

# The VIEW from BLUE

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[www.bluemountainratepayers.ca](http://www.bluemountainratepayers.ca)

Box 198, Thornbury, ON N0H 2P0

The largest ratepayers' association in The Blue Mountains

December 2012

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

by Michael P. Seguin

## Are we on a sustainable path?

As the year 2012 comes to an end, we all should be looking forward to a festive season and great expectations of hope and prosperity in the upcoming new year. Instead, we must live with the effects of a sluggish economy and, of course, higher than expected municipal tax hikes.

The sustainable path to a quality and affordable lifestyle that most of us envision is slowly evaporating.

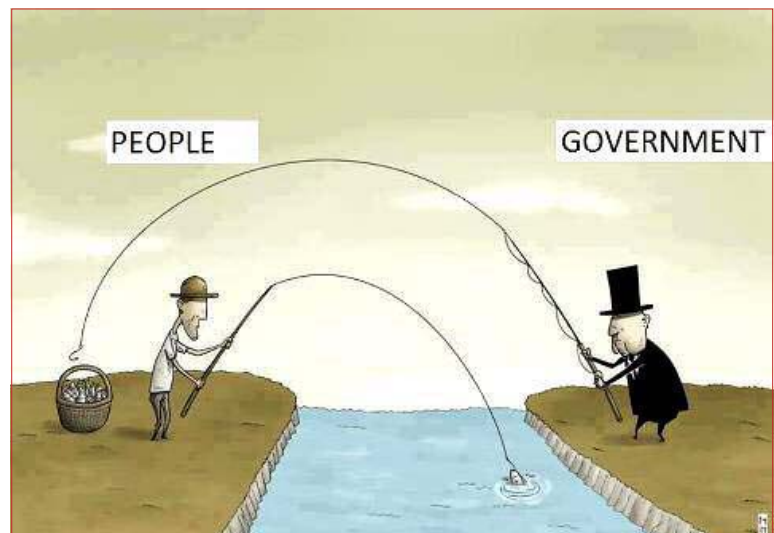
As we move into the 2013 Budget Process, one would expect restraint and some tax breaks. However, as the cartoon depicts, our Catch of the Day is feeding the wants of government.

Current proposals call for a 6.1% increase in your property taxes, a 23% increase in your fixed water charge, an 8% increase in consumption water rates, a 14% increase in your fixed wastewater charge and a 2% increase in consumption waste-water rates.

What this means is that the average family will be paying an extra \$188 in taxes next year. And, as if this potential increase is not enough, we have been warned that service level enhancements may increase the property tax level another 2% to 8.1%, driving taxes

over the \$200 threshold.

The budget process is quite complex to explain in this short article, and so we have put together a BMRA Budget Review Committee to examine the details. We will provide you with a breakdown and comments in our future email blasts before the



*How taxation works in Our Town*

Town holds a Public Meeting – sometime in January or February.

On a more positive note, the BMRA Short Term Accommodation (STA) Committee has been very active and has provided to the Town

*See President's Report page 2*

## President's Report

*Continued from page 1*

staff a number of quality suggestions for moving forward with a strong and effective STA Licencing By-law. Assuming that all goes well, we are expecting this by-law to be in place by March 31, or by the summer at the latest. We will report to you any changes in direction or attitude (you never know with this Council).

■ **On the planning front**, the Town's Official Plan (OP) Review has basically come to a standstill. They say it's about eight months behind schedule. The Chair of the Committee, D. McKinlay, blames a high volume of public input. The Director of Planning and Building, D. Finbow, blames a lack of resources.

I blame a lack of "good planning."

While the OP review struggles, there are several old and new developments in various stages of the approval process; i.e., Windfall, Eden Oaks, Terrasan (now Meridian), Telfer, Lora Bay Heights and the "Home Farm." If approved, these developments could potentially add another 1,500-2,000 residential units to the market in the years 2013-2015.

Is this possible or just a "pipe dream?" I wonder how many of these developments represent "good planning." The Town appears to struggle with this concept (see my article about that Planning Amendment being turned down on page 3).

To give our members a better understanding of these developments as they move through the planning process, I want to form a BMRA Planning and Development Committee and will be looking for volunteers to participate – let me know if you are interested.

