

Orangeville Citizen

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ALAN M. CLARIDGE Publisher
THOMAS M. CLARIDGE Editor

10 First Street, ORANGEVILLE, Ontario L9W 2C4
E-mail: mail@citizen.on.ca Web Page: http://www.citizen.on.ca



Claridge
Community Newspapers Ltd.

THOMAS M. CLARIDGE President
ALAN M. CLARIDGE General Manager

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Telephone: (519) 941-2230 Fax: (519) 941-9361
E-mail: mail@citizen.on.ca



The humblest Citizen of all the land, when clad in armour of a righteous cause, is stronger than all the hosts of Error. - WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN

Transportation network with far too many gaps

ONE THING Canadians who travel abroad soon discover is that we have a lot to learn from Europeans when it comes to transportation generally, and public transit in particular.

At a time when Canada has almost no rail passenger service outside the Montreal-Windsor corridor and pathetically slow service even within it, railways in Europe offer high-speed service just about everywhere, with many of the rail lines being fully electrified.

Granted, developing a first-class transportation network in Canada has been, and always will be, a big challenge because of our demographics, with nearly all our 30-million-plus residents spread out more than 5,000 kilometres between the Atlantic and Pacific coasts and the vast majority of us living within a few hours' drive of the U.S. border.

Although transportation has been a political hot potato ever since completion of a transcontinental railway was made a condition of British Columbia's entry into Confederation, precious little has been done toward bringing either our road or rail networks up to 21st Century standards.

We see it as nothing short of scandalous that 60 years after Parliament passed the Trans-Canada Highway Act in 1949, the TCH remains the only "national" highway, and that except for a few short stretches near Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie it's still just an ordinary, two-lane road between Arnprior and the Manitoba border, a distance of more than 2,000 kilometres.

Sadly, at a time when all the national political parties are subscribing to a need for economic stimulus and improvements to infrastructure, none has a platform that includes a promise to work with the provinces on develop-

ment of a national highway grid complementing the U.S. Interstate system, the stimulus scheme that President Dwight D. Eisenhower promoted as a massive public works project during a mid-1950s recession.

Whatever else might be said, it's surely obvious that in an era of continental free trade, Canadian farmers and manufacturers alike suffer from having a grossly inadequate system of highways, lacking even a single coast-to-coast freeway.

Even the current project of "twinning" the TCH is showing progress only east and west of Ontario, with four lanes now available through most of Quebec and the Maritimes as well as across all three Prairie Provinces, save for a short stretch in western Manitoba and the middle of Calgary. (Outside of Ontario's, the major challenge remaining is in B.C., where widening the TCH to four lanes through the two mountain passes between Revelstoke and the Alberta border poses a gargantuan task.)

But inadequate as our road transportation network surely is, it's clearly superior to our existing forms of public transit.

Even in Toronto, the only Canadian city that has retained a streetcar system, public transit is second-class by comparison with that offered in European cities of similar size.

Part of the problem is obviously a lack of adequate funding by all levels of government. Although everyone gives lip service to the idea of getting commuters out of their cars, the best option most of them have been given is an occasional bus that may or may not connect with a commuter train and likely won't deliver them close to their places of employment.

Currently, commuters in the Greater

Toronto Area are being served, more or less, by a multiplicity of local transit services that all must get most of their revenue from fares that are so high they prevent patronage from ever reaching the point where the service being offered would be frequent, let alone speedy.

In fact, the only entity that currently offers both relatively cheap fares and speedy service is GO Transit. (As an example, anyone commuting between Orangeville and downtown Toronto has the option of GO service that will get them to Union Station in roughly 90 minutes. A bus that leaves Orangeville shortly before 6:30 a.m. each weekday and connects with an express GO train at Brampton sees its passengers arrive at the Union shortly before 8 a.m., and the return fare at a little over \$18 is less than two hours' underground parking in downtown Toronto.)

But one thing both provincially owned GO and federally owned Via Rail have in common is huge gaps in the levels of service they provide. With Via, the gap is between fairly frequent service between Toronto and Montreal and none at all between Toronto and places like Orangeville, Goderich, Collingwood, Sudbury and Peterborough that still have rail lines. With GO, it's between the huge, double-deck trains and the only other mode, ordinary intercity buses.

