

Arts and Ideas

Town should embark on campaign promoting signs

By JOHN SOMMER

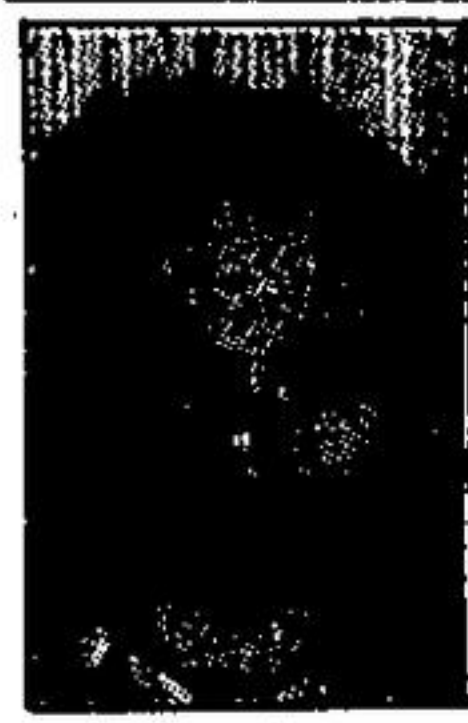
I like shop signs. When you travel in Europe you come across the most fabulous signs. They are made of different materials, wood, or iron and copper, with paint and a bit of gilding here and there. Some are hundreds of years old and have been kept in good repair by many generations of shopowners.

They often hang over streets and lanes like the branches of a tree and you can see them from far away. Let's assume that you have called your restaurant the "St. Mary's Inn". Your sign, in this case, might be a glorious depiction of the virgin in a white dress and a blue coat and a gold crown, the whole surrounded by beautifully wrought iron scroll work.

These signs are works of art

and many of them have found their way into museums where they are rightly admired for their workmanship and style. At the same time these signs had, and still have, a commercial purpose. They announce to the world that here is a place of business.

In North America it is rare to find a shop sign of this kind. Our shop signs here are more direct and to the point. They haven't quite the poetry of these old signs. Modern business practices are rougher, and there are so many businesses that the signs have to shout more, or they will be overlooked. And, of course, if you sit in a car, a sign has to be huge, or you will have passed it before you had a chance to read it. Most North American signs are pylon like structures impossible to miss, and that is a good



Ideas and The Arts by John Sommer

thing, because our highway shopping strips are so dreary that without those signs there would be nothing to look at. I have to confess to you that I love these signs. As far as I am concerned, there cannot be enough of them, and I am always astonished when a by-law or something creeps up

that makes it an offence to put a sign in a business area.

North America has made selling the focus of its existence. If you have something to sell you have to tell your potential customer about it. Therefore a sign is more North American than anything else I can think of.

With that I don't want to say that the signs in our towns could not be improved. They could be a lot nicer and a lot more imaginative. I wonder if any local merchant has ever hired an artist to come up with an idea for a sign.

A fashion store, for instance, could have a peacock as a sign, with a fan shaped tail that lights up at night in all the colors of the rainbow. A flower shop could have a sign of enormous flowers made out of different colored neontubing. The sign for a supermarket could be a huge video screen right on the roof of the shop that shows the happy shoppers inside the store, pushing their carts along and filling them up with groceries. A jewellery store could have an over life size Marilyn Monroe, with her hair and dress blowing in the wind, singing "Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend". There is no end to what one could do. There could be contests between the merchants as to who has the most popular sign, and there could be contests between towns.

Tourists would come to Georgetown for no other reason but to see our signs, and an award could be given to the merchant with the sign that has brought more people to town than any of the others.

I seriously suggest the Chamber of Commerce should start a campaign promoting signs. Anybody who has ever been to Las Vegas knows how signs can enhance a town. We should all pull together to make a North American art form out of them.

I always get a real kick out of paintings done by small children. These paintings have the bright,

ripping sparkle of fireworks. Small children find everything interesting, and the charge they get from their surrounding flows directly into their paintings and makes them exercise in curiosity, astonishment and laughter.

Sadly, the growing boy or girl is robbed of the vitality they possessed earlier in their lives, and, after puberty boredom and conformity become the rule with most.

The student art, selected by the Halton Board of Education from our schools, and exhibited at the Gallery of the Halton Hills Cultural Centre in Georgetown to May 12, illustrates what I have just written. The stuff done by the little ones is uninhibited and alive. The art works of the older pupils look, with few exceptions, depressed and tired, by comparison.

The overstimulated lifestyle of these young people seems to drain them of the ability to express, in their art, what they feel.

YMCA Annual Art Auction

May 10th is YMCA's Annual Art Auction.

The North Halton YMCA will be hosting its 12th Annual Gala Art Auction on Friday, May 10th at Holy Cross Auditorium.

A wine and cheese reception and preview of the art will begin at 7:00 p.m. and the actual auction begins at 8:00 p.m.

