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**20 years**  
Muskoka Furniture  
has evolved and  
grown over the years.  
*See p. 11*

**Historic Duke  
building sold**  
Purchaser is  
Butson's Boat Shop.  
*See p. 3*



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# NORTH COUNTRY BUSINESS

October 2011

Muskoka's Business Newspaper Since 1997

## Plastics plant producing



**BIG PLANS:** Owner Rick Struthers looks over the product at the recently opened True North Plastics on E.P. Lee Drive in Bracebridge. See story on page 7.

## CHRIS LUND Deerhurst GM is returning

Deerhurst Resort looked to its past when choosing a new general manager.

Chris Lund held the very same title 13-years ago and is returning to Deerhurst to take command of the ship.

While many things will be the same, it will take time to familiarize himself with the resort and its many staff. With over 750-acres of land, 405 rooms, two golf courses, a private air strip and much more, it won't happen quickly.

Still, the man who spent seven years as the general manager at Deerhurst already has the homecoming feeling.

"Coming back to Deerhurst for interviews was a bit déjà vu," Lund said in a press release. "The hotel has evolved a great deal, but many of the team I knew are still here."

Having spent nearly 30 years in the Canadian hotel industry, most recently as regional vice president of operations for all of Delta's Ontario hotels and as general manager of Delta Toronto East, Lund brings a lifetime of experience to the Deerhurst role. Lund also worked at the Royal York and New Brunswick's Algonquin Resort.

An active member in business and community organizations, Lund is a former Huntsville minor hockey coach who is looking forward to a special winter event.

*LUND - p. 12*

## Gravenhurst brewery planned

By Matt Driscoll

As Niagara is known for its wine, Muskoka is becoming increasingly known for its beer.

The Muskoka Brewery in Bracebridge, and Lake of Bays Brewing Company in Baysville will soon be joined by the Sawdust City Brewery Co. at the Muskoka Wharf in Gravenhurst.

"I love the culture of beer," says owner Sam Corbeil. "It's a social drink and it brings people together. I love the history of it and the making of it."

Corbeil and business partner Rob Engman have purchased a plot of land at the west end of the Muskoka Wharf in Gravenhurst located between Grace and Speed, and Zensations Emporium.

The pair have plans to build a brewery on the site next year with an adjacent two story tied house. The tied house is essentially an attached restaurant, with the second storey reserved as an events space.

Sawdust City's initial plans include the production of a line of

five Muskoka-themed beers.

Golden Beach Pale Wheat is a hoppy, American wheat beer with citrus flavours, and Lone Pine IPA is a west coast-style India Pale Ale.

Skinny Dipping Stout is a chocolate flavoured oatmeal stout, while Gateway Klosch is a German-style lager ale.

"The gateway to Muskoka is Gravenhurst and we figured it would be a nice, easy-drinking beer that might get people into craft beer drinking," says Corbeil.

*NEW BREWERY - p. 12*

**Celebrating Small Business Week – see p. 8 - 10**



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**MUSKOKA MILESTONE:** Muskoka Furniture owners Todd and Iris Jones (right) celebrate with plaza owners John and Gisela Jurgeneit.

## Muskoka Furniture celebrates 20 years

By Matt Driscoll

Over the past two decades Todd Jones has seen it all: changing trends, financial ups and downs, and a fire that left him wondering if he would ever open his doors again.

Through it all, Muskoka Furniture has continued to succeed, and this year they celebrate 20 years at their Wellington Street location in Bracebridge.

"It certainly doesn't seem like 20 years," says Jones, the owner of Muskoka Furniture.

The store was a much different place when Jones opened in the fall of 1991 out of a small retail location in the Wellington St. plaza owned by his father-in-law.

"We didn't start off by selling furniture," says Jones. "Twenty years ago we were buying bankrupt stock from the city. We sold everything from books and movies to clothes. We had no idea what it was going to evolve into."

The store, then known as Muskoka Price Outlet, gradually shifted its focus towards furniture. Jones and his wife Iris, who is the co-owner, found their goods met a niche market for cottagers in particular.

Nonetheless, their momentum came to screeching halt on the Victoria Day weekend in 1998

*"It certainly doesn't seem like 20 years"*

when a fire razed their entire stock.

"It was the worst possible day to lose our business... right before the summer," he recalls. "I thought it was over. The only reason we were able to come back is because our insurance served us well."

