

Opinion

MUSKOKA MOSAIC

Introducing Reuben Pyette

BY PAULA BOON

Reuben Pyette has two full-time jobs, and both of them involve helping others.

"I'm just an individual in the community trying to make a difference," says the Emsdale man.

Pyette was born and raised in Mindemoya on Manitoulin Island and moved to the area seven years ago to take a position with Community Living Huntsville.

He began working with the Ministry of Community and Social Services 25 years ago at age 16.

"I saw a lot of abuse of authority, and I wanted to bring some humanity into the field," he says of his decision to enter a Developmental Services Worker college program after high school. "Everybody has the right to exist."

The clients he has spent time with have taught him a lot, he says, adding, "You feel a family closeness to those you dedicate yourself to."

In February, 2006, Pyette also became the owner of Independent Taxi. He had been working part-time for previous owners John and Anne Haughton, and when they decided to retire, Pyette was concerned that people would lose their jobs if someone didn't step forward and take

over the business.

"You have a service that's growing and a need in the community, and you step up to the plate," he says. "I certainly didn't do it for the money."

Salaries and upkeep on the taxis, which are all owned by Pyette, are expensive, he says. No wonder: they covered about a million miles last year.

Vandalism presents another challenge. Because of sand in gas tanks and screws in tires, Pyette has had to get the parking lot monitored, as well as taking other precautions.

"That's all right," he says. "As long as it pays the bills, I'm happy."

A self-described workaholic, Pyette doesn't get a lot of sleep. "I start in the morning around 7:00," he says. "My feet hit the floor and don't stop until midnight, sometimes 2 or 3."

Pyette is proud of the service and support his business provides to all kinds of people, such as seniors, community living clients, and people who receive workmen's compensation.

Independent Taxi doesn't yet have a wheelchair-accessible van, but Pyette says that should be coming within a year. "Right now we'll send two drivers to lift people into the car if necessary," he says.



REUBEN PYETTE

LETTERS

Town is overlooking perfect emergency shelter: the legion

An open letter to Mayor Doughty:
Last Friday in the Weekender an article ran *Emergency generator project in Huntsville*.

It would seem that the committee estimates the cost to be in the vicinity of \$370,000 to \$420,000. It also appears that additional land must be purchased to house the generator at an additional cost.

With his infinite wisdom the mayor questioned whether the generator should even be installed at town hall. He brought up a possible ice storm in January at -30 degrees centigrade and the need to house and feed people during this emergency.

He also, along with Councillor Mike Greaves, suggested perhaps the Centennial Centre would be better suited to house refugees during a large power outage.

Mr. Mayor, you already have an authorized emergency measures building in the heart of town, offering the citizens of Huntsville safe, comfortable, accessible feeding and sleeping emergency accommodation.

We feel our facilities far exceed those of the Centennial Centre which, with the pool, could be detrimental to some seniors on a sleep-over basis.

Our facility is equipped with two fully operating kitchens on two floors, able to feed 600 people or more with full dinners.

In an emergency the facility can sleep up to 400 people and can be expanded if necessary.

It has a core of volunteers already experienced in feeding large groups and has done so for 75 years.

The facilities are wheelchair accessible and the volunteers are experienced in dealing with seniors.

We have not gone out of our way to toot our

own horn, but quietly go about our way aiding the citizens of Huntsville and area.

We recently organized a committee to investigate making our facilities even more handicapped accessible and one of the items investigated was a larger emergency generator.

We have a qualified electrical expert on our committee, Phil Merson, who conducted the investigation into the generator and came up with two recommendations, which were readily accepted by the committee as practical and reasonable.

With this addition we would achieve exactly what you are looking for in your quest for emergency facilities.

It was our intention to make an application to the Trillium Foundation for a grant of \$76,000 to bring our emergency facilities up to what we considered satisfactory to our requirements and the town's.

Unfortunately, between our study and submission the Trillium Foundation changed the ground rules and reduced the grant to \$32,000. It also required a two-year audit which would have cost us \$10,000 with no assurance we would get the grant. This is definitely a lose-lose situation.

We would like to turn this into a win-win situation by bringing the Royal Canadian Legion and the town together to discuss our findings and aid them in settling the emergency measures problem.

I have discussed this with Mr. Merson and we would be very pleased to meet with you and/or your committee to explore this most advantageous opportunity for the town of Huntsville.

We anxiously await word from the town.

