

Caledon Concert Band steeped in the community's history

By Constance Scrafield

Except for a number of years after the Second World War, there has been a community band in Caledon since the 1850s and the Caledon Concert Band (CCB) is still keeping that spirit alive.

The Bolton Citizens' Band, established, as far as records seem to indicate, in the 1850s, maintained its role as Caledon's community band until the Second World War, when too many of its members went off to fight.

In 1974, Jimmy Maw re-opened the tradition of the band by gathering musicians of all ages, both professionals and amateurs, to play together and put on concerts for the local public. They called it the Caledon Concert Band (CCB). He recalled Rob Kinnear, a high school music teacher and conductor of the school's band, took over as conductor of the CCB Jan. 5, 1985. Still in that role, Kinnear is an enthusiastic promoter of the Band and the arts in Caledon.

The Band is happy to announce their upcoming concert, Mardi Gras! Feb. 26 at 2 p.m. It will take place at the Caledon Community Complex.

Music from Rio, New Orleans and Quebec Winter Carnival are all part of the program, bringing the percussion section into full use, with favourite pieces from the brass.

"With Mardi Gras," said Kinnear, "we're hoping people will get up and dance. Karina of Caledon Dance is going to give Latin line dancing lesson."

He added there will be an art show and sale by the students of the Mayfield Secondary School Regional Arts Program.

It is important, as part of the CCB's mantra, to encourage and promote other arts and artists in the community by inviting them to participate within the concerts.

After all these decades of bringing music into the community, Kinnear and his wife Sandra think it is high time for a permanent location for the Band's free summertime concerts: a gazebo, bandshell or the like.

"We'd like to see the Town support us," Kinnear commented. "We do all we can to bring music to events in Caledon wherever we're invited."

"We'd like to do even more than we do," added Mrs. Kinnear. "And we are an associated member, an Affiliate of Caledon."

This designation with the Town involves the executive of the Band, led by President Andy Dunn, taking mandatory regular training sessions at the Town about such subjects as insurance (to qualify to be an Affiliate, the organization must have \$2 million liability), involvement of volunteers, Annual General Meetings, financial training and many aspects of being a not-for-profit organization.

"So, this way, anyone wanting to engage or invite us to their function will know we have insurance," Mr. Kinnear said. "Even though we are a non professional group, we are expected to run ourselves in a professional manner."

Added to this, Mrs. Kinnear remarked, "Although professional musicians do play in the band, along with the amateurs, they don't get paid - they just enjoy playing in this band."

Only Mr. Kinnear is paid an honorarium, which is normal in community bands; everyone else works as a volunteer, including the executive (also the norm).

Mrs. Kinnear explained, "We see ourselves as providing a service to the community. We give free concerts for events, like Fire and Ice at the Alton Mill recently. We love to be invited to events."

The Band is presenting its 150th Anniversary of Canada's concert with an all-Canadian program, May 28, reaching back into their archives for pieces that show off Canada's musical history. Such rare music as Royce Hall Suite for Concert Bands by Healey Willan and Men of Dieppe by Steve Michell are two special choices for the concert. Music from Newfoundland and the folk songs of this great country; stand and cheer for Fred Stride's arrangement of O Canada to fill your heart with pride of Canada's fine music production from our past to our present day.

After 32 years of conducting the band, why has Mr. Kinnear been a part of this for so long and intending to continue.

"I guess it's a little odd but, personally, there's the feeling of family. There are people in the band that I taught at high school. They're grown and still playing - that keeps me coming back," he told us.

Retired for six years, he related, "It was the administrators: they don't see what a school band does for the community of the school. All they see are the sports teams but they don't understand the overall benefits of music. It does all that sports do for confidence but there's more because of the connection between people in music."

They want it known that the band is open to all. They plan to begin a program to encourage people close to retirement to come out to learn the joy and benefit of playing music. They plan to have sessions for beginners before the whole band's rehearsal, to stay on and hear how a rehearsal takes place if they wish.

That connection, the blending of harmony, the power of playing music together ?really does have a fulfilling and a warmth to it.?
?It is quite profound,? said Mr. Kinnear.
For tickets and information, telephone 416-276-7852 or online at www.caledonconcertband.ca. There is an email:
Caledon@bandmusic.ca