

Newport Forest

April 3 2001

7:15 - 8:15 pm

A Telephone Conversation with Todd Janik

We were recently given the name and telephone number of the owner of the neighbouring lot by Eva Newport, who made some inquiries on our behalf. His name is Todd Janik and he lives in Windsor. The lot, sometimes referred to by our Moraviantown friends as "The Beehive Property," owing to a bunch of hives that someone has been operating (I forgot to ask Janik who that was).

Mr. Janik is now 78 years old, but seems keen on conservation. Many years ago, he got the MNR to give him some trees (White Pines, of course) for the property. Within a year, most of them died, others are struggling on. However, a group of pines that were planted on a sandy patch of ground are doing very well and Janik says they are now old enough to harvest.

He told me the story of his life, from his being orphaned at an early age. (His mother died at the Byron Sanatorium here in London.) Janik was shuttled from one foster home to another before coming to an age when he could learn a trade. His father had left him a complete set of die-makers tools and these he used to good advantage, gaining employment in a tool and die operation in Windsor. He also worked for Ford and described some of his difficulties getting along with union bosses. "You see this hammer? If you don't quit pestering me for dues, I'll drive it through your skull."

Janik has not visited his property for some time on account of the blow he received when his wife of many years (Paula) died about a decade ago. I told him I hoped he would come up this summer so we could walk the property(s) together. He agreed to let me go on his property whenever I wish. He also agreed that someday he would consider taking down a stretch of fence to allow the deer untrammelled access across the lot line from one property to the other.

Janik says he has tried to rent the land out to local farmers but the last two have complained that they can't get decent crops. Janik says he'd like to plant the whole property in trees!