

GRAPEVINE



Gift of life

Two first-timers were among the 71 people who donated blood at last Thursday's Canadian Blood Services clinic at the Acton Legion. Seventy-nine of the 100 people who booked appointments showed up, but eight were deferred and could not donate blood for various medical reasons.

Spiritual medium

The entertaining and informative spiritual medium Chris Stillar will be back, by popular demand, to Country Soul Reflections on May 15 for a workshop.

There are just a few spaces left for the event, which will include an interactive workshop, random messages and "mediumship" – attempting to connect with the other side.

Last week, Angelologist Elizabeth Foley gave 25 private readings at Soul Reflections and drew more than 30 people to two workshops.

Songs for Supper

Artists featured on the new *Songs for Supper* CD – a fundraiser for Acton's FoodShare food bank – entertained a large appreciative crowd at the CD launch at the Roxy on Saturday night.

The brainchild of Limehouse recording studio owner Tim Alberts, a FoodShare director, the CD is a compilation of songs by local artists – from hip hop to folksongs to hard rock and much more.

Following a fast paced set featuring 12 acts, all of the artists took the stage for a spirited rendition of the Beatles' *Come Together*.

FoodShare officials were thrilled with the turnout of over 100 people at the launch and grateful for the bin full of non-perishable food donated by the crowd.

The CD is available at a number of Acton businesses and FoodShare officials are looking for more local stores to stock the CD. For more information call Tim at 905-702-7470 or go to www.actonfoodshare.com and leave an e-mail.

Computer classes

Need the essential workplace skill of basic computer training? Literacy North Halton can help with a new workplace essential skills training program available in Acton for unemployed adults.

Applications are being accepted for several courses that begin next month, including evening classes. The weekly three-hour classes will run for 10 weeks offering small classes with one-on-one assistance for those who have no previous or very little computer knowledge. For details call 905-873-2200.

Employment help

Links2Care is celebrating Administrative Professionals Week (until April 24) with a free employment support session featuring Administrative Options.

On April 26, staff will highlight some of Everest College's flexible training programs for administrators. Each Monday, from 1:30 to 4:30, an employment specialist will offer free help with resumes.

Top Gymnast

Congrats to Limehouse gymnast Marc Gaudet de Lestard, 17, whose top three finishes propelled his North Halton Gymnastics Club team to a Gold medal at the recent Ontario Winter Games Men's Artistic Gymnastics event.

de Lestard, a Grade 12 student at Acton High School, hopes to qualify for the national open championship next month in British Columbia.

Burn permits

If you plan to burn anything outdoors – from a backyard fire to get rid of branches or an outdoor fireplace or chimney – you need a permit from the fire department.

Deputy Chief Harry Olivieri reminds local residents that an open air burn permit is needed to conduct a burn for anything other than cooking on a small contained fire on a barbecue or grill and that all fires must be supervised at all times as outlined in the Ontario Fire Code.

Knox relief efforts

Knox Presbyterian Church is holding a HAVE or HAVE NOT dinner and concert on Saturday to raise money for Haitian relief and the Mercy Children's Centre in Kenya – a school of 3000 students that Knox has supported for the past five years.

Through the luck of the draw people will receive either a HAVE or HAVE NOT meal, although they will be able to upgrade their dinner for \$2 more than the \$10 ticket.

Following the dinner there will be a concert featuring Glen Soderholm of the Moveable Feast Ministry. Tickets are available at the door or by calling 519-853-3951.

Skills competition

Congrats to Acton's Laura Woodhead, a student at Christ the King in Georgetown, and her partner Stephanie Lewis, who earned a Silver medal at the recent Halton Skills Competition, a joint effort by the public and Catholic school boards to showcase skilled trades.

Woodhead and Lewis competed in the 2D character animation event.

Astronomy Night

North Halton Astronomy hosts Astronomy Night in Acton on April 24 to help celebrate Earth Day. The group will set up telescopes, binoculars and cameras, and offer information and handouts to the public.

The star gazing begins at 8 p.m. in Prospect Park, weather and clouds permitting. North Halton Astronomy's Motto is "Who Needs Hollywood.... We look at real stars."



