

The Tributary



A Newsletter of The Hills of Headwaters Tourism Association

Spring 2006

Message from the Chairperson

Welcome to Spring edition of The Tributary, for an update on what the Hills of Headwaters Tourism Association is doing on behalf of tourism in our region. First, an update on progress on goals for this year:

- Spring 2006 marks a milestone with the creation of a formal Tourism Service Agreement between the Tourism Association and its partner municipalities Caledon, Erin, Orangeville, Mono, Shelburne and Dufferin County. The Agreement recognizes and formalizes the relationships between our respective organizations.
- Plans for the new Visitor Information/Business Centre are underway, with some exciting developments. Read Lesley Burns' article for all the details.
- As part of the goal "Explore Your Own Backyard", the Tourism Association launched a new dining out program, WinterFeast. Locals and visitors alike enjoyed specially priced menus at participating Headwaters restaurants. A new restaurant promotion, SummerFeast, is planned for later this summer.
- Following the great success of the Golf Trail program, new "trail" initiatives are under development for Towns & Villages, the Arts, and Equine themes. And an expanded Golf Trail 2006, with the addition of accommodation partners, has just started.

This month also marks the launch of the 2006 Visitors Guide, packed with thousands of ideas for anyone who wants to fully experience what our region has to offer. As a member of the Tourism Association, your business listing and/or advertisement will have year-round exposure to over 100,000 readers of this indispensable resource.

One of the most exciting trends I've witnessed over these past months is the growth in collaboration between member businesses across the region. Premier golf courses joined together with a dozen accommodation partners for the Golf Trail 2006; nine member restaurants promoted dining out in the Hills of Headwaters through the WinterFeast program; and many small businesses across the region are now in the process of developing the Towns & Villages initiative. Kudos to our talented and ever-enthusiastic Hills of Headwaters staff for their facilitation of these initiatives and their dedication to tourism in our region!

Jocelyn Klemm

Your Hills of Headwaters Board of Directors for 2005/ 2006

Jocelyn Klemm, Chair – The Wine Coaches
Don Smith, Treasurer – Wedgbury, Smith, Monteith LLP
Cheryl Spalding Brand, Secretary – Country Manor Antiques & Spa
David Baldwin – County of Dufferin
Charles Banfield – The Millcroft Inn & Spa
Jole Bedard – Erin Country Inn
Lesley Burns – Country Host
AJ Grace-Cavey – Town of Shelburne
Susan Chow – Café Uno
Jeff Duncan – Town of Erin
Brenda Fowler – Town of Mono

John Gioncola – The Royal Ambassador Event Centre
Norm Lingard – Town of Caledon
Janine Livingston – Broadway Farms Market
Ken Manwell – Town of Orangeville
Jefferson Mappin – Headwaters Arts Festival
Kelly Myles – Caledon Country Club
Ruth Phillips – Town of Orangeville
Nita Selby – Robinson House Antiques & Gifts
Shannon Smith – Hockley Valley Resort
Allan Thompson – Town of Caledon
Annette Turturici – Inglewood Antique Market

Headwaters Golf Trail continues into 2006

In 2005 the Headwaters Golf Trail was introduced as the first of our product/experience cooperative marketing initiatives. Based on the overwhelming response from golfers in 2005, the Headwaters Golf Trail is back in 2006 with another tremendous offer for golfers to experience some of the finest golf in Ontario, just 40 minutes northwest of Toronto.

The Headwaters Golf Trail features Caledon Country Club, Glen Eagle Golf Club, Hockley Valley Resort, Shelburne Golf & Country Club and Woodington Lake Golf Club, who have joined together once again to offer a great program for golfers. Play each course once – and you can play them all again for FREE.

This year the Headwaters Golf Trail has partnered with the Skins Golf Loyalty program to ensure registration and reward tracking goes seamlessly. Golfers are invited to register at www.thehillsofheadwaters.com/golftrail to purchase a Headwaters Golf Trail card for \$15, or they can purchase one at any Headwaters Golf Trail course. Once they have their card, they just present it at each course upon arrival and their round is tracked electronically. When they've completed all courses on the Trail, the certificates for their free rounds are sent to them electronically, and in real time! In addition, the Headwaters Golf Trail/Skins Loyalty card entitles golfers to a host of other benefits offered by the Skins Program.

