

GRAPEVINE



Diabetes support

Once again, the LCBO will be supporting the Canadian Diabetes Association by placing donation boxes at checkout counters throughout Ontario, from Feb. 1 thru Feb. 28.

Last year the boxes collected \$9,100 province wide to help fund diabetes research, education, services, and advocacy.

Nominations called

Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce is calling for nominations for the Business Achievement Awards in the following categories; Entrepreneur of the Year; Civic Pride; Employee of the Year; and Business of the Year.

Nominations must include the name, address, tel/fax numbers of both the nominee and the nominator, and a summary of achievements for which the company/individual is being nominated.

For more information or to submit a nomination contact the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce, 328 Guelph St. Halton Hills, Ontario, L7G 4B5; Fax: 905-877-5117, email sue@haltonhillschamber.on.ca.

Employment help

During the month of February the Acton Employment Resource Centre will be exploring alternative routes to employment. A representative from Georgetown's Express Employment Professionals will be at the centre on Feb. 10 at 10am. Discover the advantages of working with staffing/recruiting service.

Are you interested in learning how to get your resume into the hands of multiple employers? Join us on Feb. 19 at 2pm to learn how to register your resume on various internet job search sites. On Feb. 26 at 11am let our employment specialists show you how to create and post an e-resume.

Please call Deirdre at 519-853-5014 for further details, drop in at 45 Mill Street East, Acton or visit our website at www.links2care.ca.

Pathways information

Designed to help parents and students explore opportunities available in high school the Halton District School Board will be presenting a session to educate students how to explore, or try out, a career path in high school before heading to apprenticeship, college, university, or the workplace.

The sessions include information on various programs relevant to the presentations and will take place at Acton District High School, 21 Cedar Road on Feb. 12 starting at 6:30pm.

Community Brunch

The Kinette club of Acton will once again produce a community brunch (it's all you can eat!) on Sun., Feb. 22 in the Acton Community Centre/Arena at 9:30am to 1:00pm. Cost is \$6 – preschoolers are free.

Funds raised are sent to local service groups, schools and clubs. Come on out and share the community spirit!

Business Consultant on Site

On Thursday, Feb. 19 a Professional Business Consultant from the Halton Region Business Development Centre will be available at Halton Hills Public Library's Georgetown Branch to help you start a small business or expand your existing small business. Register for a free one-hour consultation at 1-866-4HALTON or busdev@halton.ca.

Calling all Cadets

Past members of Acton's Royal Canadian Air Cadets 197 Typhoon Squadron are invited to help celebrate the squadron's 25th anniversary in May.

The Cadet program, which has no fees, dues or uniform costs, builds leaders, teaches teamwork, citizenship, self-confidence and physical fitness in a federally funded program for 12 to 19 year olds. Officials would like as many former Cadets as possible, and the public, to attend the annual inspection and parade on Sunday, May 3.

Past members are invited to contact Lt. MacKenzie at 905-838-2021 or mackenziemackie2@aol.com with their current mailing address so a formal invitation can be issued.

Parenting help

Nassagaweya Presbyterian church is offering a parenting seminar Feb. 6 at 6:30pm named "Understanding Why They Do The Things They Do" presented by youth culture specialist Paul Robertson.

The seminar focuses on teens and pre-teens but parents of young children won't want to miss it.

The church is located at 11264 Guelph Line, Brookville. For tickets or info call 905-854-1055 or email info@nassagaweya.com or go to www.nassagaweya.com.

Cooking for one

Links2Care will be hosting a presentation by Joan Borchuck on "Cooking for one" in, on Acton Monday, Feb. 9 at 12:30pm. The presentation is open to all seniors, and will show great ideas for making nutritional meals for one. For more info please contact Lynn Gibson at Links2Care 519-853-3310.



FREE SKATE: Many people enjoyed the free skating provided by Wellington-Halton Hills MPP Ted Arnot at the Gordon Alcott Arena in Georgetown recently. - submitted photo

Hallelujah – finally some action

Many of you might expect the column to be filled with reasons why the MSB school lands should not be sold. Well, it's not going to be. As one of your members of local council I have made my opinions clear to the other councilors, Town senior staff and the appropriate members of the school board including our local trustee.

The Mayor, the head of the Parent Council at MSB, Ian Watson (President of Acton Soccer) and former Councilor Norm Elliot all spoke at a hastily called Press Conference last Monday. This Press Conference which was covered by all local newspapers and Cogeco is reported on elsewhere in this edition.

I would like to acknowledge the large number of MSB students and parents who attended the Mayor's Press Conference. I believe it's only the tip of the iceberg of outrage that will spread through this community when others hear about this shortsighted decision regarding the MSB playground.

It's far past the time that the Halton District School Board wakes up and realizes that the schools and the property surrounding them are not their personal fiefdoms. Those assets are held by them in trust for the taxpayers of Halton Hills. That trust has been stretched to near the breaking point.

What I would really like to comment on is the long awaited decision to finally sell the Speyside School property on Highway 25 South. I say finally because as regular readers will know, I have been crusading for more than ten years to have this property declared surplus

The Way I See It

with
Mike O'Leary



and sold.

I was never able to get an answer from the HDSB as to why they were holding onto that property. I did get some lame excuses second hand about a 90 day process that had to be completed before the Board could declare it surplus.

I know that there were at least two firm offers sent to the Board years ago. When I finally did get an answer as to why no-one responded it was in my opinion, totally unsatisfactory. I was told the Board does not reply to unsolicited offers or real estate agents.

That seems like a pretty high handed attitude for a supposedly public agency to have. I can't imagine that the HDSB is inundated with offers for school properties. Even if they are, how much time and effort would it to have an assistant, if necessary, return a call to explain the Board policy?

In a previous life I was the national sales manager – market development for Hallmark Cards. As such I was responsible for negotiating with developers across the country for retail space, building and managing the corporate stores, developing national chain stores and other duties. In more than ten years in that job I always returned my phone calls and that was in the days before cell phones and PC's.

I did that to maintain the company's image in the marketplace, to promote our business relationships and because my mother taught me it

was ignorant to be rude. If the HDSB finds they don't have time to look after the business affairs of only 90 some odd schools, perhaps a time in motion study of how they spend their days would be in order.

So after ten years it appears that Speyside will finally go on the block. That would be at least ten years after the school was basically abandoned and left to deteriorate, ten years of no heat and little, if any maintenance. Anyone who knows anything about flat roofed buildings knows the deterioration factor increases exponentially year after year. An engineer friend who has looked at the building recently is of the opinion it is probably a tear-down.

The cost of renovation or rehabilitation would be more than the cost of erecting a new energy efficient building. The basic rule of business is buy low, sell high. The HDSB has dithered during the real estate boom years and only now are they considering selling into a depressed market. In private business gross management of an asset like the abandoned Speyside School would cause heads to roll. I wouldn't hold my breath waiting for anything to happen at the HDSB.

This whole mess reminds me of 2 sayings from my youth. The first being the folk song "This land is my land" so keep your cotton pickin' paws off it. (I added that last part). And secondly, from a movie about the 60's Freedom Fighters in the States; "If You See a Good Fight Get Into It."

This is a fight for good. I hope to see you join us at the barricades.