

# Opinion

## MUSKOKA MOSAIC

### Introducing Ryan Burda

BY PAULA BOON

Sixteen-year-old Ryan Burda takes advantage of every opportunity that presents itself to him.

Although the Grade 11 Huntsville High School (HHS) student has the option of a free period in his timetable, for example, Burda says he prefers to take as many courses as he can to keep future doors open. "It would be nice to have that time to do homework, though," he adds.

Between his academic, athletic, musical and dramatic pursuits, the Port Sydney teen is a busy person.

Since being cast as Kurt in the Sound of Music at age 10, Burda has performed in various musicals such as Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, Godspell and Grease. This spring, he will appear as the cowardly lion in the Wizard of Oz. "I like to be noticed," he says with a smile.

It was Burda's mother who encouraged him to audition for the first time. Reluctant at first, he quickly came to love being on stage. "You get such a rush," he explains.

Music is also important to Burda, whether it's playing the trombone in the HHS band or performing with his friends in a band called Phive. As well, Burda has been taking voice lessons for several years and passed his Grade 6 Royal Conservatory test with honours last June.

Another one of Burda's hobbies is doing magic at parties and shows across Muskoka. "When I was about seven, my dad went to Las Vegas with his company and bought some stuff in a magic shop for me," he says. Then,

when he reached high school, a fellow student named Jacob Gettins took Burda under his wing and taught him many things about magic.

Burda began by going on gigs with Gettins, but more recently he has been getting some bookings of his own. He likes doing magic – especially card tricks – for small groups because it is more intimate and challenging. "If I'm doing an illusion right in people's face and I make a mistake, people are going to notice," he says, adding that he enjoys the challenge of perfecting tricks. "You see something that takes three seconds and I spend hours and hours to get that right."

He also enjoys the chance to interact with his audience. "In theatre there's this invisible wall between the audience and you. Magic is more real and interactive," Burda says.

Sports play an important part in Burda's life as well. He played Hurricanes basketball in elementary school and then switched to volleyball when he got to high school. Last year he was captain of the junior boys' team, and this year he has moved up to the senior level.

A member of the HHS Athletic Association, Burda is also in charge of the school's intramural program,



which runs during lunch every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. "It lasts all year," he says. "My job is to come up with a new sport every 1.5 months, put up signup sheets, make the round robin, organize the games, make the announcement, then referee the games."

During the past three summer holidays, Burda has used his various talents in his work with kids at Huntsville-area day camps. He began as a Leader in Training at Camp Sydney, moved on to become a Junior Leader at Camp Skoka, and last year worked as a counsellor for Camp Sydney. "I loved it so much," he says with a grin. "It's like going to camp again and getting paid for it. And, I got to work with great people who are true to themselves and honest with each other."

The biggest challenge, he found, was keeping kids interested. "It requires a lot of planning and thinking on your feet," Burda says, adding that he can imagine teaching as a future career.

But for now, he's following each of his passions as far as it will take him and living according to a favourite saying: "One day your life will flash before your eyes. Make sure it's worth watching."

## LETTERS

### MNR shouldn't be allowed to shoot deer-chasing dogs

Re: *Reminder: Don't let dogs chase deer*, Forester article, Wednesday, Jan. 14, 2009

First and foremost, I will state immediately that in no way do I condone the irresponsibility of dog owners to allow their pets to chase wildlife, period. The issue I have is with the extent to which this regulation goes. I believe that a hefty fine should be in order for any pet owner who allows their pet to terrorize our wildlife, but to shoot their dog, this is completely overboard. I will state my case as such.

First of all why is it that the dog is discriminated against and apparently the size of the wild animal is a determining factor. What about the squirrel or rabbit, the blue jay or grouse? The main argument seems to be that the stress of the animal is the concern, particularly on ice or deep snow. Well, I certainly have never seen a dog in snowshoes or iceskates, so please explain why that would be a factor in this reasoning. Also, does the squirrel not get stressed as it is chased up trees?

The household cat is known to be the most efficient predator in the animal kingdom, with the most prey to its name. If we disregard the size of the animal, then perhaps all of household cats should also be shot (on the plus side, we won't need animal shelters anymore).

A second point: If we place this severe regard for our wild animals then perhaps we

should be focused on the inexcusable amount of roadkill on the highways. In Alberta and British Columbia where there is a heavy concentration of animals, there are fences along the highways, with walkways every so often to allow animals to cross safely. I do not know how many deer have died from stress in running away from a family pet, but I certainly see the amount of roadkill every year. Perhaps some priorities are in order.

Third point: I am guessing that the poor MNR folks did not sign up for dog-killing duty when they took on their roles to protect our environment. Please explain exactly how this would play out. Would they knock on my door and say, "Excuse me, Mr. Wilson. Can you please ask your dog to step outside so I can shoot him?" That seems a pretty unfair position for these folks. Besides, I promise, the bullet would need to go through me before it ever reached my pet.

Animals have natural tendencies even if domesticated. It is the responsibility of the owner to control their pets. It only makes sense that it is the owner who pays the price for their pet's behaviour, not the pet itself. Perhaps we should save these regulations for the drunken, wealthy city hunters who come up every year and terrorize our forests.

