

# Muskoka Mosaic: Introducing Wayne Stahls

By Paula Boon

Wayne 'Hackett' Stahls believes in working hard and doing your best. "If you're going to do a job, do it right or don't do it at all," he says.

He also believes in the importance of family and treasures the time he spends with his wife of 26 years, Wendy, and their children Joshua, Jacob and Jillian.

A former lacrosse player and coach, Stahls says that his athletic experiences shaped his approach to life. "I learned a lot through lacrosse, especially about responsibility and being part of a team," he says.

Stahls started playing lacrosse in 1959 and went on to win four provincial championships at the novice and peewee levels. He also played five years of junior lacrosse, followed by Senior A lacrosse in Windsor and Owen Sound and Senior B lacrosse in Huntsville before retiring in 1984.

None of his successes would have happened without his coaches. "Jim Bishop was there all the way through," says Stahls. "And Donnie Stinson, a good fishing buddy of mine, coached the Junior B team in 1973. We were wild back then, but he had the discipline to get the best out of us."

Stahls followed in his mentors' footsteps and spent 18 years coaching minor and junior lacrosse, first in the late '70s and then through the '90s, when his sons were playing. "It was neat to coach my boys and see their progress," he says.

In 1995 Stahls was named coach of the year for this zone. He was coaching three teams at the time. "I pretty much lived at the rink," he says.



GOOD MEMORIES: Wayne Stahls stands in front of a lacrosse net in his backyard with a handmade wooden lacrosse stick crafted in 1973. Stahls has many good memories of his time as a player and coach.

Stahls' athletic achievements and contributions also extend to hockey: he was on three all-Ontario minor hockey teams as goaltender and played in the sportsman league for 17 years, as well as coaching some minor hockey.

A strong work ethic has always been part of Stahls' life outside the arena as well. The fourth of seven kids, he grew up in the West End of Huntsville, and by age 9 he was peeling potatoes at a restaurant for \$10 a week.

After high school, he worked for 19 years at Dominion/A&P and another nine at National Grocers. Now, he does maintenance

work for Dr. John Koncan and Dr. Doug Raynor as well as custodian of both Trinity United Church and St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. As custodian, he is responsible for general maintenance, cleaning, setting up for groups and cleaning up afterward.

"It's demanding," he says. "You're there all the time."

Stahls takes great pride in his work, and he enjoys interacting with members of the congregations. "It's a good bunch of people," he says.

He particularly enjoys hosting weddings

and answering visitors' questions about parking, places to eat and places to stay. "Plus, I get to see the expression on the groom's face when the bride's 10 minutes late," he says with a laugh. "Well, you're here, that's the main thing, I'll tell him."

Due to some recent health problems, Stahls and his wife Wendy now tackle the custodian's job as a team. "That takes the pressure off and we enjoy it," he says.

In his free time, Stahls also cuts grass and clears snow for neighbours. "I don't have to look for work. People often call me with jobs," he says.

And he loves to keep busy. "I have no plans to retire," he says. "I'd go stir crazy doing nothing."

Stahls and his wife are big supporters of the military. "Our nephew Donnie LeBlanc has done three tours of duty in Afghanistan," he says.

As a result, they have a Support Our Troops sign in their front yard and wear red on Fridays as a sign of support.

Faith is also important to Stahls, who attends Allsaw Pentecostal Church near Minden, where Wendy's sister is the pastor. "You have your good times and your bad times in life, and it's a lot easier if you've got God on your side," he says. "Then you've got hope."

In every aspect of his life, he appreciates the feeling of community. "It's good to see people helping people," he says. "That's what it's all about, really."

Thanks to Cathy Faubert for suggesting that Wayne Stahls be profiled. To explore the complete collection of Muskoka Mosaic profiles go to [www.thelifecollector.com](http://www.thelifecollector.com).

## Fractional ownership taxes have local politicians fuming

By Matt Driscoll

The government calls it a correction that's long overdue, but some local politicians say it's nothing short of a cash grab.

Earlier this month, Progressive Conservative MPPs, including local representative Norm Miller, demanded that Ontario's minister of finance reconsider imposing the land transfer tax on fractional ownership properties. In particular, Miller takes issue with the fact that the tax will be imposed retroactively.

Miller, who is also the PC finance critic, called the plan a threat to the tourism industry and economic development.

"I am very concerned by this government's regressive tax scheme to apply the land transfer tax to fractional ownerships. That is why I personally asked the finance minister, Dwight Duncan, to review and reconsider the policy," said Miller. "Applying the tax retroactively only adds insult to injury and can only be viewed as a tax grab."

