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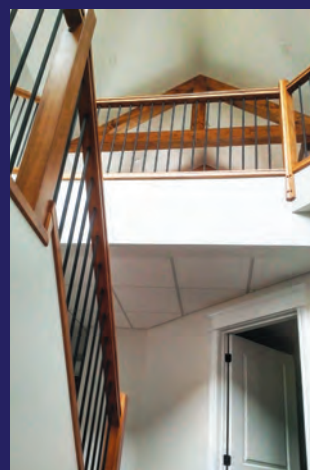


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THE MADAWASKA HIGHLANDER OCTOBER 2026 EMBRACE THE PAST ~ ENCOURAGE THE FUTURE ~ ENJOY TODAY

The Madawaska Highlander

Celebrating Cottage and Country Life in the Madawaska & Addington Highlands of Eastern Ontario

**October
2026**

FREE Vol.25 Issue 6

Next issue November 4

Welcome!

...To peak fall colour and mild weather in the Highlands while El Niño is being a good little boy. Take a peek at ten fabulous short stories, your doorway to another realm, as in The Mysterious Door. What should a good boy do? What should you do if your doorway is too small, as it is for The Stone Giant? And what if people are afraid of you because you are different? In For the Love of Cats, we learn of a life-changing experience that made a difference disappear. Animals pick up on our messages.

In Farm Life: When the Animals Run the Show, we get the message about who is really in charge. But who, ultimately is the one in charge? In BFFs, Birds and Best Friends Forever, we wonder if friends we have lost can contact us from beyond. As we move through life we gain and lose friends, but we remember them, as we see in the musings of one war veteran in I Remember them All.

Do memories disappear when we move on or are they retained in the lives we touch, like the grandchild in Grandma's House? A tattoo is one way to preserve a memory, and in Tattoo, we learn they can make new connections. Newspapers are another way to connect and preserve the past, but sometimes they can do more, as we see in Local Paper Sends Bad Guys to Jail. Was it the Highlander?

Even cherished objects viewed a new way can stir up a lifetime's overview, as we see in The Chair. The Bible says that God has a constant overview of our lives, but how can He see us? Young Garry Ferguson thought he had it figured out in his light-hearted story, Reflection of a Stove Pipe Hole.

Garry's story is not part of the contest, and either is Howard Popkie's, When the Past Comes Back to Haunt You. We know you enjoy the short story edition, so we added more to the ten we received, plus a few other articles.

Bethany Armstrong shares sad news with A Tribute to Dale Dilamarter in Watershed News. Geoffrey Cudmore shares great news about the success of the Griffith Terry Fox Run in Out and About. Charlotte shares news about what happened and what's happening in GMDV News and Morgana brings us more joyful coverage in Bogie Beat.

You'll experience the whole spectrum of emotions in this edition, so grab a hot beverage, curl up somewhere cozy, and be prepared to... Enjoy!..

The first signs of autumn beauty on the Madawaska River in Greater Madawaska.
Pic by Stephen Lyons.



Lunch time on an Ottawa Valley farm looks like Thanksgiving Dinner at our house.
Mooove over. I want some too.
Pic by Lois Thomson

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Thank you Everyone!

Charlotte Dafoe
Morgana Dillingham

Geoffrey Cudmore
Bethany Armstrong

Garry Ferguson
Contest contributors



Throughout much of its history, Canada sought to maintain political and economic autonomy by balancing the overwhelming influences of its two most influential trading partners and cultural influences, Great Britain and the United States. The so-called North Atlantic triangle prevented Canada from being pulled exclusively into the orbit of either of the much larger powers around it.

By the post-war years, that equilibrium was failing. Britain, already weakened by the First World War, left the Second World War mired in debt and challenged by an obsolete manufacturing base. In contrast, the United States was indisputably the world's greatest economic and military power — the first "superpower." By the 1950s, two-thirds of Canada's exports and imports were with the United States. Even more dramatically, more than three quarters of all foreign capital invested in Canada came from south of the border. When such economic dominance was compounded by the influence of Hollywood, American magazines, radio, and the emerging medium of television, many worried — as did Canada's foremost economist, Harold Innis — that we had gone "from colony to nation to colony." Thus, economic policy in these years was inseparable from wider fears about Canadian identity.

Walter Gordon, Pearson's Finance Minister, had chaired the 1955-1957 Royal Commission on Canada's Economic Prospects that raised questions about foreign ownership. In his first budget, he moved on his concerns by instituting various measures, including a 30% takeover tax on foreigners buying control of a Canadian company. The reaction from business was immediate and harsh, and Gordon had to retreat. In response to both internal and external pressure, the Liberals under Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau took two concrete steps. The first was the Canada Development Corporation (CDC), designed in 1971 to help increase Canadian investment in Canadian companies. The second arrived in 1973 in the form of the Foreign Investment Review Agency (FIRA), which gave government the power to review and possibly prevent a foreign takeover of a Canadian company. Although FIRA and the CDC remained on the books until the mid-1980s, the fact is that the high level of concern about foreign investment was already waning.

John Diefenbaker had been forced out in 1967, and the party's stance was morphing into a more pro-American one. This shift would culminate in a major free trade agreement with the United States in 1988, crafted by Tory Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. Of course Canadian concern about American dominance will always be a part of our national landscape. However, growing markets in Europe and Asia and growing pools of investment capital at home mean that — viewed from the perspective of the present — the period from the 1950s through to the early 1970s stand out as a particularly volatile era in Canadian economic nationalism.

Cartoon and information from UBC Open Text, *Economic Nationalism* by Doug Owram, Department of History, University of British Columbia - Okanagan <https://opentextbc.ca/postconfederation/chapter/8-14-economic-nationalism>.

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NEWS & VIEWS - GRIFFITH & MATAWATCHAN & DENBIGH & VENNACHAR

Key addresses: **GRIFFITH:** Griffith & Matawathan Recreation Centre (Denbigh-Griffith Lions Club) 25991 Hwy 41. Ginza Rink Park and Pickleball Court, 15 Ginza Street. Adams Berry Farm & Market 25761 Hwy 41, Griffith Hilltop Church 25197, Hwy 41 **MATAWATCHAN:** Matawatchan Hall 1677 Frontenac Road. **DENBIGH:** Denbigh Hall 222 Hwy 28. Heritage Park, 48 Lane Street. St. Lukes Church – 188 Hwy 28. Addington Highlands Community Centre and Food Bank 31 Central Street. **VENNACHAR:** Vennachar Free Methodist Church 424 Matawathan Road.

By Charlotte Dafoe



The Denbigh-Griffith Lions Club's Show N' Shine was another tremendous success, drawing more than 150 registered vehicles and a crowd of spectators throughout the day. The event featured numerous vendors, a popular bouncy castle for children, and lots of wonderful food, prepared by a team of dedicated kitchen volunteers. The event was well attended by municipal leaders, including Mayor Rob Weir and Councillor Lois Thomson from Greater Madawaska, Reeve Tony Fritsch and Councillors Maurice Leveille and Kirby Thomson from Addington Highlands, as well as MPP Billy Denault. The Denbigh-Griffith Lions Club extends its appreciation to everyone who attended, volunteered, sponsored, and supported the event. Special thanks are also extended to the Township of Greater Madawaska, whose grant funding helped provide the bouncy castle, adding to the fun and family-friendly atmosphere of the day.

People's Choice Winners:
 1st Place: Roy Klentz, Pembroke (1940 Plymouth)
 2nd Place: Jeff Yonin, Killaloe (1970 Dodge Super Bee)
 3rd Place: Ian Watt, Port Hope (1956 Meteor Victoria Rideau)
 Oldest Original Vehicle: Denis Vaillancourt, Pembroke (1928 Ford Pickup)



The Lions were on the prowl for cash with their toll road on the Labour Day Weekend.



Denbigh Recreation was fortunate to have a beautiful fall day for its annual ATV ride. The event was a great success thanks to the dedication of the volunteers and the enthusiasm of everyone who took part. A sincere thank you goes out to all those who helped organize, support, and participate in making the ride another memorable community event.



Casey Cuddy, Fire Chief of the Denbigh and Kaladar/Barrie Fire Departments, was named the 2026 National Volunteer Fire Chief of the Year in recognition of his outstanding 45 years of dedicated service. He has been a strong advocate for firefighter cancer prevention and mental wellness while helping to rebuild and strengthen vital rural emergency response capacity.



Ottawa Valley singer-songwriter Vicki Brittle recently performed at the Matawatchan Hall, entertaining attendees with her blend of folk and rock music.



On September 3, Greater Madawaska SALC members enjoyed a wonderful day trip to Kingston for a 1000 Islands Cruise.



Township of Greater Madawaska Programming

It has been another busy season for the **Greater Madawaska 55+ Seniors Active Living Centre (SALC)**, with programs and activities continuing throughout our communities.

On September 3, SALC members enjoyed a wonderful day trip to **Kingston for our 1000 Islands Cruise**. They were lucky to have beautiful weather for the day, and everyone enjoyed a delicious meal, great music on the cruise and some beautiful scenery along the way. It was a wonderful day spent together, and the Township would like to extend a big thank you to all of the SALC members who joined them. They had a lovely time and are already looking forward to doing it again next year!

As we head into October, fall programming continues with Yoga in Calabogie, Dacre and Griffith, along with several new wellness and social opportunities.

SALC will also be hosting an **RCDHU Vaccination Clinic** in partnership with the Denbigh-Griffith Lions Club on **Wednesday, October 21 at 1:30 pm.** at the Recreation Centre in Griffith, 25991B Hwy 41. The clinic is intended for seniors as well as other members of the community who are considered vulnerable or high-risk, including immunocompromised individuals, health care workers, children ages 6 months to 5 years, and others considered part of a high-risk population.

SALC members will be heading to **Ottawa on October 18 for the Renfrew County SALC Cirque du Soleil LUZIA bus trip** as part of a County-wide outing, with seven buses from across Renfrew County heading to the show for what promises to be a great day out together!

GM55+ SALC continues to grow, with more than 300 members participating in programming in 2026. They are very grateful for the continued sup-

port and enthusiasm from local seniors and look forward to continuing to offer opportunities for connection, wellness, learning and fun throughout Greater Madawaska.

We're always looking for new ideas and opportunities to expand our programming. If you have an idea for a class or program, or if you're interested in leading a class or sharing your skills with our members, we'd love to hear from you! Please reach out to us at salc@greatermadawaska.com or 613-752-1129. We would love to hear from you!

For more information about GM55+ SALC programs, program registration or membership, visit greatermadawaska.com/salc or call 613-752-1129 or email salc@greatermadawaska.com. Membership is free for Greater Madawaska residents aged 55 and older.



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WHAT'S HAPPENING SERVICES AVAILABLE IN OUR COMMUNITY

The Denbigh Community Food Bank, located inside the Addington Highlands Community Centre, is open on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month from 10-11am. For more information, call Gail at 613-333-2224.

ONGOING EVENTS

- Looking for friendly conversation over coffee or tea? Join the **Denbigh Wellness Group** every Tuesday at 9am at the Denbigh Hall.
- You're invited to gather in fellowship at **St. Luke's United Church** in Denbigh every Sunday at 10 am. All are welcome to attend.
- **Denbigh-Griffith Lions Club Bingo** are held on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month. Doors open at 6pm, game starts at 7pm.

- **Food & Fellowship** at the Denbigh Griffith Lions Club is held on the third Wednesday of every month.

OCTOBER

- **Feast and Faith**, an adult fellowship program, will be held on October 15th, 22nd, and 29th at Vennachar Free Methodist Church. The evenings begin with a free supper at 6pm, followed by a short study.
- Planning is underway for **Octoberfest, Griffith-style**, taking place on October 17th. Festivities will begin at 3:30pm, with dinner served at 6pm. Guests can look forward to an afternoon and evening of great food, live music, and community fun. Tickets are \$25 per person. To purchase tickets or for more information, call 613-333-1984 or email dglionsclub@hotmail.com.
- **Ladies Fellowship and Bible Study** will be held on Monday, October

19th and 26th, beginning at 10am in the basement of Vennachar Free Methodist Church.

- **Denbigh Recreation will be hosting a full day of Halloween fun** on October 31st, beginning with a Kids' Halloween Party from 11am to 1pm. Children and their families can enjoy a light lunch, refreshments, and a festive atmosphere. Later that evening, starting at 8pm, adults aged 19 and over are invited to attend the **Halloween Costume Dance**. Guests are encouraged to dress up for a chance to win prizes and enjoy an evening of Halloween fun and entertainment. Admission to the dance is \$10 per person.

- **The Matawatchan Halloween Costume Dance** will take place on October 31st starting at 8pm offering an evening of music, costumes, and fun. Guests will enjoy **live entertainment by Radio Days**, along with a festive Hal-

loween atmosphere. Advance tickets are \$25 per person, or \$30 at the door, and a cash bar will be available throughout the evening. Please note that this is an 19+ event.

EARLY NOVEMBER

- **Denbigh Recreation will host its annual Hunter's Supper** on November 6th. More details to come.
- **The Griffith & Matawatchan Fish & Game Club invites everyone to its Annual Fall Festival** on November 7th at the Matawatchan Hall. From 7pm until midnight, guests can enjoy an evening of live music, great food, a cash bar, and plenty of fun. Highlights of the evening include a draw for a rifle, scope, and accessories. Admission is just \$5 per person. Everyone is welcome.