■ **I would like to thank our Council** for turning down a request by Clearview Township to speak out against a judicial review of the Walker Aggregate Quarry decision. The decision to move forward with a quarry expansion basically ignored the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act (NEPDA) and was challenged by many ratepayers in Clearview Township.

The BMRA argued that a judicial review is a legal question and not a political one and we should not be putting the ratepayers of our community against the ratepayers of another community without due public process.

■ **Finally**, there has been a lot of discussion about declining water levels in Georgian Bay. A continuing reduction of water levels has had and will have a serious impact on shipping, tourism, wildlife, natural heritage features and recreational boating throughout our region. We support all the mayors as well as the federal and provincial representatives of this region in lobbying both senior levels of government to help correct this serious problem.

If you have comments regarding my statements, please do not hesitate to contact me through our web site, [www.bluemountainratepayers.ca](http://www.bluemountainratepayers.ca) or by emailing me at [mpseguin@rogers.com](mailto:mpseguin@rogers.com).

As I have always said, and will continue to say: "You are the heart and soul of the Association and we value your opinion."

## BMRA Membership Update

Great news from the membership front! Both family and condominium memberships have increased since August, with many of the newcomers involved in a variety of issues facing us as ratepayers.

Of note is the continuing growth in the Thornbury/Clarksburg area, representing some 70% of the new members.

In an effort to reach as many people as possible, we encourage everyone to include email addresses for all family members during this year's renewal season. I don't know about you, but I enjoy seeing our email blasts and newsletters in my inbox. It all adds to the influence of the BMRA when we are advocating on your behalf.

As you get ready to renew your membership for 2013, you have more options ever!

In the printed *View from Blue* newsletter (for our members without access to email) there is a **Membership Application Form** (see page 10). Just complete the form and mail it with your payment.

In the eNewsletter there is a link to a **Membership Application Form PDF** that you can download, print, complete and mail.

### **NEW FOR 2013:**

We now offer an **Online Membership Application Form** with credit card payment (Pay Pal, a secure online payment provider). This option is quick and easy, and is something many members have asked about. There also will be a link in the *eNewsletter*, if this is your choice.

On the website there is a **Renew Now for 2013** link that will take you to the Membership page, with all membership-related forms and information.

### **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.

***Breaking News . . .*****Continuing growth and strength in the BMRA membership!**

On behalf of the BMRA Board and its membership, I would like to welcome the Board of Directors of the Georgian View Estates Ratepayers' Association (GVERA) as new members of the Blue Mountain Ratepayers' Association.

Their Association currently has 28 family memberships, and so their Directors will be able to communicate BMRA information to another 50 or more residents/voters.

As an added bonus their President, Terry Thompson, has agreed to join our Board and will be introduced and approved at our next Board meeting on Jan. 12.

This is great news. This addition to our membership base will only strengthen our voice as major stakeholders in the community.

Michael P. Seguin, President  
Blue Mountain Ratepayers' Association

## Council turns down 'good planning' amendment

By Michael Seguin

*(With some abstracts from a presentation to Council by the Napier-Victoria Resident's Group)*

**O**n Nov. 19, Councillor Martin proposed an Official Plan Amendment (OPA) establishing criteria for residential development on vacant lands within the Thornbury Urban Community (TUC). Why?

The Telfer proposal for an "adult lifestyle" community of 86 residential units on land leases (at the SE corner of Napier and Victoria Streets) basically exposed a long-standing and very serious planning problem: there are virtually no planning controls in place, nor is there guidance for development of vacant lands within the TUC that are designated "RES" or "DD" in the Official Plan. Compatibility of development also remains undefined, and the character of the community is threatened.

These problems have been acknowledged by both planning staff and consultants, and residents have asked Council on numerous occasions since the Fall of 2010 for more specific Official Plan policies and Zoning By-law regulations for these areas.

### **Delays, lack of trust**

Many believe the five-year OP review could address this planning problem. However, continuing delays and a lack of trust in the review process do not bode well for the necessary changes to be in place soon or, at least, in the next two years. In the meantime, any large scale, "silo" style development could move forward under the old OP and turn "a field of dreams into a field of schemes."

