

Opinion

MUSKOKA MOSAIC

Introducing Jerry Brandt

BY PAULA BOON

The team having fun will win. That is Jerry Brandt's philosophy, whether he is working as an industrial electrician, relaxing with his family, serving on Armour council or fielding calls as an Ontario Minor Hockey Association (OMHA) convener.

"If you tell everyone what they're doing wrong every day, things are going to go wrong," he explains. "If people aren't having fun, the coach or boss is doing something wrong."

He had plenty of opportunities to put this approach to work when coaching minor hockey, something he began doing in his early twenties.

For example, one novice team started its season with two devastating losses: 15-1 and 16-0.

"Before the third one I bet the kids my beard they couldn't win a game," he recalls. Then his smile widens. "They shaved me in the Humphrey arena afterward."

Many of the young people he worked with have gone on to be coaches themselves, and they haven't forgotten Brandt.

"A lot of those kids I coached 30 years ago still call me Coach," he says. "It's very touching."

In the early 80s Brandt also became a referee because there was a shortage in the area.

He would still be refereeing, he says, except that an old knee injury came back to haunt him and he required a series of operations.

That didn't end his involvement in hockey, however. When Mye Sedore, assistant to the OMHA representative in Parry Sound died in September, 1992, Brandt was asked to assist as a convener. He's been doing that job ever since.

"A lot of it is answering phones and providing information about the rules," he explains. "I basically assist Bob (Beaumont), our area OMHA executive representative."

His home life (with wife Diane and four now-grown kids) and hockey have kept Brandt busy, but he has managed to do even more for his community.

Brandt has also been a councillor for Armour Township for about 20 years, with just one "sabbatical."

Having been on various governing committees since high school, Brandt felt it was natural to be involved at a township level.

"I've had a lot of enjoyment over the years in making Armour Township a better place," he says. "Not all our roads are paved, but we're working on it!"

Brandt hopes to be able to see the township through the changes it will face with the four-laning of Hwy. 11.

On top of all this, Brandt also has a full-time job.

Hired soon after Domtar (now Panolam) was built in 1977, Brandt became a construction and maintenance electrician and then an industrial electrician. He has an industrial maintenance ticket for Panolam as well.



JERRY BRANDT

"I can honestly say there's never been a day that I haven't wanted to go to work," he says. "It's an excellent spot to learn and teach. The people are just great. There are lots of challenges every day, but always a way to overcome them."

Brandt has found it exhilarating to work for an industry innovator, and he thinks the plant's rec club has done a tremendous job over the years. "We've had a lot of fun," he says.

Although he's eligible to retire, Brandt says that won't be happening in the near future. "I can't retire until I'm done, and I'm not done yet," he explains.

Brandt's roots in Burk's Falls are deep — his Swiss great-grandfather settled there in the late 1800s — but Brandt notes that Huntsville is also very important to him.

"I spend a lot of my time in Huntsville," he says, "mainly because of sports and recreation. And I love paddling in Algonquin Park every year."

This entire area is great, in his opinion. "By the looks of the four lanes (on Hwy. 11) more people are understanding that, which is good."

Years ago, on his way to work, Brandt often drove down Hwy. 11 without seeing a single car until he got to Emsdale.

"Now often I have to wait five minutes just to get out onto the highway," he says. "That's just one sign that we will prosper."

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.

LETTERS

Mailbox changes don't make sense

I really get ticked off when people from the post office, or government, come to my door.

It's very simple. They never bear good news, like we are giving you a rebate. We are lowering your taxes. We know your old age pension is really too low so we are raising it.

Doesn't matter. They probably wouldn't do it with a smile anyway.

The latest is we won't be delivering the mail to your mailbox, the one that has been so faithful for almost 30 years (replaced three times) through rain and snow sleet and hail. It's always there.

Like the owner, it's getting a little threadbare, and the flag falls down occasionally. That's usually when I have a letter going out to be mailed. Yep, the mailman puts it in his car, saving me a 10-kilometre trip to town.

Snow is never a problem. Our good neighbour Willi Guthof runs his snowblower along the front of the eight mailboxes when he plows the private road, a

good deed appreciated by all. So why the change now?