Derek Wilson  
Emsdale

### Owner of runaway pup says thanks to all who helped

Sunday morning one of my three dogs took off from our driveway while I wasn't looking. After a half hour of calling we started driving around looking for him. He disappeared into thin air. This story has a happy ending: he was found on Monday morning 11 km from home. But here is the best part. I discovered that our town has an amazing support system for lost animals. Being Sunday, I was surprised when my calls were returned by both the Huntsville Animal Shelter and Bracebridge OSPCA. I called 105.5FM first thing Monday morning and our dog was on the radio before 10 a.m. I called the on-call vets and all of them took information regarding our dog "just in case." I learned that a concerned motorist had called to

report a dog on Hwy. 11. But it was less than 10 minutes after I called Huntsville's bylaw department that Barb Mooney called me to report that she was following a dog matching my description. She had been called earlier that morning by a snowplow operator on North Lancelot Rd. I don't know your name, buddy, but thanks a bunch. We are so happy to have "Mikey" home, no worse for wear, just tired and hungry. We just want to say thank you to all the folks who took the time to call in, take our information and respond to a pup who obviously wasn't where he should be.

Karen Woods,  
Port Sydney

### Foundation warns of drug combination often used to battle high blood pressure

A drug combination currently used to treat thousands of Canadians with high blood pressure (hypertension) can increase the risk of sudden cardiac death, kidney disease and the likelihood of dialysis, the Heart and Stroke Foundation is warning.

New guidelines from the Canadian Hypertension Education Program (CHEP) based on international research funded in part by the foundation will urge patients who have been prescribed a combination of Angiotensin Converting Enzyme (ACE) inhibitors and Angiotensin II Receptor Blockers (ARBs) to see their family physicians as soon as possible for a treatment change.

"These two popular categories of hypertension medication are each safe and effective treatments – but not together," said Dr. Sheldon Tobe, spokesperson for the Heart and Stroke Foundation and CHEP executive member.

As many as 175,000 Canadians with high blood pressure may be currently treated with this combination of medications.

The ACE inhibitors are a type of blood pressure medication that helps widen blood vessels, making it easier for blood to flow through, while the ARBs inhibit the action of a peptide called angiotensin, which causes blood vessels to narrow, helping to relax the blood vessels and lower blood pressure.

According to CHEP, most people who develop hypertension will require treatment with two or more medications plus lifestyle modifications. Treating these patients with combinations of drugs will remain a widespread and highly effective practice.

But problems surfaced earlier this year in the ONTARGET study, carried out by Heart and Stroke Foundation researchers and published in the New

England Journal of Medicine.

In this major international clinical trial of 25,620 patients, the drug combination of an ACE inhibitor and an ARB was found to be only marginally more effective at lowering blood pressure than either of the drugs taken alone. In addition, patients on this combination experienced more side effects such as kidney problems than those on only one of the drugs. Patients were age 55 and over and had vascular disease or high-risk diabetes.

"The combined action of these two drugs is a source of major stress on the kidneys," said Tobe. "They don't give any additional benefit in combination, but each is associated with side effects, so all you do is double up the side effects but you don't double up the benefits."

Side effects can include fainting, diarrhea, and dangerously elevated potassium levels which could result in the need for dialysis – or death.

"The good news is that patients who are experiencing side effects recover as soon as they get off the combination of medications," said Tobe.

The Heart and Stroke Foundation and CHEP have translated the professional blood pressure management guidelines and they are available at [www.heartandstroke.ca](http://www.heartandstroke.ca). For more information on hypertension medications go to [www.hypertension.ca](http://www.hypertension.ca).

The Heart and Stroke Foundation's Blood Pressure Action Plan offers realistic strategies and ongoing support to help individuals prevent and control high blood pressure. Canadians can get a free, confidential risk assessment by going to [www.heartandstroke.ca](http://www.heartandstroke.ca).

To find out more about Heart and Stroke Foundation lifestyle or stroke and heart disease information, and to learn how you can offer much-needed support in your community, call 1-888-HSF-INFO (1-888-473-4636).

 <p><b>MOE'S</b> <b>PICK OF THE WEEK</b> <b>2006 PONTIAC VIBE</b></p>  <p>1.8 L, 4 cylinder engine, manual, 104,766 km. Stk# 9059</p> <p><b>\$12,995</b></p>	<p><b>2003 CHEVY TRACKER ZR2</b></p>  <p>2.4 L, 4 cylinder engine, auto, 4 door, 126,252 km. Stk# 8219 <b>\$9,995</b></p>	<p><b>2004 CHEVY SILVERADO EXT. CAB 4X4</b></p>  <p>5.3 L, 8 cylinder engine, auto, warranty, 149,472 km. Stk# 8513 <b>\$11,995</b></p>	<p><b>2004 CHEVY SILVERADO REG. CAB</b></p>  <p>4.8 L, 8 cylinder engine, auto, 81,401 km. Stk# 7536 <b>\$14,995</b></p>	<p><b>2004 PONTIAC SUNFIRE</b></p>  <p>2.2 L, 4 cylinder engine, auto, 71,556 km. Stk# 8635 <b>\$8,495</b></p>	<p><b>BRAY MOTORS</b></p> <p>PONTIAC BUICK GMC CHEVY TRUCKS</p> <p>GM</p> <p><b>HWY 11, SUNDRIDGE</b> <b>(705) 384-5333/4 • 1-800-989-1113</b> <b>braymotors.com</b></p>
	<p><b>2005 BUICK ALLURE CX</b></p>  <p>3.8 L, 6 cylinder engine, auto, 31,465 km. Stk# 9090 <b>\$13,995</b></p>	<p><b>2005 CHEVY EQUINOX</b></p>  <p>3.4 L, 6 cylinder engine, auto, warranty, 39,994 km. Stk# TP9074 <b>\$15,995</b></p>	<p><b>2005 CHEVY SILVERADO</b></p>  <p>5.3 L, 8 cylinder engine, auto, warranty, 61,991 km. Stk# TP8656 <b>\$15,995</b></p>	<p><b>2005 GMC CANYON</b></p>  <p>3.5 L, 6 cylinder engine, auto, warranty, 57,503 km. Stk# 9075 <b>\$15,995</b></p>	

**SHORT DRIVE . . . LONG ON SAVINGS**