

Fiddlers Night tomorrow

THORNTON NEWS

by Cathie Miller

Happy birthday to all the February babies in our village. To name just a few, they are Lena Stephenson, Terry Greensides, Kay McKiernan and Ruby Smith. Best Wishes to all of you and everyone else who may be celebrating this month.

Tomorrow, is the next Barrie Thornton Old Time

Fiddlers Night. It will be held at the Lions Hall. Admission is \$3 per adult and children are free. The doors open at 6 p.m. and the music starts at 7 p.m. sharp. All fiddlers, signers, caller and listeners are welcome. Call Cec Denney for more information at 458-9996.

The Essa Historical

Society meets in the community room of the Thornton library starting at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday February 23. The guest speaker will be Henry Jones, owner and operator of Roadshow Antiques at the 400 Market. The topic for the meeting will be antique appraising and the roll call is pioneer post offices. All are welcome to attend. Call Olive at 458-9971 for more information.

The Thornton Women's

Institute meets on Wednesday February 20 in the community room at the library starting at 7:30 p.m. Roll call is to read a short news clipping about agriculture and the guest speaker will be Sam Squires from Alliston speaking about potatoes. All are welcome.

Interested in Bridge? Jean Harvey is looking to start or join a daytime social bridge group in our village. Call Jean at 458-1021 if you are interested.

Did you know that if you save your Zehrs and Sobeys cash register receipts that you can leave them at the library and the stores will make a donation back to the library? What a simple way to support a great cause. Also at the library you can purchase garbage bags tags and dog tags. Visit or call the library at 458-2549 for more information.

New preschooler storytime sessions will be starting at the library on

Feb. 25, so stop by or call for more details. Monday February 18 is the province's new Family Day holiday and the library will be closed on that day. Enjoy your newest holiday with your family by doing something fun.

If you have any news, announcements or coming events, you can e-mail me at throntonnews@rogers.com, call 458-0869 or drop it off at 25 Robert St. Bye for now.

Hospital volunteers discuss cash flow

By Florence Blanchard

Stevenson Memorial Hospital Auxiliary held its January meeting in the conference room with president Beryl Burroughs presiding.

The meeting was opened with the auxiliary prayers and the welcoming to all

members present. Seven of our regular meeting members were absent with the flu.

Financial reports were given by treasurer Linda Doucette and gift shop treasurer Audrey Mawdsley.

As Doucette gave her report, we noted the

different activities that our auxiliary volunteers had been involved in Santa's Breakfast gave us a profit, but the Tree of Life wasn't as profitable as other years.

Fundraising plans have been made. Our first event will be selling carnations on Valentine's Day in the lobby.

Lucky draw tickets which are drawn at our annual bazaar in October will be sold for the first time at the April Home Show.

The Region 3 spring conference will be hosted in Barrie on Wednesday April 16.

Our annual tag day will

be held on Friday May 23 and will have its headquarters at St. John's United Church in Alliston. The annual meeting will be held on Thursday May 29.

Committee reports were given next. Our membership now stands at 194 and we all appreciate the work our

telephone volunteers do. We are looking forward to receiving the latest edition of our publication, Smock Talk, created by Linda Gaspar.

Our next meeting will take place on Feb. 21 and Lorraine Johnson from the Women's Wellness Clinic will be the guest speaker.

Protecting yourself from HIV

By Dr. Colin Lee
Simcoe Muskoka Medical
Officer of Health

It is estimated that more than 40 million people worldwide are currently infected with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). In Canada, it is thought that at least 58,000 persons are infected with HIV and that about 30 per cent of them are unaware of their infection. It can take years for a person infected with the virus to show any symptoms of infection, during which time a person can unknowingly spread the virus to other people. Every year, anywhere from 2,800 to 5,000 persons in Canada are newly infected, which is evidence that the HIV pandemic continues to thrive.

Despite intense scientific research in the past 25 years, there is still no effective vaccine or cure in sight. However, there are now HIV medications that, although costly, help people live an estimated 24 years after being infected.

More concerning is that there is still some misperception and misinformation about how HIV is transmitted and how people can protect themselves.

HIV is spread primarily by unprotected sexual contact with an infected person, and by sharing

needles or syringes (primarily for illicit drug injection) with someone who is infected.

Therefore, the use of condoms during sexual activity, and using sterile needles and syringes are necessary to prevent transmission.

The risk of HIV transmission through blood transfusions in Canada is now very low given our advanced HIV testing and screening of donors and donated blood.

Our blood bank supply has never been safer. Babies born to HIV-infected women may become infected before or during birth or through breast feeding after birth. However, we now have medical interventions, including medications that greatly decrease the risk of infection during birth. Therefore, it is imperative that all pregnant women be screened for HIV, especially since it is estimated that one-third of all people infected are not aware they have the virus.

Casual contact through closed-mouth or "social" kissing is not a risk for transmission of HIV. Because of the potential for contact with blood (like bleeding gums) during open-mouth kissing, it is recommended against engaging in this activity with a person known to be

infected. However, the risk of acquiring HIV during open-mouth kissing is believed to be very low.

Some people fear that HIV might be transmitted in other ways; however, no scientific evidence to support any of these fears has been found. HIV cannot be transmitted through the air (sneezing), sharing water or food, or insect bites.

The best way for people to protect themselves from HIV is by always using condoms for sex or to avoid having sex until both partners have been tested for HIV.

Testing is the only way to find out if you do or don't have the virus and would be recommended for people starting a new relationship. HIV testing is recommended for anyone who has previously engaged in high risk activity, such as unprotected sex with someone whose HIV status is unknown or needle sharing.

There is generally a three month window period for HIV testing, which is the time between when a person is infected with HIV and the time when a test will detect the virus. Testing, which involves a blood test to find antibodies to HIV, is confidential, and can be performed in consultation with your family physician or primary care provider. If

you are concerned about privacy, you can have an anonymous HIV test. The sexual health clinics at the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit offer anonymous testing.

Being diagnosed with HIV is tragic, but the greater tragedy is that HIV is preventable. Ask yourself if your behaviour puts you at risk, consider testing and always protect yourself from

HIV and other STIs. For more information about HIV and testing, call Your Health Connection weekdays 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. at 1-877-721-7520 and ask for sexual health.

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