

# 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

September 2009

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Membership in the Blue Mountains Ratepayers' Association is only \$25 a year from: Blue Mountain Ratepayers' Association, Box 405, Collingwood, ON L9Y 3Z7

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

*As my second term begins . . .*

## New Town Hall still a nagging concern

By Michael P. Seguin

**M**y second term as your President began after a very successful AGM on May 30<sup>th</sup>. On the business side, the membership approved substantial amendments to the By-Law that better defines our mission statement and membership and allows your Board of Directors to properly operate and govern the affairs of the Association. I was very impressed with our members who attended (72) and took the three Councillors (Gamble, McGee and McKinlay) to task with some difficult questions of concern: the new Town Hall, Short Term Rentals and the Georgian Trail, to name a few.

The AGM was also successful on another front. We now have a new Director: Peter Seligman, who will provide a fresh outlook and bring new ideas to the Board. Peter is an independent estate and insurance planner who is keenly interested in helping the Association broaden and strengthen its membership base. Welcome aboard Peter.

**THE NEW TOWN HALL** development continues to be of concern to many of our members. Will the receipt of \$4.6 million in infrastructure money provide relief to taxpayers? I don't think so. While the Mayor sings a chorus of "We're in the money," the Town's own auditor sings "Fix your negative reserve funds and reduce your capital spending." The Town currently has 10 reserve funds showing deficits of \$6,123,034 – money that has been taken out of important infrastructure funds to finance capital for pet projects. If the Town can't replace this money from development charges – guess who pays?

The new Town Hall is already running over budget; remediation

costs for the old service will be in excess of \$100,000, far more than promised by the CAO, and there are new plans for a staff parking lot on the old trailer park site. This doesn't include the storing of contaminated soil for free at our dump.

Finally, the Town's steering committee is now trying to spin the excavation and remediation costs into a great opportunity to build a full basement which will provide for more bureaucratic space. The extra costs are not known but another \$500,000 wouldn't be out of the question.

**MY BIGGEST CONCERN**, however, is not about construction costs, but how we are going to pay for the maintenance of this much larger building without subtracting other facilities and raising taxes, water and sewer rates and a number of user-fee charges.

We will be following all these costs and keep you informed, especially as the construction date gets closer.

With regards to the Short-term

*See President's Report page 2*

## President's Report

*Continued from page 1*

Accommodation issue, an OMB Pre-Hearing Conference was held on July 28, 2009 and a list of seven volunteers was presented and accepted by the Board to participate as “witnesses” in support of the Town’s Official Plan and Zoning Amendments. Unless the participating parties come to some settlement, a hearing is expected to be scheduled for late winter or early spring. State tuned!!!

On another front, the Blue Mountains pilot “Neighbourhood Watch Program” was launched in the Craighleith Community Centre at a meeting held on August 22, 2009. I will temporarily serve as the neighbourhood’s area coordinator and we have four volunteers (so far) to serve as zone coordinators. These zone coordinators are in the process of canvassing the streets and signing up watch members.

As soon as we organize and finalize all the details (i.e., handing out decals, erecting strategic metal signs, distributing valuable instruction materials and phone numbers, etc.), we will start the process of branching out to other neighbourhoods. The “Neighbourhood Watch Program” will be one of several types of watch programs under the greater Commu-

nity Watch umbrella, which is expected to reach out to all areas of the Town.

I would also like to mention that the Board is continually looking for areas to expand the Association’s membership base and provide a stronger voice in the affairs of the community. In this regard, the Board passed a motion to amend the By-Law to include a “Condo Membership,” which will be extended only to Condo Executive Directors. These Directors will be responsible for dispersing all newsletters and email blasts to all residential unit owners within the Condo Corporation. Residential unit owners will still be encouraged to join the Association as separate members.

I can proudly inform you that we have two Condo memberships already, representing 67 residential units, and we expect to receive another four memberships soon.

If you have questions regarding any of the topics or issues that I have mentioned, or wish further information, please do not hesitate to contact me through our website – [info@bluemountainratepayersassociation.com](mailto:info@bluemountainratepayersassociation.com) – or send me a message via the Association’s mailing address. You are the heart and soul of the Association and we value your opinion.

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## A MESSAGE FROM PETER SELIGMAN OUR NEW DIRECTOR

Like many of you, I cherish my time here in the Blue Mountains of Georgian Bay.

