

Would you know what to do?

Halton's updated Personal Emergency Preparedness Guide

By JENNIFER ENRIGHT

Halton's new Personal Emergency Preparedness Guide is designed to provide information, but in such a way that people will want to make use of that information, says Wayne Gould, the Region's emergency management co-ordinator. There are sections of the guide where people can fill in personal information and design a home escape plan, both of which can be clipped out and placed on the fridge or in a safe location. "Really the whole idea of the guide is for people to want to pick it up and read it and keep it. What we've tried to do is make it user friendly and make it appeal to a family so they will look through it."

The well-publicized events of September 11, 2001, raised concerns among many people about how we respond to emergency situations. As a result of those concerns, the Region of Halton, local municipalities and regional police developed the area's first personal emergency preparedness guide in 2002.

Now the Region together with the Towns of Oakville, Milton, Halton Hills, the City of Burlington and Halton Regional Police has released its second Personal Emergency Preparedness Guide. The Guide, which is distributed through regional and local municipal offices, provides information and outlines steps people can take during an emergency.

Mr. Gould says the second edition is a revised one that is intended to address the needs of different groups. Contact numbers have been updated and there's information on where seniors can receive assistance and how people with special needs can handle emergencies. As well, the guide highlights 911's multilingual service. "One emergency in Toronto recently went unreported because a grandmother didn't speak English and she was reluctant to call 911," explains Mr. Gould. "So we wanted to remind people that regardless of what language they speak they can call

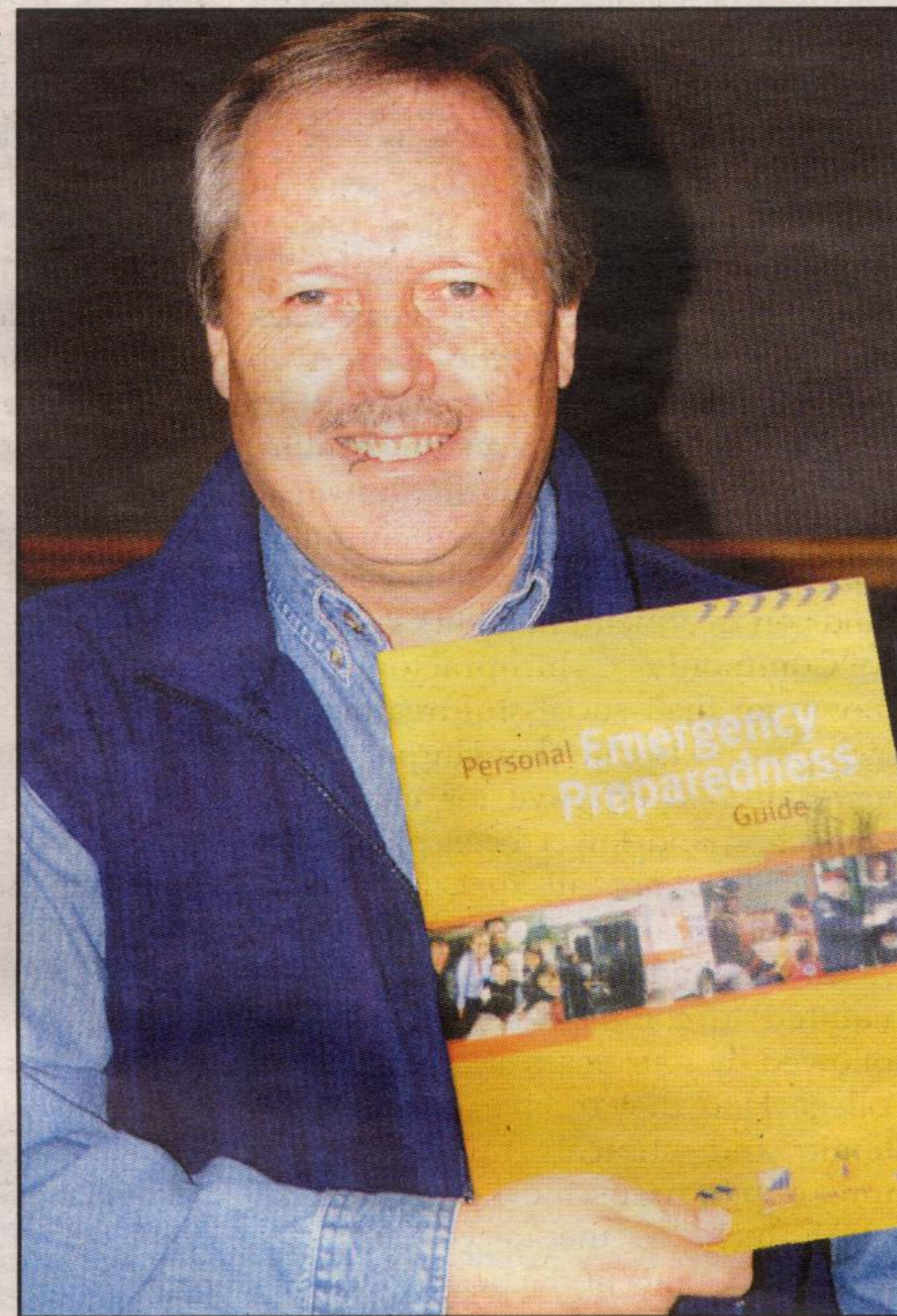
911."

