

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

August 2010

Board of Directors for 2010-2011

President

Michael Seguin
519-599-7179
mpseguin@rogers.com

Vice-President

Lester Posen
705-445-3528
lbposen@rogers.com

Secretary

Catherine Sholtz-Seguín
519-599-7179
mpseguin@rogers.com

Treasurer (Membership)

Peter Sharpe
705-446-0825
pesharpe@rogers.com

Directors

Stan Back
705-445-5884
norstan@rogers.com

Dennis Stainer
705-444-2544
stainer@rogers.com

Dorothy Healey
705-445-5447
dihealey@bmts.com

Bruce Taylor
(519) 270-5088
brucedtaylor@rogers.com

Web Site Advisor

Neil Carscadden
519-599-5006
ncarsca@prodigy.net

MEMBERSHIP

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

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

What changes do we foresee?

By Michael P. Seguin

The “wheels” of bureaucracy will debate a number of changes to our town over the next 6 to 12 months. The Town of The Blue Mountains is and will continue going through significant changes. What once we knew as our familiar home will never be the same. Does this make you happy or sad?

In the past, the Town has been more focused on local planning issues and infrastructure, but now the Town is spending close to \$1-million on studies, including a revised Official Plan and a new consolidated Zoning By-law. These will create major changes that will impact the physical, environmental, social and economic character of this community forever.

If you haven't heard of the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan, the Housing Needs Study, the Community Improvement Plan, the Strategic Planning and Urban Design Study or the Economic Development Strategy Plan, then I suggest you get familiar with them. There are dollar signs and Town “wants” written all over these plans.

Trust me, the bureaucracy will continue to grow! The Community Improvement Plan alone, if implemented, will cost the taxpayers almost \$1-million dollars over the next five years – that represents almost a 10% increase in your taxes, unless the Town can find money elsewhere.

Projects under way

Two expensive and well-known projects are already under way: the New Town Hall construction and the Beaver River Bridge Rehabilitation. Both are considered by Town officials as essential to the needs, health and sustainability of the community – obviously for many different reasons. After securing a site between Tigs and the Cidery building along Highway 26, the new medical clinic is expected to begin construction, hopefully this fall.

On the horizon are two more major projects that could have major impacts on the design and character of the community: the Terrasan Development in Craigleith and the Thornbury Gate Apartment Complex.

Highway 26 makeover

Terrasan, which recently was approved (OP & Zoning Amendments) by Council, will consist of a large mixed-use commercial, residential and institutional development. The residential component alone will provide accommodations for over 400 people and is expected to change the entire make-up of the Craigleith community along Highway 26.

A development this large threatens the make-up and quality of life enjoyed by the residents in surrounding communities. It also will test the ability of the developer, through its advocates, to provide a development that protects the environmentally sensitive wetlands of the Silver Creek Watershed and the Georgian Bay shoreline.

The Blue Mountain Watershed Foundation adamantly opposes Council's decision to allow substantially reduced buffer setbacks that will

See *President's Report* page 2

President's Report

Continued from page 1

threaten these significant wetlands and a number of endangered species. Your Association supports the Foundation's position that is being presented to the County of Grey.

Thornbury Gate Project, if approved, would provide for a massive 5-storey, 126 unit apartment and a 3-storey, 43 unit apartment that would contravene the existing Official Plan with regards to height, densities and many of its general principles as a "Sense of Place." The Thornbury/Clarksburg Citizen's Coalition opposes this massive development and your Association has provided support via the following statement:

"In order to help protect the interests of the community, our Association continuously strives to promote responsible planning and development. The Association does not want to discourage any new development involving housing that will benefit the community. However, the needs of the individual owner (taxpayer) must be weighed as strongly as those of the developers who profit from their proposed business development. These developers are heard by council on a regular basis and engage hired experts to push their proposals through, using self-directed reasons for their proposals.

