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Fall is here!
What a perfect time to enjoy the outdoors and all that the Highlands have to offer, amidst a backdrop of stunning and colorful fall foliage. Across the region, Buyers are enjoying a sense of relief as we move towards a more balanced market and are back to visiting Open Houses while still eagerly anticipating the daily posting of new listings. They now have the time to evaluate their home buying needs while still considering how they are being impacted by inflation and higher interest rates. For both Buyers and Sellers, there is a lot of speculation surrounding market and price trends, but seasoned and experienced realtors have the utmost confidence that the real estate market will prove it is still your best investment. Finally, for Sellers, there is no better time than now to get those exterior photos ordered, being prepared to be the proverbial "early bird" for spring of 2023. Yes, 2023...



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THE MADAWASKA HIGHLANDER October-November 2022 EMBRACE THE PAST ~ ENCOURAGE THE FUTURE ~ ENJOY TODAY

The Madawaska Highlander

Oct-Nov
2022
FREE Vol.20 Issue 6
Next issue Nov. 11, 2022

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

Welcome!

...To the most colourful part of Fall in the Highlands. It's time to enjoy some fun adventures in the wilds, on a dock, or driving our twisty roads. It's also time to enjoy the colourful Short Stories in this Special Edition of the Madawaska Highlander. Read 'em, enjoy 'em, and judge 'em. See page 8 for how to be a judge in the People's Choice Awards. (No wig, robe, or gavel required.)

There are so many stories with ghoulies and ghosties and things that go bump in the night that we are thinking of calling it the Halloween Special Edition for all the tricks and treats our storywriters sent in.

We have the lighter side of aging (Killing Time While Time Kills Me), a heartwarming and intimate account of an untimely demise (When Cancer Called), and a (thankfully fictional) story called Night Terrors. We have murderous Thoughts and Desires (will he do it?), a brush with the law in Close Call (what were they thinking?) We have jail time musings in McGrath's Deposition (who's the real criminal?). Of Monsters and Muskies goes below the surface (what's going on?).

On the surface, Uncle Lee's Pullman looks like an ordinary luxury hotel in the jungle, but... (You'll have to read the story.) Everything seems better in the daylight, as we learn in A Monastic Vow (What is that?)

For the sake of interest, good stories need to have some kind of struggle to overcome, even if it's a struggle between man and mouse, as we see in Opeongo. Home sweet... (Is that a chipmunk?)

Some stories are more of a walk in the park, or A Jungle Romp (Is that an orangutan?)

There are chills and thrills, tears and fears, funny moments and happy endings, but before you read them, make sure to read Bogie Beat and News & Views so you don't miss what's going on around you. And make sure to read Happy Trails? (Question mark intentional). More volunteers are needed so you can continue to enjoy the Calabogie Loop Snowmobile Trail. Enjoy...



Fall colours are best seen from on high, like at the lookout at Dan's Mountain in Matawatchan, part of an annual pilgrimage for many. Pic by Derek Roche



Leaves are also best when reflected on water. at Airds Lake. Pic by Nancy McCauley

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The Madawaska Highlander

The Madawaska Highlander
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**Next advertising deadline:
Nov. 11 for Nov. 23 publication**
madawaskahighlander.ca for previous issues

Message from the editor:
Please make note of activities in Bogie Beat, GM News, and DV News and check the ads for updates.
Check advertiser messages right away for important information, hours of operation, specials and what is open. Tell them you saw it in the Madawaska Highlander!
We also maintain the matawatchan.ca website, which serves the Tri-County area around Matawatchan, Griffith, Denbigh and Vennachar. Also check out www.greatermadawaska.com and other township websites for information. Our community paper depends on the community, so if you have something to offer that our readers would enjoy, please contact us to discuss it. We keep our advertising rates low to keep it accessible for small businesses.

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CONTRIBUTORS THIS ISSUE

Thank you everyone!

We couldn't do this without our volunteer contributors and our advertisers. Thank you to the Eganville Leader for your support.


Skippy Hale, Danielle Jacques, Lois Thomson, Eleven Short Story Writers




1902-03 ad funded by the Canadian Commissioner of Immigration to Saskatchewan in West Farmer magazine promoting the benefits of prairie living. "Uncle Sam - Where there is money to be made you'll find a Yankee."

Living is cheap; climate is good; education and land are free." So proclaimed Canada West: The Last Best West magazine in 1910. More promotional brochure for immigration than magazine, it was part of the Canadian government's drive to attract skilled farmers—British and American immigrants were primarily targeted—to settle and till the soils of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia, and turn the land into a cornucopia to feed industrialized Eastern Canada and Europe. Issues always included a string of success stories and testimonials, such as one provided by an American newcomer who enthused, "I make five times per acre what I made in Iowa." Between 1896 and 1914, more than two million settlers from Europe and the United States poured into the prairies in the greatest wave of immigration in Canadian history.

Immigrants from the British Isles made up 57 percent; from America, 19 percent; Germany, 4 percent; and China, 2.5 percent. Smaller numbers came from Japan, Syria, Turkey, and the West Indies. However, in terms of "origin," 96 percent of the population was of European descent. By 1901, of the more than five million in Canada, almost 700,000 (12 percent) were immigrants (not born in Canada). (Info from *Selling the Prairie Good Life* by Graham Chandler canadahistory.ca)



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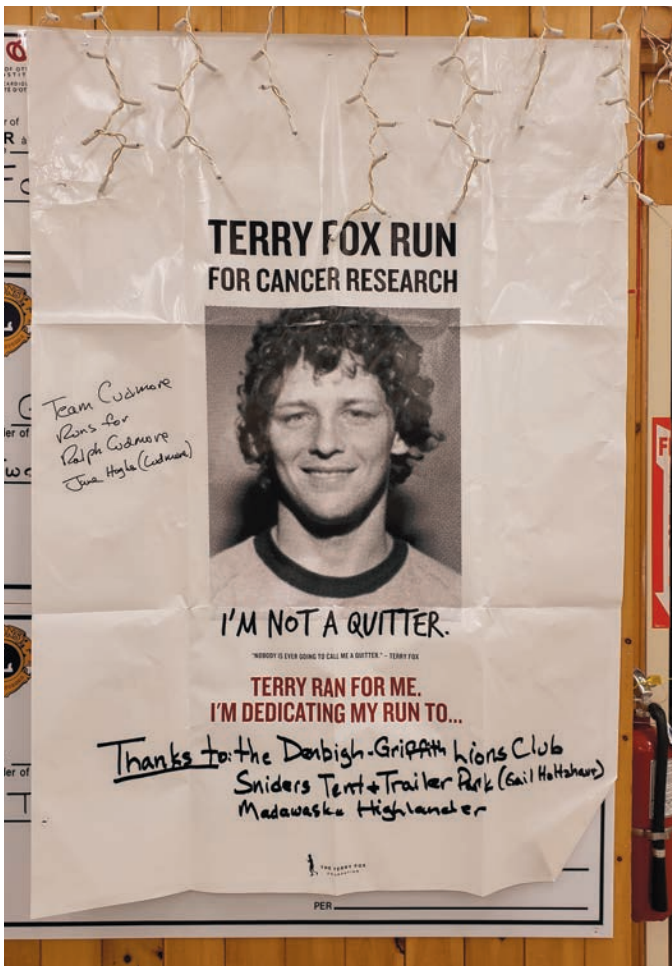


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<p>NEW LISTING!</p>  <p>SOLD 2855A Highway 132 2 storey with a huge high ceiling attached garage, smaller attached garage, lower unit - 1 bedrm living area with full bath. 2nd floor unit - 3 bedrm with full bath, ensuite MLS \$359,000</p>	<p>CALABOGIE COMMERCIAL!</p>  <p>5057 Calabogie Rd. Over 5 acres of pristine commercial land with a Highway Commercial Zoning \$599,900 MLS1257456</p>	<p>PRICE REDUCED! WATERFRONT BUILDING LOT!</p>  <p>155 Frost Lane on Virgin (Dempseys) Lake \$359,900</p>	<p>PRICE REDUCED!</p>  <p>505 Gladstone St. Calabogie MLS1290383 \$479,900</p>	
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By Danielle Jacques



Rain did not stop Terry Fox, nor did it deter the faithful run-walk-rollers on September 18. Donations will be accepted online until March 2023 at run.terryfox.ca/3438



There was a good turnout for the candidates meeting that was hosted by the Denbigh-Griffith Lions Club at the Hall in Griffith. The candidates introduced themselves and explained why they wanted to run. People's questions were read out for the candidates to answer. Voting to elect an all new council ends on October 24 at 8 pm.



