

OUTLOOK

Owen Sound & District Chamber of Commerce

WINTER 2023 / Issue 12



CHRISTMAS TOYS

The Salvation Army's food bank and the Owen Sound and Inter Township firefighters toy drive unite the community.

MEETING YEAR-ROUND NEEDS

Year-round giving is crucial to address the ongoing needs and sustain charitable efforts.

GEORGIAN BLUFFS MAYOR MESSAGE

Mayor of Georgian Bluffs commends local business community for their role during the holiday season.

HOW TO HELP WOMEN, CHILDREN

Supporting Women's Centre improves gender equality, provides vital resources, and fosters empowerment.

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CHRISTMAS TOYS AND SO MUCH MORE

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Year-round giving is crucial to address the ongoing needs and sustain charitable efforts. It ensures a consistent impact on various causes, fostering lasting change and supporting those in need beyond seasonal peaks.

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HOW TO HELP WOMEN, CHILDREN IN GREY BRUCE

Supporting Women's Centre improves gender equality, provides vital resources, and fosters empowerment. By offering safe spaces, counseling, and education, women can thrive, contributing to more inclusive, resilient communities.

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GEORGIAN BLUFFS MAYOR MESSAGE

Mayor of Georgian Bluffs commends local business community for their role during the holiday season. Their generosity and support enhance the joy and vitality of our community.

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NEW MEMBERS

Look whose joined us! Read up on the new members of the Chamber.

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JUST SAYING: THE GIVING SEASON

During the giving season, local businesses showcase our community's unmatched spirit of generosity. Their commitment to making a difference exemplifies the heartwarming unity that defines us as the best at giving.

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Cover photo
Inter-township Fire Department toy drive.
Photo credit: Candra Schank Photography



OUTLOOK

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SINCE 1950

CHRISTMAS TOYS – AND SO MUCH MORE!

The Christmas season is complicated. It's a time of peace and joy for most residents of Bruce and Grey Counties but a source of added stress and loneliness for too many others. Happily, through the generous support of many individuals, businesses, and community groups, The Salvation Army enhances the comfort and reduces the anxiety of a growing number of vulnerable Grey Bruce residents during this contradictory season. Where would we be without their selfless leadership - especially at Christmas time but indeed throughout the year?

Many individuals could be wishing for a Christmas that isn't blue rather than dreaming of a White Christmas. The Salvation Army helps ease that pain.

The Salvation Army, which has been actively engaged in our community since 1884, is an international Christian church which is even-handed in their support of whoever in our community needs assistance, whatever their beliefs and backgrounds. Their year-round social service activities encompass hunger relief for individuals and families through food banks and feeding programs; shelter for people experiencing homelessness and support for those needing housing; rehabilitation for those struggling with addiction; long-term care and palliative care; after-school programs, camps, and school nutrition programs for children and youth; and life-skills classes such as budgeting, cooking for a family, and anger management.

Among many low-profile but high-impact initiatives consider the positive example of The Salvation Army's longstanding Thrift Shop. For more than 40 years it has provided indi-

viduals and families with gently used, low cost clothing and household items. Although proceeds from the sale of goods are modest, they help fund the Army's many local social programs. The Shop also provides items free of charge to those people who have been referred by community social programs and agencies.

Unfortunately, demand is soaring! The current financial quagmire with high interest rates and skyrocketing food prices translates into rapidly growing need for many of these community services. In August of this year The Salvation Army's Family Services and Foodbank helped more than 1,000 local individuals and families. "That's 42 % higher than one year earlier and there's no sign of abatement any time soon," says Alice Wannan, Community and Family Services Manager. "Some families who were once donors are now clients."

CHRISTMAS ASSISTANCE

At Christmastime The Salvation Army goes into overdrive. Their Christmas assistance is flexible to accommodate the particular needs of a wide range of individuals and families who have been accepted for eligibility through a dignified, non-intrusive application process. Benefit choices include gift certificates, food hampers, toys for children up to age 16, and a Christmas Day meal for those who will be alone.

