

# "Elderhostel" a learning experience

By MAUREEN BROWNING  
A year ago I described two Elderhostel programs we attended, one in Newfoundland, another at Killarney, Ontario.

Since then we have attended two more of the six day interest filled "courses." One was at Timberlane Lodge on Manitoulin Island last September, the other the last week of June this year at Iqaluit (Frobisher Bay), Baffin Island, N.W.T. On Manitoulin Island we enjoyed hearing of the Anishnabe Heritage from an Indian historian, veteran of World War II and an Elder of his people. Included was a field trip to First Nation Points of Interest. "High on the Rocks" was a geological history of Manitoulin Island given by a congenial exploration mining man with a rare sense of humour. To round the program out, we had a wonderful retired English teacher who taught us about "writing memories" and entertained us with her own stories. Easy field trips and entertainment evenings were not to be missed. (Of course, you can rest up if you are willing to forego any activity). Meals were home style at the lodge and we were housed in comfortable cabins.

To get to Iqaluit, accessible only by air, we used up "frequent flyer" points accumulated from Wardair and British Airways. K.L.M. and Canadian International and associated "feeder" airlines also participate in this scheme. Air travel in the North is extremely expensive so this is a way to get to a distant "Elderhostel" to which you cannot drive or take a bus. The programs themselves cost about \$295.00 per person, including all meals, accommodation, activities, etc. Bag lunches are provided for outings.

Our courses at Iqaluit included lectures and field trips to do with the Inuit people, their culture and traditions; Iqaluit, the modern Arctic community; and the Arctic environment - flora and fauna,

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resources, marine life, travel and survival. The outings were fascinating and included an afternoon of food and fun with the Inuit elders at their beautiful seniors centre where we were introduced to Arctic chair, caribou roast and barbecued ribs, etc. For the adventurous gourmets there was a great supply of char fish heads and raw caribou. We were also introduced here to an ingenious Inuit "parlour" game, in which a half dozen participants attempt to impale a suspended, drilled, wooden target stick with a sort of brilliant cue. Very heated poking activity is accompanied by much squealing and hollering from participants and spectators alike.

This Elderhostel program was under the auspices of "Arctic College" of the Northwest Territories educational system. Our quarters were at the "Ukiivik" residence of the "Nunnata" campus. During the school year this is the home of Inuit High School and Community College students from Baffin Island settlements, hamlets and villages who are flown in and out each school season. Meals were excellent, comparable to any southern establishment's variety, and rich with fresh fruits and vegetables. Remarkable, when you consider that at the local stores you must pay four dollars for one litre of milk, two and a half dollars for a can of pork and beans, and three dollars for a dozen eggs. Everything here comes in by air or by yearly ships, laboriously unloaded on tidal flats.

On Baffin Island, you are not limited in your activities by a shortage of daylight - the sun merely dips below the horizon to give a short bright twilight period. Those who wished to go farther north did a charter flight to Pangnirtung in the mouth of a

spectacular fjord on Cumberland Sound. This smaller community provided a demonstration of Inuit crafts people at work on prints and weaving. Soapstone sculpture was of course available at all Inuit communities - I wouldn't call the crafts inexpensive, but they are beautifully done. We saw one artisan, dust-coated, playing his art in his front yard.

We met many interesting people here, native and imported, not the least intriguing being the Elderhostellers themselves; some from distance climes in Canada and the U.S.A., a few from up the road almost, one couple being from a Grand Valley farm. It is surprising how quickly you make new friends in such surroundings as you enjoy at Elderhostels. Next stop for us is Strathcona Park Lodge Elderhostel on Vancouver Island.

I mentioned the program cost. Fees are kept to a minimum but may still be beyond the means of many older adults. Limited assistance is available to help those people who cannot afford to attend Elderhostel.

Information on "Elderhostelships" (bursaries) is available from: Elderhostel Canada, 33 Prince Arthur Avenue, Suite 300, Toronto, Ontario M5R 1B2, as is other information.