It is THAT time of year!! What is the best thing to put into a pumpkin pie? *drum roll please* Your teeth! What are the top three favorite Fall activities? Picking, patching and treating. That's right! Apple picking, pumpkin patching and trick o' treating - all the fixings for a memorable autumn season.

But, before talking autumn, the Terry Fox Run in Griffith marked the end of our summer activities. The weather did not deter a group of dedicated individuals who braved a morning downpour and cloudy weather to make this year's Terry Fox Run a success. Geoffrey Cudmore, Lions, and other volunteers were on hand at the Hall in Griffith to greet registrants at the start of the event and all were in good spirits as they completed the run. A huge 'memorial' poster of Terry Fox was up on the hall wall so that people could write a message or dedicate

their run to a loved one battling/having battled cancer. Donations can still be made up until March 2023 at <https://run.terryfox.ca/3438>.

Gloomy skies introduced autumn along with torrential downpours, thunder and lightning, and colder weather. Made one wonder if winter was getting ready to push autumn aside to make an early arrival. We tend to forget that those colder days are needed to ignite the beautiful Fall colors which can be seen all over the County now. The sun is back and so are some local activities.

The Ward 3 debate between Ward Councillor hopefuls was held September 28th at the Hall in Griffith, Hosted by the Denbigh-Griffith Lions Club. The turnout was great and the room packed. Those who could attend had a chance to ask questions of the candidates. Although the internet is available at the location, the event was not offered

through online streaming or filmed, leaving those unable to attend in the dark as to who is the best candidate for our Ward/Mayor. However, there is still the option of getting the list of questions that were asked through the Township Clerk along with the contact information of the candidates. Perhaps the hosts could consider streaming future events online especially those that concern all of its taxpayers, now that WiFi is available at our community halls.

The Lions are back! They are in the planning stages for a number of events. There will be more information as planning ramps up. **Hunter's Lasagna Dinner - Friday, November 11th 4:30 - 6pm** eat-in, or take-out \$20 Lasagna, garlic bread, salad and a yummy dessert. Catered by Schmidt's Catering in Pembroke. Pre-order by calling 613-333-1984 or 613-333-1409 or e-transfer DGLionsClub@hotmail.com

Art in The Highlands with Reina Coulthart is back! Art classes will be held at the Hall on Hwy 41 in Griffith, every Thursday from 1pm to 4pm from 6 October - 8 December. These art classes are meant to initiate people to the joys of painting with acrylics. The cost is \$150 payable to the Denbigh-Griffith Lions Club or by e-transfer to DGLionsClub@hotmail.com or you can contact Reina directly for other payment arrangements (613)-333-1709.

Save the dates!

Lunch Social Event - starting Wednesday, November 16th, 2022. Details to follow.

Christmas Market - with Tourtiere Sales - Saturday, December 3rd, 2022

Christmas Monster Bingo - Tuesday, December 6th, 2022

For more information see Facebook and local posted flyers.

...continued from previous page



Only one board member (Brian MacPherson - standing) attended the Griffith - Matawatchan Sno-Dusters Annual General Meeting, so there weren't enough board members to form a quorum for the meeting. This club and all the visitors it brings here are vital supports for local businesses from Calabogie, through Griffith, Denbigh, and up to Eganville. We can't let it fail. Read the full story on page 6.

Matawatchan Song Circle returns to the Matawatchan Hall! Held a few years ago, the song circle is being brought back to the hall and is open to all ages and musical abilities (or not). It is meant to be a fun evening sharing songs and laughter with old friends and making new ones. Give it a try! This event will take place **Saturday, October 22nd at 7pm.**

Don't forget the **Matawatchan Hall AGM will take place on November 1st at 7pm.** Bring your ideas about what you would like to see happen at the Hall. The Hall is always looking for volunteers and there are some vacancies on the Board if that interests you. Also, if you are looking for a venue, keep the Hall in mind as it is available for rent. You can contact Peter Chess via 613-318-8308 or by email at pete1.chess@live.ca for all your rental needs.

Heads up! **This year's Christmas Craft Sale will be held on Saturday November 26th, starting at 10am, at the Matawatchan Hall** so if

you are interested in getting a table for your own crafts, please contact Peter Chess and he will let you know how to proceed.

The Griffith and Matawatchan Fish Game Club's Buck and Doe Contest runs from Monday, November 7th to Saturday, November 19th. This year, the weigh station will be at Rosie's at 22353 Hwy 41 in Denbigh. The Club is grateful to Joey and Jennelle Rosenblath for taking on the job this year! Tickets will be available before Thanksgiving weekend at local businesses and from Board Members at \$5 each. **Anyone who purchases a ticket will a get a chance to win a \$500 gift card from Cabela's, whether you hunt or not.** Prizes will be awarded at 12pm on Sunday November 20th as follows: \$500 for Largest Buck, \$250 for Largest Doe \$250, and \$100 for the Mystery Weight. And if you haven't had a chance to purchase tickets from the local retailers, there should be some available at the **Griffith and Matawatchan Fish and Game Club's**

Deer Hunter's Ball taking place on Saturday, November 12th at 8:00 pm at the Matawatchan Hall. Admittance is only \$5. A light luncheon will be served and local favorite Grant Gauthier, will be on DJ detail.

The Fish & Game Club held their annual AGM on June 18, but only the current board members showed up. They kept their current positions for the year, but it's not too late to let them know you would like to help out.

Fish & Game Club Membership went down to zero during the pandemic, so they are happy to report that membership is up to 119 as of September. You don't have to be a fisher or a hunter to join. Your \$5 membership helps the club put on activities for youth, hunter safety courses, and ecosystem preservation.

Fish and Game Memberships are available at Griffith General Store, BMR Pro and Pine Valley Restaurant. You can also purchase your Club Membership through interac e-transfer!

The cost per member is \$5.00 and can be sent to fishandgameclub@gmail.com You can also pay your OFAH dues this way as well.

In the Meantime... We encourage you to join the OFAH through the club at a reduced rate. The savings you get by purchasing through the club will more than cover your fish and game membership. The cost of memberships through the club is:

- Adults \$44.35 from \$55.99
- Family \$53.95 from \$69.25
- Youth \$39.85 from \$42.80

To join the OFAH, contact Karen Holleran at 613-333-2294. Check us out and feel free to like and share our Facebook page at "Griffith & Matawatchan Fish & Game Club" for local upcoming events and articles! Please feel free to share your pictures and stories there as well!

From the Fish & Game

Club's September newsletter:

The MNRF from the Peterborough Research Branch has asked for our assistance by **donations of deer heads to further their research of Chronic Wasting Disease.** They will supply the freezers and plastic bags for the heads which will be placed at Rosie's.

When you leave your heads in the freezer Rosie's will present you with a crest and if you fill out the "identity card" the MNR will notify you of your test results. They need 450 heads from various hunting areas for their survey to be valid. We appreciate your contribution to their research!

The MNRF has separated from their previous title which included Northern Development, Mining and Natural Resources. The OFAH has been working on this since they amalgamated for fear that our conservation and outdoor culture would fall to the bottom of their list of priorities. **The MNRF is once again a stand alone Ministry.**

With the upcoming Migratory Bird Season on September 25th the MNRF has proposed a few changes:

- The ducks in your freezer no longer count against your possession limit.
- If you're transporting any distance, you no longer have to leave the wing on, you can leave the head on if you choose.

There is a new charitable donation permit available for hunters who wish to donate their ducks to soup kitchens and food banks. You can apply for this permit at an MNRF office or their website.