TOY DRIVE COLLABORATION

Along with their omnipresent cheerful donation kettles (please donate generously), perhaps The Salvation Army Christmas activity with the highest local community profile is the area-wide Toy Drive which is conducted in partnership with the Owen Sound Professional Firefighters (OSPF) and the Inter-Township Fire Department (ITFD). And the 2023 version is well underway! As the result of this collaboration each eligible local child up to 16 years of age will receive a gift which is selected according to their expressed preferences. "That's straightforward for most younger children but more challenging for teens whose interests and needs go beyond toys to include personal or high-tech items" says Alice Wannan, "but we do our best to be both sensitive and creative". Appointments for gift pick-up from The Salvation Army are arranged when a family Christmas application has been accepted.



Alice Wannan Salvation Army

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CHRISTMAS TOYS - continued

OWEN SOUND PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS

Firefighters give to their communities every single day they are on the job and even when they aren't. "Community service is what we're all about, and just not in fighting and preventing fires," says Doug McEwen, Fire Prevention Inspector, who heads up the participation of the Owen Sound Professional Firefighters in this year's Toy Drive. "We're proud of our long-standing involvement in the Toy Drive and of our many other community engagements like recently showcasing our wonderful local female hockey players and supporting many youth teams. Our Toy Drive partnership with the Salvation Army over more than 30 years grew out of firefighters repairing and refurbishing worn-down bikes for local kids."

The firefighters collect toys from 20 donation boxes situated across the City. Added to these are toys collected at the Santa Claus Parade, and those dropped off at the 3rd Avenue Fire Hall or the 14th Street location of the Salvation Army. Monetary donations from caring individuals and corporations are used to purchase gifts that have been requested but not donated and to obtain gift certificates for those hard to buy for children and teens.

Sorting toys, matching lists provided by The Salvation Army, and filling gaps are an integral part of the firefighters' frenetic process so that they are ready to distribute gifts in the third week of December. "All 31 staff members role up their sleeves" says Doug. A huge step forward this year is the generous contribution by the Heritage Mall of permanent space for the establishment of 'Toy Box Headquarters'. This attractive space, colourfully decorated by Gabe Nowak of Have1.com, will be a focal point for the community outreach of the Salvation Army, the OSPF and the ITFD for years to come.



Like the Salvation Army and the ITFD, the OSPF are greatly appreciative of each and every one of the countless individuals, organizations and corporations that contribute and collaborate to make the Toy Drive a success. This year Doug McEwen gives particular shoutouts to the Harshman family, their Tim's franchises, and the Owen Sound Attack for sponsoring fun, creative 'puck tosses' with proceeds dedicated to the Toy Drive.

INTER-TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Inter-Township Fire Department (ITFD) is a unique partnership between the Township of Georgian Bluffs and the Municipality of Meaford which provides fire suppression and prevention services to the southern end of the Township of Georgian Bluffs and the western region of the Municipality of Meaford. Its 42 firefighters, most of whom are volunteers, consistently demonstrate their outstanding dedication to their communities both in fighting and preventing fires and in a variety of community outreach activities such as participating actively annually for over 30 years in The Salvation Army's Toy Drive. "It's all about serving people" says volunteer firefighter Kelsey Waymouth, the 2023 team leader who coordinates the ITFD's toy collection and distribution activities. The kick-off of their campaign was the well-attended ITFD breakfast and raffle (minimum \$15 contribution) for children that took place on October 1st. All proceeds from the fun event are used to purchase toys for the Toy Drive or to send local burn survivors between the ages of 7 to 17 to Camp BUCKO (Burn Camp for Kids in Ontario), an inspiring initiative. "It's heartwarming to see so many individuals and companies across our large region contribute to the ITFD and The Salvation Army financially and with toy donations to support our children at this special but challenging time of the year," added Kelsey.

Like their OSPF counterparts, the ITFD volunteers start with a list of kids and their Christmas gift preferences obtained from The Salvation Army. They then do their best to meet these needs based on donated toys or by shopping for those items which haven't been donated in area-wide collection or by direct contribution at the Santa Clause Parade or the ITFD's Fire Hall on 12th St. W. in Owen Sound.

To receive Christmas Assistance, individuals and families are encouraged to complete an application by visiting The Salvation Army's Community Family Services at 365 14th St. W. For further information or to arrange a Christmas Day dinner please call 519-371-0957.



