

Is Golf Good?

by SHERALYN ROMAN

Well, here we are a few days post Canadian Open with lots to talk about. Whether it's all good, all bad, or something right down the middle is up for debate, and also, depends entirely on who you ask. Was it good for the economy? Bad for women? Ok for Alton? A great day for Bud Cauley and a good showing for the FCPG? Is golf good for Caledon? You tell me.

There is certainly something to be said for seeing your home town on TV and let's face it Caledon, and more specifically Alton, cleaned up well. All things considered, it's kind of cool to be on the receiving end of some good press. After all, with the very real threat of a below the water table blasting quarry STILL on the horizon, Alton could use a little favourable news.

From a resident perspective, certainly some of the changes to parking, bussing, and traffic flow also seem to have helped. There were still a fair few rideshare seekers wandering the village aimlessly staring at their phones and glancing at every passing vehicle as they awaited rides well outside of the designated rideshare zone, but there's always a few rule breakers and that's not necessarily the tournament's fault. An improvement over last year for sure and since the Open is apparently headed back our way again next year, let's hope by year three they finally get all the moving pieces right and ensure no buses park and idle in front of the seniors home.

While Caledon brags about the sheer volume of investment the tournament brings to town, and the impact of any trickle-down economics are still to be determined, it was nice to learn that at least one or two local businesses were included in the potential for largesse. Whether it was worthwhile in the end, it was at least refreshing to see more of an effort made beyond the gates of the golf course to include locals.

One of the trade-offs for all this goodwill and investment however, might result in the renaming of a portion of Beech Grove Sideroad, impacting a stretch of this road that lies immediately east of Main St. Alton and coincidentally, right in front of the new Golf Canada headquarters. When I questioned the town about the potential impact of the renaming on local residents and/or emergency services the only person who promptly and courteously replied to me with actual answers was Regional Councillor Early. Thank you! As for when we did finally hear back from the town, it was to tell us to wait for a Staff Report.

Back to the locals. Encouraged by the Forks of Credit Preservation Group there were significantly more protestors gathered outside Osprey this year. Democracy thrives on the principle of being able to express oneself freely and how else are we to get the attention of the world except through peaceful protest when nothing else has yet worked? Perhaps some of the heavy investors alleged to have visited our little town to watch the tournament took note of the potential for a blasting quarry and will factor that into their decision-making about locating here. Dare I say it, perhaps even our friends at Osprey - who might be planning to use displaced quarry water before funnelling it downstream to who knows what effect might also have taken note. And yes, once again as I often am, I'm being sarcastic about both clean water and taking notice. I'm pretty sure all eyes were on the prize - that being the sweet sound of money being plonked down by visitors to swill expensive beer as they gazed upon the golfers.

On that note, one has to wonder if there is truly anywhere in this whole world where a woman can be safe? I ask this question because it appears that even on a wide-open golf course, with thousands upon thousands of people walking around, and in broad daylight, with TV cameras everywhere, it is STILL NOT A SAFE PLACE TO BE A WOMAN. Some slimeball (which is all I'm probably allowed to say in a family newspaper) allegedly sexually assaulted a woman, in broad daylight. One such assault has been made public with OPP circulating photos of the man.

Meanwhile, some suggest there may have been others. Where is the collective outrage?

Alton is certainly on the map as they say. We're becoming known as more than just a great place to dump construction fill or mine rocks for millions while decimating the local environment. Now we can also lay claim to a world class golf tournament hosted at a facility whose owners share a common with the blasters, my new nickname for CBM Votorantim.

Perhaps all this new attention will actually work in our favour and discourage future pit and quarry approvals lest other investors interested in our town debunk for (still) greener pastures. Maybe our town will enjoy the same kind of sweeping epic fairy tale ending that Bud Cauley, this year's winner of the Canadian Open, experienced. It's not quite the right idiom, but from a near fatal accident and multiple surgeries to his first PGA victory, one thing we might all agree on - it was a swan song happy ending for Cauley.

Swan Lake can only hope for the same.