

Broadbent recognized at heritage celebration in Caledon

By Bill Rea

Heritage in the community is something to be celebrated, and that was the case in Caledon Saturday night.

The room at Caledon Country Club was packed with those marking the 40th anniversary of Heritage Caledon and the 10th anniversary of the Caledon Heritage Foundation.

Foundation Treasurer Errill O'Hara observed Heritage Caledon came into existence the same year that Apple Computers came on the scene and the CN Tower was finished. It was also the year Montreal hosted the summer Olympics, 'and they're still paying for the stadium,' he said.

Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones was on hand to bring greetings, and to read a statement she had made in the legislature last week.

'The volunteer members of the Caledon heritage committee have spent the past four decades cataloguing, conserving and preserving our community's history,' she said. 'Through an extensive list of stories, buildings and artifacts, they have helped record our community's origins, historical events and people that lived and worked in Caledon.'

'The research conducted by Heritage Caledon through its committee members, volunteers and supporters over the past 40 years has helped to ensure our collective history is recorded and preserved,' she added.

One of the high points of the evening was a presentation of an Award of Excellence to Heather Broadbent, who has made major contributions to the preservation of heritage in Caledon over the years.

The presentation was made by former mayor Carol Seglins.

'She has been integral in every way with the birth of both of both organizations,' Seglins said, adding Broadbent was also instrumental in awakening Caledon to the need of recognizing and preserving heritage.

Seglins observed that Broadbent arrived from the U.K. and settled in Caledon in the 1970s. She had been surprised to find there was no local historical society, so she set about creating one 'with her usual determination and tenacity.' She found other enthusiastic people and they founded the Albion-Bolton Historical Society. Broadbent was also a founder of the Mono Mills Historical Society. She also went to work on Town council to convince them to establish a local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (LACAC) for Caledon. Seglins said Broadbent arrived at the council meeting with a batch of cookies, adding it's not clear if it was her arguments or the cookies that prevailed. But the LACAC was formed within two years, with Broadbent as its first chair.

Seglins observed Caledon's LACAC became a model for other communities.

Broadbent continued her volunteer work until she was asked to join the Town staff in the mid-1980s as Heritage Resource Officer, retiring in 2000.

She has remained active since then as a consultant, advocate and writer.

'It's all very well to praise me,' Broadbent said as she accepted the award, 'but you can't get anything accomplished without a lot of people behind you.'

The keynote speaker was author Dan Needles, who is known as the playwright behind the Wingfield Series.

O'Hara explained Heritage Caledon is a committee appointed by the Town to deal with issues arising from the Ontario Heritage Act. That includes the designation of historically significant features, including buildings, bridges, stone culverts, trees, etc. It also administers grant programs for designated properties.

The Foundation is a non-profit registered charity that promotes heritage preservation in town.

'Cultural heritage is a direct link to our history,' declared Heritage Caledon Chair Joanne Crease.

She also observed there have been 123 designation put in place over the last 40 years, and she said that would not have been possible without interest and stewardship of residents.

O'Hara expressed thanks to the Town for its recent grant to the Foundation, which he said will help with three projects in the works. They include an illustrated children's book on the evolution of Caledon, dealing with indigenous people and early settlers, along with the coming of railways, early industry and farming. The book is already underway and will be distributed next year free to all Grade 3 students in Caledon. It will also be available through the library system.



Former mayor Carol Seglins made this presentation to Heather Broadbent Saturday night.



Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones presented a framed copy of the tribute she delivered in the legislature last week to Heritage Caledon Chair Joanne Crease and Caledon's Heritage Resource Officer Sally Drummond.



Author and playwright Dan Needles delivered an amusing keynote address.