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EXPERT COLUMN

UNLEASHING POTENTIAL: OWEN SOUND'S FOUNDING ROLE IN THE GLOBAL ISOTOPE INNOVATION

Canada has been a leader in the global supply of isotopes for several decades. A significant portion of Canada's isotope supply comes from Ontario, where Bruce Power provides reliable access to vital isotopes used in various diagnostic and therapeutic applications in modern medicine. In addition to producing and irradiating different isotopes, Ontario is home to a diverse network of companies and organizations with specialized equipment and goods to support the processing, transportation, and handling of isotopes.

As Canada expands its international leadership, isotope communities like Southwestern Ontario must explore new ways to promote collaboration.

Formed in June 2023, the Southwestern Ontario Isotope Coalition is a partnership between regional leaders, including the City of Owen Sound and the Nuclear Innovation Institute (NII), in collaboration with the Canadian Nuclear Isotope Council (CNIC). The Coalition was formed to support a national vision to increase Canada's role in medical isotope research, development, and production.

This pivotal partnership, deeply rooted in vision and commitment, positions the Coalition as a catalyst for regional collaboration that propels Southwestern Ontario to the forefront of global isotope research.

Through its activities, the Coalition aims to unite Southwestern Ontario's isotope community and foster future opportunities to leverage the region's many strengths. To achieve this, the Coalition will develop a strategic plan to support expansion in the area, increase local awareness of Southwestern Ontario's role in Canada's isotope ecosystem, facilitate future public and private investment, and explore ways to grow the region's global supply.

As a hub of isotope production, the region is crucial in advancing research, fostering economic opportunities, and elevating Southwestern Ontario's collective standing on the global stage.

Owen Sound's dedication to this vision is instrumental in setting the tone for a future where regional collaboration is the linchpin of economic progress and transformative contributions to global healthcare. Isotope production, viewed through the lens of collaboration, becomes not just an industry endeavour but a shared mission with far-reaching implications for the entire region.

Together, as we unleash the potential of isotope innovation, we also cultivate a legacy of robust regional collaboration that resonates far beyond the confines of Southwestern Ontario.



MEETING YEAR-ROUND NEEDS: THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSISTENT CHARITABLE GIVING

The senior smiled broadly at me as he angled his walker towards our table. Picking up the roll of toilet paper, he quipped "I need this now that I'm camping". While the day was warm, and the sun was shining I felt cold. "I'm sorry what?" I blurted in response. "My landlord wanted my apartment back, couldn't afford anything that was available, so I got a tent," he explained. I hustled him over to the Housing table, hoping they could at least get him into the Short-term Shelter program, to give him a real bed to sleep on, while trying to find a place for him to live, that wasn't a tent, hidden in a copse of trees.

There's often a huge gap between the resources a person has, the resources provided by the various levels of government and a person's basic needs, a gap that is filled a multitude of local charitable and non-profit groups.

Bruce Grey is home to 22 food banks, numerous food cupboards, community gardens, daily and weekly hot meal programs, and many thrift stores that both raise money for these programs as well as provide items at no cost to those in need. There are mental health programs lurching from grant to grant, homelessness programs are expected to fill the needs of those experiencing the housing crisis firsthand.

In Canada, the charitable sector is 17% of the GDP, which is bigger than, real estate, manufacturing, mining and the finance and construction sectors. Thousands of employees and volunteers all working together to improve our society.

The Ontario Non-profit Network (ONN) conducted a sector-wide study in the summer of 2023.



Trends over four years reveal:

- Demand for nonprofit services is at an all time high over the four-year period of ONN surveying and has grown 29% since 2020.
- Nonprofit financial situations are on a downward spiral.
- Two thirds of the sector is facing staffing challenges, specifically around recruitment and retention.

continued on page 13

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MEETING YEAR-ROUND NEEDS - continued

- Nonprofit closure reports have increased, now sitting at 35% of organizations reporting that they know of another similar nonprofit closing.
- Over the four-year period, only half the sector has reported marginal increases in revenue, while 90% this year have reported an increase in expenditures.
- More than other sectors and industries, nonprofits are at the whims of our context. For nonprofits, community crises translate into increase in demand for services usually without additional support, and broader economic uncertainty and austerity means declining donations and government funding.

