

Opinion

MUSKOKA MOSAIC

Introducing Janice Markle

BY PAULA BOON

It was family that brought Janice Markle and her husband Craig back to Huntsville.

After their second child was born in 2002, Markle realized that Canmore, Alberta, where they had been living for five years, was too far from home.

"We had good friends," she explains, "but it's not the same as having your mom come over. I wanted to be around family."

Markle, who attended Pine Glen Public School and Huntsville High School and has a degree in psychology, has worked at a variety of jobs in the community, most recently at Soul Sistas Wellness Kitchen.

"I started a year ago last June and I love it," she says. "People come in and they're happy to be there. They're happy to get a wholesome meal."

Markle enjoys the people, the interaction and the fast, fun pace. "At times it can be hectic, but that goes with the job," she says.

When asked what her job title is, Markle replies, "I'm the bossy soul sista." She laughs. "There's no official title. We all work pretty evenly doing whatever needs to get done."

Of the new location at 79 Main St., Markle says, "It's open, bright and cheery — definitely worth the walk down the street."

She notes that since the move, Soul Sistas

has seen an increase in customers, adding, "People see it as a full-service place to eat now."

The rest of Markle's life is just as fast-paced as her work at Soul Sistas.

For the past few years she has had a cleaning business and spent a lot of time with what she calls "special senior people."

At the moment she has about six clients, some of them seniors. "With them, it's cleaning plus lunch. I really enjoy it. They look forward to me coming, and they're so thankful for both the work and the company."

Markle's involvement with seniors also goes beyond her business. She volunteers for two Muskoka Seniors luncheons every year, helping with serving, kitchen work, and anything else that needs to be done.

"And there are a couple of people I visit and take here and there," she adds. "One I see three times a week. I write my schedule on her calendar each week so she knows where I am. I want to leave myself open for that kind of thing."

Markle also has her own family to care for: she's mother to Emily, 8, Nathan, 5, and Jared, born just last week.

"It's a bit daunting to be starting over again with diapers and things," she admitted during an interview last month, "but I'm sure it'll be great."

The family is active at Faith Baptist Church. "We go most Sundays, and often there are things going on after church," she says, "plus I'm in a little Bible study."

Markle can't say enough about the numerous activities the church offers for children. "For example, in January, both kids started playing UPWARD basketball there," she says.

When she finds herself with free time, Markle says, she enjoys socializing, baking, walking, doing projects like refinishing furniture and reading — "although there's never really enough time for that."

When asked about her hopes for the future, Markle reflected for a moment and replied, "I like the way things are going now. I hope they continue to go the way they are. After the baby's born, I'll go back to working at Soul Sistas part-time, being home for the kids, and cleaning. It may sound funny, but I just want things to stay the same."

Markle says her family sometimes tells her she's got too much going on in her life, but she enjoys it too much to give anything up.

"We'll see what Child Number 3 does to slow me down," she says with a laugh.

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



Environmental commissioner to give a talk in Huntsville

BY ROB ZINGEL

Huntsville Lakes Council

Gord Miller, Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, is an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and is charged with monitoring compliance by the various provincial ministries with Ontario's Environmental Bill of Rights. He is coming to Huntsville on Feb. 28 to talk about his latest report in which he points out a number of areas in which our province has once again fallen short on protecting our natural environment.

Miller very clearly indicates that, in various areas of the Greater Golden Horseshoe in Southern Ontario, plans for economic growth and development continue to take the upper hand over the ability of local ecosystems to support this. He concludes that the planning system of the province puts the cart before the horse by issuing population projections before seeing if these are sustainably possible. For example, for some communities, these projections exceed the available local water supply and the natural limits of the rivers to receive and assimilate the treated sewage.

He goes further by noting that plans to artificially expand the carrying capacity of these communities, through long-distance transport of water from outside the local watershed (and wastewater away), will create systems more vulnerable to disruption, require costly infrastructure and carry with them a greatly increased energy need for the pumps required. There is no concerted effort by the province to establish sustainable water use cycles as an integral part of land use planning. That sort of pressure isn't a problem to us up here quite yet, but we do need firm legislation that sets out detailed planning requirements that will provide protection for ecological values.

As well, Miller shows that, although the province states that it is its intention to promote more compact growth in urban areas to decrease vehicle use, it plans to spend more of its budget on its highway systems than on public transit improvements. New road construction often has a profound impact on natural areas. Even provincially significant wetlands are not protected in this instance.