Applications for programs are included in the quarterly issue of the program catalogue describing the offers for each season. Descriptions include locations, subject matter, fees, etc. The Elderhostel Canada system is covered in every aspect in the introductory pages. Just write to the above address to be included on this publication mailing list - no charge.

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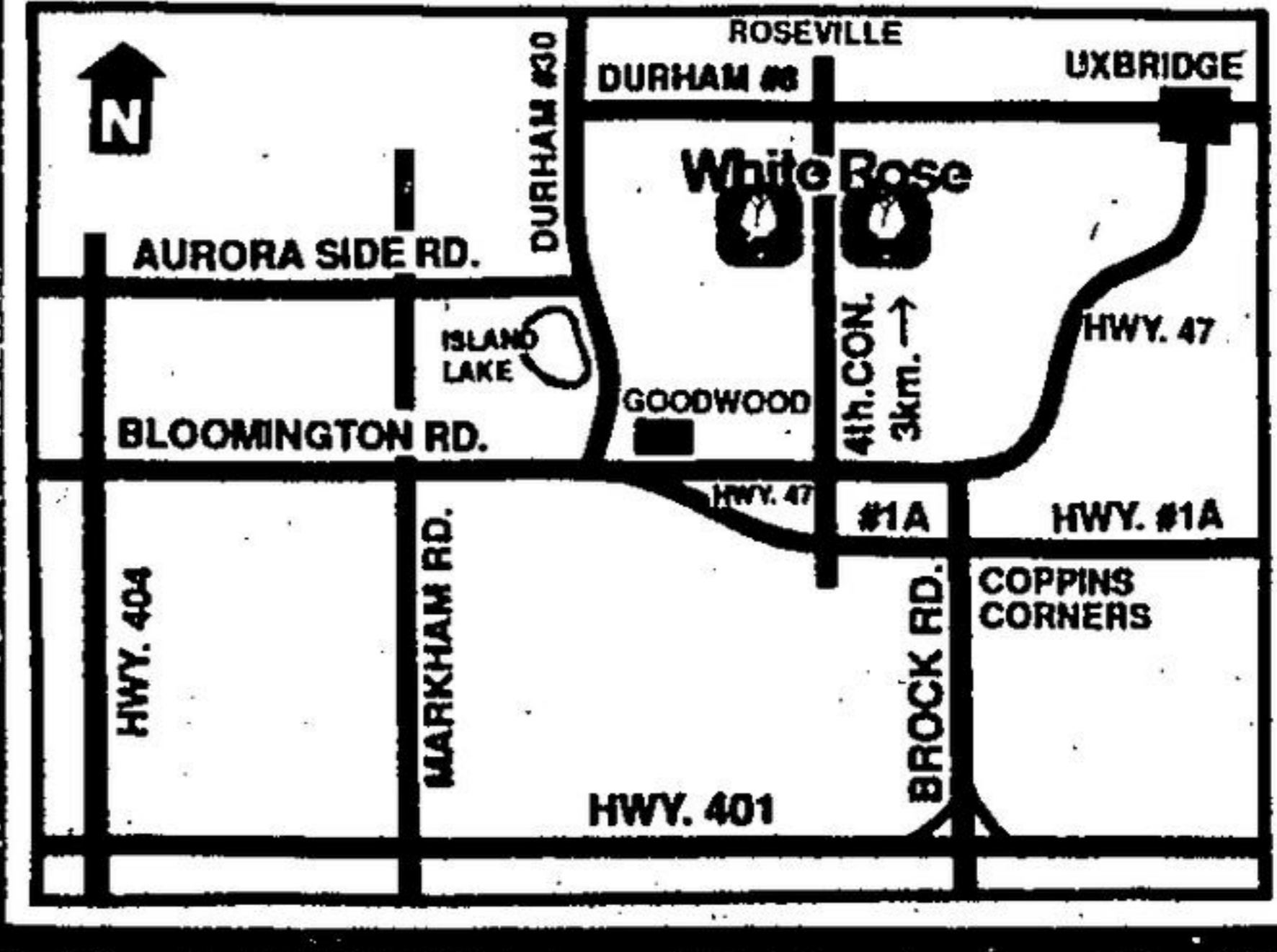
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