



LAST BLOOM: Fields of flowers show off their last blooms at Andrews' Scenic Acres on Thanksgiving weekend. – Marie Shadbolt photo

Library Notes

There is a lot to do at the Acton and Georgetown branches of the Halton Hills library. The calendar includes:

Free Business Advice at Library

A professional Business Consultant from the Halton Region Business Development Centre will be available at Halton Hills Public Library, Georgetown Branch on Thursday, October 20, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. to help people start or expand an existing small business. Register for a free one-hour consultation at 1-866-4HALTON or busdev@halton.ca

Exercise for Strength and Flexibility

On Thursday, October 13 from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. at the Acton branch,

older adults will learn exercises to prevent falls. To register for this free event, please call 519-853-0301 ext. 2550. The library is located at 17 River Street.

Ontario Public Library Week October 16 - 22

Help Halton Hills Public Library celebrate public libraries. Fill out a ballot when you visit, and you may win our beautiful gift basket. For more information, visit www.hhpl.on.ca or call 905-873-2681 ext. 2520 or 519-853-0301.

Drop In For Family Storytime

Family Storytime is a free 30-minute program for grownups and young children to enjoy together at Halton Hills Public Library. It includes

stories, music and lots of fun. Registration is not required – just drop in.

At the Acton HUB (at McKenzie-Smith Bennett school), the programs is offered on Wednesdays at 2 p.m., from October 12 to November 30. Call 519-853-0301 or www.hhpl.on.ca for more information.

Knit Night at Acton Library

Whether you are new to knitting or a seasoned expert, join the staff at Halton Hills Public Library, Acton Branch for an hour of friends, books and all things knitting on Thursday, October 27 from 7-8 p.m., Halton Hills Public Library, Acton Branch, 17 River Street. For more information, visit www.hhpl.on.ca or call 519-853-0301.

Science Matters

By David Suzuki



Can oil be ethical?

In his book *Ethical Oil*, Ezra Levant raises an important point about the moral implications of products and activities in the global economy. I applaud the move to raise ethics to greater prominence in discussions around trade and economics. Questions around social justice, poverty, environment, and violence have propelled movements leading to action against sweatshops and child labour in the garment industry, to fair trade and shade-grown coffee products, to boycotts of California grapes and trade with apartheid South Africa.

Two days after he was appointed federal environment minister, Peter Kent took up Levant's slogan, trumpeting Alberta's tar sands as "ethical oil". We rightly criticize oil-producing countries that support or indulge in violence, murder, oppression of minority groups and women, and so on. But because Canada does not overtly support or indulge in such practices, does that mean our oil is more ethical? Levant acknowledges that exploiting and using fossil fuels has environmental impacts. Does that mean there is a hierarchy of

ethical practices or that one ethical practice cancels out other unethical activities?

The application of ethical standards in our purchase and use of products should be applied universally and not selectively. Canada signed the Kyoto Protocol, which became international law. When Jean Chrétien signed the document, he did so not as a Liberal but as the prime minister of Canada. This meant that, as a nation, we were committed to achieving the targets set by the agreement. On becoming leader of a minority government, Harper declared his intention to ignore Canada's commitment. Is it ethical to ignore an internationally binding legal commitment? This is even more astonishing in light of Prime Minister Harper's outspoken commitment to law and order.

Canada is one of the highest per capita emitters of greenhouse gases. Our rapidly melting permafrost releases massive amounts of the potent greenhouse gas methane, amplifying our contribution to the global crisis of climate change. Alberta's tar sands require enormous amounts of energy and water to extract, further compounding Canada's already excessive emissions. Is there not an ethical component to our demand for a greater share of the Earth's atmosphere than most other nations? Rapid exploitation of Canada's tar sands – by companies from countries including the U.S., Korea, and China – is not crucial for our nation's survival or even well-being, yet we ignore the impact on the rest of the world. If that isn't unethical, I don't know what is.

Climate change is already causing more extreme fires and weather events, melting glaciers and ice caps, rising sea levels, drought, floods, altered plant and animal distribution, spread of

disease, and killer heat waves, to cite just a few impacts. Canada's vast resources and space confer greater resilience than most nations, but the world's poorest areas are especially vulnerable. Floods in Pakistan's great river delta, drought across central Africa, and extreme heat in India are killing people who did little or nothing to contribute to the climate crisis. These deaths may not be as grisly or violent as those in Nigeria or Saudi Arabia, but that shouldn't matter in ethical debates.

Despite the Kyoto agreement and international efforts at Copenhagen, this unrelenting rise in greenhouse gas emissions means countries around the world intend to continue contributing to the enormous problems of unpredictable climate extremes and fluctuations that people for generations to come will have to live with. This is the most unethical practice I can imagine. In the face of overwhelming evidence that human use of fossil fuels is creating an incredible crisis of climate change, wealthy countries like Canada and the U.S., whose use of these fuels created the massive economic expansion that brought about the climate crisis, are now unwilling to reduce their emissions. It's all in the name of economic growth, not survival or the future for our children and grandchildren. That is not just unethical, it's criminal.

In today's world, all fossil fuels are unethical. There is no such thing as ethical oil. People like Ezra Levant, who say they care about ethics, should press for rapid transition from these unethical energy sources to more ethical, equitable, and sustainable sources, such as renewable solar, wind, and geothermal energy.

Learn more at: www.davidsuzuki.org

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