

This week's Muskoka Mosaic: Introducing J.P. Ledez

By Paula Boon

Jean-Paul (J.P.) Ledez cares about making sure the roads of Ontario are safe.

A driver improvement counsellor with the Ministry of Transportation, Ledez spends most of his time conducting group education sessions for seniors. "Before 1996, when seniors reached 80 they had to do a road test," he explains. "Now they do a vision test, group education session and knowledge test."

During education sessions, Ledez provides information about how aging affects driving, gives safety tips, reviews the rules of the road, and tells participants about recently passed laws, such as the need to move over for emergency vehicles which are pulled over at the side of the road.

Ledez says often the seniors are apprehensive, especially about the knowledge test. "I try to get them to relax," he says. "I tell them, 'I'm not here to take your licence away; I'm here to help you drive safely and keep you on the road longer.'"

He understands their concern, though. "If you live in Toronto and can't drive, you have the bus and subway," he says. "If you live in Muskoka you would have to rely on taxis, friends or neighbours."



FRIENDLY FACE: Ministry of Transportation driver improvement counsellor J.P. Ledez does everything he can to put seniors at ease when they attend the group education sessions he conducts. Ledez and his wife Penny moved to the area in 2002.

Ledez says he really enjoys spending time with the seniors. "The people I meet are just so interesting," he says. "Listening is a big thing. In this job, you can't always do the talking. You have to listen, too."

Conducting sessions all over northern Ontario, Ledez sees 200 to 250 seniors every month. This makes for a lot of time away from

home, but Ledez says he doesn't mind because he loves his job so much.

While former students often recognize him in the grocery store and he has even had some letters of thanks, Ledez was surprised when one of them recommended him for a Muskoka Mosaic profile. "That really made me feel appreciated," he says.

The other part of Ledez's job is to conduct interviews for novice drivers who reach six demerit points and fully licensed drivers who reach nine demerit points. "Those people have to come in and talk about how they are going to change and why they deserve to keep their driver's licence," he explains, quickly adding, "We're not enforcement, we're counsellors. We want to help people change their attitudes about driving. People don't realize how important their driver's licence is until they are going to lose it."

Born in Brittany, France, Ledez moved to the Toronto area at age three. As an adult, he spent more than two decades working at Pearson International Airport, where he met Penny, his wife of 32 years.

Next, he became a driver examiner in Brampton and worked his way up to the position of supervisor. Then, about 12 years ago, he

moved to Huntsville as the supervisor of the Driver Examination Centre. "My wife and I had been up for vacations a couple of times. We really like it up here," he says. "When the opportunity arose for the supervisor's position, I jumped at the chance."

In 2002, when driver examination services were contracted out, Ledez decided he wanted to stay with the Ministry of Transportation and applied for his current position as a driver improvement counsellor.

Ledez lives in Port Sydney, where he and Penny built a home five years ago. "My wife and I love to garden," he says. "We are constantly moving rocks, building rock gardens."

In his free time, Ledez also likes

to play cards, golf and spend time with his three daughters and their children. "My daughter Jacqueline and her kids, Zoe and Christopher Jack live with us, so I get to see them a lot," he says.

When asked to describe himself, Ledez shrugs and says, "I'm just down to earth."

Ledez plans to retire in about four years, but he hopes to keep doing the seniors' sessions on a part-time basis. "I just like it so much," he says. "And the biggest thing I've learned when I talk to seniors is if you don't keep busy and active, you stagnate."

Thanks to Joan Young for suggesting that J.P. Ledez be profiled. Explore the complete collection of Muskoka Mosaic profiles online at www.thelifecollector.com.



BIG BIKERS: The Deerpark team stops for a photo prior to riding the big bike on May 24 to raise money for the Heart and Stroke Foundation. Thirty per cent more teams participated this year than in 2008, raising \$18,000, which was 35 per cent more than last year. Big Bike for Stroke was hosted by Robinson's Your Independent Grocer.

DOWNTOWN HUNTSVILLE PRESENTS THE 31ST ANNUAL

DOWNTOWN HUNTSVILLE

FIREFLY FESTIVAL

MIDNIGHT MADNESS

Friday, July 19, 2009

6:00 P.M. - MIDNIGHT

MAIN STREET WILL CLOSE AT 5:00 P.M.

