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The View from Belfountain

November 2008

Two Empty Buildings

They huddle there after more than a century of struggle and vitality, empty. The Belfountain Village Store at Main and Bush Sts. The classic stone house of the vanished Pinkney clan at 17923 Shaw's Creek.

The Stone House



Drive a kilometer north on Shaw's Creek and right beside the Cataract-Elora walking trail you come upon the sagging snow fence with the yellow tape: *Fireline, Do Not Cross*. And the red and white *No Trespassing* sign. And behind the tape, across the unkempt lawn, the grey hand of history—an 1886 quarried stone farm house, hammered plywood blinding its doors and windows. And behind the plywood barriers, the charring from a second floor fire lit by teenagers partying where the Pinkney pioneers once slept. And behind it all, just out of view, the wrecking ball poised but not quite unleashed.

"We've been exploring opportunities as to what to do with it—rent, tear down or sell," said Maureen Miller, vice-president land, with Lafarge aggregate who in 2000 bought the seventy-acre property from Warren Paving and Materials Group. "It's a very lovely old house. We're not quite sure what our route is there. But the least favourite option is to tear it down."

The least favourite, but certainly the easiest. Being a country home, they don't even need a demolition permit, confirmed Caledon building officials.

The original 100-acre farm was split in 1878 when the railroad came to Caledon. "I can remember my mother cooked meals for gangs of hard working men who laid the roadbed and rails for the Credit Valley Railway," wrote the late Bill Pinkney in Berniece Trimble's *Remember When...* published in 1976.

The railway came eight years before the Pinkneys hired an Italian stone mason to erect the stone house for \$400. That's when the family moved out of the log cabin they'd inhabited since the 1830s upon arriving from Scotland's Isle of Islay. "The stone came from the quarries at the Forks of Credit as well as from our farm," wrote Pinkney.

The farm got out of growing crops when it converted to a private "wayside pit in the olden days," says Regional Councillor Richard Paterak.

It is believed that only two years supply of gravel remains for when Lafarge chooses to apply for a license. "There's not a lot there," said Ms. Miller.

The company would like to sever the two-acre yard from the land holding and sell it, she said. But the maximum allowable three separations have already been done years ago on the section south of the walking trail.

"It's a very lovely old house, superb stonework," said Ms. Miller, who lives in a historically designated house in Alton. "But there would be a gravel pit for a short time in the backyard."

There are 31 gravel pits across Caledon. Licenses are granted after haggling with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Caledon, each of which receive a fee for every ton extracted. When a pit is exhausted, the company is supposed to "rehabilitate" the land before walking away. Since Lafarge has yet to apply for a license on there is no agreement for the disposal of the old Pinkney farm after the company leaves.

It would cost at least \$100,000 to get the peeling green roof, windows and inside of the stone house into good shape, said Paul Murphy, leasing manager for Lafarge's Eastern Canada Group. "We're having a real hard time with this property," he said. The "umpteenth hectares" of Lafarge properties across Canada contain "a couple of hundred houses," he said. So there is limited time or money to spend on one old stone derelict.

"It's a beautiful heritage home," said Mary Hall, director of planning. "Leasing it to someone would be really interesting." But any lease longer than 21 years has to go through the Caledon Committee of Adjustment.

So the house is left dangling in the wind. Like the wrecking ball.

The Store

The Shed, one suspects, would like to hoist a cup of its delicious coffee to the competition across the road. And a second brimming latté for the free parking and picnic table area that the Shed's many customers have enjoyed just a few steps over the road.

After 120 years of operation, through wars, winters, and the Great Depression, The Belfountain Village Store—traditionally Belfountain's biggest employer after the school—has not opened its doors to the coffee sippin', ice cream lickin' public in 2008.

"Everyone comes here," said The Shed's Samantha Emmerson, glancing toward the deserted Belfountain Village Store. "It has brought more business to us."

"I'm still renovating," Tammy Karaim said last week. She bought the store from Garth Turner last spring with the intent of selling take-out organic food downstairs and inspirational seminars upstairs from her Tammeron Centre for Well Being. "It has taken me a lot longer than I anticipated."

It's not local officials and their issues about washroom facilities and licensing that have held her up, she said. "It's just finding the right people, that sort of thing."

"It has been very frustrating. A lot of things have happened in my personal life," she added.