EVENTS AT A GLANCE

October 13th & 27th - Denbigh-Griffith Lions Club Bingo
October 15th, 22nd, and 29th - Vennachar Free Methodist Church Feast and Faith
October 17th - Oktoberfest, Griffith-style
October 19th and 26th - Vennachar Free Methodist Church Ladies Fellowship and Bible Study
October 21st - Food & Fellowship at the Denbigh Griffith Lions Club
October 31st - Denbigh Recreation Kids' Halloween Party and 19+ Halloween Dance

October 31st - Matawatchan Halloween Costume Dance
November 6th - Denbigh Recreation Hunter's Supper
November 7th - The Griffith & Matawatchan Fish & Game Club Annual Fall Festival
November 28th - The Matawatchan Hall Christmas Market & Sale
December 8th - Denbigh-Griffith Lions Club Bingo
December 12th - Denbigh Recreation's Festival of Lights

BE SURE TO FOLLOW ON FACEBOOK

Stay connected with what's happening in our communities! Follow the **Denbigh Griffith Lions Club**, **Denbigh Recreation**, **Griffith & Matawatchan Fish & Game Club**, **Matawatchan Hall**, **Villages of Griffith & Matawatchan**, **Greater Madawaska Seniors Housing Corporation**, **Township of Greater Madawaska** and local businesses on Facebook for news, updates, and events.

BOGIE BEAT

Calabogie Folks & What they're Up To By Morgana Dillingham



40 witches and warlocks were a sight to see as they took to Calabogie Lake for the Mad River Paddle Company's annual Witches Paddle on September 25.



Greater Madawaska Landscape Artist of the Year — This event on September 12th was so well received!



This is the perfect time to see a breathtaking view of the fall colours from the chair lift at Calabogie Peaks.



Friday September 25th was an evening to remember at the Calabogie United Church as the Ontario Provincial Police put on quite the show with their Chorus Concert.



This Month in the Bogie

October has arrived in Calabogie, bringing shorter days, colourful trails, spooky traditions, and that unmistakable shift into the cozier side of the year.

This month we're looking back at some of the wonderful things that happened around town, remembering a little piece of Calabogie history, and talking about

the conversations happening in the Calabogie Facebook Folks group. From fall colours and community events to local history, parking passes, Bluff Point,

and the never-ending Highway 508 construction, there's lots happening around the Bogie.

What's Been Happening Around Town

Greater Madawaska Landscape Artist of the Year — This event on September 12th was so well received! This was my second year participating and I noticed such an increase in not only the people participating but also the people who came out to watch the artists at work and take in the vistas of Barnet Park. A big thank you to organizer Colin Sutherland, and the rest of the committee for all of the work they put into another great event! I had such a good time, my daughter even participated and submitted her watercolour painting.

Terry Fox Run with St. Joseph's Calabogie — On Friday September 25th the students at our local school participated in this Canadian traditional fundraiser for the 20th year! If you were out and about you may have seen the students throughout the village running for Terry. I had the privilege of volunteering with the walk and it was really interesting re-learning about what Terry Fox stood for and why this walk takes place each year. The teachers did a great job showcasing the information and getting the students involved. The weather was great the day of the walk and all of the kids were genuinely excited to be getting outside and doing the run for a good cause!

Witches Paddle — The witches and warlocks of Calabogie took to the calm waters of Calabogie Lake on Friday September 25th for a sunset paddle dressed in their wicked attire. Paddling from Mad River Paddle Co to On The Rocks and back there were over 40 participants. This event grows each year! The past few years I have directly participated in the paddle, but this year we sat on the sidelines and I will say it was really cool to watch the witches take over the horizon around the restaurant. The restaurant got into the theme with an adjustment to their playlist, the music was spooky and witchy in all of the right ways. The weather couldn't have been better! This is such a cool event and I hope in the years to come it continues to grow. After the paddle, participants went back to the Mad Shak for one last scoop of ice cream for the season and a little social hour.

OPP Concert at the United Church — Friday September 25th was an evening to remember at the Calabogie United Church as the Ontario Provincial Police put on quite the show with their Chorus Concert. This was a free will donation style event, and the money raised was donated to the Calabogie Food bank. This year there was over \$500 raised!

Music in the Park — The Greater Madawaska Recreational Committee hosted an afternoon of music at Barnet Park on Sunday September 27th where musicians serenaded the audience at a free outdoor event. The event was positioned as an open mic as well so last minute musicians of all skill levels were able to come and sing to the crowd. The weather was amazing, and it was a great afternoon of music!

What's Coming Up in October Fall has officially taken its turn in Calabogie, gone are the long days of summer as we begin to lean into the shorter cozier days with our seasonal traditions.

Fall Colours at Calabogie Peaks — This iconic fall experience is one where you take the chairlifts up the

mountain for a panoramic view of the Madawaska Valley and Calabogie Lake with all of the fall colours setting into the trees. I was fortunate to attend this event this year with my family. The last time I had gone was several years ago, often finding that the more touristy attractions on weekends I tend to leave for the visitors, but I am so happy to say that this is an annual event I'd love to make a tradition for our family. My daughter absolutely loved going up and down on the chair lift and looking at the view. We caught some grasshoppers at the top as we took in the view. If you haven't been yet I highly recommend this local experience. You can ride up and down or hike it if you like a little challenge. The Chair Lift Rides to view the fall colours will take place Saturday and Sunday as well as the Thanksgiving weekend, even on Monday October 12th. Check out their website for pricing and hours.

Calling Local Calabogie Crafters, Painters and Artisans — Calabogie and Area Home Support is looking to showcase beautiful work by local artists in their Local Christmas Raffle draw. They will be putting together a gift basket filled with beautiful work donated by local artists! This initiative is coordinated by Marg Solar, Board Director and Coordinator of fundraising. Tickets on the basket will be sold as part of our fundraising efforts. If you would like to donate to help Calabogie and Area Home Support in their fundraising efforts, please contact the office at 613-752-2828 or drop by at 4984 Calabogie Road; Monday to Friday 9am to 12pm. Many thanks to those who have already donated and many thanks in advance for your consideration.

The Municipal Election is well underway — The candidates have begun sharing their platforms and have really gotten the residents involved and talking about what matters most to them. The budget, spending decisions, road maintenance, and the litigation for the easements on Bluff Point are all big topics that voters are taking into consideration when deciding to cast their vote. An all candidates debate night is taking place at the Calabogie Community Centre (574 Mill Street, Calabogie) on Friday October 9th. The doors open at 5pm and the debate starts at 6pm. Voting will take place from October 13–26, 2026 by phone or online. Look for your Voter information card with your PIN number in the mail.

Mind & Motion: Wellness Series — Starting October 15th until December 17th the GM 55+ is hosting a Chair Exercise for Fall Prevention that is designed to improve balance, stability, strength and more. The exercises use different tools to help participants work on these skills in a way that can be adapted for sitting or standing. You should attend if you're looking to improve your balance and strength, work on your mobility, reduce fall risk and meet up with others as it's also about social connection. The event takes place at the Community Centre. You can register for this on the Townships website. There is a discount for GM 55+ Members.

GM Fire Department Haunted Halloween Walk — Get ready to get spooked and maybe a little haunted. You're in for a terrifying time whenever the Calabogie firefighters come together to put on their haunted Halloween walk. This event takes place at the Calabogie Community Center from 3-5pm on Sat-

urday October 24th. You can find all details on their Facebook page!

Lions Halloween Bingo will take place on Wednesday, October 28th at the Calabogie Community Centre. The doors open at 6:30pm and the Bingo starts at 7pm. Snacks are available for purchase, and the Lions Bar will be open. Each year attendees show up in the best costumes! Some on their own and some in groups. I know my friends and I always enjoy getting dressed up and having a fun night of Bingo.

Calabogie Village Trick or Treating — Saturday October 31st the kids will be out trick or treating around the village. It's very exciting that Halloween is on a Saturday this year, hoping that the weather is nice because last year it rained the whole night! If you live in Calabogie, take the kids out for some trick or treating in the village.

Remembrance Day in Calabogie — The Poppy Campaign will take place Friday October 30th and Saturday 31st. The actual ceremony in Calabogie for Remembrance Day will take place on Saturday, November 7th at the cenotaph on Madawaska street at 2pm. Many have asked why our community often has the event on a day that isn't Remembrance Day, and the answer is simply that this is when everything was available to come together. The parade will start at the community hall down towards the cenotaph where the ceremony will take place. Afterwards there is usually refreshments over at the Calabogie Community Hall. Make sure you check in on Calabogie Folks or ask your neighbours for any updates as they come. It will be lovely to stand with you for this event, I hope that with the weekend date there will be a grand turn out. By buying a poppy or coming out to the ceremony you are supporting the veterans and their families.

Local and Legendary Billy Dodge's Store in the Heart of Calabogie — There are some places in Calabogie that people still remember like they were there yesterday. Billy Dodge's Store, located at the corner of Lanark Road and Mill Street, was one of those places. A recent post in the Calabogie Folks group brought back so many memories of the little shop and William "Billy" Dodge. People remembered sitting on the steps, buying penny candy, and being sent in by their parents for whatever random item was needed that day. One local summed it up perfectly: "Didn't matter what you were looking for, hell yes, he had it somewhere under a pile." I love these little glimpses into Calabogie's past. They remind us that some of the places that seemed ordinary at the time end up becoming the memories people hold onto for decades. And apparently there were quite a few things kids were sent to buy back then that probably wouldn't be happening today! If you remember Billy Dodge's Store, I'd love to hear your memories. What did you buy there? Did you spend time sitting on those steps?

Seasonal Spotlight: The Ideal Fall Reset in Calabogie for Residents

There's something about fall in Calabogie that naturally invites us to slow down. The mornings get crisp, the leaves begin to turn, the trails become a little quieter, and the landscape seems to ask us to pay attention. Of course, come the

weekends, our little corner of the Ottawa Valley fills up again with visitors chasing those famous mountain views and fall colours, but there are still plenty of ways to find your own slower rhythm.

Take a walk without an agenda. Pick a trail, wander through the village, or take the long way home and actually notice what has changed. Look for the first reds and oranges, listen to the leaves under your feet, and notice how different the forest feels from just a few weeks ago.

Find a favourite fall view. Maybe it's from the top of Manitou Mountain, along the K&P Trail, down the causeway overlooking the lake, or somewhere completely ordinary that you've passed a hundred times like the vistas at Barnet Park. Take a Thermos of coffee, sit for a while, and give yourself permission to simply look.

Get outside while the weather still invites you to. Get in that last paddle on a calm afternoon, go for a bike ride, take the dog for a longer walk, or squeeze in one more picnic at the park before the blankets and wool sweaters officially take over. Fall can feel short by the time we give in to summer being over, so make the most of the days when the sun is shining.

Use the changing season as a little reset. What are you carrying into the next season that you actually want to keep? What can you let go of? Autumn is a pretty good reminder that change doesn't have to be dramatic to be meaningful.

Stay outside after dark. As the evenings get longer, take advantage of Calabogie's dark skies, and less bugs. Bring a blanket outside, light a fire, look for constellations, or simply stand for a few minutes and listen to how different the lake sounds at night as the birds have begun their migration down south.

And finally, let yourself **be a tourist in your own backyard.** The fall colours bring plenty of visitors to Calabogie, but you don't need to wait for someone from out of town to remind you how beautiful this place is. Take the scenic route, visit a trail you've never explored, grab something warm from Oh-El-La café, and spend an afternoon seeing your own community with fresh eyes.

Fall doesn't need to be packed with plans. Sometimes the best way to experience it is simply to notice it before it's gone.

What The Folks Are Saying

Do we have to pay to enjoy our own backyard? There has been quite a bit of conversation lately around parking passes and fees at some of our local recreation spaces. Eagle's Nest and Manitou Mountain both have paid parking, with the Township currently listing trail parking at \$5 per day, \$25 for a resident annual pass and \$50 for a non-resident annual pass. Barnet Park has also come up in the conversation, although the current Township information notes that only vehicles with boat trailers are required to pay for parking there, yet residents are sharing that they're receiving tickets and rightfully so, are not happy about it. I think this is an interesting conversation for a community like ours. We are incredibly lucky to have access to so many beautiful outdoor spaces, but as more people discover Calabogie, maintaining trails, parking lots, washrooms and other public amenities comes with a



Billy Dodge's Store, located at the corner of Lanark Road and Mill Street, was one of those places that might have seen ordinary at the time, but formed special memories for a generation of Calabogie residents and visitors.

cost. At the same time, I understand why residents have questions about what we should be paying for, especially when these are places many of us have enjoyed for years. Suggestions for an inclusive parking pass to be included with your "transfer station" pass (another item that many residents don't actually have and didn't even know was required). I'd love to hear from the folks; do you think

these fees are reasonable, and where do you think that balance should land?

There has also been continued discussion in the group surrounding the legal dispute involving Bluff Point. I'll be honest, I don't have all of the details yet, and from what I've been able to gather, this is not a particularly simple situation. There are different perspectives and a fair amount of information circu-

lating online, so I don't want to pretend I have the full picture when I don't.

