's not just the menfolk of this family who, in my view, appear to have a screw loose. In a television interview last week, the mother readily admitted she would welcome them becoming martyrs by sacrificing themselves as suicide bombers. The daughter piped in that she would also welcome the opportunity to become a suicide bomber and martyr.

The Liberals and NDP are telling the Harper government it has to take up the cause of Omar Khadr with the Americans. NDP MP Joe Comartin wants the U.S. to treat Khadr as a "child soldier." In my view, that dog don't hunt.

For the life of me, I cannot figure out why our government would lift one finger to help. A video recovered after the 2002 battle allegedly shows Khadr planting improvised explosive devices targeting coalition forces.

We have a name for Canadian citizens whose loyalties lie with an enemy we are at war with. We call them traitors. Our government should treat them as such. The whole bunch.

In a lighter vein, Paris Hilton is in the news again (still?). This time it's over her jail sentence for violating a probation order. My only question is: Who gives a snit?

The Hilton saga is at least good for comic relief. Paris was in jail, out of jail, ordered back in and will be out again as soon as every ounce of P.R. has been wrung out of this soap opera.

Hilton is reported to be crying, screaming, praying, not eating and not sleeping. Hell, that's not the sign of any severe psychological disorder. She's simply throwing a temper tantrum. Her nanny should have nipped that behaviour before she learned to talk.

Perhaps someone could explain to me why Ms. Hilton deserves so much attention? She has no appreciable talents. She is mildly attractive, but not in the same class as hundreds of other Hollywood types who can actually act. She has famous parents who own a few hotels, so I assume she has access to scads of money but so do thousands.

She performed in an amateur porn flick, but I understand that's far from unique.

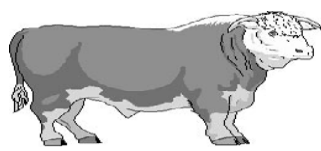
Near as I can tell she's a poor little rich kid who should have been spanked more as a child. Actually, scrub that idea. She might like it too much.

I have to caution you again to be careful when using your debit cards in retail stores. Another of my daughters, along with her fiancée, was robbed of almost \$2,000. While they will get their money back, the disruption in their lives was traumatic.

I keep telling the girls to only use their debit cards at the bank. It has never made any sense to me to take the chance of allowing someone to obtain access to their bank accounts. I use a credit card with a minimal limit and pay it off when the bill arrives.

They give me the "oh dad" look. But I'm not the one who was robbed.

What's Your Beef?



Put it in a letter
to the Editor!

Deadline is Tuesday at noon.