People living in the neighbourhood and people who consider living in this neighbourhood should have a clear expectation of what their community will look like in the future. By turning down this amendment, the Council provides no clear vision or

guidance for the future of this community – only fears of what mysteries lie ahead.

In my opinion, rejection of this amendment (4-3) brings two important possibilities to the fore:

1. The Telfer proposal has been approved secretly behind closed doors, and certain members of Council don't want to jeopardize the proposed "Minutes of Settlement" to be presented at a OMB Pre-hearing scheduled for Jan. 29;

2. Certain members of Council do not consider this project worth spending taxpayer money on legal fees. As one member of Council said, the money would be better spent on "throwing bags of gravel on the road than on legal fees."

### **A disheartening mystery**

Council's "sad" approach to community planning is certainly a mystery to most people in the Thornbury Urban Community. I'm sure the residents of the Napier-Victoria Residents Group also are disheartened by Council's decision to ignore them.

According to area resident Brian Nelson, who has been involved with the Group since the beginning of this controversy in 2010: "People around here are definitely disappointed and concerned. It's hard to understand how the concerns of so many people over such a long time can be rejected by Council. The lack of planning here is astounding, and wouldn't be tolerated in other communities.

"Something like the Telfer plan, with so many questions and problems, shouldn't even be on the table."

It's interesting that on the night the OP Amendment was turned down, the "Sustainable Path" Committee made a presentation about the bright future of our community and how we should move forward – Council was all for it! However, when the topic of how to "sustain the character of our own community" came up, the majority of Council turned it down! We might as well put that document on the shelf.

It's noteworthy that the Telfer proposal addresses

none of the key planning principles outlined in the Sustainable Path, not even basic accommodation for pedestrians and cyclists.

Finally, as the Telfer OMB prehearing approaches, I'm starting to imagine what the Town will say in their attempt to present "Minutes of Settlement" and, ultimately, get grant approval for an "unwanted" development. Will the Town representative say: "We agree to proceed with approval because this proposal represents good land use planning"?

## How can TBM budget proposals be made more meaningful for ratepayers?

By John Leckie

Chair, BMRA Budget Review Committee

The BMRA Budget Review Committee is appreciative that the Chair of the Special Meeting of Council to review the 2013 Budget Proposal, along with senior staff of TBM, has agreed to a workshop with our Committee.

Areas in which we need a better understanding will require:

1. That TBM publish financial statements (specifically, a balance sheet) that present the Town's largest financial assets/liabilities in accordance with well-established norms in the private sector.

2. That the Town show the impact of their proposed Budget on ratepayers in a format that clearly sets out the year-over-year increases in taxes in all areas, and that it not be blended with the County. User fees and fixed charges should be added to the overall impact in a way that allows us to judge the Town's fiscal management of our money.

There are several examples in item 1 that call for a balance sheet. One area would be assets and liabilities that relate to phasing out of the life of the old landfill and also showing the new landfill on a pro forma balance sheet, setting out its expected capital investment with an appropriate offsetting debt package.

Another example would be to embellish the Town's very helpful graphs in the proposed Budget with a balance sheet of assets and liabilities.

As with most municipalities, TBM has an infrastructure deficit gap. But even though taxpayers are being charged for new infrastructure (via their development fees when they get a building permit) they are now being charged additionally for Reserves to meet the Provincial Asset Management criteria. In other words they are being charged twice in some cases for assets such as water and sewage – they pay now for the new hook-up, and over time to

replace what they already paid for so that the next purchaser of their property doesn't have to pay lump sums the way they did.

This is double taxation. An appropriate balance sheet disclosure tool, as used in the private sector, would trigger the unfairness of the double taxation. It would appear that Queen's Park is pushing for this type of accounting tool in its new program called Provincial Asset Management.

With regard to item 2, we would encourage TBM to clearly show us the line item summary of year-over-year changes they have used to rationalize the proposed 6.1% increase. All the changes need to be set out before being blended down by the windfall of the County's low tax rate in 2013. In other words, show very clearly the gross amount taxpayers will be hit with by taking into account:

- Fixed water charge increases in the proposed Budget by 23% (i.e., from \$22-\$27 per month).

