

Muskoka Mosaic: Introducing Marjory Goodwin

By Paula Boon

Marjory Goodwin is open to people and ideas. "If you're willing to take a risk, get involved and show you care, life can be so rich," she says. The retired Huntsville Public School (HPS) teacher, known to former students as Mrs. Earl, has had a rich life indeed.

Goodwin graduated from North Bay Teacher's College in 1970 and Laurentian University in 1993. Her entire 27-year career was spent at HPS. "A real sense of family existed there," she says. "I loved it and I'm especially grateful to principals Jack Laycock and Dan Patterson for their guidance and encouragement."

Goodwin always strove to provide a safe, secure place for students and to show them she cared. At the same time, she kept her standards high. "When the students realized their capabilities, it lit a fire in them," she says.

Throughout her time at HPS, Goodwin fanned the flames in innovative ways. For example, in 1994 she initiated a community partner program. "This provided an opportunity to teach the children how to care for others with special needs," she says.

In small groups, students and teacher travelled once a week to the home of Rena, who had ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease). There, they did some light housekeeping, acted as scribes, played Scrabble and chatted with their new friend. Between visits, students took turns calling to check on her. The entire experience, including Rena's death and funeral in mid-April, taught students what Goodwin calls "huge life lessons."

In 1996, after two more suc-

cessful community partnerships, she received the board-wide Jack Puntis Exemplary Employee Award for her efforts.

Goodwin also helped to develop the board's first formal elementary art program, and in the mid-'70s helped implement the first co-ed sexual health class at HPS. In 1978, she and a colleague convinced the board to pilot class sharing. For many years, Goodwin taught evening classes in English as a Second Language as well, resulting in lifelong friendships.

A Tynan by birth, Goodwin spent every winter until she was 11 in lumber camps, usually in the Limberlost area. "My father was a jobber for Hay & Co. (now Tembec) and my mother was the camp cook," she explains.

There were about 12 men in each camp, usually the same ones from year to year. "My brother Stan and I enjoyed being substitute kids for the men. They saw their families on weekends, only," says Goodwin. She has fond memories of Gordon Mason, who used to spend his evenings by the fire knitting socks and mitts for the men while telling stories to Goodwin and her brother. She also loved helping her father with the chores when he was looking after the teams of horses at the end of each day.

As a descendent of Chaffey Township pioneers and someone who was raised in lumber camps, Goodwin has a strong interest in local history.

"It's a privilege to walk in the footsteps of my ancestors," she says. "I'm so thankful my parents gave us opportunities to experience camp life." An accomplished artist who was a long-time member of Muskoka

Arts and Crafts, Goodwin had her first art lessons from her father in the lumber camps. In place of paper, he used a fungus and a nail to show her how to draw a horse.

Her favourite medium is water-colour, although she also enjoys photography, acrylics, woodburning, carving and cake decorating.

"Art is a great outlet for me," says Goodwin. "Sometimes I can paint all night and not feel tired the next day."

Family is very important to Goodwin. After her retirement, she advocated and helped care for both parents until their deaths. "My father, who suffered from dementia, was placed in long-term care," she says. "I visited Fairvern almost every day for four years. He was more settled when I was there."

During that time, Goodwin started the Fairvern Family Council, of which she was president from 2002-2004.

Goodwin also has a daughter, Melaney, a son-in-law, Carmen and a brand-new grandson, Hudson Albert-Thomas Groomes, born on Aug. 22. In 2000, she married Glen Goodwin, who has three children and five grandchildren. Someday Goodwin would love to open her home up as a bed and breakfast. In the meantime, she will continue to advocate for and help family, friends and strangers alike.

"I believe when we reach out to others, our life has more meaning and purpose," says Goodwin.

Thanks to Judy Blazic for suggesting that Marjory Goodwin be profiled. To explore the complete collection of Muskoka Mosaic profiles, go to www.thelifecollector.com.



WELCOME: Marjory Goodwin sits by the sign in front of her home, which she hopes will someday be the site of a bed and breakfast.



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Couple wishes to buy town park land

By Brent Cooper

A Huntsville couple is asking the town to permit them to buy an unused section of land from the proposed Conroy Park.

Jenna Gow-Irwin of 134 Brunel Road was before the town's parks and recreation committee on Wednesday asking the municipality to consider selling a piece of the land for the proposed sports complex that has been used by her family for years.

"The previous owners of our home continued a lineage of permission to use this small section of land as a back yard to this tiny home and tiny property," she stated in her presentation to the committee.

"They converted one section into a well-manicured lawn, with an aluminum shed on it and kept the other part natural, as a habitat for local wildlife. The previous owners of the Conroy Park land granted us permission to continue use of this land, and with them we signed a use-at-own-risk contract."

Gow-Irwin, whose lot is only 30' by 30', said the preliminary plans for the new park indicate there will be no use for the section of land she and her husband Chad wish to purchase. She said the area has brought much joy and health to their lives, saying it is ... "a calm serenity of nature to balance out the loud, busy Brunel Road on the other side of our house."

"It has provided a safe, clean space for our two-year-old son to play and explore. For him, we have installed a swingset, a sandbox and a stick-fort. We have cut the grass, raked the leaves, dismantled two hazardous trees, pruned other trees and shrubs and created a garden and compost bin."

She said they have maintained property stewardship over the area that this land's previous owners have appreciated, adding that it was the beautiful green space that inspired the family to buy the home.

Community services director Brian Crozier told Gow-Irwin that the town would first have to declare the land to be surplus property before any sale could proceed, along with conducting an evaluation to determine the value of the land.

Chair Mike Greaves added that the town still has to decide the composition of the project before it decides to sell any portion of the property. "There is a bit of homework we haven't got completed yet. The first step is to decide what we need. Then we can get a report to say if this (area) is surplus."

Greaves instructed Crozier to bring a report back to the next committee meeting about the possible sale of the parcel of land.

There was no determination as to the exact size of the land the couple is looking to purchase.

O'Yez... O'Yez!

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2:30 p.m., enjoy the R.C. Legion Pipes & Drums Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

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Kids... Say Hello to "Dizzy," the Swiss Chalet Chicken, who will be out and about Huntsville for the day

Photograph a Town Crier to win One Burger Combo per week for the remainder of 2009

The best photo of a Town Crier taken this Saturday between 12 noon & 4 p.m. anywhere in Huntsville shall win! Bring your photo into the restaurant or e-mail it to swiss@muskoka.com by Sunday, Sept. 27.

Watch for the Town Criers and Dizzy Chicken from 12 noon until 4 p.m.

Win **\$100** of Chicken Dinners

Watch for Town Criers throughout the business districts of Huntsville "crying" for the Saturday Grand Opening Celebrations. Ask them for a **FREE QUARTER CHICKEN DINNER OR FREE HARVEY'S COMBO** between 12 noon & 2:30 p.m. (while supplies last). They will also have coupons to let you vote for the Best Town Crier!

You could win **\$100** of Swiss Chalet Chicken Dinners!

(Voting coupons must be turned into Swiss Chalet/Harvey's by closing on Sept. 20, so don't delay!)