

# Opinion

## MUSKOKA MOSAIC

### Introducing Scott Roodvoets

BY PAULA BOON

The most important thing in Scott Roodvoets' life is his family. "That gives me the greatest joy," says the husband of 19 years and father of two teenagers. "I wish every person who has kids would have as nice an experience as us. Mitchell and Audrey are happy, well-adjusted kids we love who like to be with us. It's working out great."

Roodvoets also loves the stage. Many in Huntsville will recognize him from various community theatre productions. "I think I've spent more time onstage than in the audience at the Algonquin Theatre," he says with a laugh.

He caught the acting bug at age 12 and performed regularly to the end of high school, then drifted away from the footlights until he was in his 30s. "When the theatre was built, I was working with Gregg Evans renovating the train station for the Suzuki school and begged him to be in *Jesus Christ Superstar*," says Roodvoets. "I've been in one show every year since then."

Spiritual exploration has been another dominant theme for Roodvoets, who is a member of Huntsville's Buddhist community. Raised in the Dutch Reformed church, he started wrestling with questions about Christianity during his teens and joined a Unitarian Universalist fellowship in his twenties. His wife Kerry's introduction to the Huntsville branch of the Buddhist organization Soka Gakkai really caught his attention.

"I saw a transformation in her level of joy very soon after she started practising," he says. "I was attracted to the philosophy, but

the idea of chanting felt strange and irrational. There was a leap of faith involved. People said, 'Try it and see if it makes a difference.' And it did. If I kept at it for a few days or weeks, life was smoother."

Career-wise, Roodvoets couldn't be happier. In May he began a new job as general manager of Niigon Technologies, a small injection moulding company on the Moose Deer Point First Nation reserve south of Parry Sound. "I wanted to find a career that would leverage my experiences but be more humanitarian and have a sustainability aspect," says Roodvoets. He has found that at Niigon. The company aims to enhance community sustainability by hiring people from the reserve and returning proceeds to the community; and to do it in a way that uses the latest environmental and manufacturing technologies.

However, the road to get there had as many twists and turns as the one he drives to work each day.

Raised in Michigan, Roodvoets received a naval engineering degree from the Webb Institute of Naval Architecture in New York State, then worked in shipbuilding before starting a combined MBA/Advanced engineering degree program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

There, he met Rob Alexander of Huntsville. "He was my favourite classmate, an awesome, fun, kind-hearted guy," says Roodvoets. "He epitomized Canada for me — like an



American, only nicer."

It was Alexander's wedding that brought Roodvoets and his wife to Huntsville for the first time. He remembers thinking, "This is a place I would love to live."

In 1995, when he heard about a management position opening up at Hidden Hitch in Huntsville, Roodvoets jumped at the chance. He eventually transferred to Algonquin Automotive and did various jobs with that company until his position was eliminated in 2006, the same year he and his family became Canadian citizens.

"I'm part of a fairly big crowd that's had a manufacturing career here and then watched the industrial base in Muskoka largely go down the tubes,"

he says.

However, being without a job became an opportunity for Roodvoets to pursue the kind of work that was most meaningful to him.

It took some time, but after a year of commuting to Toronto for part-time work, he found what he had been looking for in Niigon Technologies. "I've got this job that has a humanitarian focus with a sustainability aspect, and I get to come home every night," Roodvoets says. "I've had to be flexible, patient, work at it, and I've managed to do it. It was definitely worth fighting to remain part of this community."

## LETTERS

### Health minister Clement addresses letter-writers' concerns about the impact Bill C-51 will have on natural health products

I would like to respond to recent letters to the editor about Bill C-51 and natural health products (NHPs). Bill C-51 is an update to the Food and Drug Act, which has not been updated in over 40 years; it does not focus solely on NHPs.

That said, allow me to address some concerns and inaccuracies raised over NHPs and Bill C-51. I believe in choice in health care. In fact, while Minister of Health for Ontario, I pioneered recognizing traditional Chinese medicine and naturopathy as legitimate branches of medicine.

I also believe that NHPs should have their ingredients listed on the labels and shouldn't make false health claims. These are common sense ideas that most industry partners are happy to, and already do, comply with. It is my responsibility as Minister of Health to protect the health and safety of Canadians, and I take that job very seriously.

It was said that I owned shares in a pharmaceutical company until a "very short time ago." In fact, I proactively divested all interests two years ago, without direction from an individual or com-

mittee, because it was the right thing to do.

NHPs have been regulated as a unique category (not food or drugs) since 2004 and these regulations do not change under Bill C-51. Rumours about price increases or restricted availability of NHPs because of Bill C-51 are false. Additionally, an inspector will still require a search warrant to enter any private dwelling, such as a home. And the allegation that unpaid health-related advice would be a crime is untrue, and frankly, absurd.

The claim that Bill C-51 is designed to be easy on big pharma is entirely unfounded. Pharmaceutical companies would be required to be much more accountable; providing mandatory reporting of a drug during its life cycle, and mandatory adverse drug reaction reporting.

A major hole in the current Food and Drug Act is the Minister of Health's inability to recall dangerous or tainted products, including NHPs. Just because a product is labelled "natural" does not imply it is inherently safe and effective. In the last few months, I've issued several warnings over dangerous NHPs that claim to do a variety of things such as increase sexual enhancement and cure epilepsy. Most of these drugs are imported from unknown manufacturers overseas and contain unlisted ingredients, many

times heavy metals.

Responsible businesses have no cause to be concerned over Bill C-51; in fact, this bill will "level the playing field" for businesses which now have to compete with less responsible entities. A representative for Jamieson Laboratories stated to CBC Newsworld on Friday, May 9, "When you're looking at safety and efficacy and truth of advertising, yes, we're very supportive of Bill C-51."