As a young boy I spent many weekends and holidays with my cousins, who own a ski chalet in Craighleith. Now, as an adult, I have my own property (still in Craighleith) and consider myself a committed “weekender,” with my summers being planned around extended weekends as well as vacation weeks and my winters spent on the slopes with my family for Christmas and March Break and, of course, weekends.

Over the past 10 years there has been explosive growth in our community, with an increase in both full time residents (including retirees) and vacation homes. The Directors of the Blue Mountain Ratepayers Association (BMRA) are a group of devoted full time residents and I have chosen to join, with the mandate of assisting the BMRA by representing the weekenders (i.e., part-time vacation home owners).

We have invested significant time, money and love into our recreational havens and it is important that we have a voice within our association. Our vacation homes represent a significant tax base for

our local government and this, in turn, gives us the privilege and the right to be heard.

Whether your intent is to maintain your property as a vacation home, perhaps for multiple generations, or ultimately to retire here, we want the best community possible. I urge you to support the BMRA with your own membership and to encourage your fellow weekenders to do the same.

As Director of Membership my intention is to launch a major enrolment campaign reaching out to as many full and part-time residents as possible, utilizing, where practical, the help of the various ski, golf and yacht clubs, etc., municipal mailings, government tax notices and even perhaps a direct mail “drop-off” campaign.

I welcome you to contact me with any concerns, suggestions or assistance. Enjoy the glorious Fall Colours we are blessed with.

Peter Seligman  
[peter@seligman.ca](mailto:peter@seligman.ca) (416-932-3200)

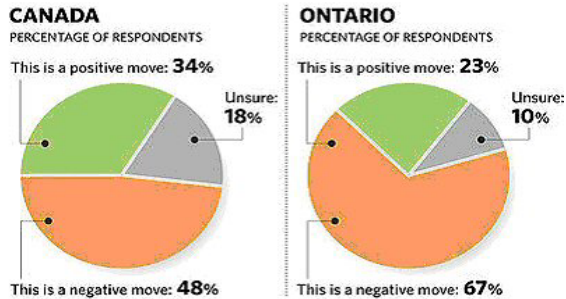
### INFOLINE: 211

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

# The dreaded Harmonized Sales Tax plan (HST)

## *Ontarians resent Premier McGuinty's proposed merger with GST, poll shows*

The following article/poll was published in the *Toronto Star* this past May, clearly indicating that a majority of Ontarians reject this legislation:



**QUESTION:** As you may know, the province of Ontario is looking to harmonize its provincial sales tax with the GST. Some people think this is a positive move because it will reduce administrative costs for businesses and government; others think this is a negative move because consumers will pay more in taxes on some services and goods. Which of these two views best reflects your personal opinion? (Source: Nanos Research)

**By Robert Benzie**

**Toronto Star Queen's Park Bureau Chief**

Premier Dalton McGuinty's harmonized sales tax is more than a year away but Ontarians already resent it, a new survey suggests.

Even though consumers will not be paying the 13% levy until July 1, 2010, there is growing anxiety about the tax's impact on pocketbooks, according to a Nanos Research poll done for the *Toronto Star* and *La Presse*.

"It's pretty clear that Ontarians are concerned about the potential negative effects of harmonization," company president and CEO Nik Nanos said yesterday.

Nationally, 48% of Canadians see tax harmonization as a negative move while 34% believe it is positive and 18% are unsure. (Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland have already harmonized their consumption taxes.)

But in Ontario, 67% of people polled have a negative view of the melded tax compared to 23% seeing it as positive and 10% unsure.

Nanos Research interviewed 1,001 people across the country from April 25 to 30 and results are considered accurate to within 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

In Ontario, 302 people were surveyed and provincial results are accurate to within 5.7 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Across Canada, 28% felt the business-friendly

streamlined tax would boost Ontario's struggling economy while 32% feared it would hurt the province with 25% neutral and 16% unsure. In Ontario, 21% believe it will be positive and 51% said it would have a negative effect with 21% neutral and 7% unsure.

McGuinty wasn't available to the *Star* yesterday, but he recently noted that Ontarians aren't yet that aware of the fact the 8% provincial sales tax is being melded with the 5% GST.

"I think most folks haven't heard about it. Human nature being what it is, we live in a 1,000-channel universe; it's swine flu, it's the world recession, it's the auto sector, all those kinds of things," the premier said last month.

"As we get closer to July of next year then they're going to stare into the face of it and better understand what it's all about," he said April 29.

