



Trudy Linner took on the challenge of growing a giant pumpkin this summer and came in second in the National competition, sponsored by The Composting Council of Canada. While the \$500 prize was won by a team in Prince Edward Island, Trudy has won the appreciation of all of us for her efforts.



Doug Root was able to have his volunteer hours with our group recognized by his employer, Bell Canada, who generously donated \$500 to support our work. NVCA CAO Wayne Wilson helped accept the donation on behalf of The Friends of the Utopia Gristmill and Park.



Our community's presence at our lease-signing event



And thanks! to the team at Visions of Utopia for their ongoing financial support and tireless help with our efforts.



As a friendly reminder, the rules of all NVCA properties as identified in this photo's signage also hold true for the Utopia Conservation Area.

In the spirit of respect for our natural community treasure, we are asking your help to ensure that everyone is aware that:

- Vehicles should be parked at the entrance way with folks walking in from there. Off-road vehicles are also not permitted in the conservation area.
- The conservation area is for day-use visits only. Neither overnight camping nor fires are allowed.
- The plants and animals that live in the conservation area should not be disturbed.
- Any litter and recyclables should be brought back home.

Thank you for your ongoing trust and support.

We have some really terrific-looking fleece jackets and caps embroidered with the image of the Utopia Gristmill as well as the words, Utopia, Ontario. The jacket is being sold for \$25 + tax and the cap for \$12 + tax. Please contact Linda Sjerps @ 728-8894 if you would like to buy some of these great items.

Friends of the
UTOPIA
Gristmill & Park

Officers of The Friends of the Utopia Gristmill and Park

Chair: Susan Antler (susan@utopia.ca; 737-5314)

Vice-Chair: Jim McCann (726-0292)

Secretary: Linda Sjerps (sjerpsinutopia@hotmail.com; 728-8894)

Treasurer: Susanna Malick (424-2791)



Friends-to-Friends was designed and printed through the support of the folks at Visions of Utopia

Friends-to-Friends

Winter 2008 Newsletter

An Update from The Friends of the Utopia Gristmill and Park

Greetings!

As we embark on our plans for the upcoming year, we thought that it would be good time to also reflect and acknowledge the collective support to-date from our community for the Utopia Conservation Area.

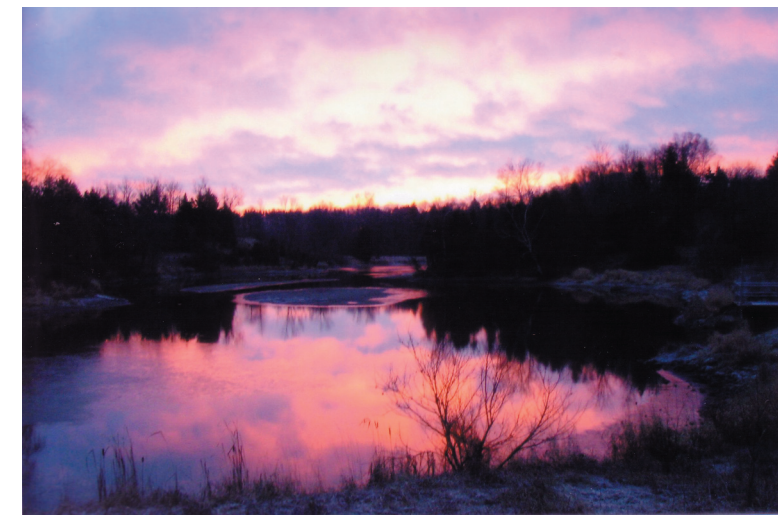
The Friends of the Utopia Gristmill and Park, formerly known as "The Utopia Gristmill Committee", established itself during the past year as a non-profit organization to spearhead the care and management of the Utopia Conservation Area as well as to work towards the restoration of Bell's Gristmill.

On June 21, 2007, we signed a 5-year lease with the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority (NVCA) for the Utopia Conservation Area.

Our vision for the Utopia Conservation Area is to respect the natural beauty of this property and to care for it accordingly.