The charitable sector's data reveals a slowing of donations in the sector. CanadaHelps' The Giving Report 2023 reported the overall percentage of people who donated to charities dropped to 28 per cent from 36 per cent between 2010 and 2022 amongst individual households.

When I reviewed the United Way's Canada Helps data, the number of donors is UP in 2023 compared to 2022, BUT the average donation is down significantly dropping from \$102 to \$75. While the donors are still supporting, they cannot support at the same level. Donors are being hit by this economy. Donors have become service users too.

I know our partners across the region are seeing the same thing.

Locally we are seeing demand for services still increasing beyond the needs at the height of the pandemic. For most organizations supporting people, need never dropped back down to pre-pandemic levels.

The challenge with that is all the pandemic government funding is gone, and donors are also struggling with the increased cost of living, so donations are down across the sector.

Support is there, but as soon as donations come in, they go right back out to do the work that's needed.

The holiday season is a traditional season of giving. There are many ways to support your local charities and the people they serve. Honestly, the best way to help is with a financial donation. Most charities have well-developed supply chains and can stretch a dollar from Tobermory to Dundalk!

So don't wait until December to make that charitable contribution. Your help is needed now. If you're not sure where to place your donor dollars, give 211 a call and ask what services are in your community. It goes without saying, a United Way donation spreads throughout the region with 100% of the population able to touch a United Way funded program.

The United Way and the Community Foundation can both process donations of securities as well. Check with your financial planner on the best way to maximize the tax implications of your charitable giving...just don't leave it until 11 pm New Years Eve.

Francesca

Francesca Dobbyn is the Executive Director of the United Way of Bruce Grey



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5 Reason to Shop Local this Holiday Season



1 Helps Support Your Local Community

2 You Help Create Local Jobs

3 You are investing in Local Entrepreneurship

4 Local Shops Offer a Truly Personal Touch

5 You Get Access to Truly Unique Gifts

SNEAK PEAK- YOUR BUSINESS BUDDY

NAVIGATING THE TERRAIN: UNVEILING THE CHALLENGES FACED BY SMALL BUSINESSES AND STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

Small businesses are the backbone of any economy, but they often face many challenges that can hinder their growth and success. From limited resources to intense competition, small business owners must navigate a complex landscape to thrive in their respective industries.

One of the most significant struggles that small businesses face is access to capital. Without sufficient funding, businesses may not be able to invest in new equipment or technology, expand their product lines, or hire additional staff. This can limit their ability to compete with larger corporations, which often have more resources at their disposal.

Another challenge that small business owners face is navigating the ever-changing landscape of marketing and advertising.

With so many digital channels available, it can be challenging for small businesses to know where to focus their efforts to reach their target audience effectively.

Despite these challenges, there are many strategies that small businesses can use to overcome these hurdles and achieve success. In today's fast-paced and interconnected business world, networking has become an indispensable tool for professionals looking to expand their horizons and open doors to new opportunities. One such avenue for effective business networking is through your very own Chamber of Commerce, as you know we are a community-based organization that brings together businesses of all size to foster growth and collaboration. In this blog we will explore the importance and benefits of participating in our business networking event, offering valuable insights into how these events propel your business forward...

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YOUR BUSINESS BUDDY

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EXPERT COLUMN ANNUITIES? CAN THEY FUND YOUR RETIREMENT?



Annuities are financial tool that provide a steady income stream. With increasing life expectancy and uncertain market conditions, annuities offer peace of mind and financial security for a specified period or for the rest of one's life. They are commonly used as a retirement savings tool. With an annuity, you make a lump sum payment or regular contributions to an insurance company or

financial institution. In return, you receive regular payments in the future.

There are two main types of annuities: immediate and deferred. Immediate annuities start paying out immediately after you make a lump sum payment, while deferred annuities accumulate value over time and begin paying out at a later date.

One of the key benefits of annuities is their ability to provide a guaranteed income stream, which can be especially valuable in retirement. This can help ensure a stable income for individuals who may have limited retirement savings or are concerned about outliving their money.

