

Opinion

MUSKOKA MOSAIC

Introducing Mike Taylor

BY PAULA BOON

Things are about to change for Mike Taylor, and that's the way he likes it. "I've had a lifestyle of change," he says. "I'm always looking for new things to do."

The owner of the Finds on Main Street has been taking real estate courses and will begin work with Coldwell-Thompson Real Estate when he is done, which should be in September.

"It's not that I'm not enjoying the store anymore," says Taylor, who plans to hire a manager for The Finds. "I just like to keep things interesting. I got to a comfortable level with it, and it runs pretty smoothly now. I want to expand my horizons."

That's been a common theme in his life.

Born North Toronto, Taylor became interested in kayaking around age 12 when his family bought a cottage in Minden and watched kayakers on the Gull River. He quickly became serious about the sport and ended up a member of the national whitewater slalom kayak team. "We could have done the world cup circuit, but there was no funding," he says. "That was before it became an Olympic sport. So we competed in events that were closer to home."

True to Taylor's nature, this wasn't his only focus. Around 1985, when he was still in high school, Taylor began playing in a band and chose to go to a music college.

After that, he embarked on music career with a reggae-jazz

band called Tabarruk. The group wrote their own material and recorded a CD with guest players like Alanis Morissette and Tony Springer. Until 1994, the band toured Canada, the United States and England with Taylor as a vocalist and bass guitar player.

Taylor says he learned a lot in those years and had many good times. This is also when he met his wife Vanessa.

Then he got fed up with the music business and put away his guitar. "It lost its joy," he explains. "In music if there's no joy there's nothing, because there's certainly no money – for most!" About 10 years later, that joy came back, and Taylor now plays with local band Big Sweet Lou.

To support his touring, Taylor managed an outdoor store in Toronto. In 1994, the opportunity arose to move to Huntsville and do the purchasing for Algonquin Outfitters. Taylor also competed for a couple of years with Alex Hurley of Dwight in two-man closed canoe events.

"I did a lot of commuting from Oxtongue Lake to Montreal, where Vanessa lived," he says. The two were married in 1995, and their daughters Neve and Jordan were born in 1997 and 1999.

In 1998 Taylor decided he was ready for a career change and began work as a kayak sales rep to retail stores all over eastern



Canada. "It seemed like the next natural step," he says.

He travelled a great deal, which was tough with two small kids at home. "The time away from home got to be a drag after a while," says Taylor.

So, during a family holiday on the East Coast in 2002, he and Vanessa came up with the concept for The Finds. "It happened fairly quickly," he says. "We put together a concept we thought we would enjoy on a personal level and would also make good business sense for Huntsville."

The Taylors decided the store's tagline would be "Unique finds from Muskoka and beyond," which left it open for them to play with. Although their focus has remained on local artists, the store has evolved through the years. Nowadays The Finds has more jewellery, women's accessories, footwear and clothing. "There's been a great response to that," he says.

Since 2005, Taylor has also been the Downtown BIA's promotions and events chair, which involves putting together festivals, plus advertising and marketing campaigns.

Taylor's new position in real estate sales will allow him to branch out, learn more about the community and contribute in new ways, he says, adding, "I'm looking forward to it. I really thrive on change."

LETTERS

No footprint required

I would like to comment on a recent editorial regarding the Dyer Memorial.

Why do we believe that just because it is there that we have to put our footprint on it?

Is there a reason that we should not leave the forested areas and clean green spaces as it is?

The memorial should be left as it is; a cemetery and a memorial to Mrs. Dyer and a beautiful site to visit and enjoy.

We are already losing a great deal of our forests to logging and development. I am not against either of these activities but we need to proceed with a little more caution; with global warming and increased pollution every loss of green space is one step backwards in the fight to protect the planet for our children and grandchildren.

The editorial also noted that the Town of Huntsville performs marriage ceremonies. I have contacted the Town Hall and they do not perform ceremonies, but many people are already using the site for weddings and picture taking. This could perhaps generate revenue as it does in other municipalities. (I am assuming that a fee has to be charged to pay for the cleanup of the garbage and empty bottles that are left behind as it was after one of the weddings last year.)

I believe that the town should set an example and start protecting our forests and waterways. The essence of what makes Huntsville what it is can soon be lost without careful planning for the future.

C. J. MacNeil,
Huntsville

An unfortunate series of events

The emotional distress of losing a pet and dealing with its demise is one with which we are familiar. What a shame that the radio station and especially the Huntsville Animal Shelter, were not able to disseminate and coordinate this vital information about Janet McKay's dog, Tinkerbelle. That is especially upsetting and a terrible oversight since Dr. Werdell had notified both that this beloved pet had been brought to his clinic. Some dogs do not like collars or slip out of them, so the tags may not be on the pet. This unfortunate series of events will make owners consider checking the validity of their pet's microchip and the importance of wearing I.D.

I can reassure the owner that Dr. Werdell is a caring and compassionate veterinarian who does everything possible to alleviate the pain and suffering of animals. We became Dr. Werdell's clients when he arrived in Huntsville. Our geri-

atric dog was constantly collapsing. Dr. Werdell was able to operate and cure the balance problem. The look of joy he displayed when our beloved terrier was able to walk again made me realize how much he actually cared for animal welfare. A year later, when our friend had end stage kidney failure and nothing more could be done, Dr. Werdell personally delivered the dog to our home, carried him down to the family room and set up the I.V. It allowed us to have one final weekend to say good-bye. Then Muskoka Animal Clinic made a donation in our pet's name to the University of Guelph. So Ms. McKay can rest assured that Dr. Werdell must have agonized over the decision to euthanize, but as Dr. McLeod stated euthanasia must be considered to end suffering.

