

GRAPEVINE



Truck safety

Halton police hope for much better results in a commercial vehicle safety blitz today (Thursday) in Acton, after a recent safety inspection at the Dufferin quarry on the fourth Line. In that quarry-organized safety check two weeks ago, six of the eight gravel trucks failed a mechanical inspection. Police laid 18 charges and took the plates off one unsafe truck.

Along with a MTO officials, Halton's specialized vehicle safety team will look for mechanical and paperwork issues during the blitz from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Job search help

Returning to the workforce can be daunting, but free, practical help is available - everything from upgrading rusty computer skills to mock interviews to build confidence.

Five and 10-week computer courses began yesterday (Wednesday) but space is available at the Links2Care Employment Resource Centre in Mill Street. On October 19 at 11 a.m., the focus at the Centre will be on competing in the new job market.

On October 28, staff will stage mock interviews at 11 a.m., and at 2 p.m., the seminar will deal with retraining options including eligibility and financial information. For details calls 519-853-5014.

Parental help

Parents who feel pressured to be perfect would benefit from the new "Nobody's Perfect" parent/child seminar that runs on Tuesdays from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m., at the Acton Ontario Early Years Centre in the Band Hall on Wallace Street.

The Centre offers a free drop-in program on the first and third Thursday of the month - from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. - for parents and caregivers of kids from birth to two-and-a-half years old.

The program includes Tiny Tot Circle at 11 a.m., with songs, rhymes and stories. Call Jennifer at 519-853-2960 for more information.

Spectacular views

You don't have to look far in the Acton/Halton area before finding a beautiful fall scene. Two areas, which offer especially spectacular vistas this year, are from the top of the chair lift at Kelso Conservation Area, and from the Glen Williams cemetery.

Conservation Halton suggests a back-roads drive between its six parks offers a perfect scenic tour, or you can hop on the free Fall Colour Shuttle.

Campaign Boss Needed

Wanted: An organized person with good people skills, a good eye for detail and a sense of humour. The candidate must be available for regular monthly meetings, and for a couple of weeks each spring. The volunteer job - campaign coordinator for the Acton Branch of the Canadian Cancer Society - includes helping existing captains with the door-to-door campaign. Training and support will be provided. For details, call Cathy at 819-853-1424.

Snowmobile permits

For those of you who are praying for snow - there's a new location in Acton to get your 2010/2011 Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Club trail permit. Permits - \$200 before December 1, and \$250 after, are now available at Yourway Auto on Main Street North.

Creative winners

Congrats to Acton's Alexandra Armstrong and Valarie Wood, two of the 12 budding writers whose submissions were selected as winners in the Library's second annual Ink Writing project. Kids entered work - poetry, short stories and illustrated fiction - in two age groups.

Armstrong's illustrated fiction entry Dream Runner won in the Inksters (Grades four to eight) category, and Wood's poetry entry called Emotions won in the Inkinings (Grades nine and 10) category.

All of the winners will receive their prizes - \$50 and a booklet of the collected entries - at a ceremony on October 26 at the Georgetown branch. The booklet is available at both branches.

Astronomy night

Want to see Comet Hartley? Join the North Halton Astronomy Club when it sets up telescopes for a public viewing in Sir Donald Mann Park on October 26. The planet Jupiter will also be bright in the sky.

Depending on clear skies, the event begins at 8 p.m., and lasts an hour. If you have a telescope or binoculars, bring them along and dress warmly.

If the weather is poor, the event will be rescheduled.

For more information call 519-853-0675.



CANCER CASH: Members of Acton's annual Paul Murr Memorial Golf Tournament committee recently presented a \$4,175 cheque to CASHH (Cancer Assistance Services of Halton Hills). Committee members Jon Hurst (left), Allan Hall and John McNabb presented the cheque to Sheila Smith, Executive Director of CASHH. A \$53,000 cheque will be presented to the Acton Branch of the Canadian Cancer Society for general cancer research. These donations bring the 26 year total to \$850,000. - Submitted photo

Shady practices are good when it comes to coffee

By David Suzuki
with Faisal Moola

Science Matters

By David Suzuki



Coffee is the second most traded commodity in the world, after oil. And as with oil, the massive scale of production necessary to meet our insatiable demand for coffee results in an enormous ecological footprint. According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, more than seven million tonnes of coffee will be produced worldwide this year.

The thirst for coffee is growing rapidly in developing countries, like Indonesia, where coffee beans are grown and exported. And while citizens of wealthier nations are cutting their coffee consumption, people in Africa and South America are drinking more - thanks to increasing household incomes, population growth, changing tastes, and successful marketing.

With so many people drinking coffee (63 per cent of Canadians drink it daily, on average 2.6 cups per day), growers have industrialized production to meet demand. They've done this by establishing high-yield monoculture plantations, spraying toxic pesticides to control unwanted insects and plant pathogens, and even developing genetically modified varieties that allow traditionally shade-grown coffee, like arabica, to be grown under more economically productive conditions in partial or full sunlight.

These industrial agricultural practices have proven success-

ful in ensuring a steady supply of beans to world markets, but the environmental costs associated with much of the coffee consumed worldwide is too high, according to many scientists who study the industry and its impacts.

Most coffee sold in Canada is grown in open plantations on land that was once tropical or subtropical forest. Since the early 1970s, huge swaths of natural rain forest have been cleared in coffee-producing nations such as Mexico, as the industry has shifted from traditional shade production to "sun-grown".

According to Bridget Stutchbury, an internationally renowned bird expert who has studied the impacts of coffee production on neotropical birds, "Sun coffee is not a self-sufficient ecosystem - it can only be grown with large amounts of fertilizer, fungicides, herbicides and pesticides. There are no trees to shade the coffee plants and soil from the downpours of tropical rains; soil erosion and leaching is a big problem in sun coffee farms."

On top of that, sun-coffee plantations provide little habitat for sensitive species, such as neotropical migratory birds like the hooded warbler, which are threatened because of the loss of their rain-forest habitat.

Troubled by the consider-

able environmental and social footprint of their favourite beverage, many consumers are looking for coffee that has been certified as organic, Fair Trade, or otherwise sustainably grown. But with so many choices, and confusing and difficult-to-verify environmental claims by businesses, experts recommend that you choose coffee that has been triple certified: organic, Fair Trade, and "shade grown".

Although it won't replace natural forests, growing coffee in shade using agro-ecosystem techniques does provide extensive understory and canopy cover from a diversity of tropical trees, providing a refuge for butterflies, birds, and other wildlife. Studies have shown that shade coffee plantations can provide habitat approaching natural conditions.

As with food labelled organic or Fair Trade, consumers need a credible certification system to guarantee that their cup of coffee has been produced in a way that doesn't harm bird and other wildlife habitat. One credible certification system for shade coffee is the "Bird Friendly" eco-label, which is awarded to producers who follow a rigorous audit and verification process by the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center.

Switching to certified shade-grown coffee for your morning cup of joe won't save the planet on its own, but it is one more simple way to lessen your environmental impact.

Learn more at www.davidsuzuki.org.