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Combattre la grippe A (H1N1) avec... des «fêtes d'enfants»



Certains parents britanniques ont écrit sur des sites de discussion qu'ils voulaient organiser des «fêtes de grippe A» pour que leurs enfants contractent le virus maintenant avant qu'il ne devienne plus virulent. Sur la photo, une fillette porte un masque à son arrivée à l'aéroport Gattwick, début mai.

Photo Reuters

Mali Ilse Paquin, collaboration spéciale

La Presse

Quelqu'un a-t-il encore peur de la grippe A (H1N1) en Grande-Bretagne? Sur un populaire site de discussion parental, mumsnet.com, des mères ont suggéré à la légère de tenir des «fêtes de grippe A». L'idée? Faire en sorte que leurs enfants contractent le virus maintenant afin de renforcer leur système immunitaire. Et, surtout, avant que la grippe ne devienne trop virulente.

Certains parents britanniques ont effectivement lancé cette idée, bien que leurs échanges sur le forum de discussion avaient une touche d'humour, proposant entre autres d'apporter du jambon et d'autres produits dérivés du porc.

La fondatrice du site mumsnet.com, Justine Roberts, n'a pu confirmer si de telles fêtes avaient bien eu lieu. «Plusieurs parents constatent de façon rationnelle que leurs enfants ont avantage à attraper le virus avant qu'il ne devienne plus virulent l'hiver prochain», a-t-elle affirmé au Daily Mail.

À la suite de ces rumeurs, l'expert en santé publique Richard Jarvis a rapidement prévenu que cette stratégie pouvait saper les efforts des autorités à contenir l'épidémie. Il serait plus sage de ne pas anticiper l'évolution du virus et d'attendre l'arrivée d'un vaccin, selon lui.

«La grippe porcine est une maladie sérieuse qui peut assommer les adultes pendant plusieurs jours et provoquer des complications graves, comme la pneumonie. Les gens veulent-ils vraiment exposer leurs enfants à ça? Le risque n'en vaut pas la peine», écrit le docteur dans The Independent.

Cent mille cas par jour

En Grande-Bretagne, seulement sept personnes sont mortes depuis l'apparition du virus. Hier, trois personnes, dont deux enfants, sont décédées à Londres et dans le Yorkshire. Elles souffraient déjà de problèmes de santé.

Près de 8000 individus sont atteints au pays. Des experts en épidémiologie prédisent que 100 000 Britanniques par jour pourraient contracter le virus vers la fin du mois d'août.

Pourtant, le ton a dramatiquement changé depuis le mois d'avril. Lorsque les premiers malades se sont confirmés, le chef de la santé publique, Sir Liam Donaldson, avait avancé des chiffres catastrophiques: 750 000 décès, dans le cas d'une pandémie. Les écoles touchées étaient systématiquement fermées.

Préparé au pire, le gouvernement britannique avait augmenté ses réserves d'antiviraux pour traiter 80% de la population.

Aujourd'hui, la santé publique parle d'une «maladie mineure» et de courte durée pour la majorité du grand public. Depuis le 2 juillet, la Grande-Bretagne a diminué ses mesures de précaution. Les écoles resteront ouvertes et les personnes ayant été en contact avec le virus ne recevront plus le Tamiflu à titre préventif. Les malades sont avisés de rester à la maison au lieu d'aller à l'hôpital.

Toutefois, ce n'est pas une raison pour tenir des «fêtes» pour les petits, comme des parents l'ont fait pendant des générations avec la varicelle, ont martelé les sommités en santé publique.

«Les parents ne se pardonneraient jamais d'exposer un enfant vulnérable à une maladie sérieuse, a affirmé Sir Donaldson à The Independent. La vigilance est de mise.»

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Toronto – Montréal Child travels free <small>when accompanied by an adult**</small>	<small>starting at</small> \$69*
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Dignitaries taken to school

Visit by Japan's royal couple thrill for students

By PETER ZIMONJIC, NATIONAL BUREAU

Last Updated: 7th July 2009, 5:22am



The emperor of Japan praised Canada's urban green spaces and clean living Monday before he planted a tree at the Governor General's residence during an official visit steeped in pomp and ceremony.

Students at Carleton University were treated to an unexpected surprise yesterday when the Japanese royal couple stopped during a visit to shake hands and exchange pleasantries with the 1,000 or so people who had come to see them.

"This was so exciting for us because in Japan we could never get so close to shake hands and speak directly with the emperor," said Yoriko Moriyama, an anthropology student from Hyogo, Japan, who is studying at Carleton.

"My parents will cry when they hear about me because they like their majesties very much."

Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko arrived in Ottawa on Friday. They are visiting Canada for 12 days to mark the 80th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Yesterday morning, they were officially welcomed at Rideau Hall by Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean with a marching band and full military honours, including cannon fire. Speaking briefly to a modest crowd of Japanese-Canadians, the emperor recalled his first three days in the capital and said he hopes to strengthen relations between Canada and Japan.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

"We are most impressed with the effort the people of your country make in order to maintain nature in metropolitan areas and try to lead a healthy lifestyle," Emperor Akihito said through an interpreter. "We hope to deepen our understanding of your country where those who have lived here for generations and those who have moved here from various countries recognize and respect their mutual cultures and strive to create, harmoniously, the Canada that is today."

Jean honoured their majesties with her Foot Guard and a performance by the Band of the Ceremonial Guard, which played both the Canadian and Japanese national anthems.

"My husband and I, along with the people of Canada, hope that your presence here ... in Canada in this year of celebration of our friendship, will open the door to infinite opportunities for sharing with Japan," Jean said.

After the speeches, the royal couple made their way onto the grounds surrounding Rideau Hall, where they took part in the planting of a Canadian hemlock tree to mark the occasion.

The pair returned to Rideau Hall later in the day to meet Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

The royal couple leaves for Toronto tomorrow where they will visit Queen's Park and The Hospital for Sick Children before flying to Vancouver on Friday.

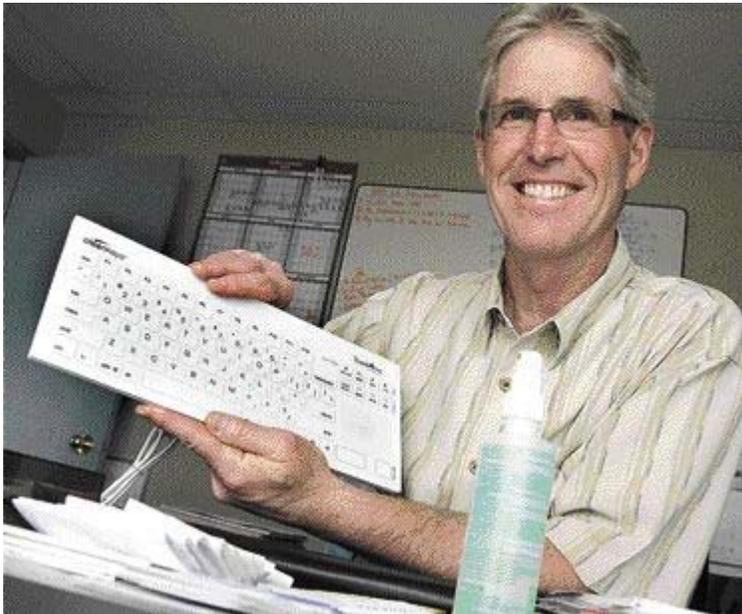
Highlights of their Vancouver trip include a visit to some of the Olympic facilities before flying to Victoria to meet Premier Gordon Campbell.

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How to come clean in seconds

Easy-to-clean keyboard especially suited for use in health-care facilities, schools

BY DAVID FINLAYSON, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN; CANWEST NEWS SERVICE JULY 7, 2009



Don McCormick, marketing director for CleanKeys, holds the new computer keyboard that has a touch-sensitive flat surface that can be cleaned in seconds.

Photograph by: Chris Schwarz, the Edmonton Journal, The Ottawa Citizen; Canwest News Service

A computer keyboard that's cleaned with the wipe of a cloth across its touch-sensitive flat surface should click with customers in an increasingly germ-wary world, an Edmonton company believes.

CleanKeys is especially suited for hospitals, doctors' and dentists' offices, schools and other institutions where computers have multiple users, says marketing director Don McCormick.

Studies show that computer keyboards are a leading cause of the spread of infection in health-care facilities, says McCormick, a technology veteran who was asked to join the CleanKeys team by Randy Marsden, president of parent company Madenta.

The U. S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has also warned that the swine flu virus could be spread through common touch surfaces such as computer keyboards, he says.

"It's perfect for any environment that has contamination of some kind. It takes seconds to spray it and wipe it down, while others in the market have a rubber coating that you have to immerse in water. And they still have key crevices where all kinds of things can get trapped."

CleanKeys has a glass or acrylic surface, with touch-sensitive keys that give an audible click for feedback. The sensitivity can be adjusted for people wearing gloves.

It's already attracting interest in the U. S. and Europe only 18 months after the first prototype came out, says McCormick.

CleanKeys was chosen as best new product at the 2007 American Dental Association conference, and two major U.S. dental-supply companies have signed up to distribute it. International distributors have also been lined up, mostly in Europe, he says.

CleanKeys retails for \$399, which McCormick says is in the middle range among similar products.

"It puts us in a favourable position with our closest competitors, and it's not an awful lot of money for that kind of protection."

