



PRETTY WOMEN II: Shirley McKeown, Ena Gibson, Connie Burt, Gail Hanselman and Lois Osborne entertained the people at first ever Trinity United Church's "All Church Celebration Luncheon" this past Sunday (Nov. 12) at the Legion. - Ellen Piehl photo

Mad cows teach tough lessons

Living in the developed world, we often take access to a safe, reliable food supply for granted. But government officials, scientists and an unsuspecting public in Great Britain have learned the hard way that complacency can be deadly when it comes to food safety.

Last week, the British government released the results of an exhaustive, three-year public inquiry into mad cow disease and its human equivalent, variant Creutzfeldt-Jacob disease (vCJD). And the findings are not very comforting.

The investigation, chaired by senior judge Lord Phillips, found that scientists and government officials generally mismanaged important scientific information and this led to the erroneous belief that British beef was safe. That unquestioned conviction delayed action to contain the disease, potentially exposing millions more people in subsequent years. And because vCJD can take many years to manifest itself, thousand and even tens of thousand of Europeans may be walking around unaware that they are infected with a terminal illness.

"Mad cow disease," or bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) can infect cattle and occasionally spread to other mammals including sheep and even cats. The disease is caused by a mysterious class of proteins called prions that destroy nervous system tissue in the brain, causing loss of motor control and eventually death.

When the disease first appeared in cattle in 1986, British officials proclaimed it to be a bovine form of scrapie, a disease that had infected sheep for centuries, but had never been reported to be transmitted to humans. Scientists and government officials held firmly to this assumption and declared that BSE posed only a "remote" threat to people, even though this conclusion had not been adequately tested.

Meanwhile, meat and bone

Science Matters

- by David Suzuki



meal from infected carcasses was being made into cattle feed, thereby spreading the disease. The result was a BSE epidemic that raged in cattle herds throughout Britain in the late 1980s and early 1990s, with tens of thousands of new animals becoming infected every year. And because the risk of human infection was considered to be remote, some 750,000 of those infected cattle ended up in the human food chain. This is how the disease spread to humans and became variant CJD, first identified in 1996. So far, more than 80 people, mostly in Britain, are known to have died from vCJD.

Some British vCJD victims may also have become infected through immunization for other human diseases, since vaccines are often cultivated in cattle tissue. In spite of the BSE epidemic, some vaccines potentially made from contaminated cattle tissue were in use until November, 1993. And other European states still face potential BSE outbreaks from beef cattle imported from Britain. Although in 1996 Britain banned mammal remains from being used for animal feed, some European countries still allow this practice, insisting that their livestock is free of BSE.

The BSE inquiry highlights what can go horribly wrong when we make assumptions about food safety without adequate information. That's why it's so important to have strong, well-funded public agencies safeguarding our food and water. Scientists must be able to conduct research independently, free from political and budgetary pressures. In Britain, part of the reason for the mismanagement of the BSE tragedy may have been the 20 per cent cutbacks in the ani-

mal health research budget. In Canada, cutbacks likely played a role in the Walkerton, Ontario E-coli disaster.

Furthermore, underlying the BSE crisis is the deeply troubling practice of feeding animal extracts to livestock that normally eat plants. This practice may make short-term economic or political sense, but it violates biological boundaries.

LEGION NEWS BRANCH No. 197

Joyce Buchanan
Secretary

Hi again:

Well Mother Nature sure was kind to us on Saturday. Who could have asked for a better day for the Remembrance Day parade? It was heart warming to see so many participants. Also, the service held in the Branch was very well attended as was the dinner. The tribute in The New Tanner was spectacular and very much appreciated.

The bus for Rama Nov. 18th has been cancelled: not enough people signed up. It is also a busy week-end in town so maybe later will be better. For a refund you should see Carl.

Most of the tickets for the Seniors' dinner Nov. 28th have been purchased, but one person will be missing their tickets. It was turned in at the Veterans' dinner by mistake.

Ladies' Auxiliary: don't forget to get in touch with Charlene 853-0693 or Pat 853-2769, if you want to go for a surprise bus trip for dinner on Dec. 7th. The bus will be leaving at 6:30 p.m. sharp from the Legion.

No word yet on Gord's

condition, but he is now back in Guelph, I will report later.

I guess Santa is coming to town this week-end, just in time to pick up our children's list. Hope you got their names and ages in correctly.

To all who are ill we wish a speedy recovery and hope to hear from you all soon. If you know of any members who are ill please let us know.

Don't forget Bridge and Euchre during the week at the Branch

See you at the Branch

Board wins two awards

The Halton District School Board has received two prestigious national communications awards from the Canadian Association of Communicators in Education (CACE) at its annual conference held November 4-7th in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

The "BRAVO!" awards recognize projects that demonstrate excellence in research, planning, execution and elevation. Entries are in

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CONSTABLE RIDDLE'S CORNER

With Village Constable **Bill Riddle**

WINTER IS HERE

This morning I woke up and saw snow on the roof of my neighbour's house. When I went out to drive to the office I had to scrape the ice from my car windows. I think winter is here with ice, snow and cold temperatures. Great for the winter sports enthusiasts but not great for drivers. Each of us that drive should be preparing ourselves for winter driving and I have some tips for you.

1. Keep your gas tank full (that's expensive but a good idea).
2. If you do break down or get stuck you are probably better off to stay in your vehicle.
3. Carry a call police sign in your vehicle.
4. If someone stops to help you only roll the window down enough to talk through, they may be a good Samaritan or may not.
5. Do not raise the hood of your vehicle, this may draw the wrong kind of attention, and it also blocks your vision of what or who is approaching.

THINGS TO HAVE IN YOUR CAR FOR YOUR SAFETY ETC.

1. A blanket, and a large candle (a lit candle inside a car will raise the temperature about 10 degrees) and do not forget matches.
2. A good flashlight, make sure the batteries are good or even carry spares.
3. Road flares and a first aid kit.
4. Energy food such as candy or nuts, trail mix, diabetics particularly should make sure something is available.
5. A clean empty can can be used to melt snow for water if needed.
6. If you have a cell phone make sure the battery is charged well - it could save your life.

My last bit of advice is to drive with respect for the weather conditions. It is always better to get where you are going safely even if you are late, than to hurry and not get there at all.

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