

# St. Catharines Torch Club Bulletin – April 2017

**Next meeting:** Thursday, April 13th  
Social Hour 6 pm, Dinner 7 pm

**Location:** Best Western, St.Catharines

**Dinner:** *Hola!* The April 13th menu will be an *apetitoso* Mexican Buffet!  
*with*  
*Tea, regular or decaffeinated coffee*  
*Vegetarian options available upon request.*

**Cost;** \$25 per person

**Speaker:** Dale Shipley

I was born in St. Catharines and raised near the brow of the escarpment. As a child, I would look out from our garden, across the city to the Lake and the Toronto skyline beyond and wonder what the magnificent arc at the western end of Lake Ontario, now called The Golden Horseshoe, would become during my lifetime. Although I lived and worked in Ottawa, Toronto and abroad for many years, I was happy to return in 2003 to my Niagara roots. I soon discovered that Niagara had not progressed much in the forty years I had been elsewhere. Deep economic scars had become visible in the social fabric and physical deterioration of the small towns and cities. Then, about 2004, discussions about “new urbanism” trends and *smart growth* began to be reported in Niagara and beyond. Soon after, Regional Government decisions set Niagara on a course that offers the potential for sustainable growth, renewed prosperity and healthier lifestyles for those fortunate to live here. My only credentials for daring to make this presentation are my membership for the past ten years on the Region’s Smarter Niagara Steering Committee and my enthusiasm for *smart growth* as a key strategy for Niagara’s future health, prosperity and influence.

**Topic:** Smart Growth for Sustainable Lifestyles

*Smart Growth* is a 21<sup>st</sup> century approach to city and town planning that is sweeping North American cities and towns in response to the imperatives of environmental sustainability and economic viability. Niagara’s early forays into *smart growth* were supported by the Ontario Government’s designation of greenbelt lands around the 12 municipalities that make up Regional Niagara. The greenbelt lands that stretched from Toronto to the Lake Erie shore curbed urban sprawl, reinforced municipal boundaries and protected agricultural lands and sensitive natural habitats. About 2003-2004, the

Regional Municipality of Niagara adopted ten principles associated with *smart growth* from a list of 100 principles endorsed by the Congress of New Urbanism (CNU) in the US. Since then, Niagara has pursued the implementation of ten *smart growth* principles, a prolonged endeavor that remains a work- in-progress throughout the 12 municipalities. This presentation defines *smart growth*, discusses five key principles and shows examples of progress made in Niagara and elsewhere over the past several years toward improving the sustainability of our extraordinarily bountiful and beautiful Region. Niagara's early leadership in *smart growth* policy and practices has encouraged other southern Ontario municipalities to follow suit. What may be needed at this time is better understanding by citizens of the many ways in which *smart growth*, sustainable planning and development practices, economic progress, and healthier lifestyles are interdependent.

**Minutes of Meeting, March 8, 2017, Secretarial notes by Abraham Rempel**  
**Regular Meeting**

Date: March 8, 2017

Location: Best Western

Time: 6:30 - 9:30 PM

Attendance: 30 members, 2 guests

**Welcome:** Michael Manley-Casimir (President)

**Toast:** David Warren (Vice President)

**Prayer:** David Warren's prayer that we "hit a home run."

**Speaker Introduction:** John Northover

Alan Veale was born on a dairy farm, earned a degree in engineering, and was the Director of City Planning for St Catharines for 25 years. More important, Alan married Janet, and together they raised three very accomplished daughters.

***The Future of Beaverdams Creek*** by Alan Veale

Most of us know very little about Beaverdams Creek other than its association with Laura Secord and the battle of 1813 when the Americans sent a force from Ft George. In this battle, the British fired their guns "and they began to runnin," and never came back. Fewer of us still have even seen much of this one-time nondescript little creek that runs from Lundy's Lane in Niagara Fall, flows due west through Thorold South, before heading north on the east side of St Catharines, and emptying into Lake Ontario at Port Weller.

But not our Alan Wheeler. He's hiked and driven many miles of Beaverdams Creek out of sheer personnel interest, and in the process learned much of its history: including its

first water-powered mills, its minor and subsequent full-fledged and still productive hydro-electric power plants, its many dams and aqueducts, its substantial man-made intrusions such as Lake Gibson, and the monstrous topographical forces of the various Welland Canals.

Allas, according to Alan, Beaverdams Creek no longer exists except a for a few small parts, with only one small part still untouched. The only consolation, if we can call it that, is the Creek's amicable and prosperous relationship with the businesses and communities that still flow along its long-gone shores.

**Thanks for the speaker:** Anne Elliott (Past President)

Thanks Alan, for the detailed history of Beaverdams Creek, and (no tongue in cheek) its testimony to human ingenuity and co-operation.

Thanks from the Secretary: David Warren's prayer was answered

#### **Speakers for 2016-17**

Wed. May 10      Steven Bronn: Making Your Money Last in Retirement

Thurs. June 8      Summer Social

#### **Something Special:**

**Minutes of Meeting, January 11, 2017** [with apologies from your Bulletin Editor. Computer software incompatibility delayed this report].

Secretarial notes by Abraham Rempel

Regular Meeting

Date: January 11, 2017

Location: Best Western

Time: 6:30 - 9:30 PM

Attendance: 31 members, 0 guests

Welcome: Michael Manley-Casimir (President)

Doreen Peever arranged for the gift and card for the hotel servers

Prayer: Abraham Rempel

Toast: David Warren

Speaker Introduction: Dave Sydor

Professor Emeritus, Dr Daniel Madar, earned his Masters and Doctorate from the University of Toronto, and taught for 41 years at Brock University. He retired in 2012.

Will We Miss the Cold War? by Daniel Madar

With a view to where we are in world politics, Daniel served up a "meat and potato"

repast of Cold War comestibles. It came with all the trimmings: the bi-polar rivalry of the

U.S.A and the U.S.S.R., a nuclear triad of planes, silos and submarines, Mutually Assured Destruction, backyard bomb-shelters, and the Cuban missile crisis. Does anyone miss it?

What didn't jive was the prevailing liberal and democratic institutions against nouveau communism. At that time, the Soviet Union was truly an ideological threat, all too often perceived as a new world order. And yet, long before the iron curtain came down at the end of Act One, international law and trade regulations were rapidly gaining ground world-wide. Significantly, that allowed for China's peaceable rise to world power status, second only to the U.S.A. But again, the rise came from an increasingly centralized government, even more centralized than Mao Zedong's time.

The question was asked: "Why do governments arm themselves beyond the need for defence?" The consequence, however, was the predictable arming of otherwise non-belligerent countries such as Japan, Australia, Vietnam, Singapore and India. Although Russia and China are no longer ideological threats, their military build-up certainly is, especially now in the face of many diminishing economies.

Enter Vladimir Putin and Donald J. Trump on the world stage of Act Two in which both are perceived as risk takers, rash and unpredictable. The upshot is, by "meat and potato" standards, a volatile and dangerous world similar to the Cold War era. It's a dish none of us want to have served again.

Michael, our Torch President, thanked the speaker with a single but apt statement, "It was an exceptional evening."

Secretarial note: We've had a string of exceptional speakers this Torch year. Not to put myself in the same category by any means, but I expect to deliver an entertaining and humorous paper with powerpoint illustrations next month. Please bring some guests for my, "Millions and Millions: a Modern Myth."