

# GRAPEVINE

## GOLD LIFESAVING AWARD

Congrats to Vincenzo Cicero of Acton, a Saint John Ambulance volunteer who, with five of his colleagues, were recently honoured for their attempts to save lives in two separate incidents.

Cicero, with the Saint John Ambulance Milton/Halton Hills First Medical Responder Division, received a Gold Life-saving Award for his efforts to save an 18-year-old who fell under the wheels of a float at the Scotiabank Carabana parade in Toronto in August. The victim died, but Cicero was honoured for his work under hazardous circumstances.

## HELP AVAILABLE

If you have suffered the loss of someone close and need to talk with others who can relate, Acton's GriefShare program might help. The 13-week video-based small group, which meets Thursdays at 7 p.m., provides confidential support to people who are grieving. Call 519-853-3687 for details.

## TRICK OR EAT

Organized groups of costumed kids will go door-to-door collecting donations of non-perishable food, not collecting candy, this Hallowe'en as part of *Trick or Eat*, a new Canada-wide youth-led food drive.

Locally, the program is being championed by the POSSE Project, and all of the food collected on October 31 will be donated to Acton's FoodShare

food bank, and on-line donations will be accepted.

## FLU CLINICS

Halton's seasonal influenza immunization clinics are underway, and flu shots are also available at local pharmacies, walk-in clinics, doctors offices and in many workplaces.

On Tuesday, October 22 there will be a flu shot clinic at the Acton Seniors Centre from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. There will also be a flu clinic at Acton High School on Wednesday, November 6 from 4 to 8 p.m. For more information dial 311 or 1-866-422-5866.

## GENEROUS DONATIONS

The 71.2-pounds of food, \$350 and a \$20 turkey voucher donated to the FoodShare food drive this month at Active Choice Rehabilitation Centre helped feed the hungry this Thanksgiving.

Chiropractor Dr. Dana Selby was grateful for all of the donations, and said they may stage a combination toy drive/food drive this Christmas.

## SPOOKTACULAR EVENT

The Halton County Radial Railway hosts it's an all-ages Hallowe'en Spooktacular event – complete with a haunted barn, creepy streetcar rides and a science show – on Saturday (October 19) and again October 26 from 6:30 to 10 p.m.

Railway officials said costumes are "highly encouraged." For details about the Guelph Line Hallowe'en fun, at the electric railway museum, call 519-856-9802 or visit hcr.org

## Bottled water warning issued for Halton Region

Halton Region warns residents and businesses not to consume or serve bottled water produced by Red Canoe Water Co. Ltd. of Caledon.

The Region's Public Health Inspectors recently found bottled water related to the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care's province-wide advisory within Halton Region. A sample of water was taken from the bottles and found to be heavily contaminated with bacteria. As a result, there is a potential health threat posed by these products.

"Water contaminated with bacteria may cause adverse health effects such as gastrointestinal and stomach illnesses like nausea, vomiting, cramps, and diarrhea," said Dr. Bob Nosal, Halton Region's Medical Officer of Health. "I strongly advise anyone using bottled water to thoroughly check the label before you drink, use or sell the water."

Consumers and businesses can check labels on water bottles for the following references:

- Bottled at source by Blue Glass Water Co. Ltd., or;
- Bottled at source by Caledon Clear Water Corp., or;
- Red Canoe Water Co. Ltd.

The operator is known to offer customized labels to food establishments. Consumers and businesses should carefully check the label to determine the manufacturer before consuming or purchasing.

Bottles may be blue, green or clear glass with a screw top. Bottles have been observed in 750-ml and 375-ml formats.

No illnesses related to the bottled water found in Halton Region have been reported to date; however, if you have consumed this water and feel unwell, please visit your physician or walk-in clinic.

If you have any of this bottled water, call Halton Region by dialing 311 or 1-866-422-5866.



**BLOWING OFF STEAM:** Between playing hockey in a tournament at the adjacent Acton arena, members of a Burlington team ran off some nervous energy while their parents held a barbecue on Friday - Marie Shadbolt photo

## Science Matters

By David Suzuki



## Despite Fukushima, scientists say eating West Coast fish is safe

Following Japan's devastating 2011 earthquake and tsunami, fear spread about risks of leaked radiation from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant – for the health of those living in or near Fukushima or involved in cleanup efforts, and for the planet and the potential impacts on our complex marine food web.

Shunichi Tanaka, head of Japan's Nuclear Regulation Authority, told reporters radioactive water has likely been leaking into the Pacific Ocean since the disaster hit. It's the largest single contribution of radionuclides to the marine environment ever observed, according to one report. With 300 tonnes of contaminated water pouring into the sea every day, Japan's government finally acknowledged the urgency of the situation in September.

Social media is now abuzz with people swearing off fish from the Pacific Ocean. Given the lack of information around containment efforts, some may find this reasonable. But preliminary research shows fish caught off Canada's Pacific Coast are safe to eat. It will take about three years from the time of the incident for the radiation plume to reach the West Coast, which would be early next year. Recent testing of migratory fish, including tissue samples collected from Pacific bluefin tuna caught off the California coast, assessed radiation levels and potential effects on marine food webs

far away from Japan. Trace amounts of radioisotopes from the Fukushima plant were found, although the best available science puts them at levels below those naturally occurring in the environment around us. Natural, or background radiation, is found in many sources, including food items, medical treatments and air travel.

The most comprehensive health assessment, by the World Health Organization, concludes radioactive particles that make their way to North America's waters will have a limited effect on human health, with concentrations predicted to be below WHO safety levels.

More reports are in the works. The UN agency charged with assessing global levels and consequences of ionizing radiation will present its findings to the UN General Assembly this month. This is where we may find answers about the amount of radioactive material released, how it was dispersed and any repercussions for the environment and food sources.

The ocean is vast and dynamic with many complexities we don't fully understand. It appears two currents off Japan's coast — the Kuroshio Current and Kurushio Extension — diluted radioactive material to below WHO safety levels within the first four months of the disaster. Eddies and giant whirlpools, some tens of kilometres wide, continue the

dilution and will direct radioactive particles to coastal areas for at least two decades.

Fish from the water near the crippled plant are not faring so well. High levels of cesium-134, a radioactive isotope that decays rapidly, were found in fish samples there. Radiation levels in the sea around Japan have been holding steady and not falling as expected, further demonstrating that radiation leakage is not under control. At least 42 fish species from the immediate area are considered unsafe for consumption, and fisheries there remain closed.

New concerns continue to arise. While the initial leak contained cesium isotopes, water flowing into the ocean from the plant now appears to be higher in strontium-90, a radioactive substance that is absorbed differently. While cesium tends to go in and out of the body quickly, strontium heads for the bones.

A huge accumulation of radioactive water at the plant must be dealt with immediately. Determining the full effects of years of exposure to lower levels of radioactive contamination leaking into the ocean will take time and require continued monitoring and assessment. While Health Canada monitors radionuclide levels in food sold in Canada, and one of its studies incorporates samples from Vancouver, we need to remain vigilant and demand timely monitoring results.