So is the end in sight? "Probably in the New Year," said Ms. Karaim.

The Great Wall of Mike and Ted



You've seen it running south of the Grange Rd. on the east side of the Mississauga Rd., the stunning heritage stone fence that Mike Schenk is resurrecting, inch by inch, stone by finger crushing stone, along Ted Simmond's property.

It's a historically designated wall, raised 120 years ago by the Kirkwood clan. Mr. Simmonds even found one limestone with the date 1889 scratched into it. The 'drystone' fence is pictured on page 19 of *The Book of Fences* by Scott Symons, published in 1958. Mr. Simmonds received a \$4,000 matching heritage grant for this year's work. "I think it's something Caledon deserves," he said. "I don't think someone owning a historical property like this should allow it to fall into disrepair."

"It's a shake wall," said Mr. Schenk, who has so far shed two blackened fingernails, one off each hand. What that means is that he stacks the granite and limestone rocks of up to 200 pounds apiece in two stone walls that lean into each other, tied together by split cedar shakes.

The cedars strips eventually rot away and the wall settles into itself. No mortar, just gravity. Forty inches thick at the base, fifteen inches thick at the four-foot-high crest. "I won't install manmade products," he said. "This is the only area in Ontario with this style."

To extend the life of the wall, he's placing round stones on the crest—known as the 'coping'—to stop rain collecting and soaking through.

Two strong men do 100 feet a month. The remaining 500 feet bounding the Simmonds property will come next summer, said Mr. Schenk.

It Took the Village

We would like to thank publicly the many people in and around Belfountain who have helped us during Stacey's hospitalization and recovery (so far). For childcare and taking Hannah to gymnastics and on and off the bus; for soup, pasta, chili, chocolate and apple pie; for dog-walking (and searching and catching); for books and DVDs; for flowers and cards and good wishes; for company and patience: thank you all.

A donation has been made to UNICEF (Democratic Republic of Congo) in your honour: for their villages.

Stacey, Cate and Hannah Mortimer-Sandilands

**And Now for Your
Traffic Report...**



Early in November, I attended a Public Information Session at the Peel Regional Police Association (PRPA) on Mississauga Road. Quite an interesting place—more or less a quasi-pseudo resort—but that's another subject. In brief, the plans are to widen to four lanes our beloved road from Steeles, through Speedtrapville north to Mayfield Road, the border with Caledon. It will be accomplished in two segments. You have probably noticed that construction (municipal services) has already commenced in Huttonville on the southern section (Steeles to Bovaird) and is to be complete sometime in 2010.

Construction from Bovaird to Mayfield will begin in 2012. And yippee!! A grade separation at the CN tracks will be part of the deal I'm told—either an underpass or overpass.

David Jobe

The Lizard that Schmecks

One exuberant poster plastered on the church wall at Belfountain's annual Salamander Festival advised in letters red and green: "Eat Local Salamander".

No recipe was provided for the wee frittered critters, but those grade fours, fives and sixes at Belfountain Public School who drew an array of artworks on the 'eat local' theme are really getting into the back-to-nature mantra of the school.

Not that every young'un was into eating locally. Young Jonathan Dolan, 6, won the prize for 'most animal looking' squash with a green zucchini.



You'd be going home now to bake it for supper, he was asked as he held high the zucchini that resembled a penguin. "I don't want to cook it," he said. "It tastes gross."

Local floor hockey ace Jack Love's crowning moment came when his hubbard squash took the 'most like the face of Bart Simpson' honours. Speechless with emotion, Mr. Love left the crowded scene to mail his veggie to Ripley's Believe It Or Not.

Once again, the music was scintillating. The doggie show was a scream. And there were booths flogging everything from potions against chronic fatigue to free entry to Belfountain Park to watch Credit Valley Conservation officers electrocute fish.

Perhaps the most eye-catching booth was Wendy Burke and her baggies—making purses from recycled plastic bags. A technique imported from India, she said. She inserts four or five bags inside each other, spreads oven parchment on top and then irons them. "They sort of shrink-wrap about each other," she said.

Ms. Burke likes to live on the edge. She had an LCBO bag, a Home Depot bag, a

Fortinos clutch purse, a Canadian Tire shoulder purse—and not a lawyer's letter yet.

As always there came a moment of controversy. Two years ago, it was parking tickets for all. Last year Ishra the belly-dancer from Guelph was banned from performing her art on church property. This year a Reiki healer from Toronto was told her godless arts were not welcome.