When is Highway 508 going to be finished?! If you've driven in and out of Calabogie lately, you probably already know why this one has been coming up in folks' discussions around town and online. County Road 508 has been under rehabilitation, and the County's current information indicates that the work

is expected to continue into late October 2026. After the detours and closures we dealt with earlier this summer, I think a lot of us are ready to see the construction signs disappear and get back to normal. It was a nice drive the other week when there was a good portion of the road that has been repaved. Cheers to less potholes and smooth drives. In the meantime, give yourself a few extra minutes when heading in or out of town.

Closing Connections

As another season changes around us, I hope you find a little time to slow down and enjoy the beautiful place we get to call home. Whether you're heading out for the fall colours, getting involved in the community, or simply enjoying a quiet October evening, I'll see you around the Bogie.

*Seen something worth sharing?
Building something new? Have
someone in mind that is local and
legendary? I'd love to hear about it and
share your story. Contact Morgana at
thebogiebeat@gmail.com.*



Morgana Dillingham is a media communications marvel and has called Calabogie home for the last decade. With her experience with the Calabogie Folks Facebook group, she stays up to date on local happenings. Based in Calabogie village, Morgana enjoys community involvement, sustainability, arts, motherhood, and time on the water.

2024 SHORT STORY CONTEST - PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARDS

YOU BE THE JUDGE! By Lois Thomson

"A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies . . . The man who never reads lives only one."

- George R.R. Martin

At last! Here are this year's short stories. I'm sure you will read them all and when you do, please tell us which one was your single-most favourite adult fiction or adult non-fiction story.

The judges have a score sheet to go by to make sure all of the stories are judged by the same

criteria, but our readers are tasked with choosing the story they like the best and sending in their vote.

Which one meant the most to you? Which one made you laugh, gave you chills, or made you say, "You've got to read this!" This isn't a popularity contest, so please don't vote for yourself or get others to vote for your story to stack the votes. **Send your vote to the email, phone, or address for The Madawaska Highlander that's on the inside front cover of**

the paper. Include your name and postal code and a quick line about why you liked it. We'll share that feedback with the writers. If you have positive, encouraging things to say about any of them, please include them along with your number one choice by **October 23... and enjoy!**

"Books are a uniquely portable magic."

- Stephen King



PEOPLE'S CHOICE PRIZE

**Adult Fiction
or Non-fiction
One prize of \$50**



NEWS CLIPPINGS WE HAVE GATHERED

Indigenous tourism operators say business is booming across Vancouver Island despite survey that says most people are unaware of Indigenous tourism.

Economic reconciliation with First Nations remains elusive 11 years after Truth and Reconciliation Report, lacking meaningful consultation and prior informed consent.

Ontario Investing Over \$1.1M in 5 Indigenous Forestry Projects projects to create more than 200 good-paying jobs and build a stronger, more resilient forest sector.

Vancouver Fraser Port Authority says surging grain and oil exports drove a record amount of cargo in the first half of the year as part of a push away from U.S. markets.

A Saskatchewan-based potash exporter is investing \$500 million to upgrade a North Vancouver shipping terminal and bolster Canadian potash shipments.

Opening of the Ray-Mont Logistics port facility in Prince Rupert adds export capacity as trade tensions with the U.S. are escalating and Canada is diversifying exports.

Canada investing \$1.2B to keep our waters safe, to protect marine life, and to strengthen conservation enforcement to minimize impact of expanding port activity.

Ontario and Canada celebrate removal of Nipigon Bay, Lake Superior, from a list of the most polluted locations in the Great Lakes after nearly 40 years of cleanup work.

Ontario Investing \$5M to Protect Lands and Waterways from Harmful Invasive Species to help stop their spread and restore natural spaces across Ontario.

Canada's last epishelf lake ecosystem (freshwater lake on an ice shelf) drained into the Arctic Ocean following the 2020 breakup of the Milne Ice Shelf and will not recover.

Russian Sanctions Are Fueling a Canadian Car Theft Epidemic. Russia is the largest destination for stolen Canadian cars, meeting the demand of a booming black market

Chinese SUV waits for its owner to leave the car before using its incredible technology to back itself into the garage and park, avoiding obstacles.

Chinese carmaker BYD Co. inquired about taking over an idled Stellantis plant, signaling possible global interest in Canadian auto hubs amid trade battle with the US.

US push to isolate Canada falters as foreign investors start to buy in.

RBC launches \$1.4-billion fund to invest in Canadian technology companies.

TD Bank has joined a growing group of Canadian financial powerhouses committing massive capital to accelerate national economic development.

President of the European Union's investment bank says "the time is ripe" to deepen its co-operation with Canada by exploring how to finance Canadian projects.

Ontario municipalities could face cuts to provincial funding if they fail to comply with "Buy Ontario" procurement requirements amid a trade war with the U.S.

Barenaked Ladies sing O Canada at Buffalo Bills home opener. Fans cheer as Bills play the Detroit Lions. The Bills have about 10,000 Canadian season ticket owners.

Ontario Supporting New \$410M Critical Mineral Processing Facility in Marathon. supporting nearly 500 jobs while protecting Ontario's critical mineral supply chain.

Kingston aluminum plant lays off 1/3 of workforce, 80 workers, due to U.S. tariffs.

Canada is eyeing ways to informally lock into Europe's \$21 trillion market so goods, services and workers in strategic industries like energy, AI and defense.

EU Chief Backs Canada's Push to Become Bloc's First Associate Member. Canadian PM Mark Carney has urged much deeper partnership with European alliance.

More than 9,300 federal public servants have been approved for an early retirement package as part of the federal government's plan to trim the size of its workforce.

Canada wants to help strengthen and build a new east-west internet fiber network to keep more data and internet traffic under Canadian control, less reliant on US.

Ontario Marks First Access to Nickel Ore at the Craig Mine Onaping Depth, \$2 billion nickel mining expansion in August to support 400 good-paying full-time jobs.

Trans Mountain Corp. says the pipeline that sends Alberta crude to the Vancouver area ran 94 per cent full during the second quarter, is requesting an expansion.

A proposed pipeline carrying one million barrels of oil a day from Alberta to the B.C. coast has become the first project designated in the national interest.

BCS Automation expanding in Belleville after Vancouver Shipyards invested in it as a Canadian Supplier of automated systems, amid Canada's Shipbuilding Strategy.

Grain being shipped out of Port of Churchill for 1st time in 6 years. Port will help Canada diversify trade as U.S. demands go 'way too far,' federal minister says.

From new military investments to Arctic security and sovereignty, Canada is pouring billions into asserting its presence in the North.

GM adding production of next gen heavy duty trucks and transmissions and will not sell idled plant - part of the new agreement between GM and its workers.

GM and the Unifor union reached agreements committing to keep the CAMI plant's future a priority for new programs or defense work.

The Ontario government is investing \$5.1 million in Biovold North to advance the engineering work needed to potentially restart the Espanola pulp mill.

Xanadu quantum computing firm gets \$195M federal boost to produce chips that are powered by light, not electricity, to guide particles of light without creating heat.

Iran's Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei calls for gradually reducing the U.S. dollar's role in their economy and relying more heavily on domestic production.

Canada, U.K., France to ban trade of goods from Israeli settlements in occupied West Bank. Israel to close British consulate in East Jerusalem in response.

Seven months into the US-Israel war on Iran, the governments in the three countries are all fighting political wars at home.

Canada and Ukraine to scale up drone production, build up Canada's defence industries, and aim to achieve a just and lasting peace in Ukraine

Norwegian company in Canada uses drones equipped with hoses to spray windows down with cleaning solutions and filtered water on office towers.

Ontario Corps partners with Ontario Stone, Sand and Gravel Association (OSSGA) to leverage its members and construction equipment during an emergency.

ON investing \$20M to upgrade 2 critical wildland fire management facilities that are strategically located to deploy fire crews, equipment and aircraft in NW Ontario.

Ontario expanding Student and Family Support Offices to all school boards, giving families a way to get help regarding their child's education and find solutions faster.

Hilroy scribbles, known for the cover with a map of Canada on them, printed a version with a map without Newfoundland and Cape Breton. Hilroy admits it failed.

Used bookstores navigate 'suspicious' bulk orders amid AI book-shredding fears. Canadian booksellers worry buyers are scanning, destroying books to train AI.

21 universities in Canada are hiring dozens of researchers to join their top academic ranks, poaching the majority of the recruits from the United States.

Ontario welcomes Sanofi pharmaceutical company's new \$925 million vaccine manufacturing facility that brings 300 highly skilled jobs to Toronto.

Ontario recruited 570 doctors and 2,300 nurses from the US in 2025 alone. Workers are bringing experience and ideas from some of the largest hospitals in the U.S.

Ontario Helping opening applications for expanded Ontario Learn and Stay Grant with \$220 million investment to support more than 2,000 future family doctors.

Toronto's SickKids hospital has been ranked the world's best children's hospital for a second consecutive year, according to one study.

Canadian astronaut Jeremy Hansen became the first non-NASA astronaut to receive the American Congressional Space Medal of Honor in August.

Air Canada announced an expanded mobility aid policy Friday that will allow customers to bring up to three mobility aids free of charge. "It's not luggage."

Air Canada to launch seven new routes in biggest global expansion in its history. New flights will create 1,500 jobs and boost GDP by over \$7 billion a year.

VIA Rail cars to be made in Canada for 1st time in 40 years with support from the federal government.

About 1 in 8 cancer cases worldwide may be caused by infections—many of which are preventable with treatment or vaccines, according to new research.

WHO has released updated recommendations to help prevent or delay the onset of dementia as 45% of all dementia cases have preventable causes.

The Mysterious Door

"Oh crap," I said while mumbling over the eggs in my mouth, sounding as if I was under water. First of all, I'm Waddles and I'm going to tell you the story of how I almost got stuck in a place called Egg Land.

One day I was laying on my couch, bored out of my mind when I had the idea to go snoop around in my basement. So, like any kid, I went downstairs to snoop around and find some old stuff, not trying to find anything too crazy, when I found a mysterious door with a question mark on it. I decided to open it and go in, after that it all went black.

When I woke up all I could see was mushy yellow ground that smelled like delicious, scrambled eggs. I was so hungry I could barely stand, so I tried some and, WOW, it tasted exactly like mouthwatering scrambled eggs that my own mother makes. When I turned around, I saw a human-sized egg.

"Hello and welcome to Egg Land. I am King Eggman and here you can have any kind of egg you could ever want. Here are my workers called egglets," he blurted out. I looked down and saw hundreds of little blobs of scrambled eggs scurrying around my feet.

"Those must be the egglets" I thought to myself. When I looked back at King Eggman he was wearing a royal blue cape with a wine-red stripe down the middle, a crown that shined so bright I almost went blind, and in his left hand was a golden staff fit for a king. After that, King Eggman led me to a house made out of yellow bricks and black roof

shingles in the middle of a beautiful neighborhood.

After I had been there for at least 4 weeks, I started to make my way to Egg Palace to ask when I could go home, after making my delicious, scrambled eggs with cheese and ketchup. When I got there, I asked him,

"King Eggman I've been here for a while and I'm starting to miss my fam-

ily a bit, not trying to be mean but when can I go home?"

"About that..." he murmured.

"What do you mean 'about that'?"

I questioned with a confused tone.

"Yeah, um today is when you choose to stay here for your life or go back home and be deathly allergic to eggs."

"Oh crap" I muttered while stut-

tering over the eggs in my mouth.

"Yeah, but you have five days so zero rush." For the next five days I was thinking harder than I had ever thought before.

When the 5 days were over, I started to slowly crawl my way back to Egg Palace making the quickest decision of my life. As soon as I got there, he immediately asked me,

"So... where have you chosen to spend your life?"

"King Eggman, it was the hardest decision of my life, but I have chosen to go home. I love it here, but I miss my family more than EVER!" I exclaimed.

"Ok," he sighed and with a snap of his fingers it immediately went black. When I woke up, I was in a place that wasn't all yellow, it didn't mush when I walked and it didn't smell like eggs at all. As soon as I got into the kitchen, I saw my mom stirring a delicious potato and carrot stew cooking on the hot stove. Once she turned around, she suddenly screamed.

"GUYS, HE'S HOME!" After that my dad and all four of my siblings came sprinting down the stairs faster than the speed of light. They all hugged me tighter than ever and I finally felt the warm embrace of the family that I'd been missing for ages.

The next day at breakfast my mom asked me,

"So how do you want your eggs?"

"Actually, I was thinking of waffles today, I'm a bit sick of eggs now."



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Tattoo

Davey gulped. It was to be his first tattoo. He decided to get his brother's name on his arm. He'd been notified that his big brother had been killed in Helmand province in Afghanistan. Davey had always looked up to his brother Milo.

He opened the door, hearing the bell tingle. A woman's voice shouted, "I'll be with you in a minute. Look around." The walls were covered with sketches, color drawings, and photos of an incredible variety of tattoos. It looked like someone had tried to categorize them. One whole wall was animals, then faces, religious themes, landscapes, geometric designs, foreign language symbols, and on and on. Davey was awed.