- Wastewater increases 14% (from \$19-\$22 per month).

The above information has been gleaned from the 170 pages of the Town's Finance Dept., so this is not a criticism of non-disclosure. It is simply a suggestion that would help ratepayers understand what is happening to their taxes. Until we can work with the Town to set this out in a balance sheet, it is hard to grasp. The good news is that the BMRA is working with the Town on these issues and we shall keep you posted on developments with a view to giving you a clearer picture of the fiscal impact of the 2013 Budget.

## Town moves closer to an STA Licence By-law

By Michael Seguin

In an email communication on Nov. 30, we advised members that the Short Term Accommodation (STA) Licencing By-law consultation was about to end. Some members of the BMRA-STA Committee met with Town staff and later submitted a lengthy letter/report identifying areas in the draft by-law that should be strengthened or clarified, as well as important controls that should be added to minimize possible loopholes.

### **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. Membership, which includes a subscription to our newsletters, is just \$25 a year, payable to:

**Blue Mountain Ratepayers' Association  
Box 198, Thornbury, ON N0H 2P0**

## WARNING: A NEW WAY OF STEALING...

A new warning from the Blue Mountains Community Watch Committee. (People sure stay busy trying to cheat us, don't they?)

### THE SCENE:

A man at a local restaurant paid for his meal with his credit card. The bill for the meal came, he signed it and the waitress folded the receipt and passed the credit card along. Usually, he would just take it and place it in his wallet or pocket. Oddly, this time he took a look at his card and – lo and behold – it was the expired card of another person.

He called the waitress and she looked perplexed. She took it back, apologized, and hurried back to the counter under the watchful eye of the man. All the waitress did while walking to the counter was wave the expired card to the counter cashier, who immediately looked down and took out the real card. No exchange of words — nothing!



She took it and came back to the man with an apology.

### THE VERDICT:

Make sure the credit cards in your wallet are yours. Check the name on the card every time you sign for something and/or the card is taken away for even a short period of time. Many people just take back the credit card without even looking at it, "assuming" that it has to be theirs.

**FOR YOUR OWN SAKE, DEVELOP THE HABIT OF CHECKING YOUR CREDIT CARD EACH TIME IT IS RETURNED TO YOU AFTER A TRANSACTION!**

Scary isn't it? But there are several more ways of stealing your money and identity that you should know about. They can be found at: [www.bluemountainscommunitywatch.ca/index-cw/dynamicimages/CREDITCARD\\_article\\_453\\_222\\_873.htm](http://www.bluemountainscommunitywatch.ca/index-cw/dynamicimages/CREDITCARD_article_453_222_873.htm)

We also addressed many of the key questions that were being asked by the Town:

- Are there additional prerequisites to holding a licence that should be considered?
- What are the implementation challenges?
- What type of Public Meeting should be held?
- Should the Town consider utilizing a Hearing Officer or a Licencing Committee to address possible suspensions or revocations?

Our areas of concern and the answers to these important questions will all be detailed, together with other stakeholder comments, in a report being prepared for Council on either Dec. 17 or at the first Council meeting in January. State tuned for further updates.

We have come a long way since 2001, when the Town commissioned the OPP to enforce By-laws regarding issues relating to STA nuisances. Despite the OPP's best efforts, the complaints continued to grow and a statutory public meeting was held in October, 2007 regarding draft OP and Zoning Amendments. Subsequently, an Interim Control By-law was passed in February, 2008.

A three week OMB Hearing followed at the end of 2010 and the beginning of 2011, and the Town's decision to move forward with STA regulations and standards was upheld. The OMB decisions also stood the test of a "leave for appeal" in 2012 and now – we are finally moving forward to a STA Licencing regime in 2013.

Some important stats (to the end of October 2012):

■ 113 STA files have been opened and 64 files have been closed in 2012, with a total of 218 files still active since 2009;

■ STA communication in 2012 includes 79 violation notices, 688 emails, 176 phone calls and 300 STA pamphlets being distributed.

■ 175 STA inspections were carried out in 2012 in addition to hours of patrols and online and advertisement investigations.

■ Although no stats were released, we are also advised that Town is now experiencing successful STA court prosecutions – great news for law enforcers!

