

Opinion

MUSKOKA MOSAIC

Introducing Terry Smith

BY PAULA BOON

Terry Smith is always late for appointments, which is funny considering that the Port Sydney watch and clockmaker has spent the past 35 years surrounded by timepieces.

Born and raised in Huntsville, Smith began working at Northey Jewellers soon after finishing high school. "Ted Briggs was retiring and Bob (Northey) was interested in someone to be the watch repairer," he says.

In 1974 Smith enrolled in one of only two watchmaking programs in Canada at Red River Community College in Winnipeg. During his year there, he met his wife Iris, who returned to Huntsville with him. "We said we would give it a year and see how it went," he says. "We're still here."

Smith drove to North Bay once a week for a year to work with a certified watchmaker and then spent six months in Toronto for an advanced finishing course at George Brown College.

In 1977 he wrote and passed his board exams and became a member of the Ontario Watchmakers' Association. At the time, the association had between 600 and 700 members. Now, it no longer exists.

"I'm part of a dying breed," Smith says. "Some people in the industry today are just movement-changers. They don't actually sit down, disassemble and repair something. There are 350 parts in the watch I'm wearing. To take them all out and put them back together takes time."

Despite living in an increasingly throwaway culture,

Smith is kept very busy with work from clients across the province. "I've never advertised," he says. "It's all word of mouth."

When asked what is most rewarding about his job, Smith answers, "It's the smile of satisfaction when you hand back a piece of their heritage – that and educating people about the care of their timepieces."

Since the 1970s, Smith has also been the person responsible for the smooth running of the Huntsville town hall clock. Once a week he winds the clock by cranking a 1,800-pound weight up one and a half storeys, ensures that the hands are accurate, and performs any necessary maintenance. "It's a big responsibility," he says. "I see it as keeping Huntsville's past in time with the present."

As he gets older, Smith's appreciation for what he's working on grows, whether it's the town clock or the grandfather clock someone has inherited from a relative. "Every time I open a watch there's a story inside," he says. "There are marks from repair jobs a hundred years ago. I can see what people have done, what they should have done, and what they didn't do."

While his focus when he was younger was on establishing his business, Smith says that now he is absorbed in the job at hand. "I'm very aware that if I repair a grandfather clock now and it runs for 20 years, this is probably the last time



I'll repair it," he says.

In his workshop, Smith has many "drawers of history" filled with antique pocket watches and old wristwatches. He plans to start a website and distribute parts to those who can use them. "Having cleaned out several watchmakers' estates, I don't want my kids to have to do that," he says. "Besides, there are so many useful parts there that would just look like junk to someone who didn't know. It would be a shame for them to be sent to the dump."

When he's not doing house calls or working in his basement shop, Smith loves spending time with Iris, his grown children Sean and Lindsay, and granddaughter Ariana.

He also enjoys gardening in the yard of the home he and Iris bought on the Muskoka River eight years ago. "It's good to get my hands dirty when my job is so clean," he says.

Goaltending in hockey and playing baseball also give him a chance to be out with people and get physical. "You can't throw a watch," he says with a grin.

Whether it's at work or play, dedication is central to who Smith is. He says, "If you make a commitment, you follow through with it and don't run away when times get tough."

Thanks to Cathy Olliffe for suggesting that Terry Smith be profiled.

LETTERS

Town's shelter decision based on rumours, hearsay

Re: *Animal shelter woes continue*, Huntsville Forester article, April 22.

Last year the town of Huntsville started this farce and cancelled their contract with the animal shelter. The town apparently got complaints about the shelter. Now, if those had been serious, something would have been done immediately.

Otherwise, someone neglected his or her duty. If they were less serious, why not talk to the shelter directly or offer help and support? The town did not communicate with the shelter, either. Would that not have been the first course of action? They sent Dr. McLeod for an inspection (was there any legal basis for that?), even though it already was decided to cancel the contract with the shelter.

Dr. McLeod was misled, used, and I think discarded. I have known Dr. Jason McLeod of the Algonquin Animal Hospital for eight years. He is a compassionate and competent vet. The same applies to all of his staff.

I have known the animal shelter for about 10 years and donated my time and money because it is a worthy cause. The people working there do a great job with limited time and resources. They deserve all the support we can give them, now more than ever.

The cat quarters at the shelter are cramped and crowded most of the time. That is not the shelter's fault, but mainly the fault of those who don't get their cats spayed or neutered. The dog section is noisy and wild if a stranger walks in. But it is not overcrowded. Since almost all of the complaints were about the cat quarters I ask myself, and those in power, how does it help the cats if the town does not bring pound dogs to the shelter anymore? Cats cannot be kept in the dog section, and cats and dogs are housed on different levels in the building. There were no problems with the dogs at the shelter. What are they thinking at the town? Why are they trying to punish the shelter?

If I compare the conditions my own dogs live in I could complain for hours about the situation at the shelter, for both dogs and cats. The shelter is a shelter, not a home. Compromises are necessary, unfortunately, unless we get more volunteers and more support. Everybody working there does much more than most of us are willing to do if we get paid for it, let alone voluntarily.

The town's actions in the matter appear to be despicable, and they seem to have ulterior motives. Why does this "problem" (that the town created in the first place) require closed sessions, where Mayor Doughty turns away the shelter's board members, even though that meeting on Nov. 21, 2008 was pre-arranged with them? Shelter board members were also excluded from a closed meeting of the safety and enforcement committee discussing the matter on March 27.