"Regarding the Thornbury Gate Project, the heights and densities being proposed will drastically change the character and design of the community that we all love, and are enjoyed by the traveling public. The responsibility of this Council is to give more consideration and thought to the concerns of the community at large, which they represent, rather than the singular inputs of developers, who are working to drive a bottom line profit, and that have little or no interest in the community other than growing their profit lines and moving on."

Short term accommodations

The biggest change that this municipality anticipates in the very near future is OMB approval of Official Plan and Zoning Amendments that will help regulate Short Term Accommodations (STAs). Left unchecked, these ruthless STA operators will continue to run unlicensed commercial rental businesses that seriously jeopardize the safety and quality of life within designated and zoned residential neighbourhoods. Without regulations, petty crime will continue to grow into more serious issues and will start spreading into other areas of the Town, especially along the waterfront.

Your Association supports the Town's position in introducing regulations (OP, Zoning, Licensing) and we will not stop until that mission has been accomplished. The OMB hearing starts Aug. 23rd (10.30 a.m.) at the Marsh Street Centre. We want as many people as possible to attend and express their support for the Town in making every effort to win this case and move to the regulation stage.

Once the OMB Hearing has been completed, we must then turn our attention to the municipal election, to be held on October 25th. You will be asked to vote for individuals who will have the ability to make responsible decisions and have the courage to lead. These individuals must be prepared to control spending and, more importantly, take us to the STA regulation stage. There will be an All-Candidates meeting on October 2 to help our members and the public decide on the best candidates to lead us over the next four years. Our September Newsletter will be dedicated exclusively to the election.

The Chili Cook-off

In wrapping up, I want to thank Lester Posen and his family for all their hard work in arranging a very successful booth at the chili cook-off and promotion of the BMRA and the Neighbourhood Watch Program. Lester and Kim have provided a summary of the events (see page 6). I also want to congratulate Lester on his appointment as Vice-President of the BMRA. Lester replaces John Pineo, who dedicated many years to the success of the Association. I also want to welcome a new Board member to the fold: Bruce Taylor. Bruce lives in Thornbury and is one the major voices behind the effort to stop/reduce the massive apartment development known as the "Thornbury Gate Project."

Over the next three months, your Association will continue to do its best to keep you informed on the major issues and bring you up-to-date on candidates as they file their nomination papers and reveal their election platforms. This information will also be posted on our Web Site. We will also start to post new survey questions to gauge your interests and concerns.

If you have any topics, issues or questions that you want the BMRA Board to consider in the lead-up to the municipal election, please do not hesitate to contact me through our Website at info@bluemountainratepayersassociation.com, or send me a message via the Association's mailing address. Your thoughts will be kept confidential and I will always respond.

As I have always said, you are the heart and soul of the Association and we value your opinion.

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; Craighleith Fire Station #2, (705) 444-2244;

Municipal Offices: Thornbury 599-3131. Paul Graham, Chief Administration Officer, x234; Robert Cummings, Treasurer, x245; Corinna Giles, Town Clerk, x232; David Finbow, Director of Planning and Building x246.

Is the whole town still talking?

In May of this year we advised you of a development proposal to construct a 5-storey, 126 unit apartment building and a 3-storey, 43 unit apartment building on a site in Thornbury ("The whole town is talking"). It would be located north of the Cidery and bordering on Huron Street E., Elgin Street N. and McCauley Street N. The site currently is zoned for 20 residential townhouses.

The proposed Thornbury Gate development (if it had been approved) would have contravened the Town's height restrictions, the density would have been *eight* times more than the current zoning and three times the maximum density allowed in Thornbury.

Needless to say, the residents in the local area and to some degree throughout the Town were very surprised to learn of the proposed change in land use that would seriously transform the character, historic significance and architectural integrity of the community.

So what's happened since May 3, 2010, when residents of the community expressed their dismay at this proposal during a Public Meeting before the Planning and Building Committee of Council? The following reports should bring you up-to-date.

