

# Opinion

## MUSKOKA MOSAIC

### Introducing Jay Neill

BY PAULA BOON

During his 17 years volunteering for the Canadian Ski Patrol at Hidden Valley, Jay Neill has given a great deal of time and energy to the organization, but he says he has received much in return.

"The patrol really brought me out of my shell," says the telephone/lan technician for Community Telecom, adding that before joining the organization he was "beyond shy."

Neill had skied when he was in high school in southern Ontario but got out of the sport when he entered the work world, got married and started a family. Then, when he, his wife Charlene and their two children Dan and Hillary moved from Burlington to Huntsville in 1989, the timing was perfect to take up the sport again. "My kids were old enough, and it was something we could have fun doing as a family" he says.

In the fall of 1992 a friend convinced Neill to join the ski patrol, and it has been a huge part of his life ever since. "It's lots of fun," he says. "The camaraderie is great."

Neill competed in the Ontario Division First Aid competition three years in a row starting in 1994, and the team placed sec-

ond in the province. In 1999 he switched to coaching, and that team won the provincial championships. When one member had to drop out, he stepped in to compete at the national level, and the team placed fifth.

Between 1996 and 2000, Neill was the ski patrol's director of first aid, which involved delivering the 40-hour training course. Then he became president for four years. "It's really an administrative job — a lot of e-mailing and getting information from people to make sure things run smoothly," he says.

Neill put in many hours as president, organizing the annual ski swap, arranging to buy a portable from the school board to use as the patrol/training room, and getting involved in charity bingo to help raise funds for supplies, first-aid and safety programs.

Because it can be difficult to get enough people to commit to volunteering for the ski patrol, Neill was also influential in arranging incentives for long-time patrollers, such as reduced lift ticket rates for their families. "For a young family it's ideal to join the patrol," he says.

During that time, Neill switched from skiing to snowboarding. "My kids shamed

me into it," he says, "and I found snowboarding more exciting."

Neill's work on the ski patrol has not gone unnoticed by his colleagues. In fact, they nominated him for a national appreciation award in 2004. "That was very special," he says. "It felt good to be appreciated."

From 2005 to 2008, Neill was the ski patrol's treasurer, and at the moment he is interim president until an election in the spring.

Neill and his wife live on Otter Lake, and they love it. "We enjoy the lake, the peace and quiet out here," he says. "It's far enough out you don't notice how close you are to town."

They bought the property in 1981, and for years he spent weekends getting the house ready for his family. "Long weekends were great because you had one extra day to work," he recalls with a laugh.

When Neill found a Muskoka-based

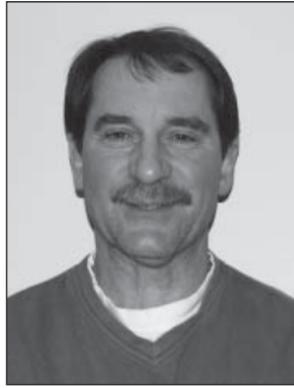
job in his field of installing and repairing telephones in 1989, the family was finally able to move. He still does the same kind

of work, although now his focus is more in the commercial market. "For example, I spent almost a year at the new BMLSS building, completing the cabling and phone installation," he says.

When he's not with the ski patrol or working, Neill keeps busy cutting and splitting fire wood and working on his home. He loves to ski Mont Tremblant in the spring, and rides bikes and camps in summer.

Neill also maintains his connections in the city — both with family and friends he went to high school with. "That's what's important to me," he says. "Family, friends and being an active volunteer in the community."

Thanks to Nicole Phippen for suggesting that Jay Neill be profiled.



## LETTERS

### Clement could learn something from Banwell

I am not a Liberal; I don't support the party. However, I have gained a marked increase in respect for at least one Liberal, Doug Banwell, and lost an equal amount for a Conservative, our own member of parliament, Tony Clement.

In the last exchange of letters between them, Clement suggested that as Doug Banwell dared to disagree with the leader of his own party over the recent budget, he might perhaps reconsider which party he belongs to.

That is an insult to both democracy and common sense.

Politicians are not meant to be automatons who unflinchingly follow orders from their masters in Ottawa. The fact that Clement mentioned this after the last budget was passed, with him voting "aye," is beyond belief.

Clement has been saying for years that the Liberals will drive Canada into debt and employ nothing but tax and spend policies,

throwing money at whatever problem arises. Fair enough, his opinion. But how exactly can he then justify voting yes for the last budget? It is the exact opposite of the Conservative ideology he has been preaching for his entire life.

True, Doug Banwell does not have a cushy minister's post and an expense account to lose by speaking his mind. However, he was also not elected to represent Parry-Sound-Muskoka as Clement was, as a Conservative.

The bottom line is if we wanted a Liberal budget we would have voted Liberal.

If Doug Banwell should leave his party for having the moral fortitude to disagree with his leader, perhaps Clement should leave his party and let a Conservative with the guts to disagree with his leader run in Muskoka.

Tyler Austin  
Huntsville

### Federal Economic Action Plan has much to offer this area

I am writing today to share some good news. The recent federal budget is truly an economic Action Plan, one that will immediately, positively affect the lives of northern residents. I am also pleased to tell you that the Parry Sound-Muskoka region has a genuine opportunity to prosper from this practical and constructive fiscal plan.

Firstly, FedNor's presence has been significantly strengthened. As the key driver of economic development in northern Ontario, our government looks to FedNor to help us deliver a number of the economic stimulus initiatives announced in last week's Economic Action Plan.

