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A Ted Bit Great being a 'foodie' for a day

Last Thursday I spent the day checking out farms and food in Halton.

In essence, I was a 'foodie' for a day.

As a member of the Halton Agricultural Advisory Committee, (HAAC) I took in the annual HAAC Farm and Food Tour, a bus trip organized to educate municipal politicians and staff, about the world of agriculture, and how it affects and impacts local businesses.

HAAC's duty is to advise the Region to develop and maintain a viable agricultural industry as an important component of Halton's economic base.

Numerous members from various fields sit on the committee, giving it an eclectic array of viewpoints and experience, from livestock and crop farming, to market gardening and landscaping.

The bus trip is not new, but this year, it took on a different approach, as the relationship between Halton's food and farms was explored.

First stop was the Red Canoe Bistro in Burlington, a high-end establishment owned by Chef Tobias Pohl-Weary. As the group enjoyed smoked perch, Tobias explained his passion for sourcing local food. His menu features about 90 per cent local food.

"I haven't been able to find a local supplier of chocolate, pepper or coffee," joked Tobias, "So until I do, I can't quite make it 100 per cent."

The second stop was Springridge Farm, at 7256 Bell School Line, Milton. Owners Laura and John Hughes welcomed their visitors, and had an added bonus as Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne joined the tour to see how the operation runs, as well as enjoy some of the various treats, pies and jams and baked goodies that have put Springridge on the map.

Next stop found the group sampling some divine smoked bacon and other delicious hors d'oeuvres at Mohawk Inn and Chop House, located on the Guelph Line at Campbellville.

Director of Operations Trevor Jones told how the restaurant is part of a group of four restaurants in the Wellington area—Fergus, Grand Valley, Drayton and Wellesey— all featuring locally sourced food whenever possible.

Trevor explained how his two chefs at Mohawk are responsible for their own grocery shopping to ensure the food quality is up to their satisfaction.

On to the northern limits of the First Line of Nassagaweya (Milton), we met Ryan Marshall, of Marshall's Real Farmers Market and Store. Marshall is a suc-



Ontario Premier and Minister of Agriculture, Kathleen Wynne (left) was welcomed by Halton Regional Chair Gary Carr and Springridge Farm owners Laura and John Hughes as she dropped by for the second stop of the 2013 Halton Agricultural Advisory Committee bus tour. September 19.

Photo by Ted Brown

cessful cash cropper with his father, and also grows numerous garden crops at the Nassagaweya site, where the market is located. He has been successfully growing his crops with limited tillage and no-till techniques, to preserve the land for future generations.

He was proud of the quality of his produce, all grown with minimum tillage.

The final stop brought us to DG's Greenhouses, on the Eighth Line of Halton Hills, just south of Five Sideroad.

We were welcomed by owner Nick DiGirolamo, as he explained the history of the family-run operation, and various growing pains they endured, trying beef cattle and other ventures, until they found their niche with pick-you-own vegetables, herbs, potted plants, annual and perennial plants, bulbs and garden supplies.

The culmination of the tour found us seated at a linen-draped table at DG's Greenhouses, enjoying a spectacular buffet serving 100 per cent Halton food, catered by Silver Thyme Catering.

Well-known chef Jamie Kennedy was the guest speaker, sharing his philosophy about eating and purchasing local food, and how he tends his own garden to supply his restaurant.

Throughout the day, I enjoyed beef, pork, lamb, ostrich, chicken, and even bison, with local vegetables as well.

We were spoiled with wonderful desserts and soups, all created from locally sourced food.

As I drove home at 8 p.m., I felt proud of the multi-faceted food production operations we have in Halton.

And on top of that, I was stuffed.

—Ted Brown can be reached at tbrown@theifp.ca



TED BROWN

GEORGETOWN SOCCER CLUB Soccer Tryouts

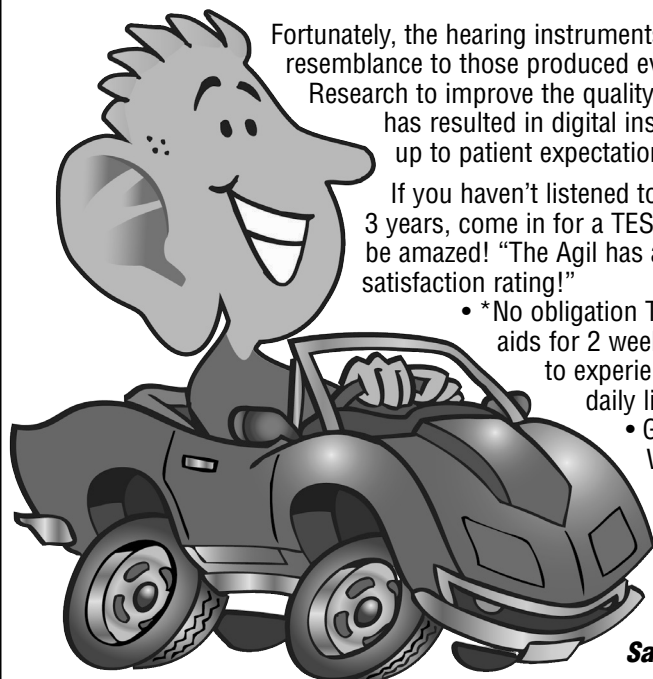
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