Nanos said the government is going to have to explain the intricacies of a tax reform that will raise the levies on everything from a morning coffee and muffin to gasoline and heating fuel to funerals and new homes costing more than \$500,000. "Otherwise, they could be in for a very rough ride."

The Liberals clearly appreciate that challenge, which is why the government is lobbying the auditor general to loosen the rules against partisan political advertising.

It is believed McGuinty hopes to launch an ad blitz in the run-up to July 1, 2010 touting the \$1,000 in rebate cheques that most families will receive from the federal government to offset the higher costs of numerous products and services.

## **Mr. McGuinty explains . . .**

*One of our members took the time to write to Mr. McGuinty's office about the Province's proposed "TAX GRAB" and its unfairness to the taxpayers, especially low income families. His appeal to Mr. McGuinty and his "Liberal henchmen" that they come to their common senses resulted in the following bureaucratic response, which we want to share with you:*

### **(FORM LETTER FROM THE PREMIER)**

Thanks for writing to me about the proposed single sales tax. Your views are important and they matter to me. And I appreciate your taking the time to express them.

If you're looking for detailed information about the tax changes, you can find it at [www.ontario.ca/taxsavings](http://www.ontario.ca/taxsavings).

I'd like to take this opportunity to tell you why our government is making these important changes. It's all about building a stronger economy for Ontario.

Merging the GST and the PST on July 1, 2010, is

the single most important step we can take to make Ontario more attractive to businesses. As already proven in the Atlantic provinces, a single sales tax will mean more business investment in Ontario and, ultimately, more jobs for Ontarians.

By merging two taxes with different rules into one sales tax with one set of rules, we're reducing red tape — and creating new incentives for Ontario businesses to grow and for new businesses to locate here.

I know this change will not be easy. That's why we're doing our part to make the transition as smooth as possible for families across the province.

Our full package of tax changes includes personal income tax cuts and small business tax cuts. In fact, 93 per cent of all Ontario taxpayers will benefit from a personal income tax cut next year.

Our tax changes will leave our government with \$2.3 billion less revenue over the next four years. While that shortfall will create its own set of challenges, we feel strongly that it's a price worth paying if we truly want Ontario to prosper.

I know many Ontarians are feeling the effects of the current global economic recession. But I am confident that, if we work together, and are prepared to make changes now to help our economy, Ontario will emerge an even stronger, more prosperous and more beautiful place for our children and grandchildren.

Thanks again for contacting me.

Dalton McGuinty  
Premier of Ontario

## Governance of our association

Over the past year, it was decided that our By-Law was outdated and did not allow the Board of Directors to properly operate and govern the affairs of the Association. After much deliberation and re-writing of the old By-Law, the amended Association By-law was presented for approval at the AGM held on May 30.

The following is a list of the major changes:

- The format has been changed to a point and number format (i.e., 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, etc.) which makes it easier to read and to make amendments in the future without rewriting the whole section;

- All references to the Craigeith Community have been taken out; the business affairs of the Association now pertain to all members within the Town of the Blue Mountains;

- **Article 3** – The Board of Directors has been reduced to a minimum of 5 directors instead of 8;

- **Article 10** – The Secretary and Treasurer are now considered two separate officers of the Association;

- **Article 19** – New Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality section;

- **Article 20** – New Protection of Directors and Officers section;

- **Article 21** – New Membership section to reflect two types of memberships – a Family Membership and a Company Membership.

There are many small or minor “housekeeping” changes – mostly wording and to reflect the type of memberships.

Motion to adopt and approve the BMRA governing By-Law, as amended and presented by Michael Seguin, was moved by member Brian Lane and seconded by member Steve Donahue. Motion carried.

The amended By-Law can be viewed on the BMRA web site at any time or you can request a hard copy by writing to BMRA, Box 405, Collingwood, ON, L9Y 3Z7.

## In brief:

- Grey County wants to pave the shoulders on County roads in order to provide for increasing pedestrian traffic (walking and cycling), and are studying the cost-benefits;

- The Blue Mountains has approved a final Fire Master Plan and has given the department the go-ahead to hire three new officers, increase the volunteer firefighter component and create two new positions; this will cost the taxpayers \$117,500 in 2009, \$363,300 in 2010 – a 1.4% tax increase, \$411,600 in 2011 – a 1.1% tax increase, and \$490,000 in 2012 – a 1.2% tax increase. The hiring of three new officers this year is suppose to improve response to emergency calls and allow for more inspections, fire code enforcement, defibrillator training, public education duties, pre-emergency planning and maintenance responsibilities.

