

GRAPEVINE



Soccer camp

Registrations are still being accepted for a soccer camp running from August 13 to 17 on the Elizabeth Drive pitch by Acton's Crossings Community Church in conjunction with Athletes in Action Soccer.

The groups' university and club players offer soccer camp players – aged seven to 12 – though an intense week that includes one-on-one instruction, skills development, exciting competitions and tournaments with the focus on excellence, fun and commitment.

Register at 519-853-9757 or at www.realfaith.ca

Skatepark opened

After five long years of planning, Acton's 3 Musketeers Skatepark officially opened yesterday (Wednesday) afternoon with a reception, ribbon cutting and skateboard demonstrations.

The facility has been jammed with boarders, bikers and bladers since before crews completed the work last week, and the consensus is that the park is "awesome" with lots to do for all levels of skill.

Acton's new facility supervisor Aaron Matthews, a member of the Acton Sports Action Park committee that helped make the facility happen, said they'll put out a few more garbage cans and let people know that garbage bags are available inside the arena.

Auxiliary cops wanted

Halton police are looking for voluntary Auxiliary Police Officers who commonly are used to augment police at public events like fall fairs and Christmas parades.

Applications will be accepted until August 10 and the first part of the selection process involves a general aptitude test. Application forms are available at www.hrps.on.ca or from any police station.

Auxiliary officers receive over 100 hours of instruction including

legal training in powers of arrest, ethics, traffic direction and use of force.

Dance divas

Three Acton teens whose dance audition impressed the judges were invited to compete in the Rising Star 2007 competition at this year's CNE.

Amber Price, 17, Amber Piette and Monique Lalande, both 16, just recently began to perform competitively as a trio. The number they will perform at the CNE dance competition is "Haunted" and the girls, all who train at Acton's TDI dance studio, are costumed as zombies.

The first round of competition for the girls is August 17, and hopefully the trio will move through to the finals on September 2.

Don't swim

The Old Beach in Prospect Park continues to be unsafe for swimming because of high levels of bacteria in the water.

For the past three weeks, Halton Health department testing has shown unacceptable levels of bacteria and the results are causing "concern" for Halton staff, including environmental health supervisor Paul Burgher who said they believe the Fairy Lake pollution is caused by four storms water drains that dump into the lake, run-off from goose poop and the slow movement of the water that leaves the lake "dead."

Despite signs warning people not to swim without first calling the beach hotline to check for water safety, people were swimming at the Old Beach on Saturday and Sunday and Burgher said they may have to reconsider their strategy next year in order to prevent people from becoming ill by swimming in bacteria-contaminated water.

The Prospect Park beach is one of seven recreational water areas that Halton checks on a regular basis. The test results are posted on a beach hotline – 1-866-422-5866 – and information is updated weekly, or as conditions change.

Jody Fong's book about Acton left out of column

To the editor:

Hartley Coles, in his July 19 column wrote about Maisie Roach the author from Acton and wanted to know if there were any books out there that used Acton as the setting. Could you please advise him about Judy Fong's "Midnight at the Dragon Café". This is a fabulous book about a Chinese immigrant family in the 60's, living and working in Acton.

Best regards,
Ruth Germain

Editors' note: Coles completely is completely astonished at his failure to include Judy Fong's "Midnight at the Dragon Café" because a copy of the book was sitting on the desk beside him where he wrote the column. He has also read it and was intrigued by the story which anyone who lived in Acton during the era Judy describes found it fascinating.

He says: *mea culpa, mea culpa, mea culpa.*



SUPPORT OUR TROOPS: George DeRabbie, George Forrest, Bill Kitley in rear, John Wagg and Wayne Young, all of Branch 197 of the legion support our troops.- Ted Tyler Photo.

A good reason to see red

This was sent to me by a friend and I thought I would share it with you. The hard part will be to remember each Friday. I intend to mark my calendar but even if we just try to send the message it will have an impact.

Last week, while travelling in Canada on business, I noticed a soldier travelling with a folded flag but did not put two-and-two together. After we boarded our flight I turned to the soldier, who had been invited

to sit in First Class (across from me), and inquired if he was heading home.

No, he responded. Heading out, I asked? No, I am escorting a soldier home. Going to meet him? I asked. No. He is with me right now. He was killed in Afghanistan. I am taking him home to his family.

