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The View from Belfountain

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The View from Here



Trail Mix

Landowners along Caledon Mountain Drive are greeting with mixed feelings a Bruce Trail Association initiative to extend a pathway through their bushland backyards.

The BTA proposes to fashion a kilometre-long pathway from below the Devil's Pulpit that will proceed north-west near the base of the Niagara Escarpment, cross the Credit River on a new pedestrian bridge and merge with the *Roy Trimble Trail*.

The highlight of the wilderness walk would be the crumbling, 15-oven lime kiln and its monumental stone chimney—ruins of Cuzcoesque glory left by the quarry-workers of the late nineteenth century.

Opened in 1963, the Bruce Trail is an 800-kilometre public walkway extending along the escarpment from Niagara Falls to the tip of the Bruce Peninsula, much of it through private land. Nine Bruce Trail clubs are committed to pruning trees and tidying up litter along the way.

Carol Sheppard, landowner relations co-ordinator for the Caledon Hills Bruce Trail Club, says the proposed route aims to open in 2007. But first, permits have to be sought from various government organs including the Niagara Escarpment Commission and from the people whose lands are affected.

The new trail is to run across lowlands owned by the following families and organizations: McIntyre, Stanton, Weeks/Baddeley, Ministry of Natural Resources, Barker/Weston, the Credit Valley Conservation Authority, Peyton, Kendall/Mayers, Tansony, and Scriver.

The main worries by property owners are:

- Liability if hikers wander off the trail and hurt themselves.
- Fire hazard if hikers smoke or light campfires.
- Strangers climbing the steep hill to wander through their gardens.
- Graffiti defacing the ruin.

"We are prepared to offer all the landowners free insurance coverage under our policy for any trail-related activities," said Ms. Sheppard.

As for the anxieties about fire, "there's already evidence down there of fire pits and parties," she said.

But Reg Tansony, one of several landowners who worry about the proposed walk, told *The View*: "It's kind of a dangerous area. The Bruce Trail insurance covers things that may happen near their trail, but not for a longer way off it."

"Opening the kiln to the public is a fine idea. They should do a short loop trail. But I'm not for introducing the public into a hazardous area that has hitherto been inaccessible."

The BTA does not intend any restoration of the kiln—reportedly built in 1896—but would clean up the site and install a metal grating over the tall chimney, said Ms. Sheppard.

A single plaque at the ruin site would mark "a beautiful piece of history," she said.

David Kendall



25 Scott Street

The Credit Valley Conservation Authority has taken its former bordello off the market after finding the house's septic system and foundation need work.

The stunning 2.7-acre property with its four-gable frame house at 25 Scott Street was priced for about six months at \$525,000, said listing agent Martha Summers with Johnson Associates Realty.

The place has been vacant for four years since Karen and Robin Christie left after selling it thirteen years ago to the CVCA as part of a 9.6-acre parcel.

The sale agreement, funded by the Ontario Heritage Foundation, allowed the Christies to stay on rent-free as long as they wished, said Mike Puddister, CVCA manager land and stewardship.

"We want it to be a safe building," said Mr. Puddister. "It just needs a bit of homework."

It's peaceful at the end of the 200-metre driveway where the birds cry and the river gurgles. A rope swing hangs forlornly from a tall tree.

Despite diligent labours on her client's behalf, Ms. Summers did not offer the place to Ms. Holly, the former Miss Nude Canada who is said to have plied a sizzling trade there through the 1970's under the trade name of *Satin Doll*.

The name was inspired by the 1953 release *Satin Doll*, written by jazz musician Duke Ellington and pianist Billy Strayhorn with lyrics by Billy Mercer that began like this:

*'Cigarette holder which wigs me,
Over her shoulder she digs me,
Out caddin' that satin doll.'*

"She was a very attractive young girl," recalls historian Norm Wrycraft, who moved to Belfountain in Ms. Holly's final year of activity. "Maureen and I gullibly thought it was a ladies' apparel store."

Currently featuring a kaleidoscope of blistering wallpapers and stained floor coverings and a bathroom tiled in lurid red, the house has been so long abandoned that even the mice seem to be staying away.

But recent events stir hope of a return to glory days. A December Supreme Court decision has given sanction to swingers' gatherings while, closer to home, local womenfolk have been observed honing their exotic dancing skills at a nearby exercise centre.

Annual General Meeting



Wed., February 22, 7:30 p.m.

