

# Opinion

## MUSKOKA MOSAIC

### Introducing Greg Sutherland

BY PAULA BOON

Question: What Huntsville resident has had success as a jazz record producer, magazine publisher, and graphic artist, all while working full time at another job?

Answer: Huntsville High School teacher Greg Sutherland.

Born and raised in Huntsville, Sutherland grew up surrounded by music. One grandmother was an amateur opera singer and the other a piano teacher, while his father, the rector of All Saints' Anglican Church for 35 years, was an excellent pianist and vocal coach.

Growing up, he was also encouraged and supported by friends who shared his artistic sensibility. For example, writer Tom McGregor, artist Randy Parker, and Dora-award-winning playwright and mathematician John Mighton were his classmates, while his older brother Mark is now an international performance poet/artist.

"My brother always said, 'Artists coexist, they don't compete,'" Sutherland comments.

While studying neuropsychology at the University of Toronto, Sutherland also studied at the Royal Conservatory of Music, completing the highest possible levels of piano, theory and harmony. It wasn't long before his attention turned to jazz music.

Then, in 1980, he finished his teacher's training and found work in downtown Toronto.

With partner Bill King, he began the Jazz Report in 1986. The magazine began as an eight-page, black and white newsletter and grew to a 72-page glossy magazine distributed internationally.

By 1989, the partners had started their own record label, Radioland Enterprise, signing with Universal Music just a year later. Over the following decade they made 28 recordings of many of North America's great jazz artists, such as Pat La

Barbera, Ted Quinlan and Ed Bicket.

Sutherland loved the intimacy of the recording studio. "It's an environment that can't be replicated," he explains. "Very few people get to experience that."

As the magazine grew in scope and the record label took off, Sutherland began to learn about graphic design so that he could create advertisements and album covers.

In 1991, he and his wife Michelle decided it was time to head north. They had property in Huntsville and found themselves spending many weekends here, so it was a natural move.

At first he was returning to the city at least three times a week, but gradually he and King wound things down with their record label.

Sutherland applied for a job at Huntsville High School, first teaching media and special education, then psychology, sociology and anthropology.

His children Tamara, Aaron and Jarred came along in 1997, 1999 and 2002, and it was time to shift gears.

While Sutherland remains busy, family is his priority. "Childhood is fleeting," he says. "I want to spend time with my kids."

Sutherland coaches all three of his kids' soccer teams, and the family takes advantage of the many outdoor activities this area has to offer.

"I feel thankful to be in Huntsville with young children," Sutherland says. "There are so many positives to living here. You have 100 sets of parents for your kids, because everyone treats them like their own."

He's also impressed by the number of activities in the town. "Everything is available, maybe on a smaller scale, but at a high level," he says.

Recently, Sutherland has begun team-teaching one music

class per semester.

Are his students aware of his background? "At first they don't know who I am," he says, "but they start to get a sense of where I'm coming from and what I have to offer."

When asked what advice he offers to those wanting to pursue a career in music, he replies, "You need to have a broad spectrum of experiences; that will only serve you well. All experiences, good and bad, will make you a better person and professional."

On subject of students, Sutherland says the media are filled with negative stories about youth, but his job shows him the other side of the coin. "I can say I've been fortunate to teach an incredible array of intelligent, insightful, caring, kind young people who are all going to go off and do amazing things," he says. "The future is a lot brighter than many people think."



## LETTERS

### Oct. 10 referendum presents a chance to make every vote count

Consider the following: Ontario has not had a government elected by a majority of voters in decades. In fact, the Bob Rae NDP government of 1990 was elected to a "majority" government with only 37.6 per cent of votes while the following Mike Harris governments won only 44 per cent and 45 per cent. Imagine how different our province may have been if these "majorities" of the past were forced to work with the other parties rather than simply exerting their will unchecked.

More than 80 countries, including almost all major Western democracies, already use proportional representation voting systems. In the 2005 New Zealand election which used a mixed member proportional system, only one per cent of vote's cast were "wasted." In comparison over 50 per cent of the votes cast in the 2003 Ontario election elected no-one.

In the last federal election more than 650,000 Green Party voters across the country received no representation while 475,000 Liberal voters in Atlantic Canada elected 20 MPs. The NDP attracted a million more votes than the Bloc, but our current voting system gave the Bloc 51 seats and the NDP only 29.

In the prairie provinces, Conservatives won three times as many votes as Liberals, but were given nearly ten times as many seats, while at the same time 400,000 Conservative voters in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver didn't elect a single MP.

