

Today is a BONUS!

by SHERALYN ROMAN

At the risk of trotting out all the old cliches about a Leap Year, the fact remains that you only have a chance once every four years to celebrate February 29th. I don't care whether it's your birthday or not ? today is a BONUS day and you should treat it like one. It's an entirely EXTRA 24 hours of 2024. What are you going to do with it?

If budget permits, perhaps you can start the day by heading to Gather Cafe in Alton before walking over to the Millcroft Inn for a day of hot and cold plunging. Follow it up with lunch at Ray's 3rd Generation Bistro then walk off the calories with a hike through one of the many local trails. If Caledon East is more your speed you've got plenty to choose from including Gabe's and Four Corners, or breakfast at Tom's. Take a spin on the ice at the newly opened (and beautiful) Reese's Rink with the kids, grab a book from the awesome new location of the Caledon Public Library before you leave the arena and then head up to the Villa Caledon Inn for a late lunch/early dinner. You might even want to hit Adella and do some shopping for yourself or your significant other before you do. If the north end of Caledon is your favourite place to be, a visit to Palgrave wouldn't be complete without a stop at ?The Church? for a Caledon Hills Brew (or two) and if you're at the south end of Caledon, a scone and ?a cuppa? from Butter and Cup in Southfields might just hit the spot.

Maybe you're thinking of heading from south Caledon to the northern portions - if so and the sun is shining, take a side trip off Highway 10 and venture through the Forks of the Credit and stop in Belfountain for a coffee and a treat. I'm told Higher Ground makes fantastic fancy coffee. (I take mine black so anything with ?__cino? in the name is beyond me.) You don't have to wait until the fall to enjoy the view at the Forks - it's pretty no matter what the time of year! If you take the back roads instead of Highway 10, you could pass through Inglewood, Cheltenham or both and stop for fresh baked goods and a cider at Spirit Tree Cidery. Got the kids in tow? Head to Terra Cotta Conservation Area for Maple Syrup season then stop by GoodLot for ethically, environmentally produced, excellent beer at their new barn called The Oast.

Bolton readers will no doubt be quick to point out the myriad of options now available on the east side of Caledon including the cool vibes of The Wine Spot downtown, great places for sushi and fantastic Italian food peppered throughout town. If you are on a budget (and really, who isn't these days) or don't have a designated driver for all those pub stops, there over 35 kms of trails on the Caledon Trailway which are always open and with plenty of spots to picnic - yes even at this time of year if you're dressed appropriately and plan accordingly!

Of course, if you're reading this at the end of the day on February 29, it might be too late to plan your cross-Caledon adventure for today, but technically you've still received a bonus day in 2024 so what are you doing this weekend or perhaps during March Break? There's so much to see, do, eat and explore right here in our own community. Sure, I'd exhort you to be extra careful on Highway 10 and yes, we have big trucks travelling haulage routes right in front of schools and through small villages, but the recently approved Caledon budget promises ?service improvements? including ?traffic calming,? so maybe, just maybe, you'll arrive at your destination safely.

As a bonus for those who are walking the Caledon trails, included in that same budget are allocations for ?trail maintenance on Trans Canada Trail, (including) gateway maintenance and invasive species,? so perhaps your walk will be even more pleasant than you're anticipating. In more good news for pedestrians I understand the Region of Peel is also weighing in on road safety and a ?new, safer crossover equipped with overhead flashing lights and push button controls? is coming soon to Marilyn Street in Ward 3. That's great news and we can only hope it sets the precedent for another, urgently needed identical crossover in Ward 2 where seniors and schoolchildren are left dodging four lanes of traffic as they head out to enjoy their ?bonus? day.

Happy Leap Year to one and all - may you never have to LEAP out of the way of a speeding car!