Danielle Jacques and her husband Michel retired here in 2016 after falling in love with the Centennial Lake area. Danielle is fluently bilingual, a lover of nature and has developed an expertise in genetic genealogy. She is looking forward to capturing the essence of this community by meeting and talking to people, gathering their stories, news and events, and highlighting them in the Madawaska Highlander.

1677 Frontenac Road in Matawatchan

Nov. 1 at 7pm Help plan Events and Activities for the Community at the Matawatchan Hall!

The Hall is community owned, which means YOU are an owner! Want to see more or different programming? Join your community at the AGM and vote or put your name in to be a director. **WE have done this together since 1952. Let's keep it going!** Coffee & cookies provided.

It's YOUR Hall after all!

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Bogie is a Happenin' Place!

By Skippy Hale



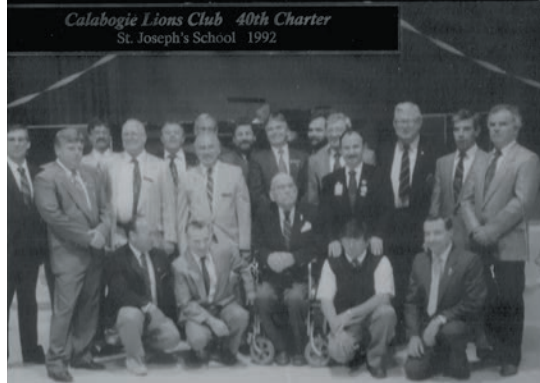
Ward 1 Councillor candidates meeting on October 6 with 161 people in attendance, was hosted by the Calabogie Lions with Trudy Wagner as moderator. L - R: Jeff Levesques, Craig Armstrong, Kurt Viehbacher, Don Dilks, Chris Norton, Rob Tripp. Video of this and Mayoral meeting are available at Calabogie Lions Club's Facebook page: facebook.com/Calabogieont
Pics by Barry Nichols



View from the K&P trestle bridge over the Madawaska River



The Barra MacNeils entertained an almost full house at the DACA Centre in Dacre on October 15, as part of the Ontario Festival of Small Halls.



Calabogie Lions 40th Anniversary photo taken in 1992 in the gym at St. Joseph's School. They began 70 years ago in 1952.



The Lions Club, along with other clubs, put out the call for donations to help victims of Hurricane Fiona. Service groups like the Lions have been doing great work like this for generations.

The weather has been topsy-turvy again and as soon as I put away all my summer clothing, it got very warm, but now it's more seasonal. The trees are turning their beautiful shades of yellow, red and bronze which is a delight every year. I think I would not like to live in a place without four seasons. My favourite one is always the one we're in. Call me a crazy Canuck, but I do enjoy them all. I just don't like the ups and downs so that you don't know what to wear each day. I guess we should all have an extra outfit when we go to work since when you go home, the weather has changed from the morning!

Volunteers have been busy at St. Joseph School helping with the Reading Programs and making the monthly Grilled Cheese lunch supported by Calabogie Food Bank.

The Calabogie St. Andrews Church has a very active group with regular Church Suppers, a recent Yard Sale and the upcoming Christmas Bazaar on November 19 from 11:30 am - 3:00 pm. Contact Cindy Wright 613-433-4136 or cynthia_wright@hotmail.com.

Volunteers have been busy at Most Precious Blood Church doing a Fall clean-up of the church gardens. An update of the landscaping will be done come Spring after the Daffodils and Irises have bloomed

November 19 will be a busy day for Christmas shoppers. The United Church Bazaar will be in the morning and the Calabogie Winter Market at the Arena from 4 pm - 8 pm.

We had a lively Councillor Candidates' meeting on October 6. The overall theme was controlled growth and transparency. The Moderator, Trudy Wagner ran a tight show keeping the gentlemen to their time limits. There was one question regarding the makeup and number of Council including the Mayor. Many meetings this past term only had 2 Councillors plus the Mayor present. This was a quorum, but hardly enough for a legitimate vote for our changing Township. The Candidates are Craig Armstrong, Don Dilks, Jeff Levesque, Chris Norton, Rob Tripp and Kurt Viebacher with 2 to be elected. Amanda Daily has withdrawn.

The All-Candidates Meeting for Mayor was on October 11. Three Candidates are running for this office:

Debora Giffin, Jim Hemlin and Rob Weir. Lucie Perrier has withdrawn.

Vote! You should have received your letter with your personal pin number to vote online or by telephone. If not call the Township Office to get on the voters' list 613-752-2222.

Here is an update on the Ukrainian family. Vadym got a job in the IT field so they have moved to Etobicoke. Mary thanked all who bought flower bouquets from Agneshka at the Summer Market. She raised enough to pay for her dancing lessons.

How many of you realize that our village has several published authors? I had the joyous privilege to spend another afternoon with Anne Kathleen McLaughlin interviewing her about her new novel. Sitting in her living room drinking Lavender Lemon tea and eating scones, I was enthralled by her latest story. Anne Kathleen is a member of the Community of the Grey Sisters of Pembroke. I delight in learning about all of the sisters who taught me at Assumption School in Eastview (Vanier) and Immaculata (Girls) High School in Ottawa. Many have passed on, but some of my teachers are still in Pembroke. They were wonderful teachers and great role models in their gentle ways.

Anne Kathleen holds a Master's Degree in Religious Communication/Pastoral Studies from Loyola University in Chicago. "Through retreats, workshops, stories and plays, she works with women who are seeking to discover the Divine woven into the tapestry of their everyday lives. Her novels *A Place Called Morning* (2001), *Planted in the Sky* (2006), and *Called to Egypt on the Back of the Wind* (2013) are published by Borealis Press."

Her latest novel is *Singing the Dawn*. I just received it, so have not yet had a chance to read it. I have read all of her other novels. They have all been page turners where I could not put them down, burning many a midnight oil!

Since I have not yet read it, I will quote from the Press Release Anne Kathleen gave me. "*Singing the Dawn is a novel for those who stand in the gap between outmoded spiritual concepts and the allure of a new understanding of our Universe. It's the story of a Canadian woman who finds herself drawn to an island off the West coast of Ireland, and*

finds herself standing in that gap, knowing the new story of the Universe, aware that the mystics of her own and other faith traditions knew intuitively what the physicists are only now discovering. She finds grounding and joy in her discovery of the ancient wisdom still present in the land, the trees, the rivers, the lakes, the stones, the hills of Ireland, as well as in its powerful myths, and in the company of a small group of women who embody this wisdom."

In my own limited study of Celtic myth and spirituality, I am fascinated

by the intertwining of early Christianity and the beliefs of the Druids of the Celtic religion. I look forward to reading this book and learning more about this as well as this protagonist's search for the return of the Feminine Sacred will be honoured and how it will impact Mother Earth which has been sorely neglected. My deep love of my Irish roots is longing for the wisdom to be found in this novel.

Copies can be purchased through Borealis Press.

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The Calabogie Snowmobile Loop is in Jeopardy

By Lois Thomson

is loop/ tournée des rivières de Calabogie
ark Loop/Tournée du parc Algonquin



The Snow Country Snowmobile Region (SCSR) District 6 covers a huge expanse in Eastern Ontario, and central to it is the Calabogie Highlands Loop. Up to \$3.3B of Ontario's annual economy depends on volunteer clubs.

The Griffith - Matawatchan Sno-Dusters Club is in trouble if they don't get enough volunteers to keep it going. Why the cry of alarm? Although it's called Griffith - Matawatchan, it is responsible for over 180 kilometres that make up part of the E102, "Calabogie Highlands Loop". They take care of the part that runs along the Madawaska from Calabogie, through Griffith, over to Denbigh, then all the way to Eganville. Other clubs take over from there through Douglas, MacDougall, and back to Calabogie. That loop also connects with other popular loops in Eastern Ontario, so it's a vital part of the snowmobiling and ATV economy in Ontario. It's not only a Griffith and Matawatchan issue.