Another advantage of annuities is their tax-deferred growth. While you contribute to an annuity, any earnings or interest are not subject to taxes until you start receiving payments. This allows your investment to potentially grow at a faster rate compared to taxable accounts.

Furthermore, annuities offer various payout options to suit individual preferences. You can choose to receive payments for a specific number of years, for the rest of your life, or for the joint lives of you and your spouse. Additionally, some annuities offer features such as inflation protection or the ability to leave a legacy for your beneficiaries.


However, annuities also have some drawbacks. They can be complex financial products with fees and charges that can eat into your returns. Additionally, annuities typically have limited liquidity, meaning it may be difficult to access your funds without incurring penalties or surrender charges.

Before considering an annuity, it's important to carefully assess your financial goals, risk tolerance, and other available retirement savings options. With inflation and the rising cost of living, annuities keep your income secure from both market risk and interest rates.

Annuities can be a valuable retirement savings tool, providing a guaranteed income stream and tax advantages. However, they also come with potential drawbacks and should be carefully evaluated before making a decision.

Find out if an annuity is right for you by consulting your financial advisor. Rachel can help you determine if an annuity is suitable for your specific circumstances.

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HOW TO HELP WOMEN, CHILDREN, AND YOUTH BUILD SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE LIVES IN GREY AND BRUCE YEAR-ROUND

Over the past three years, women, children, and youth have been victims of violence and abuse more than ever before. The COVID-19 pandemic caused a ripple effect of survivors escaping dangerous situations, since many were trapped at home with their abusers, or pushed to other unsafe living situations due to pandemic restrictions and shutdowns. Since then, women's shelters have continued to see an increase in women, their children, and youth requiring support.

According to Statistics Canada, on any given night 3,491 women and their 2,724 children sleep in shelters because it isn't safe at home, 78% of which sought shelter because of gender-based violence. Approximately one woman or girl is killed every 48 hours in Canada, and in rural and remote locations there is an increased risk, and subsequent need, for awareness and services to address these heartbreaking statistics.

The Women's Centre Grey Bruce (TWC) is a local charity that prides itself on being a safer place for women, children, and youth. They're innovative, caring leaders in providing secure shelter, crisis intervention, safety planning, counselling, and transition services for women, children, and youth affected by abuse in Grey and Bruce County.



In 1981, a Grassroots initiative to identify the need for a women's shelter in Owen Sound began. 41 years later, the charity has grown in services and supports exponentially. There are three physical locations, including the Emergency Violence Against Women Shelter, a 20-bed shelter for women, and their children, to seek refuge when fleeing abusive living situations; the Second Stage Residential Housing Program, a geared-to-income housing program available for women, and their children, who have left abusive relationships and want to hone valuable life skills, build their finances, and begin building safe and sustainable lives free from violence and abuse; and the Anti-Human Trafficking Program for Youth (AHT), a youth house for 15 to 18 year olds at-risk of, and survivors of, human-trafficking, to focus on prevention, healing, recovery, stabilization and reintegration.

TWC has also built outstanding community outreach services and supports that include a court support program, for help navigating family or criminal law or sexual assault trials; clinical counselling; transitional housing support; a 24/7 crisis hotline; safety planning; and support for children who have experienced or witness violence in their homes. We are also one of a few shelters in Ontario that is 100% pet friendly because 71% of pet-owning women entering women's shelters reported that their batterer had injured, maimed, killed or threatened family pets for revenge or to psychologically control victims.

Every year the holidays brings communities together to support those in need. TWC has been fortunate to receive many donations of brand new, never used items needed year-round like bedding, pajamas and toiletries. This year, TWC has partnered with a local artist to create an exclusive line of socks perfect as a stocking stuffer, making it easier for you to purchase a gift that gives back. To donate to TWC this year, purchase an exclusive pair of socks, or learn more, visit www.thewomenscentre.org or email donations@thewomenscentre.org. For charities like The Women's Centre, a little holiday cheer goes a long way.



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD



Jason Hemstock, Chair

When I think about Owen Sound as a City, I think about how strong we are as a Community. I remember many examples both recent and past where we've come together in support. This doesn't just refer to Not-for-Profit organizations and charities, but local business and citizens alike answering the call time and time again. This truly is a wonderful Community to be part of and we should all be very proud!