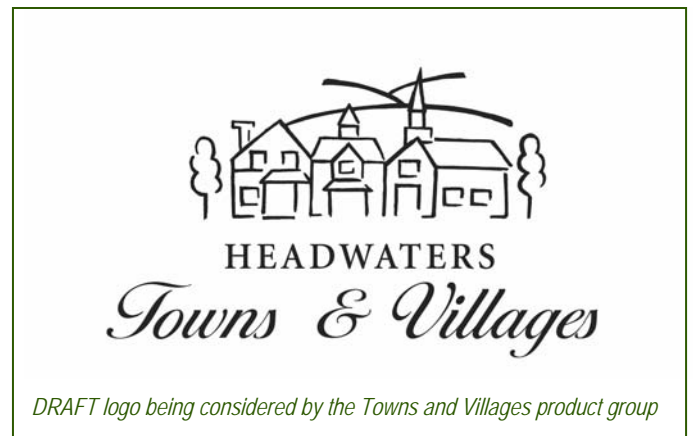
In an effort to promote other travel opportunities in the region, other partners have joined in the campaign. The Millcroft Inn & Spa is promoting great golf stay & play packages, and the Royal Ambassador/Consulate Dining Lounge is promoting their dining & banquet facilities. In an effort to encourage overnight stay in the region, nine of our bed & breakfast members have joined the campaign, offering golfers a 20% discount on their stay upon presentation of the Headwaters Golf Trail card.

Heritage Towns and Villages next tourism experience in line for development

Over the past several months the Hills of Headwaters has been working with representatives from our member communities to determine the feasibility of developing a "towns & villages" experience. Members of the Tourism Association have been invited to these on-going sessions to determine the best means of promoting the unique experiences that each community provides, while weaving them together in a cohesive consumer marketing framework.

The Hills of Headwaters region boasts a unique cluster of heritage towns & villages within a defined geographic region. While each of these destinations in and of themselves may not be substantial enough to demand an extended regional stay, encouraging consumers to follow a "trail" to discover the unique clustering of villages, each with their own unique selling position, will be promoted and used as a hook to encourage extended stay visitations between community visits.

A campaign is currently being formulated which would promote the unique story of each village/town and would encourage visitation in shoulder seasons. The call to action will be dependent on the individual needs of the village – it may be a community specific event, attraction, or overall tourism experience. By weaving together compelling stories, each community will leverage their particular experience with the other communities to create a regional product for the consumer.



The campaign will focus on encouraging visitation from the southwestern Ontario marketplace. Current activities of the group include the development of a unique product logo (consistent with the Hills of Headwaters logo, and in keeping with the branding established by the Headwaters Golf Trail), as well as the development of compelling storylines for each of our area towns/villages, which can then be used for marketing initiatives and public relation opportunities. A passport program is being considered which will further encourage the consumer to explore each village within the cluster, and will offer a "reward" to consumers for visiting all required stops along the way. The passport program will require electronic validation, where specific market intelligence will be collected from the consumer. As with the Headwaters Golf Trail, a campaign specific website will be developed, to which all inquiries will be directed, and where unique visits can be tracked.

From the Executive Director

Lisa Hohban Brusse

Many of you may not know that each fall your Board of Directors holds a special full-day meeting to review the activities of the Tourism Association and set the direction for the coming year. These *strategic planning sessions* result in a series of goals which the Tourism Association uses to focus its resources and attention throughout the year.

Over the past couple of years, the relationship between the Tourism Association and our partnership municipalities has been a focus for at least one goal each year. This is because the Tourism Association works on behalf of the 10 local municipalities that comprise the Hills of Headwaters region providing tourism marketing and visitor information services for the benefit of the tourism industry and the community at large. Our municipal partners contribute financially to the activities of the Tourism Association because they recognize that tourism affects the economic, social and physical environment of a community, that it pays dividends in the form of new employment, increased income and higher tax revenues, and helps support local business services and products that could not otherwise be supported by a community's existing retail trade. The municipal investments are leveraged with the industry contributions (membership fees) to create a much larger pool of funds to promote tourism. This regional approach gives the Hills of Headwaters tourism destination the higher profile needed to "compete" with other tourism destinations like Niagara, Muskoka or Georgian Triangle.

The importance of this public/private partnership was recognizing in 2002 when our municipal partners were extended voting privileges on the Tourism Association's Board of Directors. With the Tourism Association's increased level of activity over the past several years, our municipal partners have also kept pace with our increases in membership fees by increasing their contributions to the Tourism Association as well.

