



GRACIOUS GIFT: Al Smith, left, site operations manager at Country Heritage Park, accepts the keys to a van from Carl Kennedy, who along with his wife Helen, donated it to the park, located south of Highway 401, on Tremaine Road west of Milton. Park staff will personalize the van with decal stickers and use it for the many tasks in the 80-acre park. — Submitted photo

Roundtable creates strategy for Halton's voluntary sector

Close to 300 people attended the Chairman's Roundtable on June 15 of this year with the discussion on non-profit and voluntary agencies' challenges and opportunities.

"We are very pleased by the exceptional attendance at the forum," said Halton Regional Chairman Joyce Savoline. "This turnout is indicative of the importance of the voluntary sector to the social health of our community."

Attendees participated in 70 strategy development sessions, which addressed the funding of Halton's community agencies, the infrastructure needed to support the sector, and opportunities to create awareness of the sector's contribution to Halton's economy and quality of life.

Suggested strategies included:

- the establishment of a central body/umbrella group;
- the creation of a centralized resource/database for information sharing around financial and non-financial resources, training and development opportunities, best practices and volunteer opportunities;
- raising awareness through marketing, the use of media and advocacy; and
- achieving efficiencies via enhanced communication and collaboration amongst agencies, funders and the business community.

A highlight of the forum was the keynote address by motivational speaker Ian Hill of "The Changing Point", who invited attendees to engage others around the work they do and emphasized the importance of seeking innovative solutions to the issues confronting the sector. Hill, who was once an at-risk

youth, issued a heartfelt 'thank you' to the crowd, stressing the sector's crucial role in helping him overcome early life challenges on a path to business and community success.

The Roundtable's work was based on consultations that included dialogues with volunteers, agencies and funders.

While a plan has not been finalized, the strategies arising from the forum provide a solid basis for future community directions. A report to Halton Council will be released in September 2006, at which time next steps and further opportunities for community involvement will be announced.

Additional information about the Community Forum and the work of the Roundtable is available at www.halton.ca/Volunteer-Roundtable.

Author Mark Cullen recruited to explain Farm Plan to gardeners

Mark Cullen, best selling author and one of Canada's most prolific garden writers, has been recruited to help broadcast information about the Canada-Ontario Environmental Farm Plan (EFP). Cullen wants gardeners to learn about the EFP stewardship techniques used by farmers, and apply these to their own backyards.

The Environmental Farm Plan program was created by farmers for farmers through the Ontario Farm Environmental Coalition (OFEC) in 1992, in partnership with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA). Since then, the program has evolved to the current Third Edition and is now offered, in various formats, throughout Canada as part of the Environment Chapter of the Agricultural Policy Framework.

Since 1992, over 31,000 farmers in Ontario alone have participated in the EFP program. This represents approximately two-thirds of the farmers in the province making significant investments in on-farm environmental improvements.

"The EFP program helps farmers adopt good stewardship practices and many of these are applicable to the backyard gardener," says Mark Cullen. "By understanding and applying the same conservation methods many farmers use, we can all make a positive contribution

to the environment."

Participating farmers attend two full day workshops and work through up to 23 modules to evaluate the environmental risks and benefits of their individual farm operation. Based on this evaluation, they create an action plan to minimize any environmental risk and enhance the environmental benefits of their farm. A

trained panel of local farmers peer review each action plan, and if deemed appropriate, the farmer is eligible for cost-share funding from AAFC and OMAFRA for specific Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs).

The EFP program is delivered by the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA) on behalf of OFEC.



ACTON SENIORS' RECREATION CENTRE

BY JULIE CONROY

I can't believe it's almost the end of August, and the children, students (and parents) start thinking about their return to school. The children looking forward to seeing friends they haven't seen over the summer. The same thing happens at the Seniors Centre, as people who go to the cottage, babysit grandchildren, or just enjoy being at home during the summer, start to reappear at the Centre again, ready to enjoy the activities, and renew friendships.

The evening euchre on Wednesday, August 16 was well attended, and high man was Marie, high lady – Pat, 2nd man – Robert, 2nd lady – May, low man – Andy and low lady – Lydia. I am sorry I didn't receive any surnames, so I think it must have been a very friendly group. I presume that the next one will be the third Wednesday in September.

The Centre will be closed on September 4 for Labour Day, but many of the usual events will happen during the rest of the week. The Fit and Fun class will start again on Wednesday, September 6 with gentle exercise at 9:15 a.m. and regular class at 10:15 a.m. Card players will be out in full force on Thursday, (although some avid players never stopped playing during the summer). The "Happy Hikers" will resume (after a break during the hot months) on Friday, September 8, meeting at 10a.m. at the Centre and car pooling to their hike destination.

We are hoping to restart Line Dancing and Yoga if there is enough interest, so

come in and sign up, or call Eileen Dix if you would like more information at 519-853-0493. Fridays will see the usual sing-a-long or shuffle board in the morning followed by lunch, and then Bingo at 1:15p.m.

The week of September 11 to September 15 will be Open House at the Centre, when we hope to meet people 55 years of age and over who are interested in seeing what we have to offer. Starting Monday with Tai Chi or Crafts followed in the afternoon by Carpet Bowling. If you would like more information on the Carpet Bowling call Peggy at 519-853-8691.

Don't forget a new session of Watercolour Art classes begins on Wednesday at 9a.m. under the direction of well known local artist Maria Sallay. Also new this fall is an evening class on digital cameras. We have quite a few new members who joined the Centre so they can learn the art of paper tole picture making and scrap booking.

We will have a new Newsletter by then, so drop in and pick one up, and see what else is happening at the Centre during the next two months.

Don't forget, on Tuesday, September 19 at 1:30p.m. Blair Lancaster will be here with an informative talk about breast cancer detection, support, and treatments. This is open to everyone.

We are still looking for ideas for a mascot; an entry box is sitting at the front desk. If your idea is selected you will receive a very nice gift basket.

The fundraising committee is very busy with the second annual Rock-a-thon which will be held at Sobeys again this year. The format is the same – two rocking chairs – so from Friday, September 29 at 9a.m. until 9p.m. on Saturday evening there will always be someone rocking! If you would like to join us, or sponsor someone please get in touch with the Centre. There will be prizes and entertainment during the Rock-a-thon. If last year is anything to go by it should be lots of fun.

Thinking of fun, I see the M.I.M. men are having an evening tour of Sleeman Brewery in Guelph on Monday, September 18. If any men are interested, there is a sign up sheet at the front desk

Georgetown Seniors Centre is starting an introduction to bridge and is inviting Acton members to join them. If you are interested in learning bridge, they will welcome you. More details in the new Newsletter. It starts on Thursday, September 7 at 7p.m.

Any members who celebrate their birthdays in August or September are invited to the next birthday tea on Tuesday, September 12 at 2p.m.

Tickets will be available shortly for the Friday, September 15 dinner which will start at 6p.m. and feature chicken, local corn on the cob, and delicious Chudleigh Apple Blossoms. It will be restricted to members only and the entertainment will be an Italian Folk Dance group.

There was no 50/50 winner this Friday.



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