In particular, FedNor will administer the new Community Adjustment Fund in northern Ontario. Across Canada, the fund will provide \$1 billion over two years to promote the diversification of the local economies. This fund will greatly benefit northern communities and will help those hardest hit by the recession get back on their feet.

In addition, Parry Sound-Muskoka residents will have access to:

- support to automotive parts manufacturers by improving their access to financing through accounts receivable insurance offered by Export Development Canada;

- Targeted twinning improvements to a number of segments of Hwy. 11 in northern Ontario;
- \$225 million over three years to develop and implement a strategy on extending broadband coverage to communities currently without access; and
- \$170 million to help the forestry industry develop new products, use new technology and promote Canadian forest products to customers around the world.

The Parry Sound-Muskoka region can also take advantage of new programs such as the Recreational Infrastructure Canada initiative to support construction and upgrades to community recreational facilities, or the Infrastructure Stimulus Fund to support rehabilitation projects, including bridges and roads.

Combined, these progressive measures form an Economic Action Plan that works. Our government, through FedNor, is committed to making immediate, targeted investments that will not only strengthen northern communities, but will promote long-term growth. Our Economic Action Plan will accomplish this for Parry-Sound-Muskoka, for Northern Ontario and for Canada.

Tony Clement  
minister of industry  
minister responsible for FedNor

## Financial support for urgent dental needs expanded to youth from 14 to 18 years of age

By Simcoe Muskoka medical officer of health Dr. Charles Gardner

Since 1987, the Ontario provincial government has provided financial support to low-income families so that their children — up to age 14 years — can get urgently needed dental treatment. This coverage has now been extended to those up to their 18th birthday beginning Jan. 1, 2009.

This is great news because a healthy mouth is important for a healthy body. Research shows that poor oral health is associated with heart disease, diabetes, respiratory diseases and premature and low-weight babies. Untreated cavities can also be painful and lead to serious infections.

Tooth decay is preventable, but some people are at more risk than others because

they do not have easy access to oral health care. The recent announcement of the expansion of the Children in Need of Treatment (CINOT) program will help some of our citizens most at risk of poor oral health.

The expansion of CINOT is part of the provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy and specifically addresses oral health services for low-income families. Children and youth up to their 18th birthday are covered if they have dental pain, infection, large cavities, bleeding gums or have injured their mouth, and if their parents do not have a dental plan and cannot afford to pay for their child to go to the dentist.

Children and youth can be enrolled in CINOT after being screened by a registered

dental hygienist, either at school or by making an appointment to see the dental hygienist at a health unit office. Adolescents do not have to be in school to qualify for the program.

While getting needed dental care is important, prevention is key to good dental health and should begin early. Parents can help their children take care of their teeth by encouraging them to practice brushing their own teeth a minimum of two times a day—morning and bedtime, using a small amount of toothpaste containing fluoride.

Regular visits to the dentist should begin early to both reduce the risk of cavities and to help get children in the habit of caring for their teeth. The Canadian and Ontario Dental Associations recommend a

first visit to the dentist by the age of one. Children who wait until they are older for the first check up may have already developed cavities, and treatment can often be stressful for the child and parent.

Good nutrition also has a key role in building strong teeth and gums that resist disease, and it's important that children develop habits that are good for their teeth. Eating or drinking sugary foods and drinks often will weaken teeth and lead to tooth decay.

For more information about dental health or the CINOT program, check [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org) or call Your Health Connection at 721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520, extension 8804, Monday to Friday.

<p><b>MOE'S PICK OF THE WEEK</b> 2007 BUICK ALLURE CX</p> <p>3.8 L, 6 cylinder engine, auto, 70,376 km. Stk# 9137-A <b>WARRANTY \$16,995</b></p>	<p><b>2006 PONTIAC VIBE</b></p> <p>1.8 L, 4 cylinder engine, manual, 104,766 km. Stk# 9059 <b>\$12,995</b></p>	<p><b>2003 BUICK CENTURY</b></p> <p>3.4 L, 6 cylinder engine, auto, 89,099 km. Stk# 9100 <b>\$7,995</b></p>	<p><b>2003 CHEV TRACKER ZR2</b></p> <p>2.4 L, 4 cylinder engine, auto, 126,252 km. Stk# 8219 <b>\$9,995</b></p>	<p><b>2004 CHEV SILVERADO</b></p> <p>4.8 L, 8 cylinder engine, auto, 81,401 km. Stk# 7536 <b>\$14,995</b></p>	<p><b>BRAY MOTORS</b></p> <p>PONTIAC BUICK GMC CHEVY TRUCKS</p> <p>GM</p> <p><b>HWY 11, SUNDRIDGE</b> (705) 384-5333/4 • 1-800-989-1113 <a href="http://braymotors.com">braymotors.com</a></p>
	<p><b>2005 GMC SIERRA</b></p> <p>5.3 L, 8 cylinder engine, auto, 45,526 km. Stk# 77705-B <b>WARRANTY \$18,995</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>2006 CHEVY MALIBU</b></p> <p>2.2 L, 4 cylinder engine, auto, 67,020 km. Stk# TP9043 <b>\$11,995</b></p>	<p><b>2008 CHEV IMPALA</b></p> <p>3.8 L, 6 cylinder engine, auto, 29,702 km. Stk# TP8649 <b>WARRANTY \$18,995</b></p>	

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