

Through The Knothole

a quarterly newsletter of the

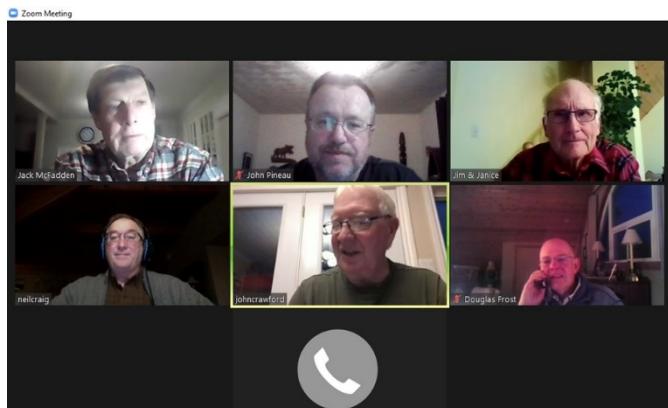
HURONIA WOODLAND OWNERS' ASSOCIATION

Issue # 87

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Spring 2021

ALL THE BEST FROM THE BOARD: The HWOA Board of Directors hope that you, and yours families, are all safe and well.



During the COVID-19 restrictions, the Directors Meetings were held via Zoom, and also telephone link (Cam Douglas).

Huronia Chapter AGM April 17, 2021 at 1 pm

By Jim Marchand



We had a very good AGM on April 17, via Zoom.

The Zoom link was made possible using the OWA ZOOM account and John Pineau, Executive Director of the OWA provided the technical expertise.

Neil Craig chaired the meeting. Along with the usual Financial report, and election of the Board of Directors, again this year no one from the membership stepped up to the challenge, so our 2020 Board continues. Many thanks to Neil Craig, John Crawford, Doug Frost, Cam Douglas, Jack McFadden, Chris Ellsmere and Jim Marchand.

The White Pine Award winner was presented, and the Scholarships were awarded.

White Pine Award Winner For the year 2020 John Crawford

Submitted by Earl Dertinger

Earl presented the Award to John Crawford at the AGM:

“Often at presentations like this a speaker may say it is an honour to be the presenter and that was very true for me as the presenter of the recipient of our White Pine Award for 2020 at our Zoom AGM. This year’s recipient is a very valued member of our association. He is a Director, our Treasurer, a neighbour and a friend. It is an honour to congratulate John Crawford.

John and his wife Doris are members of the Huronia Woodland Owners. They are landowners in Oro-Medonte township. They produce maple syrup as a hobby, have a good trail system in the woods and have harvested wood products from those woods. John supports Severn Sound Environmental Association annual tree distribution day and was an active member of the Maple Tree Replacement Program, a significant project of the woodland owners.



John Crawford, with his White Pine Award

The harvest thinning on his property was completed using good forestry practices, the trees to be harvested were marked by qualified tree markers. The thinning was completed by a good local company. The entire process was highlighted at one of our Fall Field Days to help educate other members considering a harvest.

John is a strong supporter of the Woodland Owners and supports wise forest use and conservation. He always shares his knowledge and advice with our members. John has been a director and our treasurer of the HWOA for many years. John meets and exceeds the criteria for the White Pine Award. He is and

continues to be an important member of our organization."

Again from all our members, Earl and the Board of Directors, congratulations John, it is well deserved.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Submitted by Mark Scharf

Despite COVID-19 school attendance issues in 2020 the Huronia Woodland Owners Association (HWOA) scholarship committee nevertheless received ten scholarship applications. After a review of the applications the committee chose our two winners, namely Rimon Keleta of Sault College and Ryan Patterson of Fleming College. Both are in their college's Forestry Technician programs. Both Rimon and Ryan sent videos of themselves which were shown by Zoom at the HWOA AGM on April 17, 2021.



RIMON KELETA



RYAN PATERSON

The videos were helpful in explaining the reasons why Rimon and Ryan chose to study forestry and their hopes for careers in aspects

of forestry. What was abundantly clear from the videos and the essays attached to their applications for the scholarship, was that each had a love for the outdoors, understood that maintaining the health of our forests enabled all of us to enjoy the outdoors, and gave them the promise of careers working outdoors. It is gratifying to know that the HWOA by its modest contribution of \$500 to each of them helped them advance their career goals, which in the long run helps us all.