*Source: Town Report B.12.32, Dec. 4, 2012*

### Emergency & Information

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

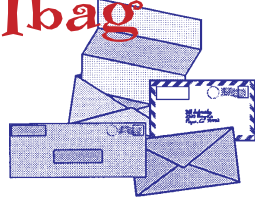
**OPP** (Collingwood & Blue Mountains): 1-888-310-1122; (Administration): 705-445-4321. Blue Mountains Resorts Security: 705-445-0231 x8281/8911 (24 hours)

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

**Municipal Offices:** Thornbury (519) 599-3131. Troy Speck, Chief Administration Officer, x234; Robert Cummings, Treasurer, x245; Corinna Giles, Town Clerk, x232; David Finbow, Director of Planning and Building x246; Reg Russwurm, Director of Engineering, x260.

## The Mailbag

### Is the Mega Quarry really dead?



I think they will be cautious for a time. Until Highland stops hydrogeology testing or sells the land back to farmers, there is every possibility the project will go back on stream with a Tory government in power.

The citizens groups, NDACT and CORE, will remain vigilant and will probably invest their nest egg in preparation for the next fight. The Highland Companies likely realize they got it wrong, so their large potato operation will have to pay the bills for now. They'll hang on to that land while they build up community relationships, then file another aggregate application years from now.

My prediction: Highlands will quietly finish its testing, scale it back and find a true local partner.

Now, if Melancthon Township was smart, they'd apply to "Greenbelt" the lands as a Specialty Crop Area. Municipalities can apply to the province for Greenbelt expansion - e.g., Oakville. Highlands land is contiguous to existing Greenbelt, so it qualifies.

If Highlands objects to this Greenbelting/agricultural land preservation . . . Well, you'll know whether they're farmers, or not!

**Norm Wingrove**, President

Blue Mountain Watershed Trust Foundation

### Bridging a necessary gap in the Georgian Trail

Within weeks of the Georgian Trail being created, it was discovered by myself and other residents on the waterside of Hwy. 26, between Grey Rd. 19 and the

Edgewater condominiums, that we had no way of accessing the Trail on foot without walking along (the passing zone of) an 80km/h highway for several hundred feet. Recognizing that this would not be a safe practice, several residents installed wooden bridges in order to traverse the deep ditch separating Hwy. 26 from the Trail.

This informal solution supposedly solved the Trail access problem for several years without incident.

However, in October, 2011 the Ministry of Transportation, Ontario (MTO) removed and trashed our bridges as they considered them an unwanted liability risk. Prior to that disturbing incident and based on preliminary warning notice in June, 2010 of their removal, I immediately communicated with the Georgian Trail Board requesting that they plan replacement of the informal bridges with MTO-approved structures, which I was told the MTO was prepared to authorize.

Because the need was/is so obvious, I assumed replacement structures would be installed quickly. However, 29 months later, there are still no replacement bridges. In fact, The Blue Mountains and the Georgian Trail Board have (unbelievably) advised that no replacement bridges will be installed. Apparently, both the Town and the Georgian Trail Board consider it acceptable for residents, including children, to walk along an 80 km/h highway for several hundred feet seeking ad-hoc access to the Trail.

The ironic situation is that replacement bridges will not be installed because of perceived liability issues.

Apparently the Town and Trail Board do not seem to realize that their refusal to provide a realistic solution to the problem has created (for them), not perceived, but real and immediate liability issues.

**Robert Woodcock**

(One of many annoyed residents affected by this unresolved problem)

## For your pleasure and education

For the fifth year, the Watershed Trust Foundation (BMWTF) and Elephant Thoughts are offering the "Be the Change" documentary film series at the Gayety Theatre in Collingwood.

These educational films are about environmentally-focused challenges facing our world today. This year you can purchase **dinner** (provided by the Mediterranean Catering Company) and dine while you listen to live music beforehand. Tickets can be purchased at the door (starting at 6.30 p.m.): Film \$8 and Dinner \$15.