- The Town is re-writing its zoning by-law to consolidate the old Township of Collingwood and Town of Thornbury by-laws. The public is being asked to participate in advising of their concerns. The process is expected to be completed by January, 2010.

### Emergency & Information

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

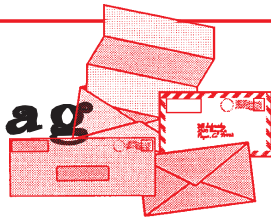
**OPP** (Collingwood & Blue Mountains): 1-888-310-1122; (Administration): 705-445-4321. Blue Mountains Resorts Security: 705-445-0231 x8281/8911 (24 hours)

**Fire Department** (Craigeith): 444-2244

**Municipal Offices:** Thornbury 599-3131. Paul Graham, Chief Administration Officer, x234; Robert Cummings, Treasurer, x235; Stephen Keast, Town Clerk, x237; David Finbow, Director of Planning and Building x246.

# The Mailbag

LETTERS TO  
THE EDITOR



## Your association does influence government

Recently I've seen some articles that show a significant discrepancy between the reality of our current economy, the need for local government proposals for non-essential service plans and taxpayers' ability and willingness to pay for these proposals.

Again, I attended The Blue Mountains Ratepayers Association's annual general meeting on Saturday. I am pleased to tell those of you who are not members that the Association is doing a great job in representing the interests of its community. Three of our Town Council members attended the meeting this year. The Association is on track to do better than ever and it needs your feedback, whether you live here full-time or part-time: you all pay taxes; you all deserve good value for those taxes.

I believe that the elected officials actively listen to our Association, for the most part. But without the check and balance of the size of our Association's membership, the local government and the Town administration have to take direction from elected politicians and might move ahead with proposals such as these items above. With respect to tax increases, sometimes the timing of a project is as important as the need.

If you are not aware of the \$7.95 million costs of the planned new Town Hall to house the administration, you had better read the Association's website articles.

Please visit [www.bluemountainratepayersassociation.com/](http://www.bluemountainratepayersassociation.com/) and [www.thebluemountains.ca/municipality.cfm](http://www.thebluemountains.ca/municipality.cfm). Also, the local newspaper website is informative: [www.bluemountainscourierherald.com/](http://www.bluemountainscourierherald.com/).

Please join the local ratepayers association. I am not on its Board, nor seeking nomination, nor was I asked to solicit memberships. But I believe that the Association has actually moderated tax increases, as well as represented residents' interests with respect to quality of life, environmental issues, tourism, business matters and other reasons that make the area a wonderful place to live.

Make your views known to your Town Council, and help preserve the reasons that you became a resident in The Blue Mountains.

**P.B., Clarksburg**

## Infrastructure monies

While this is good news from some viewpoints, I am most disappointed that some of these taxpayer bailout dollars aren't going to fund our much needed medical clinics in Thornbury and Meaford. Some of these local politicians ought to be strung up by their cajones and publicly flogged. Their lack of support for the Clinic initiative shows how stupid they really are, not to mention their lack of common sense.

We were at a council meeting recently to support a presentation to them asking for financial support for the Clinic project. Two of the councillors (males) voted against support and the rest gave minimal support. This project may die as a result and guess what? . . . **No Clinic, No Doctors!**

We need Medical Clinics far more than a new Town Hall!

**P. J., Thornbury**

## The state of our water and wastewater systems

During the week of August 24<sup>th</sup> I visited two Town-owned facilities: the Craigeleith Wastewater Plant and Thornbury's newly updated Water Treatment Plant. As a taxpayer, you have to be proud to live in a Town that can boast these two well-run facilities. We thank the staff at both plants for showing them to us and encourage them to keep up the good work.

We would also like to thank Mr. David Finbow for his updates on the new Town Hall project. In the end it is much better to keep the public informed than to keep them in the dark. I am sure, as you have stated, you feel proud about the clean-up. Keep the information coming.

However, as a taxpayer I am not so proud that the Town paid much more for the service station than it was worth, considering all the clean-up costs.

At least that's the way I see it.

