

Caledon East & District Historical Society sharing our past in unprecedented times

By **ROB PAUL**

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In Caledon, residents in the community are working to preserve the history of the town and spread their knowledge to others.

They're the Caledon East and District Historical Society (CEDHS), a group founded in 1984 by Anne Allengame and Pam McKinnon

Allengame and McKinnon wanted to ensure the heritage of Caledon would remain and grow, and the society was incorporated in 1987 and has been growing ever since.

Over its 35-year history, the society has been involved in many projects in the community and welcome those in the area to attend their events and meetings.

CEDHS events and speakers focus on a range of topics dealing with the history of Caledon, specifically in the Caledon East district. The three main objectives of the CEDHS are to promote and stimulate interest in the history of the people and places of Caledon East and District; to collect, classify, edit, and preserve information relating to the district; and to disseminate material so collected by publishing, by holding meetings for the presentation of papers and discussion, and by marking historic sites.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has stalled some CEDHS events, on Wednesday, April 28, at 7 p.m., they'll be hosting a speaker via Zoom

The speaker is Zoe Lepiano and she'll be speaking about the history of local artist Rosemary Kilbourn of the Dingle Schoolhouse.

Through presentations and community involvement, the goal of the CEDHS is to keep the rich history of Caledon alive and to ensure the new generation is invested in it.

"We're very enthusiastic about our community history and we want to share it," said CEDHS President Robyn Innis. "We want to engage community members and have them care enough to tell people and have them understand why certain things matter and what they represent. We donate whatever funds we have back into the community in ways that will help and shape the community.

"At the same time, with our presentations, we're just gauging people's interests in wanting to talk about stories from the days in the past and what it used to be like. We try to grasp onto different types of speakers. For example, we have Zoe coming up and for June we have Dave Borrett from Sandhill Pipes and Drums. When deciding on a presentation, at the executive meeting the Board all gets together to discuss it and we schedule them a year in advance. Right now, there's not a lot we're doing in the community (other than presentations), but CEDHS has done many things in the past."

Innis says CEDHS is proud of their accomplishments in the community such as publishing award-winning books *Settling the Hills* and *For Those Served*—the latter of which they obtained a \$25,000 grant, from Trillium to publish 1,500 copies; purchasing Canadian and provincial flags and installing them on the Main Street of the village and taking them down each fall and putting them back up each spring, replacing any that needed it; collaborating with Heritage Caledon to produce and place historical plaques on over 20 historical significant sites in the village; contributing money to school scholarships, local sports teams and to the Caledon East Revitalization Committee; publishing *Revisiting History* for their 25th anniversary project—a self-guided walking tour, of which they recently did a reprint of the booklet; donating \$1,500 to the committee who published *The Caledon Trailway: Building the Dream*.

"Of course, for years we have done our best to obtain interesting, informative speakers and events to further educate our community

on all aspects of history, local, national and international,? Innis added. ?Some accomplishments were on a no financial cost basis. The Society obtained a \$10,000 MACG grant to assist in publishing The Caledon Trailway and we delivered our Walking Tour Guide to CE Public School so their history class could use them on a tour of the village.?

The circumstances of the pandemic forced the CEDHS to cancel the majority of their 2020 plans, but they've adapted for 2021 by moving to the online world and for the time being are allowing people to engage in their meetings with no charge.

?We've only ever done it in the in-person platform so a few of us got together to figure out what we're going to do here, and we got our annual general meeting for January online to decide if we'd continue on with presentations?this is all new to us as well,? she said. ?Thankfully, we have a great bunch of workers and people that are eager, and the AGM went off successfully.

?With COVID, there was an interruption for us last year, but this year we're going to go with our same schedule of five meetings in the year, so we're kind of not interrupted anymore. Right now, it's a free membership so people can jump onto our Zoom meetings?we put the link online and the public is free to watch without any charge. Typically [when in person] there's a visitor charge of \$5 or you join as a member.?

Those interested in getting involved in the CEDHS, or wanting to learn more, are encouraged to visit the Facebook page (www.facebook.com/groups/cedhs/about) and those interested in Lepiano's presentation on Rosemary Kilbourn can watch it on April 28 via Zoom.