

It's not just the leaves that are falling

by SHERALYN ROMAN

The world can feel a little overwhelming at times. Okay, a lot of the time. Many of us are struggling with the economic impact of tariffs, the constant barrage of negative news, and even the uncertain future of those we rely on to tell the jokes that lighten our mood. Okay, that last part was a bit of a joke, but it's certainly no joke that right now, both in Caledon and around the world, it's not just the leaves that are falling. Democratic principles are dwindling, language needs parsing, flags aren't flying and speed still kills. That said, before those aforementioned leaves hit the ground, they are beautiful, bold in colour and brazenly shine in the sun, so I'll try to insert some good news into my column today too!

On the bright side, fall brings with it an unleashing of the creative spirit. Like shades of glimmering golden leaves, we welcome glimmers of culture in Caledon with the onset of Culturefest, Culture Days, and studio tours throughout town. Celebrate this creative arts festival by planning day trips to locations like the Alton Mill, The Humber River Centre and the Caledon East Community Complex. There are over 50 free things to see and do! Keep the arts alive, they provide a beacon of light in dark times.

On the darker side, as we approach September 30th and the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, we are learning that the Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board is refusing to fly the Every Child Matters flag. In a move that seems to fly in the face of the principles Jesus espoused, after first, disappointingly, reaffirming in June of 2024 they would not fly the Pride flag, they maintained other flags might still be flown on occasion.

What does this have to do with September 30? It seems the trustees had a change of heart and in January of this year, amended their flag policy yet again, this time removing the part that permitted additional flags within schools. Worse still, a motion to specifically allow the Every Child Matters flag to be displayed was also voted down. I have only two words for shame.

In other news, a recent fall event inspired somewhere between 150-200 Caledon residents to go for a hike across beautiful Belain farm, share a BBQ dinner and GoodLot beverages, and listen to speeches. The inspiration was the opportunity to take a personal look at Swan Lake, furthering our understanding of what's at risk if we allow for construction fill to be dumped there.

Let's parse the language, shall we? Originally referred to as "an old aggregate pit," nothing could be further from the truth. From the viewing platform, as a magnificent sunset spread across the horizon, visitors noted a myriad of bird species resting on the shimmering waters and verdant green shoreline. Flora and fauna were in abundance, seemingly proclaiming, "I dare you to call me a pit." There's really nothing to parse. Saving this property from construction fill isn't just about the species at risk. It's also about saving our groundwater, and preserving lands for future generations. It's even about setting a precedent for how we handle similar applications that may (or already have) come before Caledon Council or the Ministry of Natural Resources.*

There's much at stake when it comes to "old aggregate pits," but rest assured, Swan Lake isn't one of those at all.

In some potentially good news, many of those same residents currently have their "fingers crossed" after a delegation by former Councillor Ian Sinclair, and a motion by Regional Councillor Christina Early, took place at the Region of Peel. The motion was that Credit Valley Conservation purchase Swan Lake under a special program that would help fund said purchase from the "prominent developer" who owns it.

While this is a promising move, every Caledon resident who cares about aggregates and environmental degradation must put September 29 on the calendar. This is when the Town will share its draft "Site Alteration Bylaw." During an Open house between 6-8 p.m. at the Caledon East Community Complex you can ask questions and learn more about how this bylaw potentially impacts not just Swan Lake, but the future of all of Caledon.

I wanted to also talk about Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE), but let's face it, I'm running out of space! Perhaps we can just say

this: it's not a cash grab as our Premier has implied, it's literally just a sign that you should be driving slower. Police can't be everywhere, all at once and in places like school zones it just make sense to put up a reminder to folks to slow the f**k down. Yes, it is that simple.

Finally, in other news ? this time good ? residents are invited to celebrate history and to honour veterans. Belfountain is celebrating its Bicentennial (200th anniversary) with a large festival on Saturday, October 4, 2025. Enjoy some fall ?leaf peeping? while you're at it, but be aware there will be some road closures in place as the festival is in progress. Speaking of roads, you'll also want to keep an eye out for upcoming changes to some Caledon roadways which will soon feature Veteran crosswalks.

After several residents brought the idea to the attention of Mayor Groves, crosswalks will be installed in spots across Caledon including: in front of Town Hall, at Centennial Dr. and Highway 50 and in multiple Alton locations. I can't help but feel this is an important opportunity to bring visibility and attention to our veterans and all they have done ? or are doing ? to help preserve our freedoms. They will act as a reminder all year long, not just on Remembrance Day, of their sacrifice and when we see what is happening in other parts of the world right now, visible reminders are more important than ever.

Yes, the leaves are falling, but it's not all doom and gloom.

*In an example of just one of several applications, Aecon is asking the Ministry of Natural Resources to allow the company to import up to 11 million cubic metres of fill to dump in a 571 hectare below the water table pit, ?including into the ?pond?/lake which occupies a large part of the site.?