**Paul Mitchell, Thornbury**

### Georgian Bay Animal Rescue:

## Ten years of caring for Georgian Triangle's needy animals

This year, Georgian Bay Animal Rescue (GBAR) reached the milestone of 10 years of service and care of the needy animals in the Georgian Triangle, a very large area to cover for a group of unpaid volunteers who work without any municipal or government support. And as a "No Kill" animal rescue registered charity, there is additional strain put on limited resources, though GBAR firmly believes it is the humane, compassionate way to deal with the hundreds of abandoned, unwanted, neglected, sick, injured animals found yearly, many in the Blue Mountains.

There has never been an animal shelter within the Georgian Triangle. TOBM uses Blue Mountain Veterinary Services as the town pound – but only for dogs, which are housed for seven days at the town's expense (costs are charged back to the owner of a claimed dog). After this time, unclaimed dogs are to be "disposed of," since the town takes no further responsibility for them. (See TOBM By-law No. 2006-32; in particular Sections 14.0 Seizure and Impounding; Section 15.0 Liability for Fees; Section 16.0 Disposal of Dogs.)

Fortunately, Dr. Tina Gray has a heart, and using her own finances keeps these unfortunate dogs until a home can be found for them. GBAR's website provides courtesy listings for this purpose. Sadly, the situation is no better in the other municipalities within the Georgian Triangle. And "felines," as the Town so poetically calls cats in its public notices, are not provided for in any way by TOBM. We quote:

"Please be advised that the Municipality does not provide and/or have facilities related to felines. You are reminded that felines are not to be dropped off at the Town's shelter. By-law Enforcement: (519) 599-3131 Ext. 249."

Injured, sick, abandoned cats are left to fend for themselves; many are also pregnant. The town takes no responsibility for these poor, unfortunate creatures who find themselves in these situations through no fault of their own; they are the result of human neglect, abuse and indifference.

It is GBAR that takes all of these animals into its compassionate care, which has resulted in about 400 cats in care; and in 2008, \$228,000 in veterinary expenses! And even though TOBM makes no provision for the care of felines/cats, it recently issued an

eviction order for GBAR's cat shelter at 104 Hope Street, a property which is zoned Highway Commercial, which permits the operation of a veterinary clinic with boarding for dogs and CATS! (Final outcome of this situation is not clear at time of writing.)

Because of the absence of an animal shelter in the area, GBAR has been working to have one built. And although groundbreaking was in January, 2008, a year and a half later the building is still not completed because of lack of funds. Construction has slowed due to tough economic times and fundraising realities: funds dried up, and are slow in coming in.

The struggle to reach completion and opening of the shelter continues. **Between \$350,000 and \$500,000 is needed now to get the shelter open.**

Minimal amounts have been contributed by the municipalities that will benefit by the operation of this animal shelter. For example, an affluent municipality such as TOBM (where the average house sale price is over \$350,000, according to the local real estate board, higher than any other municipality within the Georgian Triangle, and similar to Toronto's, creating high assessment valuations for its tax base), has not extended itself very much for the care of its abandoned animals. In May, 2008, it made a total contribution of \$15,000 towards the Shelter Building Fund – this for a building that will cost at minimum \$1-million to build and furnish and which will be at least 30% occupied by animals from TOBM! Council can find large amounts of money for all sorts of things, including a grand new town hall, but not to help alleviate the suffering and plight of its needy animals.



During 2008 and to date in 2009, as donations warrant, work has moved slowly forward toward the day when the Shelter's doors can proudly swing open. The Design/Build contractor – Shertine Construction of Collingwood (owner, Les Burgess) – generously accelerated work on the Shelter during June/July to complete the building to the point where an Occupancy Permit could be obtained. This work was done with the understanding that GBAR would pay on an "as we can, when we can" basis, with ongoing fundraising efforts, and that the financial costs to Shertine would be considered as part of their overall corporate contribution to the Shelter project.

But even with this boost, some items will not be finalized and must be completed later. These include landscaping; a retaining wall at rear of dog runs; interior/exterior details of dog runs; cat enclosures; signage, and other miscellaneous items. And funding is still needed for the interior fittings and fixtures.

Serious fundraising is still required to reach the final stage of the Shelter.

When completed, this first purpose-built Shelter in the Georgian Triangle will be an achievement all of the community can be proud of. Still much needed is the ongoing generosity, help, dedication and support of the public who share GBAR's dream and goal for the benefit of the needy animals in our community, that depend on human kindness and that we cannot let down.

