

Local Personality—

# Alice Pain: Enjoys life as a senior



Alice Pain

"I enjoy all of them in a way, but I can't say people are any happier for them."

When Alice is not busy at her community work, she is apt to be visiting at The Pines or the hospital, browsing through a book, listening to music, or doing handwork, such as knitting or crocheting.

#### Muskoka-Lover

A lover of Muskoka, Alice maintains she would not want to live anywhere else.

"I don't think there's any place better than Muskoka," she declares. "It has beauty and it has health and everything I think we require. I've never travelled much, but as far as the United States and the rest of Canada go, I don't think they have anything on Muskoka."

By Jeff Allen

In the view of Bracebridge resident Alice Pain, 80 years young, the key to a happy retirement is to maintain the hobbies and interests of one's post-retirement years. For Alice, that entails keeping up her work with the many and various organizations through which she has made a significant contribution to the community.

"I've always been a busy person," she says. "I belong to different things which I enjoy and I never get bored for want of something to do."

#### Founding member

Over the years, she has been an active member of the Rebecca Lodge, the Women's Institute, the Orange Lodge, the Senior Citizens' Club, and a variety of other organizations.

While it is difficult to single out a particular group, she is currently, perhaps, best known for her involvement in the Senior Citizens' Club, of which she is a founding member.

The club got started in 1967, Alice recalls, following a party held by the Town's recreation committee for senior citizens at Memorial Park. A committee was subsequently appointed to get a club going.

When formed, Alice served on its public relations committee, and was the first vice-president on the executive, a position she has since filled several times.

#### Provincial Grant

The club met for a time at The Pines, and then started meeting at the United Church.

Around 1970, it obtained a provincial grant and used the funds to renovate the old A & P store at 75 Manitoba Street where it continues to meet.

With membership having grown from about 40 to 400, the club is much more active now. The increase in membership, Alice says, and, in particular, the deplorable condition of the building, necessitates a new meeting place.

#### Move Necessary

"We have to move from there because it's condemned," she states. "It's a regular fire trap. If we ever had a fire there's only two narrow stairways at the back, and if anybody tried to rush down there they'd never make it."

She adds that to maintain accessibility, the Seniors are anxious to secure centralized facilities.

"There really is a need for it to be on the main drag," she says, "and I do think the library would be a good place, assuming an addition can be built."

In Alice's view, the Senior Citizens' Club fulfills an important social need.

"I feel it really has a place in our lives," she comments. "Not everybody goes out to other places like I do, and it does bring people out who are otherwise lonely."

#### Touches Lonely?

"Sometimes I think we don't touch the really lonely people, but on the whole, I think for anybody who likes mixing, they do find it has a place in their life. I know I do."

A native of Muskoka, Alice was born in Germanias in 1900 to Charles and Elizabeth Rutter. She received her schooling there, and then went to work at the Beaumaris Hotel. During the winters, she worked in Toronto at Eatons.

In 1920, she and her fiancé, William Pain, of Purbrook, were married in Toronto. They moved to Bracebridge into a house on Bird's Hill. Her husband, who died in 1962, worked for the tannery. Alice herself worked on and off in various restaurants and hotels.

#### Seniors' Complex

After the death of her husband, Alice sold the house and moved to an apartment in the vicinity of the high school. Recently, she moved into the senior citizens apartment complex at 124 Alice Street.

Reminiscing about Bracebridge's earlier days, Alice notes that the Town was in many ways a more colorful place than it is today.

"It was quite an event," she says, "when the train went through. There used to be trains in the morning, in the afternoon, and in the evening."

#### Watched Trains

"And people used to go down to the station just to see the people come in and out. One of our recreations was to see the train come and go."

Another favorite pastime was to take excursions on the steamships.

"It was a really big thing to go on the Thousand Island Cruise up to Lake Joseph," Alice recalls. "There were excursions here and there to other places; Sunday schools had picnics on the boats. This generation misses a lot because it was really beautiful then."

In Alice's view, the advent of the automobile and modern communications usurped the kind of pleasure once derived from people making

their own fun. While the standard of living has increased dramatically, in many ways the quality of life has declined.

"I think television and radio spoiled life as it was," she claims, "because we used to make all our own fun—have dances from home to home and that sort of thing. Well, then, they got the radios and people stayed more to themselves."

"Everybody used to go somewhere on Sunday for dinner or supper after church and things like that, where now they stay home and watch the ball game."

"I think we were more content and happy with fewer gadgets to look after," she says. "I really do. Now women have everything to do the work for them and they have to diet to keep down their weight!"

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