Miller points out that the vast forests and tundra of Northern Ontario have ecological significance on a continental if not global scale. He notes that many proposed activities and development there are going ahead in the absence of any overall planning mechanism. Over 80 per cent of land in Northern Ontario (and a lot of Muskoka) is Crown land over which there are few legal mechanisms that deal with sorting out land use, such as the competing priorities of forestry, mining, tourism and the ecological needs of species such as the woodland caribou. As well, the Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines, Energy and Environment ministries operate in isolation from each other with little effort to co-ordinate or integrate the impacts of their various approvals and activities. This does not advance the protection of the environment.

Dear to the hearts of many of us are wetlands, a critically important ecosystem providing, among other benefits: water storage, storm protection and flood mitigation, groundwater recharge, water purification through retention of nutrients, sediments and pollutants, mitigation of some of the impacts of climate change and habitat for many species of plants and animals.

Provincial policy clearly states that wetlands should be protected. However, Mr. Miller notes that wetlands continue to lose out to other priorities. There are protections provided in certain policy

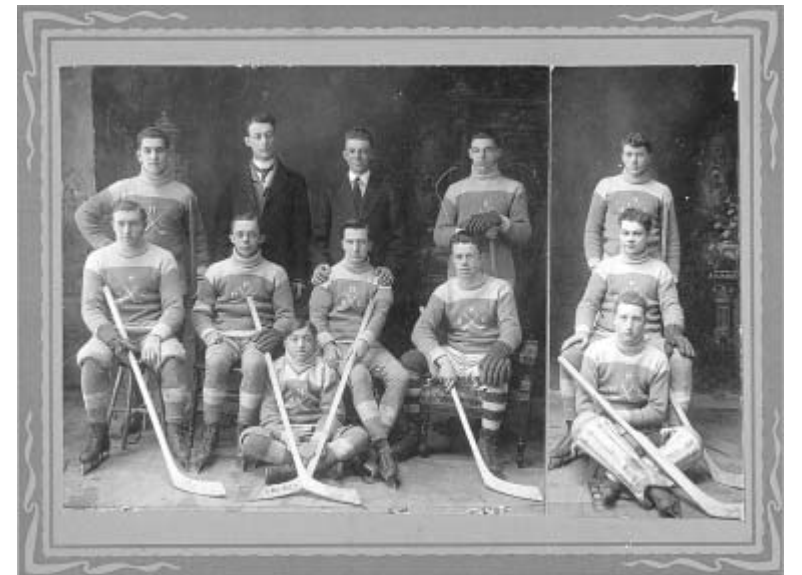
documents but exemptions allow for infrastructure works such as roads, agriculture and some resource extraction such as pits and quarries. Responsibility and jurisdiction is fragmented and decision-makers are permitted a lot of discretion in applying policies. As well, protection depends on evaluations followed by development restrictions added right into Official Plans. Evaluations are costly. In Huntsville, many of our wetlands still need to be identified and evaluated.

A review of the aggregate resources program was recently completed and Miller indicates that this shows that there are problems in the regulation of this industry, especially with the rehabilitation of old pits and quarries. There is a great demand for aggregates for new development and he found that once a proposal for a new aggregate operation is initiated, it appears to be almost unstoppable, no matter the ecological cost.

Miller's report goes into much more detail and covers many more areas than are noted above. Although he has some applause for the province, I'd advise any environmentalists with high blood pressure or heart conditions to come out and hear him speak — it might be less stressful than reading the document. The Muskoka Heritage Foundation and the Muskoka Watershed Council are sponsoring Mr. Miller's talk. This will be in Partners Hall on Feb. 28 at 7 p.m. For more information or to register (appreciated but not necessary), call 645-7393. Miller's report can be accessed at www.eco.on.ca (under publications and forms) or at the Huntsville Public Library (call first to ensure it has been received).

Huntsville Lakes Council's mission includes facilitating education on the environment and sustainable development. For more information on HLC please visit www.huntsvillelakescouncil.org.

Photographic Memory



HUNTSVILLE IS HOCKEYVILLE, and has been for a very long time.

Players photographed as the Huntsville Hockey Club in 1912-13 were, back row: Ralph (Bud) Shaw, Wm. McDonald, unknown, Sticky (Norman) Cribbs, Baldie (Harry) Cribbs; middle row: Art Blackburn, Brownie Thompson, Charles Watson, Reg Booth, Doug Matheson, and front: Gus Hamilton and Newton Thomas.

The Northern Hockey League was formally organized in 1906. So, Huntsville is 'Hockeyville', as every local Bud, Harry, and Art has known for a very long time. Sticky indeed. Sticky and 'K'raffy. Go team Huntsville.



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