

property PROS

STORY **JUDE WAYLAND**
PHOTOGRAPHY **BONNIE FOX**

The Southern Georgian Bay Association of REALTORS* (SGBAR) is a Collingwood-based organization that provides resources, leadership, advocacy and support to its membership, which includes close to 500 licensed Realtors from over 60 offices.

Formed in 1970, the organization was originally named The Collingwood & District Real Estate Board. This not-for-profit association comprised a territory that encompassed Wasaga Beach, Collingwood, Clearview Township, The Blue Mountains, the Municipality of Meaford, as well as Grey Highlands.

In April 2013, The Georgian Triangle Association of Realtors (GTAR) announced a merger with the Southern Georgian Bay Real Estate Association (SGBREA). Amalgamating with the eastern communities along the shores of Southern Georgian Bay expanded the Association's geographical area to include the towns of Midland and Penetanguishene, and the surrounding communities of Elmvale, Port McNicoll, Victoria Harbour, Coldwater, Port Severn, Honey Harbour and Tiny, Tay, Springwater, Oro-Medonte, Severn and Georgian Bay Townships.

The goal of the merger was to assist the western and eastern districts in accomplishing their shared objectives by pooling resources, tools and expertise, and to elevate the level of professionalism and service from local salespeople throughout Southern Georgian Bay. The nine-member Board of Directors is elected annually and meets monthly.


OUR HOMES recently chatted with Kevin Woolham, the newly elected President of the SGBAR Board of Directors.

Congratulations Mr. President. What do you hope to accomplish during your term? I'd like to raise public awareness about what local Realtors do within their communities, and how they contribute to community development – like political advocacy, fundraising and volunteerism. And it's important for us to communicate the value and benefits of using local salespeople, as well as the roles and responsibilities they assume on behalf of consumers.


I also want to ensure we provide the best opportunities to our members for their professional development, whether that be education, technology, or other resources needed to best serve their buyers and sellers. *Continued on page 62*

2015 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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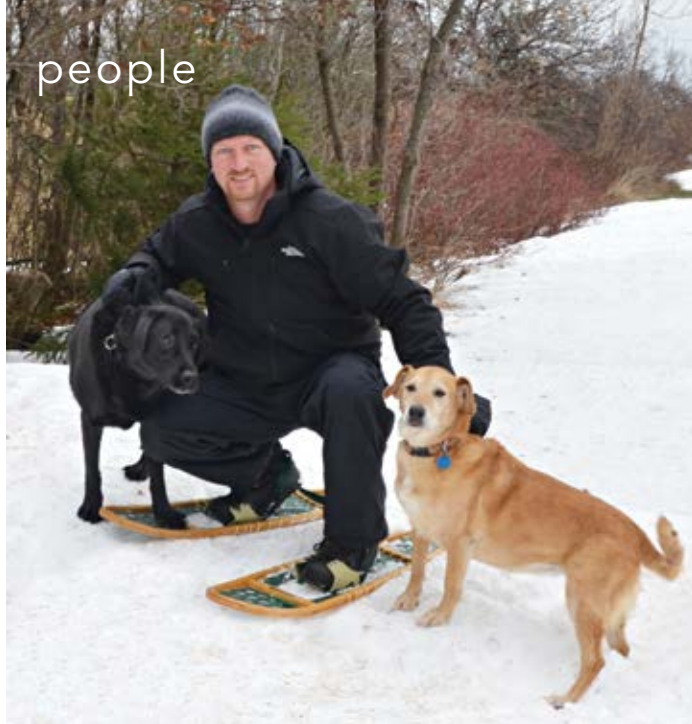
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people



President Kevin Woolham with his dogs Maggie and Chester.

With the advancement of technology, many people now spend less time interacting face-to-face, and I believe that this is an integral part of our business. I'm looking to encourage this throughout our membership as I think camaraderie is important between members.

What else does the Association do? We provide the MLS system, so a high priority of the Association is to maintain the integrity and consistency of the MLS Listing data so both members and consumers have confidence in the quality of SGBAR data.

How did you transition into real estate?

I've been coming to Collingwood and Blue Mountain most of my life. My great-great grandparents are actually buried on Poplar Side Road. I was born in Scarborough and grew up in Johannesburg, South Africa. In 1998, I became involved with Indian Motorcycle, part of the parent company that opened restaurants in Toronto and Colorado, and purchased The California Motorcycle Company. My division manufactured motorcycles. I opened a dealership in Toronto and then a restaurant here. Three years later, I turned Original Motorcycle from a losing business into a winning venture.

Then I bought a small hobby farm at the top of the ski hill, rescued some horses, dogs and cats, did a lot of volunteer work, and decided I didn't want to leave the area. I'm an entrepreneur and I'm a man of my word. I like stating what I'm going to do, committing to doing it and coming through in the end. Real estate has always intrigued me. I've made it

my mandate to overeducate my buyers and sellers about all the real estate areas that I wasn't aware of until I became a Realtor and I think that education process has been part of my success.

Why employ the services of a professional Realtor when buying or selling a home?

When you're making one of the biggest decisions of your life, using a professional salesperson is the best course of action, and using a local one is even better. We know the area, the environment, what's going on in local politics, government and communities, have lawyer and surveyor contacts, are knowledgeable about sales issues, water table levels, wells, septic tanks, and the list goes on and on. We are registered and follow strict laws; that's a homeowner's guarantee of ethical, professional behaviour. Board data allows us to extrapolate what a property is worth, research any pitfalls the buyer/seller may need to be aware of, and to offer recourse support if need be. We are also mandated to take continuing education courses every two years to upgrade our knowledge about real estate-related issues and regulations.

SGB is Ontario's premier four-season recreational playground. Is that why you choose to live and work here?

We've got so much going on year-round. With 12 million people within three hours, there's huge potential for growth and sustainable recreation. I choose to be here because it's one of those rare vibrant places with year-

round activity – without the congestion of a major urban centre.

Where can we find you when you're not selling real estate?

Usually on the farm. I'm also an avid curler, snowboarder and skier, and I snowshoe through the forest with my dogs and walk Collingwood's wonderful trail system.

How important is it for Realtors to give back to the community?

One of my mandates moving forward is to increase volunteerism, support local charities and causes, and promote them as Board-sponsored events. It's hugely important for people to realize that we're not just here selling real estate. For example, the average house sale in Ontario generates, on average, \$52,925 in spin-off transactions. In 2012-2013, Realtors in Canada gave almost \$54-million to charity, and through the Ontario Every Realtor Campaign, over \$800,000 in grants to over 200 shelter-based organizations.

Where will you be in 10 years? Back here being President again for the 10th year Anniversary. I look forward to a long career in real estate. I enjoy the lifestyle. I love the people I meet. I love what I do. **OH**

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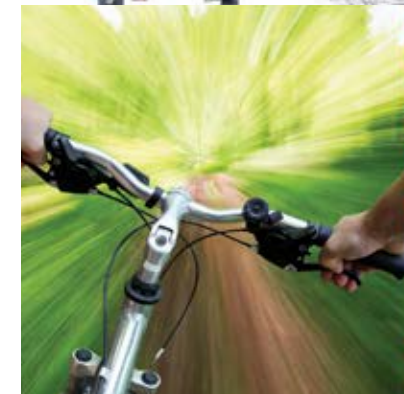
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