Beaux Art International, a Toronto-based art gallery, supplies 150 pieces of art and sculptures with local artists also included in the show.

Our feature artist, Carole Black, a resident of the Georgetown area will be on hand the night of the show to speak to collectors, and many of her

works will also be auctioned off.

Non-art items such as a summer membership at the Georgetown Racquet Club, Buffalo Bills tickets, and dance lessons will also be on the block, and add to the evenings excitement.

The YMCA has a policy that no person should be denied access to their programs due to economic circumstances. In these tough, economic times more and more people are turning to the YMCA in their time of need. All proceeds from the evening will go towards helping the YMCA as they provide for all age groups within our community.

Tickets are \$8.00 in advance

and \$9.00 at the door, and are available at Oxbow Books, Georgetown Yarn and Crafts, Work That Body, and The Hallmark Store, or by calling the North Halton Office at 878-0548.

Church event

St. John's United Church is holding a book sale, car wash, garage sale and a silent auction on Saturday, May 4, 1991 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. This event is a fundraiser for St. John's restoration and renovation project. St. John's is putting on a major addition this spring as well as renovating the existing building.

The book sale will prove to be exciting. There are over 1,000 books and all are priced at 50% off publisher's list price. All books are new hardcovers and range in price from \$2.00 to \$16.00. Children and adult titles are equally represented and include works by authors Dean Koontz, Stephen King, Lawrence Sanders, LaVyrle Spencer and Judith Kranz. There is also a large selection of Nancy Drew/Hardy Boys as well as picture books for pre-schoolers.

There's a long, hot summer coming up with plenty of time for reading. We invite you to pick up some bargains and help St. John's "Here We Grow" Campaign.

Artisans spring sale

This is the best time of year to shop because it is unhurried. There is no one bellowing on the TV or radio that there is only so many days left until Christmas. No nail biting as you try to find that "hot" item that everyone wants but every store is sold out of. Yes, this is the time of year to leisurely shop for a special gift for a birthday, graduation or for yourself. And where better to choose a unique gift than at the Credit Valley Artisans Spring Sale.

The Spring Sale will be held this Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Cedarvale Cottage in Cedarvale Park, Maple Ave. at Main St. in Georgetown. Admission is \$1.

The members have been creating unique gifts all winter long. There will be a large selection of weaving, pottery, stained glass, watercolors, oil paintings, prints and crafts of every variety. For those with a sweet tooth, there will also be a bake table. So take a stroll through Cedarvale Park and discover the artistic treasures of the Credit Valley Artisans at Cedarvale Cottage.

Artisans meeting

The Credit Valley Artisans will be holding their annual general meeting Wednesday (tonight) at 7:30 p.m. at Cedarvale Cottage in Cedarvale Park. Members will be electing a new executive and reviewing events of the past year. Fundraising events and dates will be selected. All members are encouraged to attend.

Founded in 1975, the Credit Valley Artisans is a non-profit community organization which promotes the visual arts in Halton Hills. Instruction in the various arts and crafts is offered through workshops and courses in the fall and winter and equipment is maintained for this purpose.

The Credit Valley Artisans consist of four guilds: The CVA Potters and Sculptors, The Heritage Handweavers, The Palette and Pencil Club and the CVA Stained Glass Crafters. For further information contact Mary Rowan at 877-7992.

Spring Celebration '91

The Forge Studio Gallery in Terra Cotta, Ont., invites the public on May 5 to "Spring Celebration '91" with guest artists: Paulus Tjiang with large blown glass plates that are hand reverse painted with vivid, flowing drawings inspired by his fascination with children's art, Monica Johnston with wheel thrown porcelain forms that have been smoked fired and further embellished with images that are drawn or carved into the surface, Agnes Olive with multi-media Spirit Dancers and clay sculptural planters that have been fired in the ancient Japanese tradition called Raku.

Vladimir Rozylo with mixed media wall assemblages that have been inspired by the beauty of nature's floral gardens and also express the artists concern for our fragile environment.

To get there, go north on Hwy. 10 or Mississauga Rd. to Ki. g St. and left into Terra Cotta. The Gallery is located next to the Forge Parkette and across from the General Store.

Gallery Hours: Tues. to Sunday incl. 12 to 5 p.m. or by appointment. Meet the artists, Sunday, May 5 from 12 to 5 p.m. Exhibition ends June 23. Refreshments.

For more information call 416-877-1312 or 877-5872.

Sanctity

There is sanctity in a good man's house which cannot be renewed in every tenement that rises on its ruins; and I believe that good men would generally feel that, having spent their lives happily and honourably, they would be grieved, at the close of them, to think that their earthly abode, which had seen, and seemed almost to sympathise with all their honour, their gladness or their suffering - that this, with all the record it bore of them, and all material things that they loved and ruled over, and set the stamp of themselves upon - was to be swept away ... that though there was a monument in the church, there was no monument in the hearth and house to them; that the places that had sheltered and comforted them were dragged down to the dust.

Ruskin

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