

Stepping Up

by SHERALYN ROMAN

It seems to me that a part of being a responsible citizen is contributing to the greater good of the community. At some point or another, we must all assume the burden of ownership. That is, ownership for one's own actions and any potential negative impacts, but also, ownership for those actions that help to promote the health, safety and well-being of our fellow citizens.

Simply put, in 'stepping up,' you are literally showing others that you care about their lives as well as your own. Collectively, that spirit of caring means we all win.

There are so many ways to build 'stepping up' into your life, and many of them are decidedly easy. Yes, sometimes it means stepping out from behind your keyboard, and stepping forward into unfamiliar territory to help 'be the change you want to see in this world,' but other times it can be as simple as ordering a pizza or grabbing a coffee. In case you missed it, here are just a few of the things going on around town - things that I would whole-heartedly encourage you to, or thank you for, being a part of.

First, an easy thank you to all those who literally stepped up during this past weekend's annual Terry Fox runs. In Palgrave and in Bolton (and countless other locations) individuals and families came together in memory of one remarkable young man who galvanized a nation to action in 1980.

If you've ever wondered about whether the actions of 'just one person' could have an impact, Terry Fox single-handedly began a movement that today has seen more than \$850 million raised in support of cancer research. Thank you is far too simple an expression for the monumental impact Terry's efforts have had but sometimes, even for a wordsmith, it's all we've got. To those here in Caledon who kept the pledge again this year 'including local school children too ' thank YOU.

If you are thinking of starting small, looking for a simple way to have your say and perhaps also help shape the future of Caledon, consider something that doesn't even require you (this one time) to step out from behind your keyboard. Take the Town of Caledon's Budget Survey anytime between now through September 30, 2024. I took it, it certainly didn't take very long, and with it being online you can do it anytime that suits you best. Late night at the office? Take a few minutes to complete it before you head home. Waiting for your kids outside hockey, or dance, or gymnastics or music practice? Do it from your phone while you wait in the parking lot. If you want to have a say in what happens next in Caledon rather than simply complaining about it afterwards on social media, now is your opportunity. Want more parks? Maybe transit is your top priority? How about more by-law enforcement? Tell the town, you literally have no excuse not to. <https://haveyoursaycaledon.ca/budget2025>.

Something that has been on everyone's minds lately is traffic. Regularly we hear about horrendous accidents on our local roads, many of them seeming to involve large transport trucks. Our Mayor and Council have delegated to the province on this topic and continue to advocate for change. The province seems to be responding at a glacial pace, and no doubt the issue is a complicated one but that's never a reason to not continue the fight. How can you get involved? There are two upcoming meetings on traffic safety that would very much benefit from having as many people in the room as possible. The first is on October 3, taking place at the Humber River Centre from 6:30-8:30 pm. Both the OPP and Town staff will be in attendance.

In light of the most recent tragedy in Bolton it's fair to say that 'thoughts and prayers,' and condolences are no longer enough. We need action and if ever there was a time to step up and get involved, this is it. The second meeting will take place in Alton on October 23, at the Alton Legion, also between 6:30-8:30 pm. With the main road through Town currently designated as a 'Strategic Goods Movement Network,' meaning gravel/quarry truck traffic can thunder past a K-6 elementary school (within just 15 metres or so of the front door) not to mention equally as close to area businesses, homes and a local seniors residence, a traffic safety discussion where residents show up in the multitudes has never been so important.

Looking for an easy way to make a difference and perhaps feed the family, or treat yourself to something yummy at the same time?

For the month of September, a number of local businesses are helping raise funds for Bethell Hospice Foundation. Whether it's coffee from Coywolf Coffee or the Bike Shop Cafe, or pizza from Gather Cafe, Airport Pizza or Spirit Tree Cidery, a portion of the proceeds will be donated back to Bethell. Caledon Hills Brewery will set you up with a pretzel (they're enormous and delicious) and there are other restaurants and specials available in Erin, Orangeville and Mono as well who are all taking part. Doing your part has never been easier - or more delicious!

I could go on for days about ways to get involved in our community. You could volunteer with a non-profit, sit on a board of directors, or apply to be a part of one of the town's many committees, but I'll end with this one last shout out to two groups doing great work, PUCK (Palgrave United Community Kitchen) and Eco-Caledon. I highly recommend you check out their facebook pages and website content to see what they are up to and how you can both get involved and benefit from stepping up. From rain barrels and conserving water, to community cooking programs benefiting visitors to The Exchange, or innovative programs helping kids learn how to navigate the kitchen, you'll feel good while doing some good.

It's never been easier as a citizen and a good neighbour to step up and help the community. It's our responsibility, and frankly I think it is our nature as Canadians, to work together towards the social welfare of every citizen. No one ever has enough ?time? to get involved, but if everyone got involved just a little bit, the impact over time would be enormous. Stepping up, in some of the ways identified in today's column, requires very little time indeed and you'll benefit too, right alongside our community. Together we all win!