

Volunteers key in Caledon Canada Day and Strawberry Festival success

By **Zachary Roman**

The Caledon Fairgrounds were a sea of red and white on July 1.

On Canada Day, the Caledon Agricultural Society hosted its Caledon Canada Day and Strawberry Festival event.

The Caledon Fairgrounds, located just off Highway 10 in Caledon Village, opened early so Caledon residents could enjoy a pancake breakfast with fresh local strawberries, whipped cream, and maple syrup. Peameal bacon was being grilled up too for delicious breakfast sandwiches, also a staple at the event.

Official Canada Day ceremonies began at noon when Caledon's Town Crier Andrew Welch drew crowds to a stage where dignitaries like Caledon Mayor Annette Groves and Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones were to address residents.

In his proclamation for the day, Welch stressed the importance of preserving farmland and greenspace.

"Some people have visions of robots plowing fields with evermore chemicals? severing the last remaining threads of people to our land," said Welch. "If you take the people out of agriculture, you may as well just take the people off the planet."

Welch said initiatives with a Caledon community focus, and volunteer groups like the Caledon Agricultural Society, are what make Caledon stronger and happier.

The Caledon Concert Band played O Canada while members of the Alton Legion raised the Canadian flag at the start of the proceedings, before former Caledon Mayor Allan Thompson took over as the emcee.

Jones thanked everyone for coming out to celebrate Canada with their friends and family, wishing all in attendance a great day.

Groves said she was delighted to be at the event alongside fellow Council members Christina Early, Lynn Kiernan, and Doug Maskell.

"Thank you to the organizers? without the volunteers, none of this would happen," said Groves. "Over the years, they have worked tirelessly."

She said volunteers are the pillars of the Caledon community and it's because of their efforts that people can come out to enjoy wonderful community events like the Strawberry Festival.

Early noted the day prior to the festival, volunteers were busy washing and cutting strawberries all day.

"It takes a village to pull off this kind of an event," said Early. "You've got to be so proud that this is something that's an annual tradition that's so well-received and attended."

Kiernan agreed and added that it's a small group of people that make the festival happen. She said it's quite impressive because it's such a big event with many moving parts.

"What you come and enjoy is done by a handful of people? they all deserve your applause," said Kiernan.

David Cunningham, President of the Caledon Lions Club, thanked everyone for coming and joked that he was living up to the Lions' motto of "We Serve" by serving up pancakes all morning.

In an interview at the festival, Caledon Agricultural Society president Ed Taccone said he was really happy with the turnout for the event.

He was pleased to see the weather holding out, and was happy to see lots of great vehicles turn up for the classic car show.

Taccone himself recently finished restoring a vehicle to showcase. He was also quick to credit the hard work of volunteers for the success of the day.

"The volunteers come out of the woodwork for Canada Day? all the effort that goes into it makes me proud," said Taccone. "My biggest satisfaction is we're celebrating Canada. When I see people walking around, they're here for that reason."

A lawn tractor pull, beer gardens, silent auction, and vendor market were some of the many activities Caledon residents were able to enjoy throughout the day.