

ENTERTAINMENT



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GLT to honor medal winner

Shannon Crawford is a former member of Georgetown Little Theatre. Because of this, and because we are all so proud of her achievement, the group has planned a special presentation to Shannon.

Shannon was a member of the women's rowing team that captured a gold medal at the Barcelona Olympics.

Shannon has been invited, along with The Medal, to a special social hour on Tuesday, September 1, from 7:30 - 8:30 p.m. at the GLT premises, 33 Stewarttown Road, Georgetown.

Garth Turner will also be present, and has agreed to make the presentation.

Dave's Diversions: Zebra Mussel invasion continues

By David Featherstone

In the late 1980's the zebra mussel, previously unknown to North American waters, rapidly colonized the waters of Lake St. Clair and Lake Erie.

These mussels have spread to all of the Great Lakes and have been sighted throughout the Rideau and Trent-Severn water systems.

The zebra mussel is a small, brown and white striped, clam-like animal native to Europe. These mussels were unwittingly introduced to Ontario by a ship laden

with ballast water from a freshwater European port.

When the ballast was discharged, zebra mussel larvae were released into the waters of the Great Lakes. Zebra mussel larvae float freely in the water column and readily colonized suitable habitat.

Zebra mussels thrived in the productive, calcium-rich waters of Lake St. Clair and Lake Erie. Female mussels, though only five centimeters (two inches) in length, are able to produce more than 30,000 eggs each year. Vast

colonies of zebra mussels attached themselves to any solid underwater surface available.

With tens of thousands of mussels per cubic metre lining favourable habitat, problems quickly surfaced. Water intake pipes became clogged with zebra mussels creating massive headaches for municipalities, industries and utilities dependent on water from infested areas.

Each zebra mussel filters approximately one litre of water per day. Through filtering activities, mussel colonies consume vast amounts of plankton.

Abundance of plankton determines the productivity of higher orders of the aquatic food chain including game fish. Mussel infestation of spawning shoals used by fish may damage important fisheries.

Zebra mussels are easily transported to new water systems by human activities. To prevent their spread, boaters traveling from affected areas are urged to drain all water on site. Live bait containers should not be transported from affected waters to unaffected systems. Grainy surface areas on boat hulls should be scraped to prevent transfer of zebra mussel larvae. Washing boat hulls with hot tap water, especially if pressurized, is effective in destroying mussels. Hot and dry weather will kill zebra mussels if the boat is kept out of water for three or more days.

The zebra mussel is one of a long list of foreign invaders negatively affecting North American ecosystems. Proactive legislation requiring foreign vessels to dump freshwater ballast at sea before entering North American waters would have prevented zebra mussels from entering our aquatic ecosystems. To date, effective ballast dumping legislation has not been implemented. More freshwater invaders are near at hand.

A biologist by profession, David Featherstone devotes a large portion of his spare time to volunteer groups which are working to protect and enhance the environment. IDavid hopes to provide readers of Halton Hills This Week with a mix of interesting and informative outdoor and nature articles.

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