

Caledon Citizen

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Covering all of Caledon

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Concerted tourism efforts needed locally

The Town of Caledon has a lot to be proud of, and much to brag about.

But you wouldn't know it, at least judging from our lack of visibility on the WWTR - the *World Wide Tourism Radar*.

We've been touting the fact we were named the greenest town in Ontario some years ago. While that was a nice accomplishment, we should have been building on this distinction, and not just putting the quaint message on signs, billboards and letterheads.

The Town has struggled with its public relations and tourism efforts for decades. Town officials and its economic development and communications office have done little to bring about noticeable change, or create some concrete vision.

And now, instead of tackling the issue, the Town decides to leave our matters in someone else's hands, and literally throw money at them to do it.

Months of "negotiations" between Caledon and the Hills of Headwaters Tourism Association (HHTA) resulted in a deal. The Town has asked that Headwaters work more on behalf of Caledon, conceding they are the (only?) local tourism marketing agent for the region. In exchange, the Town agrees to fork over roughly \$61,000 annually for this wonderfully beneficial arrangement.

Thank goodness this most recent agreement came about after months of negotiation. We hate to see what just a few weeks of talks would have resulted in.

The odd thing about this whole issue is it's been discussed for years, by several past councils. It's not a new issue at all, only rehashed, recycled, and to what end?

The price tag for being allowed to ride the coattails of the HHTA keeps rising. Councillors and staff, over the years, debated whether they were receiving their money's worth through these annual contributions to an outside organization.

With \$61,000, to spend, there is no shortage of local suggestions. We're sure the Chamber of Commerce, Bolton BIA and taxpayers would have made good use of these funds for a made-in-Caledon program. Heck, that amount of money could have paid for one full-time staffer, with full office support, to spearhead tourism at the Town level.

Did no one think about this before getting out the cheque book?

Surely our councillors care more about our community's economic health than getting re-elected. Councillor Jim Wallace, who owns the Belfountain Inn, knows something about tourism. He questioned how the HHTA's efforts will be monitored and evaluated. Is there a money-back guarantee?

To HHTA's credit, they have done a decent job promoting arts, crafts and weekend destinations, but largely north of Highway 9. Other than some art shows and local appearances, their tourism efforts for Caledon have been inconsequential. Few in the GTA today even relate to the term "Headwaters."

Their largest project is the annual launch of the Visitor's Guide and Map. This year, some 58,000 copies were distributed throughout the GTA, through the Globe and Mail. While we understand about targeting a specific audience, we question the value of such a move. Will tens of thousands of Globe readers flock to the region every weekend to spend their money? Was the guide created locally? If not, this was a noticeable amount of money leaving the community - something contrary to the whole tourism concept.

A Caledon-only map should be created, printed and published locally, as well as abroad.

What tourism "experts" often fail to recognize is the value of local, in-town spending. Before we make a mad dash to grab other people's cash, we should be enticing our own residents to stay put, revisit their town and shop locally. And it starts at the top. How many Caledon politicians and Town staff frequent local restaurants, use local services, and buy their nice, new cars locally?

The \$61,000 budget for HHTA would have also gone a long way in creating some sort of physical Caledon presence. Our Orangeville neighbours, for years, had a very cute train caboose as their tourism kiosk. Even unmanned structures, complete with pertinent information, brochures, trail guides, etc. would serve a very useful purpose, at strategic locations throughout this municipality. A joint effort among the public, conservation authorities, other levels of government and shareholders would stretch our dollars even further.

Blowing our own horn involves more than just puckering up!



Our Readers Write

Store closing after 15 years

Caledon East Cleaners is closing its doors, after 15 years of dedication to our wonderful patrons.

It is with deepest regret that I will be terminating the business as of June 12. A great deal of loyal, personal dedication has been created between my customers and myself, which I hope has resulted in a well established customer relationship in Caledon East and surrounding areas.

Over the past months, my health has unfortunately declined, which has reflected in my ability to continue the dedication required to assure a successful service business, which I am sure you understand.

Your support and the support of our staff on an everyday basis has been outstanding, and I will personally miss that everyday contact with you all.

Your continued support up to our transition date will be appreciated. However, I would also hope cleaning can be picked up promptly by those who have forgotten they

have left cleaning in our store. Reminder calls can be expected from our staff.

For all of our Sears customers, we will be moving locations to the Hummingbird Flower and Gift Store at 15943 Airport Road. Please come in and meet Carmela for all your floral and gift needs. She is looking forward to offering the same great service to all our Sears customers.

Carol W. Armstrong
Owner/Operator
Caledon East Cleaners
Sears Caledon East

Singers thanked for their generosity

I would like to on behalf of the Caledon Rick Hansen Wheels in Motion Event thank the Caledon Community Singers for their generous donation to our up and coming event this year.

This talented and fun loving group, under the direction of Joan Huggins, have two concerts per year and the proceeds are, by group decision, donated to a local organization to help with the needs of the Caledon community.

Thank you so much Caledon Community Singers and we extend an open invitation to everyone one of you to come out to our Wheels In Motion 2006 on June 11 at the Caledon Town Hall in Caledon East. (Maybe we could persuade you to sing a note or two.)

Maureen Tymkow
Event Organizer
Rick Hansen Wheels
In Motion Caledon

Thanks for street sale

We would like to sincerely thank the residents of Sherin Court in Bolton.

They organized a garage/bake sale April 22 for a young, 10-year-old cancer patient. The patient is still undergoing treatment and really appreciates the care shown to him. This family is likewise moved by the generosity and thoughtfulness in this difficult time.

In conjunction with the community effort, a local business has also given us financial support.

We would like to acknowledge Garden Foods for their kind gift. In addition, several other private donors have responded in a similar fashion. We wish to thank them as well.

Young Cancer Patient and Family

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Caledon Citizen



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