

Opinion

MUSKOKA MOSAIC

Introducing Margaret Maw



BY PAULA BOON

Marg Maw describes herself as a "plain, ordinary person who lives day by day."

In other words, the Novar mother of six and grandmother of 15 is someone who, without drawing attention to herself, works hard, cares for her family and takes an active part in her community.

Maw moved to Melissa with her family in 1951 and met her future husband, George on the bus heading for Huntsville High School. After six years of "going together," the Maws married.

That was 48 banter-filled years ago.

"His family says I deserve a medal," Maw laughs.

George, listening in, retorts, "No, I deserve a medal!"

Her husband is full of practical jokes and other antics, says Maw, while her personality is quieter. "We share a lot of interests, though," she says.

"And if we go to a restaurant, we both order the same thing," he notes.

"Maybe it's just force of habit," she adds.

"Nah," is his quick reply. "I've molded her to my image."

Their life together has been a busy one. While her husband worked at a garage and then at Kimberly-Clark, Maw raised their six children and held down a job at the A&P.

For years, the couple belonged to a group of families who had potlucks at a different house every Saturday night.

"All the kids played together and when it was time for bed they went to sleep in the same room," Maw says.

They also camped on Lake Vernon in the summer with another large group of friends. "Whichever adults didn't have to work would look after all the kids," she recalls.

With five of her six children living in the area, there are still plenty of family get-togethers.

"You never know what will happen when everyone's here," Maw says.

Then there's her volunteer work. Maw has cooked so many big meals she finds it difficult to make dinner for two.

She spent a number of years volunteering in the kitchen at the Huntsville Curling Club, four of them in charge, turning out delicious roast beef dinners for bonspiels and other special events.

Maw was also an active curler until her double hip replacement in 2003. "I keep saying I'll go back," she says. "Maybe this year."

Life hasn't slowed down much since retirement, either.

Maw does have a quiet time early each morning when she

drinks a cup of coffee and does a crossword or sudoku puzzle.

"It keeps your mind busy," she says. "You've got to keep it active when you start hitting this age."

The rest of each day is occupied. There are tomato plants to grow for sale at the Huntsville Farmers' market early in the summer, and woodwork to prepare the rest of the time. This year it will be available at their son Lee's business in Minden.

Maw's main task is painting and staining. "George doesn't want me to get too familiar with the tools because I might like it too much," she laughs.

There's also gardening to do, along with general upkeep on their large property, which has been in George's family for generations, and on their cottage on Oudaze Lake.

While the couple has travelled to places like Newfoundland and Ireland, they are content to be where they are.

"I do miss the days when you could walk downtown and know everyone," Maw admits. "It used to take ages to go up and down the street because you knew everyone. Now it's so different. It's growing too fast."

She notes that it is nice not to have to go to Orillia or Barrie to shop anymore, but says, "I just like it the old way."

Maw says she looks forward to annual events like Midnight Madness where some of that small-town feeling still remains.

"We go walk down the street and see people we haven't seen in a long time," she says. "It's nice to talk and talk."

Watershed council's annual report card

How do our watersheds measure up? Get the Muskoka Watershed Council's 2007 report card and find out.

It's been three years since the Muskoka Watershed Council (MWC) unveiled the first report card on watershed health. The initial report card highlighted our excellent water quality, the need for emission controls to improve our air quality, more effective tools to protect our wetlands, and more information about our fisheries.

Another three years of data collection and analysis has provided the MWC with new findings on the health of our watersheds. Has our air quality improved? Is our water quality still in excellent condition? Are wetlands better protected now than they were three years ago? What human impacts are apparent? The primary objective of the 2007 report card is to evaluate any changes against the standard of a healthy, functioning and sustainable watershed.

These indicate that, at a global level, we're seeing effects of climate change, acid deposition, and invasive species. At the local level, we are seeing changes to natural habitats resulting from human activity.

How is our water? Overall, our water scored a grade of B. The recreational water quality in our lakes is among the best in Canada with low bacteria and phosphorus levels. This sub-component scored A-. Drinking water quality also continues to score very high with a grade of A-.

The removal of shoreline vegetation and climate change are two of the biggest threats to our good water quality. Already we are seeing a loss of fish habitat, changes in types of algae, and new invasive species. The score for aquatic habitats was a B.

Where people are renaturalizing shoreline habitat, improvement is occurring. Our actions around water, both positive and negative, will determine the health of the lakes and rivers in our watersheds in the future.

Our stewardship actions scored A-.

How is our land? Overall, our land scored a grade of B-. We are privileged in Muskoka to still benefit from some natural areas of 10,000 hectares and larger, which support our large native mammals. These areas need to be protected if we want our children and grandchildren to see species like bear, moose and wolves. Ecosystem protection scored an A.

Throughout our watersheds, we also need to maintain our moderately-sized natural areas of around 200 hectares in order to support interior forest species like birds and provide ecosystem services such as flood control, carbon sequestration and oxygen production.

Wetlands are also important; they keep our water clean and support virtually all of our native plants and animals, either directly or indirectly. Education and stewardship are required, along with the acquisition of important areas by public agencies and local land trusts. Protection of wetlands scored a C.

How is our air? Overall our air scored C. People in Muskoka generally believe that we should enjoy clean, pristine air because we live outside large urban areas. However, both local emissions and pollutants from the Ohio Valley have resulted in 10 to 30 air quality advisory days a year. Air quality scored a C-.

Pollutants from the Ohio Valley contribute up to 90 per cent of ozone levels on poor air quality days. Without a negotiated agreement with the United States to reduce industrial emissions and a concerted effort by all levels of government to reduce local and provincial emissions through industrial regulations, conservation and improved transportation standards, air quality will remain the same or worsen. Transboundary pollution scored a C.

