

# Opinion

## MUSKOKA MOSAIC

### Introducing Kelly Speers

BY PAULA BOON

Kelly Speers loved Huntsville before, but her experience as the volunteer co-ordinator for Chrysalis women's shelter and supportive housing has given her new respect and admiration for the town and its people.

Born in Bracebridge, Speers returned to this area in the late 80s with her family after spending several years working in Toronto.

"Huntsville was where we wanted to raise children," she recalls. "It seemed like ideal community."

Now, she says, she knows that initial impression was right. Speers can't get over the way individuals and businesses here have rallied behind Chrysalis.

The mother of two applied for the position of volunteer co-ordinator last fall after seeing an ad in the paper and being intrigued by the job description. She began work Jan. 15 at Muskoka Interval House in Bracebridge with what she calls a "wonderful group of mentors."

Then, in mid-February, she moved to the Chrysalis building, which still had no carpets and nothing besides drywall on the walls. "It was very much a work in progress," she says.

At times, the amount of work required to prepare 10 apartments, six bedrooms and the community rooms seemed overwhelming, but just when she wondered how things would get done, volunteers from the community would arrive.

"For example, high school classes of 30 students and teachers would show up, or sometimes a smaller group of students would come by after school to help," she says. "I'm glad to say some of them have returned beyond their 40 required community service hours."

She also had a "phenomenal" core group of volunteers who

always went above and beyond.

"I was so proud of the numbers that showed up at the ribbon-cutting," she says. "It spoke volumes to how this facility has been embraced."

Now that there are women and children at Chrysalis, Speers' interactions with volunteers have shifted from organizing groups doing physical labour to finding and training people to meet the needs of the facility and its occupants.

Before Chrysalis opened its doors, any number of people could be on site at a time. However, Speers says that now her top priority is respecting the privacy of the women there. "Confidentiality is very important," she explains.

For that reason, volunteers must sign a confidentiality agreement and complete 12 hours of training over six weeks in order to spend time at the facility.

"I recognize that time is a valuable commodity," says Speers, "so when people come and volunteer it means so much to me."

She says there has been so much interest that Chrysalis will be running concurrent training sessions for the foreseeable future. Speers has found that most volunteers want to help because they have been touched by family violence in some way, like seeing a good friend or relative affected by the problem.

Whatever the volunteers' strengths, there is a role for them at the facility.

"We have about 14 areas identified as requiring volunteer assistance, and we also ask people to think of other things they might like to do," Speers says. "There's a lot of talent in the community, and people are enthusiastic and ready to go."

Her work at Chrysalis often involves long hours, and Speers says she is fortunate her family supports her.

"I like to help people, and I have a long history of volunteer-

ing," she says. "When the job was advertised, so many people said this job description was written for me."

She adds that the best part of the job is meeting new people and tapping into their talents and expertise.

"To know I'm making a difference in other people's lives is job satisfaction at its finest," says Speers.



## LETTERS

### NDP candidate Sara Hall is worthy of this reader's trust

With the kids back at school and frost nipping the tomatoes, it's time we of Parry Sound-Muskoka riding get down to serious business.

The business at hand is called democracy, that imperfect process where we get to vote for improvement or more of the same old bait and switch. It all boils down to trust for this voter. Who do you trust for your kids' well being, health care, air quality, water quality, food regulation?

At 63 I'm tired of short-term solutions that amount to squandering our resources. I think long-term for your kids, your parents, your habitat. I think about how to repair the damage done by previous governments. I need to trust the person I vote for. Trust is the issue.

Sound ideas that sustain our life expectancies matter more than faux growth because under the Harris Conservatives, we allowed his alleged "common sense revolution" to sell off, download, downsize and off-load our infrastructure. The legacy is a compromised health-care system, broken social services and an epidemic of homelessness. Our minimum wage is a disgrace. We got took.

The health of our nation is best seen by the brown smog that envelopes much of south-central Ontario most months during summer. Breathing brown air is not a sign of a healthy planet. We are asphyxiating ourselves by choice. This must change, and soon.

Who can you trust to begin to fix the degradation made under Harris' watch and under his kinder, gentler clone, Liberal McGuinty? Who would you trust to babysit your children, your frail grandparents? Who thinks about real solutions that will serve us in 2067?

The Conservatives never conserved and the Liberals have amounted to Conservative-lite. Liberal incumbent

McGuinty's concept of coping with energy consumption (and air pollution) is to opt for further investment and expansion of our sinkhole boondoggle, the unreliable, unsafe, unclear, mega-costly nuclear power pill.