These are just some of the facts that I have discovered while researching the proposed change to our current electoral system that I will be voting on when I cast my ballot on October 10th. It is also why I feel that the current system of electing representatives in Canada and Ontario could use improvement and why I support the Mixed Member Proportional Representation model being proposed in this election.

In addition to the fact that this new system being recommended by the Ontario Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform would address the aforementioned inequities, it has also built in a number of checks and balances in order to address possible concerns.

The Mixed Member Proportional system would allow for a more representative democracy while the threshold that limits representation to parties that achieve three per cent or more in

the polls would ensure that any elected MPP would represent the views of thousands of Ontario voters. If we applied this percentage to the last election, it would take about 135,000 votes before it would receive any representation. This detail would ensure that the fears of tiny pockets of voters having disproportionate amounts of power are completely unfounded.

The lists that the parties would present of prospective candidates would be open, public and accountable and promise to be heavily scrutinized, ensuring that parties would only promote the most respectable and representative candidates possible or face the wrath of the electorate.

Opponents of PR often like to cite worst-case scenarios and a range of possible flaws in the proposed system to create fear of change. While it can be agreed that no system is perfect and all work better with an informed and active electorate, the new system seems to represent a significant upgrade and is worth supporting.

Mixed member proportional representation maintains much of the good of the present system and ensures local representation while creating a truly representative governing body that is almost identical to the voting wishes of the citizens of the Province of Ontario. With all the potential upsides, and with the shortcomings of the present system so obvious, isn't it time to make a change and tweak the present system?

I know that I may be accused of having a biased viewpoint, but it is important to note that the new system being recommended came as a result of the findings of a completely independent and non-partisan group of Ontario citizens from all walks of life representing myriad political viewpoints. After reviewing our current electoral system, it was this group that recommended the Multi-Member Proportional Representation model even though they had the option of keeping the status quo. No party would receive any more seats than the voters of the province grant them, making every vote cast truly count. How could this be unfair?

On Oct. 10, cast your ballot for the candidate of your choice, and then be sure to vote for a change to a more responsive and representative electoral system.

Glen Hodgson  
Parry Sound

### Hospice fundraiser was disruptive and frustrating

The recent fundraising campaign conducted by Hospice Huntsville caused a great deal of disruption and frustration for many people in town over the Labour Day weekend.

My intention here is to expose the folly and potentially dangerous outcome of this type of activity. According to one volunteer, this had the complete approval (probably behind closed doors) of both district and town councils.

During the most intense long weekend of every summer in Muskoka two check-points were set up at the foot of the swing bridge and the other bridge on Centre Street. Both consisted of three to five persons, donation buckets in hand, with pamphlets and a wooden stand, straddling the centre line. Before I knew what was causing the delay of 10 to 12 vehicles ahead of me on Centre Street horns started sounding from frustrated drivers behind me. Proceeding finally to Main Street, intending to access Brendale Square (business reasons), I was met with bumper-to-bumper traffic within 15 metres of the intersection. Total traffic gridlock.

Dangerous, short-sighted, disrespectful to the BIA, locals, cottagers and visitors to our town. Common sense is obviously a relative term within our council. Despite the contract between the OPP and the town, under any other condition, this would be a violation of the Highway Traffic Act called impeding or obstructing flow of traffic. We were not given the chance to decline the process of solicitation by the mere fact we were funneled into these check-points in stagnant traffic for up to 20 minutes only to find someone at the driver's window. No choice, few exit options, a form of virtual extortion.

Mr. Mayor, not all of us are on vacation. Some of us have to work for a living all summer.

Hospice Huntsville, get a new idea, fast. Incidentally, I figure your group owes me \$5 to \$8 for the 25 minutes I spent idling in traffic on Main Street at 98 cents a litre.

Don't expect a donation from me anytime soon.

Gary Steven  
Huntsville

### Let's keep park truly protected

Re: *Algonquin Park's forests are being sustainably managed*, letter to the editor, Huntsville Forester, Aug. 29.

While I agree with Mr. Corbett that "forestry activities in the park are conducted under an approved forest management plan that considers all aspects of sustainable forestry," where we differ is with our definitions of "protected."

I would like to ask Mr. Corbett how he defines protection. Clearly, one of the most basic elements of protecting an area is preserving the species that inhabit the space. Cutting down trees and destroying wildlife habitat through road construction is not consistent with "protection."