Climate change will be the single most significant stress on our watersheds in the

foreseeable future. Although it is still too early to truly understand what changes will occur and the impact on the social, economic and environmental systems within our watersheds, some early changes have been noted. Grey jays are having difficulty surviving warmer winters and winter recreation is being affected.

People will adapt and find opportunities for improvement along the way. Many species and ecosystems, however, will not be able to adapt as quickly and it is likely that many native species will become extinct or be pushed further north.

With multiple stressors affecting our watersheds, maintaining healthy, natural, intact ecosystems is the best insurance against widespread degradation.

We need to strengthen nature's ability to cope with change. The key messages from the report card are:

- Protect shoreline vegetation;
- Reduce hardened surfaces;
- Protect significant wetlands;
- Reduce habitat fragmentation;
- Maintain large natural areas;
- Remediate degraded sites;
- Contain urban sprawl;
- Reduce carbon emissions.

To view a copy of the full report card visit the MWC website at www.muskoka-heritage.org/watershed.

The annual general meeting of the Huntsville Lakes Council is Saturday, Aug. 18 from 9:30 to 11 a.m. in the community room at Your Independent Grocer, Hwy. 11 and 60. There will be a talk given on environmentally friendly cleaning products and, hopefully, a MWC representative will explain some of the finer points in the report card. Check your Forester for more information closer to the date. All are welcome to attend.

Thanks to the Muskoka Watershed Council for preparing the above summary.

Take care of your skin

This summer have fun in the sun and remember to protect your skin from harmful UV rays. Skin cancer is the mostly commonly occurring cancer, accounting for one-third of all cancer cases. The Canadian Cancer Society is working to raise awareness of skin cancer and the importance of sun safety.

Slop on sunscreen with an SPF 15 or higher that protects against UVA and UVB rays. Don't forget to reapply often, especially after swimming. Screen your sunscreen. Choose one that protects against UVA and UVB, with SPF 15 or higher, and look for products carrying the Canadian Dermatology Association's logo. If your child develops a burn with SPF 15, try SPF 30.

Protect yourself particularly between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m., when the sun's rays are at their strongest, or at any time of the day when the UV Index is three or more.

Enjoy play locations that include shade. In open areas such as beaches, bring an umbrella to create your own shade.

Cover up even on cloudy days. The sun's rays can still be harmful. Be a good role model. Dress the part by wearing wide-brimmed hats, sunglasses, light, loose-fitting clothing, sunscreen and lip balm that includes an SPF 15. Check your skin regularly and report any changes to your doctor.

Volunteers are needed to promote cancer prevention messages to the public. If you would like to get involved with our outreach program in Huntsville please contact Bonita Coons, Unit Manager at 1-800-555-7922 or by e-mail at bcoons@ontario.cancer.ca.

LETTERS

Reader says theatre is being neglected

Friday has arrived, the work week is over and now I can see a movie that I've been waiting for since the cameras were rolling. Seems like a simple request but sadly, it isn't in this case.

The Capitol Twin Cinemas was once a comfortable venue to take your family to, with the assurance of clean floors and kind service. Today the theatre

seems to be managed by children. By the time I can get their attention away from flirting and jabbing with their co-workers I finally manage to pay the \$9 and change fee.

Okay, kids will be kids. I too was a naive teen, so I'll let that pass. I enter the dark and never well-lit theatre with such anticipation for the movie, but sadly all

I see is a sea of popcorn, candy wrappers, empty cups of soda and residue that has claimed its territory for at least a few weeks.

I'm outraged. I've spent \$9 to watch a movie in a room of filth. I'm not just talking about one row with a few kernels, I'm talking as if the gremlins had just invaded the room. Shame on you children for not doing

your job and spending all your time talking to one another.

It's been like this on my last three visits. I'm not asking for much, but the brooms and dust pans in the closet are there for a reason. Maybe it's time to spend my money at a conglomerate theatre?

Christopher Wayne
Huntsville

Photographic Memory



LONGEVITY: Chief John Bigwin, left, lived on the island that bears his name on Lake of Bays and at M'njikaning (Rama) First Nation outside Orillia.

Chief Bigwin died at the age of 102.

This summer at Muskoka Heritage Place in Huntsville, area aboriginal people share cultural teaching during "Mondays First Nations' Storytelling", which takes place in the village at 88 Brunel Road from 11 a.m to 2 p.m.

This event is sponsored by Casino Rama Community Wellness Fund. For more information,

please call 705-789-7576, or visit www.muskokaheritageplace.org/special events.



Miigwech (means "thank you") in the original Anishinabek (Ojibway) language of Muskoka.

MUSEUM • VILLAGE • TRAIN
88 Brunel Road • Huntsville • 705-789-7576
www.muskokaheritageplace.org



HEALTHCARE HEROES



Cash Draw Volunteers & Ticket Purchasers

The math has been done and we are pleased to announce that the Foundation's Cash Draw raised over \$33,000 for Huntsville Hospital equipment needs!

Thank you so much to the Rotary Club of Huntsville, the Huntsville Hospital Auxiliary, and draw committee members, Helen Thompson & Chris Edwards. The draw almost sold out thanks to over 1,600 ticket purchasers.

Helen & Chris were the Cash Draw Committee. They gave their time and they gave up the chance to win \$25,000. Watch your mail for the news of the next draw. What are you giving for Christmas this year?

Huntsville District Memorial Hospital Foundation continues to support:

- Huntsville District Memorial Hospital
- Fairvern Nursing Home
- Burk's Falls & District Health Centre
- Muskoka-East Parry Sound CCAC



Live well with

PHARMASAVE

Historic Downtown Huntsville
789-7800