Details on the four remaining films (listed here)

can be found at [www.bethechangefilmseries.ca](http://www.bethechangefilmseries.ca):



Jason Redman

**Jan. 16:** "Living Downstream" (musical guest Jason Redman)

**Feb. 20:** "Water on the Table" (musical guest Shane Cloutier)

**March 20:** Green Beer for a Green Planet – Fund-raiser. "Reforestation Las Gaviotas" (musical guest Strange Potatoes)

**April 17:** "Carbon Nation" (musical guest Aaron Garner)



## ABOUT TOWN

With Michael Seguin

### Feds want to draw an arbitrary line through the heart of our economy

The Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Ontario wants to push the Town of the Blue Mountains out of Simcoe-Grey and into Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. The move would essentially create a fragmented region and two new ridings that would have to compete with each other, rather than existing as a unified force in developing a sustainable tourist destination and improving economic development and infrastructure, as well as policing and health services.

Many politicians and businesses plus the Blue Mountain Village Association and the Georgian Triangle Tourist Association have weighed in stating that this proposal is not in best interests of our region. Like the many walking, hiking and biking trails we continue to create so as to provide connectivity within our region, there needs to be strong political connectivity in order to make our economy work.

A split in our region is total nonsense. We need strong leadership in dealing with this potentially disruptive move by an uninformed federal bureaucracy.

Councilor Ardiel has spoken out, stating that “splitting apart the tourism destination along riding lines would destroy years of progress.” The Mayor and the rest of Council now need to speak out and lobby to remain in Simcoe-Grey – the local community businesses demand it.

*Source: Enterprise-Bulletin, Oct. 1, and Simcoe.com Oct. 25*

### Will the Thornbury BIA continue to survive?

In our last newsletter, I reported that the Business Improvement Area (BIA) was being run by an Interim Board of Council until January, at which time they expected the BIA to have elected, or be in the process of electing, a new board. To stimulate interest from BIA members, the Interim Board decided to hold four visioning sessions and start drafting a

Procedural By-law. However, after poor attendance, the final two sessions were cancelled.

Was this from lack of interest or were members expressing their lack of trust in the Town’s commitment to promoting a “sustainable commercial retail district”? A number of issues still need to be resolved, such as boundaries, levies, partnerships and communications.

So what will happen to the BIA if these issues are not resolved? Will the Town continue to run the BIA’s regular business in 2013 and depend on volunteers? I guess we will find out soon, as the 2013 Budget process starts and the need for funds becomes evident or not!

*Source: Simcoe.com, Nov. 27*

### Grey County News

Despite warnings from Lance Thurston, the CAO, Grey County Council has moved forward with a 0.74% increase in their tax levy in all municipalities.

The CAO warned that a tax increase of under the 1% mark would move the county “backward,” based on the inherent risks associated with revenue projections and being forced to draw from reserves. However, most Councilors see the need for restraint and to allow lower-tier municipalities, such as ours, some “wiggle room” in preparing their own budgets.

The County will have a new Transportation Master Plan in 2013. Public open houses were held recently to create “a vision for all modes of transportation in the County, with particular focus on encouraging active transportation options along county roads (cycling, walking/running).”

Has the time come to identify and assess future transportation network constraints and solutions, as well as opportunities involving public and private partnerships over the next 20-25 years? Can a Transit Plan be in the works?

For more information, you are asked to view the following web site: [www.grey.ca/services/planning-development/transportation-master-plan/](http://www.grey.ca/services/planning-development/transportation-master-plan/)

Finally, the Grey County EMS now has a permanent home in Craigeith near the base of Blue Mountain (behind Fire Station 2 off Grey Road 19). The 4,000 sq. ft. state-of-the-art station will provide for three ambulance vehicles and access to oxygen storage from the outside. The building will be staffed for 12 hours per day (10.a.m. to 10 p.m.) with two

### INFOLINE: 211

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

paramedics and one ambulance vehicle on standby. The long range goal is to provide 24-hour coverage.

*Source: Owensound.Suntimes.com, Nov. 8, Simcoe.com, Nov. 23*

## Real Estate News

Will the Georgian Triangle be looking at a new annual sales record for 2012? Both September and October were great months . . . but what's in store for November and December? Here's what the Georgian Triangle Real Estate Board and the numbers say.

According to MLS statistics, there were 1,520 sales in the first three-quarters of 2012 compared to 1,410 during the same nine month period in 2011, representing a 7.8% gain – the real estate optimists are looking good! This also represented a 6.0% increase in dollar sales volume.