Please check GBAR's website at [www.cdhs.petfinder.com](http://www.cdhs.petfinder.com) for information on donating, on upcoming fundraising events, and on the many many animals needing loving forever homes. Donations can be mailed to: GBAR, P.O. Box 492, Collingwood, ON L9Y 4B2, or call (705) 445-5204 (leave a message).

Please help those who cannot help themselves. The animals count on your generous heart.

## Craigleith Heritage Depot update

By Suzanne Purdy

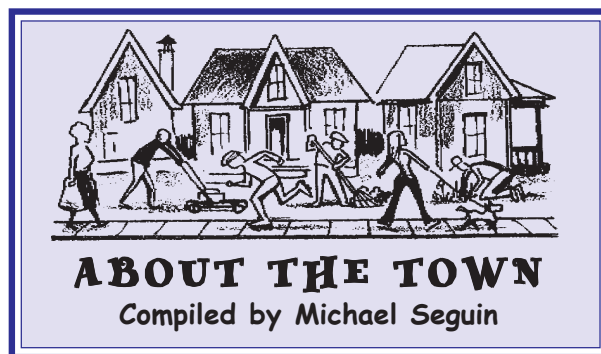
The Craigleith Heritage Depot continues to receive support from the community. During 2009, many professionals have given of their free time to lecture for The Depot monthly lecture series. We've had archaeologists, historians, authors, etc. taking time out of their busy schedules to impart their knowledge to our ever growing audience.

We're averaging 50 supportive audience members per lecture, many of whom bring their own knowledge and experience to share with the group during the Q&A portion. We are fortunate that some of our audience members have since signed on to become guest speakers in 2010. So far we have had experts and enthusiasts speaking about such topics as the Ice Age period in The Blue Mountains, the shipping industry, antique appraising, the unique natural environments in our Town, the history and future of barns in our area, and the rise of the great Osler family.

For the month of August, we were pleased to have Dr. Rudkin, palaeontologist from the Royal Ontario Museum, speak about the unique fossils in our area. We will finish off the year with speakers on the history of our railroad, the Blue Mountain ski hill, war heroes of our Town and the archaeology of Craigleith.

The success of this years' lecture series is truly indicative of what great minds and intellectuals make up this wonderful community in which we live. The money raised will support The Depot in developing additional programs for the further enjoyment and enrichment of community members of all ages.

Visit [www.thebluemountains.ca](http://www.thebluemountains.ca) to learn more about The Craigleith Heritage Depot's upcoming programs and services, or phone 705-444-2601.



### Town receives Gas Tax money from the Feds

IN APRIL, Simcoe-Grey MP Helena Guergis announced that the Conservative government would double Gas Tax transfers to municipalities. Your Town has been approved for \$198,728.02 in 2009 and \$209,937.00 in 2010. Ms. Guergis stated that the new money is to help pay for projects such as roads, water, sewer and public transit improvements. Your Town has found a way of spending this money – a roundabout, landfill environmental screening, waste receiving area and – you won't believe it! – the integrated community sustainability plan (ICSP). Is this ICSP the Town's search for a long-term development strategy or is it a just another search in "futility" or building the "bureaucracy"? *Source: Collingwood Enterprise Bulletin 4/15/09, and Infrastructure & Recreation Report 4/14/09*

### The Town commits \$250,000 to proposed Medical Clinic

THE NORTH EAST GREY Health Clinics Inc. (NEGHC) approached Council in April for financial support. The delegation expressed concerns regarding low fundraising numbers due to the "global recession;" grant application deadlines also were contributing to the urgency of the matter. After much debate, Council finally approved a donation of \$250,000 of the taxpayers' monies to the new medical centre on the condition that the NEGHC receives a Federal Infrastructure grant for not-for-profit organizations. *Source: Courier Herald 4/29/09*

### Town purchases neighbouring land for long-term expansion of the Library

THE TOWN has approved the purchase of a residential property (177 Bruce Street) on the south side of the Library for \$244,000. We understand that the appraised value was \$210,000, but no reasons were given as to why the Town paid more than the appraised value. The funds are to come from the library's development charges reserve fund, which is currently at \$375,662.04. Councillor Gamble argued against the acquisition on the basis that the lands to the south of the library did not reflect the original design and plan for the library. *Source: Courier-Herald 6/3/09*