Update on applications for Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments by 1136965 Ontario Inc. – Thornbury Gate (Angelotti)

Thornbury Gate is put to rest — for the time being

By Bruce Taylor

On July 5th, 2010, the Town Planning Staff submitted a report to the Planning and Building Committee published in the agenda, which recommended:

"THAT Council refuse the subject applications for Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment, and;

"THAT Council direct Staff to meet with the Developer to explore options for proceeding with the development of the subject lands for residential purposes, including opportunities for community involvement in the design process such as a design charrette and/or other visioning processes."

However, just prior to the committee meeting, the Developer asked that the application be withdrawn from the agenda and deferred to a future time.

The Developer, through his consultant, submitted a lengthy rebuttal of the Planning Staff Report to the

Planning and Building Committee the day after. The letter states that the developer moved forward with their proposal "in good faith and in accordance with their understanding of what the municipality wanted to see and could seriously consider at the beginning of this long process."

The Thornbury/Clarksburg Citizens Coalition, a local group who are fighting the development supported by BMRA backing, have yet to digest and take further action on the events of the July 5th meeting and the Developer's follow-up letter.

The Town has undertaken the start of a general review of the Official Plan (OP), development of a Housing Needs Plan, a Community Improvement Plan, a Sustainability Plan and many more studies. It should be through such lengthy processes that increased density and height should be discussed by Council, Planning Staff and the Citizens. One public meeting on very short notice does not constitute suitable citizen feedback.

The way I see it!

By Bruce Taylor

How did the proposed Thornbury Gate residential development on Huron Street evolve, and did the Town encourage this type of development?

The Blue Mountains Council is being proactive in their concern for local medical facilities. Currently the Meaford Hospital is short of doctors and without an influx of doctors to the region it will close. Both the Blue Mountains and eventually the Municipality of Meaford want to establish first class medical office facilities to attract the much needed doctors. In order to proceed with the construction of the needed Thornbury medical clinic, a suitable site would be required.

The Town/Council entered into discussions leading to a subsequent endorsement of a development known as the Commercial Concept Plan (CCP), wherein land

would be given to the Town along the Highway 26 frontage for the building of the medical office facility. At that time, it was recognized by all parties that there was no commitment or approval by Council for two mid-rise apartment buildings shown on the overall site plan but lying outside the lands designated as part of the CCP.

Since Council endorsement on June 2, 2008 of the CCP, however, several Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) have been signed by all parties as part of complex arrangement for a portion of the Developer lands to be turned over to the Town and The Cidery. Once again those MOUs provided a disclaimer citing the developer's residential lands would have to go through normal approval channels and stand on its own planning merits.

The developer has invested a great deal of time and money into Engineering Reports and Planning Justifica

See The way I see it page 4

The Terrasan Development

The Craigleith Village Community Plan

By Bruce Taylor

Unlike the Thornbury Gate Project, the Craigleith Village Community Plan has been on the radar for quite some time, with several community information meetings and public meetings. It appears that the Developer has tried to entertain all of the concerns expressed by the local community by engaging in discussions with those most affected by the development.

At the Council meeting of June 28th deputations were heard by Council, and it appears two issues remain unresolved:

- Don Kerr, Director of The Blue Mountain Watershed Trust Foundation, argues that the proposed setbacks from the development to the wetlands need to be increased; and,

- Gail Arena, Chair of the Association for Plan 529, Users of Bloc E, and Brian Withers, President of the Craigleith Woods Community Association, argue that Plan 529 provides local existing residents with private access to the shore line of Nottawasaga Bay and the proposed public access to the Bay along the Terrasan Development shoreline may cause the loss of privacy the local community has had for the past number of years.

After lengthy debate, Council passed the Amendments to the Official Plan and Zoning By-Laws to allow the development to proceed. A recorded vote was taken, with Councilors Gamble and Martin voting against the motion. The reason for their dissenting votes was the height of a proposed four or five storey seniors' residence.