In regards to the upcoming Holiday Season and the long winter ahead, I find myself wondering what I can do to contribute. There are the usual outlets around the Holidays to donate money, gifts and clothing which, I believe, we are great at doing. There are also countless opportunities to volunteer: sorting donations, helping prepare meals, offering transportation to medical appointments just to name a few; but what else can I do as one person to help ensure Owen Sound remains A Great Place to Live?

It starts with shopping locally. Google says that by purchasing locally, you invest in your Community, both economically and socially; helping create jobs for friends and neighbours while

contributing to public infrastructure improvement. There is more to it than that. I do really like the last part about investing in your Community, especially since it is said that \$68 of every \$100 spent locally stays in the Community. This area could really benefit from this kind of investment right now.

One of the best things about going out to shop is, it presents an opportunity to spend time with another person. Make an event of it with a friend, family member or partner and enjoy this beautiful area we call "Home". A rich artisan culture within the Owen Sound area opens the door to great experiences! We have many unique shops offering specialized and one-of-a-kind items that you just can't find on-line. There are also many marvelous and diverse dining venues to heighten your shopping experience. Why not plan your outing around an event or production to really enhance your time spent? It is such an amazing opportunity, all right here in the Owen Sound area!

We all love this Community and want the best for our neighbours, friends and family. Doing our part can be fun, educational and, most important, good for our soul. So, please, try to make as many local purchases as you can when shopping, now as well as in the future. You'll be helping make a difference in your community while enjoying the time spent.

Wishing you all a safe, happy and enjoyable Holiday Season!



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MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR OF GEORGIAN BLUFFS



Mayor Sue Carleton

As the days grow shorter and the air turns crisper, we find ourselves once again amidst the changing seasons. It's during these transitions that we come to appreciate the significance of community and the power of supporting one another. As the leaves fall and winter arrives, we see this as a golden opportunity to come together and embrace the spirit of giving and unity that makes Georgian Bluffs feel like home.

In our community, businesses play a pivotal role in giving back. Your steadfast support for local events, initiatives, and charitable causes throughout the year is instrumental in strengthening the bonds that bring us together. The holiday season in particular showcases our community spirit, making it the perfect time to acknowledge the essential role businesses play in enhancing our community's well-being.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the businesses in Georgian Bluffs and beyond for your steadfast contributions over the year, whether through sponsorships, generous donations, or collaborative efforts. Your dedication contributes to a vibrant and thriving community where everyone feels a sense

of belonging. You are the backbone of our region, providing the jobs, services, and economic opportunity that allows us to thrive.

As we embrace this festive season, I urge everyone to reflect on the profound impact of shopping locally. When you choose to support our local businesses, you not only discover unique, one-of-a-kind gifts but also become an active contributor to the overall well-being of your community. By shopping locally, you help sustain the livelihoods of your friends and neighbours, bolster our local economy, and foster a sense of unity that becomes increasingly vital in challenging times.

To stay informed about the latest events, programs, and community happenings, I recommend exploring our website at www.georgianbluffs.ca. The winter months don't slow us down, whether we are coming together for a festive tree lighting and family skate at the Shallow Lake Arena, enjoying the sights at the Kemble non-motorized parade, or stretching our legs while snowshoeing or cross-country skiing on a scenic trail. From sleigh rides, to maple syrup, to cut-your-own Christmas tree, the magic of winter is captured across the landscape.

On behalf of the Council and staff of Georgian Bluffs, I extend my warmest wishes for a joyful winter season brimming with

fun activities, strong connections, and, most importantly, good health. Let's seize this moment to come together and support one another, much like we do every winter, gathering around the hearth in warmth and fellowship during the cold winter nights.

Thank you for being an integral part of our remarkable community, and may this winter season envelop you with warmth, togetherness, and many opportunities for growth and success.

Gorgeous Georgian Bluffs

Photo Jim Martin



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAMBER



Diane Austin CEO

Helping Hands

This is the time of year when we reflect more on giving and sharing. I think about the many organizations in our community who tirelessly and endlessly provide help and assistance not only during the holidays but all year round.