And this past fall, at the Board's annual strategic planning session, it was determined that this partnership had matured to the point that a formal Tourism Services Agreement between the Tourism Association and the partner municipalities was in order. Over the past six months, the Tourism Association Board of Directors and the Towns of Caledon, Erin, Orangeville, Shelburne and Mono and Dufferin County have been negotiating an Agreement that outlines the services to be delivered by the Tourism Association and the financial contribution that will be provided by the local municipalities. This is a huge move forward for the Tourism Association and our local municipalities should be lauded for stepping up to support tourism, this key driver of economic growth in the Hills of Headwaters.

We hope that you will all be able to join us on June 21st at our Annual General Meeting to celebrate this commitment to Tourism.

New Visitor Information Centre still part of plans

Your Visitor Services Committee is still making progress toward a new Visitor Information Centre and our Executive Director has been a driving force – thank you Lisa. A new regional facility for delivering tourism services continues to be part of the strategic plan for the Tourism Association. However, our plans have taken a new direction since the property at the corner of Hwy 10 and Buena Vista Drive in Orangeville (our current location) was donated by developer Doc Gillies to the Town of Orangeville last year.

I am pleased to report that we have reached a partnership agreement with the Greater Dufferin and Area Chamber of Commerce to move forward on the construction of our own building. Negotiations are also currently underway with the Town of Orangeville who has tentatively agreed to provide our two organizations with a long term lease of the land pending the approval of a business plan. The Tourism Association and Chamber of Commerce will be the primary tenants in the new building which is expected to be a two story structure of approximately 4000 square feet in a heritage style construction. The plans include a shared boardroom, kitchenette and public washrooms, ample display space for tourism members as well as some limited room for internal growth. It is also our intent to explore the feasibility of using environmentally responsible construction practices which we hope will draw media and tourist industry attention.

At this time we are forming our Project Steering Committee, and we are pleased to welcome Mary Lawson of Dalerose Country who has agreed to chair this committee. As the Steering Committee gets settled, there will be a need for more volunteers to assist with publicity, media, fund raising, and promotion. We estimate that this new facility will cost upwards of \$650,000. We sincerely request assistance from the membership in order to meet our goal of occupancy by Fall 2007. If this interests you, please contact Lisa Brusse at the Tourism office to become involved and as excited as we are about this splendid vision coming to fruition.

Best regards, and I look forward to seeing you all at our Annual General Meeting on June 21st at the Albion Hills Conservation Area.

Lesley Burns

Chair, Visitor Services Committee

Visitor Information Centre Statistics

Inquiries:
Jan 2006: 266
Feb 2006: 204
March 2006: 220
April 2006: 229

Referrals
(Jan – April, 2006)
Caledon: 537
Erin: 160
Orangeville: 773
Shelburne: 159
Mono: 237
Dufferin: 211

Referral Categories
(Jan – April 2006)
Accommodation: 195
Shopping: 85
Attraction: 57
CVE: 342
Special events: 63
Service: 258
Restaurant: 156
Recreation: 281
Arts & Culture: 75
Directions: 360

Web site activity by month

January 2006
Unique visits: 7021

February 2006
Unique visits: 8463

March 2006
Unique visits: 8480

April 2006
Unique visits: 8582

CVE = Credit Valley Explorer

From the Web Master

By Valerie Jones (valerie@thehillsofheadwaters.com)

I hope everyone has figured out by now that the Internet is here to stay and are strategically planning some sort of e-marketing with your Hills of Headwaters web space. According to the Ministry of Tourism Travel Survey Spring, 2006, 65% of Canadians use the internet to plan pleasure travel and in the USA it is 72%. We're fortunate to have such a dynamic, well designed web site at our fingertips to promote our region, members and events.

Promotion of the Headwaters web site is done in various ways:

- Through our print visitors guide and map (100,000 copies & 150,000 copies respectively)
- Banner ads on www.ontariotravel.net
- We're researching digital media on a few high traffic Toronto web sites
- Inbound links from our municipal partners and members
- Marketing promotions that drive traffic to the Hills of Headwaters site
 - www.thehillsofheadwaters.com/golftrail
 - www.thehillsofheadwaters.com/winterfeast
 - www.thehillsofheadwaters.com/greatfalldrives
 - new www.thehillsofheadwaters.com/greatsummerdrives

Traffic and Web Site Statistics January to April 2006 (4 months)

Unique Visitors	32,546
Total Visitors	43,366
Pages Viewed	325,723
Average # of Pages Viewed per Visit	7.5 pages – Site has saying power!
Bookmarked* (or added to favourites)	8029 (25% of visitors plan to return)

Did You Know?

You can very easily buy your customized domain name and forward it to your Hills of Headwaters web site. For example purchase www.businessname.ca and then forward it to www.thehillsofheadwaters.com/businessname. Then market www.businessname.ca on your print material.

