

The VIEW from BLUE

Published by Blue Mountain Ratepayers' Association

The largest ratepayers' association in The Blue Mountains

www.bluemountainratepayersassociation.com

Box 405, Collingwood, ON L9Y 3Z7

April 2011

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MEMBERSHIP

in this Association is only \$25 a year. Send your information to: Blue Mountain Ratepayers' Association, Box 405, Collingwood, ON L9Y 3Z7

Please share this newsletter with a neighbour and suggest they join our Association

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Is there more disappointment ahead?

By Michael P. Seguin

My third term as President is coming to a close (at the AGM) and I can honestly say that it has been a busy one.

During the second half of 2010, a lot of time was spent on preparing for the municipal All Candidates Meeting in October. When the final nomination date arrived in September, I decided to enter the Deputy Mayor race, hoping to provide the incumbent with a necessary challenge and to help bring a change in attitude to our local government and growing bureaucracy.

Because your Association is about fairness and transparency, the Board agreed not to support any one candidate, including myself, and not to try to influence the election results. Lester Posen, your Vice-President, was immediately appointed to run the All Candidates' Meeting, while I temporarily removed myself from the BMRA general communications forum. Lester did an excellent job, with support from the rest of the Board, in preparing a successful meeting.

The effects of

See President's Report page 2

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

(for members in good standing only)

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Blue Mountain Ratepayers' Association will be held

Saturday, May 28th, 2011 at 8.30 a.m.

at the:

**VILLAGE CONFERENCE CENTRE –
NIPISSING ROOM**

SECOND FLOOR – MEZZANINE LEVEL

(Main entrance off Jozo Weider Blvd. opposite Fairway Court but preferred or second entrance is from the main parking area on west side of Monterra Golf shop and north of the village area)

For the purpose of:

1. Receiving the Report of the Directors;
2. Receiving the Financial Report for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2010;
3. Election of Board Directors;
4. Transacting any other business presented at the meeting;
5. Question and answer period.

By Order of the Board, March 26, 2011

Michael P. Seguin, President

Blue Mountain Ratepayers' Association

Although the meeting is scheduled for 8.30 a.m., please arrive by 8.15 a.m. for registration and coffee.

President's Report

Continued from page 1

that meeting are still being felt, based on the many promises made by candidates and now Council members, and we are challenging them to live up to their promises. I must also thank Cathy Seguin for taking over at the last minute and being moderator for the meeting. She received a lot of positive feedback on an excellent job of controlling the time and quality of the comments, as well as the question and answer period.

Needless to say, I came up short in my run for Deputy Mayor by about 569 votes (I did receive approximately 40% of the total vote count). However, I wouldn't consider my run as unsuccessful – the challenge was exciting, I met a lot of new and great community people and it gave me better insight into many of the new challenges that lie ahead.

My first real challenge came from an election promise made by several candidates to reconsider the demolition of the old town hall and conduct a more open and transparent review and reassessment of this asset.

On March 28 (after 2 ½ months of valuable time wasted), a majority of Council flatly rejected the ratepayers' request and are taking a quick and unacceptable approach: an amended motion to have staff place a 90-day advertisement (to be effective April 1, 2011) in the local newspaper for a Request for Expression of Interest (RFEI). Councilors Martin and Gamble voted against the motion and must be recognized for their efforts on behalf of the ratepayers.

Old Town Hall is doomed

Clearly, the old town hall is now doomed. A 90-day ad. (now extended to the end of July) is just a "bone" that is being thrown out to the public to show that the Town has attempted to find a user. In my opinion, this ad. is just a waste of time and money – the bureaucratic requirements will be too overwhelming. Why delay the inevitable and just move on to demolition. There are many former hand-picked "community consultants" and members of Council who can't wait for the expensive landscaping, amphitheatre and skating loop that will replace the old town hall. They are putting *their wants* first before *the needs and interests of the ratepayers in this community*.

So much for a "forward thinking local government that continually engages its citizens and partners, a government renowned for regional collaboration." (*Source: TOBM Sustainable Path*). I'm truly disappointed.