The realization of what he had been asked to do, hit me like a punch to the gut. It was an honour for him. He told me that, although he didn't know the soldier, he had delivered the news of his passing to the soldier's family and felt as if he knew them after many conversations in so few days. I turned back to him, extended my hand, and said, Thank you. Thank you for doing what you do, so my family and I can do what we do.

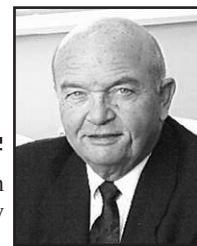
Upon landing in Canada the pilot stopped short of the gate and made the following announcement over the intercom. "Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to note that we have had the honour of having Sergeant Steeley of the Canadian Armed Forces join us on this flight. He is escorting a fallen comrade back home to his family. I ask that you please remain in your seats when we open the forward door to allow Sergeant Steeley to deplane and receive his fellow soldier. We will then turn off the seat belt sign."

Without a sound, all went as requested. I noticed the Sergeant saluting the casket as it was brought off the plane, and his action made me realize that I am proud to be a Canadian.

So here's a public Thank You to Our Military Men and Women for what you do so we can live the way we do.

Very soon, you will see a great many people wearing RED every Friday. The reason, Canadians who support our troops used to be

The Way I See It



with
Mike O'Leary

called the "silent majority." We are no longer silent, and are voicing our love for God, country and home in record breaking numbers.

We are not organized, boisterous or overbearing. Many Canadians, like you and I and all our friends, simply want to recognize that the vast majority of Canada supports our troops. Our idea of showing solidarity and support for our troops with dignity and respect starts this Friday and continues each and every Friday until the troops all come home. Hopefully, this will send a deafening message that every Canadian who supports our men and women in the armed forces will wear something RED. It could be just a small RED RIBBON

By word of mouth and through the press let's make Canada on every Friday a sea of RED. If every one of us who loves this country will share this with acquaintances, co-workers, friends, and family, it will not be long before Canada is covered in RED and it will let our troops know the once "silent" majority is on their side more than ever, certainly more than some in the media lets on.

The first thing a soldier says when asked, "What can we do to make things better for you?" is ... "We need your support and your prayers." Let's get the word out and lead with class and dignity, by example, and wear something RED every Friday.

It is your choice, thanks to our armed forces!

A few weeks ago I wrote about the plague of gun crimes now infecting our cities. In that column I misrepresented the Boyd Gang who operated in Toronto as being armed but not as dangerous as today's trigger happy punks. My observant readers called me on that mistake.

It had completely slipped my mind that the Boyd Gang ended their careers by murdering a police officer, one Pete Tong. I also think that two members of that gang were the last two men hanged in the old

Don Jail.

Of course other things were different in those days, Bank branch accountants, most of them kept a loaded .45 pistol in their desk drawers. It's hard to believe these days but the bank brass expected their underpaid employees to defend their cash at their personal risk.

The other thing that changed in police attitudes, if they saw someone who was wanted for killing a fellow police officer the sounds they might hear would be: Bang, Bang, Bang; Stop Police! Bang, Bang. So, for the most part, crooks avoided getting into a gunfight with police. Ah, the good old days.

In any event, I stand by the general tone of that column. Most Toronto policemen I knew up until my late 20's had never even drawn their pistols in self-defence. And those were cops working in downtown Toronto. I'll wager few, if any, could make the same claim today.

Today's criminals, often fueled by drugs, have no respect for human life, not even their own. Witness the tragic murder of an 11-year-old boy last weekend.

I do appreciate readers pointing out inaccuracies in my humble offerings I would like to remind everyone that this is an opinion column. As Marshall McLuhan observed; the media is the message.

Another column that got me in to trouble was the one on smart cars. For the record I did not sat that anyone who drove a Smart car was an idiot. I did say, and still do, that the jerk I saw on the 401, weaving in and out of lanes, cutting off 65 foot highway rigs was an idiot. I stand by that observation.

To the reader who suggested we would all be better off if everyone drove a Smart car perhaps. I prefer a slightly larger vehicle with some available "crumple zone" in case of an accident. No, I do not drive an SUV.

Friends, if someone wants to drive a smaller vehicle, or a larger one for that matter, like a moron then don't expect the rest of us to grieve if they end up a messy puddle on the highway. My only observation is that there is not much "crumple zone" in Smart cars. Other than the occupants of course.

Thus endeth the mea culpas for this week. Consider me duly chagrined.