Since then the store has thrived, growing from

1,000 sq/ft to 11,000 sq/ft, including a warehouse on Keith Rd. The store now employs five full time and three part time staff, in addition to three summer staff.

The store's primary focus is on handmade, high-quality Mennonite furniture.

"It can be a bit more challenging because it's not just a matter of making a phone call and placing an order... but there are no manufacturers that build this kind of stuff," says Jones. "Most of the imported stuff doesn't have that rustic or cottagey look. Plus, it's nice that our retail sales fund local manufacturing."

Muskoka Furniture remains heavily involved in the community, supporting sports teams and the local hospital.

They also host an annual Thanksgiving celebration that has seen them give away more than 1,000 turkeys.

## Couple creates hot rod heaven in Huntsville

By Chris Occhiuzzi

The hot rod and rockabilly lifestyle is the focus of Huntsville Hot Rod.

While searching for a Christmas gift for his dad, Reg Garnett and his wife Debbie Cameron came up with the idea for the new retail store.

The couple were having trouble finding a unique gift item that stood out from the norm.

In response, Garnett and Cameron opened a shop which caters to the Hot Rod lifestyle for all ages.

"We just threw this idea around and did the 'wouldn't it be cool...if,'" says Garnett. "The concept just sort of grew from there. It's really about a lifestyle that includes kids and family...because we have a big family too. You can get everything from a T-shirt to a nice high-end print for the office."

There are model cars, poodle skirts, bowling shirts and many memorabilia to choose from. Plus, at the back of the Main Street shop is a tattoo parlour for those aged 18 and older.

"Basically, it's wrapped around the lifestyle of hot rod and rockabilly," says Garnett, whose daughter Rebecca works there on weekends. "So, it caters to people who are into hot



**ROCKABILLY RETAIL:** Reg Garnett's shop has everything from fine prints to t-shirts.

rods, custom cars and the paraphernalia that goes along with it – which includes tattoos."

Kevin Newman and Brandon Gilpin are the tattoo artists for the parlour, which has been inspected and approved by the health board.

"We're definitely different from what everybody else has," says Garnett. "You might see something new. It's fun even to just come in and talk about cars or rock 'n roll."

Even before the retail shop and tattoo parlour came to be, Huntsville Hot Rod operated a body shop just outside of town for the past year.

Custom cars, many for

shows, from the 1920s to 1970, are in the shop.

"We do some stuff for customers that people don't want seen until it's done," says Garnett. "So, there's that privacy factor as well. Some cars are built for shows, and if there's a picture that gets out on the Internet of a car before the show, then the car could be disqualified if it's a first-time show."

Garnett said members of the public often want to stop by the shop and see what's in the works, and he is more than happy to oblige.

"They just give me a call and I'll cover those cars up and be happy to let people come on through," he says,

## Hair N There helps food bank

By Chris Occhiuzzi

Elizabeth's Hair N There celebrated their new location's grand opening in a charitable manner by collecting donations for the Table Food Bank.

Thanks to several local businesses offering gift certificates and other prizes, Elizabeth's was able to place these items in balloons and allow each person donating a non-perishable food item to pop a balloon and receive the gift inside.

"We got quite a bit of food and dropped it off at the Table Food Bank," says owner Elizabeth Groomes.

After operating on Huntsville's Main St. for 16 years, Elizabeth's made the move to their new location

on Chaffey Street May 1 but chose Sept. 10 as their grand opening date.

"We're for the most part hometown girls and boys here and we found the summer is really busy for everyone," says Groomes. "So, we wanted everyone to be able to come and have time to enjoy themselves."

But, it's not just Elizabeth's Hair N There salon offering services to customers. Wayne Baker runs Baker's Barber Shop in one part of the main floor, while Dianne Young's Transformations Massage and Terry Moore's Terry's Nails and Pedicures have space upstairs.

It was an opportunity too good to pass for Groomes.

The chance to offer not only all her skills as a hair stylist, but all the other services as well, made moving to the new location a no-brainer.

And the new digs have been a hit with their loyal clientele.

"They love our new location, because we have lots of parking that they don't have to pay for," says Groomes.

"They love the ramp that we have and they love the beautiful atmosphere in here. It's a lot prettier than our last location. There's a lot more room and a lot more services, so they can just come here and spend the whole day if they wanted and get all beautiful."