

Everyday Heroes

Dr. Clare Maine

BY DEBORAH QUAILE
ROCKWOOD & AREA

There are many excellent veterinarians in the area that will cater to both you and your pet, but one Rockwood woman works for the local wild population as well.

Dr. Clare Maine's office is bright and friendly. Clients are welcomed by the park-like setting with lush plants, rosy print curtains and borders, and a comfy bench to wait on. In the front window, a cage of birds sways gently as the merry inhabitants twitter to themselves, hopping from perch to perch. A large case of kittens and a crate of puppies await homes with deserving families. And a white monster of a cat placidly has his bath in a favourite sunny spot by the window.

But there's something else here, an underlying background noise that indicates a different sort of population. There's the chittering of raccoons awaiting rehabilitation, and the *caw* of Roger the crow, whom Dr. Maine is in the process of setting free. In the cage under Roger, a squirrel that was callously shot with a pellet is recuperating from surgery. Nearby, two infant skunks are carefully fed and nurtured until they can be released in the wild again.

"So far this summer 40 raccoons have been bottle fed. People stumble across us by accident; the animals we get are by word of mouth. So many of our volunteers are wonderfully giving, but I can't advertise our activities too widely or we'd be inundated. We've even had raccoons from Mississauga and Oakville."

The biggest challenge Dr. Maine faces is time; there is

never enough to do that little bit more. She has lived in Eramosa for several years, but previously worked in Stoney Creek. However, "the city community didn't feel right for me," she stated. Dr. Maine didn't enjoy it nearly as much and felt there was a need right in Rockwood for another practise.

And how has the area responded?

"The residents all have hearts of gold and are the most wonderful, comfortable people to work with," Dr. Maine beamed.

Rockwood Veterinary Clinic is a cheerful place for people and pets to visit, where the doctor loves each and every animal as if they were her own. They all receive a special pat, soothing words and sometimes a healthy biscuit to boot.

"Since about the age of ten, this was the only thing I wanted to do. I was always trying to fix things, and ease the animals' suffering. I always wanted to be a healer," Dr. Maine declared.

It's difficult to find a balance between letting the veterinary profession entirely run her life and carving out space for herself. One professional challenge is decision making; trying to impress upon the client which course of action would be in the best interest of themselves and their animal.

"You cannot be God but you take it very personally when things don't go right," she stated. "To avoid burnout I have to be totally focused on one job at a time, but then let go and move to something else."

As far as Dr. Maine's charity and volunteer work is concerned, she does "a little bit of everything and anything - no animal is less deserving of the effort than another. Some veterinarians don't chose to get involved unless they can produce a bill."

Dr. Maine does, however. She strongly believes in wildlife work and rehabilitation: giving back what we take away from nature. Ultimately, humans are responsible for the animal/car accidents, shootings, neglect or abuse.

"There are no rewards for ending a life, but the rewards for fixing them are enormous. You have to go out on a limb a little bit! There are a lot of people who will foster animals for me, and others who volunteer. I sponsor local events to help with the Upper Credit Humane Society fundraising. They have no paid staff, and any money raised goes straight to the animals."

Tish Lewis, who is Dr. Maine's Office Manager, is a breath of fresh air. Tish, known locally as the cat lady, originally fostered cats for the U.C.H.S. Unfortunately, their resources were limited so Tish decided to convert her garage to a cat shelter. Dr. Maine and other loyal volunteers do as much fundraising as they can for the cats in order to support the U.C.H.S. "no kill" policy. The cats may stay in the new shelter until adopted.

You would wonder how such a busy woman would even consider expansion, but obviously busy people are the ones that get things done.

"I have so many plans!" Dr. Maine said enthusiastically.

ly. "I'd like to start another clinic with the same philosophy as this one. I'd also like to start a small regional wildlife sanctuary, a place to send all our orphans. I just need more space to take care of them. It wouldn't be for long term stays, but short term recovery spans. A barn or something more natural would be a better setting. You can't, for example, expect a deer to come in the clinic with all the dogs and lose its fear of them temporarily. That's not natural for its return to the wild."

Dr. Maine pauses, considering the consequences.

"But I can't expand yet," she continued, "or we would be swamped. The practise has to finance what we do."

It's obvious that with a wealth of love, supportive volunteers and staff and more support from the locals, Dr. Clare Maine and Rockwood Veterinary Clinic will achieve all their goals. When there are sick, injured or homeless out there, they refuse to consider any other option.

You can reach Rockwood Veterinary Clinic by telephoning (519) 856-9002, or drop by at 179 Main Street South, Rockwood.



PHOTO BY DEBORAH QUAILE

A QUICK SNACK - Roger the crow takes a chip from Dr. Clare Maine, who operates a veterinary surgery in Rockwood that cares for both domestic and wild animals.

NASSAGAWEYA TIMES

BY CINDY LUNAU

CHURCHILL ESTATES: This major subdivision on the north east corner of Guelph Line and 15 Sideroad was first applied for in 1988 and approved in 1993. Construction will begin shortly. The Region is holding a meeting that also includes information on this development in conjunction with the widening and the reconstruction of the Guelph Line in this area at the Nassagaweya Community Hall on Thursday, August 6th from 5-8 p.m.

TENNIS COURTS: Play will be interrupted briefly while the courts are resurfaced. Community memberships are always available. Call club president Jean Falls (878-9220) or membership chairman Lori Hand (856-4069).

MILTON TRIATHLON: Congratulations to Nassagaweya athletes in the

annual Milton Triathlon in July. Harry Barnes (who also helped organize the event) placed first in the men's 50-54 age class and 13th overall. Charlie Barnes (no relation) placed first in the seniors' class. Other local competitors were Calvin and Janice Snow.

MOHAWK: The multitude of cars at the racetrack in June and July were not an early opening, but a temporary holding site for Chrysler cars, since shipped onward.

RECYCLING: Confusion followed the moving of the Brookville recycling igloos from the Guelph Line to the parking lot behind the Nassagaweya Community Centre. The adjacent garbage bin intended to hold refuse from the Hall was soon overfilled and spilling over causing a great problem. This bin has now been removed.

CAMPBELLVILLE CRASH: On a personal note: It was déjà vu as I heard reports of the Campbellville Train Crash. During the infamous Mississauga Train Derailment in 1979, I was in the Oakville Hospital after Andrea's birth. We were sent home early to make room for possible emergency admissions. As the stand-in Mayor of Milton for June, I wondered if I'd be called upon for emergency measures, as Hazel had done in 1979. Not necessary. The Police and Fire department along with emergency response teams from the Region, M.O.E.E and CP quickly had the situation in hand. Twelve fire fighters from Campbellville Station Two joined Milton Central to admirably handle the diesel spill and ensure the safety of the village and cleanup crew.



PHOTO BY CINDY LUNAU

WILD CATS: Mild mannered Milton Councillors had no chance as the Bengal Critters from Brookville Public School invaded Council Chambers to explain their participation and the need for a new playground adjacent to the Brookville Ball Diamonds. Doug Thompson from Leisure Services introduced students Tom Wilson, Brendan Lange, Cohn Martin and Katherine Harder. Construction on the Playground will take place this month.

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