Turning to the 2011 budget, I sat through many grueling hours of budget workshops, meetings and deliberations. Most of the time, Council appeared to

be confused as to what approach they should take in tackling a budget brought to them by staff reflecting a 2.0% increase plus enhancements that would add another 1.0%. At the Statutory Public meeting, I told Council that a 3.0% increase showed no restraint by this Council and did not represent the promise that each candidate (now members of Council) made during the election to oppose all Town budgets with increases greater than the cost of living (currently around 2.0%).

Fiscal restraint in short supply

Council decided to take another look at a 3.0% increase and juggled it to 2.7%, which still shows no fiscal restraint, but they nit-picked over important community needs in order to arrive at this levy. What are they thinking? They should be looking at the "padding" in the bureaucracy – like a 7.0% increase in staff salaries, wages and benefits and discretionary spending on certain capital projects such as the expensive and unnecessary \$1.0 million storage yard shed in Ravenna.

Very soon (May 10th), you will be witnessing the opening of the new Town Hall – a grandiose and very expensive building. I'm sure many of you will love it, but what did we sacrifice and how will we pay for it? Remember, we have been told by staff that only 40% of the space will be occupied.

I think the attitude toward demolition of the old town hall and the need for higher than cost of living increases in both tax levy and water charges will be become more apparent in years to come.

Is there more disappointment ahead? I hope not – there are too many good people working for the Town and serving on Council to make sure the ship doesn't sink.

As I have said before, our mission statement is clear and the BMRA will continue to monitor the direction of this Council and make sure they are "charged" and responsible to act in the best interest of this community. We also will continue to keep you informed through our new social network: Twitter and Facebook (see story next page).

If you have comments regarding my statements, please do not hesitate to contact me through the web site (info@bluemountainratepayersassociation.com) or send me a message via the Association's mailing address. As I have always said, you are the heart and soul of the Association and we value your opinion.

INFOLINE: 211

Need help? Got a question?
Simply dial the INFOLINE at 211
anytime – day or night.

OMB decision pending on short-term accommodations

By Lester Posen

Many of our members are curious as to the status of the Ontario Municipal Board hearings regarding the interim control by-law for Short Term Accommodations. As of April 5, 2011, nothing had been noted on the OMB website.

The long weekends of the summer are approaching, and with these come the large parties and late nights. Business for our local tourism operators should be very good this year, what with the increased cost of fuel and the great attractions in our area.

This combination makes for a strong case to spend time closer to home where there are an abundance of activities the entire family can enjoy.

The flipside to this boon is the challenge that our town also becomes the destination for those seeking a getaway, leading to large parties with little or no restrictions regardless of the impact on the neighbours or the neighbourhood.

Tourism is one of the many ingredients that make our town a desirable destination for both tourists and potential new residents. It is imperative to attract people who will engage with those businesses that rely on such patronage for support and to pay local taxes as well as to reinvest into the community.

The community looks forward to a favourable outcome in the OMB decision so as to ensure that our neighbours and neighbourhoods can be enjoyed peacefully. Not only are we awaiting this outcome but

other communities are looking at The Blue Mountains and the outcome of this challenge at the OMB.

Wasaga Beach has had a by-law on the books restricting STAs in R1 zones since 2003. Last year the Town of Collingwood enacted a similar by-law. The issue is becoming an increasing challenge in many communities as STA businesses continue to move into areas not zoned for those businesses. These and many other communities are awaiting the results of the OMB hearing in The Blue Mountains.

The original premise for someone renting their home out for short periods was to help them defer some of their costs. Generally this rental was to a single family in whom the residence owner had faith that they would use the home as if it were their own. In some cases this might still be true.

Unfortunately, with the injection of these new operators there has been no responsibility or feeling of responsibility for neighbours or neighbourhood. In fact, this infiltration of STA businesses has hurt the neighbours and neighbourhoods, preventing them from renting to those families who used to come up regularly. This has led to the need to establish locations where these businesses must operate.

Again, there is no law or by-law preventing these businesses from operating – just a by-law controlling where they operate. It appears the wheels are turning very slowly. Regardless of the time that is being taken we will continue to monitor and report on the progress of this important decision.

The BMRA moves into cyberspace!

By Lester Posen

Increasing numbers of people are turning to social media in order to stay in touch with friends, family, associations and others. There are many advantages to this type of linkage to a world that includes speed of information, variety of sources and the ability to tailor the information to suit personal taste.

Noting the escalating numbers of people looking to these internet-based resources in order to stay in touch, the BMRA has committed to this new wave.

