

# Late Assiginack Reeve Bud Rohn penned final letter to taxpayers

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by Alicia McCutcheon

ASSIGINACK—Bud Rohn, a colourful member of the Assiginack council for many years, passed away recently during his first term as the township's reeve.

During his last days, Mr. Rohn spent time working on a letter to the residents of Assiginack and his wife Jane and daughters Colleen Mailloux and Pam Rohn have asked The Expositor to publish it. It follows here, together with recollections of Mr. Rohn's career in municipal politics.



This is just a note to thank all the residents and land owners that took the time to help elect me as Reeve of Assiginack Township. Unfortunately, I cannot complete this term and will have to step down.

Everything so far has been going ahead as planned and we again have a good Capital Budget in place for this year, with the emphasis on roads, streets, sewer lines, landfill and upgrades for the betterment of this community. Your staff and council have only the best for this community in mind and work hard at making only the best and cost efficient decisions for you. They continue to communicate and cooperate together as a team to make this community the best on the Island. Thank you to all the volunteers and well wishers for their efforts and concern. It certainly has been appreciated. This community is what it is because of your efforts.

I want Alton, Freda and Deb to know how much I enjoyed working with them. Words cannot express how much I appreciate all their support and efforts at keeping me in line! They took over when I couldn't and did it without complaint and with efficiency as they manage everything connected with the town business. Brad, Paul, Brenda and Bob: thanks for picking up my committees. It was a pleasure to work with you all. Stay firm with your beliefs.

I know that sometimes it is hard to understand the problems that are encountered when trying to get an appointment at our health clinic here and end up with delays. The Ministry of Health requires a minimum number of patients that we require in order to provide the funding. We are now almost there and things are very busy. Our doctor and nurse practitioner try their very best to accommodate the needs of the population in this community. I believe that we have an excellent and caring team that work hard to accommodate each and every individual that they can. Keep in mind we have only one doctor as compared to the team of doctors in Little Current and Mindemoya. Our doctor has a commitment to be in the emergency room, which is a 24-hour shift. Most of us don't realize that being on call for 24 hours requires the need to have a recovery day of rest. We don't know the amount of paperwork that is legally required. If you want to understand how good we have it in Manitowaning, head in to the clinic or hospitals or even try to get a doctor's appointment in Sudbury for a taste of the real world.

I would like to thank the clinic team: Dr. Bedard, Joanne, Lianne, Sherri and Sandra for the excellent treatment and assistance I have received.

Thank you to all who wished me well and those who were concerned. It certainly has been appreciated by me and my family.

This wonderful community is what it is because of your efforts. HEAVEN ON EARTH.

“You’re on your toes when you’re working with Bud,” laughed former Assiginack reeve and recently named councillor Leslie Fields when describing her predecessor, in the reeve’s chair, the late Bud Rohn.

Mr. Rohn passed away last month after battling cancer, a politician to the very end, attending council meetings and even showing the flag on behalf of the people of Assiginack at a recent meeting of the Manitoulin Centennial Manor.

In 2010, Mr. Reeve left the ranks of councillor, a spot he held for 12 years, to take on the role of reeve of the municipality.

“He cared so much about the community and the whole Island,” Ms. Fields added. “Even though Bud always had his own opinion, he always listened to both sides of the argument.”

Ms. Fields noted his passion for the youth of Assiginack, always there to man the barbecue at a fundraising event or sit on the recreation committee, advocating for work on the arena, which eventually came to fruition in the form of a complete retrofit.

“Once you got to know Bud, you realized he was just saying Bud things,” she chuckled. “He was colourful, flavourful.”

The former reeve said while he started off as a representative of Sunsite Estates, where he and his wife have a home, he blossomed into a representative of the entire municipality.

“Jane was his soul mate,” she said of Mr. Rohn’s wife. “She kept him under control when she had to. When he started to lose control, she would rein him back in again. You couldn’t ask for a better fit.”

“I’m going to miss him very, very much,” she added.

Mrs. Rohn explained that her husband’s first foray into politics began when the couple moved to Sunsite Estates.

“There was an association for the property owners and we joined,” she told The Expositor. “He eventually ended up becoming president for a number of years because, as usual, only a few really get involved with running things.”

“One year, the town was able to hire some workers through a program with unemployment,” she continued. “He was able to arrange for them to work for a week at Sunsite. They were able to clean up the parkway where the water treatment plant is located. It was full of rocks, poison ivy and snakes. The town put in some fill and leveled off the ground. Since then, Bud planted a few trees and started cutting the grass. The parkway is for backlot owners to access the water and also for the water treatment plant workers to get to the pump house. He also used his backhoe and moved some rocks to make access to the public beach easier and attempted to clean up the beach area.”

“Twelve years ago there was an election coming up,” Mrs. Rohn continued. “Bud always said ‘if you don’t like what’s going on, do something to fix it.’ He threw his hat in the ring and was successful in being elected to council. He was very involved in the DSB (District Services Board) and came home from many a meeting frustrated. He felt that they were spending our taxpayers’ money and it was his responsibility to do it diligently. Very often, he was out-voted, much to his chagrin.”

The Island Waste Management program was also very important to Mr. Rohn and his municipality has instituted a recycling program which has greatly reduced contents and extended the life of the dump.

“He always felt there were many things ending up in the dump that were still usable,” she noted. “He had hoped to start a program where things that could be used by others would be set aside and people could take them home for a new purpose. He was going to name it ‘The Assiginack Mall’.”

“The last election was coming up and Bud had planned on retiring,” Mrs. Rohn continued. “Eventually, he decided that council and staff had worked hard and had a substantial reserve in place and he wanted to be there, if possible, to continue with capital projects. He was successful in being elected reeve and was looking forward to doing everything possible to making Manitowaning a great place to live.”

“He was in good health at the time and never expected things to take such a dramatic turn,” she said. “In January, he was informed that he had to take chemo treatments. He was to start in February and had one treatment with good results. Unfortunately, before the next treatment, the cancer became aggressive and spread. With his usual strength, he weighed his options and decided the treatments weren’t going to give him any quality of life and decided to spend his remaining time doing everything possible with his usual determination. Over the next two months he amazed us. Visits from family and good friends made some very happy memories of the ‘potato gun,’ among others. We were very fortunate to have our own private nurse, daughter Colleen Mailloux, and with Dr. Bedard’s guidance, he was very comfortable. Our spirit lifter, daughter Pam, kept us up during the bleak times along with antics from the grandchildren.”

“Politics was a very important part of his life and he took great pride in representing the community and keeping Manitowaning a wonderful place to live,” Mrs. Rohn said. “He was a strong, honest, kind and loving man and will be missed.”

“Bud will be missed,” added Brad Ham, who sat with Mr. Rohn on the council for the past six years and who has since been sworn in as reeve. “He was a real straight shooter and you never had to worry about what was on his mind. He told you like it was, wrong or right.”

“I really enjoyed working with him—it was always interesting,” Mr. Ham laughed. “I’ll do my best to fill his shoes.”