Barb Zeagman
Huntsville

Locks fee 'ridiculous and just plain greedy,' says local boater

I find it amazing that the parks and rec. people are blaming the weather for the income from locks passage being down this year. Have they not checked the price of fuel for the average "stinkpot"?

I know of one person who wends his way slowly through Fairy and Pen Lakes to fish. He goes through about a tank and a half of fuel for a 16 ft boat. You're looking at something like \$30 to \$35 for a couple of hours fishing. Why add to that by going to Mary Lake? Until the town took over, passage was free (I stand to be corrected on

when the fee was added.) But \$10 for the current privilege (?) of passing through the lock is ridiculous and just plain greedy. As far as this senior is concerned, I'll take my canoe and portage around it.

I suggest that parks and rec. give their collective heads a good shake and see what other factors affecting boating are involved. The Brunel Lock is a necessity, not another municipal cash cow, and I apologize to the cows.

Robert Berry
Huntsville

Shelter does its best to reunite lost pets with their owners

In the Forester this past week was the story of Janet McKay and Tinkerbelle. We spoke with Janet and agreed with her that there needs to be public awareness and protocols when a pet has gone missing.

As the chairperson for the Animal Shelter for Huntsville, I can only speak of our experience in the above incident.

The shelter was called on Friday, July 18 regarding a Pomeranian mix dog that had been brought into the Muskoka Animal Hospital. At that point we had not had any reports of a missing dog with this description. Mid-conversation with the Animal Hospital, shelter staff were told that a microchip had been found on the dog and that the Muskoka Animal Hospital would call the owners. The conversation ended there. As there was every indication that the pet was going to be reunited with its owner, a lost animal form was not completed.

Generally when a stray animal has been taken to any of the local veterinarian clinics the animal shelter is called and we take on the responsibility of the animal as a "pound dog." The animal will receive medical treatment and after a period of 72 hours, if unclaimed, it is then considered a shelter animal and put up for adoption when recovered. We continue to search for an owner through the local radio station, animal control through the Town of Huntsville and other municipalities depending on the area the pet came from and by checking for a microchip or tattoo. If a microchip or tattoo is found we trace the pet to an owner. We

use every avenue at our disposal to try and reunite a pet with its family.

We have matched and returned numerous dogs and cats throughout the years.

PLEASE as a pet owner use your resources if your pet goes missing. Call the shelter, call the local radio station, call Animal Control in your municipality and call the local veterinarians! If you don't get an answer at any of the above businesses call back. Speaking for the animal shelter, we are currently housing 20-plus dogs and 100-plus cats and kittens and are not always able to take your call immediately; however, we check messages daily and return calls between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

An economical way to tell everyone where your pet belongs is through the purchase of municipal dog tags. Town of Huntsville dog tags are available at the Animal Shelter, Pet Valu and all the local veterinarian clinics in Huntsville.

As to the comment in Wednesday's article with regard to myself not returning calls to the Forester, I received a message left on my home answering machine Saturday, August 2. I was away for the long weekend and immediately upon my return called the reporter and left a message at her house. I also reviewed our telephone logbook at the shelter and found no record of any messages left there regarding this incident.

Georgina Nuttall
Animal Shelter
Huntsville

Kudos to public works employees

On Saturday, Aug. 9 my wife and I were returning from a visit with friends in Orillia. It was about 6:40 p.m. As we pulled onto Grassmere Road I noticed that substantial amounts of water were running over the road – hardly surprising considering the rainfall of the last few days. As we drive onto Grassmere Resort Road it became apparent that there was a major problem. I stopped the car at the top of the hill leading to the Cedar Grove Road cutoff and noticed that water was running in a torrent. As I watched, huge sections of Grassmere Resort Road disappeared, totally washed out.

Within minutes the Lake of Bays Fire Department arrived at the scene and blocked the road. Shortly thereafter, Huntsville Public Works were on scene.

Grassmere Resort Road is the only access to Cedar Grove Lodge, Pow Wow Point Lodge and a number of cottages and residences. We were cut off from our house, and our two dogs inside, and wondered how we could get to them. The owner of Tally Ho Inn, who is also a volunteer firefight-

er in Lake of Bays, told us to go to the inn and his daughter would take us to our house by boat and that we could leave our car at Tally Ho. That is what we did. I was expecting that we would have no road access to our home for days.

Imagine my surprise when the next morning I learned the the road had been reopened. During the night, municipal employees had managed to bulldoze a temporary road around the washout which looked to me to be about two hundred feet long, thirty feet wide and about twenty feet deep. They have continued to work around the clock not only to repair the road, but also to provide access to those of us who have to get in and out.

I couldn't have been more impressed by the hard work and dedication of the Huntsville Public Works Department employees aided by the Township of Lake of Bays Fire Department volunteers. They truly deserve our thanks and commendations.

D.G. Burrow
Grassmere Lane
Huntsville



HEALTHCARE HEROES

Huntsville District
Memorial Hospital Foundation
100 Frank Miller Drive
Huntsville, ON P1H 1H7
Tel: (705) 789-4756



Kearney Lions Club

Over the past 5 years the Lions Club of Kearney has raised over \$14,500 for the Huntsville District Memorial Hospital. The recent success of the Annual Lobster Fest allowed them to give over \$1,800 to the Foundation for the health of our community.

Congratulations to Mary & Rick Flavelle and their team of volunteers. Their hard work pays off for all of us.

If you or your organization is interested in hosting an event to raise money for your hospital, please give the Foundation a call. We can help you plan for a "Lion" size success!

Huntsville District Memorial Hospital Foundation continues to support:

- Huntsville District Memorial Hospital
- Fairvern Nursing Home
- Burk's Falls & District Health Centre



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