But when the dust cleared, it was surely the most successful festival ever. They ran out of squash soup. And hot dogs. And elk burgers. And baked potatoes. They even ran the church well dry.

For those who study these sorts of things—and *The View* does—there were just two Harvey's "It's a Beautiful Thing" soft drink containers left in the parking lot at the south end of the village that Orb Inc. kindly let the Festival use.



COMINGS AND GOINGS...

MARK HEATON, Abby Campbell and their three girls have moved around the corner to the late Mary McLeod's house on Bush Street. Mark is our resident natural resource guru and the initiator of our local fish hatchery. Their old house (built by international painter Alexander Fleming in the 1920's) is for rent.

ALSO on Bush Street, another Mark—Mark Seimen—and Shannon who have lived here for nine years with their three children, have sold but are shifting to a nearby side road.

CHRISTMAS PARTY: The 14th annual village party will be held on Sunday, December 7th, 4:30-7:00 in the Village Hall. Let's have a fun get together with all the residents.

MEMORIES OF CHINA: *The Tree of Life Centre for Creativity* invites neighbours to a presentation of the Memoirs of Cecil W. Butson and paintings of Doris N. Butson on Sunday, Dec. 14 from 2-4 p.m. followed by light refreshments at 716 Bush St.



Three years ago, when the roads people cut down one of Belfountain's oldest trees by mistake the stump was saved. Lynn Wood, on whose property the tree grew, has come up with this imaginative solution.

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.

Caledon Central Pool

The Best Kept Secret in Caledon!

Did you know that the Caledon Central Pool is only about 10 minutes drive from Belfountain? I only discovered this wonderful facility earlier this year. It is open seven days a week (closed Holidays) offering lessons and recreational swimming.

The manager says that the facility is extremely under-used. Due to children growing up and moving away, more homes with swimming pools and an ageing population the attendance is way down. It would be a shame if this pool were closed from lack of use. We would lose a valuable resource for all ages. They even do birthday parties Call (519)927-5111 or go on-line www.town.caledon.on.ca/townhall/departments

Madelon Stevenson

Letter From the Editors

That's it for us. Thanks for your thoughts, even the uncharitable ones, over the last three years. It has been fun. But come the annual general meeting this winter, the BCO will have to find new folks to operate *The View*.

David Kendall and Charles Peyton

BCO Report

The Belfountain Community Organization extends a heartfelt thanks to the cast and crew of the 13th annual Salamander Festival. This year's celebration was part of an even bigger event—Caledon Day. Even though the weather was not the greatest (but at least it didn't rain), Caledonians and people from afar came by the busload. The Festival was a golden financial success—generating some \$5,000 for your BCO operations, ecological projects and village beautification.

The Festival came together through the efforts of three local organizations, their volunteer chefs, an army of bakers, a designer, a website guy, sponsors who provided products, services, and much needed cash donations, nearly a hundred Silent Auction donors, a grounds crew and the sixteen volunteers on the BCO. In no particular order, we are grateful to the following willing and cheerful contributors:

The members of the Belfountain Village Church community, the many teachers and students at the Belfountain Public School, Kari Sattler and her team at Credit Valley Conservation (CVC), Tim Forster and the barbeque chefs from the Caledon West Rotary Club, employees of the Town of Caledon, the Caledon Day Committee & the Region of Peel, Phillip Adsetts and the folks at Kinetico Water Filtration Systems, Meekabode Farm and Lyonsdale Farm for locally-grown decorations, Jim Wallace of The Belfountain Inn for the award-winning squash soup, Glen Echo Nurseries, Mike McKeever Graphic Design, David Burke, Jeremy Kendall, Tony Donatelli, Neil Barnes sound system, Darryl McNichol, Ed Greenfield—the fastest grass cutter in the west, Sam's Service Centre, Royal Bank (Erin), Ed Peavoy Septic, The Shed for sponsoring our free-coffee-in-your-own-cup campaign, and last but certainly not least, that formidable crew who showed up to install tents and stage, got rained out, and showed up again the following night to get the job done!

The Christmas party is next on our agenda, followed by the AGM to be held sometime in January or February. We look forward to seeing you there to discuss future plans for Belfountain and environs. Does the fun ever stop!!

Amanda Elias and David Jobe