The Annual General Meeting for the BCPO is at 7:30 p.m. Feb. 22 at the Belfountain Community Centre. Renowned naturalist, Don Scallen, will delight and educate with his *Frogs and Salamanders* slide presentation, complete with frog call recordings. Ribbid fun!

This is the meeting where residents get to renew memberships in the BCPO (or become members!), hear what we have been up to for the past year, elect new committee members, and help the BCPO define the burning issues for next year. This is your opportunity to voice your concerns as members of the Belfountain community. If you wish to become more involved, consider becoming a member of the committee. Please call David Burke at 927-9207 for more details.

BCPO Christmas Party



As the 10th annual Christmas Party of Dec. 11th began the Belfountain Community Center was alive with the sound of children singing, cavorting and tearing open little gifts.

Nearly 30 youngsters, their parents, neighbours and friends, gathered to celebrate the season at the Pot Luck Dinner orchestrated by Myfanwy Douglas who described the little ones as "remarkably well behaved." As Ms. Douglas also noted: "Linda Bridges, a new member of the community and the new owner of the Gingerbread House, won the draw and the proceeds of the night went to local needy families."

The Hall was decked with bows, (thanks in large part to the efforts of Wendy Burke, Kathy Yankovich and Madelon Stevenson), the tables and chairs were set (thanks to the lifting and hauling of Wade Domet, Tony Stevenson and Jimmy Douglas) and the air was filled with carolling (thanks to the wee bairns).

Charles Peyton

Warm Welcome

The View met the amiable new owner of the Dufferin Lake estate standing disconsolately under an umbrella, watching his house burn to the ground.

A cold drizzle that Nov. 26th midday was failing to quell the flames licking from the ruined foundation overlooking the 76-acre property's large lake. "Right now it's getting natural heating," said Joe Shlesinger, a Toronto merchant banker and father of two.

The fire actually started a day earlier, only to re-kindle after the local fire department had come and gone, he said.

Mr. Shlesinger's grief was tempered by knowledge that the stubborn blaze ignited mysteriously after the 2045 sq. ft. wooden cottage had already been "ninety percent demolished" by his contractor to make way for a new 6,297 sq. ft. two-storey dwelling. Hydro had been disconnected a week before sparks flew, he added.

He bought the rumoured \$2.5 million estate from the Caledon Ski Club, which had owned the property since 1999 during which period it failed to win government permission to suck out the lake's water to make artificial snow.

"The lake is designated as an area of natural and scientific interest," said Mike Puddister, manager land and stewardship with the Credit Valley Conservation Authority. His people along with the Ministries of Natural Resources and of the Environment were party to the withholding of the water permit.

Comings and Goings



Welcome Arrivals:

- Landscapers Darryl and Aileen McNichol with sons Cole and Jack to their new house on Shaw's Creek Rd.
- Interior design consultant Linda Bridges from Caledon East, taking over the Gingerbread Cottage on Bush St.

Moved: Terrie and Carrie Raybould leave the Gingerbread Cottage (3rd oldest building in Belfountain, ca1860) for Burlington. Retired teacher/librarians, they were long-term members of the Belfountain Heritage Society and ran their charming B&B for seven years.

Profile

Jeff Collins is a resident of the darker and damper reaches of Belfountain, which might suggest a gloomy outlook. On the contrary, Jeff is something of a phenomenon of optimism. Like the Ghost of Christmas Present, he greets the world with an imposing physical presence and an open, sunny disposition that goes a long way toward convincing you of whatever position he is arguing that day. And, there will be a position. Mr. Collins thinks on a grand scale, particularly about fish and breasts.

The Fish

The Credit River was once home to what we know as the Atlantic Salmon; a resilient creature that long ago made its way all the way from the eastern ocean to become a resident of Lake Ontario and the Credit River to spawn and retire. But, along the way, growing human populations introduced dams, warmth and pollutants that drove the Atlantic Salmon away.

In a somewhat right-headed but entirely wrong-science way the governments of both Ontario and New York eventually decided to re-populate the rivers with salmon by introducing an alien species: the Pacific Salmon. Today, better science and the persistence of people like Mr Collins and his team are encouraging the Ontario government to take a closer look at an Atlantic Salmon program.