Our scholarship fund is not self replicating and contributions to the fund are necessary to maintain it and help the HWOA continue to make these contributions to help well deserving forestry students. Contributions to the fund should be arranged with our Treasurer John Crawford and his contact information is in the Board of Directors list on the last page.

Mr. Ladouceur's Thumb

-a short (true) story
by Gerry Beauchamp

My childhood was spent in 1950's Penetanguishene, a quiet little town located on a sheltered inlet of Georgian Bay. The area had been a bustling community in times past when the logging and sawmill industry featured prominent in the Canadian economy. Most people in the community had once worked, or had a relative who worked, in the forest industry but now it was simply a sleepy little town with a few factories, some main street stores, and not much more. Growing up there wasn't quite a 'Leave It To Beaver' kind of childhood but indeed something resembling that simple kind of lifestyle.

It was around 1959 when my dad decided to have an oil furnace installed in our home, but up until then our house was heated solely with wood. I vividly remember waking up on cold winter mornings being cautioned to stay under the covers until dad got the kitchen stove stoked and radiating some warmth into the refrigerated house. Because wood was our sole heat source and the efficiency of wood-burning appliances was far from being perfected, it meant an annual tradition of accumulating wood for the winter. A lot of wood had to be purchased and processed to make sure the household remained warm for what was sometimes an extended cold season. I don't know where my father sourced our firewood but I remember it being delivered in a large truck by a boisterous French speaking man with whom my dad seemed to be familiar and friendly with. The load was mixed hardwood delivered in four foot lengths and dad neatly constructed a long pile along our property line. I don't know how much wood was there but I assume it

probably would have been six to eight bush cords. The cordwood was usually delivered in late summer and had already been well seasoned from some previous winter harvests.

As days grew shorter and a morning chill developed in the air, it became time to get the wood cut, split, and stored for winter. Getting the four foot logs cut into stove lengths was a considerable job and my dad undertook to hire someone for the task. We would set up the work area beside the house and await the arrival of old Mr. Ladouceur. His arrival was the highlight of the day for me, and my best friend Raymond, since we had rarely witnessed such a spectacle in our short lives. Mr. Ladouceur was an old man whose operation consisted of a horse drawn wagon with a gasoline engine mounted on it and a buzz saw which overhung the back of it. He manoeuvred the wagon into place uttering abrupt commands in French to the tired old horse who responded without delay. Raymond and I were fascinated by the fact that Mr. Ladouceur had obviously found a French-speaking horse. My father set up his own working area where the splitting maul would render the cut lengths into firewood blocks which would then be tossed into the open basement window for piling. Raymond and I would each receive a twenty-five cent piece if we stuck out the day alternating between lugging the log lengths closer to Mr. Ladouceur and throwing blocks into the basement.

As the old man got his operation set up, Raymond and I marvelled at the look of him. Raymond guessed that he must be a hundred years old. He had a very bushy grey moustache and long grey hair protruded from under his rumpled fedora. A very wrinkled face framed his mischievous eyes and he didn't talk very much, except to get cutting directions from my dad. He wore a well-worn set of patched trousers, leather boots and, to our amusement, a suit jacket that looked like it may have been quite in vogue some thirty years before. As he readied for work he put on a thick pair of leather mitts to protect his hand from splinters. To us, this too seemed strange since the wearing of mitts wouldn't be necessary for at least another couple of months.

With fascination we watched as Mr. Ladouceur unhitched the French-speaking horse from the wagon and tied him to a nearby tree leaving it with a partial bale of hay to munch on. He then began trying to persuade the old engine to fire up and finally after adding fluids to various orifices of the engine block and rotating the hand crank it gave a grunt and began belching grey smoke and emitting noise that I am sure must have been audible some miles away. As the old wagon shuddered, the engine was allowed to warm up before the big iron handle was pulled and a long wide belt began to turn the sawblade. Raymond and I marvelled as the large silver disc rotated so rapidly that only a blurr was visible. My father had cautioned us not to go anywhere near that spinning monster and only Mr. Ladouceur had the right to be in that particular work area. We were instructed to place the four foot pieces on the sawhorse some six feet away and if a log was too heavy for us, to get my dad's help.