Ironically, both Via and GO could fill these gaps by introducing self-propelled rail cars similar to the Dayliners that used to move at up to 70 m.p.h. between Toronto and Owen Sound.

For some unexplained reason, neither GO nor Via has ever explained its disinterest in modern versions of the Dayliner which Canada's own Bombardier is selling abroad. Pity.



Wanted: some 'official' scenic tours

SO HERE WE ARE in the Month of Colour, as October might well be dubbed, and the local arts community is celebrating artistic colour with the Headwaters Arts Festival while the Credit Valley Explorer is running special fall colour tours.

Without a doubt, the next few weeks will provide a golden opportunity for the local populace, as well as the hordes from the Greater Toronto Area, to witness the spectacular colours in the Dufferin area's many wooded valleys.

However, one thing missing in both Dufferin and Caledon are highways and byways that have been officially designated as "scenic routes" and assist tourists with the appropriate road markers.

Granted, some roads so obviously qualify as scenic routes that they likely don't need the markers, three examples being Caledon's Fork of the Credit Road, Mono's Hockley Road and Mulmur's River Road, all of which will be busier than usual as the fall foliage reaches its colourful

peak. However, what's really needed is a grid of sorts that would offer tourists a round trip.

One such in Caledon would take you from Highway 10 along Forks of the Credit Road to Mississauga Road, up to Peel Road 24, south on Shaw's Creek Road, east through Belfountain to Mississauga Road, south to the Grange Sideroad east past the Caledon Badlands and back to Highway 10.

(The more adventurous would continue east on the Grange to Mountainview Road, up to Highway 9 and back to 10 via Horseshoe Hill Road and Olde Base Line Road.)

In Dufferin, one "grand circle tour" could also start from Highway 10, follow the Hockley Road to Airport Road, north to Dufferin 21, west as far as Ruskview (for the spectacular view of the Pine River Valley), south to Terra Nova, west along the River Road to Prince of Wales Road and south to Highway 10 at Primrose.

CITIZEN MAILBOX

The Regulation of Tree Cutting in Dufferin

The Dufferin County Council is in the process of rewriting a tree cutting by-law which will: limit the sale of timber and firewood; require a permit every time one cuts a tree; treat sales differently than own use; and encourage neighbours to comment on your forest harvesting activities.

The drafting of tree cutting by-laws is very challenging because trees are covered by many provincial laws including: the Ontario Municipal Act, the Conservation Act, the Trees Act, the Environmental Bill of Rights Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Planning Act, the Provincial Policy Statement and the Places to Grow Act. Getting a by-law which is consistent with all these provincial Acts will require quite a lot of effort by legal counsel. The Trees Act for example states that any trees cut in accordance with good forestry practice are excluded. That looks like an excellent place to start.

The draft proposal on the County website, www.dufferincounty.on.ca/document_info.aspx?id=2371 appears to be based on a number of questionable assumptions. First it assumes trees are a unique form of property which should be regulated

by the County. Trees, on most farms and many non-farm properties are a perennial crop not unlike hay or pasture. No other crops on private property are regulated by the county. Why are trees regulated by permits as to whether one can or cannot sell them. Many woodlots are profit centres which are managed to provide income to the owners.

Money actually grows on trees but only if the owners are allowed to harvest and sell them. A deciduous hardwood woodlot increases in value in the order of \$125 to \$150 per acre per year. Given a managed harvest of timber every 10 to 12 years, a well managed woodlot creates an income of approximately \$1,500 per acre each harvest. Given the attractive federal taxation regulations, the sale of timber is a profitable activity. Properly managed trees are a profitable crop and should be treated like other farm crops. Just because municipalities can control timber and firewood sales does not mean they need to.

The second questionable assumption implicit in the by-law constraints on tree sales involves the naive idea that the volume of growth will be maxi-

mized by not allowing any tree cutting. The problem with this idea is that deciduous trees grow much slower as they age. Older trees form a canopy which retards the growth of younger, faster growing trees, thus reducing the total biomass. Refusing to allow the cutting of trees, in addition to being economically irrational also creates a less efficient forest in terms of biomass and oxygen creation. If woodlot owners cannot sell timber and firewood, they will not manage, care for or protect their woodlots.

