

# The Tributary



A Newsletter of The Hills of Headwaters Tourism Association

Winter 2007/08

## Message from the Chairperson

Welcome to the 2007 Winter edition of The Tributary for an update on what the Hills of Headwaters Tourism Association is doing on behalf of tourism in your region! It has been a busy summer and fall season. I will highlight a few projects with details in the articles inside this issue.

With funding from The Friends of the Greenbelt, the Marketing Committee created a very successful 'Grown in the Hills' campaign. The campaign theme went well with the summer season, provided linkages with other regional experiences (towns and villages for example) and aligned well with the Greenbelt. Goals for the project included:

- 1) Increase the awareness of the Hills of Headwaters region in the GTA.
- 2) Develop awareness of the Hills of Headwaters as a 'special place' because of our location within Ontario's Greenbelt.
- 3) Draw visitors to the region.

If you haven't already, I encourage you to visit [www.growninthehills.ca](http://www.growninthehills.ca) the campaign web site. It features the radio, photographs and video vignettes that were used during the summer campaign. It's pretty impressive!

WinterFeast and SummerFeast brought our local restaurants together for the second year to offer local residents and visitors fine dining experiences at an affordable price. Plans to make these two events bigger and better are already underway for 2008.

The Board of Directors met for a Strategic Planning Session in September to plan the direction and set the goals required to accomplish our short and long term projects leading us into 2008 through 2010. Our first major project is to conduct an Organizational Review during the first half of 2008. We will be contacting you to solicit feedback to assist with the development of internal communications and marketing strategies for the future.

Articles included in this issue will detail the status/results from each Committee for specific projects, successes of completed and future marketing campaigns, web site growth, membership growth, and the new Centre in the Hills project. 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 region.

As we move into the holiday season, we wish you health and prosperity. I look forward to working with you in 2008.

*Annette Turturici*

### Your Hills of Headwaters Board of Directors

Annette Turturici, 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  
Stacey Coupland, Best Western Orangeville Inn & Suites  
AJ Grace-Cavey – Town of Shelburne  
Natalie Daniel – Town of Caledon

John Gioncola – The Royal Ambassador Event Centre  
Elaine Giles – Hockley Valley Resort  
Jeremy Grant – Historic Alton Mill  
Nancy Huether – Town of Orangeville  
Janine Livingston – Broadway Farms Market  
Kelly Myles – Caledon Country Club  
Wendy Sheedy – Theatre Orangeville  
Nadya Swyrydenko – Juniper Grill & Wine Bar  
Josie Wintersinger – Town of Erin  
Megan Young – Shelburne Golf & Country Club

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## Board of Directors set strategic goals for 2008

This past September, the Board of Directors met for a full day planning session to set the Association's direction for the coming year. There was overwhelming agreement at the session that after five years of growth and increased programming, that there is a need to regroup, assess and reestablish a three to five year plan for the Tourism Association and tourism marketing in the Hills of Headwaters. As their two primary goals for 2008 (in addition to the regular programming of the Association), the Board will:

1. **Source funding and conduct an organizational review** including: obtaining feedback from industry stakeholders, a review of organizational structure and funding model, consultation with accommodation stakeholders on the implementation of a Destination Marketing Fee (DMF), the development of an internal communications strategy.
2. **Source funding and develop a three to five year marketing plan** including: establishing a baseline of brand awareness in the target markets, assessing the role and determining direction for the Visitor's Guide, Map and other print pieces and their integration into the broader online marketing strategy, developing a strategy for reaching the Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) market, developing an external communications strategy, offering a collection of signature experiences that are integrated into the overall marketing strategy of the region.

Both goals are large undertakings and will be dependent on sourcing additional funding by the Tourism Association. We will be sure to keep you updated on the Association's progress.

## Municipal Summit on Tourism

On May 16, 2007 the Hills of Headwaters Tourism Association convened a meeting of municipal partners and industry stakeholders to reach a common understanding of tourism's role in the economy of the region; and to reach a common understanding of the kind of tourism destination that we want to build for the future. The results of the discussions is summarized below:

### Region's greatest tourism asset:

The group expressed a strong association to the region's natural beauty and landscape; the area's peacefulness and connection to its rural heritage. These values expressed through the businesses, organizations and events in the region, coupled with all of the traditional amenities expected by a sophisticated traveler were determined as the Hills of Headwaters greatest tourism asset.

