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# The View from Belfountain

September 2007



Grade 5 teacher, Jiiva Somerville.

## Not Pretty

The west end of Belfountain the beautiful has become Belfountain the armpit, but the perpetrators vow it's just temporary.

Much of the Belfountain Public School on Shaw's Creek Rd. is a wasteland thanks to an ongoing \$3,043,000 four-classrooms-plus-washrooms construction that will add 5,770 square feet to the school's structural footprint.

On the opposite side of the road 1,420 truckloads of rubble from the Forks of Credit Road revamp are being dumped on Darryl McNichol's property in order to turn a valley into a plateau for his home and business.

## The School

The project was to be completed by Thanksgiving, but the new finish date is "before Christmas", said school Principal Michael Walmsley.

The expansion reflects a recent Peel Board of Education policy to lower class size. As a result, a new teacher has joined the staff, despite the school's enrolment this year actually falling by two students to 149.

When the dust settles, one new room will be an eco-lab where study of nature will fall under the microscope, two rooms will take the reduced class size overflow and replace last year's portable classrooms, and one room will serve as a staff room and French language class until enrolment rises.

"It's definitely ugly right now," said Mr. Walmsley. But a local landscape architect has offered to provide a site plan at no cost that will beautify and educate, he said.



Belfountain School Construction.

He visualizes a tree-dotted "land component" on the 10-acre property with nature trails, a vegetable garden, a butterfly garden, outdoor learning spaces, and, of course, a level soccer field atop the new septic system.

One day soon, said Mr. Walmsley, instead of the student bringing the teacher an apple, the student will bring home an organic tomato for his mom.

Pushed by a committed group of parents, the expansion also reflects a groundbreaking attempt to craft environmentally conscious citizens from childhood through hands-on experiential learning, a strategy to learn to spell and do maths through a green lens.

Belfountain Public School. said grade six teacher Pamela Gibson, is the first school in the world to initiate such a complete program of experiential learning at the primary education level from kindergarten through grade six. "The entire curriculum

is being taught using the outdoors," she said. "We're interested in permanent change."

"We are unique," agreed Mr. Walmsley. "We're blessed with the Credit River right next door plus the environmentally conscious surrounding community."

*But the heart and soul is being taught outside rather than at a desk*

"People want to feel the basics are being covered," said grade five teacher Jiiva Somerville. "But the heart and soul is being taught outside rather than at a desk. We see ourselves as part of a world where humans are not the only thing of value—other organisms on the planet have the right to life."

When they talk about the birds and the bees at Belfountain Public School, they really mean it. Jean-Jacques Rousseau must be smiling in his grave.

"We're shifting the focus from *me* to *we*," explained Ms. Gibson. "From competition to co-operation. We've adopted the mantra: live lightly on the earth."



Grade 6 teacher, Pamela Gibson.

Mind you, it can get a touch fuzzy. For the parental and the curious, the teachers have literature prone to sentences such as: "Fortunately, the process of generating non-linguistic representations engages students in elaborative thinking. That is, when a student generates a non-linguistic representation of knowledge, by definition s/he has elaborated on it."

Last school year two classes served as pilot for the eco-program. "Parents were either blown away happy with it or they were upset because maths didn't look, feel, smell like it used to," said Ms. Somerville.

The students use drums, dance, and storytelling. They measure fish populations in the Credit. They talk to trees. "I want them to be introspective," said Ms. Gibson.

## The Dumping Ground

Darryl McNichol is just waiting until the Forks of Credit roadwork is complete to begin beautifying the property at 17254 Shaw's Creek from which he operates his landscaping business Ltd. Lawn Care.

He has a permit for 1,500 truckloads, but says he won't need the full complement. "I'd like to start putting my grass in," he told *The View* recently.

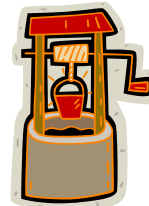
He has already planted 400 trees and turned what he called "a rat-pack of a place" into a decent home. "It's going to look a far sight better than many houses that are neglected in Belfountain," said Mr. McNichol.

He will be planting more trees this fall and in the coming year on the bank of rubble and a row of spruce on top, he says, as well as designing a toboggan run down the slope seen from Bush Street.

"It will be naturalized," he said. "When I'm done, you'll never know anything has been done."



McNichol backyard property improvement.



## Whither Water

The search continues for an abundant water source for Orb's planned seventy-home development on the 178-acre former farm along Belfountain's southern fringe.

Until suitable water is arranged, Peel officials won't allow the development, which will virtually double Belfountain.

The developer thought this spring that the Town of Erin would sell or lease one or both of its unused groundwater under direct influence (GUDI) wells at the south end of town.