In late March the BMRA set up a presence on Twitter. This social medium is rapidly becoming a key source for information. This is especially true for those of our members who have more than one primary residence.

Until now, most of our members would have to

rely on pulling information down from the web or going to newspapers or other sources. We can now provide concise snippets of information via a regular feed. Developing a Twitter presence will allow the BMRA to push information out to its members and anyone else who wants to know more about what is happening in The Blue Mountains. It is the BMRA's intention to become one of the key organizations people will rely upon for such information.

The BMRA website has a link to our Twitter feed via the Read More link under the Twitter logo, or by searching for [BlueMtnRtpyrs](#)



This is a work in progress and takes a great deal of effort to manage and maintain.

We will try to continue growing and enhancing our visibility, with our members and in cyberspace!

Here's where we are located:

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/@BlueMtnRtpyrs>

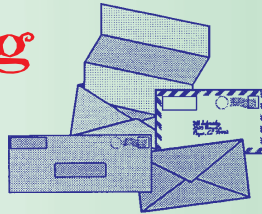
Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Blue-Mountain-Ratepayers-Association/201444343209459



Thornbury Health Centre finally under construction

On Thursday, April 7 various North East Grey Health Clinics and Health Centre Board members, the Mayor, Councilors Martin, Gamble and Ardiel and a delegation of supporters met to officially break ground for the construction of the new health centre in Thornbury. Construction actually started days earlier with perimeter concrete footings being formed.

The Mailbag



Fear of the unknown – What to do?

The Council of the Town of Blue Mountains, with Mayor Anderson as lead spokesperson, is strongly opposed to Bruce Power's application to ship Steam Generators (boilers) to Sweden for recycling of the steel. Bruce Power has provided ample detailed evidence and shown clearly that there is essentially zero risk. Nevertheless, the Town remains very concerned, claiming that Bruce Power hasn't provided sufficient information and assurances.

At the same time, various groups of residents are organizing to question various proposed developments and changes to the Town. Why? Because they didn't see it coming, and are not sure what it could mean.

HELLO! Wake up everybody! There seems to be a strong parallel here!

The TBM Strategic Plan, Goal 6, Strategic Action 6.3 says: "Practice Open and Pro-active Communications."

Readers, let your imagination envision this hypothetical scenario: The Mayor, Council and Senior Staff initiate a Collaborative-learning Conference with Bruce Power. The Topic: "Detailed Planning and Clear Communication; How to Do It, and How to Do It Well."

If all participants openly shared their full knowledge and skills, and the organizations shared the costs 50 /50, the Town would clearly come out with the best of the deal. That would be a good thing for TBM, its resident and its ratepayers.

Ron Hartlen, Thornbury

Craigleith Heritage Depot lectures

Here are dates for the Craigleith Heritage Depot 2011 lecture series, which continues at the Beaver Valley Community Centre in Thornbury. Admission is only \$7.00 per lecture (\$10.00 per couple), with discounts to youths and museum members:

- April 25: **Charles Garrad** – Indian Myth and Magic on the Blue Mountain
- May 30: **Dr. John Carter** – Dispelling the Myth of the Little Red Schoolhouse
- June 27: **Frank Dobbs** – From Craigleith to Fort McMurray to Colorado: The Commercialization of Unconventional oil in Canada
- July 25: **Ron Brown** – the Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore
- Aug. 29: **Janet Iles** – Home is Where Your Study begins
- Sept. 26: **JoAnne Fleming-Valin** – Earthy, Wet and Leafy
- Oct. 31: TBA
- Nov. 28: **Dr. Peter VonBitter** – A Rock Talk

Please pass it on . . .

When you have finished reading this newsletter, please pass it on to your neighbours and encourage them to join our association!



