

Arts scholarships up for grabs

It's time to celebrate the arts in York Region again.

As part of the celebration, the York Region Newspaper Group wants to help fund amateur performance artists with its second annual Celebration of the Arts scholarship program.

"The purpose of this is to encourage the artistic talent in York Region," Marsha Winton, co-chairperson of the York Region Celebration of the Arts committee, said of the scholarship fund.

"We've established a series of scholarships to help rising amateur artists further their careers."

Actors, singers, dancers and musicians are encouraged to enter the competi-

tion.

Mrs. Winton said the arts play an important role in the community.

Applications are available at the offices of the Economist & Sun at 9 Heritage Rd in Markham, the Stouffville Sun at 34 Civic Avenue in downtown Stouffville, or online at www.yorkregion.com

The last date for submissions is June 28 at 5 p.m. Late applications will not be accepted.

For further information send an e-mail to celebratethearts@yrng.com with your name and phone number. No phone calls, please.

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We are looking for your questions
Ask Dr. Bear

Dear Dr. Bear:

My children want to spend a lot of time outdoors this summer but we are concerned about insect bites and various sport related injuries. What should we do preventively?

Yours truly,
Loving Parents

Dear Loving Parents:

With the fear of the West Nile Virus (transmitted by mosquitoes that has attacked infected birds) and Lyme Disease (transmitted by Deer Ticks), it is important to know how to minimize insect bites when our kids play outdoors. Since children's body temperature is warmer than adults', they tend to be more attractive to insects. Furthermore, some kids may be extremely allergic to stinging insects.

Insects love perfume. Many stinging insects (bees and wasps) and flies are attracted to food and beverages. They also love open garbage. The stinging insects' peak activity is at daytime and they love bright colour and flowery patterns. They are usually not afraid of insect repellents.

Mosquitoes usually come out in the evening after sunset. They love dark colours. They lay eggs in stagnant water.

The following are the key pointers to minimize insect bite:

Cover the body surface as much as possible, including wearing socks. Babies should be in a stroller with a net screen over them. Wear bright colours at night and wear dull and dark colours during the day. Wear an insect repellent with DEET less than 10%. You will need to reapply every 6 hours. DEET of higher concentration can be absorbed through the skin and is poisonous. Carefully check the product label. The insect repellent is to be applied over the sunscreen. If both products are used, re-application has to be more frequent. "Plant-based bite blocker" and "Avon's Skin-So-Soft moisturizing sunscreen plus" are reasonable DEET-free alternatives.

Spray your children's clothes with permethrin-based spray.

Do not use any perfume products on skin, hair and clothing.

Inspect the house surroundings to make sure there are no water collections in empty cans, flowerpots or bird feeders. These places are perfect for mosquitoes to lay eggs.

Do not leave any food, drinks and garbage in the open as these draw insects to the play area.

Do not walk on grass bare feet to avoid stepping on stinging insects.

Do not drink from an open beverage can to avoid getting stung in the mouth by stinging insects.

If there is a known allergy to stinging insects, always carry your Epi-pen in case of an emergency.

If an insect has bitten you, consider the following measures:

If you have signs of severe allergic reaction such as difficulty breathing, weakness, unconsciousness, hives or itching all over, extreme swelling of different facial structures and penis, you should use the Epi-pen immediately when available or call the ambulance.

For mild local reaction, cold compress followed by Calamine lotion will probably relieve most symptoms. Avoid using Calamine near the eyes or on the penis.

Using a mixture of 2% Hydrocortisone with Lanacane cream on very itchy and swollen bite area four times a day has shown good results. Please consult your doctor to get a prescription.

In addition, children like to spend time outdoor biking, scootering and roller blading in the summer time. Please be aware of the following potential injuries:

There are 50,000 children severely injured in bike related mishaps every year.

A fall from two feet can cause permanent brain damage and a fall at a speed of 20 km/hr can result in death.

30 to 40% of bike helmets worn by children in USA are not suitable for them and may not protect them from head injury.

There has been a 700% increase in scooter related injuries since May 2000 of which 60% could have been prevented or reduced in severity if proper protections were worn. Proper protections include helmet, elbow pads and kneepads.

There are two million Canadian In-Line skaters (roller blades) per year. This sport is a leading cause of injuries in emergency room during the summer time. 81% of the injuries occur in children less than 14 years old. The number of injuries would be much lower if helmets, wrist guards, elbow and kneepads were used along with proper inspection of skates. It is illegal for children under 16 years to bike without a helmet. Parents will be fined for violating this safety rule.

For more detailed information on proper protection, please consult the following resources:

York Region Health Services, Health connection @ 1 800 361-5653

Canadian Standards Association @ www.csainternational.org

Health Canada @ www.hc-sc.gc.ca

Safe Kids Canada @ www.safekidscanada.ca

Hospital for Sick Children @ www.sickkids.on.ca

Have a wonderful and safe summer!

