

Opinion

MUSKOKA MOSAIC

Introducing Ann Shorn

BY PAULA BOON

Ann Shorn's face is familiar to many people in Huntsville. Not only is she active at Club 55 and a regular at the swimming pool, but she has also provided childcare for dozens of local families over the past 30 years.

"I stopped about five years ago," she says. "Up to 80 I was fine, but my reflexes aren't as sharp now. You have to have good reflexes when you're caring for children."

A self-described river rat, Shorn lives beside the swing bridge in downtown Huntsville. She spent her childhood summers swimming and fishing in a river in her native Serbia (then Yugoslavia). However, at age 14, she began a journey which took her away from rivers for many years.

During the Second World War, Shorn was sent to a German labour camp near the Danish border. "We travelled in freight cars like cattle," she recalls.

For five years she worked on a farm with French and Russian prisoners. "I was young enough that they more or less adopted me as their daughter," she says.

Then, after being liberated by the Brit-

ish, Shorn had to wait with other Yugoslavians in a repatriation camp. That's where she met her husband Tony.

On their way back home, Tony convinced Shorn that they should not return because the country had changed under its new ruler. The two jumped off the train when it stopped just before the tunnel from Austria to Yugoslavia. "I was 20 years old and in love, so I did it," she says. "It was hard because I knew my Dad was waiting on the other side of the tunnel for me."

The couple made their way to another camp nearby, where they lived for more than a year. They got married, Tony bought a second-hand sewing machine and worked as a tailor, and they had a daughter. When the Shorns heard there was a need for tailors in Canada, they applied.

In 1952, the family arrived in Canada. "When I saw Toronto, I started crying,"

Shorn says. "I wanted to go back to Austria. It was too big, too overpowering."

Luckily, they continued on to the much smaller city of London, where their two sons were born.



When Tony was just 45, he died of a cerebral hemorrhage. "My daughter was already an Air Canada stewardess at that time, but my sons were just 15 and 7," Shorn says. "I couldn't give up. I had to work. I told my sons, 'We are like a Russian troika: if we pull together, we will make it. If we pull apart, we're lost.'"

For more than a decade, Shorn worked in a tailor shop to support her family. Then, when her youngest son was 20, she fell in love with Huntsville during a week-long visit and moved here soon afterward.

She soon began to babysit for some local

doctors and lawyers. Always strict but never unkind, Shorn forged connections with the children she cared for that last to this day. She receives many letters, cards and photos from former charges. One young man told her, "We always knew where we stood with you. Yes meant yes, no meant no, and maybe meant it depended on us."

Shorn still keeps busy. She swims five days a week at the Centennial Centre pool, acts as a hostess for Club 55, and supports various causes that are close to her heart. "The most important one is the Terry Fox Run," she says. Over the years she has also raised about \$14,000 swimming for the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

Since she acquired her home from the Blackburn family about 20 years ago, Shorn has very much enjoyed living by the river again. While she has had many offers for the house, she has no plans to leave. "The only way they'll take me out of here is feet first," she says with her trademark smile and twinkling eyes.

Shorn loves to garden, swim, fish, feed the wildlife, and watch boats go by. "It's my little piece of paradise," she says.

LETTERS

Snowmobilers take exception to last week's letters

Re: District might be better off without snowmobile trails and Snowmobilers should support landowners, letters, Huntsville Forester, March 4.

After many years of sitting through dispute resolution committees, I learned that a pot of turmoil is quite often better to be simmered not stirred, but after reading your comments, I would not be doing my job to let your comments go unchallenged.

My wife and I are snowmobilers and have been since the early 1970s. We agree that our sport has its fair share of people who do not put their best brain forward but, and not in their defense, many operators of any type of motor vehicle can be challenging, to say the least.

We also agree that the landowners had only one trump card to play and that was closing the trails and we believe that they got the desired effect. We have always been very appreciative of the generosity of the landowners in allowing us to cross their lands. We protect that right every opportunity we have but are now being somehow held accountable for a very unfortunate statement made by an elected official, not us, the snowmobilers.

From here on, we disagree with your statements. We ride all day, as many other snowmobilers do, with no smoke or smell and certainly no residue from our ride with the exception of a track left in the snow. The

wildlife uses the trails to move around with ease and when we ride by them, the deer, quite often, do not get up from their rest. We see the onset of winter and spring in the bush and it is something that many people would have no idea about. The main thing is that when spring has arrived, there is little to no evidence that a snowmobile was ever there.

You asked about a "focus group" when the decision was made to have Muskoka a snowmobile destination. We don't go back that far, but I do know that when we started riding, Port Sydney was touted as the snowmobile capital of Canada, if not the world, in a major publication. They had the three main ingredients: snow, places to ride and places to stay. Maybe it was the same focus group who deemed us to be cottage country.

In comparing us to other groups, you have suggested that snowmobilers are insane and unhealthy. These comments offend us and we don't believe that you are any better than the elected official that you condemn for making such statements.

Finally, you have suggested that the landowners' problems have been caused by excessive unregulated snowmobiling. That statement is so ridiculous that it does not warrant a further comment.

To Mr. Reynolds: As mentioned earlier, we snowmobilers are extremely grateful to the landowners and always have been.