But the deal fell through because "the town intends to complete their settlement and servicing master plan first," said urban and regional planner Glen Schnarr, working on the project. That study, which could take up to three years to complete, has been "on the table for two years and they don't even have it started," he added.

"So we're asking a hydro-geologist to find another land where we could put in a well west of Belfountain."

Mr. Schnarr predicted that the hydro-geologist could table his findings "in a month or so."

The developer hopes then to lease or buy the water-rich property and install a pipeline to the housing project, he said.

"It's a last ditch effort to find a water supply," said Mr. Schnarr. "Orb is a little frustrated."

## The Digging Continues...

You'll be able to drive over the smooth tarmac of the restored Forks of Credit Road by the end of September, promise Regional Councillor Richard Paterak and Peel Region Project Manager Randy Senko.

But you'll tumble into the abyss if you try Main Street leading south on the Mississauga Road.

A Peel Region road crew will be blocking off the south entry to Belfountain and hollowing out the road to a depth of six metres in front of no. 17170 on Main Street "as soon as the Forks of Credit Road opens," says Mr. Paterak.



The new project could take up to two months, he said, depending on what they find when they dig.

There is no budget set for the new project. "Because that one is an emergency," said Mr. Senko. "They're losing a bit of ground along the slope."

The wetland behind the houses on the south side of the road has been dribbling under the road for years, reducing its foundation to a mucky consistency.

Trucks have continued to use the road despite a new notice posted just north of the Grange sideroad warning truckers against tempting the unstable road.

"Unread, unheeded, unenforced," said BCO Treasurer David Jobe, pointing out that the large black and white notice had blown down twice already in the fall winds.

Requests from the BCO that the new project be delayed until after the Salamander Festival on Sept. 29 and from the Village Store for a delay until after Thanksgiving have so far fallen on stony soils.

"It's an emergency," said Councillor Paterak. "The road could fail at any time."

## VRROOMMM!!!

The View (at the all-candidates meeting in Belfountain Hall last November):

"Belfountain residents are concerned about the noise of motorcycles. Could you please tell us how many tickets were given out in the past year for noise infractions?"

Mayor Marolyn Morrison: "I don't know off the top. But I'll get back to you on that."

We're still waiting.

The View (last month): "Could you tell me how many tickets have been given out in our area for motorcycle noise violations over the past year?"

OPP Staff Sgt. Greg Sweeney: "Not a lot, if any."

It is tempting to picture OPP officers lurking with decibel registers along our echoing glens and byways where the deer and the choppers roam. But the Highway Traffic Act in fact does not stipulate any noise ceiling, said Officer Sweeney.

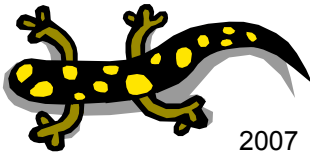
"There is a section that deals with excessive noise," he said. "But it deals with illegal fixtures." Such fixtures, designed to enhance the muffler's roar, are usually procured in the 'after market.'

Tickets can be levied on bikers "if a person is driving in a way to make excessive noise, such as driving in third gear when he should be in fifth," he said. "If someone is going out of their way to make noise, it's an offence."

"But it's difficult to define," he said. "An improper muffler is easy to define. But excessive noise is a judgement call."

**The View from Belfountain...** comes to you from the Belfountain Community Organization. It is published irregularly as news and information warrant and time allows. It is circulated to all residents of Belfountain and its environs.  
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## SALAMANDER



### HERE WE COME

Salamander Fest ignites September 29, 2007 from 10 a.m. to 3p.m.

This day is filled with great activities for the entire family while bringing awareness to the endangered Jefferson Salamander.

Early risers will meet at the Belfountain Church at 8:30 a.m. for "The Salamander Crawl," a guided historical walk through the scenic Forks of the Credit. An invigorating way to work up an appetite for the delicious breakfast back at the Belfountain Church. This year's breakfast and lunch menus are focusing on "healthy and green" selections—healthy for our bodies and green to reduce paper waste. Wraps stuffed with eggs and cheese start at \$3.00. Nicola Ross is sponsoring coffee for the first 100 people who bring their own coffee cups. During breakfast, Randy Benson will entertain with his fiddle and banjo.

Vendor booths will be set up in the church grounds along with a silent auction area to give visitors a head start on their Christmas shopping. The West Caledon Rotary is cooking up lunch which includes the Belfountain Inn's seasonal squash soup.

The acrobatic "Flatface and Friends" dog agility group is to perform on the grounds of Moorcroft Antiques where children will be participating in an integrated arts activity. Ishra is returning this year with her amazing belly-dance. Endsville, Emma Cook will be entertaining the crowd along with Marcia Barnes, and other dynamic talent right from our own Belfountain.

