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Caledon councillors John Holden (left) and Richard Whitehead (right) were on hand for the opening of Caroline Butson's art studio in Belfountain recently.

Area artist overcomes disability

By JANET BAINE
 Staff writer

Originally painting helped Caroline Butson overcome a disability, but now it's how she earns her keep.

Butson recently moved to Belfountain from Toronto and opened an art studio on Bush St. She said she has worked 10 years to bring about this dream.

"I want to live as an artist and be paid for the work that I do," she said. "In order to keep painting, I have to keep buying supplies, pay for the roof over my head and all those other things. You have to sell your paintings."

At the same time, Butson is happy to sell her work and to meet the people who visit her studio. Butson said it is very hard to make ends meet as an artist, especially when art is sold through private galleries, which usually take 55 to 60 per cent commission. Having her own gallery is the only way she can survive as an artist, she said.

Butson had been looking for an

appropriate location for a couple of years, but didn't find her studio in Belfountain until January.

"It's an ideal place for me to do my work. It's a beautiful scenic area, there's a nice community feeling and a lot of visitors that come to the village," she said. "The property is perfect for a studio gallery and it's right in the centre (of the community)."

Butson also plans to teach, and has a special interest in teaching disabled children. She once had a speech problem and began studying art in 1985 with Ron Satok in Cabbagetown, where she soon began to teach. She had a form of autism which made her speech stilted, and through her art she was gradually able to overcome it. Butson also writes children's plays and creates children's performances, designs sweaters as well as sculptures.

Anyone who drops by her studio, open noon to 5 p.m. Wednesdays to Fridays and 11 to 6 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays, will find Butson working there. She hopes to

have the work of guest artists also on display and some resident artists working with her.

Her studio is one of the stops on the Art Road Tour, a new enterprise organized by artists to help each other. They have published a map with art studios marked on it, as well as information on bed and breakfasts and restaurants.

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