Yours truly,

Dr. Bear

Dr. Richard Wong graduated from the University of British Columbia with Honours in Physiology. He subsequently received his medical degree from the University of Calgary in 1983 with a Nat. Christie Award. He was trained in Dalhousie University, Halifax and the Hospital for Sick Children, University of Toronto. After completion of his paediatric training in 1988, he began serving in the Town of Markham as a general paediatrician with a special interest in behaviour and development of children. He has been a paediatric consultant for Markham Stouffville Hospital since 1991. He is currently the medical director of Medical Services International ("MSI"). MSI is a non-profit Christian organization that provides much needed professional and health services and supplies to underserved areas of China.



Dr. Richard Wong

We are looking for your questions. Please mail, fax or email your questions to:

Julie Ponsford, Child Life Specialist

Markham Stouffville Hospital

381 Church Street

P.O. Box 1800

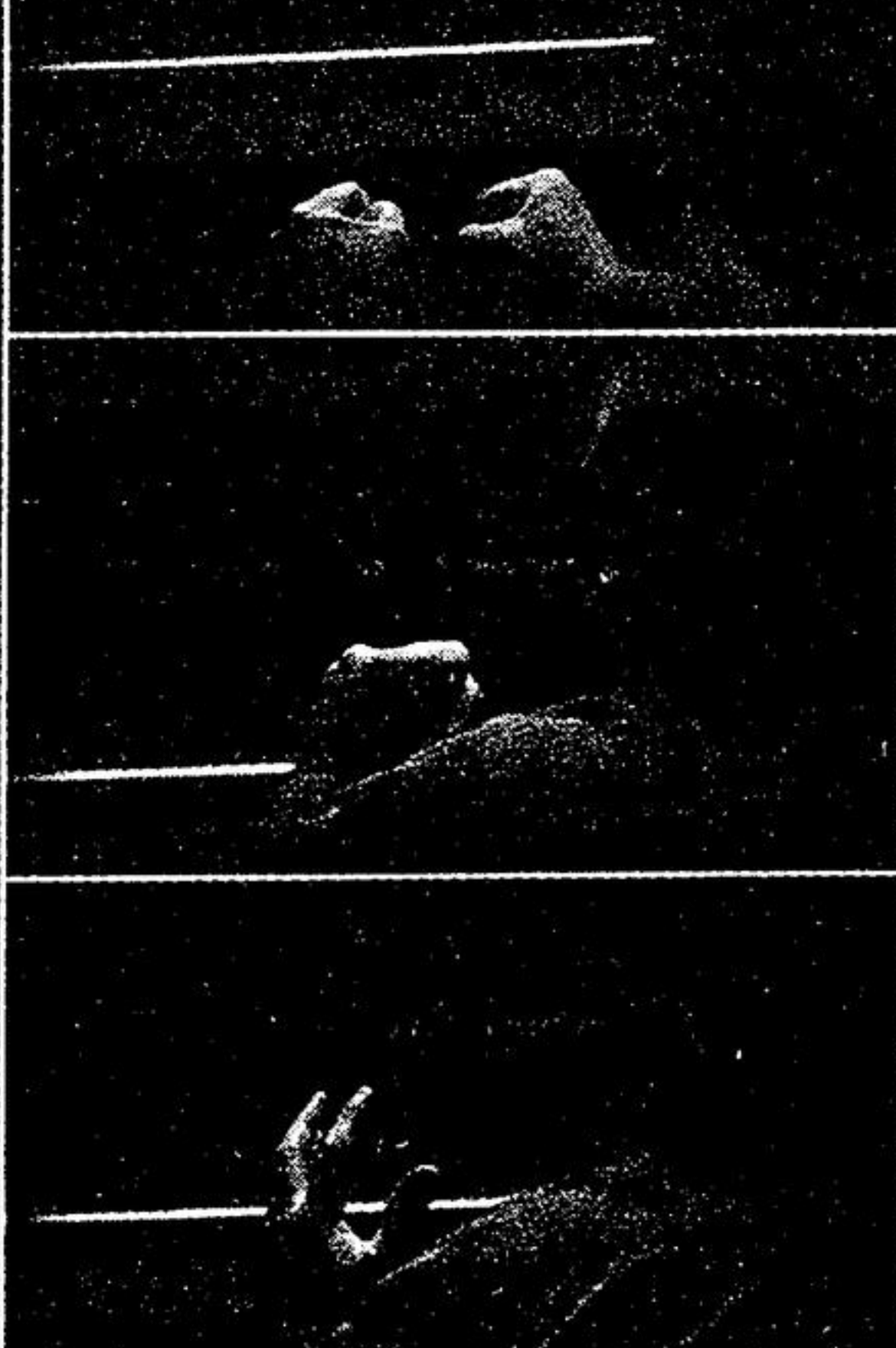
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