

The Tributary



A Newsletter of The Hills of Headwaters Tourism Association

Spring 2007

Message from the Chairperson

Welcome to the Spring 2007 edition of The Tributary, for an update on what the Hills of Headwaters Tourism Association is doing on behalf of tourism in our region. The spirit of collaboration is growing as more and more of our member businesses are connecting on various projects. Here I will highlight just a few, with more details in the articles to follow.

One of the best examples of collaboration is the Tourism Association website www.thehillsofheadwaters.com, the best on-line resource of all there is to see and do in the region. Currently, the website receives more than 130,000 unique visitors annually! Members continue to make the most of the website to promote their businesses and events. If you're interested in doing more to enhance your company's visibility on the website, look out for upcoming workshops organized by the Membership Committee.

Two promotions in 2006, WinterFeast and SummerFeast, invited local residents and visitors alike to enjoy fine dining opportunities at an affordable price. This successful collaboration brought together nine restaurants in the Hills of Headwaters to jointly promote dining out. More restaurants have joined in for WinterFeast 2007, which was held February 19- March 8th, giving diners 18 days to try their favourites and discover some new ones!

A collaborative initiative that was many months in the making was the Tourism Services Agreement established in 2006 with municipal partners Caledon, Erin, Mono, Orangeville, Shelburne and Dufferin County. Over the past few months, the Association Executive has made presentations to each municipality reporting on Measurables set out in the Agreement. The Measurables cover results in areas such as Regional Marketing Tactics, Media and Public Relations, and Website success.

Finally, a key project under development is our permanent Visitor Information Centre, Centre in the Hills, in collaboration with the Greater Dufferin Area Chamber of Commerce, and under the stewardship of Project Chair Mary Lawson. The vision is to create a sustainable, "green" home for two community organizations that showcases the best of what our region has to offer.

The collaborative momentum underway in the region promises to benefit all members, whether directly as program participants or indirectly with the increased visitor presence in our local businesses. Kudos to our talented and dedicated team at the Hills of Headwaters Association office, Lisa, Cynthia and Sharon, and to our service providers, Kate, Valerie and Michele for all of your unwavering community-building spirit!

Jocelyn Klemm

Your Hills of Headwaters Board of Directors

Jocelyn Klemm, Chair – The Wine Coaches
Annette Turturici, Vice Chair – Inglewood Antique Market
Ian Stewart, Treasurer – Acme United
Cheryl Spalding Brand, Secretary – Country Manor Antiques & Spa
David Baldwin – County of Dufferin & Town of Mono
Charles Banfield – The Millcroft Inn & Spa
Doug Beffort – Town of Caledon
Sylvia Bradley – Town of Orangeville
Lesley Burns – Country Host B & B Reservations
AJ Grace-Cavey – Town of Shelburne

Natalie Daniel – Town of Caledon
John Gioncola – The Royal Ambassador Event Centre
Jeremy Grant – Historic Alton Mill
Janine Livingston – Broadway Farms Market
Jefferson Mappin – Headwaters Arts Festival
Kelly Myles – Caledon Country Club
Ruth Phillips – Town of Orangeville
Shannon Smith – Fieldstone Farm B & B
Josie Wintersinger – Town of Erin
Megan Young – Shelburne Golf & Country Club

Facilitating the development of the region's Signature Tourism Experiences

The Tourism Association continues to work with the Ministry of Tourism to develop tourism experiences that attract visitors to the Hills of Headwaters region. With the assistance of the Ministry, the Tourism Association has identified the region's key 'demand generators' that bring people to the Hills of Headwaters. Namely: Golf, Heritage Towns and Villages, Arts, Trails, Equestrian and Corporate Meetings. The Association's work now, involves facilitating the development of these signature experiences, getting them to a market-ready position, and then launching a marketing campaign. Although the outcome is a marketing campaign specific to a unique experience (for example, golf), by focusing the campaign on an experience we can *pull* visitors who are seeking that particular experience into the Hills of Headwaters region who then have the opportunity to partake in the various ancillary experiences the region offers: dining, shopping, overnight stays, theatre and the list goes on.

With the assistance of \$48,000 in funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Tourism Association has engaged Product Development Coordinator, Michele Harris, who is working with the identified product/experience groups to determine their market-readiness and facilitate the development and delivery of an experience-based marketing campaign.