### **Town wants to pave the Georgian Trail**

IN MAY, the Town's Recreation Department together with the Georgian Trail Board of Management decided to apply to the Recreation Infrastructure Canada Program (RIInC) for funding to complete the hard surfacing (asphalt paving) of the entire 34 km Georgian Trail. Councilor Gamble presented this proposal to Council with the suggestion that additional funding would be required from the Town without public input (not sufficient time). However, at our AGM, some of our members expressed anger and disappointment that the Town would consider such an "inappropriate" proposal without consulting the public, especially those who use the trail on a regular basis. The *Courier-Herald* carried a number of interesting comments and "protests" discouraging this type of behaviour. Interestingly, only the major writer for the paper, Ms. Engel, showed support for the pavement. *Source: Courier-Herald 5/28/09 and 6/3/09*

(On July 14, it was announced that the paving project for portions of the Georgian Trail had been denied funding by the RIInC and that a reserve fund of \$200,000 will be used to make some repairs and resurface the trail in 2009.)

### **The Blue Mountains "In the Money"**

ON JUNE 13 it was announced that the federal and provincial governments will invest approximately \$7.6 million towards infrastructure projects: \$4.6-million for the new Town hall, \$332,000 for a trail along Beaver River from Thornbury to Clarksburg and \$2.6 million for the replacement of water and sewer service and road infrastructure in Plan 915. The mayor was so happy, she started singing a chorus of "We're in the Money" – I think from relief about not having to pass on the huge costs of these projects to the taxpayers. Hopefully, the Town can stay within their projected budget and not use this money to enhance their projects with more "bells and whistles." *Source: Courier-Herald 6/17/09*

### **Cord Canning steps down as head of the Blue Mountain Resort**

GORD CANNING is relinquishing his role as President and Chief Executive Officer of the Blue Mountain Resorts to become Chairman of the Board of Directors. I contacted Gord to congratulate him on his new position and to asked him whether this change would free up more time for recreational activities like golf. Gord replied that he hoped for more recreational time but he must first help Dan Skelton's transition from Vice-President of Mountain Operations to the new CEO position. Gord also stated that "we appreciate the good relationship that all of us here at Blue Mountains have with the BMRA and look forward to continuing dialogue and productive initiatives for the community going forward." Congratulations to both Gord and Dan on behalf of the Board of Directors and

members of the Blue Mountain Ratepayers Association. *Source: Enterprise-Bulletin 6/26/09 and emails of 6/26/09*

### **Rob Potter named acting Communications and Economic Development Coordinator**

THE TOWN has announced that Rob Potter is now the acting Communications and Economic Development Coordinator until about February 2010, subbing for Lisa Kidd, who is on maternity leave. You might know Rob as the past editor of the *Courier-Herald* and for his substantial involvement in establishing the Marsh Centre as a going concern in our community. Rob is also an historian, who has researched the historic development of the Thornbury downtown area over the past 100 years or so and, more particular, the old and the new Town Hall site. I told Rob that I can visualize him being the curator of the new Town Hall development. In any event, best of luck to Rob and, of course, to Lisa, who we expect will be anxious to return in the new year. *Source: Town Communication Message 06/07/09*

### **Garbage bag alert!**

WHILE WRESTLING with the rising costs of garbage and recycling pickup, the Meaford Council decided, without public consultation, to affix a \$2 garbage bag charge to every bag of garbage being picked up at curbside. Needless to say, the resident of Meaford are not happy but they appear to have accepted this imposition. The Town of the Blue Mountains currently allows one free bag and charges \$1 for the second bag. Our Council is probably deliberating – if it works in Meaford, why not in the Blue Mountains? Can you smell a cash grab coming up? *Source: Meaford Express 06/30/09*

### **Town and Grey Sauble Conservation Authority agree on new trail**

THE TOWN and the GSCA are partnering to develop a new trail that will connect the Thornbury Harbour area to Clarksburg, all the way to the Clendenan Dam. The Town received infrastructure money in the amount of \$166,000 each from the provincial and federal governments (see news brief "In the Money" above) and will chip in \$167,000 for its development. Apparently the Town has lots of money for recreational trails. The trail, when completed, will be approximately 5,000 metres long (over 3.0 miles). No timeline has been given for when construction will begin. *Source: Courier-Herald 08/18/09*

### **First-time buyers driving real estate market**

THEY SAY THAT our economy is recovering. The Georgian Triangle Real Estate Board reports that the number of sales over the first 6 months was only down by 19% over 2008. First-time buyers are driving the market and properties under \$300,000 are moving. Condo sales were approximately the same as in 2008.