We do think that being asked to support the landowners against the municipality is a bit over the top. Ninety percent of the snowmobilers riding in Muskoka would not have any idea of the issues or the best approach to resolution, but they would know that if they don't support the landowners' position, they will lose their trails. Asking or demanding their support under those conditions, Mr. Reynolds, is not a fair approach. This is the way the petition was presented to us: "Sign it or we are going to lose our trails." So we signed it.

In summary: this dispute originated

between the landowners and the municipality. The landowners chose to use the snowmobilers as their pawn by closing the trails. Now, we have read three letters and have heard numerous comments that the snowmobilers should get involved or perhaps we should close the trails permanently. How did we end up being the bad guy?

These comments represent the opinions of my wife and myself and in no way express any opinions of other snowmobilers or District 7.

Ken and Connie Cox
Huntsville

Evening of country music

BY ANNE JOHNSON

Dwight News

If you want to learn to knit or crochet, come out to the Oxtongue Lake Community Centre each Wednesday evening from 7 to 9 p.m. Everyone is welcome to come learn, watch, or just visit. The cost is \$1, which helps cover the rent of the hall.

Noah's Larks present an evening of country music with special guests The Silver Strings on Saturday, March 21 beginning at 7 p.m. Dust off your western boots and hat and join your friends at Pioneer Memorial Church hall on Hwy. 60 at Hillside for great country tunes, an auction, and light refreshments. Tickets, \$10, are available from church members.

The Dwight Winter Carnival was a great success thanks to Linda Keown and her committee. They are looking for any suggestions from people for next year's carnival, which will be our 40th. Send suggestions to owlnt@vianet.ca, dwplants@vianet.ca or bigjohn@vianet.ca and all ideas will be considered.

The Bob Palmer Award was presented to Neil Barnhart for his 50 years of volunteer work in the community of Dwight. Congratulations, Neil.

The Carnival Bear was won by Jenna and Michael Sykes. The bear was on the black iron frame around the old bell at Stewart Memorial United Church on Dwight Beach Road, facing the water.

The winners of the pie contest are as follows: adult category, first, Marcia Tymochko, blueberry pie; second, Leslie Stewart, apple pie; third, Marcia

Tymochko, strawberry-rhubarb pie. Junior category, first, Michael Sykes, chocolate pie; second, Sarah May, lemon pie; third, Jenna Sykes, pumpkin pie.

The winners of the fish derby are as follows: under 12 years, Hailey McConnell, 9.29 lb. trout; ages 13 to 18, Brandon Corry, 20.5 lb. pike; adult, Craig Marwick 19.94 lb. pike. Many thanks to Keiley and Dave of the Dwight Market for sponsoring this event.

A delicious pancake breakfast was served by the Huntsville Otters peeewee hockey team and their families. Many thanks to Geoff and Carine at Henrietta's for allowing the bacon and sausages to be cooked there.

Emily Keown would like to thank everyone who helped fund her school trip to Egypt. We hope she and all the other students on the trip have a good time and, of course, learn something.

Many happy returns to Jack Hurley, Vicky Hall, and Andrew Hall, who are all celebrating birthdays on March 16.

Tuesday night euchre results: women's first, Carol McMullen and Shirley Caron; men's first, Fran Gower; second, Aubrey Cotton; lone hands, Al McMullen and Don Ross; 50/50 draw, Edith McAllister and Dennis Hopper.

Thursday night bid euchre results: women's first, Marnie Brethour; second, Jacquie Hatkoski; men's first, Vivian Stronach; second, Brian Hodge; hidden score, Dennis Hopper; 50/50 draw, Mack Lattam and Lorna Wilks.

News may be sent to me at owlnt@vianet.ca or call 635-1743.

Harper should resign

Dear Mr. Prime Minister: Your refusal to recognize what people were referring to as a serious recession almost lost you your job when threatened with a vote of no confidence by a coalition.

Governor General Jean offered you a thread upon which to cling when she allowed you your prorogation (a holiday while America imploded and Canadians scratched our collective heads in confusion as to your inept impotence). You should've resigned.

Now you're back to the divisive, combative behaviour, attempting to re-distract Canadians. Job losses mount and infrastructure restoration projects are mostly paralyzed by your restrictions demanding matching funds for federal infusions of loons, loons that are necessary now to kick-start our nation.

For an economist (your previous

occupation), you're clearly over your head without a clue what/how to remedy the second Great Depression. Your neo-conservative ideology is obsolete even for Republicans who served under militant buffoon George W. Bush.

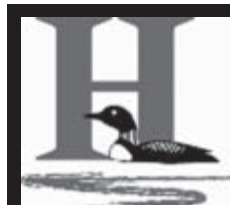
Engaging in mean-spirited attacks on new Liberal leader Ignatieff are not productive when people are losing their homes, their cars and their jobs. Rather than forcing another election (your goal), please do the right thing for Canada and simply resign. That's the honourable approach when one is lost beyond lost.

Spare us your aggressive impotence. Please.

Mendelson Joe

Emsdale

(A true conservative who conserves)



HEALTHCARE HEROES

"A Letter From A HDMH Grateful Patient..."

I was admitted to Huntsville Emergency Dept. on the evening of June 18/08 with my blood pressure spiking rates high.

Dr. Trenholm was on duty that evening & I will long remember him for the care & attention he gave me.

He was diligent, calm, kind & friendly & I am pleased to have this opportunity to thank him.

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