Miller said fractional ownership represents the "next generation of transient tourism accommodation," and is a system that has helped reinvent many older resorts and lodges, particularly in Muskoka.

"This policy could ... kill it just as it's getting started and seriously damage the potential for economic development in many regions of the province," said Miller.

The local MPP said he has already hosted

a meeting between the Ministry of Revenue and several local fractional property owners. He said he has also spoken with Duncan directly about the issue.

"He really didn't seem to know very much about it," said Miller. "I think it's possible that the change was made without his knowledge."

Miller said he has already received at least 30 e-mails from concerned constituents and he expects to see a lot more as the province continues to crack down.

Miller is being backed by fellow MPP Peter Shurman, who represents Thornhill and is the PC critic for economic development.

"I've received letters and calls from constituents who have been advised that as members of owners' associations in what are effectively time shares, they will be subject to the Land Transfer Tax Act applied retroactively to the date of purchase of their membership," said Shurman. "This is at best a tax grab and certainly constitutes an abuse of the powers of taxation by this government."

For its part, the ministry responsible for administering the land transfer tax said last week that it has always been its policy to collect the tax on fractional ownership cottages.

"The Ministry of Revenue was not immediately aware of these transactions. As the transfers usually occur outside the realm of land registry offices, it is more diffi-

cult to track the transactions," said ministry spokesperson Anna Giannini. "As a result the ministry is following up with fractional ownership associations and owners to ensure that the tax is applied evenly. Some fractional ownership transfers were reported to the ministry and the tax paid."

Minister Duncan did not respond directly to the criticism, but Giannini said he was "aware of the situation" and would communicate with those affected.

According to Muskoka Lakes Township mayor Susan Pryke, that communication has been sorely lacking thus far.

"Usually with something like this we get a heads up from the government or through the AMO (Association of Municipalities of Ontario), but I had literally never heard of this before (last week)," said Pryke.

Muskoka Lakes has seen a boom in fractional ownership properties over the past decade, and the land transfer tax will likely hit more property owners there than in most other municipalities in Ontario.

"We have a great number of resorts that chose that route and the rules, to them,

will seem to have changed," said Pryke. "It doesn't impact taxation for our municipality but ... for those residents who purchased a unit in good faith seven years ago, this will come as a surprise."

Pryke called the application of the land transfer tax to fractional ownership properties a "creative interpretation" of the existing rules.

"There's no bill in the legislature. No one is voting on this. They've just decided they're going to do it," said Pryke. "The ministry will interpret that decision one way, and the opposition will interpret it another. The people who own these units are the ones who will be impacted, and they're the ones I feel sorry for." Pryke's primary concern is that the ministry has decided to apply the tax retroactively.

"If the province wants to do it, that's their right. What I find difficult is that it's retroactive," said Pryke. "If you're going to do something new you start from that date and move forward so those who purchase the properties can be prepared. I think retroactive taxation of any nature isn't right."

## Tembec plant has not closed

A company official says news of the closure of the Huntsville Tembec plant is exaggerated.

Word had been circulating through town that the mill had closed its doors.

"The hardwood sawmill continues to run three days a week," said John Valley, the company's executive vice-president of business development and corporate affairs. "Other than that we simply do not, will not tend to ever, respond to rumours. That is all I will give you on the record."

Late last year, Tembec announced 30 new jobs would be created at the plant in Huntsville as part of a multi-million-dollar investment into the Muskoka operation. The move was part of a consolidation of all of Tembec's manufacturing for hardwood flooring activities into the Huntsville plant. The investment was projected to bring the employment level at the Muskoka operation to around 125 employees.

However, like many companies tied to the forestry industry, Tembec has seen its share of recent setbacks. In June, the company announced it was temporarily closing all four sawmills in Northern Ontario. It also confirmed that two B.C. sawmills would be idled. The shutdowns, according to Tembec, were the result of the rapid and significant appreciation in the value of the Canadian dollar, continued weak markets for lumber, and the need to manage inventories and working capital.

Financial statements on the company's website show consolidated sales for the three-month period ending June 27 were \$407 million, down from \$609 million in the comparable period of the prior year. The company generated a net loss of \$38 million or \$0.38 per share in the June 2009 quarter.

Tembec is a large, diversified and integrated forest products company. With operations principally located in North America and in France, the company employs approximately 9,000 people. Tembec's common shares are listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange under the symbol TBC.

Additional information on Tembec is available on its website at [www.tembec.com](http://www.tembec.com).

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