In a letter to the shelter on Dec. 18, 2008, the town wrote: "The reason for the termination of the agreement is due to the fact that it appears to the town of Huntsville that the Animal Shelter for Huntsville has failed to meet the terms and conditions of the contract."

Well, it "appears," and they state it as a "fact," that it only appears. That means they either don't really know why they are terminating the contract with the shelter, or they know, but want to hide it from us. If I do not really know the facts I write, "It appears to me." And it appears to me that the cancellation of the contract with the shelter is not legally valid, since the town cannot and should not make decisions on something they don't really know. It is unprofessional to decide on rumours and hearsay, especially if there appears to be a hidden agenda. In the case of our town officials it is highly suspicious, if not outright illegal.

The letter of Dec. 18 also contains the words, "The notice to terminate the contract may be revoked." Now there is a chance.

Gustav Norra
Dwight

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

E-mail: letters@huntsvilleforester.com

When sending letters to the editor be sure to include your name, address and phone number Unsigned letters cannot be used.

Community production of *Oz* was pure wizardry at work

A prominent Huntsville playwright was heard to remark last week that *The Wizard of Oz* was "one of the best productions ever to come out of Muskoka."

It was a sentiment echoed by many who saw the musical at the Algonquin Theatre, a lavish show that recently played to 3,600 people over the course of 10 shows.

Bringing a community musical back to Huntsville has been a longtime vision of Huntsville community theatre thespian and director Gregg Evans. It was not an easy feat, bearing in mind the financial cost and number of people required to make such an event successful.

Last year, Evans approached the Huntsville Festival of the Arts (HFA) and the Huntsville Rotary Club for help in re-launching the annual spring musical tradition. With a leap of faith, they came on board and together, with some 200 volunteers clocking up more

than 15,000 hours, Evans' dream became reality.

The resulting show was a visual and aural feast, from the wonderful sets, the great music emanating from the orchestra pit and the fabulous costumes and props to the incredibly talented cast.

The production was a success that surpassed all expectations. It was once said, "If you build it, they will come," and the people of Muskoka came in droves. That support, through net proceeds, will benefit a number of worthwhile local projects supported by Rotary and the HFA.

If *Oz* is any indication of what the future holds for the annual community musical, we say, "Welcome back!"

Gillian Brunette
Huntsville Festival of the Arts
board member
Huntsville

Musical was a huge success

Bravo to the Huntsville Festival of the Arts, the Rotary Club of Huntsville, Gregg Evans and the amazing actors and behind-the-scenes supporters of the recent totally delightful production of *The Wizard of Oz*.

This community never ceases to amaze me with its talent, energy and willingness to create opportunities for fun, excitement and learning for young and old alike. Add that to the commitment to use the proceeds of such efforts to support local projects and

you have a truly winning combination for everyone.

With the availability of our beautiful Algonquin Theatre as the perfect venue, I certainly hope that this particular partnership, the festival, rotary and North Muskoka Players, will continue to thrive. I, for one, look forward to many future productions.

Thank you to everyone involved.

Lela Shepley-Gamble
Huntsville

CNIB thanks its volunteers

April 19 to 25 marks National Volunteer Week in Canada. To mark this important occasion, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) would like to thank all its volunteers for their hard work and dedication to people living with vision loss.

CNIB was built on the work of volunteers: the leadership of Colonel Edwin Baker, who lost his sight in the First World War, and six other dedicated volunteers led to the founding of the CNIB in 1918. Currently, CNIB has over 10,000 volunteers that contribute at every level of the organization,

all across the country — from working in offices to travelling to provide support to people with vision loss in their homes and in rural communities. Our volunteers are certainly at the heart of what we do.

On behalf of all the staff and clients at CNIB, we would like to thank all our volunteers for their efforts in helping us achieve our mission of enhancing independence for Canadians with vision loss and promoting vision health.

Marilyn McGale, Rosemary Kitney, service managers, central region



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PICK OF THE WEEK**
2005 CHEV EQUINOX



3.4 L, 6 cylinder engine, auto,
39,994 km. Stk # TP9074

WARRANTY

\$15,995

2006 CHEV SILVERADO Z71 OFF-ROAD



5.3 L, 8 cylinder engine,
auto, 44,674 km.
Stk # TP8587-A

\$23,995

2003 BUICK CENTURY



3.4 L, 6 cylinder engine,
auto, 89,099 km.

Stk # 9100

\$7,995

2003 CHEV UPLANDER



6 cylinder engine, auto,
106,192 km.

Stk # 6645-B

\$7,995

2005 GMC CANYON



3.5 L, 6 cylinder engine, auto,
57,503 km. Stk # 9075

WARRANTY

\$15,995

2005 CHEV SILVERADO



5.3 L, 8 cylinder engine, auto,
80,396 km.

Stk # 8666

\$15,995

2007 BUICK ALLURE CXL



3.8 L, 6 cylinder engine,
auto, 30,376 km.

Stk # 9137-A KM

\$16,995

2006 PONTIAC VIBE



1.8 L, 4 cylinder engine,
manual trans, 104,766 km.

Stk # 9059

\$12,995

2006 CHEV MALIBU



2.2 L, 4 cylinder engine,
auto, 67,020 km.

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