

Opinion

MUSKOKA MOSAIC

Introducing Christina Simpson

BY PAULA BOON

Christina Simpson has an adventurous streak.

Although the owner of the boutique Me and Mr. Jones professes to being a "real girly girl," she says she "can get rough, too."

Born in Hamilton in 1981, Simpson spent many summer days at her grandparents' Muskoka cottage fishing and boating. After her family moved to Huntsville when she was in Grade 4, Simpson also counted snowmobiling as one of her favourite pastimes. Her younger sister Aura-Ley is the fastest woman in Canada on a four-wheeler, and Simpson shares some of her daredevil attitude.

For example, at age 21, after running a business in Barrie for a few years, Simpson decided she wanted to travel, so she closed up shop and headed off to Europe with a few belongings in a backpack. "I had no book, and I didn't even know what a hostel was," she says. "I jumped on a plane, landed in London, England, and figured it out as I went along."

She ended up staying for three months. "I loved Ireland – oh, and Switzerland. It had the nicest hostels, best chocolate, and best-looking men," she says with a laugh.

While on the road, Simpson met other backpackers and travelled with them. "I had to be really social," she says. "I didn't want to spend all my time alone."

Her travels weren't without hardship, however. One time she ended up spending the night in a train station when she couldn't

find a place to stay. "I didn't sleep," she says. And, halfway through her trip, she was robbed on a train near Rome. "I was only on for one stop, but someone managed to get into my backpack," she says. "I lost my passport and all my money. I thought about going home at that point."

Instead, she got a new passport and travellers' cheques and carried on.

However, after three months she had had enough. "I got tired of hostels and tired of my backpack," she says.

Simpson returned to Barrie but decided she would rather be in Huntsville. So, in 2004 she got herself an apartment in town and started waitressing at the Pub on the Docks. "I love it there. The girls and I have so much fun," she says. "It's a fun atmosphere: small and intimate."

For several years, Simpson thought seriously about following her interest in fashion by opening a shop. "Originally I planned to sell shoes, but I thought I'd have to sell a lot of pairs of shoes to pay the mortgage," she says.

She had already made plans and researched wholesalers when the space on King William Street became available. "It's perfect, nice and small," says Simpson. "I wanted that boutique feel so I



grabbed it."

She spent about a month overhauling the space and stocking the store, then opened the doors last February. Simpson gets her trendy, hip clothing and accessories from a vendor in Los Angeles. "They have 40 different showrooms, and I pick what I want online," she explains.

As a member of the Chamber of Commerce, Simpson appreciates that organization's warm welcome and the support they provide to businesses in the area. She is also glad to be able to rely on the expertise of her mother, who owns her own business in Barrie.

Simpson spends about five days a week at the store. "Mom works Mondays, which is great, and sometimes my sister helps, too," she says. "I also spend a couple of nights at the pub."

If all goes well, Simpson hopes to move her shop onto Main Street someday and perhaps even open another one somewhere else. For now, though, she is focusing on making Me and Mr. Jones a success. "I have lots to learn, and I like the challenge," she says.

Thanks to Bill Spring for suggesting that Christina Simpson be profiled.

LETTERS

Don't vote Conservative

With a possible federal election this fall, I direct this letter to those citizens who vote Conservative as a family tradition.

The Conservative Party of Canada is not the Progressive Conservative Party of the past. That party was stolen from Davis Orchard through the deceit and trickery of Peter McKay, and delivered to the Alliance Party, a neo-conservative group patterned after the George W. Bush administration in the United States. The U.S. neo-con leaders include Dick Cheney, Paul Wolfowitz and Donald Rumsfeld. Together, they undermined the social structure of American society, jeopardized American finances through "laissez-faire economics," and deceived America into an expensive and unnecessary war. In addition, they cheated much of the Third World of their rightful economic legacy and have caused America to lose respect throughout the world. They are now despised by many Americans and hopefully will be defeated in the next election.

