

Opinion

Goderich could claim third Ontario arboreta

To the Editor;

As a business and homeowner in Goderich, I am often involved in discussions with customers regarding the future of our town and county, especially since the downturn in the economy and the closure of Volvo. Many of my customers, from spring to fall, are from out of town, province and country and many are here to camp and hike our trails.

So, not surprisingly, one of the major topics of conversation has been the Parsons Court extension and intrusion on Maitland Woods. Maitland Woods is a rare pocket of Carolinian forest this far north in Ontario and includes a number of endangered species and species of significant interest. We are in a unique position at this moment to establish what would be the third of only three arboreta in Ontario (the other two being in Guelph and Ottawa. What better way to compliment our town, our beaches and sunsets, our burgeoning arts and theatre, our historic gaol, our world-famous

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Celtic College and Festival, our re-invented rail bridge over the Maitland River, than with a world-class arboretum.

Not only would it increase the number of visitors to our area and create jobs, it would also give us an educational and research facility. We have excellent models to explore in the Ottawa Central Experimental Farm Arboretum and the University of Guelph Arboretum (please check out their web sites); we have the expertise necessary available to us locally; the land adjacent to the south of the six acres of woodland which is under dispute in the town plan (and should be designated as natural environment, not industrial land) would be an excellent location; and we already have the Maitland Woods - the backbone of such a project - in place (including the trail system supported by the Trail Association).

Instead of using hundreds of thousands of dollars earmarked for servicing industrial

lots, for which it is unlikely there will be any interest due to the economy (I understand three existing lots have already been turned back to the town, Volvo's properties will be vacant and there are a number of other industrial lots to the west of Maitland Woods still requiring drainage), it could instead be spent on creating a lasting legacy for Goderich and area and saving our natural heritage, undisturbed by man for thousands of years.

I also understand there could be funding available from the government for such a

project, which could be started immediately. Everyone with whom I have discussed the possibility of creating a Goderich Arboretum feels it would be a major asset to the town and a more constructive way of spending that kind of money than on some unnecessary industrial lots.

Should we pave over this land for the benefit of the few or save and embellish it for the benefit of many?

Sincerely,
Christine Ferguson
Goderich

Town taxi service appreciated

To the Editor;
Kudos to Patti Smith for her letter on Jan. 21 regarding taxi service.

I have used their services for the past five years and they have been very accommodating, courteous and going the extra mile and are extremely helpful. Her defending

the other cabbies in town was a nice touch.

Too bad some people sit at their windows looking for negativity.

I would personally like to thank Goderich Taxi and their great staff.

Mary Ann Weber

Luxury of energy sometimes comes with sound

To the Editor;

I'm writing in support of Mr. Van Beers' comments in last week's paper. As Dolly Parton was once quoted "if you want to have the rainbow you got to put up with the rain!"

All the comments lately seem to be about how far we can get the windmills away from us or how big they are or that they make noise. Goderich is full of large, man-made structures

one of which we will be all wishing was still making noise after June. So let's accept that if we want the luxury of energy we have to accept what comes with it. Why don't we think of the opportunities that would come with windmills - a local, secure, green energy source.

We see in the news what havoc can rain when we depend on long distance energy. Take

the Russia-Ukraine dispute or the gas pipeline bombings in B.C. We know that how even in this province protest groups can shut down rail systems just by blocking one track. We know that for every one unit of energy we use we need to produce three to account for transmission and distribution losses over distances. Imagine if we produced our energy locally and could promote ourselves to business on a secure energy source and they could market products that were produced with green energy.

How it would compliment Goderich - the Prettiest Town in Canada - Canada's Green Town along with our Farmers' market promoting local food. We could develop a complimentary solar system and use smart meters to encourage energy use during times of natural production and in the future maybe our electric cars will become our collective batteries to

store energy during times of production also. Sound expensive? Yes. Is it perfect? No. But we, like all generations before us, have the obligation to sacrifice and try and leave this world a better place for our descendants.

The cost of status quo energy? North America uses over \$1 million /minute in imported oil - who gets this money? - not our economy. The estimated cost to society above the cost of oil for pollution, health care, water etc. Two trillion dollars a year for North America alone - all mortgaged in our air, water and soil for future generations to pay the price of our extravagance.

We find reasons to worry about the safety of windmills and yet accept that car accidents kill 50,000 North Americans a year and injure three million more - let's put the risk in perspective.

John M. Brand

Reader wonders about Rona

To the Editor;

Where is Rona going to build their new store in Goderich? About a year ago they bought the Timbr-mart and were going to combine the two stores in Goderich and build a new one. Are they still going to do this?

Where will it be located? and when are they planning to open?

The month of May is approaching quickly and there are not any signs of it happening as of yet.

Lee O'Meara
Zurich

Father involvement workshop to return next month

To the Editor;

Rural Response for Healthy Children has once again been asked by the Father Involvement Initiative - Ontario Network (FFI-ON) to host a one day Regional Father Involvement Workshop. We invite everyone who attended the first regional workshop in March of 2007 to join us once again. Bring your success and challenge experiences and

share them with community service providers, business and community representatives. Also, we invite anyone who could not attend the March 2007 Workshop to join us this year as we continue to support, educate and advocate for father involvement.

Brian Russell, Chair of FFI-ON will be our lead facilitator for the day. He brings with him years of experience working with fathers

and promoting fathering involvement. He will share the latest information on issues that affect father involvement in family, work places and community.

There will be no registration fee for this one day workshop, but pre-registration is required so that we can plan for lunch and refreshments. Please register by fax to 519-482-8340, or email to mail@rrhc.on.ca. We

ask that you have your registration filed with us no later than March 16th.

Join us for this dynamic workshop and explore ways that we can all encourage/strengthen father involvement in their families, in their workplaces and in our communities. "Father Involvement...it makes a real difference"

Rural Response for Healthy Children

Candlelit walk an illuminating experience for volunteers

To the Editor;

On Feb 6, the Maitland Trail Association (MTA) hosted the 15th annual Candle Lit Walk in the Maitland Woods as part of the Town of Goderich Winterfest Celebrations!

In addition to the 1.6 km candlelit trail we were pleased to offer some new trail experiences with the labyrinth and Scamble Mountain.

One hundred local citizens and members of

the MTA put in 400 hours of service to make this event possible. The exceptional efforts of the Thursday work crew must be noted. Clearing 200 meters of ice from boardwalks and bridges to make the traditional route serviceable for the event was above and beyond anything I could have predicted to be possible from a volunteer group. Obviously I was wrong and am reminded that the strength of a committed group of volunteers is the most

effective human force known.

I think Patrick Capper deserves special recognition for the ice steps cut into transitions to and from the cleared boardwalks and numerous other efforts in clearing, improving and decorating the trail. Let me also thank Karen Melady for continuing to provide lantern construction workshops in advance of the walk.

Thanks to the individuals who made and installed their beautiful lanterns around the trail.

The hospitality and public outreach efforts of the 15 volunteers indoors at the Columbus Center were fully appreciated by the 400 plus participants that moon (and candle) lit night. Cindy Fisher's contributions here provide the fuel for the fire. Together we produced a wonderful experience that was enjoyed and will be remembered by everyone that attended.

Thank you soooo much!

Con Melady