He found the tattoo he'd always wanted when he'd gone with his brother. It was a black panther looking over its shoulder, snarling and little red lines simulating blood dripping from its claws. He thought that was so cool. But he only had enough money to get the name on his arm or wrist.

A young woman came out through a curtain from a room in the back. She was small, pretty, long, dark hair braided and over one shoulder. She was wearing a pair of tight jeans and a scoop neck T-shirt that read 'Yes, I have tattoos. I also have an education and a career.'

She stopped before him and stood, hands on hips. She smiled at him, deep dimples on her cheeks. "So, what can I do for you, kid?"

Davey just gaped at her. Her arms and hands were covered with tattoos. So was her chest, what he could see



Pic by Stories and Ink Tattoos - Unsplash.com

of it. "Are, are you covered with tattoos?" He knew he was asking a foolish question but he was tongue-tied.

She studied him for a long minute, then turned and locked the door. With a quick motion of her hand, she flipped the Open sign to Closed. A crooked finger at him and she strode through the curtain again.

Almost in a stupor, he followed her. Once through the curtain, she asked, "How old are you, kid?"

He could only mumble, "Uh, I'm eighteen, and my name's Davey."

"Julie," she said and stuck her hand out. She shook his hand firmly. With a quick move, she took her t-shirt off and dropped her jeans. Davey gawked. This beautiful woman was completely tattooed. She stood before him and pirouetted, just wearing a tiny bra and a thong. He could see everything; well almost everything. He'd never seen a woman unclothed, except some pictures one of the guys at school had shown of his step-sister one time.

"Did you get an eyeful?" she asked with a small smile.

Davey could only nod, afraid to blink.

"Um, do you do that for everybody who comes in here?"

Julie chuckled, "No, just for a special newby, like you." She bent and hauled up her jeans, then slipped the t-shirt back on. "I just wanted you to see what can happen if you get a little carried away."

They returned to the shop. Julie turned to Davey, "So, what would you like me to do?"

Davey pulled his wallet out and showed her the bills. "I have \$35. I want to get my brother's name on my arm. He was killed in Afghanistan last week."

She came close and put a hand on his arm, "Oh, I'm so sorry. Were you close?" Davey just nodded.

"Do you have a picture of him?" He opened his wallet and showed her a picture of the two of them, wide grins on their faces, arms around each other's shoulders. She took it out of the wallet and studied it for a long minute, blinking rapidly, then led him to what looked like an examination table. "Sit, lay back."

Julie gathered a tray of colors, a

tool and a set of fine multi pointed tips. She sat on a rolling stool and slipped his sleeve back. First she shaved his arm with an electric razor. "How are you with pain, kid?" She grinned at him.

Davey shrugged, "I dunno. I don't think I ever experienced much. I guess I'll find out."

"Ah, they're just pin-pricks. In a few minutes, you'll get used to them. So, what was your brother's name?" She picked up a marker and held it poised over his arm.

"Milo. Milo Tomkin. I'm Davey Tomkin." He leaned back and closed his eyes to the buzzing of the needles. At first his arm twitched with the constant pricking pain, but soon, like she said, he grew used to it. Time went by.

After a while, she nudged him, "Wake up, kid." She held up his arm, "What do you think?"

On his forearm was a distinctive reproduction of the photo with their names scrolled beneath. It was beautifully done. Davey looked into her large, blue tear-filled eyes.

He sniffed as a tear spilled down his cheek. "Thank you so much. I, I can't pay you what this is worth. I only have \$35."

Julie leaned forward and kissed his cheek. "Then I guess you'll have to come back once a week or so to work the rest off."

"I'd be pleased to do that, Miss Julie."

After he left, Julie sat and had a good cry. Milo had been in before he went overseas and had Davey's name tattooed on his arm. They had hit it off and he'd promised they would go out when he returned from the war.

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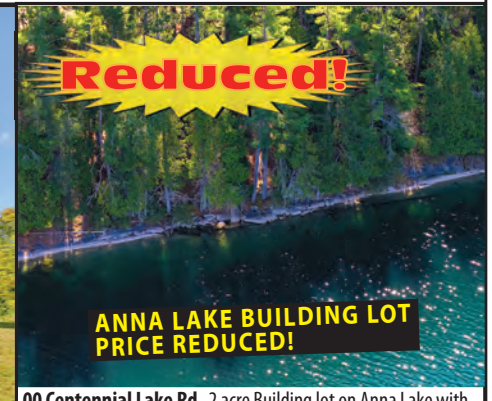
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I Remember Them All

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"How about over here, Grandad? It's shady and there's a nice breeze blowing in off the lake."

My grandson finished parking my wheelchair and setting the wheel locks. Nobody wants to pull an old man out of the water especially on Remembrance Day.

"I'll leave you here while Pete and I grab a milkshake at Debbie's Place. We'll be back before the end of the ceremony," he called out across the lawn.

My grandson is a great kid. His folks are out of town and he'd drawn the short stick; picking up his grandfather and bringing him to the Cenotaph. His payment for that big job was the use of the van while his folks were away for the weekend.

I'm not too fond of his buddy Pete. I was pretty sure that was the kid who had tossed a rotten egg at my house on Halloween a couple of weeks ago.

Kids these days had no appreciation for the history of Remembrance Day. I was just glad he wore a poppy. Even if he wasn't sure why.

I've been to many of these ceremonies in the years since returning from Europe years ago. I used to come with a few of the old boys from town. We had quite a gang of retired vets. We would meet at the Legion and they'd hire a bus to take us over. Now there were just a few of us left and the Legion isn't what it used to be either.

I looked around the grounds surrounding our small Cenotaph and gazed at the assembled dignitaries. The Mayor and three of her four Councillors are here along with a guy from the local Member of Parliament's office. (Apparently, our MP has six ceremonies to attend this weekend, and it isn't our turn to get an in-person appearance. I think the fact that our little village was one of the few municipalities who didn't vote for him may have hurt our chances to catch a glimpse of the big guy.)

In addition, the local priest and an Anglican Minister were in attendance.

The luminaries are beginning their speeches in the usual way, thanking everyone for attending and then talking about the many sacrifices made by our

brave men and women.

When the speeches started, my mind began to drift off as it often does on this Day.

Sitting here under this shady tree with the breeze blowing off the lake brings back a lot of memories. I don't share them often.

I remember clearly the day Davey Langston and I headed off to the Recruiting Office, full of piss and vinegar. The war had been raging for a couple of years. Davey and I figured the only reason it wasn't over was because we were too young to enlist. But now that we were of age, the Jerrys had better keep their heads down, 'cuz the end was near.

Mom, of course, was dead set against it and Dad said lots of stuff about waiting until we had finished our education. I think secretly he was jealous. He was too old to enlist and had to make do as a Civilian Patrol member.

Davey got home a lot earlier than me. He lost an arm and one leg was pretty shot up. He passed away about twenty years ago. At his wake they talked about his sacrifice and the pain he was in. The war wounds didn't get him though. Too many Rye and Gingers may have eased one pain but created too many others.

Ha, that reminds me of Joey McMillan. We called him Joe Mufferaw on account of his Ottawa Valley heritage. He was a year or two younger than us, having lied about his age to enlist. He spent most of his time scrounging red wine in every town we entered. If he could have brought home even one tenth of the bottles he drank, he'd have enough vino to operate a decent restaurant for years!

Apparently, all the cigarettes he smoked while drinking his wine caught up with him. Lung cancer at 54 years old. Jeez I miss Joey.

Jimmy Papadopolous, was a great guy. Little Greek fellow. Christ, he went through more razor blades in two years than I've used in the last forty! His beard grew so thick he'd have to shave three times a day! Not an easy feat when you're marching all day and hunkering

down in fox holes in the forest at night.

He had it made when he got home. His folks owned a restaurant in Toronto that eventually became one of the "go-to" places. I ate there once. Him and his wife, Helen; (we called her Helen of Troy, she was so beautiful), made the best fish & chips you've ever tasted. Probably got the recipe back when we were training in Britain. He even used to wrap them in newspapers, like the old country.

Now his kids run the place and he's living a life of leisure.

I've lost track of a few of the guys since we returned. One of my favourite fellas was Darrell, or Donny or heck, what was his name?

Oh ya, Delbert, great Ottawa Valley name. This kid was wild. He was into mechanical stuff like cars and motorcycles. I think his Dad used to own a repair shop back home. Anyway, this guy liked motorcycles so much, they assigned him ride his bike to deliver top secret messages from HQ up to the front lines, or even behind the lines, if required. Probably the most dangerous job in the Army.

He loved it, he said, "Where else can I ride my machine 90 miles an hour and not get a ticket?" He never let on that there was any danger, just called it a great way to spend a day or two in the countryside.

Apparently, riding his motorcycle was quiet and relaxing, something he couldn't do at home with ten brothers and sisters all looking for attention.

I heard he came back from the war in one piece and opened a Repair Shop/Gas Station. Lucky guy.

Jeez, so many memories.

Unfortunately, I remember too many that didn't come home. Our Chaplain was a weird guy. Saul Abramowitz. He was a Jewish Rabbi who served as a Chaplain. Not just to the Jewish kids but everyone. Very, very serious guy, he kept reminding us that the war was "personal" for him.

He had family in Poland and last he heard they were rounded up and sent off on trains to various camps. He kept hearing horror stories about what happened to them in the camps.

Funny enough, a couple of times he was seen comforting some injured Jerries we had captured. Said it wasn't their fault this war was happening, "They're kids like us," he said. "Go where you're told and do what you have to do."

Back to reality. Oh look, there's little Susie McNeil reciting the Flander's Fields poem. Her grandfather was in the First Great War, got shot up pretty bad at Vimy.

They're playing Taps now. Always brings back bad memories.

My grandson and his buddy are back. "Hey that was quick, you have a chocolate shake at Debbie's?"

"No, Mister Grandad," (that's what Robbie's friend Pete always called me), "Robbie and me were in the back row. We decided to stick around and watch the ceremony.

"You know what Sir? It was quite touching. I'm actually feeling bad about egging your place on Halloween. I'm gonna come over next weekend and repaint the door I messed up. Maybe Red, like the poppies."

"Hey Grandad," Robbie said, "you catch a cold or something? I'll get you a tissue, you've got some tears streaming down your face."



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LOCAL PAPER SENDS BAD GUYS TO PRISON

The echo in the culvert seemed to make the threatening yell shake their very bones. Ben and Joe ran as fast as they could toward the light at the far end their feet splashing in the shallow water. Try as the could, the two hunched-over and panting men chasing them could not out run them. Only their voices could catch them. "Keep your mouths shut you little bastards or we'll find you and cut your tongues out," rang in their ears as they emerged into the sunlight. They didn't stop for a second as they darted into the woods along the animal trails hidden to all except nine-year old boys who have spent half their lives exploring the local gullies as extensions of their back yards.

Ben and Joe didn't stop running until their little bodies just couldn't go any further. Joe decided they needed to tell what they saw to his older brother, the 15 year-old Carter, before they told anyone else. "We were following a turtle in the culvert when we heard a commotion on the road above. We snuck to the edge of the culvert and looked up through the bushes. We saw two men dragging a third man out of the trunk of their car. He was gagged and his hands and feet were tied. They kicked and punched him something awful and then threw him over the edge where he landed right in front of us. Ben let out a little yelp, which made the men scramble down toward us. I grabbed Ben's arm and yelled - run."

Carter hugged the two boys, gave them some water and gently calmed them down. He immediately called someone. "Come on boys. I know someone who can help you."

A few minutes later they were



with Gadget, leader of the Awaskas, a nearby secret group of teenagers known for elaborate pranks and for solving crimes. Gadget learned that Joe remembered the car's licence plate number, that he had a sense of the type of car and that they could probably identify their faces. "Boys, the solution is quite simple and safe - Crime Stoppers. You can anonymously give information about crimes and the police use it to get the bad guys. No one but us will ever know who saw what." The boys agreed on condition that Gadget call it in for them, which Gadget did.

Two days later a local paper in the neighbouring county reported that police found a man in a gully near the tenth line, an isolated area far from where the boys had reported what they had witnessed. He was found tied up and gagged, had evidence of having been severely beaten and was in a coma in

hospital. The report indicated police had no leads.

Gadget figured the thugs had moved the man they beat to that other location. He again called Crime Stoppers anonymously to suggest his theory.

The local gossip buzzed for days about the crime, something that was very rare in this small town backwoods (the crime, not the gossip). But the speculation died down over time.

Carter got Gadget to meet the boys again. "Carter tells us the police have not found the bad men. We're scared. What should we do?" asked Joe. Gadget made a few calls and learned that a local police officer had spilled the beans quietly to a friend that the Crime Stoppers report of a beating at the eastern part of the county was not related to the beaten man they found miles away to the west. Gadget immediately became suspicious. He assured the boys he had a plan to 'light a fire' under the police to force some action. He calmed the boys' fears and agreed to meet them weekly until this matter was resolved.

Gadget called the Awaskas to a 'war council' as he called their planning meetings. Assignments were handed out and the Awaskas attacked their tasks with enthusiasm.

