

Senior spotlight on Ruth Burke

This week I am writing about a lady who never seems to stop knitting. When ever I see Ruth Burke, if she is sitting still, she had knitting needles in her hand making gloves, or little pneumonia vests.

Ruth's parents traveled many miles to make Canada their home. Her mother Rose was born in Poland, and came to Toronto as a child in 1913. Her father Morris came from Rumania as a child and settled in Hamilton with his parents in 1913.

They met in Port Credit. Ruth's mothers parents moved to California when she was 19, and Ruth's father followed them. They married in California, and lived there for one year before returning to Toronto.

Ruth was born in Toronto and during her birth her mother became paralyzed. This meant Ruth's grandparents had to look after Ruth and her mother until her mother recovered which took two years, although her mother's hip bothered her all her life, and she had to have a hip replacement.

Ruth has two younger sisters and two younger brothers and they live in Toronto, Oakville and Burlington.

Ruth grew up in Oakville and attended Oakville High School. Two days after graduating Ruth started her first job working in an office where she remained for two years.

Her father already had a business, Burk's Salvage which sold used car parts. He decided to expand and open a new business selling new car parts.

Ruth had two weeks holiday and during this time she helped him organize and stock the shelves. As a child, she had helped him with invoicing and paper work, so she decided to carry on working for her father's company, which is where she remained until she retired.

The scrap yard business belonged to Ruth's grandfather originally, and was later sold. It was situated where the Oakville bus station is now.

Ruth's mother was diabetic so Ruth accompanied her to the hospital and became interested in diabetes. She was on the Board for the Canadian Diabetic Association in Oakville for 23 years, and on the Ontario Diabetic Board, which was located in London, for one year. She would have remained on the Ontario Board longer, but found the driving tiring.

For 10 years she wrote a

weekly column on Diabetes for the Oakville Beaver. She found it challenging to do the research and come up with something informative and different every week.

She has always enjoyed sports and played first base on baseball teams for 20 years, and she bowled and played basketball.

She was also secretary treasurer for Shaarei Beth El her synagogue in Oakville for eight years, and was one of the three people who wrote and edited "Shofar", the monthly newsletter.

Ruth tells me she, one sister and one brother are the last of the founding members of the Synagogue which was built in 1952.

She has always enjoyed knitting and started during the war, knitting for the Red Cross. She knitted numerous sweaters, helmets etc; She still knits for the Catholic church in Oakville, making pneumonia vest for children in Africa and India, where the days may be hot, but the nights can be cold.

Plus she knits slippers, toques and sweaters for orphaned children in Siberia which are shipped by a Pentecostal church in Milton. She tells me she has knitted 1,800 articles for this project alone. Ruth tells me this project has recently been cancelled, due to the increased cost of shipping.

Many people have been generous and donated wool for her knitting projects.

Since moving to Acton, she has become very interested in Auctions. I asked her what specifically she was looking for and she said, "Everything interested me!"

Ruth has traveled extensively, visiting Mexico, South Africa, Israel, and three times to Switzerland. She has driven from east

June is Seniors' Month **Celebrating Our Seniors**
The New Tanner is proud to feature seniors each week this month

visited back and forth several times a week over all the years.

Ruth Burk is another very busy Acton Seniors

Centre member who is still very busy volunteering and helping make lives better for many underprivileged children.



Ruth with her grand-niece Madeline.



Ruth as a young girl visiting grandparents in California.

Waiting for a ride home from the Seniors Centre.

to west in Canada and the USA, but the trip she most enjoyed was a three-week cruise of the Black Sea and Mediterranean, which visited ports in Russia, Turkey, Greece Italy and Bulgaria.

She has had her left hip replaced three times. The first time in 1994 which only lasted one month, resulting in her hip dislocating six times, this meant a second hip replacement. Thankfully, the third time in 2007, seems to have been very successful.

Ruth joined the Acton Seniors Centre in 1993, and since then has organized the Rama trips and helped run the Thursday afternoon Bid Euchre games. She also worked at the desk for many years.

You might wonder what made Ruth move to Acton. She tells me that when she was deciding to move from

Oakville, her lifelong friend of 65 years told her if she was moving, she should consider Acton. She helped Ruth get her apartment. Ruth was Maid of Honour at her wedding, and is still part of the family for all family occasions. They had always

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United Way of Halton Hills

The United Way of Halton Hills will hold its Annual General Meeting on Tuesday, June 29th, 2010 at 7pm at Roxy Coffee House, 6 Mill Street, Acton.

Join us as we review our accomplishments over the past year and pay tribute to the Champions who helped us surpass our 2009 Campaign goal!
Elections of the 2010/2011 Board of Directors will take place.

Come out and learn about the programs of Food for Life, one of our funded agencies.

For more information, please contact the United Way of Halton Hills office at 905 877-3066.

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