It was getting late in the morning and all facets of the operation were going smoothly. Mr. Ladouceur was cutting the log lengths as quickly as we could deliver them. The constant thump of the splitting maul indicated that dad was working up a sweat and both Raymond and I were alternating jobs with the anticipation of visiting the candy store at day's end. The operation was running like a well oiled machine. That is until we all heard the yell. I'm pretty sure it was a French swear word since I had heard one of my uncles say it before. Looking over at Mr. Ladouceur I saw that his slow and steady movement had been altered into a rapid and uncalculated grasping of his hand. I called out to my dad who was already running over with a rag. He immediately got the old man's hand tightly bound, pushed the big lever that stopped the sawblade and operated the switch that brought the noisy engine to a screeching halt. As Raymond and I stood motionless my father instructed us to tell my mother what had happened and that he was bringing Mr. Ladouceur to the hospital. Even the old horse seemed to sense something was wrong as dad got the old man into his truck and quickly transported to a doctor's care. As Raymond and I processed what had just happened, he inquired whether I thought we would still get paid. Assuring him that I thought we would, we began to cautiously investigate the scene of the accident. There was a big pile of sawdust where Mr. Ladouceur had been working and the sawdust had a telltale streak of red running through it. A short distance away was another puddle of blood and both Raymond and I were mesmerized by all the indications that something had gone horribly wrong. With our astonishment changing into some type of morbid fascination we began to search the area for what we were sure would be an arm or a hand. Then we found it. Raymond spotted it first. It was the thumb of Mr. Ladouceur's mitt and after poking at it with a stick he cautiously picked it up and we both made a thorough examination of the item and realized that the old man's thumb was still inside. "What should we do?" asked Raymond. "We better take it out" I said and we carefully shook the leather mitt thumb as its contents fell to the ground. Both fascinated at the sight of Mr. Ladouceur's thumb not connected to Mr. Ladouceur we pondered what to do with it. Raymond suggested that we could chase his sisters with it, but I thought we had better put it someplace safe until my father returned.

My dad returned from the hospital a couple of hours later. He told us that the doctor had stopped the bleeding, stitched and bandaged the hand and that he had brought the old man back to his home. The wagon would remain at our place for the time being and dad would arrange for the old horse to be returned to its stable and be fed and bedded for the night. I then told my dad about our discovery, and when asked about its location I handed him the jar that contained the thumb. After telling us that we had done the right thing, dad told us that since the thumb had once belonged to one of God's living creatures it should be treated with respect and receive a proper burial. With that in mind he dug a hole in our garden, where we usually planted the potatoes, and shook the thumb out of the jar and filled the hole in. After the burial, my father reached in his pocket and gave each of us a

quarter. Raymond and I then headed to the candy store and invested our days work in something we both had been thinking of all day. We each got a bottle of Pepsi, a bag of chips, two red licorice, and a bubble gum. Making our way back home we discussed the happenings of the day and how we both felt that we had done the proper thing. "I know, I know" said Raymond but it sure would have been fun chasing my sisters with it.

To our amazement Mr. Ladouceur returned to our home the following week to finish the woodcutting job. With his hand heavily bandaged he took up where he had left off and proceeded with the same deliberate and repetitive pace that he had before he had been so rudely interrupted. It was the following year that dad had the oil furnace installed.

Through the Knothole,

Jim Marchand, editor

Thanks to this month's contributors.

We need articles from Huronia Chapter (HWOA) members because they express constantly that they would like to see stories about our members, their properties and projects. Please consider emailing me (contact info in the Directors list below), an article from you or a friend of yours.

Submission deadlines for articles:

Winter: Jan 10

Spring: April 10

Summer: Aug. 10

Fall: Oct 10

HWOA BOARD of DIRECTORS

(in alphabetical order)

President/Chairman: rotating among Directors

Craig, Neil: Forest Health (705-726-1334)
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"Through the Knothole" jimmarchand5@gmail.com
OWA Director, HWOA Chapter Rep.

Directors Meetings are held the second Tuesday of the month except June, July and December.