As Lesley Cassidy explained many times in her "Happy Trails" column, trails of all kinds are a huge part of Ontario's economy and on a local scale, it is scary to think of what will happen to the many restaurants and general stores along the way, without the harder to get winter income provided by snowmobilers.

I assumed all was well when I attended the club's AGM on October 2 in Griffith. I went there because I am not a snowmobiler or ATV rider and wanted

to know more about how the clubs run and what they might need from council or the township. Well, I found out. It's not money, it's volunteers.

A handful of people waited ten to fifteen minutes for the meeting to begin in a room set up for about 30. Sadly, because only one of the current directors showed up, there was no quorum, and they couldn't hold a vote for new directors. Guest presenters from the Snow Country Snowmobile Region District 6 (SCSR) explained that the Board members who weren't there would have to resign before the remaining member, VP Brian MacPherson, could call another AGM, to hold a vote for a new Board. If a new Board of 5 people can't be found, the club will have to fold and all the many land use agreements they have with private citizens will become invalid. If that happens, there is very little chance of getting them back. Then, he told us some good news.

The club is doing well financially with 130 to 150 paying members each year. They could use more regular volunteers to assist the existing group who take care of various aspects of the trails, but the real urgency is that they lack people to coordinate volunteers and run the club. We were told that you don't

have to be a snowmobiler to help coordinate volunteers, or help in a general way, but you should become a member of the club to take an executive position. Obviously being a trail rider will be helpful, but not necessary. None of the positions have a high time requirement. Monthly meetings can take place over Zoom and/or in person. Also, the SCSR has all the information you need to guide you, should you decide to help.

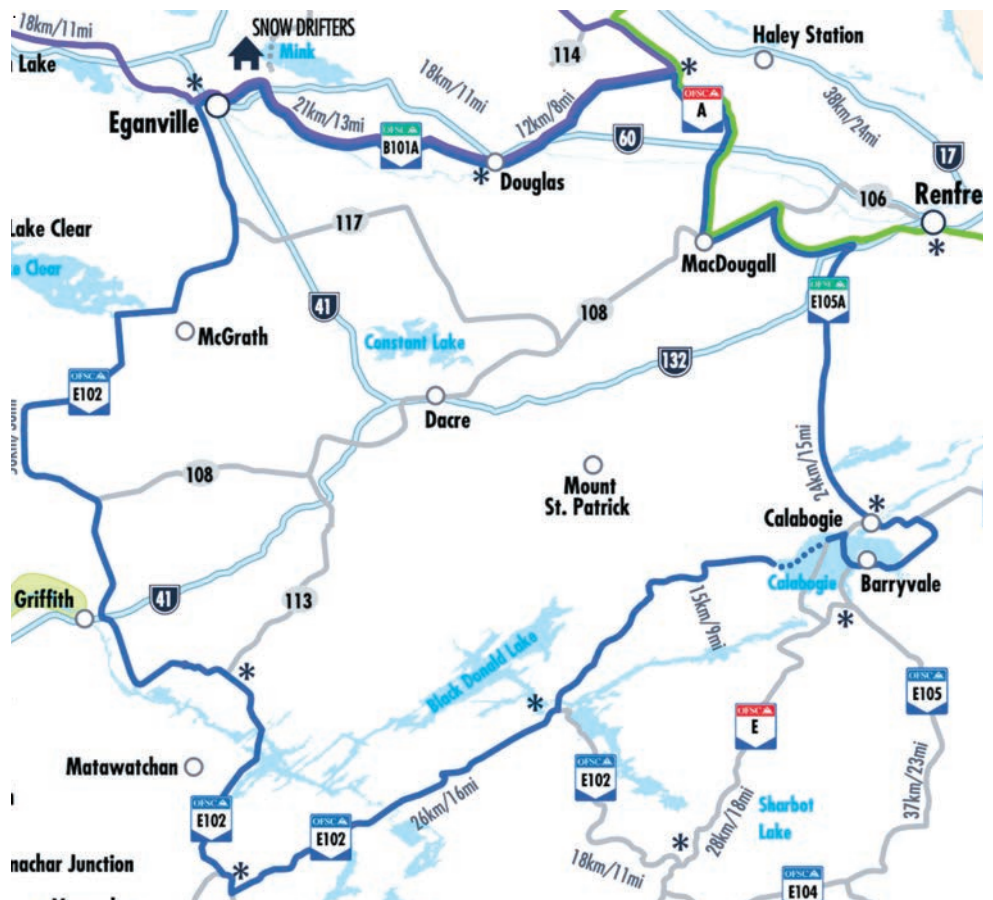
A few of the people who were at the meeting were asking about time requirements, etc., which is hopeful, but they will need more. As always, the more volunteers the club can get, the easier it will be on all volunteers. Please contact the Griffith - Matawatchan Sno-Dusters Club if you can help in any way. Take on what you can. Let's keep this important club going!

Griffith-Matawatchan Snow-Dusters volunteers maintain the E102 portion from Calabogie, through Griffith and Denbigh, to Eganville. They have money, groomers, and volunteers, but without people to coordinate efforts, they cannot continue and agreements for the use of private lands will be nullified and will be a daunting task to restore.

If you can help or have questions, please contact Brian Macpherson brian.macpherson@bell.net or snowcountry@nrtco.net

Spread the word on Facebook [Facebook.com/snodustersclub](https://www.facebook.com/snodustersclub)
Go to their website for information about how to become a member snowcountrysnowmobilerregion.ca/Clubs/griffith-matawatchan-snodusters

UPDATE: Shortly before press time I was told that the club was able to find enough volunteers to fill their minimum executive positions, however more individuals are needed to take on various crucial positions such as Trail and Grooming coordinators.



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Tla'amin Nation has sent a letter of intent to purchase Catalyst Paper for a possible clean, green energy project with Pacific Hydrogen on their historic village site.

Vancouver's Trutch Street has been changed to Musqueamview St. in honour of the Musqueam Nation rather than John Trutch, who instilled racist policies.

Ceremonial lodge for Indigenous federal workers start of 'something greater'. Mikiñak Lodge recently opened on the Central Experimental Farm in Ottawa.

Sacheen Littlefeather, who declined Brando's 1973 Oscar for him, dead at 75. She received apology this August for scorn she got over speech about Native portrayals.

Ontario students building 'tiny' homes for First Nations communities through agreements with Habitat for Humanity, learning homebuilding and housing needs.

Canada launches review of Cannabis Act to look at impact on Indigenous people, youth, and home cultivation

The Nature Trust of British Columbia received a donation of a 29Ha. property near Top Bridge Regional Park west of Parksville along Englishman River worth \$5M.

P.E.I.'s iconic Teacup Rock is gone after post-tropical storm Fiona battered it down. Sable Island horses 'doing well' after storm Fiona, having sheltered behind dunes.

Prior to 2009, insured losses from catastrophic severe weather averaged \$400 million per year; since then, the annual average has reached \$1.4 billion.

Kingston's first electric boat charging station unveiled in Confederation Basin. App will allow boaters to check availability and reserve a slot for \$20, 1-hour charge.

OPG to sell clean energy credits to Microsoft to offset carbon footprint in Ontario. Funds will go to investments in new clean generation or back to the ratepayer.

Ontario Increasing Electricity Generation and Storage Capacity with gas-fired plants and a grid-scale Small Modular (Nuclear) Reactor at OPG's Darlington site.

Ontario targets 2,500MW energy storage procurements to ensure reliability, resiliency and helping to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions

BC's Moment Energy recycles EV batteries and turn them into energy storage systems that can power off-grid homes and offset manufacturers grid usage.

Heart Aerospace unveils new electric aircraft; Air Canada invests and orders 30 planes. Battery technology has improved to make short-range planes viable.

China Merchant Energy Shipping company has taken delivery of a new supertanker, whose four massive sails will cut down average fuel consumption by nearly 10%.

China just turned on the world's biggest compressed air facility (storing compressed air and releasing it later to spin electrical turbines), California will follow suit.

Beginning in April 2025, Tokyo the largest city in the world, will require all new homes to have solar panels. The first prefecture in Japan to do so.

