

Conservation authority gets new name

For the third time in its 35 years of operation, the South Lake Simcoe Conservation Authority has altered its name.

An order of Council dated July 9, 1986, approved the official change to Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority.

Established in 1951, it was originally known as the Upper Holland Valley Conservation Authority. In 1960, the Authority's area of jurisdiction was enlarged and it was renamed the Holland Valley Conservation Authority.

It expanded again in 1970 and was renamed the South Lake Simcoe Conservation Authority.

More growth occurred in 1974 and 1978 but the name remained the same.

This most recent change was adopted to reflect the Authority's coverage area. Approximately two-thirds of Lake Simcoe and 2,612 square kilometres of land that drains into the lake are served by the Authority.

Watercolor exhibition

A showing of recent watercolor paintings by Stouffville artist James Bessey begins at Latham Gallery on Thursday, Sept. 11.

Mr. Bessey will be present for the 8 p.m. opening and he'll also be on hand Sept. 13, 20 and 27 from 1 to 4 p.m. The exhibition continues until Oct. 2.

Latham Gallery is located at 65 Main Street West, Stouffville. Regular hours are Sunday, noon to 4 p.m.; Tuesday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; closed Monday.

Local man in high-profile role

By PAULA CROWELL
Staff Reporter

He works in one of the least respected professions in the country. Markham's Rod McLeod is a government bureaucrat.

Since taking on the post of Deputy Minister of the Environment for the province of Ontario, the married father of three children spends more of his time sitting behind a desk or in meetings, but he wasn't always an office man.

During the early '70s Mr. McLeod was Chief Prosecutor for the Province of Ontario. He headed up the Crown's case in the longest running criminal jury trial in Canada. The Hamilton Harbour dredging case began with charges against a harbor commissioner of defrauding the public.

The commissioner and another individual were accused of taking bribes from a dredging company. Further evidence in court revealed that all the major marine construction companies were involved in rigging bids on contracts for marine construction work over a period of several years.

In all, eight companies and 12 individuals were charged with offences involving fraud in Ontario and Quebec.

"It was the first case in Canada where the chairman of the board and company president were charged with such offences," Mr. McLeod recalled.

Although the case began in 1973, appeals were still being heard until 1980.

White collar crime

For almost 12 years Mr. McLeod spent most of his time in court specializing in the prosecution of white collar crime and fraud cases.

In 1982 he was asked to transfer from the attorney general's to the solicitor general's office. His re-

sponsibilities as Deputy Solicitor General were law enforcement and public safety.

He remained there until after the fall of the Big Blue Machine. Following the Liberal party takeover in May, 1985, Mr. McLeod was appointed by Premier David Peterson to Deputy Minister of the Environment.

The tall, strapping man said as deputy he works closely with the Minister, James Bradley, but is responsible to the Premier who appointed him.

He and Mr. Peterson were classmates in law school. When the new Premier had his first meetings with his deputies, Mr. McLeod's was one of only a few familiar faces.

His modesty shone through when asked why he was appointed to such a high-profile ministry.

"I guess the reason he asked me to go there was a reflection of the fact that not only are there a number of new legal enforcements in environmental protection but also ongoing negotiations with the United States and individual companies," he said.

Law specialist

But while he's well versed on law, he came into the ministry green on environmental matters.

Learning the basics about acid rain and other pollutants has occupied many of his reading hours. But the focus of his job is on legal matters.

"It's not the same kind of legal work I was doing before, but it's not unlike what some lawyers do," he explained.

Much of his time is spent dealing with firms which may be polluting the environment. He meets with their key players and tries to persuade them to make any changes necessary which would reduce pollution levels.

The technical end of the minis-

try is left in the hands of scientists who have that mastery.

"This place is full of PhDs and they were really impressed with my 1960 Grade 13 chemistry," he laughed.

He's confident in their skills and would never second guess them, he said. Besides, he has other things to do with his time. During the busy months, while the legislature is in session, he estimates his work week as between 60 and 80 hours a week.

Proper balance

The Weekender asked Mr. McLeod about a reported rift between him and the Environment Minister. The new minister has taken a gung-ho approach to environmental protection which ministry staff may not be accustomed to.

"We can have a strong, effective environmental protection program without crippling industry. The question is striking the proper balance," was his response.

"We tell them (industry) what we think should be done and ask how they think that can best be achieved," he explained.

The deputy's position is that everyone should have input into pollution regulations, including public interest groups, some of which he said have considerable expertise.

Mr. McLeod has a philosophy about his job, which he says comes with the territory.

"I keep myself (organized) so I could leave in a month (if he had to). There's always a risk of being placed in a position where you're asked to compromise your public service."

He said he has had close calls, but that politicians know he won't compromise his position.

"If you're known to operate that way it gives you a degree of



ROD MCLEOD
Deputy Minister

independence from the political process," he explained adding that he's never been asked to act in a way which he thinks would be against the public interest.

"Frustrated athlete

Any time left over for the man who describes himself as a "frustrated middle-aged athlete," is spent playing hockey and squash in the winter and golf and tennis in the summer. While his new office is in midtown Toronto, he is a founding member of the Friday Afternoon Train Society (FATS) for Markham businessmen who commute to Union Station by train.

Mr. McLeod is a trustee and member of the executive of the Markham Stouffville Hospital Board and sits on the board of directors of Big Brothers of Toronto.

He is also co-author of a regularly updated legal textbook used by law firms and schools.



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