

Suzuki book tour to stop in Orangeville

By LAVINIA KERR Staff Reporter



A rare opportunity awaits 600 ticket-holders who will hear world renowned environmentalist Dr. David Suzuki, speak at a one-night-only engagement in Orangeville next week.

The sold-out evening is promised to be an intimate discussion about Dr. Suzuki's life. He is promoting the second installment of his autobiography, which is being released this month.

Orangeville's BookLore, in partnership with two local environmental groups, Reduce the Juice from Shelburne and Weedgee Kidz from Caledon, submitted a proposal to Dr. Suzuki, for Orangeville to be considered as a stop on his book tour.

He accepted the invitation and will speak in the cafetorium at Orangeville District Secondary School, to an audience - limited to ticket-holders - on Saturday, April 29.

"It's one of the smaller venues where he'll be discussing his latest book," said Nancy Frater, owner of BookLore.

She added, "Expect an intimate discussion, up close and personal."

Ms. Frater noted that it is most likely the good work the two organizations she is working with, that helped attract Dr. Suzuki to this community.

Reduce the Juice, a youth-led initiative that sprung up in Shelburne last year, has plans to continue its mission in Orangeville this summer.

The project's objectives for Orangeville include:

Build a renewable energy demonstration system at both high schools to promote energy choices and future technologies;

raise awareness about energy conservation and renewable energy technologies;

encourage the citizens of Orangeville to reduce their use of energy.

Reduce the Juice's influence was felt in Shelburne last year when the first door-to-door campaign was launched to encourage homeowners in the town to reduce their use of energy.

During the summer, the plan is to hire 12 high school students and three university students to conduct door-to-door surveys of 4,000 homes in Orangeville. The goal is to reduce the town's energy usage by five per cent by the end of the summer.

Caledon's Weedgee Kidz, another student-driven community initiative with lofty goals, is pleased to be included in enticing Dr. Suzuki to town.

The group was recently honoured with the 2006 Outstanding Rural Youth Achievement Award, given by the Foundation for Rural Living, and that distinction followed recognition by Credit Valley Conservation last year.

The program provides summer employment for 13 students and two young conservation professionals who go door-to-door with information about organic lawn care. "Getting your lawn off drugs" is a slogan the group uses.

The youth-based community outreach is an innovative, non-profit initiative that travels through the hills of Caledon demonstrating to residents, the art of weed-pulling and provides information about natural lawn care.

Weedgee Kidz is a joint project with Healthy Lawns and the Caledon Countryside Alliance.

It is considered a big boost, by these groups to get Dr. Suzuki's nod for their efforts, and along with the staff at BookLore, who were recognized for publishing and selling community-based books, everyone is thrilled to have been selected to be included on this book tour.

Dr. Suzuki is the host of CBC's "The Nature of Things", the founder and chair of the David Suzuki Foundation and the author of more than 40 books. He was also selected as a nominee in the CBC's competition for the *Greatest Canadian*.

Dr. Suzuki's work as an environmentalist, writer and thinker is highly recognized around the world.

The April 29 presentation is set for 7:30 p.m., but it is suggested to arrive early, (doors open at 6:30 p.m.) as seating is first-come, first-serve.

"Expect an intimate discussion, up close and personal."

- ***Nancy Frater***

Hydro hike higher outside Orangeville

By LAVINIA KERR Staff Reporter

Orangeville families may not have to tighten their belts quite as much as other area families, if the estimated electricity pricing increases announced last week are accurate.

As of May 1, Hydro One is increasing its rates for homeowners across the province and prices will vary for customers according to who supplies the electricity as well as how much power a household uses.

As a result, the increases have varied depending on where you live. Figures supplied by the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) show the differences in rates is significant.

For a typical household that consumes 1,000 kilowatt hours a month, Orangeville residents will see an increase in their bills of only \$3.91 while Brantford residents face a hike of \$17.71 and Toronto customers will pay an extra \$6.72.

Elsewhere in Dufferin, where the power is supplied directly by Hydro One, the increase will be \$15.95, and that will be on top of rates that are already higher than Orangeville Hydro's.

The OEB-approved rate increases are based on a combination of commodity prices - up a uniform \$9.40 a month for the 1,000-kwh consumption, and distribution rates set by local utilities.

Beginning next month, consumers will pay 5.8 cents per kilowatt hour for initial electricity use and 6.7 cents for consumption above a set threshold. During the summer season the threshold is set at 600 kwh. From November to April the threshold is 1,000 kwh.

The huge differences in the increases between communities will depend on what the local utilities charge to deliver the power.

OEB spokesman Paul Crawford explained that each utility is assessed on an individual basis. Facts such as cost of service, debt load and operations costs, including maintenance, upgrading and repairs are all factors that determine the distribution rate.

"The same criteria is used," he said, "but every community is going to be different."

Jan Howard, Orangeville Hydro's manager of finance and rates, says the utility has been watching its costs and making improvements over the last several years.

"We have been managing costs in every area, including cutting costs and reducing staff," Ms.

Howard said.

Even with the lower than expected increase, Ms. Howard suggests the utility's customers can cut their bills further by conserving hydro this summer.

Orangeville Hydro is teaming up with Reduce the Juice, a youth-led initiative that began in Shelburne last year, that will have students going door to door in Orangeville this summer with a checklist of ideas to reduce the amount of electricity a household uses.

Although the rate increase is being touted as a small increase, it does mean that on average Orangeville customers will be paying about \$50 more for hydro next year.

Meanwhile, the Hydro One customers in Shelburne, Grand Valley and elsewhere in Dufferin will have to fork out nearly \$200 more for the same consumption level. A chart released by the

OEB suggests that Hydro One customers who now face a monthly distribution charge of \$15.99 will have to pay about \$22.50 for the service starting May 1. However, a Hydro One media relations official said Wednesday the energy board had not yet provided the precise figure to the utility.