Victoria teen riding every bus route in Greater Victoria to encourage transit use. He plans to complete every route in numerical order over a year.

Electronic devices sold in the European Union must use the USB-C standard by 2024. Laptops will have an extra two years, until 2026, to adopt the new style.

Salps, gelatinous organisms, surface at sunset from ocean depths to feed on CO2. Scientists ask if they are multiplying faster because they're removing more carbon.

ThinkFungi.org got 50,000 mushroom map entries on day 8 of their Great North American FungiQuest between Sept. 15 and Oct. 15. New goal is 150,000.

Unbelievable' Video Shows 2 Bees Working Together to Open a Soda Bottle. Bees have other talents, including math ability, face recognition, and even tool use.

Putin's war in Ukraine has so far meant more coal burning in Europe, but Nord Stream pipeline leak in Baltic Sea could cement Europe's shift to renewables sooner

Trophy hunter and founder of Pro Hunt Africa, a tour group that facilitates paid wildlife hunting trips, found shot dead in province of Limpopo in South Africa.

Loblaws, which owns No Frills, Real Canadian Superstore, Shoppers Drug Mart, and Fortinos, among others, plan to eliminate all single-use plastic bags by 2023.

Rather than trash food, apps like Too Good To Go and Flashfood help restaurants and grocery stores sell it at a reduced price.

Canada's three big supermarket chains will face a parliamentary inquiry into whether they have been exploiting surging inflation to boost their profits.

Canada bans street dogs for resale, adoption, fostering, breeding, exhibition and research from more than 100 countries after dog rabies incidents.

Canada Jetlines, headquartered in Mississauga has begun service with twice weekly

flights from Pearson International Airport to Calgary International Airport. Canadian airline crew detained in Dominican Republic for six months for reporting attempted cocaine smuggling. Airline warns Canadians about risks of travel there.

100-pound Riverdale actor convicted for murdering his mom and sentenced to life in prison in Canada - is worried he will be brutalized in a maximum security facility.

Pre-Confederation jail on the market in Perth. Site of 3 executions, the jail can be yours for \$495,000... and possibly a few (20?) million to bring it up to code.

Healthcare workers warned the Ontario government that the state of healthcare is going to get worse without significant changes, as staff continues to quit.

Union sees potential of \$8B returning to healthcare workers after union victory in court challenge against wage cap bill that caused stressed workers to quit jobs.

The only pediatrician serving Renfrew County has been flying in once a month from Toronto since March to see patients, after resident pediatrician retired.

Toronto researchers discovered focused ultrasound technology is safe to provide treatment to targeted brain regions in patients with Parkinson's disease.

New Therapeutic Target Could Check the Progress of Alzheimer's Disease.

Ottawa scientist in trials to use breathing and music that's slightly faster than brain activity to treat anxiety and depression, by slowly increasing processing speed.

Canadian Armed Forces reservist who equated COVID-19 vaccinations with 'murder' pleads guilty to misconduct.

AI can now create any image in seconds, bringing wonder and danger. "Once the line between truth and fake is eroded, we will not be able to believe anything."

Investors pull almost \$140 million from the company planning to merge with Donald Trump's Truth Social.

'I'm Dropping My COVID Hubris and donning a mask,' Vows a Top Immunologist After the virus harmed Chris Goodnow's heart, he warns against virus complacency.

China has opened at least three "service bureaus" on Canadian soil. 3 Toronto shops are operated by the Fuzhou Public Security Bureau, a police force active in China.

Canada is one of the only countries where virtually all of the political spectrum believe that immigration is good, but it was up for debate in the Quebec election.

Canada, a favoured member of the Commonwealth, was the only realm to hold its own ceremony following the late Queen's state funeral. She called Canada "home".

Denmark's Queen Margrethe strips royal titles from 4 of 8 grandchildren 'to shape their own existence' while mother of two princes losing titles 'shocked' by decision.

In Canada, the Great Resignation never actually happened. Job-changing rates among Canadians are mostly similar to pre-pandemic levels, data shows

Young Adults, a source of entry level jobs and future economic engine, are Fleeing Ontario & Moving To Alberta, BC, and Nova Scotia due to high housing costs.

5 trucks are driving around Toronto, 12 hours a day, with an empty driver's seat, which Loblaw said is a first for autonomous commercial delivery vehicles in Canada.

ON minimum wage now \$15.50 and liquor servers now eligible for the same rate.

220 positions were available to be filled at Newmarket job fair in September. Part-time, full-time, seasonal and long-term job opportunities were available.

Canadian Tire opened a new store at the Carlingwood Shopping Centre in Ottawa. The 135,000 sq. ft. store is the largest Canadian Tire store in Canada.

Shopify unveils new point-of-sale hardware, expanding beyond its online platform. A smartphone device will allow retailers to checkout purchases anywhere in store.

A lawsuit against Amazon continues to gain momentum as more and more families accuse the tech giant of selling "suicide kits." Chemicals with no household purpose.

Businesses in Canada are now able to pass credit card fees on to their customers after a multimillion-dollar class-action settlement involving Visa and Mastercard

Premier Doug Ford is poised to introduce further measures to expedite housing construction — and boost density — immediately after the municipal elections.

An ultra rare diamond contains the only known sample of a mineral from Earth's mantle—and hints at oceans' worth of water hidden deep within our planet.

UK artist covered every inch of his \$1.5M house in black-and-white doodles – floors, ceilings, bedding. in 2020, he was the world's 5th most successful artist under 40.

PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD - YOU BE THE JUDGE

Read them all then tell us which ones you think are the best.

Choose your favourite in each category based purely on how much you enjoyed reading it, on or before November 11, 2022

While the official judges' scores are being tabulated, we want to hear from one more judge, and that's you. We have been able to fit every story we received into this special edition, which pleases us immensely, because the whole reason for doing this contest was to encourage people to write and to share their stories. It would have been a shame to have had to eliminate some, because they are all so good!

People's Choice Prize:
(most votes in any category)
Gabrielle, a novel by Michael Joll

By email to: info@reelimpact.tv
By post to:
Madawaska Highlander
3784 Matawatchan Rd.
Griffith ON, K0J 2R0

Please include your name and address, and a sentence about what you liked about your choices. If you are sending in choices for your whole family, please include the name of each reader.

Contest winners, including People's Choice, will be printed in the November 23 Winter edition of The Madawaska Highlander.

PLEASE NOTE: Only one vote per category, per person. Do not vote if you wrote a story or know who wrote one, if you were a judge, or are a paid Highlander contributor. Authors must not get friends to get other friends to flood the votes for themselves. That wouldn't be fair, would it?

The photos accompanying the stories were placed by The Madawaska Highlander to add some intrigue to the stories for your enjoyment, but were not provided to the judges, so they won't influence judges' scores.

The stories in random order:
FICTION

- Night Terrors
- Of Monsters and Muskies
- McGrath's Deposition
- Uncle Lee's Pullman
- Thoughts and Desires
- Killing Time While Time Kills Me

NON FICTION

- When Cancer Called
- A Monastic Vow
- Opeongo
- The Close Call
- A Rainforest Romp

Pic by Tijs van Leur Unsplash.com



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Night Terrors

Dusk is what marks the daily ritual. Everyone partakes. In Kabar, your feelings about tradition don't matter. As the sun begins to set, millions of people begin their journey. The buses and subways that slither through the maze-like complex of a city leads citizens back to the place where they will rest their heads for the night. As they reach the dark, sun-cracked cement walls of their homes, they slide their rusty, tattered metal gates over their doorways. They lock their doors. Within one hour, the entirety of Kabar is completely silent.

Of course, there is a very good reason for it. You would have to be insane to stay outside at night. What comes after dark is undesirable, to say the least. There are no monsters or ghosts. Nothing from your imagination. Everything that goes bump in the night is very real. Mobs of angry men and women with firearms, bombs, gasoline, and torches rage through the streets. Many people are murdered each night. Walls detonated to pieces, bodies mutilated beyond recognition. Government officials try to keep pictures from getting



out, but eventually we all see them. Someone close to you dies. You hear explosions during the night. When you leave your house in the morning, you see the destruction. Blackened pieces of cement litter the ground all over. Your neighbour's walls are blown apart. Overturned chairs and tables sit on the floor inside.

