

It's time again for a Thank You

by SHERALYN ROMAN

Every once in awhile I try to remember to put blinkers on my cynical self, don some rose-coloured glasses and remind me, myself and I that we live in a good place here in Caledon and in the good country of Canada.

Sure I know I do my fair share of griping and there are plenty of 'opportunities' for us to do better (and I often write about them) but today with the Civic Holiday having just passed, I want to focus on the civic-minded. It's time again, likely a bit overdue, for a thank you.

I don't think it's too much of a stretch to declare that folks who put their name down on an election ballot at the local level are doing so out of a genuine desire to help community. This might take on different meanings for different people: some, perhaps driven by a love of libraries and education and seeking to enhance both, others impacted by witnessing inequity may seek office to help address it or perhaps someone loves Caledon because of both its rural and urban balance and hopes to help manage and direct future development.

Regardless of their specific motivation, these are people who also willingly listen to complaints all day long, who knowingly put a target on their back for vitriol and blame and who rarely receive thanks for their hard work and commitment to community. Of course, I'm talking about our Town and Regional Councillors and our Mayor, all just people like you and I, none with any specific experience in handling a pandemic (also just like you and I) and most of whom work at being a councillor while also juggling other full-time occupations and responsibilities. For that alone, they deserve a thank you for what seems to me, as a casual observer, an often thankless task.

By singling out one Councillor in particular, you run the risk of offending others, each of whom continue to quietly work both in front of and behind the scenes to help our community manage through these challenging times. Now that there's some light at the end of the tunnel, however, it seems only right to acknowledge the amazing efforts of Councillor Tony Rosa who has de facto become the face of the Love Local Caledon movement.

His efforts at promoting our Town and our local businesses have been a highlight of social media feeds for some time now, even going so far as to attract the attention of bigger media markets with a feature in the Toronto Star not too long ago. In it, The Star correctly noted that, 'locally owned and operated businesses are the social, cultural and economic heart of a community.' These are the folks who sponsor our children in sports, support school fundraisers and any kind of local campaign that pops up to help people in need. Provincial lockdowns had the potential to shutter these businesses permanently and it was through the significant efforts of Councillor Rosa, together with the team at the Economic Development Office, that our Love Local campaign was so successful.

More recently, the Love Local campaign also hit the road to highlight the many wonderful features of every one of our little towns, hamlets and villages in order to encourage visitors and residents alike to explore all that Caledon has to offer.

Joined by the Mayor and involving Councillors from every ward, these vignettes help to share all that is good in Caledon. Aided throughout in both instances by another local success story, the company Lucky Element Media has played a significant role in taking these campaigns to the next level. Finally, to round out the summer, Councillor Rosa is helping to support and promote the 'Building Unity & Community' Concert Series which includes a performance specifically for our Frontline Workers. Well done, kudos and thank you indeed!

The Civic Holiday is actually a municipally-designated holiday and not a provincial or federally mandated one. Across Ontario and across Canada, it takes on different names celebrating a certain person or a significant local historical event. That's why you might see the day referred to as Simcoe Day in Toronto or Heritage Day in Alberta. However you spent this past long weekend, I hope you included some time spent right here at home, in Caledon, supporting local 'our local businesses thank you.

Finally ? before I leave and speaking of good things, can I just give a shout out to our Canadian female athletes at the Olympics? As of the time of writing, our medal count was an impressive 11 medals, 3 of them gold and all from women! Our female athletes are on point! Congratulations!

(Editor's Note: This week's column was submitted before Ontario's Andre De Grasse brought home the Gold in 200-metre sprint on Wednesday)