A 130 unit, four and five storey apartment building located on 60 hectares of land, as in the Terrasan Development, makes sense.

However, a three and five storey apartment complex on 1.1 hectares of land on Huron Street in Thornbury adjacent to existing single detached residential buildings does not.

The Blue Mountain Watershed Trust fights for our environment

By Michael Seguin

On June 28th, a majority of Council completely ignored the Trust's request for increased setbacks from the wetland areas at least equivalent to those provided in Collingwood's Consulate East development.

Instead of relying on the expertise and recommendations of an experienced protective foundation and their consultants as well as the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Director of Planning has relied on the bureaucracy of Grey County and their hired advocates. In other words, the Town staff can't make a decision or recommendation to Council – so let someone else make the decision!

But wait a minute! Protecting the Environment and endangered species is supposed to be the number one concern in the Town's Sustainability Plan. So why are we tempting fate and the potential destruction of our environment with insignificant or inadequate setbacks.

The Ministry of Natural Resources submitted a letter to the Director of Planning recommending the buffer around the provincially significant wetlands (PSW) be increased to a minimum of 15m (instead of the 10m being accepted by the County), that development near areas identified as significant wildlife habitat should not be tied to the PSW boundary, and that if endangered or threatened species are identified within 120m of a proposed development, then an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) must be undertaken to determine whether the development will have no negative impact within the adjacent lands.

The Blue Mountain Watershed Trust has now written to the County of Grey requesting that they reject the Town's OPA and Zoning By-law Amendments on the basis that protection of the wetlands should be as great in the Blue Mountains as in Collingwood and that the development be subject to the Natural Heritage Reference Manual. This manual indicates that if any proposed development or site alteration is within 120m of significant habitat that the applicant should undertake an EIS to demonstrate that the development will have no negative impacts within the adjacent lands. The existing development is planned to be within 50m of the PSW, which is unacceptable.

While this may sound complicated and technical, the bottom line is that developers' profits appear to be more important than the environment. **This Town should worry more about protecting the health of our community than about losing legal battles at the OMB.**

The way I see it

Continued from page 3

tion Reports in order to make their case before the Planning and Building Committee, only to have Planning Staff recommend refusal of the Development and subsequently the developer's withdrawal of the application.

To the Developer's credit, they have now transferred the Medical Lands to the Town for \$1 with Site Plan Approval now under way so that the medical office facility can finally start construction. A shovel in the ground and construction of the medical clinic would be great for the Council in this election year.

In conclusion, had the Community been asked to become involved with the evolution of the Commercial Concept Plan from day one, the Developer would perhaps have a viable project, Council would not be in an embarrassing position, and NIMBYism could have been avoided.

Is there a better way to elect public officials?

By Lester and Kim Posen

With the municipal elections fast approaching, at almost every gathering to discuss the state of our elected local government the topic turns to the potential value of adopting a Ward System for the Blue Mountains. At the recent BMRA annual meeting, attendees were trying to understand the differences between a Ward System and the current “at large” system.

The real crux of the matter is greater accountability by our elected council to their constituents. Good cases are made for both systems, however, and unless council makes the effort to define which councilors are respon-

sible to which constituents there will be a lack of connection between people and the government.

The Ward System creates immediate linkage between elected officials and the electorate. It allows for stronger representation to be fielded from smaller areas (wards of the town) as opposed to a strong group from only one part of the town. This is a key factor – each ward is represented by its ward councilor who is there to ensure that the unique needs of that ward are represented. The “unique” areas in rural towns require special views to their development and growth. Local ward councilors provide the much needed focus and input of people who were elected to represent these local needs.

When the discussion regarding wards comes up, those opposed to this methodology quickly raise the spectre of higher costs to the taxpayer. It is easy to make all-encompassing statements that cause concern on the part of the taxpayer. However, many of the tasks that need to be completed can be accomplished by existing staff as part of their daily workload. Some items represent one-time costs that ensure the right processes are put in place.

