

# GRAPEVINE



## Fringe benefits

Who would have thought that the Town's decision to spend \$1.3-million to buy five acres of surplus school board land at McKenzie-Smith Bennett would improve road safety?

It did for Acton Councillor Jon Hurst who said he could now "see out the back window of my van because I've finally taken the 'MSB Not For Sale' sign" down.

## Storytime moves

The stories, fun and music of the library's popular Storytime drop-in program is offered in a new location this fall – at the Acton Hub by the pool entrances of McKenzie-Smith Bennett School. The free, 30-minute program for parents and young children will run Wednesdays, from October 20 to November 24 at 2 p.m.

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Staff at the Acton branch will screen *Atlantis* – Disney's first sci-fi animated movie – at a Munch at the Movies PD Day activity at noon tomorrow (Friday). Kids are invited to bring a lunch. No registration is required, but seating is limited and there have been packed houses at past movie/lunches.

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An informal Friday afternoon book lovers group resumes meeting at the Acton branch on October 29. The program is billed as a fun and informal chat about books, new library materials, and refreshments. You can register at the circulation desk for the monthly Coffee, Books and Conversation program. Call 519-853-0301 for details.

## Harpist returns

Eduard Klassen will offer Christian harp music from around the world, interspersed with personal testimonies of God's work in his life, which began in remote Paraguay, at Knox Presbyterian Church on October 17. Klassen is back by popular demand after his lively music and natural sense of humour were a hit at Knox two years ago.

A free will offering will be gratefully accepted, and fellowship and refreshments will follow the 2 p.m. concert.

## SAVIS meeting

Acton women are invited to attend "A Woman's Voice – A Women's Group" program which

begins October 13 and runs until November 3 at the Acton Hub at McKenzie-Smith Bennett School from 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Run by SAVIS – the Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Services of Halton – the meeting is an opportunity to meet other women and share experiences. For details call 905-825-3622.

## Jazz concert

The next concert in the acclaimed fall jazz series at Halton Museum is Sunday's (October 10) performance of the Fern Lindzon Duo in the Hearth Room. The concerts are a fundraiser for the Halton Museum Foundation. The Museum is in Kelso Conservation Area, a site originally settled in 1836 by Scottish immigrants.

## Breast health

Breast health is on the agenda during Breast Cancer Awareness Month as Acton homeopathic doctor and breast program educator, Dr. Cynthia Simmons, is the guest speaker at two lectures in Georgetown.

On October 26, at 7 p.m., Dr. Simmons will present a "Breast and Digestive Health" lecture at the Georgetown library, and on October 19 at the Georgetown CURVES, she speaks at 7 p.m. For details call 519-853-8950.

## Chief's contract extended

Happy with his performance, the Halton Police Service Board has extended the employment contract of Chief Gary Crowell until June 2012, with an option for a further one-year extension.

Chief since June 2006, with a five-year contract that's up in June 2011, Chief Crowell is praised for his strong leadership, progressive crime prevention programs, law and safety initiatives that have made Halton one of the safest municipalities in Canada.

## Racer visits Acton

Sobeys/Minute Maid race car driver Dave Connelly and his fast car will be in Acton on October 12 with pit stops at St. Joseph Catholic School and Sobeys, which has "adopted" the school.

After a "show and tell" at the school, Connelly and his car will head to Sobeys for a fundraising barbecue from 3 to 7 p.m., with proceeds earmarked for St. Joseph.



QUIET BEAUTY: As the season changes, Fairy Lake takes on a stark beauty. – Submitted photo

# Protect the local farms, fields, and fisheries that feed us

By David Suzuki  
with Faisal Moola



As we move into fall, the bounty of Canada's farms, fields, and fisheries is filling local markets across the country: artisan cheese in Montreal, fresh sockeye salmon in Vancouver, plump blueberries in Thunder Bay, and scones, biscuits, and countless other treats made from heritage Red Fife wheat grown on the prairies.

No question about it, Canadians are embracing the idea of eating food produced closer to home, a sustainability movement that has been dubbed "locavorism". Proponents of eating local argue that we need to increase food security and reduce our dependence on other regions or nations for supplies of milk, meat, vegetables, fruit, cooking oil, grains, and other staples, as well as luxury items like fine wine and fancy cheese.

According to the experts, the planet faces looming scarcities of almost everything necessary to sustain high crop yields – water, land, fertilizer, oil, and a stable climate. A disruption in global trade brought on by crop failure or skyrocketing oil prices could have serious consequences in many regions of Canada, especially in communities in the Arctic and coastal Canada that have to import food largely from elsewhere.

For example, in Powell River, B.C., most food on the supermarket shelves has to be trucked and then shipped by boat from distribution centres in the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island every day. The Powell River Food Security Project is an initiative by the community

to reduce its over-reliance on imported food, along with the associated costs and insecurity of supply, by promoting backyard gardens and, on a larger scale, farming of local acreage.

The social and environmental benefits of eating local are also compelling. The globalization of food supply means that, on average, most of our food has to travel some 2,400-kilometres from field to table, resulting in enormous emissions of greenhouse gases and other atmospheric pollutants from the millions of trucks, container ships, trains, and other vehicles required to transport food around the planet.

For many people, the desire to eat local is motivated by the need for more information about how the food they eat is produced and prepared. Today, we are so disconnected from our food: processed and packaged foods, vacuum-sealed chicken breasts, garlic imported from China, apples from New Zealand, and the plethora of other cheap imported foods have become little more than delivery systems for nutrients, calories, sugar, salt, and fat. If you buy your meat and fruit and vegetables at a local farmer's market, you can talk to the farmer or producer and find out what the chicken ate or how the potatoes were grown before you choose to put them on your dinner table.

Many people would also argue that local food, because it is usually fresher, tastes better.

Although it is encouraging

to see more people take greater responsibility for the food they eat by choosing to buy local, we can't let governments off the hook. Politicians need to support local agriculture by implementing policies and laws that protect farmland, ensure that Canadian farmers receive a fair price for the food they grow, and remove regulatory barriers that hinder farm-gate sales.

The protection of Canada's rich agricultural soil from urban sprawl, roads, industrial development, and other land use must be central to any government local food strategy. Study after study has shown that Canada's best agricultural land is being chewed up and paved over because of poor urban-planning decisions that value parking lots, new highways, and larger strip malls over keeping our precious bank of fertile soil for current and future generations of farmers to steward – for our benefit.

A report by the David Suzuki Foundation, Ontario's Wealth, Canada's Future, found that an alarming 16 per cent of farmland in the Greater Toronto Area was lost to urban encroachment between 1996 and 2001. This represents the loss of thousands of acres of some of the most fertile soils in all of North America. The same is happening in other growing communities across the country – like Ottawa, Calgary, and even smaller towns like Fort St. John in northern B.C.

We should all be concerned about these issues if we want to maintain local food security and minimize the environmental costs of the food we eat.

Learn more at [www.davidsuzuki.org](http://www.davidsuzuki.org).

## CORRECTION

The pride and joy of Acton firefighters is a 1926 – not 1962 – Studebaker fire truck as was reported in last week's issue. The New Tanner regrets the error.