Here's what I got from the young people at the door. In the old days we contracted out the mail delivery so we didn't have to worry if the contractor had an accident or got hit while delivering your mail.

But now they are postal employees, and we can't have that. Unless you can see way down the road both ways, 114 metres (which you can), I think he said, we won't deliver it. Too risky.

Our mailman has never had an incident in all the years I have been here.

So now they are going to put it out closer to Ravenscliffe Road where the cars coming down the road can skid into us (non postal employees) and take out the nice new boxes they are going to put in.

You know those nice little boxes that won't hold the Weekender, which I forgot to mention is delivered religiously every Friday to our mailbox.

Those nice little mailboxes which friends in town tell me are broken into

regularly for those government cheques, which are so easy to cash.

Where oh where did these brilliant decisions come from? Certainly not from our post office employees in town, who serve us so well, and had no say in the matter. The post office employees who know the town and surrounding area like the back of their hand.

Why, the brilliant decision was made in London, Ontario, where the employees probably don't even know where Huntsville is. That's who.

Can I write my MP, my MPP, my M (that's mayor)?

Certainly not, because they got rid of the post office years ago and it is now an arm's-length corporation.

That's corpocide for don't call us, we will call you when we have more bad news.

My last hope is my loyal local paper that is already carrying the torch, and to this I add my small voice.

David McCourt
Huntsville

Judicial inquiry is 'not a good idea'

I would like to send an open letter to Mayor Doughty and councillors Zanetti, Coleman, Greaves and Fletcher through your paper.

My concern is your plan to have a judicial inquiry relating to the so-called release of private information on the Walter Schmid fiasco. Your attack on Schmid was public knowledge from the start. Council may have been in the dark but no one else was.

Quite naturally when the mayor and Zanetti began this attack Schmid was devastated and one would expect he would turn to his friends for advice and support. When the attack failed he was met with an alternative tack: resign and be paid handsomely. Again consultation was necessary even though it was obvious staying on with this negative administration would be impossible and intolerable. For the first time you could now negotiate a gag order as part of the deal. So what was leaked? All the foregoing was public knowledge. You can't fire the CAO or coerce him into resigning in a town this size and expect no one to know about it!

The pay-out figure appears to be a secret so the gag order worked.

I don't believe it is too effective. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure out how much would have to be paid considering Schmid's age, salary, experience, relocation costs and gag order. My estimate is +\$200,000.

If you add this amount for a buy-out to the squandering of public funds for cancelling contracts on the park, you are approaching half a million dollars. You may now add the cost of the inquiry which may exceed the payout figure and get a staggering waste of public funds for one year of negative administration where little has been accomplished. When is it going to end?

I believe a judicial inquiry is not a good idea for two reasons:

1. It will be another example of waste of taxpayers' money by the

five-four faction on council.

2. In the course of the inquiry Mayor Doughty and his foursome on council may find they have a tiger by the tail and it may at any time turn and bite them.

If a judge is to inquire into these matters I believe the court will have to inquire into the background of the attack on Schmid and among other things be told the truth about the following.

1. Who wanted to fire the CAO in the first place and why?

2. Is the attack on Schmid and the coerced resignation related to the resignations of Libby Boucher and Sarah Brown, two other senior employees and the removal of town auditors?

3. How and why did the new procedure bylaw get passed with the result council was removed from the process of reviewing an employee's work record (a bizarre situation)?

4. If the mayor is the only one to conduct a review why was Councillor Zanetti involved from the beginning?

5. If the mayor alone does the review who decides when it is to begin and who is to be targeted?

6. If the mayor alone does the review, is he not required to do so with proper procedure and according to labour code requirements and avoid exposing the municipality to a wrongful dismissal lawsuit?

7. When the mayor undertakes his review and finds he has no grounds for the dismissal is the review not over? Who authorized the alternative tack of payout for resignation?

8. What stage were payout negotiations at when council got involved for the first time?

9. What date was the gag order put in place and was it retroactive to cover Mayor Doughty and Zanetti's conduct from the outset?

