

See you in September?

by SHERALYN ROMAN

It's that time of year, both celebrated and dreaded, depending on your perspective. It might not quite be the end of August, but plans are already well underway to 'see you in September.' For parents and caregivers, it's generally a great time of year while kids likely have mixed feelings about it. Both scenarios might be true for teachers! It's 'back to school?' time, and for certain government officials, September is also 'back to work?' time. It's about time! No doubt all of this also means this coming weekend will be a busy one for many families whether it's moving your young adult to university, doing some back to school shopping with the little ones, or simply enjoying one of your last cottage or camping trips. No matter what, make the most of this weekend because when we say 'see you in September,' be prepared for lots going on in Caledon.

Originally scheduled for September 3, the first thing that was supposed to happen in September was a public meeting to discuss potential changes to the site alteration bylaw. Originally rescheduled from July, and arising as a direct result of serious concerns regarding the potential construction infill of Swan Lake, the meeting has now been postponed yet again. While the July reschedule was meant to ensure residents would be back from summer vacations and able to participate, one can't help but wonder if the September 3 date was chosen strategically to coincide with the first week of school - a busy time when many families are just getting acquainted with new routines and schedules. The decision to expand the scope of the meeting to also address other bylaws including; property standards, clean yards, tree preservation and entrance permit bylaws also seems questionable given the huge potential impact of any change to the site alteration bylaw.

Understanding the importance of the issue, the community collectively spoke, not only in an outcry against the rescheduled September date, but also in response to 'lumping in?' the Swan Lake discussion together with other by-law related issues. 'No way?' said the community clearly. No way could all of these potential bylaw concerns be heard in just one, two-hour long, public meeting. The September 3 meeting has now also been cancelled, with no replacement date yet set. Let's hope it's not rescheduled for Thanksgiving Monday. For all other important Council meetings, planning meetings and committee meetings, bookmark caledon.ca/en/government/agendas-and-minutes.aspx in your browser so you always know (and can participate in) what's going on.

Also happening in September, but this date is ironclad, is a protest that every, single, resident of Caledon is encouraged to take part in. Impacted by traffic mayhem? Scared to drive area roads? Overwhelmed by the sheer volume of truck traffic, gravel trucks, or 18 wheelers rumbling past less than 100 feet from an elementary school's front door? Are you concerned by the relentless, and illegal, use of agricultural lands as trucking yards that seem to be popping up all over Caledon? Of course you are! Who wouldn't be? Even the trucking industry is now joining in the call for significant change, and September 6 is your chance to join them, the CCRSA, and residents not just of Caledon but from other communities across the province, in protest. Let the Minister of Transportation know that we DON'T have what he calls the 'safest roads in North America.' Let Minister Sylvia Jones, representing Dufferin Caledon, know that we will no longer sit idly by as loved ones are taken from us in horrific accidents. You only need one hour of your time to take part. On September 6, between 2-3 p.m., join your friends and neighbours across Caledon by standing (safely) at major intersections, with signs in hand, to protest and draw attention to the important issue of truck and traffic safety in all its forms. Check out the CCRSA Facebook page for more information on a location near you!

For all the parents sending their littlest family member off to school for the first time, we wish you courage and strength to walk away from your little one, no doubt with a tear or two in your eye. You've nurtured and carried them through these first four years of life and now it's time to expose them to the world (and to germs!) You can do it. Kindergarten teachers are some of the most skilled professionals in education, gifted in helping children transition from home or daycare, to full time education - they've got this.

For all those starting high school, it's a whole different kind of angst and with the addition of social media I don't envy you or the parents and caregivers you rely on for support. There will be challenges, but high school is also often the time when you first meet the people who may well become your friends for life. It's also a time you can begin to explore what kind of future you envision for yourself by taking courses that are of interest, not just part of the mandatory curriculum. You may even branch out by joining a club,

an advocacy group, a sports team, or by learning a new skill or taking part in arts-based programming.

Finally, for those parents who are sending young adults off to university ? well ? see the comments above about kindergarten. You've kept them safe, fed and clothed for the past 17-18 years and now it's time to trust that everything you've done has actually rubbed off on them and that they will remember how to stay safe, feed themselves and how to wash their own clothes! At least these days there are ways for you to stay in virtually constant contact with your kids, unlike when I went off to a school two hours away with nothing but a shared access rotary dial phone in the hallway of the dorm. (I might be exaggerating.) Mind you ? whether your child answers your frequent texts or repeated requests for a Facetime call is debatable. Like I said in reference to kindergarten, I wish you the courage and strength to walk away from your young adult, no doubt with a tear or two in your eye.

There's a lot going on in September. Help do your part in ensuring all kids, teens and young adults get to and from school safely. Keep an eye out for the yellow school bus when it stops - they really aren't that hard to see and for goodness sake, remember it is against the law to pass them when the lights are flashing! Watch for updates on Swan Lake and plan to take part in the September 6 protest for safer roads for everyone, kids included. We all play a role when it comes to safety. See you in September folks!