The following product groups have been struck, and work on their development has begun:

Arts Product Group

Based on a comprehensive study presented in August 2005 by Mitchell Westlake, the Headwaters Arts Network was formed to bring artists together under an umbrella organization to not only promote our arts product, but to provide communication, networking and educational opportunities for regional artisans. The Tourism Association was actively involved in this process and has undertaken the task of facilitating an Arts Product Group that will explore cooperative marketing initiatives to promote the Arts experience to consumers. The Arts Product Group will work in partnership and liaise with the Headwaters Arts Network on a regular basis.

The first initiative of this product group was to develop an Art in the Hills logo, secure a website URL (www.artinthehills.ca) and produce "Art in the Hills" stickers for artisans to use on their products. These are small but important first steps to branding the quality art experience in the Hills of Headwaters region. We encourage all Arts members to use the stickers and logo and to link to www.artinthehills.ca on your web sites.

Heritage Towns & Villages Product Group

The Hills of Headwaters region offers a unique clustering of heritage towns and villages in relative close proximity to one another. In an effort to capitalize on this clustering, stakeholder meetings were held with community representatives, business merchants, business associations and other interested stakeholders to formulate a plan to promote this experience to the consumer. In November 2006, the first Towns & Villages promotion was produced that became the "establishing shot" for this experience into the consumer marketplace. A print piece, distributed through the Globe



& Mail, was produced which framed this experience within the context of a heritage Christmas storybook. An experience-specific web site, www.townsandvillages.ca was developed to complement the print piece and to track visitor interest. Further initiatives, utilizing area events as the key call-to-action, are being planned for 2007.

Corporate Product Group

Identified as a demand generator for our region, we know that meeting planners generally choose their location for corporate travel first based on destination and then based on the amenities in the region. We also know that up to 40% of visitors return to a destination because they were exposed to it at a meeting or convention. To that end, member stakeholders interested in pursuing this opportunity held an initial meeting in January 2007 to discuss working together to promote the Hills of Headwaters region as a premier corporate meeting destination. The group is very enthusiastic about the possibilities of formalizing the linkages between the various regional attractions and the corporate accommodations in order to provide meeting planners a more comprehensive offering.

Golf Product Group

Golf was the first regional experience put into the marketplace in 2005. Now entering its third year, the golf partners will continue to promote the Headwaters Golf Trail into the GTA marketplace in 2007. This year golfers who complete all six courses on the trail will be invited back for a free round of golf at the Headwaters Golf Day on October 14th at Woodington Lake. In addition, those who complete the Golf Trail will be eligible to win one of many golf prize packages include the grand prize, a 2008 Headwaters Golf Trail season's pass. As with the other experiences, the Headwaters Golf Trail has a unique web address. Golfers interested in the promotion can go to www.golfrail.ca.



Equestrian Product Group

Originally identified as a unique tourism opportunity for our region, the Tourism Association recently contracted a study to assess the tourism potential for the equine experience. Results of the report were very positive and the recommendations were



enthusiastically received by close to 40 Headwaters equestrian operators at a presentation at the end of March. Identified by the Ministry of Tourism as having the potential to be a unique experience within the Ontario context, we were thrilled to have 18 of the presentation participants sign-up to be part of a steering committee for the development of this most unique asset in the region.

From the Executive Director

Lisa Hohban Brusse

Over and above our core marketing activities – the Visitor's Guide, Map and Web site – the Tourism Association plays a role in establishing the Hills of Headwaters as a destination within the Ontario tourism product. We do this primarily through participation in a select number of Ontario Tourism marketing programs.

This summer, the Hills of Headwaters is part of Ontario's Sunset Shores and Rural Riches great summer drive campaign. The program is focused mainly on family travel and attractions. For a look at the details of our involvement in this campaign visit: www.ontariotravel.net/greatdrives. Click on Great Summer Drives and then select the Sunset Shores and Rural Riches tour. Use the dynamic web site to explore the cultural, natural and family attractions along the route.

