

# Opinion

## MUSKOKA MOSAIC

### Introducing Catherine Wyle

BY PAULA BOON

Literacy is an issue that is close to Catherine Wyle's heart. That's one of the reasons the manager of Huntsville's Coles bookstore aims to make her space as accessible as possible.

"I want anybody to walk in regardless of their education level or interests and ask questions without feeling intimidated," she says, adding that some people love books and see them as a way to open up the world, while others are intimidated by books because they weren't successful in school.

"I'm trying to close that gap," she says. "I don't think we should judge a person by what he or she reads."

And if she doesn't have something a customer is looking for, Wyle is happy to find out if anyone in town does carry it. As she puts it, "I just want to get books into people's hands. With books, you can become any type of person you want, go to any place in the world, and visit any time period. They free you."

Coles has the same philosophy, Wyle notes, describing the company's Love of Reading foundation, which chooses 10 Canadian schools each year to receive \$150,000 toward materials

for their libraries.

A supporter of the Muskoka Literacy Council, Wyle feels strongly that the world would be a different place if literacy were not such an issue. "And I don't think people are aware of the extent of the problem," she adds.

Wyle has been at Coles in Huntsville Place Mall since it opened in 1992, and she became manager in 1994. "I've put my heart and soul into it," she says. "When you walk into our store I want you to feel welcome and comfortable."

She treasures the relationships she has with her customers.

"I'm excited by their excitement," she says, giving as an example the time a mother came back and teared up telling Wyle that her son had read his first full book and asked to read the next one in the series. "As a mother of two children myself, I understood how she felt."

Growing up in Burlington as the second of four children, Wyle had a wide variety of interests, ranging from art to marine biology. "I still don't know what I want to be," she says with a smile.

A public librarian was one of the biggest influences in her young life. Wyle recalls, "Out-

side of my mother, this was the most amazing woman I had ever met. She knew about all kinds of things, and she helped everybody. She did it with such joy, really making a difference in people's lives. I wanted to be her."

Art, which she eventually studied at Sheridan College, was a way for the quiet young girl to escape into another world. "My mother had set up a little cubbyhole for me in the basement with a drafting table," she recalls. "I'd lose myself for six or seven hours at a time."

Wyle is grateful that her mother encouraged her to be her own person. Working long hours while single-handedly raising four children, her mother also somehow managed to bring the family to a cottage resort in Muskoka for one week every summer.

"It felt even more like home than home," Wyle says, tears coming to her eyes. "I saw my mother become herself. That place was a piece of heaven."

The connection was so strong that in 1989 Wyle moved to Muskoka and became co-owner of the same cottage resort.

Not long after, she turned her sights back to her love of books. Wyle began researching the

possibility of opening a bookstore in the area and saw an ad in the paper for the Coles that was about to open. The rest is history.

"Sixteen years later I get just as excited opening a new box of books," she says. "You never know what you might find in there."

For her, being manager of the bookstore is all about sharing that passion and making people's day a little brighter.

"Each person affects others even if they don't know it," she says. "I hope when people leave our store, they feel better, even if it's just for five seconds."

*Thanks to Mark Bagu for suggesting that Catherine Wyle be profiled. If there is someone you'd like to see in this space, please call Paula at 789-5541 or e-mail pboon@metroland-northmedia.com.*



## LETTERS

### Forget the massive pay raise

An open letter to the mayor and council:

It has to be presumed that you, as responsible people, would have known what work was involved in being on council and also what the remuneration was for that work, and yet we find that you are trying for a massive increase in that remuneration.

This at a time when our town is already in financial difficulty. Yes, increase every employee's pay, including your own, in line with inflation, but not more. If you feel that the positions of mayor and councillor deserve higher pay, vote it in but only to take effect with the next mayor and council.

I hear some feeling that pay should be tied to

performance, which might not reflect well on this council's present package, particularly as it pertains to the progress or lack of same on our River Mill Park.

As to the park, it has been my impression that the taxpayers have resoundingly rejected both any inclusion of a settling pond of any kind, or any use of park area for any residential or commercial purpose. Are we not being listened to?

Leadership gets things done in a co-operative fashion instead of factional bickering. Let's have some of that!

Don Reed  
Huntsville

### District councillors had better hide when seasonal residents return

I understand that the members of the District of Muskoka council, as well as the mayor of Huntsville, along with some of his council members, think it behooves all of us people in Muskoka, including rural districts, such as Lake of Bays township where I reside, to contribute financially toward the cost of water, sewers and street maintenance in the towns such as Huntsville. This sounds wonderful.