Here's where Mr. Collins and his cohorts are different to most advocates. They've acted. On the river, tucked at the back of Jeff's property, there is an incubator in a charming board and batten cottage where Atlantic Salmon are tenderly raised from eggs by burly men. Having no parents to guide them, these young have to be taught how to fend for themselves. A critical part of the process is teaching the young to rise to the surface for food. Men like Mark Heaton, David Keith, Chad Bailey, Steve Copeland and Michael Harding with support, encouragement and sandwiches from their wives, spend hours sorting live eggs from dead, cleaning the tanks and teaching the fry to rise to the water's surface for food. When literally hundreds of thousands of healthy fingerlings are released into the spring waters, these men have the satisfaction of participating in a small victory for the Credit River. The fact that they are all also avid fly-fishermen may contribute to their enthusiasm – if not the unreserved delight of the fish themselves.

The Breasts

This is for women and those who sympathize with women. Mammograms are torture. Imagine, if you will, a part of your body whose natural shape is round, packed with highly sensitive nerves, which is forcefully pressed flat as a pancake. This is said to be good for you. If you could catch your breath and clear the tears from your eyes you might, for a moment, be grateful. Breast cancer is serious. And, check ups are a sensible if inexact science.

Breast cancer is particularly serious to Mr. Collins who has seen its awful impact on his own family. A winner of the Ontario Premier's Award for Technology, Mr. Collins has applied his energy to the development of computer-based breast screening technologies that enhance the effectiveness of ultrasound to the point where it is at least as good as mammography. The limitation of the mammogram, apart from the discomfort, is that it can't detect the small changes in tissue – like ductal carcinoma in-situ (DCIS)—without the presence of micro-calcifications. The result is too many unnecessary biopsies and exploratory surgeries – both of which can give cancers growth opportunities.

Mr. Collins' company, Medipattern, is developing the screening technology in two stages. The first is a software application that can be used with any ultrasound device currently on the market. So, an instrument that painlessly shows women how their babies are developing can be used to painlessly show women how their breast tissue is faring. The FDA and Health Canada have approved the software. The second stage is the development of a hardware device that will provide a touch-free (yes, touch free), 360 degree picture of breast tissue in a matter of seconds.

This pain-free, highly acute technology will save more lives because it takes a better picture and tells a better story.

The company has recently issued a public offering of stock and is listed on the TSX Venture Exchange under the symbol MKI.

So, whether your interest is fish or breasts take comfort in the knowledge that a neighbour is caring for both.

Pam Purves

Did you know that...?



At the height of passenger service on the Credit Valley Railroad the Belfountain stop at The Forks of The Credit railroad station sold more tickets than any other stop.

Passenger service on this line ended in the 1960s. But today passengers are again marvelling at the beauty of the scenery as they travel on the newly minted Heritage Train Trips. So we thought we would get some first-hand stories on the old line from our venerable raconteur John Trimble.

It was every little boy's dream to shovel coal on a steam engine. Well, that's exactly what Roy and John Trimble and the two Harris boys, Cecil and Leslie, were able to do. There used to be a freight line that ran west of the main passenger line near the suspension bridge. It took bricks out of the Caledon Shale and Brick Company which was on the site of the present Caledon Ski Club. These little rascals persuaded the engineer to let them have a ride from the Forks to the brick works. Once on, they convinced the friendly firemen to let them help shovel coal into the engine. As Trimble said, "there we were, scared silly, but feeling like we had the world by the horns, shovelling coal into the great engine boiler!"

John remembers taking the train with his father down to the big city of Toronto to see Santa Claus at the T. Eaton Company. He and his wife Bernice later took their boys on the train to see Santa or to journey up Yonge Street to see the widely popular *The Happy Gang* at the CBC radio studios. Their boy Bob, at seven, was so talkative he'd, "go right up to everybody on all the coaches, and this is the truth, by the time we got to The Forks of the Credit Station his pockets were bulging with candy and chewing gum!"

Nothing much changes. When I took this beautiful train ride last fall, I was a little boy scoffing leftover cookies, and the train halted when some young lads pelted it with apples!

JBD

Fences

Ah the fences of Belfountain. We've got one with a hole and another built to last two thousand years.

For two years David and Erin Keith have laboured to erect an elaborate wooden palisade fronting their house on the east side of Old Main Street at the bend. But what's with that gaping aperture plumb in the middle? Is it just unfinished carpentry? Maybe a path for the winds sweeping up the valley? A chat with Ms. Keith has plugged the gap in our understanding. The carefully contrived hole allows a view from the driveway of traffic rounding the corner. It is a simple matter of safety.