Neo-conservative thought and practice are not new to Ontarians. Coached by young American zealots, Mike Harris and his band of thieves proceeded to dismantle a well-ordered province to serve business interests and international corporations, and to feather their own nests. When the negative, sometimes disastrous fallout became apparent, Ontarians rejected Harris' neo-conservatives, but not before much damage was done.

Stephen Harper represents these same interests. In fact, where did our Ontario "rejects" go? Just look at the federal Conservative front bench in Parliament: Jim Flaherty, John Baird, not the mention our own MP, Tony Clement. And Harris? As a member of the Fraser Institute, a neo-conservative think tank (among other influential far-right positions he holds) he actively influences and supports the policies of Stephen Harper's government.

The neo-conservative agenda is to weaken the protections of the nation states and empower the international corporations, for the enormous benefit of a few, and loss for many. The neo-conservative philosophy is built on arrogance and ignorance: the ignorance to believe that some in this world are more deserving than others; the arrogance to believe that they are the deserving ones and may use any means to attain personal power and wealth at the expense of others.

In Canada, every one of our social and economic safeguards is in jeopardy. As in the U.S. we must use the polls to reject this fascist takeover of our precious democracy. Perhaps true Conservatives can take back their party. Until then, I hope they will consider the ABC of politics for the next election: Anybody But Conservative.

Barbara Power
Bracebridge

Thanks and farewell to a dear friend and mentor: Duke Knox

I am writing this letter to put down my feelings about someone who helped shape my life and who made me a better person, and to publicly admit the strong feelings of guilt I have for not visiting a friend in his last days.

Knowing the recent fast decline of Duke Knox's health and still living with memories of my own father in his last days somehow seemed to justify not going the five miles to visit Duke at the hospital. As recently as last Friday I struggled with that decision. I wanted to preserve the positive memories I have for someone who helped me become a man and did not want the last memory to be that of someone I did not recognize or who would not recognize me.

My family moved to Huntsville 28 years ago after my father, Wayne, completed his professional hockey career. We were soon embraced into the community by the Knox family. Our families have been tied together through hockey, farming, work and social circles the majority of our lives. Marg and Duke were second parents in my early years and close friends and as I graduated to adulthood.

The memorial service was for one of Huntsville's finest volunteer citizens. The memorial service shared a variety of memories and stories of one of Huntsville's most colourful gems. Duke was a tireless supporter of minor lacrosse, hockey and Junior C hockey. He devoted, literally, years of his wonderful life to ensure that kids enjoyed the team and life experiences that too many people never get to enjoy.

Duke was part of the Huntsville arena during the '80s and '90s and was there to support all of us. Duke sponsored numerous teams (W.B. Knox Sons) over the years and supported anonymously to a variety of causes and charities. The community has and will continue to have great volunteers. However, it will never have another Duke.

Duke loved, laughed and lived life the way we all should and was one of the most devoted husbands and fathers I will ever know.

I miss you already, Duke. I was lucky to know you. I am sorry. Say hi to Marg and Da for me.

Todd Rutledge
Utterson

Handling of outbreak shows system is broken

Yesterday I heard our federal MP Tony Clement, Minister of Health for this entire nation, and state regarding the listeriosis threat (bad meat) that: "the system worked." Untrue. It's broken.

Mr. Clement was referring to the immediacy (or lack thereof) with which the public was informed of the threat, not to mention the source(s) of this very serious bacterial danger to public health. At this writing, at least a dozen people have died from the outbreak.

What's clear is: Tony Clement is asleep at the wheel of public health, and has misinformed

Canadians (in our case, the people who elected cottager Clement) about the so-called "system." It's sloppy.

The current listeriosis threat may extend well into September if not October because the bacterium has a long life once one ingests one's bologna, sausage, smoked ham, hot dogs, etc.

The issue is health. Mr. Clement is asleep at the wheel of our health, not unlike how Mike Harris handled Walkerton. Remember Walkerton???