They say the last thing you experience when you are hunted is the

sudden shock as you try to hold the encroaching mob back. There is no warning. You are deafened by the noise of your front entrance being blasted away, and it's already too late. There are simply too many people to try to fight off. There is no time to run. There is no defense against hundreds of people invading your home. There is no escape. The blood from the victims of the previous night inexplicably covers each wall of the

room where they are slain. Blade and bullet wounds desecrate the body to the point where it looks like a pile of lacerated meat rather than a corpse. When you see this, there is no room for tears. All you are left with is a flurry of questions.

Why did they choose him? Why did they come here? When are they coming for me?

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McGrath's Deposition

I, Michael John McGrath of Tyendinaga Township, Ontario, have written this deposition with my own hand and swear that every word is true.

Signed at Lennox & Addington County Jail, Napanee, March the 2nd, 1873

Last October I walked with my friend Tommy MacDermott up the Addington Road to work for the winter in a shanty operated by the company of Senator James Skead on Louse Creek north of Mishinog Lake. Before leaving Napanee we signed contracts to work for \$10 per month plus board. Tommy and I were both 18 years of age and hailed from farms east of Belleville. It was our first time to work in a lumber camp.

As young lads with no previous experience felling pines we were set to work clearing the skidding trails. The winter days were short so we spent long nights in the overcrowded shanty where we and 45 other men ate greasy pork stew and slept in our clothes.

Shantymen's work is dangerous. In November a man was killed when a log he was skidding hit a root and came up and hit him across his back. He died there in the snow. In January another man was badly injured when a limb came down out of a tree and struck his head. He was still unconscious when they took him away by sleigh to the hospital in Napanee. The older men told us these accidents were not unusual. They seemed to take pride in the risks they faced every day.

It was not a shock, then, to anyone but me when my friend Tommy died on February the 14th. The only thing unusual was that he died in his sleep, apparently of natural causes.

"Apoplexy," the foreman said. "Now I'm another man short."

There was no doctor to gainsay the foreman's word but to my mind Tommy had been driven to his death by overwork and persecution. From the day we arrived the older men had teased and mocked us. At first this seemed to be good-natured ribbing but it turned nasty when we refused to work on All Saints Day, November the 1st, a holy day in our church. The foreman, a burly bully, had it in for us.



Pic from kids.britannica.com

"You dumb micks really believe that dogan hocus pocus?" he would jibe. Most of the other men said nothing, maybe fearing the foreman, but some joined in with jokes about the Irish, making us out to be ignorant and stupid. In fact Tommy and I had been to school. We read the newspapers and Longfellow and the Bible while many of them had signed their contracts with an X.

The foreman drove us hard. He blamed us for leaving the root on the skid trail that caused the death of his shantymen in November. He told us we would each have to do the work of two men to make up the loss to the company.

I have a strong constitution and could take the hard work and pestering. Tommy, though, was a sensitive lad and was exhausted by the work and tormented by the weeks of harassment. He told me that he wanted to run away but knew that if he left he would not only lose his pay but could be sued by the company for breach of contract. He was trying to tough it out until spring, but he never made it that far.

As I was Tommy's close friend the foreman gave me the job of taking his body back to his family in Tyendinaga. I set out on February 15th with a horse and sleigh and orders to return without delay. Along my route the forlorn landscape matched my heavy heart. For miles around

Mishinog Lake the forest had been stripped of its magnificent pine trees, leaving only the slash that had already been host to several fires. As we walked north in October we had seen this as a normal state of affairs, but on my return with Tommy's body it struck me as an abomination.

At each stop along my way people asked me how Tommy had died. In Cloyne I gave them the foreman's answer, apoplexy, but I never believed this and as I traveled south my thoughts grew darker. In Kaladar I said that Tommy had died of a broken heart and told of the overwork and harassment he had suffered. By the time I reached Tamworth I had my own verdict about his death.

"He was murdered," I said.

This shocked the good people of Tamworth who then asked if the murderer had been arrested.

"No," I said. "He was murdered by the foreman at Skead's shanty."

"But did no one contact the police to arrest him?" they asked.

That is when I should have told them the true story, but something drove me on. I knew that I could never prove that the foreman had murdered Tommy, but having gone this far I could not backtrack. I made up a story, a wishful fantasy of revenge, with no thought for its consequences.

"The police were not needed," I said. "The men of the shanty arrested the foreman, put together a jury of twelve, tried him, and hanged him from a tree until he was dead. Then they cut him down and buried him." Thinking that my tall tale would go no futher, I traveled on to the MacDermott farm to bring Tommy's body to his family. To them I told the real story of Tommy's life and death

in the shanty, but by this time my story had gone out from Tamworth by telegraph and was being reported in all the newspapers of Ontario – "Lynching at Skead's Shanty!" One account even reported, falsely, that twelve lynchers had already been arrested and taken to Napanee for trial. I should have realized that any wild story about criminal shantymen would be picked up and embellished by the newspapers.

I returned to Napanee and went to the editor of the Napanee Beaver to tell him the story was not true, that I had made it up. This correction went out to the other newspapers. The Napanee Beaver, they reported, had it "on good authority" that the story of the lynching at Skead's shanty was a hoax. Most of these papers added that the perpetrator of this "infamous falsehood" should be punished severely.

I was arrested the two days later.

This is my true account of how I have landed in this jail awaiting trial on a charge of mischief. Here I wish to add some facts that I also know to be true.

Every year thousands of men go into the bush in this country to risk their lives as shantymen, felling the big pines, hewing them into logs, hauling them to the water's edge, and driving them down perilous rivers to market. The work is dangerous, the pay is meagre, and the food is bad. A few men grow rich as they lay waste to the primeval forest. The newspapers have only praise for the millionaires who profit from this industry. The county court will judge my crime. May generations to come be the judge of theirs.



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Thoughts and Desires

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He takes the longer way home, with full intention. Convincing himself he needed time to think but those thoughts are not of immediate issues and more of lustful desires. Pining away at the details, considering all avenues that may lead back to him. "The husband is always the prime suspect", he says out loud to himself. Yet at least in this case, motive would be harder to cite. Not money, no and no evidence of an affair on either side. Yet a sudden death at such an age will undoubtedly draw suspicion. He wants to be original but all sensible roads lead back to some type of accident. Statistically speaking, a collision under terrible conditions brought on by nature is all too common, a part of life's tragic journey.

With such a conclusion being sound the difficulty of course lies in the execution. A second car could certainly be used in such a scenario. A vehicle purchased for cash, for this one purpose appears preferable and so he would take a bus a good five hours out. He would then walk some ways and if by impulse come upon a motorcycle the seller wouldn't bother asking questions beyond knowing how to ride it. Without even the suggestion of putting on a set of plates, of course on the outskirts of a city with the mindfulness and awareness of such. Perhaps however this was him blending movies, books and failed crime dramas into something calculated with precision.

Reconciliation seems such a political term, to sell hope of moving forward. Burning bridges meanwhile with its visceral reception gets too

bad a reputation. It is the most basic premise that must be first addressed; does one want or need to cross that bridge again? We maintain roads to continue travel but once they are not needed we either begin to neglect or destroy them altogether. Relationships truly are no different. The road travelled is one of the heart and so simplify completely when love dies so does the path. Reciprocation for trade is a necessity and so if one imagines a truck driving up to a path and the fence is closed.

Unlike trade agreements the caveat in relationships is emotional guilt, so sometimes it is better to leave without a trace than to have that conversation. Cowardice can be used to describe such actions but who are those that attempt to pass judgment. For like with a dying relative or friend there are instances of a kindness in not having the conversation. An absolution in disappearance if one can leave it all behind. Yet he is not a man who can just disappear, he knows too many and they rely on him. So then begins the question of fairness and how to balance the scales.