Unfortunately, some of the local yokels in the bush, along with the 'tourists' (also known as cottagers and or summer residents) seem to object on the basis that, since we pay for the installment of our own septic tanks and wells, as well as for roads and garbage disposal, without any subsidies from the good people of Huntsville, the town should pay for its own drinking water and sewage treatment.

How naive of us 'hot dawgs.' Had we only asked for the money I'm sure the altruistic burgers of Huntsville would have fallen over themselves to alleviate our costs.

Some of the town council argue that, since we rustics use the town roads, washrooms and drinking water whenever we pay a visit, that surely some of the cost of such should be borne by us. This is only reasonable. You see, when I get up in the morning I drive to town every day with celerity because I don't want to use my own facilities at the cottage when the town has similar amenities for free. It's really a matter of "holding it" until I get there. I'm sure most of us do the same. Oh, of course I have other lesser important or ancillary reasons for going to town, such as banking, grocery shopping, dropping in on the pharmacy, hardware and liquor stores, getting some lumber or a haircut, etc.; but using your facilities is of primary importance.

Likewise, my car loves to roar up and down your paved, potholeless streets, going in circles around the block, the tires screeching in delightful ecstasy as they leave telltale skid marks behind. Naturally, I should be taxed for this too, in the same way that you good folks will undoubtedly offer to contribute to the repairing of my own nasty gravel country road in the summer of 2009. I can hardly wait.

We rustics seem to spend quite a bit of money in town, thereby forcing the owners of diverse businesses to earn lots of money against their will. Goods and services tend to be depleted such that the townspeople sometimes face temporary shortages. This should not be.

I suggest you pass the legislation to increase our taxes as quickly as possible during the late winter before the silly tourists get wind of it this spring and before they have their ubiquitous annual, pedestrian cottage meetings, most of which are held on or before the July 1 weekend.

Once they learn of your intentions they collectively will become an ugly beast and will surely turn on your various mayors and councils. Some of the scalawags even know how to vote. I know because I used to be one of them before I became a permanent resident enlightened by the benefits of regional government. You folks had better find some place to hide.

On the other hand, Rome wasn't burned in a day.

In the meantime, I'll try to support your cause, however indirectly, by "holding it" again tomorrow morning before heading, once again, to town.

Cam Walker  
Rebecca Lake  
Dwight

### Great job, Aphrodite and friends

I am writing to publicly congratulate and thank the organizers, performers and crew of the International Women's Day celebration, *Aphrodite and Friends* on their wonderful show held Saturday, March 8 at the Algonquin Theatre in Huntsville.

The variety show featured numerous women from Muskoka and demonstrated the tremendous wealth of talent in our area, involving multi-media visual arts, dance, music, and comedy. The audience, which included lots of men, enjoyed a rich tapestry of experiences with laughter as well as moments of poignancy and a reminder that the work for equality of women is not yet over. It is my hope that we can continue to celebrate women's talents and strengths every year.

The show was a benefit for Muskoka Parry

Sound Sexual Assault Services.

Huntsville has sadly been reminded recently of how closely women live with the reality of sexual violence in our lives. One in four Canadian women will, in her lifetime, experience a sexual assault. Nearly 80 per cent of sexual assaults against women are committed by a man known to the woman. While these statistics may be shocking they are unfortunately consistently found in Canadian research on the issue.

We thank you, friends of Aphrodite, for your great show and performances, diligent work behind the scenes and vision in supporting services for women in our community who have been sexually assaulted.

Lauren Power, sexual assault therapist  
Muskoka Parry Sound Sexual Assault Services

### Water and sewer proposal lacks fairness

I would like to add my voice to the chorus of others opposed to the notion that rural and waterfront home owners ought to share the costs associated with water and sewer services we don't receive.

If it is in fact a fair proposition, would it not also then be fair for rural and waterfront home owners to be compensated for the thousands of dollars already spent to install water filtration

systems and environmentally friendly septic systems? Should we not also be compensated for the regular maintenance costs to ensure our systems are functioning properly? Our taxes also support services we don't receive. Where is the fairness?

Imposing a tax on all persons peeing on the side of the road would make more sense.

Mike Pearson  
Huntsville

### Who's paying for MP's 'little flyers'?

An open letter to Tony Clement, MP When I got the first one of these little flyers I thought, "How great, Tony is looking for grassroots input."

