

Opinion

MUSKOKA MOSAIC

Introducing Joanne Osborne

BY PAULA BOON

Huntsville is gradually becoming home for Joanne Osborne.

The registered nurse, a resident of Toronto for all but two years of her life, moved here in July when a teaching job became available for her partner, Kim.

"The opportunity presented itself, and we decided to go for it," Osborne says. "Moving north was always a seed of an idea for me. I love being outdoors."

Osborne's attachment to the wilderness was formed during childhood summers spent at Glen Bernard Camp near Sundridge. Coincidentally, it was the camp that brought her and Kim together as well. "There was an alumni canoe trip to celebrate the 75th year of the camp in 1994," she explains. "We got re-acquainted there."

That first year 36 women responded, and some core group members decided to make the trip an annual tradition. For the next 10 years Osborne was the main organizer of the trip. "We still go every summer," she says.

The mother of two sons and a daughter in their twenties has also guided trips in the Yukon. Her first trip, arranged by Canoe North Adventures in Orangeville, was a celebration of a friend's 50th birthday. "It's awe-inspiring country," says Osborne. "When I left, I said, 'I'll be back.'"

She has since helped with three all-women trips in the north. "It's a powerful feeling for women to go together. An incredible camaraderie develops," she says.

In the past six months, Osborne has been active in other outdoor pursuits besides paddling, such as hiking, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. She says, "It's just a stunning place to be. I wanted to be outdoors more."

Other goals she has been able to pursue include exploring her creative side through painting and photography – "inspired, of course by the magnificent surroundings and seasonal changes" – and living more lightly on the earth.

"I am interested in exploring local and/or organic food sources, and I love the farmers' market," she says.

A yoga enthusiast for six years, Osborne has also signed up for yoga classes in town.

She says the people here have been wonderful, particularly her welcoming neighbours in the Mary Lake Highlands.

And, while it has taken a little longer than she had hoped to find steady employment, at the end of January she will begin working with Huntsville's Algonquin Family Health Team providing geriatric care.

During her career, Osborne has worked with patients at all stages of life, although she says she has always had a passion for palliative issues. She trained and worked at the Hospital

for Sick Children. Later, she worked in a pediatrician's office, Bloorview Children's Hospital, Sunnybrook Family Practice Clinic, and for St. Elizabeth Health Care, a community health care provider. "That was an eye-opener and a good match for my skills," she says.

Osborne says her interactions with patients have provided many growing experiences. She notes, "Nursing has taught me to have a broader perspective on life."

Since arriving in Huntsville she has been volunteering for Hospice Huntsville. "I saw the brochure when I was first visiting and was immediately interested," she says. "I thought it was a good way to meet like-minded people, and I'm committed to the idea of volunteering and helping people in their home with end-of-life issues."

Osborne plans to volunteer more but is waiting to see what her regular work schedule will be like. However, she couldn't resist signing up to be a scorekeeper at the Canadian Pond Hockey Championships at end of January and beginning of February. "It just sounded like so much fun," she says.

At times she feels isolated, Osborne admits. "If I'm doing things in town, I'd like to be able to call people up and say, 'Would you like to go for coffee?'" she says. "There are a few people I can do that with, but it takes time to make inroads in a new community."



However, she is confident that it won't take long to settle in. "It's about keeping positive and finding community, whether it be spiritual, working or living," she adds. "We all need more community."

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

Tips for cleaning up after the flood

With water levels back to seasonal norms in the region, many homeowners will be facing the daunting task of cleaning up. For those who have had flooding in their houses, there are some special health concerns.

It's best to roll up your sleeves as soon as possible after the water has receded, as cleaning early will protect your health and prevent further damage to your home and belongings. It may be necessary to do a more extensive cleanup if sewage has backed up in your home or business — for this you may want to contact a professional for assistance.

For starters make sure the power is off. If the water rose above electrical outlets or the service panel, get your local power company to disconnect power to your home. You'll need to have your wiring inspected to see what needs to be replaced before power is turned back on.

Gather the cleanup equipment you'll need: rubber boots, waterproof gloves, face masks if cleanup involves sewage, pails, mops, submersible pumps, wet-dry shop vacs, dehumidifiers, fans and heaters.

A large container may be needed for wet bedding and clothing.

Some additional tips to remember:

Mud and debris should be hosed away and then scrubbed from walls.

Start cleaning from the ceiling and work down toward the floor. Cleaning should be followed by disinfection to kill potential bacteria and viruses.

