

Black bear sighted in back yard

COLBORNE CHRONICLE
JULY 20/00

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If you go out in the woods today, you could be in for surprise.

A black bear was sighted wandering in the backyard of a Kelwood Drive residence last Wednesday evening. While there have been several bear sightings north of Highway 40-1 in the area, the Kelwood Drive report is the first south of Highway 401 and in close proximity to the village of Colborne.

"My wife and I decided to watch that program *Survivor* for the first time to see what all the fuss was about," Monty Munsen says. "It was 8:45 p.m. and the cat suddenly ran to a bay window in the kitchen. Usually the cat jumps up to look out, but this time it didn't."

Unimpressed with the television program, Mr. Munsen opted to see what the cat found so interesting.

"There was a black bear, just ambling by, stopping to sniff the air. It wasn't in any hurry. I was about eight feet away from the open window where I was looking out, and I called to Barb to come and see. It was a bear. The bear must have heard me, because it turned toward the sound and sniffed the air again."

The animal weighed an estimated 150 to 200 pounds, Mr. Munsen guesses, standing about 3.5 feet high and five feet long, "and quite narrow. It didn't look like it was starving. It wasn't a new cub, nor was it an adult. It was more like a teenage bear, if there is such a thing."

After six minutes of backyard visitation, the black bear ambled off toward the wooded ravine to the rear of the property.

"Having read about the athlete that was killed by a bear, I decided to call the Humane Society to see if there was anything that could or should be done. The gentleman I spoke with at animal control said they really didn't handle anything like that (a bear). He asked me if I saw a mother - I didn't. Whether there was any garbage around for it to eat - there isn't, and what it was doing.

"He suggested that with all the rain we've had, the berries are not out like they have been on other years for them to feed on."

Animal control suggested Mr. Mun-

sen call either the OPP or Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR).

"When I phoned the MNR, the lady asked if I would like her send me a package of information about what to do if I met a black bear," Mr. Munsen says incredulously.

"There wasn't anything else they could do or wanted to do. The lady said the bear was just doing what it does naturally. So, I said 'Well you may as well send me that package.'"

The Munsens have lived at their property for the past five years. They've encountered lots of birds, an occasional deer, and, of course, quite a few raccoons. The property has nearby bush in the ravine to the rear.

"I asked the lady at the MNR is bears are more likely to come out at a certain time of day, like raccoons which are nocturnal. She said they come out anytime of day. So, now my wife won't walk in the path in the woods."

The day after the sighting, Mr. Munsen was concerned the bear's presence may be a potential hazard for Colborne area residents unaware of the four-legged variety of wildlife.

"Do you think I should tell my neighbour below the ravine? I mean, I wouldn't like to see a family pet or person hurt."

The upshot of the incident: Mr. Munsen says there's more survival technique in his backyard than on the weekly television series - and he's not about to go into the woods today.

Roseanne Quinn of Dundonald saw an adult black bear on Tobacco Road in mid-June. On her way to work at 7:15 a.m., the bear was standing in the road and shuffled off to the ditch in its own

good time.

"They bounce," Ms. Quinn says of the bear's movement.

"Kinda like Tigger. I think the bear had been around for a while because there were paths of flat grass all around."

Unnerved by the close encounter, Ms. Quinn drove to the nearest residence, the home of Mario and Lisa Meekes a few hundred yards away, to alert the family.

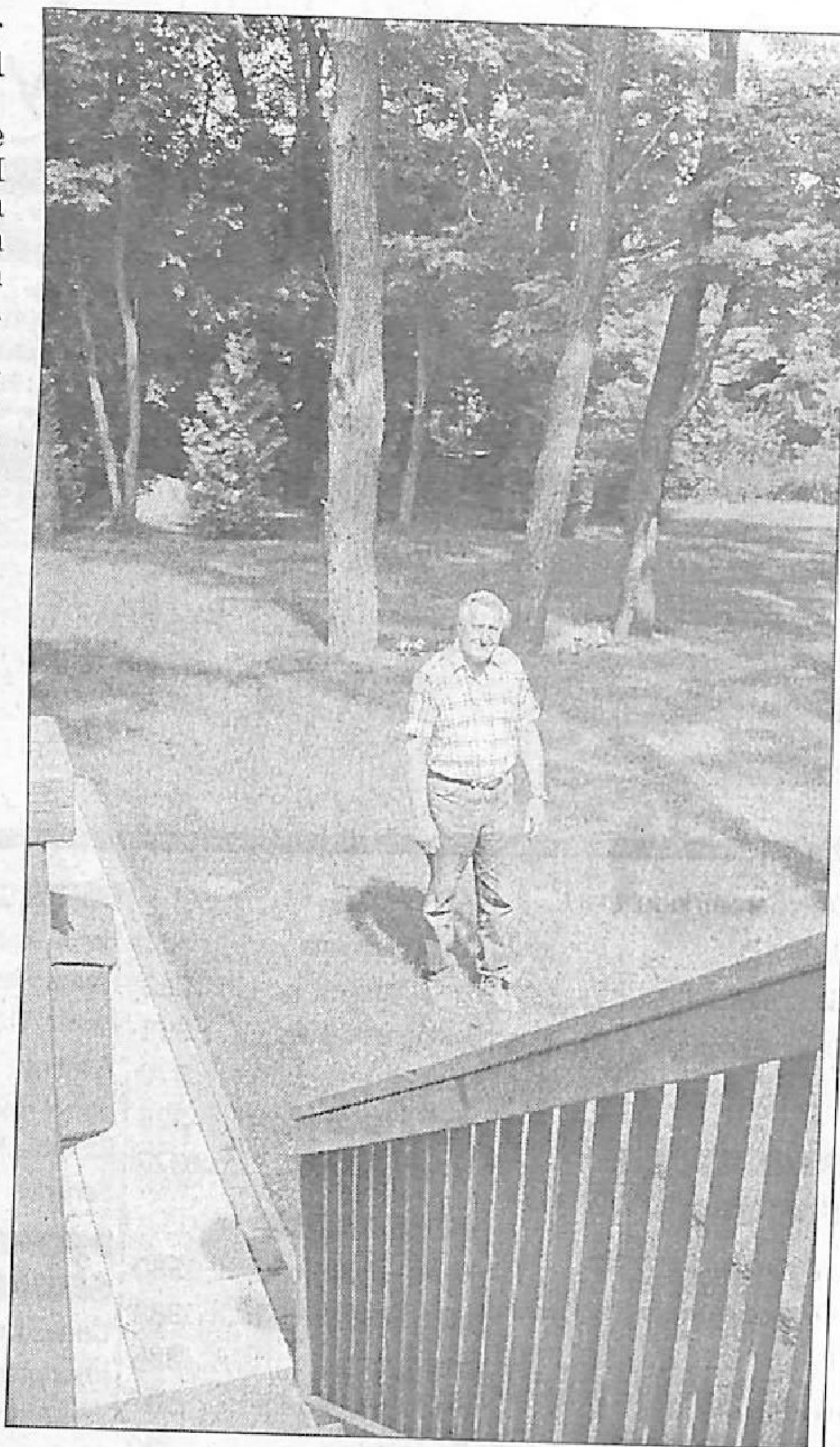


PHOTO BY MANDY MARTIN

Monty Munsen of Kelwood Drive stands at the exact location where he looked out to see a black bear sniffing the air in his back yard the evening of July 12.