At the corner of Pinnacle and Forks Road a stone fence to daunt a marauding army has recently taken form. It's as monolithic as the Keiths' is filigree.

Alex Naudts, who bought the property last year, is so enamoured with stone that the original wooden fence and aluminium siding house is now "enveloped" in the 50 million year-old material—altogether 132,000 kilos of stone, glued together with reinforcing rod and non-sagging phytotropic mortar.

"I'm negotiating right now to sell the place to the Hells Angels—these walls will stop bullets," he says with a laugh.

Actually, his daughter Saartje, a high school teacher, will be moving in around Christmas. The stone walls will mute "the music of the passing motorcycles," says her dad, a Belgium and Cheltenham based consulting engineer specializing in restoring old buildings.

It's something of a family project, since his son Ward, owner of River System Enterprises, has done the stonework.

The use of river stone is in keeping with the stonework of the Belfountain Park and also with the Douglas residence on Old Main St.

It's highly ecological, adds Naudts. North American housing of porous brick and wood is massively wasteful since it lasts only a century or so. "This house will stand 2,000 years."

David Kendall

Letters to the Editor

RE: Citizen Turner, View from Belfountain, October, 2005:

I think you missed the point with your dog-napping story in the last issue of *The View from Belfountain*. For me the surprise was not that someone turned Gazoo over to the Humane Society, but that no one in the village store knew who owned the dog.

There are good things and bad about living in a small village. And while being known by many of your neighbours can have its drawbacks, the benefit is that they recognize your dog and will let you know if Rover or Gazoo gets misplaced.

When staff and management in the general store once again recognize village dogs, then I'll know things are the way I like them to be in Belfountain.

Nicola Ross

Mr. Turner has distorted the facts. The village store was not 'dilapidated'. Under the caring stewardship of the late Judy Charbonneau it was a charming meeting place for the village. For the record, Mr. Turner was denied a heritage award because he had not followed proper heritage restoration guidelines.

James B. Douglas

Mr. Turner says that when he bought the store it had 14 picnic tables. Not true. In the 13 years that I was there, there were never more than six.

Karen Wrycraft, ex-Manager BVS

Belfountainites are a privileged lot—we are fortunate enough to live in one of the most beautiful areas of Ontario within easy driving distance of the wealthiest city in the country. When it comes to protecting the very things we came here to enjoy—the environment, the tranquility, the lifestyle—we have to obey our own rules. In Belfountain and Caledon, there are speed limits, parking, trash collection, animal control, property standards and noise bylaws, as well as the Niagara Escarpment Commission guidelines, we all must live by on a day-to-day basis. We all know how to set an example for the children in our lives—we should try to do the same with our neighbours, business owners and visitors by maintaining our properties, controlling our pets, and driving and parking properly.

David Jobe

Stone Age Village

When the MacDonald clan landed in Little York in the spring of 1820, they asked that they get good land for farming, with lots near to each other so as to keep the family close together. The Commissioner of Crown Lands saw this as an opportunity to open up land on the northern edge of what had been surveyed.

After a two-week trek carrying everything they owned on their backs, they arrived in the area of Belfountain and proceeded to settle in, clearing some land and building log cabins to see them through the looming winter.

It didn't take long for them to realize that they had been duped, that the land was far too rocky for farming. However, they did discover that much of the terrain was ideal for the quarrying of building stone. And the fact that they were mainly rock-cutters by trade, hailing from Renfrewshire in Scotland, certainly helped overcome the initial disappointment.

The rest is history. Stone from the Forks of the Credit quarries was extracted for use in some of our most impressive buildings such as the Ontario Legislature in Queen's Park, the old City Hall, and Hart House at the University of Toronto. Amazingly, one quarry is still operating in the area after 160 years.

Norm Wrycraft
President, Belfountain Historical Society



Kids' Korner

Our roving reporter poses question-of-the-day to our young readers:

What do you like about Belfountain?

"It's a small town. Every time I go out I bump into someone I know. I like it because they always smile at you. Everyone lives close together."

Ketha Campbell-Heaton, 10

"I know everybody. I like it that we can still call ourselves Belfountain. Some of my friends are now Caledon! I like Belfountain because it's full of artefacts. Like the cave in the park. Like the old church."

Jonas Cadham, 10