The Headwaters Golf Trail will be featured as one of only six regions in Ontario in the Ontario Tourism 2007 Golf Campaign. Using radio, television and print advertising the Ontario Golf Campaign will drive consumers to an interactive web site where they can find information about the Headwaters Golf Trail and a host of overnight golf packages at Hockley Valley Resort, The Millcroft Inn & Spa and the Best Western Orangeville Inn and Suites. Visit www.ontariotravel.net/golf for a peak at this new and exciting Ontario golf web site.

As with all of our marketing initiatives, the campaign or experience-specific content is built into the Hills of Headwaters web site using branded URLs. For example: www.golfrail.ca, www.greatfalldrives.ca or www.artinthehills.ca. Test out these web addresses yourselves to see how powerful the internet can be!

The Hills of Headwaters is also proud to be featured in two of only eight poster display spaces at the Toronto Tourism Information Centre located at the Atrium on Bay. This Information Centre receives over 100,000 visitors annually. Each year, Cynthia Percival, our Tourism Services Coordinator, visits the Toronto Information Centre to drop-off our Visitor's Guides and Maps and to educate the Toronto staff on the tourism attractions and amenities offered in the Hills of Headwaters. Cynthia also provides training each spring to over 20 telephone operators at the 1-800-Ontario call centre.

Welcome to the following new members!

This past summer, the Tourism Association welcomed 29 new members: Aarts Hair Salon & Aesthetics, Arbutis Grace Studio, Belfountain Inn, Blue Rose Gallery, Carver's Block, Debora's Chocolates, Dolores Greco, Erin Gallery, Friends of the Greenbelt, GDMI Communications, Hockley Hollow River Suites, Howard the Butcher, Jelly Craft Bakery & Café, Killarney Printing, Klementine Designs Inc., Lynbrook Golf Driving Range, Lynn's at the Cataract Inn, Masters Creek Estates, Mortgage Alliance, Mulberry Farm Antiques, Pear Home, Special Things by Julie, The Chocolate Shop, The Family Tree Giftware, The Home Shop, The Olde Stanton Store, The Scented Drawer, Village Bistro & Woodlot Harvest Studio.

And, in the fall, these members were joined by 38 more: Acheson's, Albion Orchards, Autumn Acres Dog Day at the Spa, Belfountain Village Store, Boston Pizza, Clouds Hill Images, Coldwell Banker Terrequity Realty, Country Green Homes, Crazees, Dufferin Garden Centre, Elizabeth Babyn, Emanuel Pontes, Felix & Ginger Salon, Four Seasons Sunrooms, Gallery Gemma, Gallery on the Grange, Getaway Double Decker Tours, Greenhawk Harness & Equestrian Supplies, Greyden Equestrian Facility, Kulhay Wellness Clinic, Lyn Westfall, Orangeville Flowers, Orangeville Music Theatre, Pidel Homes – Berkley Estates, Porcupine Quill, Primrose United Church, Old School House Treasures, Rural Roots Catering, Seasons on Mill St., Simply French, Susan Powell, Stonecroft Inn, The Busholme Inn, The Deck, The Scrap Yard, Visions in the Woods, Watermark - Anne Adams & Yoga in the hills.

Hills of Headwaters Annual General Meeting

Wednesday, June 20th
6:00 pm – 10:00 pm
Hockley Valley Resort

(Cost \$35 plus GST)

RSVP: 519-942-0314

Book your calendar now for an
evening of networking, business,
and merriment!

Visitor Information Centre Statistics

Inquiries:

Jan 2007:	218
Feb 2007	162
March 2007:	236
April 2007:	295

Referrals

(Jan – April, 2007)

Caledon:	611
Erin:	138
Orangeville:	763
Shelburne:	120
Mono:	172
Dufferin:	170

Referral Categories

(Jan – April 2007)

Accommodation:	144
Shopping:	81
Attractions:	74
CVE:	479
Special events:	46
Service:	159
Restaurant:	133
Recreation:	298
Arts & Culture:	66
Directions:	241

Web site activity by month

January 2007

Unique visits: 10,942

February 2007

Unique visits: 11,031

March 2007

Unique visits: 11,383

April 2007

Unique visits: 12,600

CVE = Credit Valley Explorer

From the Web Master

By Valerie Jones (valerie@thehillsofheadwaters.com)

Here are five reasons why you should use the web site tools and add your content to thehillsofheadwaters.com web site:

1. It's promoted via 100,000 print visitors' guides and 150,000 maps.
2. Other marketing initiatives such as the WinterFeast, SummerFeast, Great Fall Drives, the Golf Trail and Towns & Villages bring additional traffic to the web site promoting the area for everyone.
3. All our municipal partners link to us and we have 100's of inbound links – this helps the tourism site rank higher with Google and other search engines than your own web site.
4. When we add articles, rotate the community showcase and create tours we link to the member sites – it helps if your content is correct and up-to-date.
5. Use the Events Calendar (for events) and Headlines Section (stories, news and press releases) to promote your business. Members who use these tools get more traffic to their sites because they rotate on the front page.