Our work is being done by volunteers from the community and neighbourhood. To-date, funding for such things as annual park and organizational insurance has been sourced through individual and business contributions. We have done a couple of fundraising initiatives in the past year which has enabled us to keep to our goal of having at least one year of operating monies available in advance of annual bills.

Our committee meets the first Monday evening of each month from 7:30 – 9 pm. Our time together is spent on planning specific events as well as discussing park maintenance and restoration plans. Many hands make light & fun work --- so we would welcome all who might be interested to come and participate in our meetings. And if meetings are not your "thing", there are all kinds of other ways that you can contribute. Just let us know of your interest.



Christmas Sunrise 2006 in the Utopia Conservation Area

Over the next couple of months, we'll be working on a website, Park signage and hopefully, a couple of grant applications. And in keeping with the adage that a picture is worth a thousand words, we thought that we would use photos and the rest of this newsletter to review some of our initiatives in 2007.

Thank you to everyone who has given of their time, money and involvement to make our stewardship of the Utopia Conservation Area possible.

We have lots of work ahead of us but know that, together, all is possible.

Friends of the
UTOPIA
Gristmill & Park



Our Great Compost Sale

Saturday June 2nd

Envirem Technologies, which operates a series of composting facilities in Atlantic Canada, donated a truckload of their finest compost, bark mulch and other soil products for our cause. Not only did they donate the product but they also paid for its shipping all the way from New Brunswick! And when it arrived, Dave Dobson very generously helped with the unloading.

Thank you Envirem Technologies and thanks to everyone who came out to make our event a sold-out success. Our sale raised \$2104 which almost pays for the annual insurance



Dave Dobson helps to unload the precious cargo from New Brunswick



Conrad Guergis, George Catt and Earl Antler help with the lifting



Kyle Sjerps and Floy Catt keep things moving

costs associated with the park and our community group.



Getting close to being sold out...



Linda Sjerps helps spread the Compost Sale message

Celebrating Our New Lease on Life

Thursday June 21st

The Friends of the Utopia Gristmill and Park entered into a five-year lease arrangement with the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority (NVCA) to care for and manage the Utopia Conservation Area. NVCA Chair Fred Nix and Chief Administrative Office (CAO) & Secretary-Treasurer Wayne Wilson were present to explain and sign the lease. And the Children of Utopia presented NVCA Chair Nix with full payment of the annual fees for the lease's term (actually we have paid for an additional year as one of the children needed a little bit of extra convincing to give up the dollar for "his" year. And, so as to not hold things up, we pulled out another dollar and handed it over, at about the same time he decided that paying the lease was a good thing.)



Jim McCann, Linda Sjerps and Susan Antler sign the lease on behalf of The Friends of the Utopia Gristmill and Park; NVCA Chair Fred Nix signs on behalf of the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority in the presence of CAO Secretary-Treasurer Wayne Wilson

The fees for the annual park lease are paid on behalf of The Friends of the Utopia Gristmill and Park by the Children of Utopia

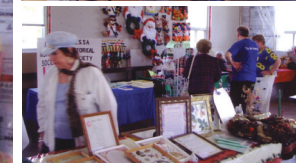


Aileen Speers and George Catt cut the occasion's celebratory cake

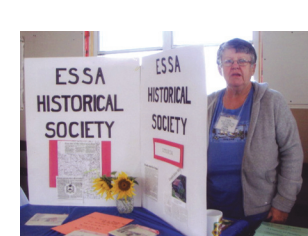
The Utopia Sunflower Festival

Saturday September 29th

Thanks to Tom Smith and his generosity in planting a field of sunflowers this past summer, our 2nd Annual Sunflower Festival lived up to its name. Local organizations were invited to join together to offer their talents and wares at our Saturday morning sale at the Utopia Community Hall that was well-attended by our community.



The Ladies of St. George's as well as the Country Crafters Club continue to delight our community's tastebuds and decorating needs.



Joan Truax of the Essa Historical Society helped share our community's history with the festival's attendees.



Community Donations to the Angus Food Bank

Christmas Party for the Children of Our Community

Sunday December 2nd

A special Christmas party was held for our community's children as a way to begin the season's celebrations. And much to our surprise, a special North Pole visitor also arrived to make the afternoon even more memorable.