The new guide also includes information on local media. Following 9/11, there was the blackout in August of 2003 and the SARS crisis, two major emergencies that prompted the region, local governments, and police to examine closely how information can be distributed to the public. Mr. Gould says a decision was made to include detailed information on local media sources in the guide. "Our community relations group have done a fair bit of work with the media to determine who's going to be best able to get information out (during an emergency)."

Mr. Gould says emergency preparedness is a topic that people can expect to hear more about in the future. With the introduction of the provincial Emergency Management Act in 2003, the Ontario government has made it mandatory for all municipalities in the province to provide public education and awareness to citizens about emergency preparedness. One requirement of the act is that each municipality prepare a report outlining its top emergency risks. Halton completed its report earlier this year, and in the next two years the Region will also be preparing other reports, a task that's also been undertaken by all other local governments in Halton.

"Every municipality in the region has gone through an exercise to determine what the priority risks are and then we will be working towards revamping or developing a total public education program that educates the public on what to do on all the risks that we have."

Copies of the guide are available online at each municipal website or by visiting municipal offices. The website for Halton Region is www.region.halton.on.ca. To contact the Region, call 905-825-6000 or 1-866-442-5866.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Brent Marshall, Halton Region's Chief Administrative Officer, holds a copy of the 2004 Personal Emergency Preparedness Guide. The guide, which is now available to Halton residents, includes information on everything from how to protect yourself from tornadoes to preparing a family emergency survival kit.

Farmers' Tan

The Country Depot is Georgetown's new Tanning Salon

By ANN KORNUA

The Country Depot name is recognized for offering to its customers a range of quality Farm supplies, land and garden, pet supplies and hardware products across communities in Ontario. The Country Depot located just off Highway 7 in Georgetown caters to Halton Hills, Georgetown and Acton for pet supplies, feeds and in season, Christmas trees. "We opened our Georgetown store on June 19 2002. The building was here, but the business is all new," owner Tracy Paris said. "It's just your typical Country Depot with great savings on farm equipment and 4 full sized tanning beds."

Tanning Beds in a Farm Equipment store? You read that right. The Georgetown Country Depot has four luxury tanning beds. It's probably true to say that it's unusual for a store that sells farm equipment and feed to also have a tanning salon, but Tracy and her husband Rob don't think it's strange in the least. Well, maybe it is a bit strange to them too. People always notice the tanning services when they walk in and immediately want to try it out for a few minutes. "We had a little bit of wasted space and we wanted to put something in here. We were trying to think of something we could go with for the winter months," Tracy said. "We also hope that people who are coming in for

the tanning beds will also look around the store."

The Country Depot offers a selection of tanning lotions and accessories to make your tanning experience complete. The choice is up to the individual if they want to sign up for just a few minutes or for monthly sessions. Gift certificates are on sale for Christmas as well as package deals. The rooms are clean and very relaxing, featuring personal CD players, UV goggles and a little touch of a mint on each towel. There are four tanning machines to try from, three beds and the large stand up tanning room. "We had to reconstruct the whole part of the store to accommodate the beds," Tracy says. "We upgraded the hydro to accommodate the power and we re-did all the electrical and hydro through the area."