She is a lovely woman, kind and cultured but she is lost. Her motives are questionable and her comfort in stagnation are troublesome to say the least. For where he has prospects, she can only tie him down. It is who she is and that cannot be changed. He has tried and indeed even made some points clear but at a certain juncture irreconcilable differences become concrete. A formal separation is out of the question and so once again after going through his

mind for reasons not to, the decision itself is without question.

He goes back to the logistics, the practical applicability as in his many contracts over the years. It has become his standard practice and for good reason to question himself at every turn but in the end, things will go smoothly. So then the choice

becomes which city as opposed to the means. Such details help to clear emotions, of interests in the moral implications. For we all live life to self fulfilling ends though some are more honest with themselves than others. And this would be his to start anew, the best way possible or as the saying goes third time's a charm.

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Killing Time While Time Kills Me

Pic by William Krause Unsplash.com

Taking the offramp and exiting the highway, we drive up a steep hill, make a right at the intersection and another right into the circular driveway of three high rise buildings. The middle one is my new home. Its pretty, as pretty as buildings can be from the outside. The grounds are immaculate.

After parking the car, my daughter retrieves my luggage from the trunk. Everything else I own is already here. She has taken care of everything for me, bless her heart. The entrance-way in my building is spectacular. It has chandeliers, mirrors and art deco on the walls. There is even a faint smell of lavender in the air.

A concierge extends a warm greeting, "Welcome, can I help with your luggage?"

I smile, turn to my daughter and say, "I could get a real kick out of this if only it were happening because I was on vacation, in a hotel, and in another country."

She gives me a knowing smile. The concierge service is the only included service out of the 'available for a fee' à la carte service menu we received when we signed the rental agreement. After declining his offer, we head for one of the three elevators available. We are both quiet on the ride up. The intercom sounds out, "Floor 8!". The elevator doors open onto a small alcove furnished with a soft leather loveseat. My eye immediately goes to the lush green tropical plant sitting on top of an exqui-



site glass and copper stand. I think that I might come sit here sometime.

A thick grey carpet covers the floor and gold-plated handrails separate each door frame from the next along the hallway to my apartment door. The hotel feel is everywhere. A black light fixture is right above my door. Its quite discreet actually and blends in well. The

light only comes on at dusk and shuts off at dawn. It is very quiet and I can't here anyone or anything out in this hallway.

I am suddenly flooded by a memory of walking along another hallway but this one is tiled. The floors are so clean, they gleam. Along the walls are wooden handrails, their luster long gone from the many hands that have moved along them throughout the years. The doors do not lock here and rarely are they completely closed. Encased in the ceiling, fluorescent lights line the hallway. The same silence exists here as well.

We enter the apartment and my daughter slides the closet doors to hang up our coats and start unpacking my suitcase. My new home is a one-room apartment that is costing a fortune, at least that's what I've heard my daughter say. A small kitchen area is to my right consisting of a small counter with a sink and 2 overhead cupboards. A table for two is placed in front of it. A small couch serves as a divider to my sleeping area which is to my left. My daughter has positioned my bed in front of the window. A 3-piece bathroom is off to one side beside the closet wall.

My mind wanders again. I follow the tiled hallway to Mrs. Cheney's room. She is sitting up in her bed. This room is her home. I am here to take her to breakfast. I love spending time with her. She is so interesting. A handmade multicolored quilt drapes her bed and her own artwork adorns the walls. Her dresser is a shrine to photos of her children and family members. She smiles up at me.

Grinning from ear to ear I say, "Good morning Mrs. Cheney! How are you this morning?"

She giggles and replies, "Not bad for an old girl!"

This is our morning ritual. We both laugh and our day begins.

My daughter's voice takes me out of my reverie.

"I have to go Mom. I have a few more errands to run before I head home."

"Of course, Dear. Thank you so much for everything. Safe travels. I love you."

"Love you too Mom. Are you going to be alright?"

"Of course, don't worry about me."

The door closes and I drift back again to Mrs. Cheney. I am pushing her wheelchair down the hallway. The head nurse smiles and waves at us as we go by the nursing station. All the nurses here are nuns. They run a tight ship. The unit is so clean you could eat off the floors. Each person that lives here is treated with dignity and great care. I am so happy here. It does not feel like a job. It feels like home. It is like spending the day with my grandparents. The seniors here are such great teachers and funny, oh my God, how funny they are. I help feed, bathe and dress them but my favorite all time activity is spending time with them, talking and learning about their lives. I wonder about their families though. I never see any of them on my shifts.

I wake up in bed. Looking around, I have no idea where I am. Time goes by and clarity returns. I am in my new apartment. I wonder how long have I been lying here. I call my daughter. She is home and asks me if I have eaten. I don't know. I can't remember. She reminds me that my meals are delivered, an à la carte service we apparently signed up for. As if on cue, the doorbell resonates through the apartment. It startles me. I hang up with my daughter to answer the door. A young lady is standing there, a cart by her side.

She reads aloud off a paper, "Apartment 803, family name Richards! Good morning, your breakfast is here. Please hold the door for me and I will set the tray on your kitchen table. I'll be back to pick up the tray in 1 hour."

She heads out the door leaving me completely stunned and shaky.

Mrs. Cheney pops into my mind again. This time I am brushing her hair. I hand her her dentures and she makes a funny face at me that cracks me up every time. I help her dress into her favorite outfit, a white blouse and a red skirt. She looks lovely.

I ask her my usual, "So, what is on the agenda today Mrs. Cheney?" Without skipping a beat, she replies, "Darling, I'll be killing time while time kills me!"

We laugh together. I am too young to fully understand the reality of that statement.

The breakfast lady is at my door again.

"Has it been an hour already?" I wonder out loud. I haven't eaten.

I answer the door and she brushes by me to retrieve the tray.

"So, what's on your agenda today Ma'am?" she absently mutters.

In a moment of clarity, I realize that I am Mrs. Cheney now but in a different time and a different place.

With a faint smile I reply, "I'll be killing time while times kills me!" She nods, and leaves.

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Of Monsters and Muskies

The path to the boy's secret place on the river ran a course through a jungle of tumultuous overgrowth like a tunnel. The wild grape vines had curled themselves around sumac and alder to form a tangle overhead.

He had pumped the broken pedals of his dump-rescued bike with all his might down the path, looking once over his shoulder to see his father standing in the back doorway of the once tidy, but paint peeled little house. That look almost cost him his escape as he careened off the brush.

His father's maniacal screams followed him down the trail until they lost themselves in the deepening shadows of the leafy tunnel walls.

Knowing that his father had never followed him down to this spot before did nothing to assure the boy that he wouldn't come here now. He gazed around as he threw the rusted bike down against the mass of living, growing vegetation.

Nothing appeared to be disturbed. His ragged towel hung on the gnarled cedar tree whose other limbs formed a natural swing for jumping into the deep water of the eddy.

His swimming hole had been formed long ago when a section of the clay and limestone river bank had collapsed. The unrelenting currents had swirled and battered the bank until it had widened into a one acre pool, big enough that the moving water had lost the energy to pull any more land into its depths.

In the centre of the pool was an island. It was shaped like an apple core, a mass of granite that the water had been unable to eat. The part above the water was barren except for a spruce tree that formed the stem.

He had first seen the musky two years ago when he was eight. He had been wading on a shelf of limestone and sat down on the shore, his feet tracing little patterns in the mud. Clouds of it billowed up and were pulled into thin lines by the current. Small fish, rock bass and perch, ascended from the shadows to pick off crustaceans and grubs disturbed from the warm mud.

The musky ascended also. It was four feet long then, a full forty pounds. The boy became aware of it, its shape at first soft, like some smooth green illusion and then hardening until the unmistakable swept back predator features slammed into his consciousness.

He had seen it often over the next two summers. It had grown to an incredible size by gorging on fish, small mammals and birds.