Your web space on the Tourism site is a huge part of your membership and can easily cover the cost of your membership if used effectively. Make sure the Domain Registrar you use allows forwarding. I often use www.domainsatcost.ca and you can buy a single domain for about \$20.00 per year.

Tip: If available buy both the .com and .ca versions of your domain name to help avoid confusion.

How Some Members Use the Web Tools

www.winexpertorangeville.com - uses the products feature to showcase their lines of high quality wine kits and a photo gallery with customized labels perfect for weddings.

www.lynbrookgolf.com – Daryl Bailey is a web pro as well as golf pro! Within days of setting up his site he'd added 10 sections providing info about the course, rates, lessons, clinics, parties, customs clubs and more.

www.cafeuno.ca – has a great selection of European Fusion menus and a section outlining their catering services.

Welcome to the following new members!

Alton Greenhouses, Art by Roslyn, A.M. Korsten Jewellers, Best Western Orangeville Inn & Suites, Cedar Highlands Ski Club, Chef Talk Bistro & Catering Inc., Chesslawn Vineyard & Winery, Credit Springs Estates – Berkshire Homes, Dancing Waters Bed & Breakfast, Devonshire Guest House, Dufferin Glen Golf Academy & Practice Facility, Erin Heights Golf Club, Gairdner & Associates Real Estate Ltd., Hearth & Leisure, Henning Salon & Spa, Hockley General Store, Humber Institute of Technical & Advanced Learning, Inglewood General Store, Killarney Printing, Lazer Maze, Little House on Ty Coed Estates, Lynbrook Golf Driving Range, Mortgage Alliance, Nutmeg Gallery, Perfect Conditions Indoor Golf Club, Pine Rock Cottage Vacations, Ray's Bakery, Suakin Communications, The Family Tree, The Mad Hatter Pub, The Emporium, The Erin Toybox, Tintagel's Tea Room, Winemakers, Wintersingers Tree Farm, Woodlot Harvest Studio.

Member Marketing Opportunities

Web Site Banner Ads

Get your Business Banner Ad working for you this month on the Home Page AND Sub Pages of www.thehillsofheadwaters.com

Only \$250 for three months

With a monthly average of 8,000 unique visits to www.thehillsofheadwaters.com
Here is an opportunity to have over 24,000 NEW or REVISITING Viewers Find You

Full Colour Banner Icons Link Directly to your Business Web Site.

News from the Hills

Five times each year, the Hills of Headwaters Tourism Association releases an attractive electronic newsletter called *News from the Hills* which goes out to over 1400 voluntary subscribers from throughout Southern Ontario. This exclusive communiqué, of six messages only, is read by an ever growing group of targeted subscribers who want to keep in touch with what is going on in our region. Usually released mid-month, *News from the Hills* go out in January, April, June, September and November. These timely, 'quick read' articles can be purchased for \$75 each (plus GST), are limited to 150 words and include a web site link directly to your business. *News from the Hills* is particularly cost-effective for promoting events to an expanded audience. The next issue is scheduled for release on June 15, 2006. Call soon to reserve your space!

Brochure Distribution

Are you looking for an extra way to reach visitors who are already visiting the region, perhaps visiting family and friends, eating at one of our fabulous restaurants or staying at a resort or inn?

Join the Hills of Headwaters Brochure Distribution Program. The Tourism Association operates a brochure distribution program to over 40 high traffic locations throughout the Hills of Headwaters region. Tourism-based members of the Association can subscribe to this program for as little as \$100 plus GST for a one time drop or only \$195 plus GST for a whole year of circulation.

*For more information on these or any other programs offered by the Hills of Headwaters
Contact Cynthia at 519-942-0314 / 1-800-332-9744 or email: cynthia@thehillsofheadwaters.com.*

2006 Visitors Guide receives positive response in GTA

The following correspondence was received several days following the insertion of the 2006 Visitor's Guide and Map into the Globe and Mail:

"I just finished going over your latest publication which arrived with the Globe and Mail this morning. I rarely ever bother to respond to something like this but in this case, I felt quite motivated. This is one of the best promotional pieces of its kind that I have seen. It is so well done that I almost feel like jumping in the car and taking a tour. Congratulations on a job well done. Having been in the tourism industry for a number of years and having been involved with the Canadian Tourism Commission, it gives me great pleasure to see such a fine piece of tourism promotional material. I am sure it will pay great dividends to all concerned."

Robert DeMone