The Blue Mountains Community Watch Program

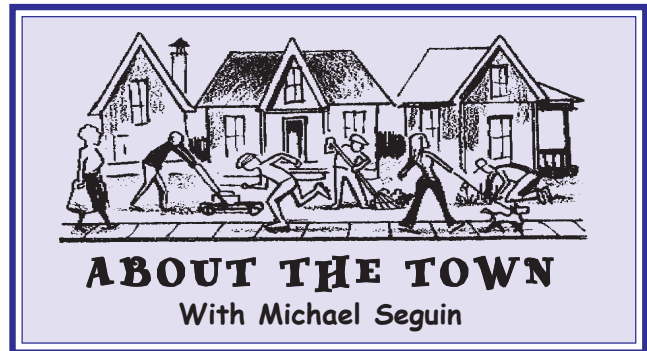
By Michael P. Seguin

The Community Watch Program is an umbrella organization for several programs that encourage citizens to become involved in protecting their community and preserving its way of life. The program is run by volunteers with support of the local OPP detachment. In the Blue Mountains, there are four components to Community Watch: Neighbourhood Watch, Rural Watch, Traffic Watch and Business Watch.

The decal (above) basically reflects the total program, sponsorships and partners, the important numbers to call and where to obtain more information (bluemountainscommunitywatch.ca). You can also visit the Blue Mountain Ratepayers' Association web site to find a direct link to the Community Watch Program web site. Go on-line and sign up now to become a zone coordinator, a neighbourhood coordinator or watch member in your area. You will receive up-to-date information regarding the Program and all your personal information will be kept confidential.

Please join and “make your neighbourhood safer from crime and nuisances” by knowing how to do it. The BMRA supports this program in protecting the interests of the community. If you have any questions or concerns, please send me an email at mpseguin@rogers.com or call me at 519-599-7179.

■ **Note:** Michael Seguin is Community Watch Coordinator, Craigeith Zone, and Neighbourhood Coordinator, Lora Bay Zone



When will we get a new CAO?

The search for the Town's new Chief Administrative Officer was advertised in the local newspapers (and elsewhere?) with a closing date of March 11, 2011. The ad stated that they are looking for a person “who shares a commitment to building a great community, who shares our values of integrity, trust, loyalty, accountability and social responsibility for the well-being of our residents and visitors alike.”

I think the ad should have stated that we are looking for a highly qualified person “who is vibrant, refreshing and wants to bring new ideas and a change in attitude that will improve the reputation and enhance the performance of the Town of the Blue Mountains.”

I expect that the Town will have a new CAO in place by the end of April or at least by May 10, the official move-in date for the new Town Hall. You will be advised as soon as the new “Chief” is chosen.

Source: *Courier-Herald* 02/16/2011

Owner of Horse Park wants more “outdoor special events”

At a March 7th Planning and Building Committee meeting, representatives of the Horse Park located in the southwest quadrant of Clark Street and County Road 2 in Clarksburg/Thornbury requested an expansion of park's operation and permitted uses to include more outdoor special events: rodeos, dog shows, car shows, festivals and sporting events.

The business community is supporting their request as a great opportunity to bring in many visitors and shoppers to our area. Each of these events is expected to attract around 6,000 visitors to the area.

The County has expressed concern over these massive events due to potential traffic, health and safety issues. The Ministry of Transportation has also expressed concerns regarding traffic issues at Highway 26 and County Road 2.

Notwithstanding this permanent request and concerns, the Town has approved a request for a Chili Ribfest – an international BBQ championship compe-

tition to be held at the park from July 8 to 10. This would include the 27th Annual Blue Mountain Chili Cookoff.

In addition to providing an outstanding food festival, this event will include amusement rides, games, an arts and crafts marketplace and music/entertainment all weekend long. This is not an event you want to miss, so mark the dates on your calendars.

If you want to know more, visit www.bluemountainschilirifest.ca.

Source: *Enterprise Bulletin* 04/01/2011

Realtors complain about the Town's process for requesting information

The Georgian Triangle Real Estate Board (GTREB) wants the Town to make it easier (less timing and less costlier) to obtain public information, such as zoning and permitted uses. Unlike most municipalities, the Town has not posted its existing zoning by-laws and charges \$100 per request for information. This makes life difficult for realtors, appraisers and planning consultants to provide time-sensitive information to their clients, as well as passing unnecessary costs to them.

The Director of Planning and Building says that "the state of our by-laws is less than desirable" to post on the web site. I say: obtain a copy from the private sector (there are a lot of copies out there) and post it for viewing purposes only.

Ultimately, the user is responsible for interpretation (just like the Official Plan, which is posted) but the old documents will provide a quick reference for those only needing information to decide what steps are required in the process of acquiring and appraising property and any future development considerations. This should also free up staff time, unless there is a more detailed request.

