

GRAPEVINE



'Cultural journey'

The Town sets off on a "cultural journey" this weekend at a symposium designed to develop a strategic plan for the arts, culture and heritage in Halton Hills.

The two-day workshop is hosted by the Ad Hoc Committee to promote arts, culture and heritage, and organizers want everyone who has an interest in promoting culture to attend the event at the Gellert Centre in Georgetown.

"This is a free event and everyone is welcome...it's shaping up to be a very interesting event that is going to move us along culturally in Halton Hills," said Ward Two Regional and Town Councillor Jane Fogal at Council last week as she encouraged people to sign up for either one or both days of the symposium.

A guest speaker at the symposium is Tim Jones of Toronto Artscape, one of the main forces behind the Toronto Distillery Historic Area project.

Registration for the symposium can be made at hhculturejourney.com or by calling 416-575-1232.

Bennett collection

A Group of Seven exhibit at the University of Guelph's Macdonald Stewart Art Centre contains 24 original paintings donated by the late Stewart and Letty Bennett. Mr. Bennett was president of Beardmore & Co. and a director of Canada Packers. They raised cattle at Scotsdale Farm on Trafalgar Road just east of Acton for decades. They were great benefactors. Their property was left to the province. Substantial sums were also left to St. Alban's Church and their paintings were left to the university. Their art works are usually out on loan, but this exhibit lasts until July. They owned paintings by well-known Tom Thomson, Clarence Gagnon, James Morrice, Marc-Arele Suzor-Cote and A.Y. Jackson. The gallery is open afternoons; donations welcome.

Meet TV guru

If you're in need of a boost, tweaks or some other motivation to switch into high gear for 2009 think of XMarks The Fitness Spot where they are presenting TV's fitness expert, Paul Plakas from Calgary Alberta and the X-Weighted Boot Camp Tour 2009 on Saturday, Feb. 21 at the Acton Community Centre from 5:30pm to 8:30pm. The 3-hour session includes a fitness and nutrition seminar, bootcamp and a chance to meet Plakas who has been a fitness guru on CTV and on syndicated shows across North America. Limited tickets on sale from X Marks the Fitness Spot in Acton.

Quilters meet

Halton Hills Quilters Guild will meet at Halton Hills Cultural Centre, 9 Church St., Georgetown, on Monday, Jan 26 at 7:15pm. Speaker is Linda Kittmer. New members are welcome. Contact Marion Baidacoff, president, at 905-702-1162.

Links2Care workshop

"What's Age Got To Do With It?" is a free presentation about senior women and violence. All women in the community are welcome to attend the workshop at 2pm on Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2009 at Links2Care, 47 Mill St. E. Acton. You may not be directly involved in senior violence, but this powerful presentation will help you become aware of those around you who are affected and to know about the issues and community resources available. Please call Lynn at 519-853-3310 ext. 225 to register.

Police Academy

Want to know more about police work in Halton? There's still some spots available for the upcoming session of the Citizen Police Academy. The program runs every Tuesday night between Jan. 27 and April 14. Each week participants are given presentations on various aspects of police work. Preference is given to person who reside in, or own a business in Halton. To apply, visit the local station of Halton Regional Police and obtain and application. Or contact, Wendy Percy at (905) 825-4747. ext. 5042.

Community Brunch

Next Acton Community Brunch is at Acton arena on Sunday, Jan. 25 from 9:30am to 1pm. Cost is \$6, pre-schoolers are free. The brunch includes an all you can eat buffet. The brunch is sponsored by the Kinette Club of Acton. A portion of the proceeds from each brunch is given to the participating volunteer group in support of their community projects.

Information meeting

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Halton is holding a special volunteer information session at the Halton Police station in Georgetown tonight (Jan. 15) at 8:30pm. The session will focus on volunteer opportunities at two Halton Hills elementary school homework clubs, slated to be running soon.

Family Literacy Day

Tuesday, January 27 is Family Literacy Day, and you can celebrate by attending a special storytime at Halton Hills Public Library, Georgetown Branch at 7pm. For more information, call 905-873-2681 x2520.