Because it is possible that floodwaters are contaminated with sewage, disinfection of walls and surfaces in flood affected areas of the home must follow cleaning.

Remove and discard contaminated household goods like carpets that cannot be disinfected.

Drywall or wall paneling soaked by flood water will need to be removed to prevent the buildup of harmful moulds.

Dry out rooms as quickly as possible.

There may be structural repairs needed in the home as well. Call your municipal office for guidance.

If your septic field has been flooded, do not use the septic system until the field has dried out. It's also wise to get a professional to check the septic system for problems.

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit has a more detailed checklist of flood cleanup tips on its website, www.simcoemuskokahealth.org.

Look for the document "Cleaning up after a flood."

Well water should be tested. If your well has been flooded, it could have been contaminated. Until you can get your well water tested, use bottled water for drinking, making infant formula, juices, cooking, making ice, washing fruits and vegetables or brushing teeth or boil your water rapidly for at least one minute before use.

If your well was flooded you will need to disinfect it. This involves adding household bleach to your well and flushing all the home's water lines, water heater, dishwasher and washing machines with the chlorinated water. The health unit's website has detailed instructions on disinfecting your well at www.simcoemuskokahealth.org.

Food items that have come into contact with floodwaters should be thrown out, with the exception of sealed canned goods. The outside of sealed canned goods must be thoroughly washed with clean water and disinfected.

Any high-risk foods that have been at room temperature for more than two hours should be thrown out.

Some types of food are a high risk for contamination. These include fish, poultry and meats (including cold cuts), eggs, milk and cheese and other dairy products, soups, stews, casseroles and any food that may have come in contact with meat juices.

Without power, the refrigerator will keep foods cool for four to six hours. Refrigerator temperatures should be 4°C or less to keep food safe. Without power, an upright or chest freezer that is completely full will keep food frozen for about two days. A half-full freezer will keep food frozen for one day. The freezer temperature should be -18°C or colder for food safety.

The Ministry of Health and Long Term Care has more information on its website, at www.health.gov.on.ca. Search for the document Food Safety: Keeping Food Safe During A Power Failure.

For more guidance on cleaning up, dealing with food or other issues related to the recent weather, you can visit the website of the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit at www.simcoemuskokahealth.org or call Your Health Connection at 721-7520 (1-877-721-7520) from Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Free workshop offers AED training

With the growing number of Automated External Defibrillators (AED) becoming available in public areas across the country, the Huntsville chapter of the Ontario Heart and Stroke Foundation wants to ensure that people know when and how to use the devices properly.

An AED demonstration is being included in a CPR public education workshop on Saturday, Feb. 16 from 9 a.m. to noon at the Huntsville Centennial Centre. The workshop is free and open to the first 150 adults and children who are over the age of 10. Pre-registration is required and can be done by sending an e-mail to cpranytime@sympatico.ca and by indicating the name of all participants and if the participant is an adult or child. For those who do not have access to the Internet, call 705-788-9972 and leave a message. Donations will also be accepted that will go directly

toward the purchase and placement of an AED somewhere in Huntsville.

"AEDs are easy to use and most importantly, they have the potential to save lives," explained Brian Harvey, president of the Huntsville chapter. "The devices are becoming commonplace in many arenas, community halls and even golf courses, and the Heart and Stroke Foundation is working to place as many defibrillators in the community as possible."

In addition to AED training, the workshop will include basic CPR training with instruction on what to do in the event of choking and a demonstration and how to recognize the symptoms of a stroke. The first 100 families to register will also receive a complimentary CPR Anytime Family and Friends Kit, which includes an instructional DVD, booklet and mannequin. The workshop is one of several events the

Huntsville chapter has planned for 2008.

On Friday, May 23, the Heart and Stroke Big Bike rolls into town, providing companies and community groups with a fun team-building exercise. If you wish to enter a team or require further information visit www.bigbike.ca or contact Brian at 705-788-9972. The event is scheduled to take place at Muskoka Commerce Park.

During the months of April through June, many of the elementary schools within Huntsville will participate in the Heart and Stroke Jump Rope/Hoops programs. Hundreds of children will skip to raise funds for the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

On Monday, Aug. 11, 2008, the 5th annual Huntsville Chapter Golf for Heart will take place at the Highlands Golf Course at Deerhurst Resort. In 2007 the event raised close to \$30,000.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

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