The community is entitled to some honest answers and if an inquiry is to be held it should be broadened.

Bruce Payne
Huntsville

Where's the recognition for council's successes?

There comes a point when even average folk get fed up with the negative coverage of Huntsville council that is being provided by the Huntsville Forester. One gets the impression from your articles and editorials that this mayor and council cannot agree on anything, nor can they accomplish a single thing that has been worthy.

Yet when I attend council meetings and participate in committee meetings I truly have to wonder if you as a community newspaper have the best interests of our community at heart or do you have an agenda of your own?

The community is entering into its second winter with this council and I as one community resident am enjoying very much the ability to walk down the main street of our town without having to jump a snow bank. And who wouldn't be in the Christmas spirit with the wonderful Christmas lights along Main Street and King William?

This past summer our town never looked prettier, and I am really looking forward to this spring when they finish the plantings and landscape on King William. I have learned from council and committee meetings that we can expect all of River Mill Park to be complete (already the Caroline extension and parking is open) as well as a vastly improved west end of town

by early summer. I have also learned that our downtown merchants have never been treated better with a council that has removed snow banks and parking meters in the name of improved tourism.

If one were to take your articles and editorials to heart we would have to believe that we have no staff left at town hall, certainly none that are capable of accomplishing anything. And yet all that I can see is business and service as usual (if not better), plus improved property standards, and a smoke-free (from fall burning) community. Just this past week Huntsville received the largest dump of snow in recent memory, yet the snow and snow banks were removed as efficiently as if they have ever been. Not a word or compliment of "good job" from the Huntsville Forester was offered toward our over-worked public works staff, something that would have been offered in past years by way of a positive editorial.

I am sure as a community we would all like to see a reasonable level of decorum amongst council, but none were ever elected with a mandate of having to like each other. I believe I was elected to do the best for my ward (Brunel) and for the town of Huntsville. And from what I am experiencing at council and committee meetings I believe I and my fellow councillors are

accomplishing that goal. The proof of evidence is throughout our community.

It is interesting that the headline on your negative editorial last week was "the pitfalls of poor planning." Yet your suggestion that this council should have entered into the community visioning process eight months ago would have been just that, "poor planning." Eight months ago a council consisting of a majority of new representatives were hardly finding their way to their committees and you want them to have community vision? If memory serves me correctly it wasn't until the final months of their first three-year term that Mayor Mackenzie and his two-term council presented their community vision.

The community of Huntsville expects and deserves fair and unbiased reporting on a consistent basis from our community newspaper. Sadly, this is not the impression I and many members of our community are receiving from the pages of the Huntsville Forester. The Huntsville Forester claims to be our community newspaper and for the most part has been able to live up to that claim for well over 130 years. Unfortunately, in my opinion, this past year not been one of them.

Councillor Mike Greaves
Huntsville

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Bruce Payne
Huntsville



MOE'S
PICK OF THE WEEK
2007
PONTIAC G5



2.2 L, 4 cyl. engine,
auto., 15,634 km
stk# CP8137-A

\$13,995

2004
DODGE DAKOTA



4.7 L 8 cyl. engine,
auto., 81,827 km
stk# CP-1

\$16,995

2004
CADILLAC SRX



3.6 L 6 cyl. engine,
auto., 74,099 km
stk# TP8149-A

\$23,995

2007
CHEV IMPALA



3.5 L 6 cyl. engine,
auto., 18,884 km
stk# CP8234-A

\$17,995

2007
PONTIAC VIBE



1.8 L 4 cyl. engine,
auto., 6,536 km
stk# CP-7690-A

\$19,995 warranty

2007
CHEV IMPALA LT



3.5 L 6 cyl. engine,
auto., 48,111 km
stk# CP8233-A

\$16,900

2007
CHEV SILVERADO LS



4.8 L 8 cyl. engine,
auto., 33,137 km
stk# CP-2

\$22,995

2007
EQUINOX



3.4 L 8 cyl. engine,
auto., 45,915 km
stk# CP-3

\$22,995

2007
BUICK ALLURE CX



3.8 L 6 cyl. engine,
auto., 23,137 km
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