

# Physiotherapist working solo at hospital

(This is another in a continuing series of articles on the McCausland Hospital in Terrace Bay.)

By Conrad Felber

Wendy Biberhofer has been the sole physiotherapist at McCausland Hospital in Terrace Bay for several

months now, but she feels confident that help will be coming soon.

"It's been a challenge," she admitted. Normally there are two full time physiotherapists at the hospital, but ever since coming to Terrace Bay in January, Biberhofer has been on

her own. "It certainly makes for a full day," she joked.

Biberhofer is originally from a small town near Hamilton, and trained at Mohawk College and McMaster University, where she graduated in December last year.

She had worked at McCausland Hospital for six weeks on a placement work experience program last year before graduating, and found Terrace Bay to be a "really friendly place," which is why she returned when she learned of a vacancy in the physiotherapy unit.

Since arriving, she has been very busy and is hoping a second therapist is hired soon, though she said she realizes that good physiotherapists are hard to come by. Hospital officials have looked for one from as far away as England.

Until help arrives, she will continue to work as she has. Biberhofer explained that a physiotherapist's job usually involves pain relief, increase in strength, and/or increase in mobility for some patients.

To do that, she uses the full range of equipment available in her department, which ranges from hot wax used on the hands and feet of arthritic patients for pain relief, to the new Orthotron unit, which a number of large hospitals in Ontario still don't have.

The Orthotron, like a lot of the other equipment, is used to help patients increase their strength after sustaining an injury in their limbs. The local Legion and Kinsmen branches helped to purchase that piece, she noted.

The Physiotherapy Department also has its own small whirlpool for pain reduction, plus an exercise bike, an ultra-pulsator, slings and pulleys for strength and mobility, and an ultrasound unit, used to reduce inflammation, swelling, and pain.

"We try to bring people back to the level of health they had (before) the accident or disease," she said. "We mainly see out-patients with injuries sustained in sports, at the mill, or at CP Rail. We also treat a lot of back and shoulder injuries."

She explained that patients first have to see their own doctor before they can visit her department. "Then I can do an assessment of their problem," she added.

A typical problem might be a stiff knee following the removal of a cast. "Our main goal is to return people to their pre-injury status," she stressed.

For in-patients, those who are having an extended stay at the hospital, Biberhofer said her department's emphasis is not usually on muscles, but on chest problems, like pneumonia or bronchitis.

"We might get someone who had a heart attack and then they develop pneumonia as well," she said.