Traffic and Web Site Statistics for 2006 – 50 % increase over 2005

Unique Visitors	130,243
Total Visitors	179,826
Pages Viewed	1,446,685 (1.4 million pages viewed on our region!!)
Average # of Pages Viewed per Visit	8 pages – People are staying on the web site when they visit

Search Strings in February

People use the Internet to search for services, make travel plans, research everyday needs and even look up phone numbers. In the month of February, 3579 different key phrases were entered into a search engine and brought visitors to the Hills of Headwaters web site. Here are a few interesting ones... can you guess which members were found by these search strings?

new homes in orangeville, fine dining caledon, indoor golf course, michael dumas, orangeville kennel club, caledon equestrian, wein case, rsp deadline 2007, erin ontario restaurants, aveda orangeville, mille swimwear, erin real estate, mono cliff trail maps, catering services, pottery ontario, antique tin ceiling tiles, tizi manierka, 16500 hwy 50

Tip: Well written, descriptive content will help people find your services and products on the Internet. Think about questions that customers ask you all the time and then tailor your content around those questions. When are you open? What do you sell? Where you are located? And so on.

How Some Members Use the Web Site Tools

We have 228 members with sub sites on thehillsofheadwaters.com. Some of these members have their domains forwarded to their Hills of Headwaters web space and use the Tourism site as their main web site:

villageoferin.ca – promotes their annual events on the calendar and has a directory of things to do, where to stay, dine and shop as well as professional services.

theglobrestaurant.ca – tells the history of their heritage building and has examples of their fine country fare and menus.

hillsoferinstudiotour.com – showcases the work of over 30 artists in the gallery section and has directions and a map to the studio tour.

discoverbroadway.ca – has a member directory, photo gallery, news section, e-newsletter sign up and event listing.

olddowntowngallery.com – features artists and their new works, the gallery's services and an art e-newsletter sign up.

Member Marketing Opportunities

Web Site Banner Ads

See your Business Banner Ad on www.thehillsofheadwaters.com start working for you immediately this month.

Three months for only \$250.

Every time the home pages or sub pages are opened, three of nine rotating Full Colour Banner Icons (with direct links to your Web Site) appear on the viewer's computer screen. Our professionally designed tourism web site has over 130,000 visitors per year with 1.4 million pages viewed in 2006. This translates into thousands of people viewing your business prominently and linking to you directly.

News from the Hills

The Tourism Association's monthly e-newsletter, *News from the Hills*, now with 2,500 subscribers, has been recently enhanced. An article in this very successful 'call to action' communiqué includes a business or event message (150 words), colour image & Web Site link for only \$75/issue.

Alternatively, you can choose the Quick Link option: a 10 word message and Web link for only \$45/issue.

The distribution schedule for 2007 is: May 10, June 14, July 12, August 9, September 13, October 11, November 8 and December 6.

Three Month Electronic Marketing Package

Combine your News from the Hills participation with a three month Web Banner Ad on www.thehillsofheadwaters.com.

The package includes three consecutive months in News from the Hills: a full article and photo the first month followed by a quick link in the two following month. This is supported by a three month Web Banner Ad on thehillsofheadwaters.com.

Price: \$375 (package cost savings of \$40)

Brochure Distribution

Are you looking for an extra way to reach visitors who are visiting the region or seeing family or friends?

Are there local residents, regular diners and shoppers, who are not aware of your business or the new products and services you offer?

The Hills of Headwaters has an extensive network of over 40 high traffic locations with 'self serve' brochure boxes located throughout our region at prominent businesses. As a member, you can subscribe to this program for as little as \$100 for a one time drop or \$195 for a whole year's circulation (prices are based on one standard brochure, some restrictions apply).

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