Need help

Volunteers are needed to help at the Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Services of Halton, a non-profit group in Oakville providing service to all Halton with 24-hour crisis support from women survivors of sexual violence. The group also provides support to people experiencing trauma, depression, loneliness, suicidal thoughts, or difficulty coping. Call 905-825-3622 or email administration@savisofhalton.org to register. Orientation Jan. 27.

Computer training

Need to upgrade your computer skills? Literacy North Halton is offering computer classes Tuesday mornings and Wednesday evening. Call (905) 873-2200



NEVER QUITTS: Undiscouraged by earlier mild weather and deep snow, Tidey Ave. resident Bill Hennessey and friends have kept an outdoor rink going in the north arm of Fairy Lake which attracts many for games of shimmy and plain skating, Inset shows Mr. Hennessey clearing the snow away so children can enjoy the ice - Jack Carpenter photo



Every parent's nightmare

Last Sunday morning was bright and cheery. Just after 10:00 in the morning, as I was thinking of getting ready for Church. My cell phone rang. I silently cursed (it was Sunday remember) because I expected it to be someone from the Acton Agricultural Society Building, which my company manages, with one problem or another.

Instead I heard a weeping female saying: "Dad, I've just had an accident on the 401." After ensuring that neither my daughter nor anyone else was injured and that the cars were off the road I proceeded with the usual questions while pulling on jeans, coat, boots etc.

Have the police been called? Yes. Are you sure you're ok, do you need an ambulance? No. Where are you? Erin did her best to describe where she was and, as I backed out of our driveway, I told her I'd be there as fast as I could.

In my mind I was imagining the worst. During my travels over the years I've seen some horrific accidents on the 400 series highways and of course, they're on the news almost night. Have you ever noticed that when you're in a hurry the cars in front of you all drive the speed limit or less? I would have paid real money for flashing red lights and a siren.

By the time I got down to the accident scene, just east of Hwy 6, I had calmed down. As it turned out, I beat the police there but not the highway

The Way I See It

with
Mike O'Leary



vultures with their tow trucks. I explained we had C.A.A. and they were not to touch the car.

The police officer was very nice but obviously frustrated. It seems this was the seventh or either accident she had responded to that morning. She was businesslike and took the written statements from both drivers, explained he procedures and after arranging for a tow we were on our way. Had determined we would go to Milton Hospital so Erin could be checked out in Emergency.

As Erin alleges, she was driving in the middle lane when the other driver passed her "Quickly" and caught his wheels in the snow pack next to the median. He started to skid, then caught it and slid across three lanes of traffic just in front of her car. Erin came off the gas and started to apply her brakes.

Meanwhile, the other car was fishtailing on the shoulder and sharply came back on the highway right in front of Erin's car. She hit him while trying to avoid his car. There was substantial damage done to our car, somewhat less to the other. The luck of the Irish strikes again.

The reason I am telling you this story is to caution drivers that, even though the driving lanes are relatively clear, if

the shoulders are snow covered you need to slow down. One moment of distraction can cause you to slip off into the snow pack and from there disaster is only a heartbeat away.

My years of driving have taught me that if you get caught in median or shoulder snow don't do anything quickly. I take my foot off the gas, I never touch the brakes, but as I slow I steer my way slowly back onto the driving lanes.

I suspect, because of the way his car acted, that he both yanked the wheel and hit the brakes. Of course, I have no proof of that, just almost 50 years of driving experience in all kinds of weather. I started driving tractors on the farm as soon as my legs could reach the clutch and brake.

To finish my story, after spending 6.5 hours in Milton Emergency, having something to eat, which magically made her feel better, and taking Erin back to her room in Cambridge, then back to Acton, we were both physically and mentally drained.

This all could have been avoided had the other driver used some common sense and drive according to road conditions. Now we have to go through the insurance issue and possibly have to replace the car.

On the bright side, cars can be fixed or replaced. Children can't

Thank God the nightmares over for us.