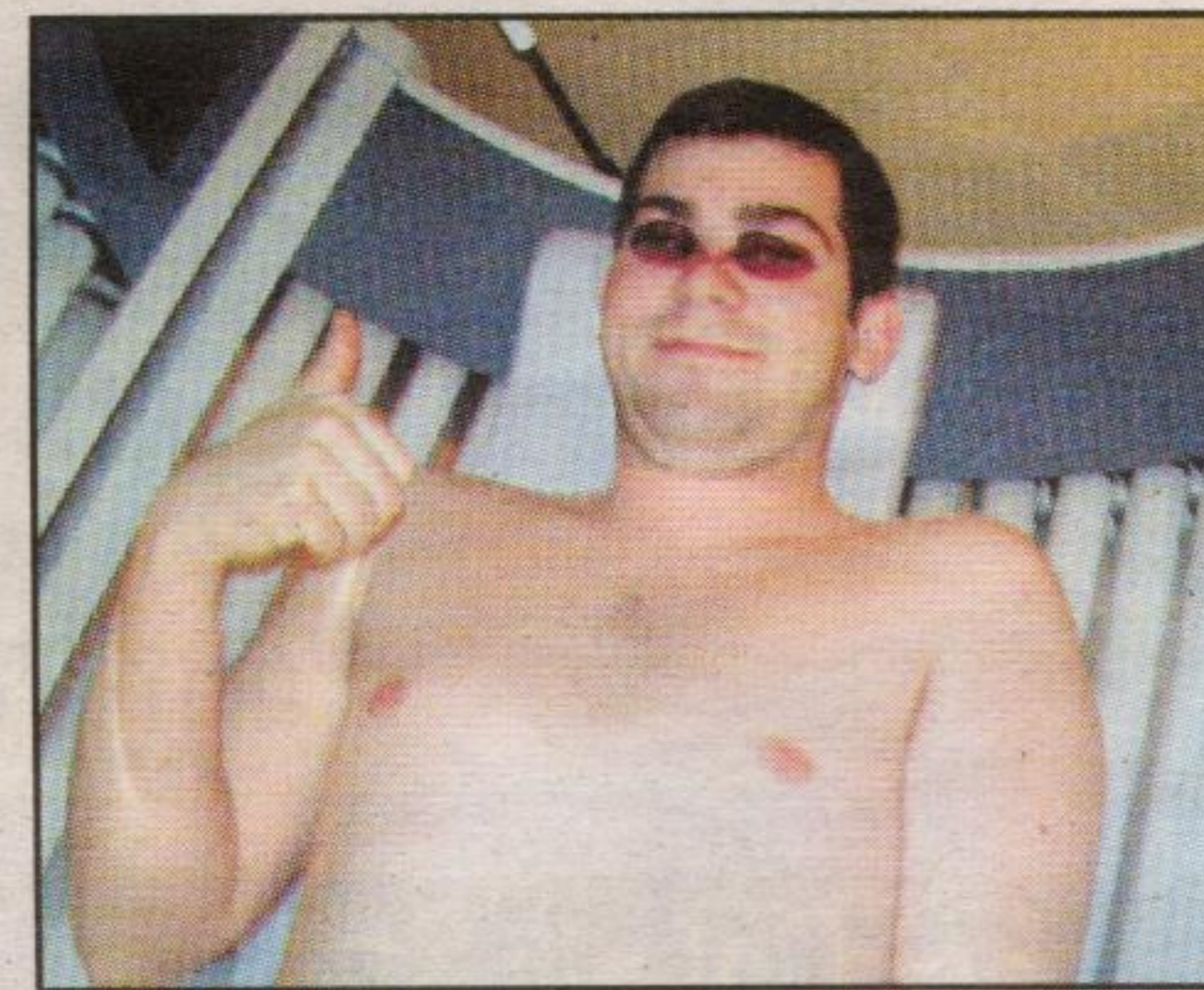
The beds were operational on November 11th when construction of the tanning rooms was completed. It's the only Country Depot in Ontario where you can buy farming equipment and lose your farmers' tan lines at the same time. It's a great gift idea for the Christmas season. Tracy and Rob welcome everyone to come in and try any one of their tanning beds and experience a south-of-the-border tan in the rural community of Halton Hills.



Tracy and Rob Paris announce, with their two special kitty mascots, that with every bag of Nutro pet food purchased you will receive a free tanning session with the Georgetown Country Depot Tanning beds.



Coming out all bronzed, Ann looks like a tanned Space Barbie with her goggles on.



Tanning isn't just for women! Showing no fear and thumbs up, Tom Hetherington goes for his trial tan in one of the three flat bed tanning booths.

PHOTOS BY ANN KORNUA AND TOM HETHERINGTON