A day later, Gadget was speaking anonymously on the phone to the general manager of the local newspaper. He convinced him to publish in the coming weekly's edition the winning submission in its annual short story contest. It was an Awaskas-written piece that described in detail how two little boys had witnessed a crime, were being intimidated, that police had a licences plate number and description of the men and their car. It included a local police officer shirking his responsibilities and sloughing off important clues. It was presented as fiction but the townsfolk saw through it quickly. Suddenly the mayor and the police were being publicly scorned and pressured for their inaction.

The mayor was powerless and the police dug in their heels responding that the story was fictional, that the licence plate number was entirely made up and that the purported location was nowhere near where they found the man.

Gadget was not deterred.

Within a week an article appeared in the newspaper of the closest large city. The cops were unfazed. They accused the newspaper of baseless and sensational accusations by innuendo.

The boys were outwardly calm

when they met Gadget but he could see the fear in their eyes. He assured them again that it was not over.

The local paper's next headline ensured the hubbub would not die soon. "Atlantic Magazine Short Story Prize Given to Local Canadian Newspaper". The New York Times ran an article with the headline "Fiction or Non-Fiction: Local Paper Contest Lights Fire Under Police". It featured the general manager of the local paper describing his newspaper's role in trying to make the community safer. The Awaskas' anonymous short story was now a national sensation in the United States, and by extension, in Canada as well.

And it didn't end there. The nearby big city paper reported an internal police investigation had resulted in an officer's suspension pending further investigation. It seems some anonymous tip had been provided to the Ontario Provincial Police command that one of its officers was acting suspiciously. It turns out that the officer had followed up the licence plate to find it belonged to his younger brother whom he wanted to protect from the law. Other officers were assigned and two men were now in custody. Proof was found in their car trunk that clearly linked them to the beating crime. As a bonus, police found stashed \$100,000 from a bank heist from a few months earlier. Within a month the two men were convicted and sent far away to prison for many years.

Epilogue: The local paper had printed a disclaimer about its short story contest that indicated "If this newspaper no longer exists when the contest deadline expires, no prize money will be awarded." The local paper, like many in small town Ontario, was in danger of closing due to the changing times that no longer made publication financially viable. The role the newspaper played in securing the conviction won it the Atlantic Magazine's \$10,000 short story first prize and another \$10,000 from Crime Stoppers, the latter because the Awaskas group could not be found. A further \$20,000 was donated anonymously to the newspaper from someone who wrote that prison might actually help turn around the life of one of the young convicts. Local businesses flocked like never before to have their ads shown in the local paper despite the twenty-five percent increase in its rates.

Ben and Joe are back to being boys, spying on turtles and such. And they vow to tell their parents some day about their adventure. The end



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The Chair

Smoke! – Fire! The metallic, computer-generated voice slowly entered his consciousness.

Smoke! – Fire! The voice repeated, punctuated by the ear shattering scream of the alarm.

William lay on the floor listening, but unable to act. His head rested against the front of the stove, his arms frozen by his side, unable to do more than twitch uncontrollably. The smell of burning bacon grease makes its way into his mind triggering a memory of the past few minutes.

He remembers standing at the stove pre-frying a griddle of bacon for the family breakfast tomorrow. He also knows he should be doing something... something important...something right now!

Smoke! – Fire! Smoke! – Fire! Get up. He must get up but his legs will not obey.

The smell of burning bacon is mixed with smell of other things; hot metal and burning plastic. A layer of smoke is creeping downwards from the ceiling, and he knows he needs to call 911 but his phone is on the kitchen table. It may as well be on the moon considering his complete lack of mobility. Finally, a thought emerges, I'm having a stroke, followed by, I am going to die, right here on the kitchen floor.

Once again, he tries to get up, to move any part of his body, even to just scream or call for help but nothing works. His paralysis is complete except for his eyes. At least he can move them. Is this how it ends?

The ceiling is a terrifying sight. The smoke is getting darker and he can

see flames from the burning cabinets just behind his head. This is not the vision he wants to take to his grave. His eyes wander around the room and finally rest upon the wooden chair in the corner. He can just see its legs, seat and bit of the ladder backrest. Seeing it brings to his mind a flood of memories.

It is his chair. He made it or more precisely, his grandfather made it and he helped. Remembering the chair brings up the memory of his grandfather, always plaid clad and smelling of sawdust. A man with strong, knobby but kindly hands capable of molding wood into marvelous things. He remembers lazy winter snow-days when school was cancelled. Days spent in the workshop with the man and watching as he went about his craft. The smell of neatsfoot oil mingled with sawdust and wood smoke from the warm fire that burned all winter long in the oval stove that sat in the corner. He could now feel the warm softness of the neatsfoot that the old man allowed him to rub into the seat of the

chair bringing out the grain of the wood and making it softly shine.

Smoke! – Fire! A new vision. He is staring at two eggs on a plate. The yokes like two bright yellow eyes look back at him. He is leaning back in the chair and remembers the feel of the ladder slats against his back. He can hear his mother's soft voice cheerfully singing, Swinging on a Star, and sees her in her flower print dress with her auburn hair pulled back in a ponytail as she scurries around the kitchen. He remembers her love.

Smoke! – Fire! It is a bright summer's day, and his girlfriend is sitting on the chair. Her yellow hair made even more so by the sunlight that hits it. He can feel the butterflies in his guts as he summons the courage to ask the question that he has had on his lips throughout the day. His previous attempts have been thwarted, either by his lack of courage or by intervening events. He drops to one knee and takes her hand. A question, THE question is asked and

for a minute of agony, when doubts and disaster occupy his mind, he waits and is answered: Yes!

His mind has tuned out the cry of the alarm, and this is a blessing. Fingers of orange flames have joined the thick, black smoke that fills the ceiling and moves ever closer to him but he only notices this as a distant, fading distraction. His focus is on the chair and the memories it holds.

A spring night with rain, hard against the windows and thunder in the distance as he sits soothing his newborn son so his wife can sleep. A different vision of a wooden train engine in his young son's hand as he pushes it around the legs of the chair while making chugging noises.

The scenes come faster now in rapid slide show fashion. His daughter climbing up onto the chair to snatch a cookie. Years later, her sitting in it as his wife puts the finishing touches on her hair before the prom. The son, nursing a hangover at the kitchen table. Grandchildren, knocking the chair over and chipping a piece from the seat as they rough-house play in the kitchen. His wife, gray and weakened, sitting on it and telling him what was to be her goodbye. Each scene registers a memory that is complete in the second or so that it flashes by. It is his life through memories of that chair. A scrapbook of the mind with each page saying what a thousand words could never convey.

By the time the heat is charring the wood and the black smoke is filling the kitchen, he is gone, carried away on the memories of a life well lived and a wooden chair that played a role until the very end.



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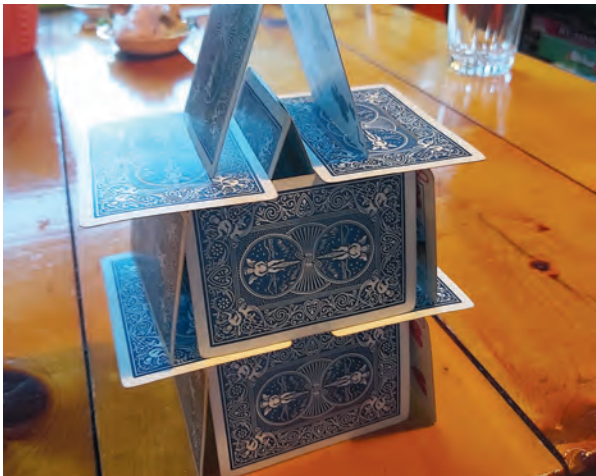
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The Stone Giant



The great stone steps were as big as they needed to be for the giant, but the rest of the house was normal size. He stooped low to get in the front door, so he was nearly on all fours. Inside the house he always walked cautiously, head and shoulders slouched forward as if he'd knocked his head many times, or had done something which made him feel guilty. The bedroom door was perfect for a normal person, but he had to slot himself in sideways, head first, and lie down immediately, as there was room only for himself. His bed was like a horse's, all straw and chicken feathers, draped over with a sail from his father's boat.

The boat was one place where the giant forgot his size. He managed the sails like a cook her tea-towels: easy and deft and clean. The wind felt his size too: large and warm in summer, and in winter, pleasingly tight and chill.

The giant sailed in all seasons, for there was little else he could do. People in town feared him because he towered over them, because he was different. When he wanted to help them with their labours – fixing a roof or trimming a tree or carrying heavy loads – they would chase him off. He especially wished his neighbours would allow him to care for their children, and he had a real soft spot for babies, but there was no chance he would ever get even to hold one. In time he stopped trying, and then they feared him even more because they did not see him, but felt he was lurking around.

No one suspected that the giant had a great friend inside the walls of his little house. It was a tiny white-footed mouse, his peromyscus paramour. The two were fascinated with each other. The giant felt no greater pleasure than to hold out his hand to the mouse and have

it run up his arm to nestle in the warm hollow of his collarbone. There it would stay all evening until it was time to sleep, when the giant put it down gently and ask it, as he did every night, to stay out of his room for fear he would roll on it in his sleep and crush it. And he would tell it to have sweet dreams. When he spoke to the mouse, he whispered, but mostly they did not need to speak at all.

One day after a supper of fish like most suppers, the giant sat on the couch by the hearth, the one seat in the house wide enough for him, with the mouse on his shoulder watching the fire. "I'm thinking of sailing away," the giant whispered. "And then coming back," he added quickly so the mouse would not be alarmed. "I want to see what it's like to come back, like a newcomer. I think people would run to see me."

And he did sail away the very next day, and the mouse, of course, did too. They sailed all through the night and over a day into the next day and the days became nights and the nights days. The stars took their places in the skies, breezes sighed soft arpeggios into the rigging. Little mousie found herself a mate on a dock in Italy and, heart-broken but happy, she sniffled goodbye with her whiskers on the giant's cheek.

He carried on with no reason until it was time to go back. By the time he returned, he was changed. Somewhat shrunk by the drying sun and wind and hard labour of sailing; somewhat grizzled by time and salt and a diet of unending fish with no greens, he sailed into his harbor on a bright day. Gulls wheeled and the smell of the sea freshened as he lowered his sails and prepared to find his land legs.

A few people turned to him curiously, as they would to any newcomer, and a child or two began to run

toward him till they were called back, as with any newcomer. A warmth of quiet friendliness flooded from the townspeople. The giant was home, and no one chased him away. Most of the villagers did not remember him, or hadn't yet been born when he left. They had only heard of him when they asked about the derelict house on the edge of town, and then the tales they heard were taller than the giant himself. They had no reason to connect the weathered older man with the legendary ogre of the stories. When he returned to the old house to fix it up and to make some rules for the new families of mice that had taken up residence there, the townspeople thought he must be a relative of the giant's who came to live among them. Those who knew better said nothing to give him away, for they had missed their giant man. When he was gone, the town had felt ordinary and small. Though he himself was smaller now, and even used a ladder he had never needed before when putting

on the new red roof, he still went sideways and stooped in at the doors. And somehow the town swelled and was fuller, and the children added a new skip to their steps. Now and then one of them would speak to him or sit with him on the warm rocks by the wharf, but mostly they let him alone.

For his part, he built homes with great piles of stones for toads and chipmunks and snakes, and a mink that his neighbours chased away; and a little house of cards for the youngest of the mouse families, which they delighted in trying not to knock over. Inevitably someone did, and the stone man, as the children called him, would build it tenderly again, adding a new level on top every time new babies arrived, until he had to buy a second deck of cards. Thus his hands remained steady and his heart stayed true and he sailed the bay as long as the sky was brilliant and blue.

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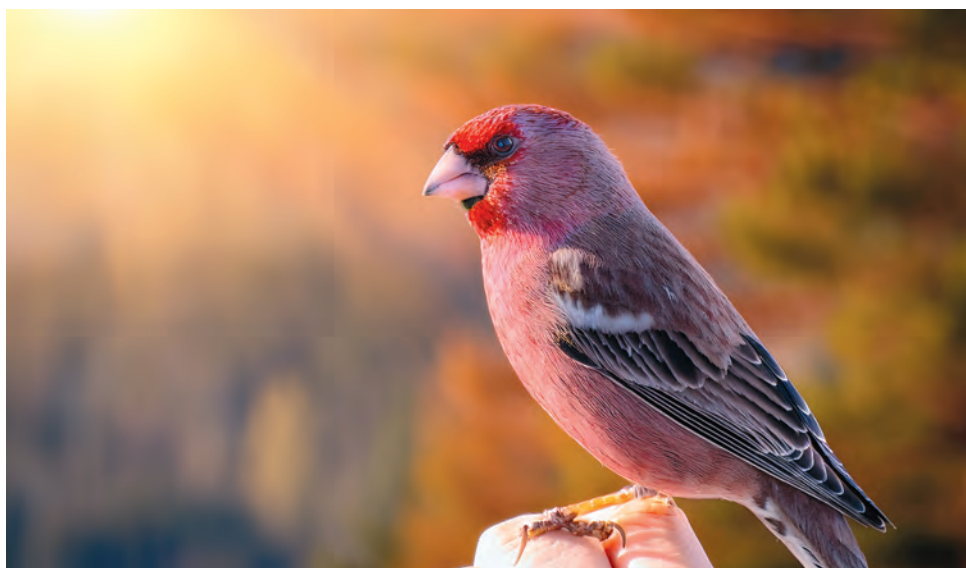
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BBFFs – Birds and Best Friends Forever

I live on a lake in Bonnechere Valley and continuously enjoy special moments and memories while surrounded by nature and the great outdoors. I have recorded the ice-out dates in the Spring, watched grandchildren fish off the dock then frolic in the water during Summertime visits, seen all the regular birds come and go, as well as noticed a few irregular visitors too. I love to gather apples and wild grapes in the Fall. Life is good, nonetheless, I sometimes find myself feeling nostalgic.