The most important point here is to ensure that the public is included throughout the process as the wards are being developed.

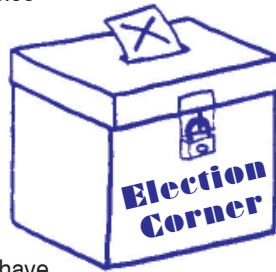
Another spectre that arises is polarization of the electorate. What is really clear is that differences already exist in the town and that a system is needed that fairly represents all of these differences under a single council.

Keep in mind that the federal and provincial governments operate using a ward (riding) system. It's time for us to look at a more progressive way to manage the town as we ensure a strong future for our families. (See *Why a ward system works*, next page.)

What we need: Leaders with the courage to lead

Only three months remain until the next municipal election on **Oct. 25**, and, in case you've forgotten, there is a lot at stake!

On this date, or by mail-in ballot, citizens of this community will be asked to vote for individuals who can provide leadership and informed/responsible decisions. While I have every respect for the staff of the Blue Mountains, they are not elected officials and are not responsible for making the final decisions. We need politicians who have the courage to lead and make these decisions based on their expertise, staff recommendations and public input!



Today, the public are better informed, have more experts available to them and are more concerned about the decision-making process. Bureaucracy should not outweigh the public's need for a voice in this process – the residents of this community finance this Town and have legitimate rights to be heard.

As promised, we will continue to keep you informed of the major issues. We hope that by providing you with more knowledge and understanding of the issues, you will be in a better position to vote for the right candidates to lead us over the next four years. Trust us, there will be alternative candidates to the incumbents in this election.

The **September Newsletter** will be devoted exclusively to this election. Hopefully, it will leave you with no excuses for not voting. If you do not, you will be revoking your democratic right to complain. Certainly we can improve on our 35% election turn-out of four years ago.

Remember, if you want change, only **YOU** can do that by casting your ballot, either in person or by mail (a voting kit will be sent to you before Oct. 25).

For more immediate information on how you can vote in Blue Mountains, please visit our Website at www.bluemountainratepayersassociation.com or the Town site at www.thebluemountains.ca.

Candidates have until Sept. 10 (nomination day) to file their papers. As of the writing of this article, the following candidates had come forward:

For Mayor: Ellen Anderson, Marshall H. Heatherington, Sheldon A. Rosen and Paul Mitchell; **for Deputy Mayor:** Duncan McKinlay; **for Councilor:** Incumbents John McGee, Cameron Kennedy and John McKean and new candidates Joe Halos and Bill Dennis.

Please pass it on . . .

After you have read this newsletter, please pass it on to a neighbour and suggest they join our Association – the best way to keep up-to-date on what's happening in our community

The following points have been excerpted from an online blog in 2008 by Bill Longworth concerning the move to maintain a ward system for the city of Oshawa. They are just as relevant today for the Blue Mountains. (Note: See "Is there a better way," page 5.)

WHY A WARD SYSTEM WORKS

- Every area of the city deserves equal representation
- The ward system encourages councilors to become fully knowledgeable about the area they represent
- Running in a ward makes councilors more accountable to neighbourhood voters.
- The at-large system gives an unfair advantage to wealthy candidates. Your vote carries more weight in ward elections.
- Without a ward system, local politics becomes more remote.
- The ward system prevents the undesirable possibility of having all councilors come from the same area of town.
- A council elected at-large is more susceptible to being influenced by non-territorially based special interest groups.
- The city is growing and becoming more diverse. A ward system can best accommodate these changes.
- The ward system gives us a diversity of opinion on council.
- Election debates are unworkable in an at-large system.
- Ward elections allow candidates to visit each home in the ward personally and to speak one-on-one with a member of each household they seek to represent.
- An at-large election system means more candidates and longer ballots. This makes it extremely difficult for voters to thoroughly consider the issues or ask questions of each and every candidate.
- In a democracy, it is important to make informed decisions. Ward elections, by facilitating face-to-face interaction between voters and candidates, help voters become better-informed.
- In the at-large system, every councilor will be competing against every other councilor. That makes it more difficult for incumbent councilors to build mutual trust and camaraderie.
- The trend in Ontario, in Canada and across North America is toward adopting the ward system.
- Your ward councilor lives, drives, walks and shops in your neighborhood. This gives councilors a better understanding of neighbourhood issues and allows them to be proactive in dealing with neighbourhood problems.
- At-large systems tend to work only in very small, homogeneous communities.