A recent news release by the Board indicates that 217 properties sold (186 homes) in October, considered a record for that month's sales and representing 36% more than the 159 sales recorded in September as well as a 23.3% increase over October, 2011. Overall, from January-October the real estate market increased by 10% over the same period in 2011. Real estate optimists are starting to look great!

So what's happening? The real estate pessimists said that tighter lending rules, an overheated Canadian real estate market, and ongoing global financial and economic instability would have a negative effect on the local housing market. Are buyers starting to believe there is strong value in the Georgian Triangle real estate market? Are sellers starting to realize they need to negotiate more to move their properties?

What we do know? New listings of affordable products are coming onto the market and almost 50% of sales reflect property values around or less than \$325,000. The average residential sale price year-to-date (end of October) comes in at \$319,583 or 2.5% lower than the first 10 months of 2011 (estimated at \$327,989).

In terms of location, The Blue Mountains saw a 19.3% increase in the first nine months of 2012, compared to 2011. Don't get too excited – it doesn't take much to show an increase when there are limited numbers and a few high-priced sales every year. The Town of Collingwood saw an increase of

14.4% over the same period, while Grey Highlands was the hot spot with sales up 50% (based on a limited number of sales).

So will there be an annual sales record in 2012? I guess we will just have to wait and see. However, one thing for sure – there are now more real estate optimists than there are pessimists.

*Source: CollingwoodHomes.ca (Karen Poshtar), The moviegals.com and Simcoe.com, Oct. 3 and Nov. 14.*

## News briefs:

### The Blue Mountains:

■ **The Apple season** is over and the effects were far-reaching. Local farmers lost 80% to 100% of their crops, the local business economy suffered and there was a major hit to the seasonal worker community. It was estimated that only 200 seasonal workers from Mexico and the Caribbean, of a total of about 1,000, were employed on farms from Meaford to the Beaver valley and Collingwood.

■ **Our neighbor to the east**, Meaford, is getting a new health clinic to attract doctors within the next two years. A site on the south side of Highway 26, next to the Bay-Vue Motel (west end) has been donated for the construction of a building similar to the Thornbury Clinic. North East Grey Health Clinic Inc. has already raised \$975,000 of the required \$2.1 million through various donations and pledges.

■ **The Blue Mountains Public Library Board** has hired a new CEO to replace Carol Cooley. Terri Pope brings more than 12 years of experience as CEO and deputy CEO at various libraries in south-western Ontario (most recently Tillsonburg).

■ **The Blue Mountain Resort** is making snow and hopes to be open in early December. In order to help build a solid snow base, the Resort invested another \$500,000 in snowmaking upgrades over the summer. The most notable additions include new two-stage, high temperature guns that enable the Resort to make snow at temperatures as high as -2 degrees centigrade. The Resort also improved its existing industry-leading snowmaking capabilities by approximately 10%. With these upgrades, the ski season should be extended beyond last season's 96 days (one of the warmest winters on record).

■ **The former Terrasan development site**, located on the north side of Hwy. 26 in Craigleith, is back in the news. In order to sell the property, Meridian Credit Union, the owners in bankruptcy, have applied to separate the site into blocks for development (residential, commercial and open/space parks). While this was a surprise to both the Town and the County, my belief is that potential buyers will only want the developable parts rather than dealing with watershed and shoreline issues. There may also be an attempt at higher densities.

## [www.bluemountainratepayers.ca](http://www.bluemountainratepayers.ca)

Have you visited our Website? It reports on lots of good stuff, including informative articles about your community and other other info and ideas you should be aware of, such as: art and cultural associations, maps, news media, attractions in and around the town, service clubs, ski areas and lots more. Check it out!



## Share the road ... we're on it together

Cycling today is evolving from an occasional recreational activity to an obsession with health, fitness, fun, the environment and transportation. Blue Mountain has great scenery, fresh air, interesting destinations and vistas and an extensive road system for traveling by bicycle.

If you participate in this activity, remember that cyclists, motorists, agricultural equipment operators, horses and riders and pedestrians often share the same road. Do your part by being a good ambassador for bicycling: drive with care and courtesy – it's easy to share the road!