Now as the snowstorm of these little flyers has increased to rival the snows of Toronto for 2008 I am not so impressed.

Two major problems:

One: The questions you ask, and the possible answers you allow to be checked off, are ridiculously self-serving.

I mean, if you ask a simple enough question and only provide one viable answer (which just happens to be the one you want to hear) then the result is pretty predictable, isn't it?

Two: Who is paying for these flyers? Is it your election funds, or our government administration funds? If it is your personally raised election funds, then the fact that the results of these surveys are statistically insignificant garbage does not really concern me as it is your money in effect that is being wasted.

If, on the other hand, it is funds that I have contributed through taxation to run our government that are being used for this foolishness, then I have an issue. If we are to use tax-based funds for a survey, then that survey should at least be scientifically significant and produce a result that has some meaning. These objects do not meet that criteria and are thus a waste of tax dollars that should be stopped.

Could you please explain the above questions?

As for the issue of the gun registry, the idea at first seemed good. The police say it is helpful (at least those that I have talked to.) My verdict is still out on the whole thing since you have correctly pointed out that "the bad guys never registered their guns."

I don't live in the far north, but I live enough in the country that a gun to me is just another tool to use. Similar in my mind to a shovel, or a rake. I use a rake to clean up the lawn, a gun to get rid of a nuisance raccoon, no big operational difference here.

I don't see the gun as a "sporting item" just as I don't see tearing up the countryside with ATVs as a sport. It is just a necessary tool to allow one to get on with the job of living in the country.

If you live in some parts of the country I suspect a gun would be a more necessary tool, used to protect yourself from becoming, say, a polar bear's lunch. Used to allow you to feed your family on a day-to-day basis in the far north too, I expect. Again I imagine these people view their guns as a working tool in their day-to-day life.

Very few of us need hand guns.

None of us in the southern part of Canada need to carry hand guns in our vehicles or on our person.

So much for the viewpoint on guns.

Now for the registry.

Can someone please explain the costs of this thing? I can buy a computer right here in Huntsville (and we are not the centre of the high-tech universe) that could easily hold all the data for 30 million guns, sort it, display it, and send it out over the net to qualified recipients such as the police for a few tens of thousands of dollars. Certainly less than a \$100,000 cost for the basic hardware.

Now, I know there are a lot of things I don't know about this registry but at the last accounting I have seen over two billion dollars (that would be \$2,000,000,000) has been spent!!!

When I ask how this is possible I never get a straight answer!

One day I am going to take my truck to Miramichi where the registry is kept. I figure the sidewalks and streetlights must all be coated in pure friggin gold to come up with a cost like this. Heck, even the local Horton's probably uses gold-plated china and cutlery! I'll just load up with some of the gold (they probably won't miss a ton or two) and head home. I can use it to pay some of my taxes for your little flyers!

A few good answers might be handy here.

Brian Tapley  
Huntsville

### Is global cooling an inconvenient fact?

Over the past 100 years the average global temperature has risen less than one (1) degree, possibly .6 of a degree. In one year the average global temperature has cooled approximately one degree. Thus one year has effectively erased 100 years of global warming. An inconvenient fact?

The collective man-made global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is less than one half of one percent. What about the other non-man-made 99.5 per cent? Government is supposed to supply the remedy and the money to fix things, right? (BTW, who really pays?) Please explain, maybe I missed it. Has the government ever addressed how we are to deal with the non-man-made CO<sub>2</sub> emissions? And when I hear this "we can make a difference" song and dance: Is the suggestion that we can actually change things from approximately .5per cent to .4 or .3 per cent? And is this really possible given the China-India industrial explosion? Anyone know?

Kindly explain the facts in lay terms.

If true science by definition suggests collection, investigation, and analysis of factual data, why is there a general suppression of facts by environmentalists and the media? For example: after a record-setting snowy cold winter across Muskoka, Ontario and North America (snow in southern U.S.A.), where are the headlines about global cooling? Yes, I said it, cooling. Is it illegal for high school students to think and read more inconvenient facts, such as are found at [Inconvenientthermometersgeocraft.com/surfaccstations.org](http://Inconvenientthermometersgeocraft.com/surfaccstations.org) Johncoleman (founder of the weather channel) globalwarming truth or hoax?

Science is not consensus, true science is factual. Who cares about the majority? Facts are facts. I'm sorry if all this is inconvenient.

Albert Grainger  
Port Sydney



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