### The beneficiaries of tourism:

There was consensus that tourism brings a benefit to all sectors of a community include local residents, businesses owners, local government, employees in the area, youth and, of course, tourists.

### The downside of tourism:

There were very few downsides of tourism expressed with the exception of the potential impact large numbers of visitors could have on local traffic volumes, the local environment and the quality of life of local residents. These concerns are understandable considering the values expressed above. Care will need to be taken as tourism in the region develops and grows to ensure that this concern is managed in a proactive way.

### Importance of tourism to the community:

Tourism supports business growth, expansion and development leading to increased tax revenues that support community services. Tourism contributes to the economic health of the region's towns and villages, enhances property values and contributes to the quality of life of local residents. Tourism brings jobs and employment to the region.

### The future vision for the Hills of Headwaters as a tourism destination:

The group expressed a strong desire to maintain the authentic rural character of the region, to preserve the wild and natural areas for all to enjoy. Celebrated tourism experiences would be closely linked with the region's natural landscape, agriculture, life sciences, and a productive countryside. There was a desire expressed for the region to become a role model and showcase for environmental responsibility and sustainability thus distinguishing ourselves from other rural destinations. Expanded accommodations, infrastructure improvements, a recognized 'Centre for the Arts' and a university campus would serve to support growth in the tourism sector.

### Centre in the Hills project embraces GREEN

The Board of Directors of the Hills of Headwaters Tourism Association is pleased to announce that leading environmental architect Martin Liefhebber has been contracted to prepare the drawings for a new sustainable (green) Visitor Information Centre on the site of the existing office at the corner of Hwy 10 and Buena Vista Drive in Orangeville.

Martin Liefhebber and Associates will bring a wealth of experience in sustainable building design to the Centre in the Hills project. Their methodology is founded on an appreciation for the natural physics and materials knowledge that taken together result in energy and resource efficiency.

Preliminary concept drawings and project budget are being developed and should be ready for presentation to the membership and community stakeholders early in the New Year.

## From the Executive Director

Lisa Hohban Brusse

At the Hills of Headwaters Tourism Association we are working hard to establish a recognized and positive brand for our region. Many people think that a brand begins and ends with the logo but it's really much more. A brand is the recognition and personal connection that forms in the hearts and minds of a customer through their accumulated experience with the brand *at every point of contact*. Ideally the brand that emerges is a positive one, leading to trust, loyalty and advocacy for ones offerings, increasing shareholder value and establishing long-term advantage in the marketplace.

At its core, the Hills of Headwaters brand celebrates the region's agricultural heritage, our spectacular natural environment at the headwaters of four rivers, our rural roots and the more recent sophistication. During an industry branding workshop in 2003, the essence of the Hills of Headwaters brand was distilled collectively by our membership and stakeholders down to three words: Authentic, Natural, Inviting.

Our challenge now, is to reflect this essence in everything we do and to apply the brand through as many different channels and mediums as possible. For the Tourism Association, as a collaborative marketing organization, this is most cost-effectively done when everyone is working together.

**Are you presenting the Hills of Headwaters region appropriately in your own organization or business marketing materials?**

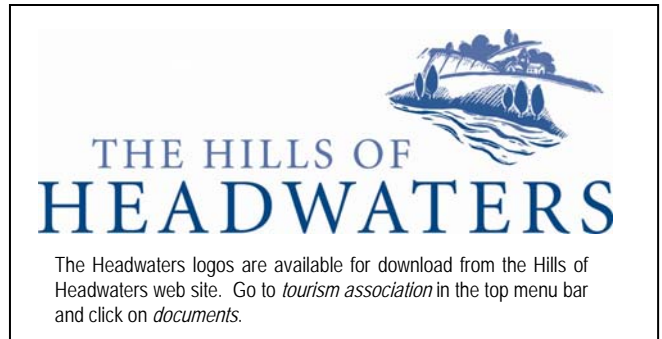
**Are you using the Hills of Headwaters logo on your web site and on your brochure?**

**Are you greeting customers with the warmth and ease that they expect when visiting an inviting and natural rural destination?**

Its the delivery of a collective and consistent Hills of Headwaters experience, across all our communities and businesses that will firmly entrench our brand and set us apart from other competing tourism destinations in Ontario such as Collingwood and the Blue Mountains or St. Jacobs Country.