For more information, please visit The Blue Mountains Website: [www.thebluemountains.ca/share-the-road\\_cfm](http://www.thebluemountains.ca/share-the-road_cfm).



■ **Market value reassessment** has hit most people hard, with an overall increase in the residential class at 19.81%, reflecting an average increase of 4.95% in 2013 and over the next three years. If your assessment is above this overall increase you will probably see a tax increase. If your assessment is at or below this overall increase, then you probably will see no change resulting from a shift in property assessment. The municipality receives no additional revenues from this shift.

■ **Council decided**, behind closed doors, to eliminate the Curator of the Craigleith Heritage Depot and enter a service-sharing agreement with Collingwood's museum services. The Town will pay up to \$31,000 per year to help Collingwood staff run the show. Will the cost-savings result in reduced service delivery? I hope not.

■ The Blue Mountain Resort has unveiled a proposed residential development on their site located on the east side of Grey Road 19, just south of Craigleith Road. The key to this site is one of the most significant archaeological First Nations sites (former Petun Village) in Ontario – the Plater-Martin Site. The Weider family has protected this site and is now offering it and significant buffer lands in exchange for an 11 acre surplus town-owned and former institutional land fronting on Grey Road 19.

This is a great deal – let's get it done!

## **News briefs:**

### **Town of Collingwood**

■ Town Council voted not to allow a casino facility within the town boundaries – health issues were considered to outweigh economic benefits. This paves the way for a Wasaga Beach casino (probably the intended location all along).

■ Dr. Peter Wells of Collingwood received a Canada's Family Physicians of the Year Award from the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) for outstanding patient care, significant contributions to the health and well-being of the local community and commitment to family medicine teaching and research. He also is founder and creator of the Rural Ontario Medical Program (ROMP) – a placement program for medical trainees that has benefited many rural communities in the Simcoe region. The program has now been extended to the Grey Bruce area – so let's *romp!*

■ The Mountainview Hotel has finally been leveled to make way for a centre-turning lane on Huron Street. The Town is still awaiting word from MTO on funding before proceeding with construction.

■ The "much-awaited" Wasaga Beach-Collingwood Highway 26 By-Pass is finally open. With two roundabouts, the drive is expected to take about 10 minutes from the old Hwy. 26 to Collingwood – near Sanford Fleming Drive – to old Hwy. 26 at Wasaga Beach (just south of Mosley Street). What a drive!

■ Health care has leapt forward with the arrival of a new CT scanner at the Collingwood General & Marine Hospital. This new piece of equipment should enable better medical imaging and diagnosis and help to reduce repair and maintenance costs as well as long waiting times.



## **Blue Mountain Ratepayers' Association**

Whether you are a permanent or seasonal resident, we encourage you to join the BMRA. Membership offers you the following:

1. Information about current local issues;
2. A voice in the performance of local government;
3. Monitoring of costs and benefits of our public services;
4. Pro-active involvement in bettering the environment;
5. Information for effective participation in local elections;
7. Regular mailings of our newsletters, with information on current issues, politics, development projects, news events and more.

Simply turn to the back page, fill out the form, and mail it us along with a cheque for \$25. Presto! You're in!



## BLUE MOUNTAIN RATEPAYERS' ASSOCIATION

*"Protecting the Interests of the Community"*

### BMRA Membership Application – 2013

Please enclose a cheque for \$25, payable to **BMRA**, as your annual family membership fee. Mail the cheque, and this application form, to:

Blue Mountain Ratepayers' Association  
Box 198  
Thornbury, ON N0H 2P0  
[www.bluemountainratepayers.ca](http://www.bluemountainratepayers.ca)

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

First Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

TBM Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address:  
(if different from above) \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail(s): \_\_\_\_\_

In order to manage costs and protect the environment, newsletters and information updates will be sent to you via email. If you do not have access to email, copies of newsletters will be mailed.

In addition the email newsletter, I would also like to receive one in the mail

Can you recommend anyone that may wish to join?

Name, Address/Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

We protect your privacy. Our privacy statement can be found at  
<http://www.bluemountainratepayersassociation.com/privacy.jsp>