While logging in Algonquin Park is managed

in a much more sustainable fashion than parts of the northern Boreal Forest (where massive clear-cuts are common), we should not use this as an excuse to continue logging in a world-renowned park. We need to keep the following figures in mind: approximately 90 per cent of the province is open to industrial activity. That means that only 10 per cent of Ontario is protected from logging. Let's keep these few protected areas, like Algonquin Park, truly protected. We must not allow profit to dictate what transpires in one Ontario's most beloved and cherished parks.

Josh Garfinkel  
Earthroots Campaigner

### Artists grateful for support

As a member of Artists of the Limberlost, I wish to extend our thanks to the Huntsville/Lake of Bays community for making our open studio weekend Aug. 18 and 19 an unqualified success.

The local media did a wonderful job of publicizing our event. We truly appreciate the support of the Huntsville Forester, 105.5 More FM and all the publications which, leading up to the tour, told our story and published pictures of our work. In addition, countless businesses and resorts in the area distributed our promotional material to their customers and guests. Thank you.

Thanks also to the many hundreds of residents and cottagers who visited our studios, bringing

their curiosity, enthusiasm and appreciation. Many took home artwork and handcrafted items, appreciating them all the more for having met the artists and seeing how their choices were created. It was gratifying for us to connect with our customers so directly.

This year was the first annual Artists of the Limberlost open studio weekend and we could not have hoped for a better event. We will welcome everyone back again next year, to what we anticipate will become a tradition in north Muskoka. Thank you again to everyone who generously contributed to our success.

Susan Higgins  
Artists of the Limberlost

### Pharmaceuticals don't belong in our watershed

BY MARY MCCULLEY

#### Huntsville Watershed Council

At the March general meeting of the Muskoka Watershed Council (MWC), Janette Sutey, a member of the MWC, presented evidence that chemicals from your medications, as well as those found in personal care products, are finding their way into our watershed. She explained that, of the 9,000 products registered, many are toxins (just look at the type and number of ingredients listed in a face cream).

The chemicals found in psychiatric drugs, hormones, steroids, analgesics, anticonvulsants etc., or their breakdown products, have been found not only in sewage effluent but in our ground and surface water. Since it was not possible until recently to analyze for many of these chemicals, there has not yet been much research done on the problem.

Despite this, the US National Research Council already lists pharmaceuticals as a major class of water pollutant that requires more research and consideration for drinking water legislation. As well, the Ontario College of Pharmacists requires that its members develop environmentally friendly ways of disposing of waste pharmaceuticals.

Most drugs or their metabolites are excreted into septic-sewage treatment systems, which is their primary source of release into the environment. Most drugs can be removed by systems using activated charcoal and ozonation, but these processes are expensive and some of these chemicals are not removed.

Folks on their own water systems do not generally treat their drinking water in this way so may be at higher risk. A secondary way for these to enter the environment is when left-over or expired medications are discarded into landfills.

Effects on humans of long-term exposure to low concentrations of pharmaceuticals remains speculative at this point. It is known, however,

that estrogens, for example, do not metabolize and thus become quite pervasive in the environment and might be linked to decreases in both male and female fertility. Drug interactions might occur between medications and other chemicals that have made their way into our drinking water. Ibuprofen, for example, might interfere with the cardio-protective properties of Aspirin.

There is not much research data at all on the effects of these chemicals on natural ecosystems. Some research shows altered physiological processes, changed behaviour, reproductive abnormalities, decreased growth, increased tumour rates and evidence of bioaccumulation. For example, 70 per cent of fish downstream from sewage treatment plants show feminization from the exposure of male fish to female hormones.

But a fully comprehensive study of effects needs to look at how organisms are affected by the influence of all the chemicals to which it is exposed. Some effects may be very subtle or occur over long periods of time, leaving the cause undetermined or even unnoticed altogether. Some effects may leave the organism unable to deal with other stressors in its environment, again obliterating the identification of the actual cause.

More research is definitely needed, but it seems clear that we should take a precautionary approach at this stage. Do not throw any unused or expired medication into your garbage. Take these to your pharmacist for disposal or treat them as you would any other hazardous waste.

We also need to urge and support ongoing research and the eventual implementation of technologies to get these products out of our drinking water and sewage. Regulations need to be established in Canada to govern testing programs and safe limits for the chemicals found in pharmaceuticals and personal care products.

Thanks to Bill Coon of Muskoka Medical Centre Pharmacy for his help with this article.