

GRAPEVINE



Limehouse fundraiser

Corn, burgers and a silent auction are on tap on Saturday (September 18) at the Limehouse Memorial Hall for its annual fundraiser. Rain or shine, the event runs from 4 to 7 p.m., and proceeds will help with Hall maintenance.

Affordable housing contest

Having won Gold in 2008 and Bronze last year, Acton High School students hopefully will do well again this year in the fourth annual Be a Hero, Be a Voice for Affordable Housing contest designed to allow students to show their creativity and raise awareness about the need for more affordable housing. Students create an entry – video, design, song or poetry etc. – to highlight how the lack of affordable housing can impact a family or individual. Cash prizes include \$1,000 to the Gold winner, \$500 to the Silver and four \$100 Bronze prizes. Details about the contest, sponsored this year by the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association, are at www.halton.ca/beahero.

Waste artwork

The call is out to Halton Kindergarten to Grade eight students to submit artwork for a contest to select the front cover for Halton's waste management calendar. Last year's calendar featured the work of Acton's Raine Masse, a student at St. Joseph Catholic School.

The theme this year is "My family recycles every day," and must feature a Blue Box, GreenCart and a positive environment. Acceptable materials for the contest include chalk, charcoal, crayon, marker, paint and pencil. Four entries will be selected – one from each Halton municipality – for the 2011 Waste Management Guide and Collection Calendar. Winners will receive an environmental prize package.

Submissions must be made before 4:30 p.m., on Friday, October 15. All entries will be displayed at the Halton HQ

during Waste Reduction Week, October 18 to 24.

Thanks, Donors

Canadian Blood Services officials were pleasantly surprised with the turnout at the blood clinic last Wednesday at the Acton arena/community centre – they collected 56 units of blood and turned away just three donors. There was also one first-timer at the clinic that collected 10 more units of blood than expected. To book an appointment for the October 21 clinic that runs from 2 to 7:30 p.m. at the Acton Legion on Wright Avenue call 1-888-2-DONATE (1-888-236-6283.)

Compost gives away

Halton residents are invited to help themselves to up to seven garbage bags of rich, garden-friendly compost produced by Halton's yard waste collection program tomorrow (Friday) and Saturday at the Region's Waste Management site in Milton between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

While the compost is free, officials would be grateful for a donation of a non-perishable food item or cash to help Halton's food banks, including Acton's FoodShare.

Back to church

The leaders of Acton's churches hope the pews will be full on Sunday, September 26, which is the international Back to Church Sunday.

The invitation is out to those who have never attended church or who haven't been in a while to attend any of the Acton churches that will open their doors that day.

'Dog donation

Thanks to Acton Sobeyes – with the help of Maple Leaf Foods and Canada Bread – approximately 1,200 students attending Education Day on Friday (tomorrow) at the Fall Fair won't go hungry. Sobeyes will continue its tradition of feeding free hot dogs to the kids who will spend the day learning about agriculture and farming with hands-on exhibits and activities.



CANCER FUNDRAISERS: A team of Acton area women called Mommy's On A MISSION raised over \$27,000 on the weekend at the annual walk in Toronto to raise money for cancer research. The team includes, front row: Sherry Fraser, Suzanne Hastie and Christina McCauley. Back: Tracy Duerden, Barry Fraser, Debbie Sukmawan, Shelley Intzandt, John Tauer and Heidi Tauer. – Submitted photo

With Fraser River sockeye, seeing red is cause for cautious celebration

By David Suzuki
with Faisal Moola

Science Matters
By David Suzuki



Salmon have been an integral part of the life and culture of people on Canada's West Coast since time began. They're also essential to coastal ecosystems, providing food for bears, eagles, insects, and other animals, and contributing to the magnificence of coastal rainforests by transferring nitrogen and other nutrients to the forest floor when bears and birds feed on them.

This year, we're seeing an unexpected – some would say "miraculous" – return of sockeye salmon to the Fraser River, with as many as 30-million fish expected to make their way up the river to spawn, almost triple the number originally predicted. Last year, only about 1.5-million returned, far fewer than the 10 million expected.

Although seeing the rivers run red with salmon once again is cause for celebration, we can't say this signals a reversal of the declines in Fraser River salmon populations that have been occurring over the past two decades. To begin, our understanding of this magnificent fish and its life cycle is limited. We simply don't know much about what happens to the fish during the two years they spend in the ocean.

And we must remember that one year of good returns doesn't mean returns will be good for years to come. This is a "dominant" cycle year. After hatching, Fraser sockeye spend two years in lakes and rivers before heading out to sea, where they

spend another two years before returning to spawn. The fish coming back this year are the offspring of those that returned and spawned in 2006. The current cycle has traditionally been the biggest, or most dominant, since early in the 20th century. In 2006, about 13-million Fraser sockeye returned.

The Fraser also has about 40 distinct sockeye populations, and some, such as the Cultus Lake sockeye, aren't doing that well. Conserving all of these populations to maintain biological diversity is the best way to ensure that overall abundance of Fraser sockeye remains high. And although this year's runs appear high, they are much lower than they have been in the past. Before commercial fishing began on the Fraser, as many as 100 million fish are estimated to have made their way back up the river in some years.

We won't know until later in the fall whether a large number of Fraser sockeye successfully spawned and whether endangered populations returned in higher abundance than in previous years.

Some people have argued that too many salmon are returning this year, and they we must allow the fishing industry to catch more of them if we are to ensure healthy runs in the future. But all the available science shows that when more fish return to spawn, the following cycle will be more abundant. Salmon are

never "wasted". Even those that don't spawn provide food for the insects that in turn provide food for the salmon that hatch on the spawning grounds, contributing to the health of subsequent stocks. And they provide food and nutrients for bears, eagles, and forests.

On top of that, the fishing plan for 2010 allows high catch rates even for the endangered populations. The 2010 plan allows fishing of up to 30 per cent of the critically endangered Cultus stock, even though scientists recommend that fishing should not exceed 12 per cent. Along with habitat damage and loss, warmer waters because of climate change, and parasite and disease impacts from open-net salmon farms, this could pose a threat to the long-term viability of the Fraser River salmon.

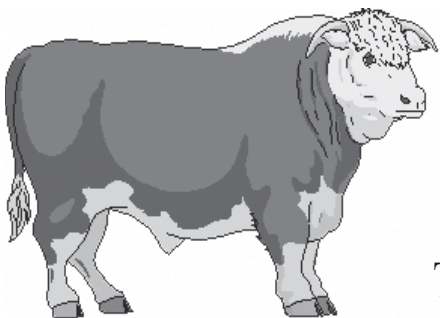
After the disastrous sockeye returns last year, and the significant declines for the past 20 years, we must see this year's Fraser sockeye returns as a hopeful sign that this important, wonderful, and surprisingly resilient creature can be saved. But we won't save them with guesswork or by greedily fishing as many salmon as possible. We must work hard to reduce all the threats against the salmon, from habitat destruction to overfishing to climate change to open-net fish farms.

And so, let's enjoy the gift of the sockeye salmon this year, but remember that it's a gift we can't afford to take for granted.

Learn more at www.davidsuzuki.org.

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.