

Opinion

MUSKOKA MOSAIC

Introducing Paulette Quinn

BY PAULA BOON

Paulette Quinn strives to make everyone else's day just a little better.

"I love people," says the Dwight woman, whose smiling face has greeted customers at the Huntsville A&P grocery store for more than 18 years. "I hate seeing anyone in a bad mood, and I try to give them something positive so they walk away happier."

For example, when parents come through the checkout with young children, Quinn focuses on the little ones to help speed up the process.

"If you pay attention to the children, parents can do what they need to do," she says. "Anyway, kids and I go hand in hand."

Children aren't the only ones with whom Quinn enjoys interacting, though. Regular customers are a particularly important part of her daily work rhythm.

"One man comes in every day for a newspaper, and another always tells me about his trips," she explains. "They become part of your life. When you don't see them you start to wonder where they are."

Quinn says she always notices when the snowbirds leave town and looks forward to their return.

And four years ago, when she had to miss work due to a broken wrist, she discovered her customers felt the same way about her.

"I was sitting in the mall having coffee," she recalls, "and lots of people came up and asked me what had happened. Then when I got back to work, they told me they were happy to see me back."

Working at the A&P is a joy, says Quinn, adding, "We have a great clientele. Our customers are like our family to us."

Another "big family" for Quinn is the congregation at the Huntsville Salvation Army church.

"They're just a great bunch of people," she says.

As head of her church's community care ministry, Quinn visits those who are sick, grieving or otherwise require support.

Faith is a central part of Quinn's life. At 10 each evening, without fail, she and her husband William sit at their kitchen table reading the Bible, doing their devotions and praying.

"I live my life for the Lord," she says.

Quinn also lives for her family. She married William at 18 and they have been living on the same property in Dwight for 37 years.

They have two grown children, William and Pamela, and two "wonderful" grandchildren, Vanessa and Alexander, who live in Durham, a 3.5-hour drive away.

"We get to see them every other month," she says. "It's hard, really it is. Six times a year is not enough."

Quinn and her husband recently bought a travel trailer and

have been enjoying camping with it, alone and with their grandchildren.

"When my husband's retirement comes in two years, I will have to take a little more time off from the A&P store," she says, adding that in the past she has taken just one week of her allotted holidays each year.

Speaking of the future, Quinn is optimistic about the direction in which both Dwight and Huntsville are headed. "They are growing rapidly, and I'm happy to see it," she says. "The economy is thriving."

Asked whether she is concerned about the area losing its small-town charm, she says, "You can make a town what you want it to be. The key is to get involved in different activities. Then it won't feel so big."

Quinn would like to see more activities for young people. She is thrilled about the construction of the Rotary Youth Park and hopes young people will take advantage of it.

"I would also like to see families doing more things together," she comments. "It would help with society's problems."

After a moment of reflection, she shares the message of a recent guest speaker at her church.

"He said, 'Build a bridge and get over it,'" Quinn says. "I think this applies to everyone. If we all build a bridge, we can get over anything."

Is there someone you'd like to see profiled in this space? Please call Paula at 789-5541 or e-mail pboon@metroland-northmedia.com.



PAULETTE QUINN

LETTERS

Fight to keep Dorset library shows democracy in action

It's great to be part of democracy in action.

I've lived for many years in parts of Africa where people wouldn't dream of expressing a public opinion that is possibly controversial. Now I live a retired life on Kawagama Lake, and I've found my neighbours to be deeply and vocally concerned about the likely removal of our local Dorset library.

It's great to hear their voices. We obviously need a library in a convenient place for us in this geographically distended county.

I'm proud to be a voter now in free elections. I'm also proud to support my neighbours freely expressing a valid opinion about the library, a necessary ingredient of community life.

As a taxpayer on a fixed income who continually faces hikes in my assessment, I do wonder at the rationale of paying more taxes for possibly fewer services.

(The Rev'd Canon) John Thompson
Dorset

Light a candle Sunday in remembrance of past children

Without question, during times of loss the people of this community have united in an effort to give comfort any way they can. Particularly when the loss is a child, because children aren't supposed to die. When a child dies, no matter who they are, our hearts break. We have already lost too many precious children in our small community. Sadly, over the course of this past year, we have again.

That is why it is important to be aware of The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting. This event is held annually on the second Sunday in December (this year Dec. 9) at 7 p.m. Around the globe, families and friends light a candle in their home for one hour to honour and remember children who have died, at any age, from any cause.

