

GRAPEVINE

LIBRARY VISITORS

There will be mice and music at the Acton library, beginning Saturday, July 27 when a favourite mouse character – Geronimo Stilton – visits the branch at 11:30 for hugs and photo ops.

On Saturday, August 10 at 2 p.m. the library presents *Music with Brian*, featuring Juno-nominated and Parents' Choice Award winner Brian. For ticket information visit www.hhpl.on.ca or call 519-853-0301.

CITIZEN POLICE

Community-minded residents who are curious about forensics, homicide, collision reconstruction and tactical rescues are invited to apply for the Halton Regional Police Academy. The 12-week program delves into all aspects of policing including traffic services, drugs, guns, recruiting, crisis negotiations, domestic violence investigation, training and communications.

The voluntary program is designed for anyone who wants to learn more about Halton police. For this fall's course, on-line registration is available. For details visit www.haltonpolice.ca and click on the Community policing banner, then Public Safety and Education. Click Citizen's Police Academy for the course curriculum or call Sergeant Kim Hill at 905-878-5511, ext. 4901.

ENERGY IDEAS

Have any ideas to save energy in Halton Hills or reduce greenhouse gas emissions? The Town is looking for ideas, creativity and feedback to build on the Mayor's Community Energy Plan, designed to reduce operating costs, increase efficiencies and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

Building on two recent energy workshops, the Town invites all to add their thoughts and vote for their favourites on-line with the brainstorming tool available at www.halton-hills.ideascale.com

FILM FESTIVAL

Submissions will be accepted until midnight September 7 for the first annual Acton Film Festival on September 27 at the Roxy on Mill Street. Video or digital format films of less than 10 minutes will be accepted in the contest which is open to all Acton residents and students attending Halton Hills schools.

Films must have a title and a director credit and require a

\$10 entry fee, which will be donated to the Acton Town Hall Centre and local youth projects. For details call Dave at 519-853-0675. Entry forms are available at the Roxy.

SILENT YOGA?

Despite no sound system to tell eager Yoga in the Park participants which way to move, the first summer session last Thursday in Prospect Park was a success.

Without her wireless mic because a power box at the Rotary Bandshell could not be opened, Staying Alive Fitness's Leanne Monaghan shouldered on, leading participants on one side while instructor Jen White led those on the other.

Approximately 90-pounds of food were donated by participants, and \$84 cash, earmarked for the Links2Care Backpack program.

GIFT OF LIFE

Four first-timers were among the 40 dutiful donors who gave blood at the Canadian Blood Services clinic at the Acton arena on Monday. Fifty-two people attempted to give the gift of life, but 12 were deferred.

The next clinic is August 15, from 5 to 8 p.m., at the Acton Legion. Call 1-888-236-6283 to book an appointment.

BLUSHING GROOM

Regional/Acton Councilor Clark Somerville's face flushed like a blushing bride when Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette congratulated him on his weekend wedding at council on Monday.

Somerville married Jennifer Clark, the former manager of the Acton McDonald's, on Saturday in Cincinnati, Ohio, the home of the bride's father.

CYCLING UPDATE

Half way there – the Halton Hills Community Cycling Challenge has hit, and exceeded, the half-way mark of 100,000-kilometres, triggering a \$20,000 donation to the Georgetown Hospital Foundation from Georgetown Canadian Tire.

The goal is for citizens to ride and then register their kilometres. When the goal of 200,000-kilometres is reached, Mattamy Homes/Peter Gilgan will donate \$20,000, and match a \$5,000 pledge from Paul Armstrong Insurance.

At press time, 731 participants had ridden and registered 120,336-kilometres – that's 60 per cent of the goal with two months left to ride.



NATURE'S BOUNTY: Surrounded by the flowers and plants loving nurtured at The Flower Shed, owner Julie Speck (right) is helped by Mark and Susan Speck at a recent Acton Farmer's Market. – Ted Tyler photo

Science Matters

By David Suzuki



We ignore scientists at our peril

It's happening again. Research confirms agreement among most climate scientists that we are altering the Earth's climate, mainly by burning fossil fuels. And industrial interests, backed by climate change deniers, pull out every trick to sow doubt and confusion. What will it take for us to start seriously tackling the problem?

For the latest study, investigators led by John Cook at Skeptical Science examined abstracts of 12,000 peer-reviewed papers on climate science. They also received comments from 1,200 scientists, who rated more than 2,100 full studies. In both cases, more than 97 per cent of studies that took a position on the causes of global warming said human activity is a primary factor. Less than one per cent rejected the consensus position. The results are consistent with previous research.

As expected, deniers are out in full force, many employing methods common to those who reject science. Medical scientists Pascal Diethelm and Martin McKee examined these tactics in the *European Journal of Public Health*: cherry picking, reference to fake experts, misrepresentation and logical fallacies, impossible expectations of what research can deliver and conspiracy theories. Deniers often rely on talking points spread by a handful of usual suspects, including Christopher Monckton in the U.K., the Heartland Institute and Anthony Watts in the U.S. and Friends of Science and Tom Harris in Canada.

The Alberta-based group was caught several years ago funneling money – most from fossil fuel companies – through a "Science Education Fund" at the Univer-

sity of Calgary. It was used to create a disinformation campaign and video with Harris, who then worked with PR firm APCO Worldwide and now heads up an organization called (ironically) the International Climate Science Coalition, which rejects the scientific consensus on human-caused climate change. According to Desmog Blog, Friends of Science has misrepresented the recent survey, calling it "careless incitement of a misinformed and frightened public, when in fact the sun is the main driver of climate change; not human activity or carbon dioxide."

Another recent misrepresentation concerns research by the U.K. Met Office, which deniers falsely claim shows the Earth hasn't warmed for 17 years.

Science isn't perfect, but it's one of the best tools we have for understanding our place in the cosmos. When people around the world apply rigorous scientific method to study our actions and their impacts on the things that keep us alive and healthy – clean air, water, soil and biodiverse plants and animals – we must listen, not just about climate, but about a range of issues.

Many scientists are saying we're creating serious problems – but we have solutions. A recent statement, "Scientists' Consensus on Maintaining Humanity's Life Support Systems in the 21st Century", lists five major challenges: climate disruption, extinctions, loss of ecosystem diversity, pollution, and human population growth and resource consumption.

More than 2,200 have signed, stating, "As scientists who study the interaction of people with the

rest of the biosphere using a wide range of approaches, we agree that the evidence that humans are damaging their ecological life-support systems is overwhelming."

Some may claim this is "alarmist". It is – because the situation is alarming. It goes on: "For humanity's continued health and prosperity, we all – individuals, businesses, political leaders, religious leaders, scientists, and people in every walk of life – must work hard to solve these five global problems starting today."

Many of the proposed solutions have long been advocated by people working in science, the environment and even business: conserving energy and reducing fossil fuel use; better ecosystem management through processes like natural capital evaluation; improved food production and distribution and waste reduction; regulating and preventing pollution; and stabilizing population growth through better education, health care, family-planning services, economic opportunities and women's rights.

Humanity has changed direction before. When our tools become outdated, we invent new ones. It's why in many countries, we no longer rely on slavery to maintain economies, we can all vote regardless of race or sex and we enjoy longer and healthier lives than before. Many systems we've invented don't apply to current circumstances. We can and must change the way we act. That requires listening to scientists and those who are working on solutions, and not to the naysayers and deniers who would keep us stalled in a doomed spiral.