

# EDITORIAL

with Frances Niblock

## Still waiting

I'm still waiting for the Christmas spirit to move me, or find me.

So far, no go.

Despite decking my halls with beautiful Christmas decorations and ornaments, despite hearing Christmas carols all around me and despite writing Christmassy holiday stories – Christmas pageants, church services and dinners for the lonely – the spirit continues to evade me.

I'd like to think that I'm open to it – that I'm ready to be swept up into the holiday festivities – but so far, holiday preparations have been just a long list of things to do, things to buy, things to clean with too little time, money and patience.

I'm envious of people with little children who still believe. I'm envious of people who happily bake, shop and prepare for a family feast. It all seems like burdensome work to me this year. I'm not pleased with the “bah humbug” state I'm in and feel guilty for not being more grateful for all I have.

Maybe instead of waiting for the Christmas spirit to find me, I'll have to go and find it. All I'm sure of is that it won't be at a mall.

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It has been very easy to get caught up in the excitement of the Olympic Torch Relay as the symbolic flames comes closer and closer to Acton.

Day 51 of the relay is Saturday and the torch will cross over into Acton at 7:57 a.m. – handed off to Aaron Walkoff of Thornhill. Although three of the seven names of people who will carry the torch through Acton have not yet been released, only one of the three whose identify has been released is from Acton.

It seems a shame that many of the people who took the time and effort to enter the various contests to put their names in contention as potential torch carriers will not get to carry the torch in their home community.

### Thumbs up

☺ To the staff of ALLTO Construction whose friendly and courteous ways have sure impressed neighbours along Guelph Street where waterman and sewer replacement work is underway.

☺ To the potential vandals who have shown remarkable restraint and not touched the Olympic display at the Main/Mill Street parkette.

☺ To Acton BIA manager Josey Bonnette who has created the various displays – including the Fall Fair, Hallowee'en and now the Olympics – at the four corner parkette

### Thumbs down

☹ To the drives who don't clear snow from the tops of their vehicles, causing a hazard for following motorists when the wind throws the snow back onto the windshields of following cars.

☹ To Halton Council that was expected to approve a planning document yesterday (Wednesday) that has “angered, and frustrated” local rural landowners and councillors with its added land use restrictions.



**TEA TIME:** Churchill Community Church was busy recently when it hosted a proper English Tea. Mary Allen, from Acton, and Shirley McKeown, from Georgetown, enjoyed their afternoon tea with friends and family. - Nancy McLelland photo

## The ocean is more than a great place to catch fish

By David Suzuki with Faisal Moola

To many people, our oceans are little more than a great blue expanse of water. To some, they are a source of beauty and enjoyment. And for millions of people around the globe, the oceans are sources of food and jobs in fishing or fish-farming industries. But the oceans are also the anchor for life on this planet. When it comes to global warming, the oceans may be our salvation.

The oceans do much more than provide us with food, employment, and enjoyment. They also absorb much of the excess carbon that humans have been pumping into the atmosphere during industrialization.

The world's oceans have already absorbed a huge percentage of carbon that would contribute to global warming if it were released into the atmosphere, according to Blue Carbon: the Role of Healthy Oceans in Binding Carbon, a report by the UN Environment Programme, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, and the

### Science Matters

By David Suzuki



Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO.

The IOC's Patricio Bernal argues that “the ocean has already spared us from dangerous climate change.” He adds, though, that “each day we are essentially dumping 25 million tons of carbon into the ocean. As a consequence, the ocean is turning more acidic, posing a huge threat to organisms with calcareous structures.” (These organisms include corals, clams, shrimp, and many types of plankton.)

The report finds that protecting and restoring marine ecosystems such as estuaries and mangroves could contribute to offsetting up to seven per cent of current fossil fuel emissions at a much lower cost than technologies to capture and store carbon at power stations. What this means from a global warming perspective is that by simply protecting and restoring these ecosystems, we could achieve 10 per cent of the reduc-

tions required to keep the climate from warming by 2° C. These actions would also have numerous other benefits to marine wildlife and fisheries.

The damage we are inflicting on ocean ecosystems has numerous consequences for global warming. Ice at the North and South poles has kept our ocean temperatures relatively stable for millennia. Now, our oceans are absorbing so much additional energy that the ice is melting and the oceans are warming at an ever-increasing rate. If polar ice disappears, the warming trend will escalate because the albedo effect, the reflection of sunlight off bright surfaces like clouds and ice, will decrease. We can only guess how this will affect marine ecosystems and all life on our planet, but we are already noticing changes in the distribution and abundance of species throughout the world's oceans.

The Blue Carbon report notes that of all living organisms that are able to capture carbon, those that live in the ocean capture more than 55 per cent. Coastal

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