The Blue Mountains Chili Cook-off

By Lester and Kim Posen

The Rotary Club of Thornbury-Clarksburg, a service club dedicated to serving the needs of the local community, has been sponsoring *The Blue Mountains Chili Cook-Off* for the past 26 years. Currently held in The Village at Blue, this event has become a fun day for both local residents and visitors. Many teams represent local clubs and businesses — a great opportunity for the Blue Mountain Ratepayers' Association to be seen and our message promoted.

The day started bright and early for the BMRA's "A Pot to Cook In" team in the recent Cook-Off. We arrived in the Village at Blue around 8 a.m. to register and locate our booth. The day was clear, warm and very windy! Your competitive team included: Michael Seguin, Catherine Sholtz-Seguin, Peter Sharpe, Kim Posen, Leah Posen, Ian Posen and Lester Posen. Later in the day we were joined by Linda and Stan Back as well as Bruce Taylor.

The first order of business was setting up the booth. Once the vehicles were unloaded (two SUVs!), we were able to build a roof and decorate the booth with our banner, team sign and Neighbourhood Watch signs. The banner and team sign were designed by Leah Posen who is especially talented in graphics design.

There was some real space planning involved here



Be a Community Leader with The Blue Mountains Community Watch

Organize your neighbours in an effort to discourage break-and-enters, fraud, vandalism and rowdyism in your community.

Community Watch includes Neighbourhood Watch, Business Watch, Road Watch and Rural Watch programs covering six zones in The Blue Mountains.

To find out more, visit www.thebluemountains.ca and click on the Community Watch headline or call: Larry Hall 519-599-6262, Rob Potter 519-599-3131 ext 282, or Sgt. Charlie Watts 519-599-6644.

It won't happen without you!

in preparing our chili and cooking it as we had only an 8 foot by 8 foot space to work in. The team really pulled together and we were ready to roll by the 10 a.m. cooks' meeting. At 10:30, the official start time, the teams started their prep and lit their fires. You could barely hear yourself think over the din of knives clinking and propane stoves roaring to life.

Your team set to work quickly with Michael, Peter, Ian and Leah grinding our special beef blend. (That's our grinder in the pictures on the Chili Cook-Off Website.) Catherine and Kim got going with the mountain of onions that needed to be chopped. Lester got the cookers fired up

We were entered in the open or the "anything goes" division. Kim and Catherine ensured that our Pot was filled with the right ingredients, at the right time, including the spices added to the different items being cooked for the concoction in the Pot. The Pot filled quickly and before we knew it about 4.5 gallons of chili were simmering away in our kitchen away from home. Our chief oarsman, Peter, took on the task of ensuring that the concoction was continuously stirred for the next 2.5 hours.

The public started to arrive around 11 a.m. to watch the proceedings and scope out the craziness that descends here once each year. Our team had the opportunity to talk with people and provide information about the association as well as our cooking techniques.

