

Personality Profile Of Week

BERT OLDERSHAW PART CREDIT WEEKLY, 1963, 1163

It's not surprising that Bert Oldershaw's activities and interests are all concerned with water sports; Bert spent the first 35 years of his life on Hanlan's Point one of the Toronto islands.

It was here that his interest in paddling first developed, he was a member of the Island Canoe Club from 1939 until he moved from the island in 1956. During that time Bert's Canadian championship wins were the second highest won by any single Canadian. Bert was a Canadian representative at three Olympic games. In 1948 at London, England, he was a member of a two-man 10,000 meter canoe team which placed fifth. Four

years later at Helsinki, Finland, he represented Canada in the one-man 1,000 meter kayak event finishing seventh. In 1956 at Melbourne, Australia, he finished fifth in the two-man 1,000 meter event with 21 countries competing.

Bert had to leave school at sixteen to help support his eight brothers and sisters, paddling was a sport he loved and could afford on a meagre budget.

Nine years ago when the Oldershaws moved to Port Credit, the closeness of both the lake and the river were a great attraction for the whole family. However Bert was soon disappointed to discover how little use was being made of

this water for all the young people. Bert immediately set about remedying this situation, in 1957 he founded the Mississauga Canoe Club. The first summer the club of about 20 children ranging in age from 12 to 18 operated out of the Oldershaw's barn, practising on Lake Ontario, this rough, cold water is often undependable and not suited for paddling practice.

For the next two years Bert with the willing and able assistance of his wife Marcelle worked unstintingly to interest the parents of the children in the club and the adults in the community of the growing need for a building close to the Credit River, the ideal spot for practising and racing. After three years the club did rent an old fishing shack just south of the Port Credit Yacht Club and were able to work on the river.

In 1960 the Credit Valley Lions Club sponsored the present building on the banks of the Credit, just north of the Lakeshore highway, this building is shared by the Mississauga Canoe Club and the Don Rowing Club. The Club now has about 250 members both boys and girls, in 1963 coached by Bert the club won both the juvenile and the girls Canadian championship.

Bert is particularly proud of the records set by his eldest son Dean and also Mac Hickox, both students at Port Credit Secondary School. These two boys won ten Canadian championships in three years, as well as setting a new juvenile tandem record at Ottawa in 1962, and then in 1963 broke their own record set the previous year.

The motto of the Canadian Canoe Association, "Through the Water to Friendship" sums up very well Bert's own philosophy, he says, "I've taken a lot out of this country, I've travelled almost around the world, as Canadian representative in three Olympic games. On these trips I've met interesting people in the world of sports, theatre, and politics.

I was able to have this experience because of the interest, time and hard work given to me by many adults, when I was a youth. I want to enable other young people to have some of these experiences."

The two boys are hoping with Bert's coaching they will break records at the Olympic games in Mexico in 1968.

A natural and necessary outgrowth of the canoe club was the founding by Bert of the Toronto Township Parks and Recreation Water Safety Course in 1960, approximately 150 local children receive their water safety certificates each year.

Bert is Vice-President of the Toronto Township Red Cross, in the past year 332 local children passed their water safety examinations. Toronto Township held a water safety week, water safety bulletins were distributed throughout the township. Canoe safety demonstration were held in pools in the community and on television.

In 1956 feeling the need for some form of communication with other paddling clubs Bert founded The Canadian Paddling Yearbook, this is the only Canadian Canoeing Yearbook in Canada, and probably one of about ten in the world. Articles from this magazine which

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Bert edits are in demand all around the world particularly those written about training and coaching techniques by Lloyd Percival of Toronto who in cooperation with Bert founded the first canoe coaching clinic, coaches from the Mississauga Canoe Club attend these clinics regularly.

A... activities would hardly seem to leave Bert time for his business, however, he is a very creative person working for a display firm, he organizes displays for trade shows, such as the Sportsman's show, the Home show and the C.N.E. Bert decorated Elster the cow's boudoir, and organized the antique car museum at Niagara Falls.

Bert's hobbies other than paddling are golf and landscape gardening.

Bert feels very much that healthy bodies house healthy minds. He would like to see more stress on physical fitness for all school children, and eventually a fully qualified physical instructor in every school with a well planned and comprehensive program to include all children.

In our local area he would hope for more indoor pools so that swimming and water safety knowledge would become available to every person, and perhaps even compulsory, as it is in Australia. Another of his dreams is a sports centre in Toronto Township with supervision and coaching for all young people.



BERT OLDERSHAW