The nuclear pill guarantees a lethal legacy of the most potent pollutant created by man. Nuclear waste is a time-bomb that'll be around after infinity to produce cancers and genetic damage beyond any nightmare/horror movie.

The only viable party that thinks about sane, long-term solutions through responsible government is the NDP. In our riding we get the fresh face of Sara Hall, a neophyte with maternal moxy, clear eyes and understated depth. The NDP gave Canadians our universal health-care system (Tommy Douglas); the NDP stood for conservation and regulation of our air, water and ground (the environment) before the Greens existed in Ontario. The NDP still stand for working people, fair wages and a health-care system that treats all as equals.

The NDP has long fought for the development of renewable energy (solar and wind) rather than insane reliance on ever-bankrupting, mega-costly nuclear power.

Today's NDP is an amalgam of folks from the left, the middle and the right (I'm a small "c" conservative) who are forward-thinking and who recognize that the Conservatives and the Liberals are almost identical with their short-term sales pitches, which tend to amount to myopic deflations.

Sara Hall has convinced me that she is out to govern with openness and principal. She is worthy of my trust. And trust is everything for this voter. Have a long look at Sara Hall before you vote.

Mendelson Joe  
Emsdale

### Town council must do what's right

As a taxpayer I am concerned, as many others are, with what is happening at town hall. Where is the transparency and accountability?

It appears there are personal agendas, self-inflated egos and scores to be settled. If these exist they need to be left outside the council chambers.

We elected you to do what is best for the town of Huntsville and us, the citizens and taxpayers.

At present there are many unanswered questions and decisions being made leaving us wondering what is going on.

One decision is wanting Walt Schmid to resign. A quote that comes to mind is "Don't go quietly into the night," Walt Schmid. You have done an excellent job and many people have commented on this. Whatever happens

I want to thank you for giving of your time, energy and expertise on behalf of the people of Huntsville.

In spite of these concerns I'm naive enough to believe that if there's a will, there's a way. Differences can be put aside. By working together you have the experience and much to offer.

You can leave a legacy. What will people say about you, your accomplishments and contributions?

I believe you ran as mayor and councillors, giving of your time and energy, to make Huntsville a better place to leave and wanting to have made a difference and contributed to the betterment of Huntsville.

Shirley Taylor  
Huntsville

### Rigidity will scare off potential businesses

In the Sept. 7 Weekender's front-page article about business signs, Mike Greaves is quoted as saying, "People who are coming to this town, who are going to bring their businesses to this town, are going to have to do it our way. Not their way."

How rigid! How uncompromising! Do we want to attract new businesses to this town? If we do, our attitude ("our way") had better be a whole lot more welcoming than that. I regret having voted for Mike Greaves in the last municipal election. If this quote is accurate, he should be removed from the planning committee.

Julie Brushey  
Huntsville

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

E-mail: [letters@huntsvilleforester.com](mailto:letters@huntsvilleforester.com)

When sending letters to the editor be sure to include your name, address and phone number. Unsigned letters cannot be used.

### Photographic Memory



**WIND POWER:** Harnessing and controlling the power of the wind has been a challenge to humans since ... forever.

This photograph, taken 100 years ago at Cache Lake in Algonquin Park, shows two hardy souls with a wind-filled sail rigged to a canoe.

We're thinking this activity didn't really "take-off" since a tippy canoe without a keel board plus a powerful surge of wind in a sail would inevitably have ended with a rather loud splash. Do keep trying.

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## HEALTHCARE HEROES

Huntsville District  
Memorial Hospital Foundation  
100 Frank Miller Drive  
Huntsville, ON P1H 1H7  
Tel: (705) 789-4756

### Win \$40,000 Cash or Honda CR-V EX

The Huntsville Hospital Foundation now has tickets available for the Cash or Car Draw. There's \$50,000 in prizes including a \$5,000 Early Bird Draw on October 1, five \$1,000 draws and the grand prize draw where the winner may choose \$40,000 Cash or the Honda CR-V EX.

Huntsville Otters owners Jason Armstrong and Chris House have given space at Otters home games to allow the Foundation to sell tickets for the draw. Tickets can also be purchased by calling 789-4756 or by visiting the Foundation. There's always free parking for people who buy tickets at the Foundation office.

Call today; tickets are \$25 each or 5 for \$100. Act soon, the \$5,000 October 1st Early Bird Draw is only 19 days away!

### Huntsville District Memorial Hospital Foundation continues to support:

- Huntsville District Memorial Hospital
- Fairvern Nursing Home
- Burk's Falls & District Health Centre



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