

Mayor's Corner

By Rick Bonnette



At last, a deal has been struck between Canada and the USA on the "Buy American" legislation. This was the \$787-billion American stimulus package whereby all US Federal Government funding for American States and Municipalities infrastructure projects had to be 100 per cent American content. In essence, this slammed the door on Canadian companies doing business in the States, yet at the same time, American firms still had unencumbered access to Canadian Infrastructure Projects. Remember the Canadian firm, IPEX, who had their pipes ripped out of the ground in California because they had "Made in Canada" on them.

Our Council was the first municipality in Canada to stand up to this American Protectionist Policy. Halton Hills was known across the country, let alone in American newspapers, British and even a Japanese newspaper. We had support from municipalities and politicians from across the nation. The issue landed in the Prime Minister's office and then Presidents Obama's office.

John Hayward of Hayward Gordon located here in Halton Hills, was terrific in getting the word out through the media that Canada was being shafted by the Buy American policy. The Americans did rag the puck and ran out the clock; however the new agreement does give a sound framework to open up the border. There are conflicting reports to whether this is a good or bad deal. The devil is in the details. What I do know is both countries rely on trade and must work together in order to be prosperous. Who would have known that the Town of Halton Hills would play a significant role in this

international story? More importantly, this isn't just about a trade deal, it's about people. It's about protecting Canadian workers, families, businesses and communities.

There have been many community fundraisers for Haiti from churches, pubs, and schools throughout Halton Hills. I'd like to thank all organizations for arranging these events in support of the Haitian earthquake victims.

Congratulations to Finn Poulstrup on being selected as this year's Hockey Heritage Award recipient. Finn has been a tireless supporter for hockey in Georgetown for years.

Good luck to Heather McIsaac, Provincial Boxing Champion who will be representing Acton, Halton Hills and Ontario at the Canadian National Boxing Championships in Halifax, Nova Scotia on February 23-27, 2010.

Congratulations to the following businesses that have opened in Halton Hills:

- Renaissance Woman's Boutique, located in Young's Pharmacy
- Inkwel Montessori School
- Dominos Pizza in Acton

Congratulations to the following businesses on their anniversaries:

- Acton Jiu-Jitsu is celebrating their 10th Anniversary
- Accountants on Main on their 2nd year Anniversary and expansion

Go Canada Go!

Appeal for Haiti

The men's ministry of Acton Baptist Church (MADMEHN – Men of Acton, Devoutly Meeting Evangelical and Human Needs) is partnering with the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste d'Ottawa (the Evangelical Baptist Church of Ottawa) to meet an immediate and urgent need in Haiti.

The Canadian response to the recent earthquake in Haiti has been unprecedented, however the situation in Haiti remains chaotic as relief efforts now shift to meeting infrastructure needs. As the country enters the rainy season, hundreds of thousands of people remain without adequate shelter in the capital, Port-au-Prince and across the country.

Acton Baptist Church (ABC) and the Evangelical Baptist Church of Ottawa (EBCO) have launched a collection drive for new and used tents, tarps, sleeping bags and air mattresses

for immediate shipment in containers to Haiti, where teams from both churches will assist in the distribution efforts to communities in need. In addition, they are hoping to collect basic toiletry items such as soap, toothbrushes and toothpaste.

EBCO has secured the rental of, and funds for shipping two, forty-foot containers from Ottawa to Haiti. Allan Jensen, spokesperson for MADMEHN in Acton recently met with Rev. Narcisse, and pledged the support of ABC's men's ministry in the collection efforts.

"We are very proud of the fierce support and generosity which we consistently see in times of need from the citizens of Halton Hills," Jansen said. "There may be many people in our community whom I know would have wanted to donate more to Haiti, but were simply unable to do so because of their own financial situations; this is

their opportunity to make a real and immediate difference in the lives of a Haitian family who have lost everything."

Donations of used camping shelters and tarps in good condition, as well as new equipment and the toiletries is being collected and stored at Acton Baptist Church, 80 Mill Street, Acton. Given the urgency of the need, it is hoped that local donations can be brought to the containers in Ottawa by mid-March.

"We're just a small church in a small community," Allan says, "but the people of Acton and Georgetown have huge hearts, and we know that people will respond. The church isn't open regular hours, so if people want to donate they can call us and we'll come pick it up for them"

To arrange for pick-up, please call Allan at 519-929-9138, or Jacques Rheume at 519-853-9556.



SPA PRIZE: Acton's Val Robertson (left) was the lucky winner of a Valentine's Day contest held at Blue Springs Spa. She received tickets for a limo ride, dinner for two and a theatre show from Spa owner Darlene Saunders. – Frances Niblock photo

Crime down in Halton Stats show improvement

Fewer criminal offences were committed in Halton last year compared to 2008, according to the Halton Regional Police Service's year-end crime statistics report which will be presented at today's (Thursday's) Police Services Board meeting.

Specifically, 1,225 fewer criminal offences occurred in Halton in 2009 (14,043) as compared to 2008 (15,268). When Regional population growth is taken into account, this represents a significant 10.5 per cent drop in the overall crime rate

Crime rate is the number of offences committed per 100,000 people. Statistics Canada and police use crime rate measurements to give the most accurate comparison of criminal activity between communities with different populations, and within a single community over different time periods.

"When a community that is already as safe as Halton shows this kind of decline in criminal offences, it speaks volumes about how effectively everyone, including the police, the public and our community partners, are working together for public safety," said Chief Gary Crowell, adding that a number of factors outside of police control can influence crime rate, including demographics and socio-economics.

Based on motor vehicle collision rates and com-

munity feedback, Crowell made traffic safety one of the Service's key policing priorities when he became Chief of Police in 2006. By using a combined approach of enforcement, education and working with regional municipality road engineering departments, there were some tangible improvements in road safety in the region last year.

Most notably, the number of fatal collisions plummeted by 40 per cent from 15 in 2008 to nine last year. Injury collision totals decreased 8.5 per cent, and property damage collisions went down 12.5 per cent. The number of impaired drivers arrested on local roads increased by 3.6 per cent from 390 to 404 and there were 448 temporary driving license suspensions issued in 2009.

"Fortunately last year fewer people were injured or killed on Halton roads, but even one serious injury accident or fatality is too many," said Chief Crowell. "Motorists can continue to do their part by buckling up, slowing down and keeping a careful eye out for pedestrians."

In further good news for home and business owners, Halton's property crime rate dropped by 10.8 per cent, with 10,502 offences committed in 2009. Crimes in this category include theft, breaking and entering, mischief, auto theft, arson, fraud and the possession of stolen goods, and accounted

for nearly 75 per cent of all crimes committed in the region last year.

Chief Crowell attributed part of the property crime rate decrease to special enforcement initiatives targeting auto theft at the AMC Theatre complex and theft from autos at local GO Transit stations, as well as the culmination of Project DISH, a joint forces operation that led to the dismantling of crime groups that had been responsible for dozens of residential and commercial break and enters in the GTA.

In other categories, violent crime offences went down from 2,463 in 2008 to 2,362 in 2009, representing a 6.7 per cent drop in the violent crime rate based on population growth.

Accounting for 16.8 per cent of all criminal offences committed in Halton in 2009, violent crimes are incidents that involve the application or threat of force to a person, such as homicide, attempted murder and various forms of sexual and non-sexual assault including domestic violence, robbery and abduction.

Halton also saw a 12.2 per cent decrease in the rate of "Other Crimes" committed in 2009, which encompass Criminal Code offences that are not classified as violent or property crimes such as prostitution, offensive weapons, bail violations and disturbing the peace.