As a start, I encourage everyone to use the Hills of Headwaters logo in your marketing materials. Tell your customers that you are located in the Hills of Headwaters and why our region is such a special place. On your web site, put a link to [thehillsofheadwaters.com](http://thehillsofheadwaters.com) so that your customers get an appreciation of the scope of what's available and happening in the region. Hopefully they will stay a little longer, spend a little more money, tell a few friends. If all 325 members of the Tourism Association make this their goal, everyone will benefit from the cross-promotion and referrals generated. And - we will strengthen our Hills of Headwaters brand.

For those who don't already have the Hills of Headwaters logo, they are available for download from the Hills of Headwaters web site. Go to *tourism association* in the top menu bar and click on *documents*. Scroll down the list and choose the logo format and colour that best matches your marketing materials. If downloading documents from the internet is a skill you have yet to master, no problem, give us a shout at the office and we'll send you a CD!



## Welcome to the following new members!

10 North Restaurant, AFJ Signs, Abby Lane Horse & Carriage, Aislinn Dressage Inc, Bistro Riviere, Black Birch Restaurant, Blood Moon Alpacas, Budson Farm & Feed Company, Catering Designs, Canadian Hydro Melancthon Wind Plant, Coffey Creek Farm, Dufferin Hi-Land Bruce Trail Club, Elora Cataract Trailway, EVERDALE Organic Farm & Environmental Learning Centre, Family Transition Place, Flaunt, Kevin Flaherty / Sutton Group Realty Brokerage, Foley's Town & Country Photography, Good News Farm, Grand River Furniture, Grand Valley Trails Association, Greystones Inn, Hamilton House B & B, Headwaters Wool, Jennifer Pratt / Equestrian Artist, Karen Lay / Royal LePage RCR Select Realty Brokerage, Looking Back Farm, Lorelee Farms, Lords & Ladies, Headwaters Golf/Hockley School, Hidden Treasures Discovery Bus Tour, High Point Farm, Island Lake Day Spa, Meridian Credit Union, Mono Cliffs Inn, Mono Mulmur Citizens' Coalition, Moorcroft Antiques, No Place Like Home B & B and Day Spa, Plantation Farm Pottery, Rachel Brassard / Royal LePage RCR Realty Brokerage, Robin Stone / Sutton Group Realty Brokerage, Rotary Club of Orangeville, Sandra Brianceau / Johnson Associates, Sergio Rovella / RE/MAX Select Ltd. Brokerage, Simply Gorgeous, S.J. Pringle / Portrait Artist, Teak Barn, The Annual Stop Limited, The Bartlett Gallery, The Plantsmen, Upper Grand Trailway, whitewash & co, Wintersinger's Tree Farm, Women Living Well, Woolly's Yarns and York Soaring.

## The Region's Signature Tourism Experiences

Since the spring of 2007 work has continued, in conjunction with our members, industry partners and stakeholders, towards the development and promotion of signature experiences to attract visitors to the Hills of Headwaters region.

Following work done with the Ministry of Tourism, the following experiences were identified as possible "signature" experiences that are unique to the Hills of Headwaters Tourism region: arts; corporate & meetings; golf; heritage towns & villages; equine & trails.

Provided below is an update on the Tourism Association's work on the development and marketing of the signature experiences over this summer and fall.

### Arts in the Hills

In the late spring of 2007, the Headwaters Arts Network formally endorsed the Hills of Headwaters Tourism Association as the external and tourism marketing group for Art in the Hills, with all the marketing initiatives that fall under this purvey being facilitated, on behalf of artists, by the Tourism Association. Work continues with area stakeholders to determine the best way to promote our member artisans into the larger marketplace. In the meantime, work is underway to develop a specific Art in the Hills landing page: [www.artinthehills.ca](http://www.artinthehills.ca) and populate it with our member artisan and relevant content & images. A companion collaborative ad is currently in production for the 2008 Visitor's Guide. Studio artists can participate in the collaborative ad for as little as \$150!



destination in the province of Ontario. A logo has been finalized, and gate signage ordered (available for delivery late-November 2007). The signage will be available to all Hills of Headwaters equine members at no-charge, while supplies last. Sub-committees are also working on compiling a comprehensive list of regional equine events for publication & promotion, a long term trails strategy, and the first annual Headwaters Stable Tour which is scheduled to be held the weekend of September 13th & 14th, 2008. A unique experience landing page [www.horsesinthehills.ca](http://www.horsesinthehills.ca) will be the portal for all equine promotion. Watch for more exciting details coming soon!