GIFT OF LIFE: With the help of Canadian Blood Services phlebotomists, regular donors Sarah Brophy (right) and Elizabeth Stuckless gave blood at last Thursday's clinic at the Acton arena/community centre. Seventy-one units of blood were donated. – Frances Niblock photo

To Err is Human, to Forgive is Divine

In the past few months the scandal of Catholic priests sexually abusing mostly children has been much in the news. Recently, this tragedy has been driven by publicity to the doors of the Vatican itself.

Full disclosure; I am a practicing Roman Catholic, have been all of my life. I attended catholic grade school and high school. I have been taught by teaching orders of nuns and priests as well as by parish priests in different churches I have attended before and after I married.

Past columns I have written leave no doubt about my disgust with pedophiles. In my mind there are no allowances for occupations or vocations. Catholics everywhere are justifiably disgusted with the few of the hundreds of thousands of priests worldwide who betrayed a sacred trust by abusing children. We also feel local church authorities have erred in their coping with these aberrations. By the same token, not all priests, brothers, nuns deserve to be assumed as child molesters.

In all my years of church related activities, or at school, I never heard or saw anything that would indicate any impropriety. During high school in the early 60's two of my priest teachers did leave the priesthood and got married. That was the extent of the scandals I ever saw that was in anyway related to sexuality.

It disturbs me, and it should you too, that an entire religious organization is being viewed with suspicion because of the perversion of a very few. Pedophilia has probably been with us since the beginning of time. That's not to excuse it, there is no excuse for succumbing to this sick behaviour. There is also no excuse to assume guilt by mere association.

The Way I See It

with
Mike O'Leary



There have been pedophile teachers in our schools. Does that mean that all teachers should be suspect? Of course not. By definition, pedophiles gravitate to places where young people congregate. Sports coaches, youth ministers, child care workers, every adult who comes in contact with children and has the opportunity to be alone with them could also be suspect.

The latest "crisis in the church" declared by the press claims the Pope himself is under siege. Poppycock! Granted, Pope Benedict has not captured the affection of the world that Pope John Paul II did. Pope Benedict has an impossible act to follow but, in his own way, is trying to lead his church to the best of his ability.

If one disregards the headlines the truth is that this Pope has been more open about depraved priests than any other church leader. He has been more honest than any of his predecessors regarding the scope of the problem. Previous church leaders tended to ignore the problem hoping it would fade into oblivion. Some courageous victims persevered however and the whole sordid affair was exposed for all to see.

I was disappointed in the, in my view, intemperate remarks attributed to the Archbishop of Canterbury around Easter regarding the Catholic Church in Ireland. The Irish church is experiencing a difficult time as has been well publicized. The Archbishop, Rowan Williams,

said the Catholic Church in Ireland had lost "all credibility" due to its handling of the abuse issue. He quickly apologized. My feeling is that people who live in glass cathedrals shouldn't throw rocks.

People are confused as to why pedophile priests appear to have been transferred from parish to parish. Back in the 60's, 70's, 80's and 90's people inside and outside the church didn't know what to do with sex offenders. Some psychiatrists thought it was a curable disease. Today, we know that the rate of recidivism is very high and we still don't know what to do with sex offenders.

In years past, this offence was an embarrassment, something to be denied. These days people tend to be more open regarding sexual mores and scandals, publicized more in this information age. These are good things for society in general and the victims in particular.

There is a report that the United Nations court is suggesting the Pope be arrested when he visits England later this year. This is ridiculous. The Pope is a "head of state" which would not necessarily make him immune. I just think it shows the duplicity of the United Nations when they insist that despots and mass murderers be allowed to roam the world at will, but they suggest the Pope be arrested.

Perhaps Toronto Archbishop Collins said it best in his pastoral message last weekend. "Just one priest gone wrong causes great suffering, and as we hear of evil done by some clergy in our own communities and around the world, we are all filled with dismay."

Perhaps these evil priests will attain forgiveness in God's kingdom. It's doubtful they'll gain it in ours.