

Acton teen earns top honours at annual Bay Area Science Fair

By Frances Niblock

Deaths from tainted spinach and carrot juice and tainted water in Walkerton sparked a research experiment to kill food borne bacteria that earned Acton student Anthony Querques, top honours at the 47th annual Bay Area Science and Engineering Fair at McMaster University on the weekend.

Querques, a 14-year-old Grade eight student at St. Joseph Catholic School, received the Gold medal and the grand prize – an all-expenses paid trip to the Canada Wide Science Fair in Truro, Nova Scotia, from May 12 to 20.

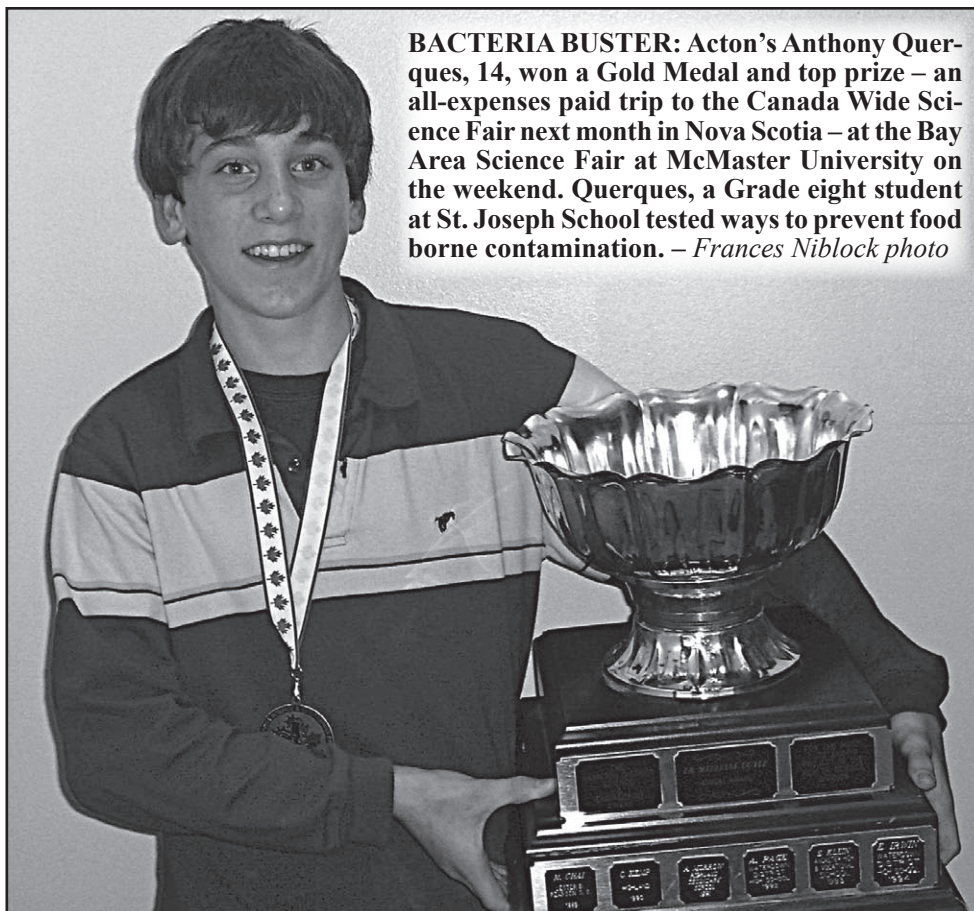
Querques is following in the footsteps of his older brother, Joseph, who competed three times at the Canada Wide Science Fair, and sister Marianne, who also competed at the National level. Last year, Anthony won a silver medal and six awards at the Bay Area event.

Querques said he wanted to see if the naturally forming enzyme Muramidase – found in human spit and sweat and his source, chicken egg whites – could be used to kill bacteria.

“I was able to prove that using it worked, but it is a bit dangerous because if you ingest it, it irritates your skin or your eyes. Maybe we can find other enzymes that will protect food, or find a way to use it to put it on food at safe levels,” Querques said on Monday.

He set up 10 Petri dishes, eight with ground meat, in his family’s dining room and watched the bacterial cultures grow for a week. Querques said he spread Muramidase on six of the Petri dishes and every two days took observations.

“The more Muramidase I put in, the lower the slope read, meaning the bacterial cultures were dying. Maybe I could apply this to find-



BACTERIA BUSTER: Acton’s Anthony Querques, 14, won a Gold Medal and top prize – an all-expenses paid trip to the Canada Wide Science Fair next month in Nova Scotia – at the Bay Area Science Fair at McMaster University on the weekend. Querques, a Grade eight student at St. Joseph School tested ways to prevent food borne contamination. – Frances Niblock photo

ing more enzymes like it,” Querques said.

Along with the grand prize trip to the National competition, Querques’ project – Pathogenic Bacterial Elimination: Bacterial Lysis Through the Application of Muramidase earned him:

- Primary Fluid Systems – Science and Engineering Fair Award of Excellence Merit Award – Gold medal

- Mohawk College and Sheridan Institute of Tuition Scholarships – Science and Engineering Fair Award of Excellence – Tuition Scholarship Award

- Halton Region Chairman’s Award for Student Excellence

- Dr. M. Doyle award – best biology project

- Ontario Association of Medical Laboratories Award

- Dr. Leonard Harris Award in Health Science

- Hamilton mayor’s Award – third place in the Biotechnology division

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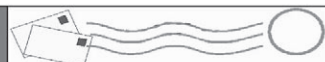


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Letters



Food brands questioned

To the editor,

This letter was originally sent to Wellington/Halton Hills M.P. Mike Chong.

Thank you for keeping us informed.

I read with interest Canada’s food guide – which is good. However no mention is made of the best brands to purchase – since there are ingredients which may be used in these products that could have bad health effects on your body – if not now later. I am talking about hormones used in milk production as well as antibiotics.

Then there are products that are used in yogurt that

should not be allowed – like Aspartame, sucralose, Splenda, etc. that as I understand it can cause bad things to happen. These are approved by governments – but should be banned.

I guess I am one of the lucky ones – when I was a kid none of this stuff was thought of – yet we were fit. Not so in this day and age – all the sickness, etc. in spite of all the wonder drugs.

I am even luckier in that I try and avoid all of the products that are bad for one’s health.

John Shadbolt.

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