They expect to be able to bring the cost down in the next 12 months or so as manufacturing ramps up, he says.

The problem is, the company needs to grow so it can develop a marketing and distribution system, and money's not exactly growing on trees right now.

So it held its first investor session June 25.

"It's not like developing software. To produce 5,000 of the keyboards, the manufacturer wants half a million dollars up front," McCormick says.

"There's a very broad market for it out there, and the only thing standing between us and success is money."

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More tips on moving files from an old Mac

BY STEVE ALEXANDER, THE MINNEAPOLIS STAR TRIBUNE JULY 7, 2009

Tech Q&A

My e-mail in the past two weeks has included several suggestions for a reader who was facing problems with his 1994 Macintosh computer. Readers rushed to the aid of the reader, who was trying to back up files from his 1994 Macintosh Performa 636 to a friend's computer. He ran into trouble because he was using an outdated ClarisWorks file format and storing files on now-rare floppy disks.

I suggested he e-mail files to his friend, or buy a newer Mac with AppleWorks, compatible with his ClarisWorks file format. But readers suggested alternatives.

n File format: Use ClarisWorks to save the files on a floppy disk in text format (the file suffix .txt), which can be read by modern word processing programs. That solution would require the user to buy an external floppy disk drive so the text files could be moved from the Mac to another computer.

n E-mail: Some noted that it would be difficult to find the right software to connect a 1994 Mac to the Internet or to the free e-mail programs available there. E-mailing the files, others noted, would be an expensive solution, because the 1994 Mac probably has neither a dial-up modem nor an Ethernet card for connecting to a cable or DSL modem.

n Flash drive: Some readers also suggested that the user get a USB flash drive and move his documents that way. But the USB flash drive wasn't introduced until 2000, and thus is unlikely to work with a 1994 Mac.

If there's a moral here, it's that computers change rapidly. By upgrading every five years or so, computer owners can avoid serious compatibility issues.

I'm a freelance advertising copywriter planning to switch from a 2001 iMac with operating system 9.1 to a PC notebook. I need to move my files to the PC. But the files are stored on Macintosh-formatted CD and Zip disks. How can I move my files?

It used to be easier to transfer Mac files to PCs, since the Apple operating system could handle both file types. But the PC storage format has changed, and this is no longer feasible. As a result, you should use a file conversion program that will allow a PC to read the Macintosh files directly from your disks. You can find that software by going to www.download.com and searching for "Mac to PC file conversion." One such program I've seen recommended is TransMac 8.3, which costs \$54 U.S.

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Camp closes after kids get H1N1 flu

By **DONNA CASEY, SUN MEDIA**

Last Updated: 3rd July 2009, 5:49pm

An outbreak of H1N1 flu has temporarily shut down an Eastern Ontario overnight summer camp.

Public health officials say at least a dozen children contracted the H1N1 virus at the camp, along with a few counsellors.

The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark district health unit will not publicly identify the camp, saying it wants to protect the confidentiality of the children infected, said Dr. Anne Carter, medical officer of health for the area that takes in Smiths Falls, Almonte, Kemptville and Ganonoque.

Carter, who described all of the cases as mild, said the infected children range in age from seven to 15 years.

It's the first H1N1 virus outbreak at an Ontario summer camp, said Aruna Ogele, executive director of the Ontario Camps Association.

"They dealt with it the best they could," said Ogele of the camp which serves 120 children for each two-week stay during the summer.

Staff started seeing children with flu-like symptoms on Monday, about a day after their arrival for their two-week camp, said Carter.

"They had fever, sore throats, nausea and headaches," said Carter, adding camp staff isolated the sick campers and counsellors.

After sending the first few infected children to a local hospital earlier in the week, public health officials determined it was a H1N1 outbreak.

By Wednesday, camp officials decided to fold its tent and send all of the remaining campers home to stop the spread of the virus in quarters with shared eating and sleeping areas.

"The camp felt it was best to shut down during the middle of its first session," said Ogele.

The camp will be re-opening on July 14 for its second session, with a new group of campers, said Ogele, adding staff would notify parents with upcoming stays of the outbreak.

All of the infected children and staffers are at home and recovering well, said Carter, adding that since they have mild forms of the virus, none are taking Tamiflu, the anti-viral drug.

Meanwhile, Ottawa's number of confirmed H1N1 flu cases continues to climb, now standing at 335.

Half of the cases are children and teenagers, with 38 admitted to hospital and half of them younger than 17.

One teenager, who had chronic medical conditions, contracted the virus died last month.

Carter urged parents to keep their kids home from camp if they are showing any signs of illness. Parents with healthy children should pack an alcohol-based hand sanitizer in their child's camping gear and mark their child's name on toothbrushes, toothpaste, wash cloths and towels and to not share them with other campers.

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