### Corporate Product Group

The make-up of this group has changed recently, with the loss of Hockley Highlands Inn & Conference centre as one of our key corporate event sites. All partners continue to promote our region as a corporate destination, and plans are underway to develop a Meetings in the Hills landing page: [www.meetingsinthehills.ca](http://www.meetingsinthehills.ca) on the Hills of Headwaters website. This web site will provide the Tourism Association with the potential to develop linkages between the various regional attractions and the corporate accommodations in order to provide meeting planners a more comprehensive offering. [Meetingsinthehills.ca](http://Meetingsinthehills.ca) should be completed by early 2008.

### Doors Open in the Hills of Headwaters

On May 5th & 6th, 2007, the Hills of Headwaters facilitated the first annual Doors Open in the Hills of Headwaters weekend (part of the larger provincial Doors Open event). This was an opportunity to promote our Heritage Towns & Villages and area businesses to members of our own communities, as well as to visitors who came from all over Ontario. The event was a great success with 20 local businesses participating and over 3000 visitors taking part in the event. For an overview of the 2007 event, visit the event web site: [www.doorsopeninthehills.ca](http://www.doorsopeninthehills.ca). The stakeholders group is currently in the planning stages for our 2008 event, which is scheduled to take place on the weekend of August 16th & 17th. Participation must be confirmed by mid December – if you're interested in taking part, you should contact the Hills of Headwaters ASAP.

### Horses in the Hills

Following the initial market study and report presentation in March 2007 an enthusiastic group of equine stakeholders and operators have been meeting on a regular basis to develop plans for promoting the region as a premier equine

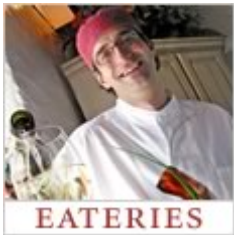


### Golf Product Group

2007 was the third consecutive year for the Headwaters Golf Trail and, following extensive discussions with the Ministry of Tourism; the Headwaters Golf Trail was formally recognized as one of only six premier golf trails in Ontario. Golf in the Hills of Headwaters was featured as part of the Ontario golf campaign on TV, print and online. Although this provided a real boost toward building brand awareness of the Hills of Headwaters as a golf destination, on the ground participation in the Headwaters Golf Trail was weak. The group will meet between now and the end of the year to assess plans for promotion in 2008.



## Grown in the Hills Marketing Campaign



In June of this year, the Hills of Headwaters Tourism Association received funding from the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation to promote food-based tourism experiences in our region. The goal of the campaign was to strategically position the Hills of Headwaters region within the context of the Greenbelt as a sophisticated rural "Greenbelt" tourism destination.

During the seven week summer campaign, which ran from July 23rd through until September 9th, the Hills of Headwaters was profiled to the southern Ontario marketplace through an extensive "Grown in the Hills" radio campaign on two of Ontario's top radio stations – 97.3 EZ Rock and Newstalk 1010 CFRB. Listeners were directed to the special campaign website, [www.growninthehills.ca](http://www.growninthehills.ca), where they received information about food-related tourism experiences in our region, through a series of photographs, audio and video vignettes.

Results of the campaign were extremely positive. Awareness of our region as a destination within the Greenbelt has been increased as measured by over 450,000,000 new media impressions obtained during the campaign.

The Grown in the Hills campaign resulted in a 49% increase in unique visits to the Hills of Headwaters web site growing visitation by 20,926 over a three month period.



The subscriber base of our online electronic newsletter grew by 2122 subscribers when compared to the same time period in the previous year.

An additional 709 subscribers were added to the subscriber base over the duration of the campaign where as in the previous year only 106 subscribers were added over the same time period.



Brand awareness, as measured through the use of the 'Hills of Headwaters' as a search string to find the regional web site, grew by 250 % jumping from 170 uses in August of 2006 to 593 uses in August of 2007.

The Grown in the Hills/Greenbelt project was used as a pilot for future marketing initiatives. A secondary application will be submitted to the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation in early 2008, with the goal to expand this campaign to include our other signature tourism experiences, over the next two years. Stay tuned!

