

Opinion

MUSKOKA MOSAIC

Introducing John Fuller

BY PAULA BOON

John Fuller is grateful for his friends, his life experiences, and the care he receives at Muskoka Landing. "Everything is beautiful. There's a lot to be happy about," says the 97-year-old. "So many people at 70 act older than I am. I don't understand it."

Born in Stavely, England in 1912, Fuller remembers standing outside his home with his father, watching searchlights pick out planes during the First World War.

After his father was killed, Fuller's mother put him and his brother in an orphanage. "When I talk orphanage, I'm referring to *Oliver Twist*," he says. "Never enough to eat except at Christmas and Easter and lots of fist fights. Charles Dickens knew what he was talking about."

As a teenager, Fuller read a magazine advertisement that said, "Canada needs British boys." Before long he was on his way. "I came here as a farm boy. We were classed as 'little immigrants,'" he says.

April 28, 1930 will always stand out in Fuller's mind as the day he walked up the gangplank of the Canada-bound Duchess of Richmond. "Things in England were tough and still are, with different classes of people," he says. "It makes me appreciate that I was able to come to this country, live a good life, a real good life, and wind up financially secure. That was the wisest thing I've ever done."

Upon arrival, Fuller was sent to Fegan's Training Farm in Kent. He signed a contract for \$150 per year plus board. "Of

course, in the first year you were expected to pay back \$75 to pay for another fellow to come," he says.

On the farm he learned to milk cows, prune fruit trees and take care of a garden. "Boy, I could milk a cow," he says. "I could almost knock the bottom of a pail out. It was a good life."

In 1946, Fuller married his wife Eva and in 1949 they bought Manna Park Cottages on Lake Cecebe. "When I got there, there were outhouses, oil lamps, and you had to pail your own water from the lake. There was no electricity," he says.

Fuller built one cottage per year, and he spared no effort to make them luxurious. "When I built the last cottage, there were electric ranges and wall-to-wall broadloom," he says. "I've never had any training in building, but I just love building. I made the plan for each building and put up every damn two-by-four myself."

He laughs as he tells the story of an American customer whose wife said, "If this is roughing it up in Canada, I'll come with you anytime."

For years, Fuller and his wife invested all their time and energy into the cottage resort. "Part of it was swamp, and I bought a truck and put 2,000 loads of fill into it," he says. "I planted all the trees and built it all. I feel good that I can leave that behind."



Although there was much work to be done, Fuller took the time to get to know his guests. Many returned year after year and became like members of his family.

His favourite pastime was fishing, alone or with guests. "It was my time with God, being on that lake," he says.

In 1990, Eva had a stroke which left her paralyzed on one side and unable to speak. He spent the next 12 years caring for her. "I lifted her up to 30 times per day. Some people said, 'I couldn't do that,' but when you've lived with a lady for 55 years who's your partner, you can do anything," he says.

Until 2006, Fuller lived on his own and even cut his own grass. Then, after a fall in August of 2006, he moved to Muskoka Landing, where he continues to reach out to others. He is a valued friend to many, as well as the vice-president of Muskoka Landing's residents' council. Last March he even put on a 40-minute St. Patrick's Day show, complete with songs and jokes, for his fellow residents.

He hopes that through this profile he will make other connections as well. "I might be one of the last Fegan boys left," he says. "Dr. Barnardo shipped out literally thousands. I wonder if any of the guys are still around. I'd love if they got in touch."

LETTERS

Big developer should pay to upgrade water and sewer system

I read in the Muskoka Sun that a developer wants the boundaries of Port Carling extended to include a 250-home development so it can be serviced by municipal water and sewers.

What am I missing here? The current Port Carling services are at their limit now, the district is \$100 million in debt and doesn't know how to pay it off and now someone wants to add another 250 homes to the system. Just who is going to pay for this? Can the developer not read? The township should be telling Nexxt Development that this project or any other project will not go ahead

because Muskoka just can't afford it.

Unfortunately, a rejection will be appealed to the OMB, who don't care what the elected officials or residents want and will probably give it the go ahead. Nexxt Development should take some of the \$62.5+ million from the sale of these homes and pay for the entire upgrade to the Port Carling water and sewage system if it wants to proceed. What a greedy bunch.

Doug Philip
Lake of Bays

Large stores need scooters to assist customers who have disabilities

I am writing this letter on behalf of persons with disabilities, including myself.

Health problems prevent me from walking around a large store without a lot of pain. I can no longer shop at Price Chopper because the store doesn't have a scooter to assist me. I did speak with the person in charge at Price Chopper about getting at least one scooter, but was told that they would probably not be getting any.

I don't understand why that would be the case

as Robinson's Independent, A&P, Zeller's, Wal-Mart and Home Depot all have scooters for customers who need them. I've always shopped at Price Chopper as their prices are reasonable. Stores like Price Chopper and other large stores need to think about persons who have a hard time getting around. I do hope they reconsider the needs of persons with disabilities.

Lorraine Robinson
Huntsville

Water and sewer proposal stinks

We were very surprised to read in the Huntsville Forester of July 9, 2008, a report following a Muskoka mayors' committee meeting entitled "Spreading Water and Sewer Burden gets support."

As quoted, this statement and proposal is controversial to say the least. It is interesting to note that all the folks in the rural Huntsville area whom we have spoken to regarding this subject are, without any doubt, very much against this whole idea. These are some of the residents who voted for our Huntsville mayor and council and this is how they think that they are doing a good job of representing them in local government? We don't think so.

We are rural Huntsville residents and taxpayers. We have a well for our household water and we totally pay for the maintenance and upkeep of this well. Recently, we had a bill for \$271 to pay for upkeep of ultra-violet light equipment and filters. This is an annual expense. Perhaps we can submit this amount to the urban taxpayers of Huntsville if we are to spread the cost of water burden to everyone? If we needed to drill a new well, it would cost us \$8,000 to \$10,000 minimum.