The date is April 17, 2016. While drinking my coffee and absently gazing out the patio doors, I am deep in thought about my best friend, Marie. I recall how we first met in Grade 9 when she was the new kid in town and came to the same high school I was attending. I noticed her sitting alone looking shy and perhaps a bit sad too. I introduced myself, we became BFFs, and the rest is history. At our weddings, she was my maid of honour and I, her matron of honour. Unfortunately, she got sick with cancer and passed away after a long and courageous battle – that was way back in 2004. Then, bang! I am abruptly snapped out of my reverie when two birds strike our front windows simultaneously.

It was precisely 8 o'clock in the morning. The sound jolted my senses and immediately launched me into action. A quick glance outside confirmed that both birds were alive but definitely stunned. I was afraid they might go into shock. I ran into the kitchen and heated two clean tea towels in the microwave. It only took about twelve seconds but it felt



like forever. Then, I went outside on the deck where the wee victims were laying and hoped that I could help them. The first was a tiny Purple Finch. I tenderly handled her and managed to wrap her little body inside the warm cottony fabric. The second was a Red-winged Blackbird. A more robust bird that I carefully wrapped into the other makeshift rescue blanket. I sat on the steps facing the lake, cradling one bird in each hand. I had my back to the offending picture windows and felt truly disappointed that the special vinyl appliques purchased at the bird store had not prevented these birds from flying into the glass. Maybe these two were engaged in some squabble over food space around the bird feeder and didn't look where they were going or have time to change course. I watched them closely while making what I hoped

were encouraging noises and whispering prayers that they would be okay.

Each little face turned to look up at me with blinking eyes as if shaking off the cobwebs after a long sleep, or more likely, just trying to figure out what happened and why they found themselves in such close proximity to a human. I suspected they were slightly concussed and probably seeing double, poor babies. Anyway, after about ten minutes, the finch was first to revive itself, wiggle out of the wrapping and climb up onto my bare hand. After testing her wings, letting loose a cloud of tiny feathers into the air, she flew away and delicately landed on the branch of a nearby tree. The larger bird took a bit longer to come to its senses but did finally step out of his warm towel. He stood on my wrist for a while, then stepped

gingerly onto my thumb, gripping it with his claws. Before long, he too was ready and just up and flew away!

Still sitting outside on the steps, my mind returned to thoughts of Marie. Today was her son's 20th birthday. On a day like this, he must be missing her. Since I believe things happen for a reason – having two birds strike the window at the same time is quite unusual – I wondered whether I had experienced some kind of spiritual visit from my friend. Could she be trying to tell me she knew I was thinking about her? Could she be urging me to keep in touch with her family? For the record, as soon as I went back into the house, I did reach out to him and we had a long talk.

The tender moments I spent with these two little birds and my conversation with that young man were real gifts and I'm not ashamed to say I shed a few tears. I feel so lucky to have my home at the lake and be surrounded by nature in all its splendour. I am grateful for all the unexpected but special moments.

PS: Today is actually September 22, 2026. I was in the process of typing the above true story, and bang! Didn't another bird knock itself out against our window. At exactly 8 am. My feeder is nowhere near the front windows anymore so, I think this bird was momentarily blinded by the bright morning sun. After a brief recovery time inside a box lined with a warm tea towel, my little feathered friend returned to the skies. Thanks, Marie. I feel like this was your way to say it's okay to share the above story. I miss you.

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Farm Life: Where the Animals Run the Show

Rise and shine! My 5:45 AM wake-up call isn't your typical alarm clock blaring. No, it's more like an internal nudge that wakes me every morning at the same time—rain or shine, late night or not. It's the barn floorboards trembling like they're doing the jitterbug, and the chorus of "Maaa-saronades" sung in perfect unison by the cloven-hoofed choir—because apparently, the universe has waited long enough for breakfast, and there's no stopping those hungry hooves from having their servants serve them up their morning feast now!

As the first rays of sunrise peek over the horizon, Clark Junior—the big, fluffy-butted, white rooster with a voice louder than a rock concert joins the chorus as he rattles the coop walls and erupts into a relentless, ear-shattering cock-a-doodle-doo, determined to wake up the entire neighborhood... whether they like it or not.

I crawl out of bed, pulling on my rubber boots that have never truly been clean, bundle up in my plaid farm coat, and step outside into the damp morning air. The wind is brisk, and the sun is just a faint, bruised purple glow on the horizon, but the farm is already in full swing.

The Barn Manager (aka me) is greeted immediately by the "guardian team." Three guinea fowls who keep watch over the farm from the apple tree—Buster, Stella, and Daisy. They hop down to greet me for some morning grub. They have been awake all night, standing guard against coyotes, neighborhood cats, raccoons, or anything else they feel might harm the farm animals. When threatened, they let out a chorus of high-pitched whistles and screeches, sure enough to scare almost any predator off.

The guinea hens—our natural pest control—are also notorious beggars. They are ugly-beautiful creatures, looking like speckled bowling balls with heads, and they are incredibly noisy. They fly up to the roof of the barn, squawking their metallic chi-chi-chi song, and then jump down, pacing back and forth, begging for the first scraps of breakfast to fall into their open mouths. I sprinkle a plentiful serving of seeds on the ground, just to shut them up.

The blend of hungry farm animals is deafening. Goats, particularly dairy goats, do not beg for breakfast quietly. It's a rhythmic, high-pitched meh-eh-eh that sounds remarkably like a chorus of screaming toddlers.

"Alright, ladies! Keep it down!" I yell, though I know it's useless.

I push open the barn door and check on the tall brown momma Nubian and her newborn goats, who have been locked in a stall overnight for protection. Momma is doing well, guarding her two babies. But, she's eager for some fresh water and her morning snack of fresh hay.

Inside the barn yard, a mix of Nubian and Nigerian Dwarf goats are doing their happy dance when they spot me. They climb on their cedar-



Pic by Oskar Kadaksoo - Unsplash.com

plank structure, leap and jump in the air, head-butt one another, and push against the fence to be the first one fed. Their long ears flap in the breeze, and their wide eyes, with those strange rectangular pupils, track my every movement.

With my pail of goat treats in hand. I head toward the herd. The chaos instantly gives way to a controlled stampede toward the food trough. They know the routine better than I do.

While the goats are outside enjoying their breakfast, it's a great time to pay some much-needed attention to the stall. I pick up the pitchfork and drag it along the floor, checking for damp bedding and spreading some fresh straw.

A riot of tiny legs, floppy ears, and head-butting bodies joins me in the barn as the goat kids, only three weeks old, high-energy, mischievous, and incredibly loud, enjoy playing in the fresh straw.

They nibble on my boots, test the strength of my clothes, and try to climb up my leg. It's an exercise in patience. But, they are definitely ready for Tuesday night's goat yoga class!

"Hey, boss lady! The pot-bellied pigs snuck out!" shouts my husband from the driveway.

I grab a bucket of pig pellets and shake it. Pot-bellies are notorious escape artists. But, thankfully, they also love a good meal. Within five minutes, they are back in their pen, grunting and complaining the whole time that the goats have already finished their breakfast and are now helping themselves to the pigs' food. What's a farmer to do?

By 7:00 AM, the goats, pigs and guinea hens are finally fed, the barn is cleaned, and quiet. The herd streams out to pasture, a brown, white, and black river of fur, heading toward the pond, enjoying a plentiful supply of briars and fresh grass.

Now for the rest of the crew. The laying hens are waiting, huddled at the front door of the chicken coop, clucking impatiently. I collect the

eggs—a dozen brown, two blue, and one green—and check for any hidden nests in the hay. The guinea hens might have snuck a few in here, too. I top up the feeder, provide some fresh water, and finally open the coop door to let the hens out to free range. The rooster thanks me by letting out a loud, harmonious crow.

The flock of sheep is much more laid-back than the lively goats. They've been grazing peacefully in their nearby pasture, requiring little care—just a quick check-in. Their feeder is stocked with fresh hay, and they have access to their own pond for a drink. They bleat a cheerful hello and seem to be doing just fine, until I notice a tiny lamb struggling to keep up with the rest of the herd. Upon closer inspection, it's clear that he's got a broken leg, which will need to be carefully splinted. The sheep will also need to be separated from the flock and placed in a cozy pen with food and water. Just when I think the farm choirs have quieted down, here comes one more unexpected duty!

Finally, there are the rabbits. Tucked away in the shed, they are the quietest animals on the farm. Ginger, a lop-eared orange and white spotted bunny, comes to the front of the shed for her morning snack. Fiona, the other grey bunny, is happily grooming

herself. They get fresh alfalfa hay and water, and I spend a few minutes petting their soft ears—a peaceful contrast to the earlier goat and sheep drama.

By 7:30 AM, the first round of chores is done. I go inside for a quick coffee, looking out the kitchen window at the "goat playground." It's a scene of organized pandemonium: goats climbing on structures, a baby trying to escape under the fence, and the dog lying in the sun, watching it all.

The rest of the day is for maintenance. A goat fence needs patching; a pig named Gremmy decided that the neighbor's roses tasted better than our clover. I use wood scraps—the universal farm fix-it tool—to secure a gap between the grass and the fence until I have more time to fix it properly.

Meanwhile, Blue, the big farm dog—part border collie, part Great Pyrenees—walks with me, eyes darting at the tree line for predators. He's also quick to spot any escaped chickens or critters out of place. If they wander off, don't worry—Blue can chase them back home in about five seconds flat.

Evening chores start around 5:00 PM. The goats yell, "Maaa," from the pasture, reminding me it's dinner time. I feed them first, then the pigs, and quickly check that everyone's doing okay.

As the sun sets with a soft orange glow, the goats settle, rabbits are quiet, hens roost, and guinea hens are finally silent. I step out of the barn, exhausted, my clothes covered in straw, hay, and animal poop. The day's weight is on my shoulders, but it's a good kind of tired.

I look back at the farm yard, at the quiet, happy chaos we've built. It's a hard life, full of early mornings, screaming animals, and endless work, but it's complete.

Walking back to the house, I hear a sleepy "meh" from a baby goat. "Goodnight, kids," I whisper, already thinking of tomorrow's 5:45 AM wake-up call.

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Grandma's House

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As a kid, I loved visiting Grandma. My family and I lived about four hours away from her Scarborough home, so our visits were too few and far between. But every time we knocked on the door and ran inside, it was as if we had never left. There were hugs and kisses, a quick pencil mark for the height chart on the door frame, and a Rice Krispy treat offered as soon as we walked into her kitchen. The tiny breakfast table was as it always had been, the rotary phone sitting atop it. Next to that, her address book; opened to page holding the phone number of one of her many dear friends. She stayed connected with so many, the sound of ringing phone was comfortingly constant. Every surface of her home held collections of figurines, potted plants, photographs and the various meaningful odds and ends her grandchildren had presented to her over the years.

The steep stairs beside the kitchen led to a dark basement filled with lead painted toys from the 60's. The old fridge with the latch handle would be humming and would always have a few cans of Vernors Ginger Ale waiting for us. My parents slept down there in a bedroom in which Grandma was convinced they would freeze overnight, despite the presence of several dozen blankets and a space heater.

I slept in the tiny bedroom that used to belong to my dad. The lavender scented sheets were a keen reminder that grandma was expecting our visit. One of the best parts about sleeping in that room was the closet. When the house was quiet and everyone was asleep, I would turn on the tiny bedside lamp and snoop. Inside there were boxes upon boxes filled with pictures from the past. A snowy black and white photo of a girl and a horse. A happy young woman with bouffant hair. Two boys cuddling a puppy in the front yard of the very same house I was in. I felt like I was being let in on a secret.

One morning I confessed my nighttime sneakiness to Grandma. Her eyes lit up and then quickly dimmed.

"I have so many photos, I really need to go thru them someday" and she would sigh.

After several days, we would reenact the arrival routine in reverse. We would share goodbye hugs and kisses at the front door and Grandma would hand us homemade cookies and cans of Vernors Ginger Ale for our drive. After these visits I often heard my parents chatting in the car on the way home.

"She has so many things, that place is going to be a nightmare to go thru."

As I grew up, I came to understand that my parents were discussing the unenviable task of helping my grandmother downsize possessions while she was still capable of participating. She DID have a lot of things. I started to notice that every drawer was filled to the brim. Every room had a closet like the one I loved to spend time in. The house was packed with the effects of her life. I could tell that going through Grandma's things

would be an overwhelming task for my family. And I knew my parents were slightly intimidated with the idea.

When I was twenty-one, I moved closer to Toronto (and closer to Grandma) to continue studying for my nursing degree. I was on my way to starting my profession in caring. I was excited and confident and had learned so much about the world in the first two years of nursing school. Like most twenty-one-year-olds, I knew everything.

