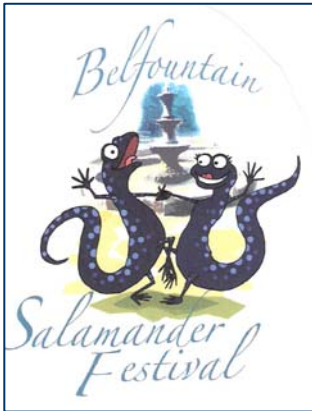


Small is Beautiful.

# The View from Belfountain

Fall 2014

## If You Love Belfountain...



You are needed at Belfountain's annual **Salamander Festival**, held on:

**Saturday, September 27  
from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

This is Belfountain's biggest fundraiser of the year and helps to raise money to preserve and protect our beautiful home from

unwanted development, excessive roadwork, uncontrolled tourism and other issues, as well as to support projects such as the upcoming Heritage Designation. So, if you love Belfountain...

**BE PART OF IT!** Volunteer for an hour or two or three. Help with set-up on Friday, September 26<sup>th</sup> at Belfountain Church. Join your neighbours for a fun day outdoors!

**Also awesome:** Bring any items you may have for the Silent Auction a few days ahead of the Festival. They can be objects or gift certificates. Perhaps your business has a product or service you would like to donate to the Silent Auction. Think of it as your contribution towards preserving the charm and beauty of Belfountain.

Volunteers and/or Auction donors, please contact Grecia Mayers today: 519-927-3204.

## Community Meeting

**September 29<sup>th</sup>, 7 p.m.**

**Come one, come all!** Updates and discussion on urgent matters of interest to Belfountain and area residents.

Location: Belfountain Community Hall, 7:00 p.m.

## Belfountain All-Candidates Meeting October 8<sup>th</sup> – 7 p.m.

Meet the candidates for Town of Caledon and Regional governments.

This is your chance to ask questions and find out what the candidates will do for you before the election at the end of October.

Date and location: October 8 at Belfountain School, starting at 7:00p.m.

## The End of Belfountain As We Know It?

Like many communities in the Green Belt, Belfountain is now under more pressures than at any other time in its history. Those of us who love living here enjoy the rural charm, natural beauty, and peaceful community. Unfortunately, these qualities are under threat (find out more at the Community Meeting, September 29). In fact, it is no exaggeration to say that Belfountain is fighting for its life.

The BCO is working hard to protect Belfountain, its historic buildings and environment, and the irreplaceable green spaces around it. Not just for those of us who are current residents but for our many appreciative visitors and for future generations. Our children and grandchildren should be able to enjoy this place just as much as we do.

The reality is: To achieve this, legal action is required, and lawyers cost money.

**So we welcome your fund-raising ideas and financial contributions** before our way of life in the hamlet and environs is lost forever. Please contact us today with your suggestions and donations. Let's make sure Belfountain and the surrounding area remains a wonderful place to live and visit now and for the future.

Contact: Jenni LeForestier  
[president@belfountain.ca](mailto:president@belfountain.ca)

*The View articles are written by community contributors. The BCO welcomes contributions but does not necessarily agree or endorse all the opinions expressed.*

## Wider Roads = Slower Traffic? Since When?

Belfountain faces yet another challenge to our status as a small, beautiful, historic area.

As many of you know from the public meetings in 2013, the Region plans a major roadwork project for the rectangle formed by Bush Street, Mississauga Road/Old Main Street, Olde Baseline, and Winston Churchill.

This project includes flattening and widening all of these roads, adding gutters, streetlights, sidewalks and parking areas for tourists, and paving roadsides that currently provide excellent drainage.

This will seriously impact Belfountain's heritage qualities and natural beauty, not to mention the way we live. Why?

According to the Region's "Environmental Study Report" (ESR), the pavement width in Belfountain should be increased by a little over 4 metres or almost 14 feet! If you live in the village, that would put the road-widening right in your front yard. In fact, if you now have limited frontage, you'll have even less—through detail design or appropriation—if the roads project is enacted. Just imagine how much hotter all this extra pavement will make the village on a fine summer's day.

If you have a well in your front yard or mature trees, they would need to go to make room for tourist parking.

Or they would have, until the BCO got involved. The president and various directors of the BCO have been extremely active launching an appeal and taking legal action against the ESR. It has been necessary to remind the Region that people who live along these roads deserve a voice in what happens to our village and area.

One of the Region's stated options in their plan for the roads was to "do nothing" except keep the roadways in good repair. This option was not selected, ignoring input from the Working Group who repeatedly told the Region that residents want to preserve the rural character of the roads, the historic stone walls, the mature trees, and the beauty of the area.



