

**Schreiber**

**Community counts for Citizen of the Year**

By Rob Cotton  
The News

It was a touching experience for Maxine Johnson when she was named Schreiber's Citizen of the Year at the Township party in December.

Maxine said she was too busy trying to guess who would be honored to realize it was her name being called.

"My husband was shaking me saying 'That's you,'" she said.

"It's a humbling experience. You don't expect anything and suddenly there you are."

Mike Cosgrove, Reeve of Schreiber Township said the award is given each year to the citizen whose efforts truly make Schreiber a better community to live in.

The Township presented Maxine with an inscribed silver plate to mark the occasion.

Maxine came to Schreiber about 10 years ago, from Saskatchewan, with her husband, James, when he took up his duties as Pastor of Grace Baptist Church.

As well her duties at the church, which include the book-keeping, Maxine supervises the children at Schreiber Public School during the lunch hour.

She also spends a lot of her time helping seniors in the community.

She is now helping a woman who has been hospitalized by a stroke - looking after paperwork and helping her



**Maxine Johnson -Schreiber's Citizen of the Year**

keep in touch with her family.

Maxine is also helping to care this woman's brother, going to his home on a daily basis to clean up at the supper hour and prepare things for the morning.

"I can always find something to do," Maxine said, "If I'm not out I can find things to do at home."

She often rides in the ambulance with people on the way to the hospital.

"It's a hard job in that you know the people well enough that you care about them like family," she said.

Maxine said she was totally surprised at being named Schreiber's Citizen of the Year.

"I never expected anything like this to come of it [her work in the community]," she said, "You do what needs to be done and try to keep up your end when someone needs help," she said.

**Northern Insights**

**Image problem in North**

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what the marketing people call "an image problem". It's obviously a serious one. Take for example this quote from a young person who is now in the south:

"Once we get there, we find it is no better than northern Ontario...many of us stay, just because if you go back north, people think there is something wrong with you".

In other words, the perception is there, whether it's true or not, that if you want to really "make it" in life, you have to "make it" in the south - that somehow, establishing a career in the north is second class. The young people also make it clear that they don't WANT to leave the north. Some even dream of coming back someday - if there were more jobs:

"The north offers many things to all of us. Hopefully, employment conditions will improve so that many young people will be able to remain in the area of that is their wish."

George Doxey, one of the report's co-authors, told the Northern Development Councils at their annual meeting in Thunder Bay, where the report was released, not to ignore what the young people were saying. "You may not agree with the factual basis of their conclusions, but you should listen nonetheless. We

are dealing here with perceptions as much as we are with reality."

The report does not downplay the importance of economic factors, like job offers from southern Ontario recruiters or the lack of career prospects in the north. But the major reasons for leaving northern Ontario cited by the young people were NOT purely economic. "Lifestyle of destination", or "education opportunities" were cited nearly twice as often as purely economic motives for moving, like "limited employment in the north" or limited prospects in the north".

On the question of educational opportunities, those who run our northern universities and community colleges should sit up and take notice of what the young people are saying in this report. The young people said that in order to get a quality post-secondary education, they had to go to an educational institution in the south. Somehow our northern colleges and universities are "second rate". Now it is true we don't have a medical school in the north, or a law school. But if you want to do regular undergraduate work in the arts or science faculties, who says southern universities are better? Is it a better education when you're in a class of 250 in Toronto, and the profes-

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**False perception about education in the North**

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problem in people's perception about the quality of education in the north.

"The students are getting the idea that education facilities in the south are superior those in the north," she said.

She described this false perception as a great disadvantage.

"If you take people out of the north to go to school there is a much greater chance that they will stay out of the north," she said.

"If you educate them in the north there is much greater chance they'll stay here."

The report points to statistics which show a net loss of 25,000 young people, ages 15-24, from the region between 1981 and 1986 - 15 per cent of the total population in that age

group during those years.

It confirms the widely-held view that most young people leave the north for employment and career opportunities.

However the report also stresses the importance of other factors such as opportunities for education, a more urban lifestyle, climate and social pressures.

Northern Development Minister Shelley Martel said that the provincial government will attempt to address the problem of limited job opportunities in a number of ways.

As an example, Martel explained that a summer employment program has been overhauled to put greater emphasis on job training and skills development.

"Even northerners have a

bad perception of the north...we found in the migration report that there was a very negative image about Northern Ontario," Martel said.

"There's a lot of hard things happening - I don't disagree - but there are a lot of good things that could be done."

The Northern Development Councils used a combination of community forums and detailed surveys to collect the data for the report.

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