We also maintain a septic bed. This is pumped out every three years at a cost of \$203. May we also submit this bill for a full refund? If and when we need big maintenance to this septic, I do trust that the urban taxpayers of Huntsville will be happy to pay for this? A few years ago, on order from Huntsville town, we and all septic owners had to pay \$40 for a couple of university students to walk across our septic and approve it as being in good working order. A new septic costs tens of thousands of dollars. In fact, I know of a family who paid almost \$100,000 for a new sophisticated septic system. Now you want to ask them to pay for Huntsville's "septic system"?

Bracebridge mayor, Don Coates, is quoted as

saying that, "waterfront property would be worthless if we didn't have sewage treatment to return clean water to the lake." You make the sewage, you clean it up - don't expect the whole district to pay for it. Most waterfront residents are good stewards of their shoreline. If not, you make them pay for the necessary cleanup and would not expect the rest of the taxpayers to pay the bill for something they did not cause?

We cannot believe that there was a recommendation at this same meeting to use the "municipalities' normal allocation funds to the Ontario Disability Support Programme payments to pay the (water and sewage) debt. ODSP costs were recently 'uploaded' by the province." This is stealing. We have a daughter in this programme and support is being cut back everywhere and when some more support funds appear, you are not going to use them for disabled people as they were intended?

How did Muskoka get into this predicament anyway? One hundred million dollars is a huge amount to get into debt. Can we not try and bring more industry into Muskoka? We seem to be almost solely dependant on construction and the tourist industry for our biggest employers. Does the Ministry of the Environment offer any grants to municipalities to do environmentally necessary upgrades? What about the Trillium Foundation? They have millions of dollars from Ontario lotteries waiting for applications for legitimate projects.

In the newspaper report, district chairman Gord Adams is quoted as saying, "We have a responsibility to do the right thing for everybody." Thank you. Please do the right thing, be fair and do not ask rural residents to pay for others' water and sewage costs when we are already paying for our own water and sewage costs.

The Gilberts
Huntsville

Green Party is here to stay

I read with disbelief the comments made by former NDP premier and current federal Liberal Bob Rae in his recent visit to Parry Sound and Muskoka.

It seems that Mr. Rae chose to use the visit to take shots at the Green Party in a failed attempt to convince voters that while they are adopting major planks of the Green Party platform, the Liberals don't see the Greens as an important party. Indeed, the height of arrogance extended to Mr. Rae trying out the desperate "one issue party" line in relation to the Green Party, a misconception that was abandoned years ago. Even the most uninformed voter understands that the Green Party has a full and thoughtful platform that is obviously sound enough to be copied by other parties, including the Liberals.

Mr. Rae is obviously unaware of the fact that the ONLY party that has continued to show major gains in every one of the past elections has been the Greens and the Green Party continues to poll at record high numbers at the expense of all of the other parties. Mr. Rae also commented that the next election would be between only "two major parties." He must have missed the fact that in the last four federal by-elections, the Green Party candidate in one riding beat the Conservative and in another the NDP candidate (I am assuming that one of these two parties must be the other "major parties" that Mr. Rae referred to) while Green Party leader Elizabeth May finished a strong second in the recent by-election in London North Center.

It would seem that the evidence does not support the statement from Mr. Rae, and it appears to be a weak attempt to convince voters not to exercise their right to choose from any of the FOUR major political parties with a good chance of electing MPs in the next election.

Now, don't get me wrong, I am happy that the Liberals have chosen to take a stand on climate change (although I believe our plan is better). I also have no problem with being accused of being

too focused on the environment as a major issue. I believe that more and more people are beginning to understand that the health of our environment is the most important issue facing Canadians and are choosing to support a party that has always recognized this and has consistently taken a stand to support citizens and future generations.

Perhaps Mr. Rae should listen to David Suzuki, who was recently quoted in Kingston as saying, "One of the most frustrating things that we have now is that the environment itself seems to be a political football. So, if you care about the environment, then you should vote Green. If you don't care about the environment, then vote Conservative, and then there's the in between" (*Kingston This Week*, June 25).

Finally, I wonder why the leader of the Green Party continues to be prevented from participating in the leaders' debates if the party is of such minor significance. This continues despite the overwhelming support of over 77 per cent of Canadians for the inclusion of the Green Party in these debates. Could it be the leaders of the other parties know the real truth and understand that the Greens are truly a force to be reckoned with, and the only way to stop their unprecedented rise in support is to deny Canadians the opportunity to listen to them?

It seems to me to be quite presumptuous for the Liberals to try and tell people how they should vote before an election is even called and base it on such flimsy reasoning as Mr. Rae did during his visit, especially given the performance of the current politicians in Ottawa this past year.

I can assure you that I, my leader Elizabeth May and Green Party candidates all across the country are looking forward to the opportunity to debate the ISSUES in the upcoming election instead of trying to play old-school politics.

Glen Hodgson
Green Party candidate
Parry Sound-Muskoka



HEALTHCARE HEROES

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Dr. Gerry Forestell The New Champion!

Dr. Gerry Forestell smiles smugly as Dr. David Mathies looks on in amazement. "Anything you can do, I can do better" quipped Dr. F. That's over \$150 better!

Dr. Forestell's coin donation topped out at almost \$985. Now, the good doctor is very shy about this public announcement, so if you could keep your praise down to a dull roar, he would appreciate it. All we can say is, "thank you, thank you, thank you." Our hospital is very lucky to have these gentlemen on our team for more than one reason. Now we have to wonder who might be next.

Huntsville District Memorial Hospital Foundation continues to support:

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