*Houses near the road could lose much of their frontage.*

As for installing more street lights in Belfountain, we already get so much ambient light filling the night sky from Brampton and the GTA, we scarcely need more. One of the joys of living in the country is dark skies at night, something that is rapidly disappearing. There is no evidence that street lights make an area safer. In fact, dark streets make drivers slow down.

And speaking of safety, one of the stated reasons the Region wants to widen and flatten the roads is to make them safer. Apparently the planners believe that such road changes will slow traffic. However, when Forks of the Credit Road was similarly "improved," residents found the opposite—drivers sped up and their road was suddenly much LESS safe.

When BCO directors asked the planners how flattening hills on Mississauga Road would make it safer, they told us that "decreasing the grade" i.e., removing the blind hills—would prevent head-on collisions caused by cars illegally passing on those hills.

Well, it's true that in the 40 years I've been driving here, I did once come over a blind hill on Mississauga Road to find a car speeding towards

me in my lane. But is it really possible to take out the blind hills without flattening all the roads like pancakes? Even with the best intentions, the Region will hardly be able

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to compensate for sheer human incompetence and the fact that there will always be people who break the law and drive on the wrong side of the solid yellow line.

The slopes and valleys of the Caledon hills are part of what attract so many tourists to our area and contribute to the charm of our area. Should these other factors outweigh the safety concern?

Sidewalks were also touted as creating safety. The reality is no sidewalk in the world will protect you from an out-of-control car unless that sidewalk is accompanied by a massive concrete barrier. The Region believes sidewalks will make it safer for Belfountain school children to walk to school. They were not receptive to the information that ALL school children here take busses or are driven to school.

The planners pointed out that, in the middle of winter, when Bush Street is icy, people walking on the roadside could be hit. Being non-residents, the planners were unaware that no one walks on the roadside of Bush Street in the middle of winter particularly as it is covered with high snow banks. Where will residents put all this snow and how much time or money will they have to spend on snow removal if sidewalks are installed?

The Region also wants to take a one-metre slice off the front of Heatherlea Farm's land to expand Winston Churchill. (The Town already took a metre or so from the farm some 40 years ago for the roads.) To add insult to injury, the Region expects owners Pat and Gord to pay several thousand dollars for the privilege of losing some of their land! Since the speed limit on that section of road is 60 km (not that you'd know it from the way drivers race through), it's difficult to comprehend how this would create more safety or benefit anyone, least of all Heatherlea and the other houses along that stretch.

However, as Pat learned, the Region is planning for the next 100 years. With that in mind, one wonders if Peel's vision for Caledon is to turn it into another Mississauga or Brampton with four-lane roads and the full urban infrastructure.

One wonders, too, what drives this Regional craze for road "improvements." Is it to turn Belfountain into a corridor for commuters to reach the incipient bedroom community development in Alton on Mississauga Road? Or is it driven by the Provincial Plan to at least double the size of every hamlet, village and town in the

Greater Golden Horseshoe over the next few decades?

At a recent meeting with Regional planners, one of them told the half dozen BCO directors present, "We're not in the infrastructure business. We're in the community support business."

Belfountain looks forward to receiving all the "community support" the Region can offer us, while together we work through this roads issue that will critically affect our community now and far into the future.

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## **HERITAGE**

### **Moving Forward On The Past**

At the Heritage Caledon Committee meeting on Monday, September 8, our delegation of five BCO members and directors made a compelling presentation about Belfountain. The response from the Committee was enthusiastic enough that they kept our delegates in discussion for a full hour.

"Nothing happens until after the municipal election in October," Carey deGorter, Town Clerk, told the meeting. "Then there's the matter of funding and staff time," added Committee Chair Errill O'Hara.

The Committee resolved that Belfountain should be recommended to council in 2015 for Heritage Conservation District designation and that they would do what they could in the interim.

While it's true that there was concern that staff resources would be stretched, Heritage Resource Officer Sally Drummond was enthusiastic about the project. She said that, despite its being a lot of work, she felt her people could manage it.

Heritage designation can be a lengthy process and works best when everyone is behind it. Bolton Councillor, Bob Mazzapoli, recommended "patience" to the BCO delegation, pointing out that Bolton's application for an HCD has already lagged by two years. However, when municipal applications are long and drawn out, it seems to be due to opposition, usually by commercial interests, as is the case with Bolton.

The Heritage Inventory Report commissioned by the Town of Caledon in 2009 recommended that Belfountain, including the Credit Gorge, be officially designated a Cultural Heritage Landscape. At the time, this recommendation was not enacted so, as yet, Belfountain has no official designation. The BCO seeks to change this to help preserve our hamlet and environs into the future.

