

It's the summertime ?..

by SHERALYN ROMAN

In this song-based ode to summer, I will endeavour to be kind to Caledon and more generally speaking, to be happier in my comments too. I figured I could try this for at least one column. All this doom and gloom about our future can be wearying and while quite justified, today let's remind ourselves of all the good that is Caledon. It's the ?summertime and the weather is hot,? so we need to try to get outside and enjoy all that Caledon has to offer. That is, before we lose what we've got.

Hmm, it seems it's hard for me to control my sarcastic side. Let's try again. How about we start with a reminder about the ?fickle summer wind? of Frank Sinatra fame.

Businesses located in Caledon East were looking forward to both area residents, and tourists travelling through, to stop by and take part in all that the area has to offer. Unfortunately, though, they have been impacted by the fickle summer wind of traffic mayhem and road closures. I wrote about this several weeks ago and many people are involved in efforts to drum up support for the many businesses that are affected and this is great. But another reminder can't hurt!

Please remember, as you are out and about in your travels this summer, that Caledon East has a lot happening there. From the ever popular sunflower fields, a post-dinner ice cream treat, to boutique shopping (both culinary and couture) and everything else in between, Caledon East is hopping. Bakeries, restaurants, hair services and health offices ? please include this village on your ?summer hits list? of places to visit in Caledon.

Well, some of you might say, ?nice try but you still sounded negative.? I'll try again. Soon enough we will be complaining about the ?long, cold, lonely winter,? so instead I encourage you to take advantage of spectacular places to view the sun, perhaps even while humming ?here comes the sun.?

There are so many places to do so. You can watch the sun rise over the Badlands, hike to the top of the Alton pinnacle and view it from there, or see it from the Albion Hills Conservation area.

Another vantage point awaits in Mono Mills, located at the northern edge of beautiful Caledon and which also serves informally as the gateway to the hills and dales of our neighbour, Hockley Valley. You might even catch a glimpse of the sun rising (or setting) over the always lovely Palgrave Mill pond. In short, there is no shortage of places to greet the sun while it's still shining with summer warmth and maybe enjoy a picnic too.

That last paragraph was a little more positive. Let's see if we can keep the momentum going!

Serving as an oasis, our own little ?island in the sun,? is the pretty, little, hidden gem of a conservation area in Belfountain. Not just the swinging bridge and hiking trails, but all that the little village has to offer, too. The route along the Forks of the Credit is also lovely and scenic. Of course, that drive has led to some ongoing traffic concerns with speeding traffic, loud motorcycles and it never helps when a transport truck gets stuck after ignoring every single warning sign prohibiting large trucks from the road. However, for local Caledon residents who treat the area with the respect it deserves, it can be a little oasis of sunshine. You might even want to take a little detour through the village of Cheltenham along the way.

Still on a positive note, Caledon also has much to offer in terms of farm stands, farmer's markets, breweries, cideries and coffee stops and bakeries, not to mention a myriad of restaurants, outdoor patios and village cafes. If you are stuck for something to do when the weather is hot, it certainly isn't because there's nothing to do here. Even in the busier hubs like Bolton and the south end of our town there are splash pads, parks, scenic trails, sports facilities and places to hike, bike and dine. So, even if some of us think ?it's a cruel, cruel summer,? with construction chaos, conservation admission prices making summer fun for families perhaps a bit too costly, and busier roads, full of trucks and motorcycles and cars, let's try and focus on the bigger picture. That is, despite all the

potential negativity, Caledon still has so much to offer.

I'd ?call it a wrap? but that previous sentence has me thinking just one more thing.

Caledon DOES still have a lot to offer, but a lot of those things are currently at risk. Ongoing threats to our environment, our way of life, questionable quarries potentially arriving on our doorstep and an affordability crisis that comes from even having to pay for parking to walk your dog on a local trail, all put summer enjoyment at risk. If we want to continue to have places to ?soak up the sun before it goes out,? and not see our ?summer dreams ripped at the seams,? then we have some tough decisions to make.

This October, as the days turn colder, we absolutely must vote for a Council that takes Caledon's heritage, environment, water, and road safety seriously. Yes, growth is coming, and we are teetering on the edge of being too late to do anything about it, but if we act now, we can still save some of what's good about this place we call home. So, if you enjoy the summer sun, healthy, local, farm fresh food, areas to hike and so much more, get informed and vote responsibly!