When my parents would visit me, we would stay at Grandmas house. By this time, age had made her tiny. She could barely reach the countertops but there would still be Rice Krispy treats waiting for us. She could not manage the stairs as easily but there were cans of Vernors Ginger Ale in the upstairs fridge. There were hugs and kisses at the door, but we no longer marked the doorframe as our heights hadn't changed in years. I still slept in the same room, and I still looked at the pictures in the closet every night. At one visit I had a fantastic idea.

"Grandma! What if I spend a few hours with you every week or so? We can sort through and organize all these old pictures." Her eyes lit up. She was excited. We planned to meet the following week when I had down time between classes. I would drive to her place; we would spend a few hours organizing and then I would head back to the city before the rush hour traffic.

I showed up the following week armed with sticky notes of every colour, highlighters and pens. I was ready and determined. I had a plan to catalogue the photos by date, and subject. I was a nursing student; I was organized. I was going to help Grandma sort through

her pictures, and I was going to take some of the worry from my parents of the impending clutter catastrophe.

I arrived at Grandmas house at a perfectly reasonable time for a university student. I knocked and walked in as usual, ready to get to business. This did not happen. First, we had to go and grab her a coffee. She was not a comfortable driver, so we hopped in my Honda and picked up Timmies from the nearest drive thru. When we got back to her house, I noticed that she had several boxes of photos out and ready to go. I thought she was ready too. We opened the first shoebox. Out tumbled hundreds of photos dating from what must have been the 1930's. Some people I recognized, most people I didn't. The photos held images of happy Christmas parties, proud mommies with their babies and family camping trips. Snapshots of her life.

With Post-its and pen ready, I started writing the names of every person in the pictures and sticking them to the back of the photos as Grandma told stories. Many hours had passed when I realized it was time for me to head home. A feeling had been welling up in me throughout our visit. It was frustration. Grandma had spent so much time talking that we had only catalogued about 10 photos. This job was going to take forever. It was going to be tedious. There were SO many pictures. If we were going to organize these photos we were going to really have to pick up the pace.

The following week I went back. I took Grandma for her perfunctory coffee and explained that we were really going to have to get down to business this week. But

once again, when faced with the box of photos, Grandma could not focus. I wanted names and dates, she wanted to tell me what was happening in each photo. She wanted to talk about her friends. Their lives and their scandals. She wanted to tell me all about her brother and his kids and how the birth of his first was suspiciously close to his wedding day. She wanted to tell me about the camping trips she took with her boys. She wanted to tell me how she met and fell in love with my grandad. And I began to understand.

I went to Grandma's house many times while I was at school. I always arrived to hugs and kisses at the front door. I always took her for Timmies when I got there, and I always left with homemade cookies and a Vernors Ginger ale. I did not, however, leave with a catalogue in pictures of her life. I don't think we even made it thru that one shoebox. But I understood that the time we spent was a catalogue of sorts. She was sharing her life with me.

When Grandma passed away her house was STILL filled. Sorting thru WAS a huge job. Lots of things were thrown away. I don't even have many of the pictures from the closet in Grandmas home. I didn't really know the people in those photos anyways. But I have memories of drives for coffee and stories and Vernors Ginger Ale. And I wouldn't trade those memories for any picture with a name and date.



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For the Love of Cats

Pic by Furkids.com - Unsplash.com



With a steaming cup of tea beside me I waited for the call, the same call at the same time for many years. My son is 47, has Aspergers (autism spectrum disorder), and lives in a small apartment in town. I can usually tell what the call will bring after I ask how his day went. An upbeat response means a good day, a lower tone tells me to settle in, the chat will be longer than usual. We get through our days with ups and downs of daily living, for him one simple change is catastrophic.

The lights are rarely turned on, only a blue glow from his computer in the recessed corner of his apartment guided his steps. You would not find a clock on the wall as he did not follow the time as we do. He had his days and nights reversed, thus avoiding social interactions, just before the grocery store closes, he will get the few foods he likes. His world is small and holds a few close people.

Girlfriends came and went, but one constant girl was his cat Faith Ann. She was different as she had an extra claw on her paws, called polydactyl. Her meals were prepared on the cold stove so she thought he was cooking, her water did not come from the tap, only bottled water would do. Bedtime found her patiently waiting for him to make her a cave beside him from the faded comforter. He loved her as she did him.

On a cool day in April, the phone rang, I looked at the ID and it was my son, hours early. I hesitantly picked it up and said hello. The words that came next broke my heart, in a painful rush he cried, mom Faith has cancer, I could feel his panic through the line. Faith had been operated on for lumps in her tummy, then tests revealed she had terminal cancer.

I told him I was on my way and said our goodbyes. As I climbed the stairs to his apartment, I could hear his sobs from down the hall. I opened his door, and there my son lay in a fetal position, crying and asking the universe why her? I went to him, and just like the little boy from years ago, he fell into me and I

held him. We managed to talk about the next steps, he did not want her to suffer, so plans were made to let her go gently. We arrived at the hospital and were led to a room where life was put to rest. Jeff held Faiths paws, talked to her through a voice filled with sadness, it did not take long and she was gone. From the depths of his soul a cry erupted, loud and unforgiving, he was devastated, we waited for him to get some control before we left the room. They did an ink print of her paws for him, and he appreciated that caring gesture, as did I. The trip home was filled with his anguish, and he wanted her buried under our wild rose bush, and he wanted to bury himself as he wanted it done a certain way.

The next few days were filled with intermittent calls from him; he missed her and wanted another cat right away. I cautioned him with the pros and cons of another cat right away, but he insisted, and so he contacted OVR and directed him to a cat foster home in town.

Early May he made the appointment and went to see some cats, he said the cat would choose him. Guided upstairs he entered a room with many cats; he named it the "cattio."

He sat on the couch and waited, a few brave cats hopped up beside him, but one wee cat with part of her tail missing went close. Then he sat on the floor, as most of the cats were timid and unsure of humans. Extending his hand out gently, and then they came. Slowly at first, then close enough for him to pet them. The lady of the house noticed his gentleness and how the cats responded to him. She did not see a young man with Aspergers, she seen a young man with a gift for gentling animals. She offered him a volunteer position once a week to just sit with the cats and give them one on one attention.

He called me and was so excited about his new job, and once again I had to be the voice or reason. I explained it meant changing his routine, going to bed early and getting up on time, that he would be dependent on arriving on time, and

interacting with whoever showed up to the room. He overrode my concerns, stating he could do it, and wait for a cat to choose him at the same time. I relented, and quietly held my doubts in, as we went down this road before. What I didn't know was he had found his calling, his gift of empathy for animals found a path to him, a new journey was beginning.

After a few visits a cat chose him, her name is Koena, the wee girl with half a tail. He took her home as a foster to adopt. She fit right into his life, he changed her life and she changed his. He was very cautious in getting home to her each day he was away, he told me she had a routine and he liked to keep it.

He came to enjoy his job in the cat room he referred to as the cattio and became friends with the folks running the rescue foster home for the cats. He has meals with them, and he said, oddly mom, it is meals that I like. He always had a hard time making friends, but I think it makes a difference when folks accept him for who he is inside, not a label. They tell me what a fine young man I raised, and this fills my heart.

He gave all the cats attention, patiently waiting on some to trust him, a virtue he rarely exhibited before. When he

was cut up by a frightened cat and required rabies shots and antibiotics, he said mom, it wasn't his fault!

He became very knowledgeable about cats and their behaviors, calmed even the most fearful cats, and earned the name "the cat whisperer." He earned a spot on Facebook by the rescuer, she posted him with all the cats around him, the purring sounded like a fine-tuned motor. Our phone calls are more frequent, especially if something new occurs or an adoption takes place. He faced death and dying of some cats, this is the hardest part for him to process, it is very personal to him, and it reaches his soul.

It has been a year, and he still follows his new routine, enjoys his close friends and of course loves and spoils Koena. I see a happy young man doing something he loves, and very proud of how he does it. When I pass his apartment window and I see a light shining through I smile, Koena must be getting her food. No clock has been hung, but alarms on his cell phone remind him of what he had planned for the day. Family and friends have commented on the change in him, wondering what occurred to cause such a change. All I can say to them is it happened "For the Love of Cats."

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Recollections of a Stovepipe Hole By Garry Ferguson

Pic by Max Anderson - Unsplash.com

When the revelation finally registered, it sent my gut looking for my toes. A series of Sunday school teachers had, many times, repeated that same message but it wasn't until one particular Sunday morning when I decided to, for reasons that don't recall, pay attention. This oft-repeated message finally smacked me, like a well-aimed blessing from a low-flying crow, on my little blond head.

God watches you all the time from up there, had been the message all along. It had been often reinforced by the current teacher pointing a finger—except for old Mrs. Thompson who had lost a digit while attempting to hand-feed a ravenous billy goat—skyward.

Fodder for my mental images was gleaned mainly from the sights and sounds of my mundane little world so it was not at all remarkable that this worrisome bit of news triggered an image involving a stovepipe hole. I envisioned a stern, bearded God peering down through this stovepipe hole that looked much like the one in the upstairs of our old log house. I guessed that a few angels might look over His shoulder but was certain that *He* would never have to share with a couple pushy brothers.

So, now I had to deal with the nagging thought that all my rotten deeds had been seen and probably recorded somewhere. I imagined a large book and a page on which there was writing—in English of course. I don't remember anything close to remorse but by evening, I was feeling a smidgen of shame rolled into a raft of embarrassment all seasoned with just a *hint of fear*. It was probably that hint of fear that prompted more than a few sneak peeks as I hoped to catch a glimpse of a stovepipe hole in the clouds.

I flinched inwardly whenever I thought about putting dried horse manure in my old great uncle's pipe tobacco just for calling me a little bastard after I'd wandered over to his place and locked him in his toilet. Everyone in heaven would know about that dirty little secret by now, I concluded.

Of all my many misdeeds though, the one that tweaked my newly-discovered sense of embarrassment was the ruckus I'd caused by convincing Second Brother (SB) that a mothball was a peppermint. He believed me. It struck me that I had pulled a double-barreled transgression by lying to my mother as SB rolled around on the floor gagging and spitting. "Triedda warn'm," I whined.

Fortunately for me, Mum became distracted by the names that SB was substituting for the one on my birth certificate. I smirked and sneaked off to the yard as she was at-



tempting to line him up for her one-size-fits-all punishment—a slap to the back of the head.

Thanks to mental laziness and a short attention span, that childish image of a stovepipe hole in heaven's floor faded and within a couple weeks, I barely remembered it. However, *our* stovepipe hole was different. It was *real*.

The upper story in our log house was merely a loft under a peaked roof. The floor of this *upper chamber* consisted of one layer of rough boards nailed to widely-spaced, log support beams. The pipes from two stoves, a box stove for heating and a cook stove, passed through this loft to protrude on up through the shingled roof. Over the kitchen area, an extra stovepipe hole had been left abandoned and dangerously uncovered. Through this opening, my brothers and I were able to listen in on local news and gossip from visitors who often wandered in after we had, supposedly, toddled off to the Land of Nod.

A night-time knock on our door would trigger a series of thumps as bare feet hit the floor. This was followed by the sound of much scuffling as we stampeded toward the stovepipe hole. We would silently drop to the floor with our little, round heads toward the hole, like a litter of piglets jostling to get their snouts up to the trough, and strain to hear every word that wafted up. Pushing and snarling, we kept to a minimum since we didn't wish to betray our presence or miss the sound of a voice that might identify the visitor.

During one of our late-evening *eavesdropping* sessions, Third Brother (TB) broke all the unspoken *stealth rules* in one go. Since the hole had been cut between two of the log rafters, one of the floor boards was nailed at one end only leaving the other end, by the hole, unsuspended. TB just couldn't leave that one dangler alone and wiggled it until it broke loose and landed among a circle of startled adults. A woman yelped, a cup shattered and our father yelled, "What ta hell's goin' on up there?"

By the time TB had scrambled under the closest bed, leaving me to take the blame—as First Brother, that was my lot in life—it was evident that he had inflicted no serious bodily harm. We never did learn whether, or not, he was responsible for any of those visitors eventually going off to the *Happy Hunters Grounds* a few years prematurely and I don't remember whether, or not, the board was ever replaced.

Since there was room for only one head to protrude through the opening at one time, we usually settled for audio only. There were times however, when video was necessary for full impact like on the night we were walloped by one of the vicious thunderstorms that rolled across the Madawaska Valley during the forties. When Sid shook the whole house with a flying body slam against our door a split second before he launched a two-fisted assault on it, we set a bed-to-hole speed record. Ear-splitting thunderclaps and a roar from a deluge pounding on shingles eliminated any need for sneakiness.

I remember Sid as a mild-

mannered, older man cursed with a terrible facial tic that betrayed his every mood. I don't remember much else since he was one of a group of transients that moved from somewhere out front to briefly squat in a remote farmhouse before moving on. Why he was on the road near our house that night, when lightning split a nearby spruce from tip to root, we never learned.

I took the initiative and lowered my head down through the single layer of boards.

"Yaah! He's clean, crazy scared arrright," I whispered as I withdrew my head from the hole. "Couldn't understand a friggin' word the pore ole bugger said."