Source: *Simcoe.com* 03/10/2011

Craigleith Community Centre

Restored 1860s one-room schoolhouse, designated as a heritage building.

Ideal for: Business meetings, Weddings, Social events, Anniversaries.

For rental information, contact Bruce Loveless at 705-446-4673.

Blue Mountains introduces a new on-line service

A new on-line (user-friendly) service has been introduced by the Town that will allow users to submit by-law complaints and track building permits and inspection requests. Users of this free service will be able to obtain up-to-date permit status, schedule permit inspections, receive automatic notification of inspection results, view public information regarding specific properties and initiate and check status of confidential code or by-law complaints.

Future enhancements of this on-line service will include giving customers the ability to submit building permit applications and pay fees on-line. The on-line service can be found at www.thebluemountains.ca/on-line-services.cgm.

Source: *Simcoe.com* 03/18/2011

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IN MEMORIAM

STAN BACK

Stanley George Back (1932-2011) of Craigleith in the Blue Mountains, passed away peacefully on Wednesday March 23, 2011 in Collingwood.

Stanley is lovingly remembered by his children Linda Skeries (Rainer) of Timmins and Barry (Carol) of Calgary. He will be greatly missed by his grandchildren Kristina, Erik, and Karsten Skeries, and Brittany, Julian, and Max Back. Beloved husband of fifty one years of the late Norma (nee Garney) and devoted partner of Linda Kirstine.

Born and raised in Toronto, Stanley ran a successful air conditioning and heating business for over 40 years. His family came first, however, whether it was summers at Wasaga Beach, 48 seasons on the slopes at Craigleith Ski Club, or living room concerts with his clarinet in hand. He also loved golf, playing cribbage, traveling the world, and retirement in Craigleith. Stan was also a valuable volunteer Director with the Blue Mountain Ratepayers' Association.

Stanley's family, friends and the BMRA Board of Directors will forever remember his warmth, his gentle, kind ways, his sense of humour, his wisdom, and his positive outlook.

A Celebration of Life will be held on Saturday, April 23 at 2:00 pm at Craigleith Ski Club. In lieu of flowers, donations to Georgian Triangle Hospice Building Fund or the Northern Harmony Singers (c/o 1000 Michelano Drive, Timmins, Ont. P4P 1H9) would be greatly appreciated.

ANDY LEMYK

Andy Lemyk (1948-2011) passed away peacefully at St. Joseph's Health Centre in Toronto (Etobicoke) on Saturday, Feb. 12, 2011.

Andy is remembered by his loving wife Brenda, his three daughters Julie, Natalie and Laura and grandchildren. Andy and Brenda had a residence in the Craigleith area and were former members of the Blue Mountain Ratepayers' Association. In January, 2011, both Andy and Brenda gave passionate speeches at the OMB-STA hearing on behalf of residents in the Craigleith resort area.

I'm sure the residents in the area and his many friends in the Blue Mountains will forever miss Andy's presence.

Funeral services to say goodbye to Andy were held on Feb. 17 at the Turner & Porter Chapel in Etobicoke.

FINAL NOTICE FOR 2011 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL!

Dear Member:

Our records show that some members have not renewed their 2011 family membership with the Blue Mountain Ratepayers Association.

If you are one of them, your membership is very important to us in order to maintain our Newsletter on a quarterly basis, to provide for an Annual General Meeting in the spring/summer of every year, to maintain our Web Site (**bluemountainratepayersassociation.com**) so that we can reach out to as many people as possible on an on-going basis, but most of all, to provide a strong voice in protecting the interests of the community.

If you choose not to renew or you do not want to be involved anymore in our Association, **then we will remove your name(s) from our mailing list and email list shortly after the AGM, scheduled for Saturday, May 28th, 2011.** Thank you for your past support – you are welcome to re-join at any time.

If anyone has any questions regarding their renewal or membership, please contact me at mpseguin@rogers.com or call me at 519-599-7179.

Michael P. Seguin, President



BMRA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM FOR 2011

Please enclose a cheque for \$25 as your annual family membership fee and send it with this application to: **Blue Mountain Ratepayers' Association, Box 405, Collingwood, ON L9Y 3Z7**

Name: (Last/First) _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ **Postal Code:** _____

Phone No: _____ **Chalet Phone No:** _____

Email: _____

Blue Mountains Address: _____

Neighbours Wishing to Join: _____

Would you prefer to receive your newsletter electronically? Please check one: Yes ___ No ___

ABOUT THE TOWN

Continued from page 6

Grey County takes our money – but are we getting value for it?