Mendelson Joe
Emsdale

District should live within its means, says lake association

An open letter to the people of Muskoka.

The Muskoka Lakes Association presented a deputation to district council on Tuesday, Sept. 2 as follows:

"The Muskoka Lakes Association has represented waterfront property owners in Muskoka since 1894. The issues you will vote on today will have a significant impact for our members. Waterfront properties have higher assessments and therefore fund a large and growing share of the costs of running Muskoka district.

We are encouraged by the healthy public interest in the debt reduction initiative report and would like to provide a few additional thoughts for your consideration."

We made the following comments and observations:

We support the general direction of the (finance) commissioner's recommendations to council as to how to get the debt levels under control. Specifically, we agree with the recommendations about development, local improvement and sewage lagoon charges. We agree about the need to build up a reserve to pay off debt as it matures, but have expressed our concern that

some of the strategies being proposed are misrepresented as avoiding tax levy increases. In effect, the district is allocating interest charges, and federal and provincial dollars, to reserves. This means that these funds cannot be used to reduce taxes for all Muskokans.

Finally, we support the recommendations to be more disciplined about proving financial and project viability before these large capital projects are undertaken.

The MLA would like to see a commitment in the 2009 and future budgets to restraint, not replacement. We requested that council adopt a 'live within our means' approach to planning.

We have also urged the district to hold a recorded vote on each individual recommendation because the taxpayers of Muskoka district are interested in how their elected representatives vote on these important recommendations."

The full text of the deputation can be seen on the MLA's website. We encourage all waterfront residents to support this fiscally responsible and prudent set of recommendations.

Carolyn Horan
president, MLA

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

E-mail: letters@huntsvilleforester.com

When sending letters to the editor be sure to include your name, address and phone number. Unsigned letters cannot be used.



**MOE'S
PICK OF THE WEEK
2006 CHEV
EQUINOX AWD**



3.4 L, 6 cyl. eng., auto, A/C, keyless entry, CD player, cruise control, 65,000 km,

\$16,995

2007 PONTIAC MONTANA SV6 EXTENDED



3.9 L V6, AM/FM/CD, OnStar, remote start, rear A/C 48,000 km

\$16,995

2004 SATURN ION LEVEL 2



2.2 L, 4 cyl. eng., auto, 4 doors Stk# CP08685-A

\$8,995

2005 CHEV 1500 SILVERADO EXT. CAB



5.3 L, 8 cyl. eng., auto, A/C, alloy wheels, CD player, cruise control, keyless entry, 79,500 km. Stk# T0866A

\$15,995

2006 CHEVY SILVERADO EXT CAB OFF-ROAD 4X4



5.3 L eng., auto, 44,674 km Stk# TP8587-A

\$23,995

2007 BUICK ALLURE CXL



3.8 L, 6 cyl. eng., auto, A/C, alloy wheels, AM/FM CD player, cruise control, 23,000 km. Stk# CP8664-A

\$21,995

2008 PONTIAC G5



2.2 L, 4 cyl. eng., auto, A/C, alloy wheels, CD player, 15,207 km. Stk# CP8615-A

\$14,995

2004 PONTIAC GRAND PRIX



3.8 L, 6 cyl. eng., auto, A/C, alloy wheels, CD player, keyless entry, cruise control, sunroof, 50,997 km. Stk# CP847-A

\$13,995

2007 GMC SIERRA 1500 EXT CAB 4X4



5.3 L, 8 cyl. eng, auto, 4 dr., A/C, CD player, power windows, off-road tires, OnStar, remote start. Stk# TP8082-A

\$28,995

SHORT DRIVE . . . LONG ON SAVINGS

BRAY MOTORS

PONTIAC
BUICK
GMC

CHEVY TRUCKS

GM

HWY 11, SUNDRIDGE

(705) 384-5333/4 • 1-800-989-1113

braymotors.com