

GRAPEVINE



Festival Fun

Acton will be transformed into the Big Easy on September 8 for the annual Leathertown Festival, which this year has a Mardi Gras theme. Mill Street will be closed and turned into Bourbon Street for the afternoon, and various other downtown locations will take on a New Orleans flavour.

Music will play a large role in the party - a New Orleans-style jazz band - The Happy Pals - will entertain from a stage at the United Church parking lot, and the Travelling Riverboat Show will stroll the street.

Library fun

Teddy Bears and kids in pyjamas are invited to the Acton library for Sleepy Storytime - a 30-minute program featuring age appropriate stories. The program at the Acton branch is offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 7 p.m., until August 26.

Kids six and older are invited to the Acton library Book Parties that include games and crafts with fun book themes including Fairies and Diary of a Wimpy Kid.

The programs runs Tuesdays at 2 p.m. in the Acton Branch until August 24. For details visit www.hhpl.on.ca or call 519-853-0301.

Unsafe to swim

Boy, it is lucky that Acton's splash pad is open in because that's the only water in Prospect Park that is safe for water play. Once again, the water at the Old Beach has tested unsafe for swimming or water sports because of unacceptable levels of bacteria.

Since Halton began weekly testing in June, water quality at the Old Beach has only been good enough for swimming once.

To find out if a beach is safe, during business hours call 1-866-442-5866 and ask for beach information and after regular hours press 2 for health information.

Golf for sledge hockey

Registrations are now being accepted for the Precept golf tournament, in support of Canada's National Sledge Hockey team, that will take place at Acton's Blue Springs golf course on September 20.

Money raised at the tourney will help send the multi-medal winning team to the Winter Paralympic championships in 2012. For details visit www.preceptgroup.net or call 1-800-881-5581.

BIA moving

After a search of more than a year, the Acton BIA (Business Improvement Area) office is moving from its cramped office to a new rented office at 20 Mill St. East, just steps from its old location.

"We're so crowded at the old location - now we'll be able to hold meetings at the office and not have to find somewhere else to go," said BIA spokesman Alec Boyd.

The new office is in a building recently purchased by Acton Optical owner Nancy Wilkes, chair of the BIA. The building is the former home to Fat Cat Tattoo which has left Acton for the Brockville area.

The BIA will open at its new location on August first, and all of the contact information remains the same including the phone: 519-853-9555, Fax: 510-853-5135 and email: actonbia@cogeco.net.

Geothermal information

HERE! Halton Enablers of Renewable Energy is hosting a geothermal energy information night for Halton residents interested in installing a geothermal system in their home. This event takes place on Thursday, August 12 from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. at Devereaux House located at 11494 Trafalgar Road in Georgetown. A representative from Devereaux House will explain the energy efficient upgrades made to this Victorian home. A geothermal energy specialist will explain how a geothermal system can be an efficient replacement for your furnace and air conditioning unit as well as heat your floors, pool and hot water. You will also be shown the geothermal system currently in operation at Devereaux House. This event is free but seating is limited, so please register by calling 905-299-2327 or emailing here.office@gmail.com. For more information on the HERE! Project, please visit halton.ourpower.ca.



SING, SPELL & JUMP: Children were thrilled to meet TV's Polka Dot Door presenter Cindy Cook recently at the Acton Library. Assisting the award-winning television star from left: Alyssa, Emma, Brayden, Kelsea and AJ. - Denise Paulsen photo

Science Matters

By David Suzuki



Outdoor fun is good

By David Suzuki
with Faisal Moola

When I was growing up in London, Ontario, in the early 1950s, back doors would flap open between 5:30 and 6 p.m., and parents would call Johnny or Mary to come home for dinner. We'd be out playing in the park, empty lot, or nearby ditch or creek. Back then, there wasn't a television station in London, and the few folks with TV sets had to capture signals from Cleveland or Detroit and watch shadowy black-and-white images made worse by electronic snow. There were no computers, cell phones, iPods, or digital anything. Our fun was outdoors.

Now, according to author Richard Louv, only six per cent of nine- to 13-year-old children in the U.S. play outside in a typical week. This is reflected by a dramatic decline in fishing, swimming, and even biking. Mr. Louv, cofounder of the Children and Nature Network, noted that in San Diego, "90 percent of inner-city kids do not know how to swim" and "34 percent have never been to the beach."

I live near the ocean in Vancouver, and when my children were in primary school, I would watch the tide charts for exceptionally low tides so I could take my daughters' classes to the beach. It always surprised me to see how many of the kids had never been to a "wild" beach. Some were timorous about walking about in the muck of a tidal flat. Most had never rolled

over a rock to find crabs, blennies, and anemones. Often, the immediate reaction was "Yuk," but I never found a child who wasn't entranced within a few minutes to find these natural wonders.

Now that I'm an old man, my sentiments may simply reflect nostalgia for the "good old days". Children today find it hard to fathom the world of my childhood. "What did you do?" they ask in amazement. They can't imagine a world without all the electronic accoutrements of their instant plugged-in world.

The eminent Harvard biologist E.O. Wilson coined the term biophilia, referring to our need to affiliate with other species (bio = life; philia = love). He believes this is built into our genes, a reflection of our evolutionary roots. In cities, we increasingly work against our biophilic needs by instilling a biophobia. We teach our children by the way we react to nature's intrusion into our homes: Take that out. Don't touch. It might bite.

This is a problem because the way we treat the world around us is a direct reflection of our values and beliefs. Compare the way we treat another species when we believe it is our biological kin rather than just a resource, commodity, or opportunity. The way we see the world shapes the way we treat it, and we will only protect what we know and love.

But our cities have developed with more regard to the needs of cars and commerce than people.

When a father has to go to court to fight for the right of kids to play road hockey, you know something is wrong.

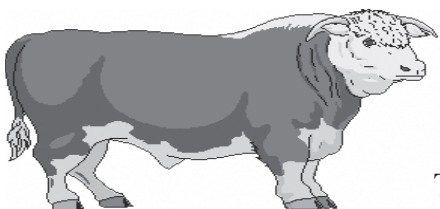
Globalization has disconnected us from the real world as we purchase products for their brand names without regard to the source of the raw materials or where and under what conditions the components were manufactured and assembled. Food no longer reflects seasons or locale. It becomes easier to focus on the economy and consumption while forgetting the real source of everything we need and use, namely nature.

Our children have exchanged the experience of outdoors and nature with the enclosed world of electronics, resulting in "nature deficit disorder". For those of us who are concerned about the state of the biosphere, this is disturbing because a person for whom nature is a stranger will not notice, let alone care about, environmental degradation.

That's why many environmentalists are concerned with the way young people are growing up. Computers, television, video games, and the Internet offer information and entertainment in a virtual world without the hazards or discomfort of mosquitoes, rain and cold, steep climbs, or "dangerous" animals of the real world - and without all the joys that the real world has to offer. Unless we are willing to encourage our children to reconnect with and appreciate the natural world, we can't expect them to help protect and care for it.

What's Your Beef?

Put it in a letter to the Editor!



It's better than just chewing your cud!

Deadline is Tuesday at noon.