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The Muskoka Jazz Guys

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PUBLIC NOTICE BOARD

LAKE BAYS TOWNSHIP

1012 Dwight Beach Road, RR#1
 Dwight, Ontario POA 1H0
 phone: 705-635-2272 fax: 705-635-2132
 Hours of operation: Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The Corporation of the Township of Lake of Bays • NOTICE
 The following is a list of roads that the public works department will be scheduling work to be completed on in 2009.
Millar Hill Road - Rehabilitation • Rat Bay Road - Slurry Seal • Maplehurst Road - Slurry Seal • West Oxbow Lake Road - Gravel Surfacing • Walker Glenn Crescent - Gravel Surfacing
 The above list is subject to change based on budget approvals.
 *****Residents that reside on these roads are advised that they***** could experience delays from time to time.
 We ask for your patience and understanding in these matters
 Detailed information can be obtained at the Township of Lake of Bays Public Works Garage, located at 1030 Dwight Beach Road, from Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Tom Brown C.R.S.S., C.M.M.III Emergency Mgt. Professional
 Director of Public Works, Township of Lake of Bays, 1012 Dwight Beach Road, Dwight ON POA 1H0 (705) 635-2851

The Corporation of the Township of Lake of Bays has been embarking on a Strategic Planning Process. We need your help!
 Every year the Township of Lake of Bays decides how to spend your tax dollars. It's vital to make sure these decisions reflect what is important to the whole community over the next five years. We need your help to provide this direction.
To GET INVOLVED please attend one of the following public meetings:
 • Tuesday, July 14th - Baysville Community Centre, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.
 • Thursday, July 16th - Dorset Recreation Centre, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.
 • Saturday, July 18th - Dwight Community Centre, 9:00 to 12 noon
 • or visit the municipal website at www.lakeofbays.on.ca

TOWNSHIP OF LAKE OF BAYS • TENDER NO. 2009-11
Supply of Aggregates 5/8 Crushed Granite
 The Public Works Department is tendering for the Supply of Aggregates. Sealed tenders plainly marked as to the contents will be received by the undersigned until **1:00 P.M. on Monday, August 10th, 2009**
 Further information may be obtained by contacting:
LAURI ROMANKO, PUBLIC WORKS SUPERVISOR - ROADS
 Township of Lake of Bays, 1012 Dwight Beach Road, Dwight, ON POA 1H0 (705) 635-2851 or (705) 635-2272
 Tender packages are available at the Municipal Office or on the Municipal website at www.lakeofbays.on.ca
 Tenders will be opened at 1:10 p.m. on August 10th, 2009 in the Municipal Office committee room.

TOWNSHIP OF LAKE OF BAYS • TENDER NO. 2009-10
FOR THE SUPPLY OF SCREENED WINTER SAND
 The Public Works Department is tendering for Supply of Screened Winter Sand. Sealed tenders plainly marked as to the contents will be received by the undersigned until **1:00 p.m. on Monday, August 10th, 2009**. Tenders will be opened at the Township of Lake of Bays municipal office (Committee room) on Monday, August 10th, 2009 at 1:05 p.m. and approved at the regular meeting of Council held on Tuesday, August 11th, 2009.
 Tender packages are available at the Municipal Office or on the Municipal website at www.lakeofbays.on.ca
 Further information may be obtained by contacting:
LAURI ROMANKO, PUBLIC WORKS SUPERVISOR - ROADS
 Township of Lake of Bays, 1012 Dwight Beach Road, Dwight, ON POA 1H0 (705) 635-2851 or (705) 635-2272

TOWNSHIP OF LAKE OF BAYS • TENDER NO. 2009-12
Supply and Connection of a Diesel Generator
 The Public Works Department is tendering for the Supply and Connection of a Diesel Generator at the Baysville Community Centre/Arena. Sealed tenders plainly marked as to the contents will be received by the undersigned until **1:00 P.M. on Monday, August 10th, 2009**
 Further information may be obtained by contacting:
 Township of Lake of Bays
Tom Brown, C.R.S.S., C.M.M.III Emergency Mgt. Professional, Director of Public Works
 1012 Dwight Beach Road, Dwight, ON POA 1H0 (705) 635-2851 OR (705) 635-2272
 Tender packages are available at the Municipal Office or on the Municipal website at www.lakeofbays.on.ca
 Tenders will be opened at 1:15 p.m. on August 10th, 2009 in the Municipal Office committee room.

Visit us at www.lakeofbays.on.ca