

GRAPEVINE



Youth dance

Local youths aged seven to 14 are invited to a chaperoned video dance party on January 7 at the Acton Town Hall Centre. Tickets are available online at videodanceparty.ca or at the door, beginning at 5 p.m. The dance, hosted by Party Cinemas, runs from 7 to 11 p.m., and is a fundraiser for local youth sports groups and organizations. Dances are also slated for February 4 and March 11.

Pole walking

Beginning Monday, January 2 Nordic Pole Walking resumes at the Dufferin Centre. The sessions run Mondays and Fridays from 10 to 11 a.m. are led by a certified Nordixx Pole Walking instructor. There is a \$2 entrance fee. For information call 905-691-9122.

Godfathers building sold

No word yet what the new owners of the former Godfathers Pizza building on Mill Street plan to do with it once they take ownership at the end of January.

A real estate agent with knowledge of the deal said they plan to turn two upstairs apartments – one of them is over Pete's barbershop – into a large loft apartment which will be rented out, but there's no word what will happen on the ground floor in the former pizza place.

The ReMax agent, Linda Olson, said retail space in Acton is "very affordable" at \$1 per square foot, compared to \$10 a square foot in Georgetown, and between \$23 and \$30 in Milton.

Woman2Woman

All local businesswomen are invited to the January 11 meeting of Woman2Woman, which will be held at Starlight Café. Halton Village Constable Moreen Smith will be the guest speaker at the meeting, talking about safety for women.

'For the kids'

With a lot of care on some very cold nights, a large sheet of ice on Fairy Lake has been cultivated into a skating rink the size of almost two regulation rinks.

The rink, built and maintained by Prospect Park neighbor Bill Hennessey, draws squads of shinny players, new skaters with wobbly ankles and many families, out for some holiday fresh air.

Hennessey, a Boston fan, floods the rink every other night with a generator-operated pump. He said team mates of his son's Tanner AE rep team

help with the shovelling, as did a neighbouring couple who also brought over a plate full of homemade cookies for the skaters on Monday.

"I do it for the kids," Hennessey said on Tuesday, when asked why he donates his time and talents to the rink. "They're all good kids."

Mindful of safety, the rink is groomed daily and Hennessey checks the ice thickness – its eight inches – with bore holes around the perimeter. He has also built a bench, equipment rack and backstops behind the goals.

Ice Safety

The need for safety on ice was underscored by Wellington County OPP who issued a caution to winter sports enthusiasts.

Ice does not freeze at a uniform thickness across most lakes and rivers with near-shore ice often much thicker and safer than ice further out. Anglers should check thickness regularly with a spud bar or auger as they move further out on the ice.

- Not all ice is created equal. Ice formed over flowing water, springs, pressure cracks, old ice holes or around the mouths of rivers and streams can be weaker than surrounding ice.

- Clear blue ice is the strongest. White or opaque ice is much weaker. Ice that has a honeycombed look, common during thaws or in the spring, should be avoided altogether.

- Travelling on frozen lakes or rivers with snowmobiles or vehicles can be particularly dangerous and added precautions must be taken. At least 20-centimeters (eight inches) of clear blue ice is required for snowmobiles and 30-centimeters (12 inches) or more is needed for most light vehicles. Double this amount if the ice is white or opaque.

- Heavy snow on frozen lakes and rivers can insulate the ice below, causing the ice to freeze slower.

- Let others know where you're planning to fish and advise when you plan to return. If you are missing, rescue crews can narrow their search and potentially save your life.

- Parents must exercise caution while children are out of school, as they may venture out on frozen ponds, ditches or area waterways.

Winter weather conditions can be unpredictable and variable, proper equipment and experience is necessary to have a safe winter season on the ice.



LUNAR LOOK: Tarun Tuli, a member of the Halton Hills Astronomy Club, braved a long, cold night to shoot the lunar eclipse early Tuesday morning from his Georgetown backyard. His composite shows the first half of the eclipse. – *Tarun Tuli photo*

Go Green With Holiday Cleanup

The holiday season has arrived. Celebrations and gifts will be at the forefront of the festivities. Once all of the gifts are torn open, there are bound to be mounds of wrapping paper in each and every home, which can mean damaging waste for the environment.

The first step is choosing environmentally responsible wrapping materials. Glossy, metallic or embellished wrapping paper may not be easily recycled -- or even recyclable at all. Instead, look for wrapping paper that is made from recycled materials and can, in turn, be recycled once more. Consider wrapping gifts in plain, brown mailing paper and decorate the outside with earth-friendly paints.

Next, nix the tissue paper inside of gift boxes. It doesn't really serve a functional purpose, except for further delaying the reveal of the gift inside. Tissue paper alone accounts for a lot of extra trash. Skipping it means a person will be saving money and the environment. Here are some other green cleanup tips.

- * Designate a child or adult to gather the dis-

carded wrapping materials and sort the piles into trash. Ribbons and bows can be reused, as can many gift boxes and bags.

- * Shred paper items that are bound for the trash to reduce their volume and require fewer trash bags for transport.

- * Find out if a shipping store will take foam peanuts and air-filled wraps to be recycled.

- * Be sure to collect expired batteries and recycle them at a facility that does so.

- * Christmas trees can be taken down and sent for mulching. Many communities collect trees after the season is over for this purpose.

Because there is bound to be some extra garbage during the holidays, individuals can take steps to curb trash in other aspects of their lives this time of the year. Some ideas include using cloth napkins and actual dishes and cutlery instead of disposable items. Before purchasing new gift paper, sort through last year's collection to see what items can be reused. Cutting the front off of holiday cards and using them as gift tags is another way to recycle.



RINK READY:

Acton's Bill Hennessey spent much of the Christmas holidays flooding and grooming this huge ice rink on Fairy Lake, off of Elizabeth Drive. He said he did it "for the kids."

– *Frances Niblock photo*