BCO president, Jenni LeForestier, warned against delay because burgeoning tourism, parking,

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changes to the Belfountain Conservation Area, the looming ORB 66-house development, and the rebuilding of the roads around and in Belfountain are all happening now and putting the hamlet's heritage at risk.

"The pressure is on now," she said. "Let's get going."

The Heritage Caledon Committee seems to agree.



*Photo credit: Karen Alison.*

## **THEM BADLANDS IS GOIN' BAD**

Turning the Badlands into *goodlands*—that's what 60-plus demonstrators were after Saturday noon of the long weekend.

At least the world knows now about the red clay desert along Olde Base Line Road.

A 1,000-name petition bound for the Ontario Legislature, a queue of *Facebook* supporters, and hey presto! Politicians and media galore were at the gathering.

Two police cruisers joined the crowd as did a number of tourists from Toronto and Brampton just out for the day and one bulky Burnese Mountain dog panting under the noonday sun.

Sixty years ago, the Badlands was just a few strips of clay poking through grass and bush land—like the first evidence of a balding scalp. Today, the Badlands are an eroding, expanding, litter-laden, ecological mistake on the rampage under the heels of ten thousand visitors.

But, said Town of Caledon councillor and candidate for mayor, Allan Thompson, it's too

late to stop the daily surge of visitors. "It's promoted in China as part of the Canadian government's tourism promotion," he said.

You can Google the Badlands. Its photo is even on display at Pearson International Airport, he said.

So folks are going to keep coming. How to manage them is a bit trickier.

A 33-car parking lot plus two bus slots a couple of hundred metres east of the Badlands is proposed along with a \$2 million price tag. And a viewing platform so people can look but not touch the red-ribbed wasteland.

And a high fence maybe, so visitors can view from the platform but not set foot on the crumbling site.

And how will the family at No. 1763 react, living in a bungalow next door to the proposed parking lot? "We'll put in a line of trees to protect them," said Thompson.

"A parking lot to nowhere," Regional councillor candidate, Barb Shaughnessy's voice boomed over the portable mike. She was wearing one of the free "Save the Badlands" T-shirts. "This place is treated like an old pair of shoes we don't care about."

"We need a full solution," continued Thompson. "This is a ticking time-bomb. It's good to see this passion."

Since the Badlands is owned by the Ontario Heritage Trust, he added, "it's a provincial responsibility."

Sushma Chatubhula of Brampton, visiting the site for the second time, wasn't so sure about fences and platforms. "Wouldn't it be nicer to have people come here?" she said. "It's a nice spot. Let's enjoy mother nature."

Yet, in this case, it would be nicer to enjoy Mother Nature from a distance. Because of all the visitors tramping across them, the Badlands have been reduced by ten feet or 3 metres in height since 1970! That drop is a full storey of a sky rise. Another 40 years of even heavier visitor traffic and there will be no Badlands, just a pancake of red clay lying at the bottom of the valley.

"There is no single, simple solution," Jean Kerins, president of the Caledon Hills Bruce Trail Club saddled with looking after the Badlands, says in a letter to this writer. "We are extremely fortunate that there hasn't been a horrific traffic accident and death along Olde Base Line Road. In the end, the proposals that have been made are the best solutions we can recommend."

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The recent publicity has already generated a couple of changes. The garbage cans have doubled to four. And two metal signs have been erected listing nine sins ranging from “no sliding” to “no littering.” Summarizing, the signs urge: “Take nothing but photographs and leave nothing but your thanks.”

The local residents have better ideas that are practical and easy for the province and the Bruce Trail to implement. The question is, are they listening? For the sake of the future and the natural environment, we can only hope so.

It's important for us all to support this local initiative so that we residents can continue to enjoy the Badlands in perpetuity.



*Photo credit: Karen Alison.*

## **Buy Ontario-Grown Now, While You Still Can**

Did you know that, back on June 23<sup>rd</sup> of this year, 70 elected mayors and municipal councillors asked the Ontario Government to expand the Green Belt by one million acres?

This bold request came from Municipal Leaders for the Greenbelt. It's a wonderful plan to protect farmland, green spaces and watersheds. But what has happened to it?

The Province seems to be moving inexorably forward with its plan to double the size of all hamlets, villages, towns and cities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe, in order to accommodate a future influx of new Canadians.

Curiously, the Province seems blind to the reality that all these people will need to eat, and

that once Ontario's prime farmland is covered over by sprawl, we won't be able to find arable land on the Canadian Shield or the northern tundra.