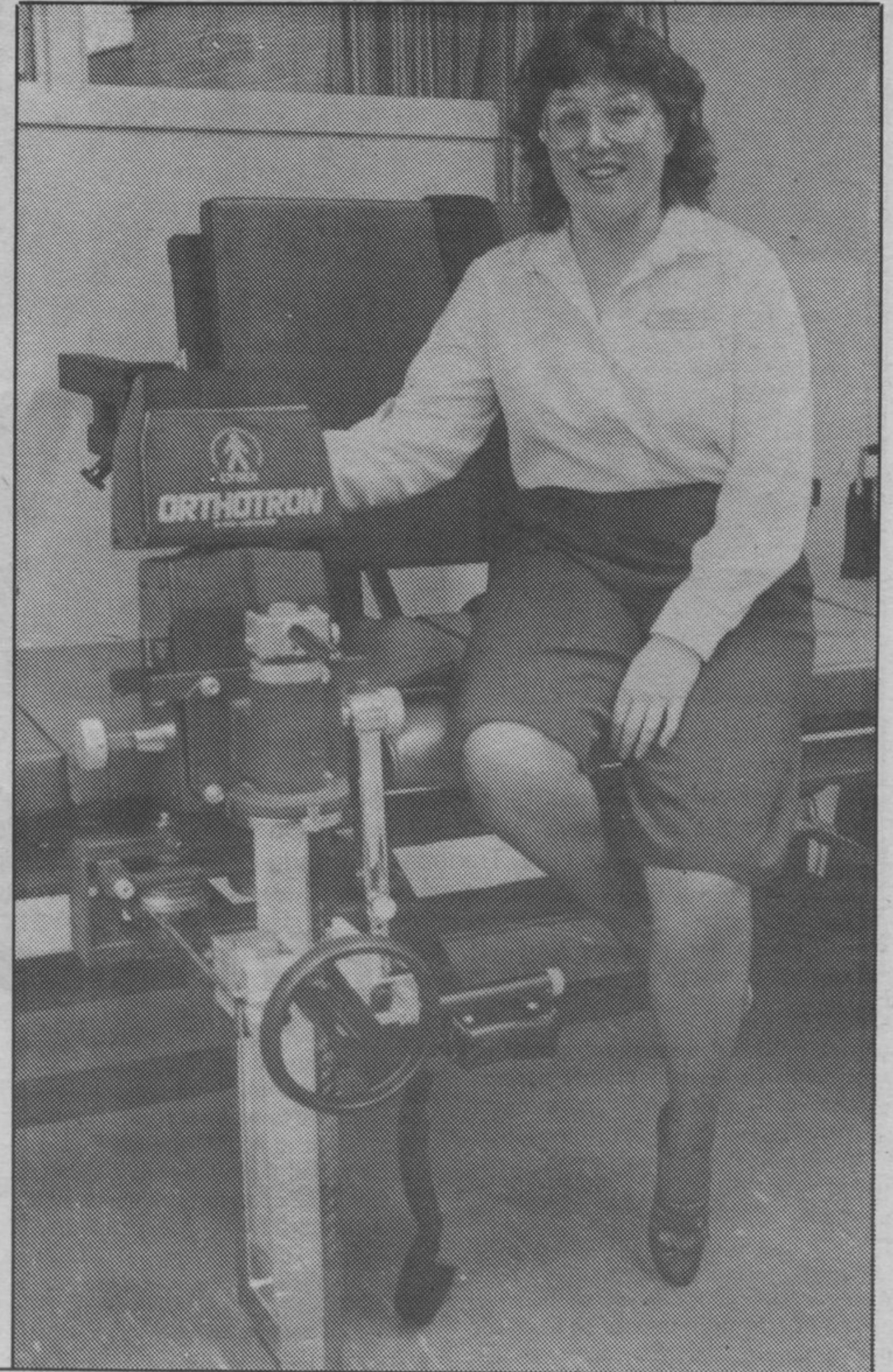
Chest physiotherapy has a whole regime of its own, she said. In fact, she is planning to attend a course this week in Hamilton to learn more about that aspect of her training, which already includes a Bachelor of Health Sciences in Physiotherapy degree.

Her department also includes a Home Care Program, in which she makes house calls with a home care nurse present as well.

"This would be for people who have had strokes but they are well enough to be able to stay at home," she explained. The program is also there for elderly people not living in nursing homes or in the hospital.

Biberhofer said her job is made easier by the "first rate" equipment she is able to use at the hospital.

"Size-wise and equipment-wise, we are better than some hospitals, or at least as good as some others," she said.



**Therapy Unit**

There are some large hospitals in Ontario which do not have a physiotherapy department as well-equipped as the one at the McCausland Hospital in Terrace Bay, according to Wendy Biberhofer, the physiotherapist at the hospital. She is shown here beside the department's new Orthotron unit, which cannot be found at many other hospitals. The Orthotron is used primarily for strengthening and isokinetic exercises.

## Police Report

A local resident has been charged with assault under the Criminal Code and will appear in Provincial Court on Dec. 3, according to a release from the Terrace Bay Police Force.

The victim in the incident, as a result of his being threatened, has also applied for a peace bond to be issued under the Criminal Code, the release added.

Terrence Bay Police also assisted the Schreiber OPP detachment earlier this month with one vehicle accident and investigated two others, both involving damage over \$1,000.

The Nov. 10 release added that three thefts over the past two weeks were also investigated by police. The value of stolen material in all incidents was under \$1,000.

After investigating a complaint of a stolen automobile, the culprit was apprehended and charged with taking a car without consent under the Criminal Code. The individual is to

appear in Provincial Court on Dec. 3.

Several bicycles were once again reported missing. Some have been recovered, and three bicycles which were found have not yet been claimed.

Due to weather conditions on Nov. 7, police were requested to assist OPP with road blocks closing the highway between Terrace Bay and Marathon.

Over the past weekend, the Terrace Bay Police were asked to assist at the McCausland Hospital regarding a disturbed person who was being violent and had to be restrained.

Also on the weekend, police were called to assist in removing an unwanted person from a private residence. On arrival, all was found to be in order, and no further action was required.

Assistance with traffic control was given by police on Saturday for the Remembrance Day Parade.

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