After we'd heard our father offer to drive him the three miles over the bush road to the old farm house, we knew that Sid would not be sleeping on our davenport so we trudged on back to our beds. Sleep however, was out of the question until flashes barely lit up the room and thunder had faded to distant rumbles. Only then, we could rest assured that we were not about to be fried—not this time anyway.

After an eavesdropping session during another late—late was any time after dark—evening, I remained in my prone position on the floor while the brothers tiptoed back to resume their dreams. I knew that Mum would come up to do a bed check and because she was so familiar with the layout, never used a light. I didn't move a muscle. After she'd almost tripped over me, she backed off a step. Then, to make sure that there was indeed something blocking her way, she booted me twice with one of her sturdy, *burry-pickin'* shoes. I was proud of myself: I didn't even grunt.

Panicked, she turned and I heard those sturdy *burry-pickin'* shoes beat a rapid drum beat on the steps of the steep, narrow stairway. By the time she'd climbed the stairs again, this time with her coal-oil lamp in hand, I was in bed and doing my best at a credible snore. She, evidently, had no doubt as to who belonged to the body on the floor. Still holding the lamp, she leaned over me and curled my tender ears with a few utterances that, I'm pretty sure, she didn't learn from reading her King James Version.

Thinking back, it seems that my parents had little regard for safety so perhaps my childish mental picture wasn't that silly after all. I'd like to imagine that none of us took a painful shortcut down to the kitchen because someone looked out for us—through a stovepipe hole much like the one in the loft of our old log house.

When the Past Comes Back to Haunt You - Black Donald Farmer

By Howard Popkie, Korean War Veteran, Highlander contributor, since deceased. Story reprinted in honour of Remembrance Day

When I got out of the army in 1954 I was sick of wearing army clothes, so I left them all behind, but when you get old it's so nice when the things you left behind show up again. I walked into an antique shop in Arnprior about a week ago and there was the same uniform I wore when I was just 16 years old. It was really like mine. It had PPCLI flashes on the shoulders and a size 10 and that was my size. I even wonder if it really was my uniform. I bought it for \$57, a nice battle dress, tunic and pants. I took it to the drycleaners and when I get it from there it will always hang in my living room with my medals on it.

A short time ago I was in Ottawa at the War Museum and a group of grade 4 students came along with their teacher. I was admiring the Vickers Machine Gun at the time and the teacher stopped to tell the kids about it. That was the gun I used for 3 years from 1951 to 1954, including the full year I spent on the front line in Korea. When the teacher was finished with her lecture on the gun I said, "You didn't tell them something about the gun." I pointed out to them a little notch in the metal where a spring is hooked on and I said, "Did you know the name of that little tiny notch is the recess or indentation of the prolong action of the left inside plate?"

Later that day I was invited by some of the Arnprior Veterans to come to the high school to speak to the girls and boys about our time in the military. On Remembrance Day, 2013, I sat with seven 84 to 94 year old veterans in a room full of kids, about 100 in all. One by one the vets spoke of their time spent in action and many of the boys and girls cried openly at the horror stories. When it came to be my turn to speak I said, "If you think you're having a bad day, you are not. You are having a good day if no one is shooting at you." I went on to say, "This Sergeant here beside me tells a really good story, but I am not so good at speaking to a crowd, so let's listen to what he has to say." To my surprise he put his hand on mine as he spoke to the kids and said, "Just because he doesn't want to speak doesn't mean he has nothing to say. Some men can't talk about what happened. He is a real hero. He joined the PPCLI when he was just 16 years old, the age many of you are now and spent a year on the front line in Korea. They had 12 Vickers Machine Guns and he was on one of them, right in the thick of it all. He saw 26 of his buddies die and he could have easily been one of them. So don't think that just because he doesn't speak that he has nothing to say. He has lots to say and he is a true hero."

I joined the kids, with facial tissues on their eyes and said, "I can tell you I saw more than my share of life and death by the time I was 17. I know families where four brothers went off to war and only one came home to mother. Now I am an old veteran with medals, speaking to high school kids who are older than I was when I was at war. May the weapons of war rust in peace."

Every year the veterans from the World Wars line up to take a photo for the newspaper and each year there are fewer veterans for the photo. The old vets that are missing are singing their regimental songs in the wet canteen up in heaven. It's an adventure I'll never forget no matter how hard I try.



I didn't always feel that way about war. When I was a kid growing up at Black Donald Mines in the 1940s, the Second World War was on and word around town was if you were a farmer you would not be called up for compulsory military service. To avoid being conscripted my Dad made sure he was a farmer and we became farmers, too. He ran fence posts around the field and got an electric fence running on a single barbed wire strand that would shock you if you touched it. We got more cows and pigs and more hens. To make sure he looked more like a farmer, we cleared more land to make the fields bigger. We made fires from the limbs of trees on the tree stumps. Some of the pine stumps had smoke coming from them all summer as the roots burned underground.

We all worked clearing land to save Dad from the army. I wasn't like Dad. I didn't want to be a farmer or a logger or a miner. I wanted to be a war hero like my Uncle Charlie who was fighting for our freedom overseas. I was just a little boy when he left to go to war in 1939 and in 1944 I was 10 years old and the war was still on. That summer my brothers and I would sleep in

the hayloft in our old cedar log stable at Black Donald.

We had a blanket over the new mown hay. I can still remember the sweet smell and the soft bed it made. We had a lot of comic books up there and they were all superheroes. We had Superman, Flash Gordon, Batman, Wonder Woman, and even Captain Marvel who punched Hitler right in the face!

That Christmas I got a wooden cannon that shot glass marbles at the enemy soldiers that were cut out of heavy cardboard. They had wooden bases so the soldiers could stand until they were shot down by heavy artillery. Many times the enemy soldiers were saved when our old tomcat got the marble before it could make the kill. I was ten years old and on my way to being a child soldier. I went on to buy army surplus supplies from the Family Herald newspaper ads that sold WWI web belts and bayonets. I had them all.

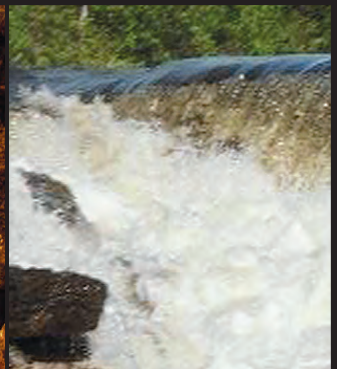
The shows in the hall in town in the war years were war pictures that began with The World News. They showed the World War raging in Europe where my Uncle Charlie was a soldier in the artillery. In my Dad's wallet were paper bills of the day with a picture of a battleship. All anyone ever talked about was the war and I could hardly wait to get there. When I was 15 years old in grade 7 at the Black Donald School, my Dad who spent three years in grade 1 before he quit school forever was not much on education. He told me it was time to stop school and get out in the world and make my own way.

By the time I was 16 Uncle Charlie was back home, the world was recovering from WWII, and the Korean War was in full swing. I was still three years too young to join the army, but in spite of my Mother's efforts to stop me I made it all the way into the thick of things in Korean battles. I no longer used my toy cannon as I had just 7 years earlier. I got a big boy toy that fired 450 rounds of 303 ammo a minute, bullets that went so fast toward the enemy soldiers no tomcat could save them.

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Tribute to Dale Dilamarter

By Bethany Armstrong

Dale Dilamarter was a long-time volunteer for MMLT, serving with diligence on the Board and several committees, as Property Manager for Rose Hill Nature Reserve, and as facilitator of the Chatson Woods property acquisition. It is with great regret that we share news of his passing in July 2026.

His association with MMLT began when he attended the Opening Ceremonies for the original 100-acre Rose Hill Nature Reserve in May 2012 and met land donor Bethany Armstrong. They formed a long-lasting volunteer team dedicated to caring for the property and helping to facilitate expansions. The first of these were 258 acres donated in 2015 by Patricia Hatton of Maine, soon followed by the purchase of a small adjacent property (complete with its yellow school bus and outhouse!), made possible through the financial support of Dale, Bethany, and Patricia.

Dale's involvement with Rose Hill was many faceted and continued until his passing. He participated in clean-ups and helped protect the integrity of the site by addressing issues related to hunting, trespass, campfires, and an abandoned well on the original farm site. Perhaps most importantly, alongside his good friend Sonny Fuller, Bethany, and others, he worked hard to establish and maintain the many trails that visitors enjoy today.

The team mounted MMLT signage along Rose Hill Road and cleared parking spaces near the trail entrances. A



Dale Dilamarter, Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust volunteer pictured at the Chatson Woods property opening on June 6, 2026 with Bethany Armstrong, left, and Antonia Chatson.

trail camera they installed along Pumpkin Trail revealed considerable wildlife, including a bear cub and a moose. One of Dale's regrets was not gaining traction on his vision of collaboration with a university for research on the Reserve – a reflection of his deep commitment to stewardship and the Reserve's long term value.

In 2024–25, Dale again played a pivotal role in expanding the Nature Reserve. He guided MMLT Board members on a tour of the Chatson Woods property, which meets Rose Hill at the corner, undertook the nature study that formed the basis of the Ecogift submission, and acted as liaison with owner Tony Chatson throughout the sale and

donation process. His final proud act was presiding over the Opening Ceremonies on June 6, 2026, complete with a guided nature walk.

Dale leaves behind a legacy of service, stewardship, and enthusiasm. His dedication will be greatly missed by land donors, fellow volunteers, and Land Trust members.

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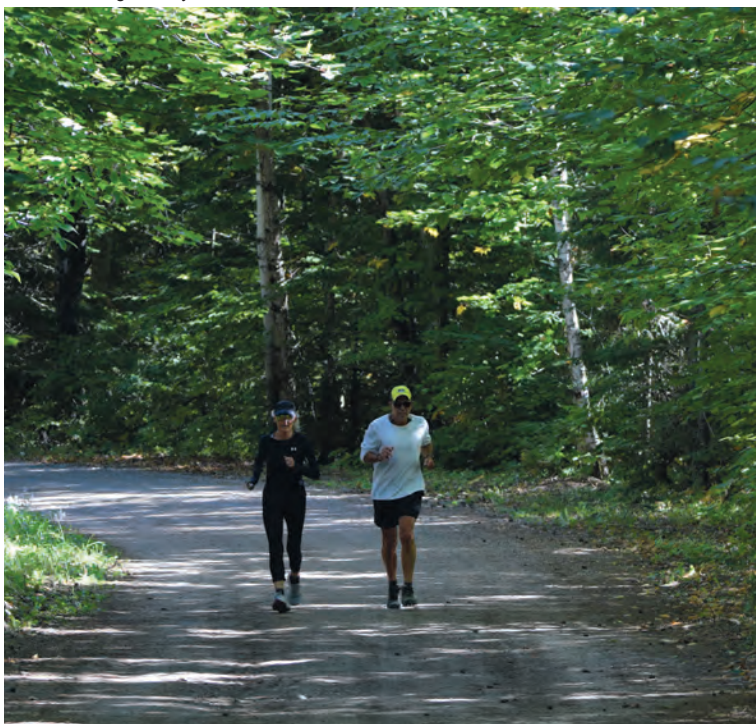
2026 Griffith Terry Fox Run tops \$11,000 raised! By Geoffrey Cudmore, Run Organizer



28 participants and two dogs ready to start the run.



Allyson Parkes with her parents, Dave and Brenda.



Eve and Steve came over from Bancroft to join the run.



A nice walk with a friend and a well behaved dog is special.



Kenzie Lorraine and Dafydd Hughes lead the way.

Twenty-eight participants came together in Griffith for the 15th running of the Griffith Terry Fox Run on Sunday September 20th. The run had a chilly start, with overnight temperatures in the low single digits, but the bright sun, and warm hearts of the group made it a perfect day.

We were thrilled that Special Olympian Allyson Parkes attended with her parents and proudly showed off her Bronze medal from the National games that had been held in August in Alberta. It was their first time attending the run but said that they hoped to make it an annual event.

The headline for the day, of course is the over \$11,000 raised for innovative cancer research, topping the previous record of \$8,400 set last year.

Kenzie Lorraine was our top fundraiser with an astounding \$2000 in online pledges. She reflected the run saying, "I took part in the run about 9 years ago as a kid, so it was really special to come back and participate again this year. Cancer touches all of us in one way or another, and I think raising money to support research and making a difference is important".

Our other major contributor to the total, as always, was Garry Guilmette from the Griffith Waste Transfer Station who brought in over \$1,200. Through Gary's ongoing dedication and persistence, he provides the perfect vehicle for the Griffith and surrounding area to support the run.

Our own Team Cudmore raised \$5,630 toward the total.

Another great thing about this year's run is that it attracted 4 of our Ward 3 candidates for Greater Madawaska Council. Thanks to Allison Holtzhauer, Dave Burton, Wendy MacFarlane, and Lois Thomson for your wonderful community spirit and support for the Run.

Thanks also has to be given to the Denbigh-Griffith Lions for the use of the hall, and the continued participation of a number of members in the event, and to Sniders Tent and Trailer for the donation of water for the course, and to volunteers Gary Breau and Edgar Cudmore who handled the 2.5km and 5km water stations.

Next year's run is on Sunday, September 19th, 2027, so save the date!

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