One can't help wondering if any of the civil servants who created the Provincial Plan live in the countryside. Perhaps they honestly don't know where food comes from. (Hint: not the storeroom at the back of Loblaws.) And before you suspect me of sarcasm, the reality is that many urban people have no idea that the food in the supermarket started life as plants and animals.

In fact, in 2012, the New York Times published an article about the recent surge in “Farm Camps”, places where children go to learn about where food comes from. No doubt there are urban adults suffering from the same malaise. After all, it's at least three generations since most people moved from the farm to the city.

Ignorance about where food comes from also seems to extend to ignorance about how farmers make a living. Perhaps there was a time when a farmer could prosper purely through his or her agricultural pursuits. Not any more. These days, most farmers have to have a day job or a business to support their food-growing habit.

Farming is an unreliable occupation. No matter how good your fertilizers and pesticides are, you can't control the weather. Farming is frustratingly dependent on nature—it's not like producing widgets in a factory. So you'd think that our four levels of government would do everything possible to support and encourage the brave folks on small farms who are willing to take the risk of growing food and husbanding animals so the rest of us can eat locally.

You'd also think that since, according to Industry Canada, small businesses (including farms) create almost 80 percent of all the jobs in the private sector, it would be worthwhile to keep these folks solvent.

Apparently not.

Take Heatherlea Farm, for instance. In addition to the cows and the corn, they have a small store at the back of the house where a lot of us enjoy buying local meats, veggies, milk, baked goods, and other delicious items.

Pat and Gord are a little tired of having the store right off their kitchen. They'd really rather have it in a separate building. Makes sense. So, even though construction can be expensive, they started the process of applying for the permits.

But before they can break ground, the Region wants a \$93,000.00 development fee. That's not a typo. Ninety-three thousand dollars as in almost

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almost a hundred grand. Pat and Gord are not building a development. They want to put up a single building for which they will receive no services from the Town or Region.

In addition, they are expected to pay a \$10 per square metre school board fee or around \$22,500.00, despite the fact that they are already paying school taxes through their property taxes.

But wait, there's more!

The Town wants \$16 per square metre, for a total of \$36,000.00, for the building permit. On top of that, there is a landscaping fee of approximately \$20,000.00, to be held by the Town until it is satisfied that the applicants have completed the landscaping as defined in their plan. (Presumably this money would collect interest which the Town might keep, while Pat and Gord pay out interest on the loan they would have to take out to cover this expense.)

So even before the expenses of the construction can be undertaken, Heatherlea Farm would have to go into debt for almost two hundred thousand dollars for the privilege of putting up one building. And just in case Heatherlea's owners aren't sufficiently oppressed by these financial considerations, an employee at the Region offered to visit the farm and photograph every corner of every building on the property to make sure nothing is changed without permission. (George Orwell, where are you when we need you?)

Is it possible that with the debt model of the Province before them, the Region and Town imagine that it's an equally simple matter for a farm or small business to go into the red? It's not. In the real world, any small business person who attempted the same fiscal operations as the Province would have to close their doors and declare bankruptcy. So far as I know, the only multi-millionaire small farmers in Ontario are the ones who've sold their land to developers.

It's interesting that the Region of Peel's slogan is, "Working for you." Perhaps every government employee ought to spend a mandatory year owning and operating a small business to give them a different perspective about the meaning of "working for you."

Personally, I like being able to buy local food from my neighbours but, given the policies of our governments, how much longer will it be possible?



*Photo credit: Karen Alison.*

## THE VILLAGE STORE

Sixteen years after she bought it, Tammeron Karaim is selling the village store at the corner of Bush and Main Streets.

Belfountain's most historical building, opened in 1888 as a tavern to service thirsty quarry workers, could be yours for \$770,000.

Ms. Karaim has lived in Erin throughout that time, and says she has not decided whether she'll stay in the neighbourhood after the sale.

The store has varied in its usage during her ownership, including recently offering an "intimacy lounge" for frank discussions of sexual matters. But her core belief in serving healthier food has remained steadfast throughout.

Her hope is that something of that belief, "maybe not as extreme as what I've been doing," will carry on in the eventual new owners.

Ideally, she says, a Bed and Breakfast with healthy breakfasts would thrive. The place has four bedrooms and two lounges and she'd urge a "historic room" downstairs.

"It's not a matter of what I'd like to see. It's what I believe would work," she told *The View*. "This place has a lot of history and stories."

### ***The View from Belfountain...***

is available online: <http://www.belfountain.ca>

#### **Have News For The View?**

If you would like to write an article or have news of the comings and goings of Belfountain and area residents, we invite you to contact us at:

[theview@belfountain.ca](mailto:theview@belfountain.ca)