The theme for this Issue is to highlight the Helping Hands of some of these organizations and create awareness on what they do. The work and assistance they provide in our community sometimes can be a thankless job but also rewarding and appreciated by those in need.

I sometimes feel that the organizations, United Way, SOS, C.O.R.E., O Share, Safe and Sound, Community Mental Health, Owen Sound Fire Department, Owen Sound Police Services just to name a few do not get the accolades they deserve for

their tireless devotion and dedication to help those in our community.

I am proud of these organizations and what they do!

The Chamber along with the City, River District and Police Chief Ambrose held a townhall meeting with local businesses to go over the issues and concerns from the business perspective with regards to the downtown core. Questions that were brought forward from a previous townhall meeting were answered. It may not have been the total solution but is a step in the right direction.

Go downtown, shop in our stores, eat in our restaurants and when you see people downtown, just say hi, who knows you could make someone's day.

During the holiday season, please support and shop local.

Thank you All for what you do!

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NEW MEMBER PROFILES BY SAVANNAH DAWSON



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Contact
info@boonbakery.ca
boonbakery.ca



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Contact
Jessie English
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Contact
theboutiqueoutlet.os@gmail.com
comtheboutiqueoutlet.ca



JUST SAYING

BY DAVE CARR



The Giving Season

Someone once told me – people told me several times, in fact – that the average main street merchant in Owen Sound gets asked for a donation of one kind or another more than 300 times a year – nearly once a day! And out of that, two things ... one, I certainly believe the number of requests, and two, I know beyond all doubt that the business people of this region, and the citizenry itself, give generously.

Over the decades, I have been involved in those fundraising efforts that sent us knocking on doors for a gift certificate, a prize, a car wash, a discount, a 2-for-1, all of it and more. And I have been the lucky or bidding recipient of some of that generosity as well!

This is a giving community, full stop.

At my writing, I don't know the date you're reading this, but I know it's sometime between Thanksgiving and Christmas. And my autumn memory comes flooding back to me: sitting for a chilly afternoon on the tail end of a big cube van parked outside the CFOS studio downtown.

It was the annual Thanksgiving food drive for the Salvation Army; on-air, we invited y'all to come fill the truck and you certainly did, autumn after autumn. People give. We met our listeners, which was fun, but more importantly, we accepted bags and bags of groceries. I remember a farmer unloading several 50-pound bags of carrots. I wonder what happened to them. Cars would pull up and someone might have a paper bag with a few things, or they might need help emptying a

trunk full of groceries. It was a pretty simple equation: people needed help, and help was at hand in the simple kindness of neighbours.

I get the feeling that those who have not been part of the Owen Sound and district community very long are sometimes surprised at the generosity. And other communities may boast the same, but as with in many other aspects of life, Owen Sound and Grey-Bruce are unique *in the level of giving* we collectively exhibit year after year after year.

A fire; a trauma; a sudden death – each produces the need, and doors, wallets and hearts are opened.

Think about it – you can count an infinite number of reasons why you live here, why you *love* living here, why you belong here. I think the giving, the almost automatic and unspoken love of neighbour for neighbour is one we may take a bit for granted, but inside, is one of those reasons

There's one more holiday season now on our doorstep, and yes, there are needs ... some anticipated, and surely some surprises. And I think we know what will happen when urgency demands.

So, because I know you (if you know what I mean, and I think you do) ... thank you.



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06 OPPORTUNITIES

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Placing an advertisement in our "Inside Scoop" E-Blast which is distributed to over 300 businesses and 1500 businesspeople in our community



03. Social Media

We host an Alive @ 5 Networking event every other month. Check our website to find the next scheduled event

02. Featured as a new member



We love to feature our members on our social media pages. Reels are an excellent opportunity to showcase your skills, creativity and accomplishments



05. Events

We host a series of workshops and webinars throughout the year. Whether you're looking to enhance your professional skills, gain new knowledge, or simply explore a topic of interest

04. Alive @ 5



We host two major events each year (Business Excellence Awards and our Annual Golf Tournament). This gives an opportunity to connect with influential individuals in the business world

06. Workshops / Webinars



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