Volunteers will be warmly welcomed. Call Stacey Mortimer at 519-927-9801

Parking is available at the Belfountain Public School on Shaw's Creek and on posted areas of Old Main Street.

*Grecia Mayers, BCO Secretary*

### Letter to the Editor

Who would have thought shopping could be such fun? Well, me, actually. And Genie Hayward of the Ascot Room who dreamed up the "Touring for Treasures" day. Fifty dollars bought you a ticket, or shall we say a stylish turquoise straw purse that served as ticket and container for the treasures that would be given or bought on the touring day.

I picked up my city friend at the Mt. Pleasant Go-station on that sunny morning of July 25 and we strutted to the car with matching bags. I pointed out the Badlands as we drove to Gourmandissimo in Caledon East where Gilles and Adriana Roche delivered a delicious box lunch. Then it was on to Orangeville where staff of From the Kitchen to the Table, The Scented Drawer, and Dragonfly Arts doled out complimentary gifts as we browsed through the wares.

Next stop was Gallery Gemma in the historic Alton Mill where all that glitters is gold. Heading over to Erin we lingered in Beaver Mills and Renaissance where we collected more lovely loot before rushing for Belfountain.

At the Belfountain Inn we quaffed mouth-watering dessert and coffee, skipped onward to The Shed where we rued having already had our caffeine boost, and dashed on to the Ascot Room. It was six o'clock and the doors were closing. They squeezed us in and minutes later my friend and I walked out in new hats. A treasure of a day with a treasured friend.

*Grecia Mayers*

### Tempest in a Fatty

On December 6 they descended on 652 Bush Street, four cruisers and a host of OPP officers.

A marijuana grow-op we were told. In Belfountain!

James Spence, 50, was charged with possession of a controlled substance, production of a controlled substance, possession for the purpose of trafficking.

"Not a sophisticated grow," said Det. Sgt. Joe Morgado. "But more than for personal use."

July 3, Mr. Spence attended Orangeville criminal court, pleaded guilty to the production charge and the rest were dropped. A fine of \$1,725, six months to pay.

Case closed.



### Hello! From Melville Mouse

The Belfountain Heritage Society brings together people interested in the diverse historical heritage of Belfountain and the area. We are currently looking for new members to join our group, and specifically invite all new residents of Belfountain to join us, to learn about the heritage of this old village, to become involved in your new community, to meet new friends in the village, and to help out with the activities of the BHS.

One of our current projects is to rebuild the outhouse at the Melville White Church on Mississauga Road. The old outhouse is falling apart and is no longer very usable. The new outhouse will be relocated away from the encroaching cedar trees and will incorporate the latest in composting toilet technology.

The Society is currently seeking funding assistance through grant programs, while carrying on its own fundraising efforts to match the grant requirements.

To this end, the Society has introduced "Melville, the Church Mouse", a cute stuffed mouse in a monk's robe, available at local establishments free with a minimum donation of \$10. These cuddly toys will make great Thanksgiving or Christmas presents for all your family members, young and old, so pick up yours at the Belfountain General Store or the Belfountain Inn and help the restoration of toilet facilities at our 170-year-old Melville White Church.

Yes, this year is the 170th anniversary of the Melville White Church founded in 1837 on Mississauga Rd. south of Belfountain. Come and visit us on Thanksgiving weekend and tour this heritage gem. Melville, the Church Mouse will be there to greet you.

*Peter Probst, BHS President*

### COMINGS and GOINGS...

**Ross and Nadine Catelli** have moved to the Forks of The Credit Road from Brampton. They said that they chose Belfountain for its peace and tranquility. They live on the hill and cannot hear the motor bikes! Ross is in the Refrigeration Business.

**Chris Jaynes and Melissa Woods** have moved into long-time resident Penny Shepherd's cottage opposite the store. Melissa is a project manager who once did a thesis on "Mac's Park" (Conservation Area) and Chris is a millwright from Caledon East.

**Signe McMichael:** Though gone from our midst for sometime, our neighbour and friend to many, Mrs. McMichael has passed away. The McMichael family's contribution to art in Canada resulted in the beautiful McMichael Gallery in Kleinburg where funeral services were held for Signe.

**FLOWERS:** Despite the drought, the intersection flowers look as beautiful as they have for some time. Thanks to the many hours of work and water from volunteers Darryl McNichol, David Jobe, Wade Domet, new resident Nadine Catelli and James Douglas.

**HIKING:** The Bruce Trail people will officially open the new Ring Kiln side trail on Friday, Sept. 28. Perched high on the escarpment ridge overlooking the Credit, the magnificent stonework of the massive lime kiln where a thousand quarry workers once hewed pink sandstone for the Ontario Legislative Assembly building awaits the energetic and the interested. It can be reached via the cliff trail at the end of Caledon Mt. Dr.