David J. McCourt
Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 232, Huntsville

Say no to closure of Dorset library, yes to more funding

The County of Haliburton has directed the Township of Algonquin Highlands to close a library branch in the township. It has been stated that this was at the recommendation of the library board, and the closing was needed to improve service for patrons.

As far as I have been led to believe, library patrons in Algonquin Highlands have not petitioned the library board to close their local branch to improve their library service. Patrons in Stanhope will have to travel approximately 20 km further than they currently do to access libraries in Haliburton or Minden should the North Shore Road branch close, while patrons from Dorset would have to travel 32 km further to access the North Shore Road branch.

I do not like the approach that the board/county has taken in pitting neighbour against neighbour to fight for what they thought was a simple community service, but as a Dorset resident it seems that this is what the decision to close the branch has come down to.

The Dorset branch was constructed with provincial funding to house the local library. The

book collection at this branch could be enlarged significantly with the only costs being for shelving.

The location of the library in the recreation centre gives ample space for programming without spending thousands of taxpayers' dollars on items such as accessible washrooms to comply with provincial library guidelines.

If the library in Dorset closes, the community will lose not only the resource of a community library but also its community programs which include:

- TD summer reading club which is accessed by the summer day camp and numerous summer residents;
- children's story time;
- adult book club;
- poetry writing contest for children.

The Haliburton County Library system receives the lowest per capita support of any county system in the province. Perhaps it is time for the county to step up and provide an improved library system throughout the entire county.

Brian Lynch
Dorset

We can learn from Nita Dunn

As a person who spends every day of my professional life soliciting donations for our hospital, I have to say the Forester of Oct. 31 stopped me in my tracks.

We often hear, "We have to find a way to include the youth. How can we show them the importance of community involvement?" It seems the youth of Huntsville already have someone to emulate.

Congratulations to Nita Dunn, not for winning \$10,000, but for sharing her good fortune. Nita has already given \$500 each to two of her favourite charities. We can all learn from such generous deeds.

Debi Davis, CFRE
executive director
Huntsville Hospital Foundation

Rotary Club's annual auction fast approaching

An annual tradition is continuing in Huntsville as the Rotary Club of Huntsville prepares to host its 23rd annual TV/radio/internet auction.

Held on Dec. 2 from noon until 6 p.m., the auction has become a well-known event in the community.

Last year, a total of \$37,000 was raised for local and international Rotary projects.

The way the auction works is that local sponsors donate items, which are then arranged into blocks for bidding. The Huntsville Forester produces an insert in the newspaper, the Wednesday

prior to the auction, with items and blocks divided and numbered for bidding. The public is able to follow the items with the newspaper insert. The auction is televised on Cogeco Cable, broadcasted on More FM radio and online at www.huntsvillerotaryauction.com.

With a comprehensive, easy-to-use website, auction organizers say that bidding online is the easiest way to bid on items.

"This year, because we're holding the event at Partners Hall (Algonquin Theatre), people can come and bid on items the day of the auction and

there will be two computer terminals if they want to bid right there," said Rotarian Barbara White, who also chairs the auction committee.

The auction makes Christmas shopping easy and the fact that there are no taxes on items makes many members of the community come back year after year to bid on items such as golf packages, computer items and trips.

Some of the items up for grabs this year will be a kayak from Algonquin Outfitters valued at \$800, flooring from Tembec and Taylor Flooring, a fly-in fishing trip valued at \$4,000 and a four-

day stay at Shadow Whistler valued at \$1,800.

The support from the community has always been very generous, and the Rotary club has been able to complete many local projects as well as continuing support for many projects in the world community.

The Rotary auction provides funds for the club to be proactive in the community and to step up where help is needed. As well, the Rotary club has been able to help internationally by working with other Rotary clubs in areas like Trinidad and Malawi, where much-needed help is provided.



HEALTHCARE HEROES

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Huntsville District Memorial
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MUSKOKA ALGONQUIN
HEALTHCARE

Proudly serving our communities through quality healthcare



HDMH Staff

As you drive by the corner of Hwy 60 and King William Street this week, you'll note a change of the Hospital Foundation's billboard.

Huntsville District Memorial Hospital is blessed to have super employees like; Heather Traves, Mary Jane McCarey, Ron Godfrey, Dr. Roy Kirkpatrick and Dr. Steve Hill. The Foundation appreciates the work that all HDMH staff does. It makes our job easier. So thank a hospital employee the next time you see them.

They are here for all of us when we need them.

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



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