

Wesley Oram's grandson and family comment further on HH's Lookout Park plaque reinstatement]



By Mike Riley

Local Journalism initiative Reporter

A few weeks ago, Bancroft This Week wrote about the Municipality of Hastings Highlands initiative to replace a plaque commemorating the donation of Lookout Park to the municipality by Wesley Oram back in 1967. This week, Oram's grandson Jason and his family provide more details about their grandfather and what prompted his donation of the land to HH over 50 years ago that became Lookout Park.

The Municipality of Hastings Highlands council received a report from clerk Suzanne Huschilt at their planning meeting on Nov. 2 about placing a replacement commemorative plaque at Lookout Park. This plaque would recognize the park's donation to the municipality by Wesley Bennett Oram back in 1967, to provide everyone, residents and visitors alike, with views of Kamaniskeg Lake.

Jason Oram says that his family is happy and proud to have this honour being reinstated and that it has been far too long since the original plaque went missing.

‘Things have been said over the years about replacing it but time has just slipped by all of us. I started this process over twenty years ago and time has just kept on moving and recent life events in our family have made it rise to the forefront of what needed to be done. My cousins were happy to hear of the replacement and look forward to seeing it complete. I am truly happy that my father was able to hear about the replacement before his passing. His smile meant everything to us during his final days,’ he says.

As to why his grandfather donated the land to HH that would become Lookout Park, Oram says that his grandfather was a true outdoor person, working the land and living off all things that it would provide.

‘He was an avid hunter and angler. He was also president of the conservation authority for 15 years and continued to be a returning officer the years following. In 1932, he ran a tourist resort on Kamaniskeg Lake called Sand Bay Camp with my grandmother. My uncle Wes Oram took it over back in the early seventies and ran it until he sold it a few years ago. Owning this property on the lake he loved so much inspired him to donate the parcel of land in 1967, now known as Lookout Park, so that all future generations would have a beautiful view of the lake,’ he says.

Huschilt told Bancroft This Week on Nov. 2 that Hastings Highlands council is looking forward to replacing the Oram plaque.

?[It] will bring completion to the project at Lookout Park. The gazebo has recently been installed and it looks fantastic together with the pebble mosaic. We need to order [the plaque] and it may take up to six weeks, so we're not sure it will get into the ground before the frost,? she says.

Whenever the ceremony occurs to have the plaque installed, Oram says that he and some of his family will be there for it.

?Whenever the municipality lets me know, I will have to contact them to make the proper arrangements. I hope that they will organize this for spring as I'm sure it will be too cold when all is in place,? he says.

Oram says he is glad for the community interest in this plaque rededication and he knows his family has enjoyed the view from the park numerous times over the years.

?We even held my brother John's wedding there. I have spoken with a lot of the public throughout my travels over the years and have mentioned how the park came to be. All were very appreciative and found it to be a great gesture. I am very proud of my grandfather, grandmother, father, uncles and aunt, for their legacy and human nature they have left behind from being pioneers in the community for so many generations,? he says. ?This will remain as part of all my family's purpose and legacy.?