As candles are lit, hundreds of thousands of

people are commemorating and honouring children in a way that transcends all ethnic, cultural, religious, and political boundaries. It is believed to be the largest mass candle lighting on the globe, creating a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone, resulting in a quiet remembrance of children who have died, but will never be forgotten.

As bereaved parents, it is a tremendous comfort knowing that as we light our candle on Sunday at 7 p.m. in honour of our precious son, candles are being lit all over the world in memory of other children who have also passed on. We encourage you to light a candle for them as well, so that their light will always shine.

Jim and Nancy Mavity
Huntsville

What's up with the snowy roads?

It has been snowing/freezing rain since Wednesday.

Thursday was a disaster trying to get around town. Where were the plows and sand trucks?

Main Street was a mess. It was glare ice from one end to the other and people couldn't get up hills. Even if kids are off school, that is no excuse to put off plowing the roads. We still have to get to and from work!

Today, Monday, is no better. Where are the

plows? I can understand not getting to rural back roads until the afternoon, but they aren't even getting to main roads in the town of Huntsville until later in the day. Are we short trucks? Are we short drivers? Or are we just short the experience of how to deal with weather like this?

Roads were taken care of better in the '80s than now. What's up with that?

Debbie Knobelsdorf
Huntsville

A god not needed in spirituality to make world a better place

Re: No plans to pull Golden compass by Simcoe Muskoka Catholic boards Nov. 28, 2007

Isn't it interesting that Christians are so touchy about anyone supposedly denigrating their God? If it isn't "My God is better than your God" then why not belittle the population who believe in "other" than God?

It was especially fascinating to see the correlation between monsters and atheists. The monsters whom I have had unpleasant encounters with in my life have not been atheists. In fact, they were God-fearing Christians.

The reference to "those with little faith" having to be concerned about what is in a book or movie more so than those confident in their God, appears to be a narrow observation of the

human race. We all have been born in a time and place, and subsequently acquire the belief systems and customs of our cultural heritage. It is not always wise or generous to blindly adhere to practices forced upon us, without thinking about how these rules affect those around us. Just as it is cruel to infer that those who do not march to the same drummer are somehow evil or inferior.

My faith lies in the strength of spirituality, inherent in all human beings who spend their time on earth as caring, nurturing, creative people who care about their fellow man, animals, and the land that provides sustenance.

Spirituality does not need a god to make the world a better place.

Sharon Stock Feren
Huntsville

Free course to be offered for people with chronic diseases

A free education program for people with chronic diseases to learn the skills needed for the daily management of longterm illnesses has been initiated by the Women's College Research Institute in Toronto.

Senior research scientist Dr. Susan Jaglal is offering the self-management courses through videoconferencing (telehealth) to Northern Ontario residents with chronic diseases.

The intent of the research study is to see if people in rural and remote Ontario communities can learn the skills they need to self-manage their illnesses by taking free courses through telehealth.

Jaglal's research team is looking for Northern Ontario residents with chronic diseases to enroll in these free courses, and participate in her study to determine whether this "distance learning" approach is effective.

Each course is 2.5 hours a week for six weeks and will be offered at Huntsville District Memorial Hospital via tele-health.

The program is designed for people 55 years or older who have one or more of the following conditions:

- Arthritis

- Stroke
- Heart Disease (e.g. coronary artery disease, congestive heart failure).
- Lung Disease (e.g. asthma, chronic bronchitis, COPD, emphysema).

The first course is finishing this week, and another will be held in the spring if there is enough interest.

Participants in the program will learn:

- How to manage your symptoms.
- How to eat well and live more actively.
- How to communicate effectively with your health care team.
- How to manage fear, anger, frustration and depression.
- How to make daily tasks easier.
- How to get more out of life.

Those participating in the program will be asked to complete a telephone survey four times over the next year. They will be asked questions about their experiences in the program, their health, health behaviours (e.g. exercise) and their use of health care services.

Anyone interested in participating or has questions about the research component of the study should contact the registration office at 1-866-870-4560.



HEALTHCARE HEROES

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Shoppers Drug Mart Staff

Dana Murdy, owner of Huntsville's Shoppers Drug Mart and her new Front Store Manager, Rick Tetreault, join Huntsville Hospital Foundation Executive Director Debi Davis, in congratulating Betty Rhiness and Margaret Botting. These two ladies spearheaded a campaign to raise money for Huntsville Hospital by asking customers to make a donation to the Tree of Life.



Betty, Margaret and their colleagues raised over \$3,900! We thank them as well as all those who gave to help the hospital.

The Shoppers Drug Mart team is looking forward to moving to their new store early in the new year. Rumour has it that the store will open by January 10. Good luck Dana, Rick and all the folks at Shoppers.

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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