As MP for Parry Sound- Muskoka, I take issue with interest groups spreading misinformation to my constituents with the sole purpose of scaring them. There are some within the industry who do not want to be regulated at all, and who are trying to scare people to achieve their political goal.

I encourage everyone to visit [www.healthy-canadians.gc.ca](http://www.healthy-canadians.gc.ca) or call 1-866-891-4542 to find out the truth about Bill C-51.

Furthermore, to the letter writer who doubts chocolate milk's place on Canada's Food Guide; an eight-ounce serving of lowfat chocolate milk provides 300 milligrams of calcium — or 30 per cent — of the daily value for this vital bone-building nutrient.

**Tony Clement**  
MP Parry Sound-Muskoka, Minister of Health  
Port Sydney

### Now is a good time to define our goals for the G8 Summit

In 2010, when the G8 Summit takes place, the world will be a very different place than it is today. As we careen ever more quickly toward some sort of global economic failure due to oil prices, it would be wise to consider the political climate that might accompany the Summit. Muskoka will be inundated with many different people who will bring with them very different experiences of what life is like in their countries and in their cultures.

We will be impacted and changed by the influx of viewpoints and ideas. In two years we could even be further impacted by the continued erosion of availability of our natural resources (oil, for sure, and maybe even water and air). More than possibly, the systems of economics that we have built our world on are about to undergo something major.

And so the G8 Summit will take place in a world that is very different than it is today. There will be many issues to protest. However, I doubt that those involved in the summit will really hear. They will be well protected from our voices. Their purpose is to look after the best interests of a select few while making it look as if they are looking after the best interests of the world at large. Perhaps the most effective step of action is to ignore them just a little, just enough to give focus and attention to this incredible opportunity to demonstrate for change in the world.

The summit will bring a lot of activity and money. At this point in time, the possibilities are endless and the future is waiting to be projected into. So, how will we, as a network of communities, move into it? Will the money drive us? Or will we take a larger position by looking to create future-friendly businesses that will continue to thrive long after the summit is over? Will we choose greed or balance as the underlying intent?

Intention matters. As the first plans and preparations are being laid, this might be a good time to take steps such as networking with outlying communities and forming focus groups to define some of these goals.

Interdependence, balance, sustainability, participation with a larger common purpose. All of these are solutions for the future and bear up under the challenge of working them through. This is fertile ground. This is where we get to be at our most creative as we forge out new ways of approaching life, relationships, and business. We all feel joyful and hopeful when we see examples of systems of human practice which have as their basic premise that all human effects on Earth be in balance with her natural laws. These are the businesses that will thrive and survive. We have known these truths and seen this coming since the '60s.

The 1960s were a time of rebellion and reaction. That time was the beginning of freedom from constraints and limitations of the past. This is the ripening of that same effort. We are now beginning to understand how much of a shift in thinking must occur. It will be the further evolution of 'pushing outside our limits.' But it will take more than reaction. It will take conscious and deliberate action. It will take the same determined passion we had back then, the same deep-seated conviction, the same love for peace, and peaceful systems. And it will mean each of us taking the internal steps and actions to live out what we believe.

And, yes, there will be many who will insist that the world runs on greed and can't be changed. To me, that's just laziness. Change is challenging. It's big work.

**Cheryl Ramcharan**  
Katrine

### Another conflict of interest in town?

In recent weeks we have followed the conflict of interest story regarding Councillor Greaves and his application via letter to council in what he thought an acceptable request on behalf of his company, Brunel Road Property Management.

But right before us I believe is another conflict of interest and an outright violation of the Code of Ethics set down by the Town of Huntsville to its employees. Fire chief Steve Hernen has brought forth the concern of CN Rail's storage of chemical cars at the Huntsville siding and has railed (pardon the pun) against CN for their lack of communication with both himself and the town regarding the storage of such cars and the chemicals they hold.

What Mr. Hernen does not comment on is twofold. One, he is a controlling interest partner in Brunel Road Property Management and two, they are set to create a condo complex overlooking the beautiful vista of Hunters Bay (their advertising) but are hampered by the unsightly view of the rail siding.

This, coupled with the previous editorial lashing out at CN Rail, sheds light only where it works in Mr. Hernen's favour: right in his pocketbook.

According to several safety sources, CN is one of the leaders in rail safety, environmental management and reduction in environmental impact footprint. They have managed to maintain a railhead in the Huntsville area without incident for many years and reports of any incident are readily available through Transport Canada and via their own website.

As to the lack of communication, it is obvious that not a lot of effort was put into getting in touch with them. I have spoken with three departments and two of them returned my phone calls. My comment on this situation is this: I do believe that the railhead with its cars full of toxic chemicals and spray-painted graffiti are both unsightly and for the safety of Huntsville citizens should be moved to a more remote location.

But I also believe that if Mr. Hernen was sincere in his concern we would have seen more of this in the local paper and on the news and this would have been a larger issue with both this and previous town councils. It is unfortunate that he has used his respected position as a public servant to further his gains as a private businessman.

**Johnathan Rathbone**  
Huntsville



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### Pine Glen Public School

Pine Glen Public School ended a successful year with a lesson in philanthropy.

Mr. LeBlanc's Grade 7/8 class held a bbq which raised over \$250 and Mrs. McCarthy's Grade 5/6 class hosted a car wash and collected over \$380. Foundation Board Member Helena Renwick accepted a cheque from students Jordan Dobson & Jacquelyn Webb at an assembly in June.

Huntsville Hospital's Garden of Honour will have a new stone celebrating the generosity of Pine Glen Students.

Huntsville Hospital appreciates the support of the Pine Glen Team.

Congratulations everyone, that's an A+ in Philanthropy 101.