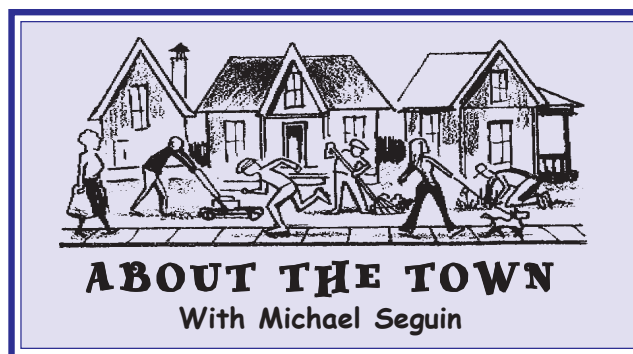
The judging begins

The 2 p.m. turn-in time came quickly and the sample bowls of chili were submitted to the judges for the competition. At the same time, the public had the opportunity to start sampling chilis from the 23 assembled teams. This was a carnival-style atmosphere, with people lining up at all the booths trying out their "Official Taster" kits sold by the Rotary, qualifying them to sample the smorgasbord of chilis. These official tasters (those who supported the Rotary by purchasing a taster's kit) had the opportunity to cast their vote for the People's Choice. (We couldn't bribe the judges, but we did our best to influence the tasters!)

Right on time, at 4 p.m., the judging was complete and the awards ceremony began. The talk in the BMRA tent was any place in the judging would be great as long as it wasn't last! So, in a field of 23 teams, 18 in the open division and with about nine restaurants, your BMRA *A Pot to Cook In* team placed 5th!

We were hot and tired, surprised and happy. We had a great time, met some really interesting people, had the opportunity to get the word out on the BMRA and did really well in the competition.

Our thanks to everyone who attended this event in support of the Rotary as well as to all those who helped in the booths. Special thanks to: The Blue Mountains (Neighbourhood Watch signs) and St. Urbain Bagel (aprons). And we would like to especially thank Phoenix Print Shop for their participation and donation of the banner. Phoenix is a social enterprise based in Toronto, working with troubled youth and helping them develop skills that will enable them to find work.



Dark clouds loom over Georgian Bay orchards

Over the years, and more so since 1990, a number of veteran local apple growers have begun chopping down their trees and abandoning the business or replacing their fields with cash crops. It is reported that there were over 34,000 acres of apple orchards in Ontario in 1994, while today only 12,500 acres are in production. Grey County is home to 4,000 acres of apple orchards, more than any other county in Canada. There are 75 apple growers in the Georgian Bay area including Collingwood, the Blue Mountains and Meaford – less than half what it was 20 years ago.

The major reason for this drop is costs, which far exceed the price the farmers receive for their produce. In fact, the prices being paid to producers has remained static for many years as world markets, including Canada, continue to import large quantities of apples from Asian countries such as Fiji and China.

We need to do our part to help reverse this trend. Buy more local produce, drink more Peeler and support our apple economy. *Source: Courier-Herald, Erika Engel 5/10/2010*

High bacteria levels close Northwinds Beach

At the beginning of July, the Grey Bruce Public Health Unit posted a notice at Northwinds Beach stating that there was evidence of high bacteria levels in the water exceeding Ministry of Health and Long-term Care standards. Swimming in the area was restricted until levels were considered safe. The unsafe conditions were blamed on an unusually wet June and heavy rains at the beginning of July.

Is this a sign of the times, or a warning? As we continue to strip away our wooded areas for new development and alter our environmentally sensitive lands, can we expect more runoff and high bacteria levels in the future? *Source: Town Media Advisory 07/02/2010*

Beaver River bridge undergoes major rehabilitation

If you haven't crossed that bridge yet, be prepared to wait. The Town has started on the Second Contract which includes repairs and improvements on the deck, railings and walkways. This work is expected to extend the life of the bridge (avoiding complete replacement) as

well as improving the bridge and approaches to meet more modern standards. Also included but not advertised to the public is the Town's \$75,000 worth of enhancements: banner poles, flag poles, river illumination, laser lighting (yes, the same laser lighting that originally there was no money for) and pedestrian railings.

The Town is hoping that MTO will provide funding for these enhancements along with the rest of the project costs. Somehow. I doubt it – the MTO Connecting Link Program only funds 90% of the value of a project. The Town is expected to finance the remaining 10%.