Year after year, especially at budget time, a question is asked about our County contributions through taxation: Is the taxpayer in the Town of the Blue Mountains getting fair and equal value for his dollar. At the present time, 42% of our tax bill (about \$12.185 million based on market value assessment) is paid to the County of Grey, funding approximately 25% of their budget collected by taxation.

The County provides such services as transportation and public safety, roads, ambulance, tourism, health and social services, planning, housing and long-term care.

Our 25% contribution to County funding is based on the Town's high market value assessment. However, because of our low permanent population, we tend to get less than 25% of the benefits. The County seems to think that our non-permanent or part-time population doesn't require the same type of services. For example, many capital projects service the traveling public, especially roads that need upgrading and a greater concentration of money from the County.

Council recently approved a motion asking the Treasurer and the CAO to obtain a more detailed breakdown of information from the County regarding capital and maintenance expenditures for 2009, 2010 and 2011 (proposed), as they apply to services and projects in the Town of the Blue Mountains.

Source: Simcoe.com 03/30/2010

For your pleasure and education

The Blue Mountain Watershed Trust Foundation (BMWTF) continues to co-sponsor with Elephant Thoughts (ET) a "Be the Change" documentary film series at the Gayety Theatre in Collingwood. These

educational films are about environmentally focused challenges in the world today. There are only two films left in the series and admission is only \$7.00 per person; students are free. Live music starts at 6:30 p.m. followed by the film at 7:00 p.m. For details contact the BMWTF at 705-445-0357.

- **April 20, 2011:** Dirt! The Movie – "The glorious and unappreciated material beneath our feet."
- **May 18, 2011:** The End of the Line – "The devastating environmental effects of over-fishing due to our global affair with fish as food."

Quick Hits!

1. In February, Georgian College announced their new campus on Poplar Sideroad, in Collingwood as the John DiPoce Georgian Bay Campus. DiPoce was a developer who donated a \$1.0 million, 10 acre site. The new \$8.0 million, 20,000 sq. ft. facility, is scheduled to open in September, 2011 and will have the capacity to triple current enrolment numbers to 250 full-time and 3,000 part-time students annually. The college is seeking \$2.0 million from surrounding municipalities to help with costs, with \$300,000 (or \$75,000 per year) being requested from the Town of the Blue Mountains. No commitment has been made by the Town yet.

2. In March, the Blue Mountain Resorts donated \$100,000 towards the development of the college campus. Gordon Canning, Chairman and CEO of the Blue Mountain Resort, stated: "We believe it is always a very positive step to increase the education and training offerings in a community. The demands placed on the workforce today require an increasingly more complex set of skills in each of us." The College is hoping to fund-raise \$750,000 from the community.

3. The Georgian Trail Board of Management appears to be in disarray – without members, without a capital plan and without capital financial support from the three adjoining municipalities (Meaford, Blue Mountains and Collingwood). Hopefully, they can get together and provide for trail maintenance, given that it is one of the most heavily-used trails in the municipality.

4. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) awarded the Town of the Blue Mountains with a Sustainable Communities Award for its work to remediate the brownfield that serves as the new town hall building site. The award should have been given to the taxpayers who paid for the remediation.

5. The Town of Collingwood has approved a \$5.0 million development along First Street, which will include a new 19,000 sq. ft. Shopper's Drug Mart store together with a second building for a medical clinic and other undesignated retail businesses.

Emergency & Information

Immediate response: 911 (Do not call unless it's an emergency or you will be assessed a response charge of \$300)

OPP (Collingwood & Blue Mountains): 1-888-310-1122; (Administration): 705-445-4321. Blue Mountains Resorts Security: 705-445-0231 x8281/8911 (24 hours)

Fire Department: Thornbury Fire Station # 1, (519) 599-5411; Craigleith Fire Station #2, (705) 444-2244;

Municipal Offices: Thornbury 599-3131. Reg Wusswurm, Acting Chief Administration Officer, x260; Robert Cummings, Treasurer, x245; Corinna Giles, Town Clerk, x232; David Finbow, Director of Planning and Building x246.