Introducing Shannan Boothby

By Paula Boon

SHANNAN BOOTHBY

Shannan Boothby is passionate about her family, her community and animals of all kinds.

Not only has the young woman from Port Cunnington, near Dwight, always had dogs and a "herd" of cats, but Boothby's dream is to be a conservation officer one day. For now, though, her love of wildlife and nature is expressed through photography. After being told for years that she should sell her photographs, Boothby decided to take the plunge last year, when she was accepted into Bracebridge's juried art show Art in the Heart. This summer she sold her work at several farmer's markets, and her photos can also be found at the Village Potter in Utterson. "My dad was a big influence on my photography, from buying me my first camera at the age of nine to encouraging my creative side and pushing my abilities with our annual fall photo competition we always have," she says. "Without the encouragement from my family, I never would have started Shannan Boothby Photography, and I'm so glad I did."

Most days Boothby, who also owns Ripples Web Design, can be found working from home. "It's perfect," she says. "I can be there with my dogs and I can work when and where I want to. If it's a nice day I can go out and then work all night. And I love boating. It's great to take my boat and my camera and say, 'I'm working.'"

While she enjoys designing websites, Boothby doesn't want to sit at a desk all day. "I often take my computer to the patio or boat," she says. "When I need a break from typing I go take some pictures."

Boothby grew up on the homestead in Port Cunnington settled by her great-grandfather in the late 1880s. She went to Irwin Memorial Public School and Huntsville High School, but she wasn't a big fan of studying until college, where she was an honours student and won a work ethic award. "Once you find something that you like, it makes a real difference," she says.

When she finished high school, Boothby worked for a local marina and Fowler Construction for two years, then went to Sir Sandford Fleming College in Peterborough for the Law and Justice program. "I decided I wanted to be a conservation officer, but if you do that, you don't always have an option of where to go," Boothby says. "I was only 22. I didn't want to leave the Muskoka area."

Instead, Boothby went back to Fleming College to study web developing, learning everything to do with websites, from interface design, planning and graphic design to coding a fully functional website that follows web accessibility standards. Her intensive three-semester course ended in August 2006, and she returned to Dwight and started Ripples Web Design.

In the spring, her business was nominated for Company of the Year at the 2009 Chamber Business Excellence Awards.

While her two businesses keep her busy, Boothby is very involved in her community – enough so that she was nominated last year for the Bob Palmer Award, which recognizes volunteer contributions in Dwight.

Boothby is a member of the Lake of Bays Fire and Rescue committee, which made the new fireboat possible, and of the Dwight Winter Carnival committee. She donated her time to create websites for both.

And, most recently, Boothby has volunteered to create an online version of the newsletter put out by the church down the hill from her house. "The church has an important place in my heart," she explains. "If I can help out in any way, I don't mind."

In the short term, Boothby is looking into starting up an art gallery as well as the continued expansion of both of her companies. Further into the future she still sees herself as a conservation officer. "It's just not what I want to be now," she explains. "I just like being able to do my own thing."

Thanks to John Lilly for suggesting that Shannan Boothby be profiled.

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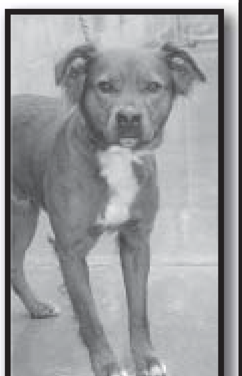

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Clement on the economy

By Jack Tynan

We're not out of the woods yet, Industry Minister and Parry Sound-Muskoka member of Parliament Tony Clement suggested Monday.

Just a few hours after figures revealed Canada's gross domestic product grew by 0.1 per cent in June, the first monthly positive growth since July of 2008, Clement was in Parry Sound making another announcement designed to stimulate the economy.

"I think we're being cautious," he said of Monday's positive growth figures. "The plan is working. At the same time, though, I don't think we can plan a victory here. I think it's safe to say we still have some challenges ahead of us. There are a lot of factors in the rest of the world that could have a significant impact."

Growth in gross domestic product is considered the technical end of a recession, and although recent job loss figures continued to grow, now with a total of 302,000 fewer jobs across the country between June of 2008 and June of 2009, recent growth on the Toronto Stock Exchange and a rise in new home construction have also hinted at a turnaround.

"There are some positive signs," Clement said. "I think it's always better to be positive than to contract. But I think people are being cautious about going out and buying things. We still see the economy as being very fragile. We've seen some positive growth in the month of June. It's fairly fragile, and not booming. We're going to stick to our plan, to roll out our economic stimulus plan."

Clement was in Parry Sound to announce $1.8 million in federal spending geared towards "strengthening northern Ontario's economy." The money included about $1.3 million in community adjustment fund infrastructure spending on water and sewer costs for a new Canadore college campus, and $500,000 in FedNor dollars for Niigon Technologies, an injection moulding plant in Moose Deer Point First Nation. It comes on the heels of $970,980 in community adjustment funding announced in Muskoka last week – part of $31.4 million spent through the fund to help municipalities cope with the recession.

"This is great for the economic growth and prosperity of the region," Clement said. "It will make a really big difference."

Clement said, locally, he's hearing of some positive economic indicators as well. Real estate agents, for example, have noted some improvement.

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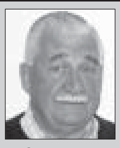
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