By the way, the total construction cost of the rehabilitation project has now been estimated at around \$2,678,331 and climbing as more problems are discovered and contractors want more contingency money. The latest issue at the beginning of July centered around temporary traffic lights and the removal of asbestos from ductwork found in the north sidewalk. You are asked to drive over the bridge with caution – more importantly, be patient! *Source: Town Staff Reports EPW.08.75, EPW.10.054 and EPW.10.081*

Construction of new Town Hall ahead of schedule

In a recent *Newsletter* (which can be viewed on the Town's web site), the Town states that the new Town Hall project is approximately three weeks ahead of schedule. Target completion date is Feb. 28, 2011. No word on costs. The steel frame erection is expected to be completed on schedule: July 30th – you can view it on your way to the bridge construction.

The Project Steering Committee has finally selected the exterior and interior finishes for the new Town Hall. For the exterior, it's Brampton Brick's Old School metric modular brick. This brick is similar in colour and size to the masonry on numerous buildings in Thornbury, including Century 21, Wong's, The Bakery/Studio 16 and the old Bayswater Gallery's interior walls. Architectural stone is to be utilized at the base of the building. Both the stonework and brick will continue into the interior and will be prominent in the Gallery. Decorative Douglas Fir beams and trim also will be prominent in the interior – the underside of the Gallery roof, underside of the bridge, the arcade roof, handrails, and wood sills in the Council Chamber and Committee Room. *Source: New Town Hall Construction Newsletter 06/11/2010*

Town wants to communicate with you in building a sustainable community

The Town has set up a "Community Engagement" E-mail program designed to reach out to residents and promote greater transparency in government activities. Mayor Anderson addressed the members at the AGM in June and asked that more of them sign-up and receive regular and informative communications from the Town.

If you are interested in participating in this Town-wide initiative, you are asked to provide your name, your Blue Mountains address and your email address to Rob

Potter, Communications and Economic Development Coordinator (rpotter@thebluemountains.ca), or call 519-599-3131 Ext. 282 for more information.

Unless otherwise authorized, your Association protects your privacy and does not provide your name, mailing address or email address to any organization, including the Town. So the onus is on you to join if you are interested. *Source: Letter from Mayor Anderson 06/28/2010*

County warns us about future tax increases and Hogweed

In early July, the new Grey County CAO, Lance Thurston, read the "financial riot act" to County Council. He basically stated that Council cannot continue to reduce tax levies and provide the same level of services. He noted in his report that over the past four years, the county's average tax rate increase has been only 0.435% and actually declined in 2010. The time has come to cut levels of services, drop programs or ??? Nobody is talking, but I can hear them thinking: *tax rate increase!!!*

2011 looks to be an interesting year at both the County and the local level.

Recently the County warned of a new threat: giant Hogweed! This plant is aggressive and can cause severe burns, blindness and permanent lung damage. The plant contains large leaves, deeply cut with sharp coarse teeth and its stems are covered in coarse, whisker-like hairs with reddish-purple spots; it can grow to 5.5m in height. The plant is mostly found along rivers, streams, wetlands and roads and basically resembles other non-toxic weeds such as native Cow Parsnip, Angelica and Queen Anne's Lace. For more information, visit www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english.

2010 Depot lecture series continues at the Beaver Valley Community Centre

Monday, Aug. 30: Dr. Ron Williamson – to speak on the archaeology of the Mantle Site, and urban planning in Ontario during the 16th Century.

Monday, Sept. 27: Doris Heffron – to speak on her latest novel, *City Wolves*, a captivating tale of a Canadian pioneer women making a road for herself as the first female veterinarian in the nation.

Lectures start at 1 p.m. Contact Suzanne Purdy for information at 705-444-2601. *Source: Courier-Herald 12/15/ 2010*

Craigleith Community Centre

Restored 1860s one-room schoolhouse.
Designated as a heritage building.
Includes kitchen facilities

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

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