## People are Still "Feasting" in 2007

The second annual WinterFeast and SummerFeast experiences took place in 2007 and both were great successes.



Between February 19th and March 8th, eleven (11) of the finer restaurants in the Hills of Headwaters area participated in the WinterFeast program, serving approximately 950 WinterFeast lunches and dinners – a 40% increase over the previous year. This year a prize draw was added and special ballots promoting each of the participating restaurants and the prizes were distributed throughout the region. The end result saw 342 of these ballots completed and the corresponding

e-mail addresses were added to the Hills of Headwaters' e-newsletter database.

Also, From August 13 to 31st, nine (9) area restaurants served nearly 1,100 SummerFeast lunches and dinners – an increase of 116% versus 2006!! A total of 431 SummerFeast ballots were also collected – again contributing to the e-newsletter subscriber database.

All in all, 2007 was a very successful year for the "Feasts", and though the number of participating restaurants is staying consistent, the amount of activity enjoyed by each is clearly on the increase.

Stay tuned for 2008.



Visitor Information Centre  
2007 Statistics

Inquiries

Jan.....	218
Feb.....	162
March.....	236
April.....	295
May.....	511
June.....	551
July.....	493
Aug.....	418
Sept.....	510
Oct.....	464

Referrals  
(Jan – Oct)

Caledon.....	1829
Erin.....	614
Orangeville.....	2816
Shelburne.....	540
Mono.....	736
Dufferin.....	879

Referral Categories  
(Jan – Oct)

Accommodation.....	579
Shopping.....	354
Attractions.....	546
CVE.....	1067
Special events.....	395
Service.....	667
Restaurant.....	477
Recreation.....	1882
Arts & Culture.....	381
Directions.....	1517

CVE = Credit Valley Explorer

## From the Web Master

By Valerie Jones (valerie@thehillsofheadwaters.com)

### Events Calendar

Are you planning an event? Add your event to the Events Calendar. The event will show up on your site, the events calendar and random events rotate on the front page and through many other sections of the web site. The event posting tool helps you answer all the questions that people need to know: time, date, cost, tickets, contact information and a description – the more you let people know the better they can decide if they want to attend your event.

### Headlines

Do you have a story, news or practical advice to tell? Add your press release or article to the Headlines section of the web site – this also rotates on the front page and now has a news feed. The News or Headline tool is to be used to publicize newsworthy events or accomplishments such as an award, grand opening, festival, anniversary, new menu, concert, closing, fundraiser, item of interest, professional advice etc.

Try these tools – they are a great way to promote your business or organization on the Hills of Headwaters web site.

### Web Site Statistics & Newsletter Subscribers

	2007 (10 months)	2006	2005
Unique visitors	164,361	130,243	84,973
Total visitors	247,806	179,826	120,646
Pages viewed	1,511,736	1,446,685	969,568
E-news subscribers	3905	1964	1301

### Check Your Own Web Stats

Did you know each member has the ability to view their own web site stats?

Login-> Once in the Member's Area, go to *edit content*, you are now in the Dynamic Content Editor. At the bottom left you will see a red headline that reads: *Disk Usage & Bandwidth*. Under that you will see: *View Stats* which is a link to your sub site stats. Check it out.

### Search Strings in October

It always fascinates me what people are searching for and how they come to our web site. People use the Internet to search for services, make travel plans, research everyday needs and even look up phone numbers. In the month of October 6222 different key phrases were entered into a search engine and brought visitors to the web site.

*Here are the top 10: albion hills, heart lake conservation area, forks of the credit, hockley valley resort, pidel homes, terra cotta ontario, glen haffy conservation area, hills of headwaters, cheltenham badlands, the globe restaurant*

## Murder on the Headwaters Express event raises \$2800!

We are pleased to report that the Murder on the Headwaters Express, a dinner tour and fund-raising event aboard the Credit Valley Explorer held on October 20th was a resounding success! Over 120 guests from throughout southern Ontario were treated to a suspenseful evening in a venue that only Orangeville can lay claim to! Many thanks to the folks from the Credit Valley Explorer and David's Restaurant in Erin for supporting the event. The Tourism Association raised \$2800 that will go toward the on-going maintenance and operation of the Visitor Information Centre.