Financial benefit does more to determine landowner's actions than any government regulation. Profits encourage good practices such as opening the canopy to encourage new growth, the removal of diseased and weed tree species such as ironwood and thorns and wind damaged trees. Man can and has in many situations improved the quality of woodlots by proper management. The proposed by-law limits annual harvest for own use to 6 bush cords per property.

The total quantity of trees which can be cut each year should be related to the size of the woodlot. A minimum of one bush cord per acre should be allowed without a permit so that proper silviculture practices can be undertaken. Clear cutting should be restricted to a very small area and be based on the total area of the woodlot. A maximum area of say, 5%, could be allowed without threatening the future of a woodlot.

The draft by-law requires notification of neighbours when clear cutting is anticipated and posting a sign when harvesting timber. This appears to be a

The response to Ms. Wallace's delegation of September 3 involved Councillors Crowe, Elliott, and Kumprey as well as myself. Mayor Fawcett was not in attendance (we are not sure why). HOWEVER, she did review the prepared material prior to distribution. The response was signed by me ON BEHALF of the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Melancton.

The written pages used words like "for example" or "for discussion only" relative to costs of various studies and were not "absolute" as inferred in the article.

Bill Hill
Deputy Mayor
Township of Melancton

way to get neighbours to object to harvesting or clear cutting of a woodlot. Frankly, it is none of a neighbour's business what one does with their property as long as it does not impact their property. No one is ever asked to inform others when they harvest other crops and furthermore, permits are not required. The issuing of permits looks like a money grab by the county. The issuing and checking on adherence to permits will require considerable effort and costs. In order to be fair, there will also need to be an appeal process. More bureaucracy is the inevitable result of regulating the growing and sale of timber and firewood.

All woodlot owners should be concerned with this revised by-law which will be discussed at the Dufferin council meeting in Orangeville at 7:00 pm on October 8.

Jim White
via email

The Dufferin County Council will host a public meeting at 7:00 pm 8 October to consider a tougher version of its tree-cutting bylaw.

Concerned citizens should be aware that the changes will apply a non-refundable \$50 fee to the existing bylaw, limit "normal farm practice" to six bush cords of wood per year, stiffen the existing requirement to apply for a permit to harvest trees or thin a forest, etc.

The current bylaw exempts just about all tree destruction except harvest, and allows county agents to enter private land without a warrant to search for evidence on suspicion that trees are being harvested without permission. It also obliges the owner to seek neighbours' approval, post a sign at the farm entrance, pay a professional tree marker (list available on an Ontario government web site), have the harvesting contractor co-sign the permit application, etc.

It's unlikely that the county administrative officer will approve a permit, as she is on record as saying her job is to "preserve the forest cover of the county."

The bylaw is allowed to exist thanks to the Ontario Municipal Act, but it need not remain in effect if enough citizens express disapproval at the 8 October meeting. A similar bylaw in Muskoka was rejected when the community objected to it.

Charles Hooker
Orangeville

Renewed focus needed

The two recent acts of violence against women within the Town of Orangeville certainly cry out for a renewed focus on proactive involvement at all levels of society. It is imperative that we learn to take every threat, every questionable act as a very clear message to protect those whose gender puts them at increased risk.

Having experienced the dark side of violence against one of our own family members in recent years, our family has lived the danger - and it is an all-encompassing fear and outright violation of one's life and lifestyle that is the result. When in that situation, one looks for compassion, understanding and action from both law enforcement and the justice system.

Too often, however, it is the rights of the perpetrator that gain momentum within our system and the victim is left to question her own involvement, intentions and vulnerability. It is high time that all levels of government and local authorities view this as a wake-up call! It is time for the good people in society to band together and

shout "We're not going to take this anymore!"

It is time that every threat towards a female is taken deadly seriously. It is time for men to take responsibility in educating and empowering other men to take an active role in eradicating "violence against women". It is time to hold perpetrators totally accountable for their acts of violence. It is time to demand that the victim be given rights.

Alas, as a Crown Attorney stoically said to our family when the punishment certainly did not seem to even approach the crime against one of our family members, "After all, it is called the Criminal Justice System". The threat, ultimately though, is not only to individual women and their families, but also to the whole fabric of the community. The whole community suffers when violence occurs.

Let's change the course of action before yet other local women find themselves as victims.

Every threat is a deadly serious threat!
A caring husband and father