He pulled his grubby T-shirt over his head and jumped into the cool water of the pool. He smashed his hands against the water, trying to release his despair. He felt the wave of his frustration entering the water through thrashing hands and kicking feet. And when he opened his eyes under the clay stained water, the giant musky rushed eerily up from the depths. It was fully the size and length of the boy now. Its huge mouth opened and then closed on the boy's hand. For an instant their eyes seemed to lock. His bubbling scream was mocked by the fish as its teeth ripped out of his flesh. Gasping, he frantically dog pad-



Pic by Tim Marshall Unsplash.com

dled toward the safety of the shore.

And then he felt the teeth tear into his right ankle as the musky fought to hold the boy back. He heaved himself up onto the muddy bank, the fish still attached to his bloody leg. Out of its element, the giant musky let go in a long raking slide back into the water. And then it was gone.

He lay in the sun, shaking, examining the long bloody gashes in his ankle and the symmetrical punctures in his hand. He was out of the immediate danger and a sense of relief and wonder filled him as the sun dried the blood and flooded him in its warm rays. He felt his eyelids drooping. And thoughts streamed in his sleepy mind.

His mother, bending over him, comforting him, protecting him from the wrath his father wielded at him for some unknown reason. She had been his solace in a storm of craziness. The man had been so loving, so patient, until his slide into insanity pulled them into a downward spiral.

And as he dozed, a vivid more disturbing vision emerged. She was running down the lane, her hair and skirt blowing in the wind of the warm August evening, a silhouette in the headlights of a truck bouncing up the dusty roadway. He tried to sound a warning but nothing came. He watched in helpless terror as the lights drew closer, the engine roaring, a horrifying thud and the spinning of tires. One blinding headlight went out as his mother's form disappeared in a cloud of dust.

A thud in the brush up the path brought him back to full awareness. It was followed by a curse and the sound of raspberry cane ripping skin and clothing. He jumped to his feet. The thrashing grew closer. In seconds his father would emerge.

He had to get away. The shore line was too thick and tangled to run. He dove into the pool as his father exploded into the clearing.

The island.

He made for the island knowing

the musky was under him somewhere. Gasping for breath, he pulled himself up and stared back at his father, who was roaring in incoherent rage and ripping off his boots and clothing all at the same time.

The boy cringed in terror, desperately hiding behind the stunted spruce on the island. He watched his father jump into the pool.

It was like watching through some other eyes, at a movie screen, in slow motion. His father's foam flecked lips issued a strange, puzzled cry. His hands and head disappeared beneath the water and then reappeared. The musky's jaws had closed on his neck just under the chin. The water churned. Hands gripped and lost their grip. Teeth, sharp predator teeth that angled backward, dug deep into the soft tissue until they reached bone.

Then nothing. A few bubbles, and a red stain spread on the water.

The police working behind the house, found a shallow grave that contained the body of a young woman whose features had been crushed by some blunt force trauma. They noted the smashed fender of a truck in the yard, coated in dried blood.

The house had been unoccupied but messed up, as if someone, something, had ripped and torn at it out of madness. They started down a trail leading through the undergrowth at the back of the house.

At first the cops didn't see him crouched behind the little spruce tree out on the island. It was almost dark by the time they got a boat out to him.

He was bloody, half dressed, his tangled hair messy and wet and his eyes huge, ringed in black and staring. He was incoherent, and he babbled. A monster, a man-fish had him.

And in the darkness at the edge of the pool, something splashed and the boy screamed and screamed...

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Uncle Lee's Pullman

It was another sticky day in KL. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia was a sprawling city of fun, lights and food, but also chaos, smog and heat. The latter is what spurred on a weekend trip to Borneo to visit Kuching, 'The city of cats'; a great jumping off point to see birds of paradise, tropical rainforests, and some of the few remaining orangutans. The gang landed early in the morning, already cooler to be out of the concrete and into the jungle.



This time, they were staying in style - checking in to the swanky Pullman Estates which was an expansive cliffside resort on the edge of town. Now, every hotel the gang stayed at would have a pool and a little tiki bar, but this place felt luxurious and way better than their usual 'cheap and cheerful'. Expat life could have its advantages, and living like this felt like one of them.

"Drop it all and go you guys!" Yelled Hutchy in his positive tone that kept the group moving. "I'm ready for the pool and a beer."

Within the hour, all four friends had regrouped and piled into a van with the goal of seeing the elusive, ever-special orangutans. The Pullman had arranged a driver to take them to a nearby sanctuary with wild viewing platforms just meters from seasonal fruit trees that were sure to draw in a great ape or two. As the van slowed through the gates, Mary noticed a ramshackle temple with pagodas that

seemed to be slipping backward into the dirt and tattered ribbons growing through the eternally creeping systems of lush vines and underbrush.

"Ah! You see something, yeah? Ol' bit of history for you, lah!" Unpromptedly began Farhan the driver. "Before this castle you call a hotel, this was old China village. Just like the rest of Malaysia; we got Malay, Indian and Chinese all living in one city. This was a happy village where people came to eat, talk, learn and live for many years."

"Where'd it all go? I don't see too much of it left!" Asked Tyler as they wound their way through the city.

"Everyone wanted the nice land; safe up on the cliff; and knew that it would be so valuable even if all the villagers were poor. All the villagers agreed to sell, but not Uncle Lee. Uncle was a happy old man - he ran a little restaurant with a big shrine - and he welcomed everyone in the village, even if they had no money to pay. He didn't care about money. So, him refusing to sell meant two things; no one could build the big hotel, but ah! no one else can get money for their land, not good lah! No one knows what happened next, but Uncle Lee's shop, house and his family burned to the ground. People were sad for a short time and next year the big hotel went up. Know one knows for sure what happened, but everyone who makes money on that land got blood on their hands, ya! But not all bad, nice place now - happy foreigners, good for drivers like me, and they make the best Beef Rendang!"

"I guess they don't mention it in the reviews of the place, no one mentioned murder and unceded land with their pool pics." Tyler half joked.

"Oh come on!" Farhan went on, "Murder here? You saw that pagoda, ah? Spooky, huh? Well guess what, before the hotel went up, village had no such thing! It sure wasn't there when they built Pullman, but now it looks like it's being sucked into the Earth! And still, you can smell burning incense and hear music at night, or so I hear! Wow, here's the orangutan sanctuary - so fast!" The mysterious shepherd pulled into the centre and sped off without a second glance.

"Okay guys, I totally smelled incense back there," Confessed Danielle a minute later. "That guy has got me all freaked out and I am moving hotels when we get back!"

"Thank God! I don't even believe in paranormal stuff, but like murdering an old guy and haunted forest music is not my cup of tea" agreed Mary.

"Coconut shakes! Not wasting time on this nonsense - Shakes and monkeys or whatever!" Belted Hutchy, the Aussie retiree who brought a good bit of perspective into things.

"They're orangutans!"

"Right!"

"Well, I will have a shake but don't catch me walking out there after dark. It gets weird and I will skip the palace and hit the nearby backpackers hostel without a second thought." Said Danielle as they approached the centre.

Danielle, Hutchy, Mary and Tyler forgot about any worries of the day over swinging primates and shakes that led to a roadside grill, beers and a wander into town. By then it pretty much made sense to slowly walk their way home. Finally climbing the last big hill up to the Pullman, the gang pulled over to share one last beer someone found in their bag.

"Ha! Lucky place to stop", noted Tyler, "You can stop and do your bedtime prayers here Danielle!"

"Don't be a jerk!" Chipped Mary.

"Oh my god, why would we stop here?" Started Danielle, "There is totally smoke and incense coming from somewhere, and I hear that awful tinny temple music - why would someone make this up? I'm going to the hostel!"

"Let's gooooo! Beef Rendang! If we don't move it, the bar's shutting down! I'm saying 'Robes, Rendang, and poker by the pool.'" Hutchy ignored Danielle's statement and practically dragged the crew along.

After a few hours of those exact events, maybe a bit too much beer and rendang, everyone toddled off to their luxurious beds. As Danielle got out of her cushy robe and into bed, she felt a shiver but brushed it off and fell asleep. Too late to change hotels at that hour.

Sometime in the night, Danielle awoke to a figure engulfed in flames, lingering at the foot of her bed with an incense stick in his hand.

Tyler startled in the night with a full body shake from an old man ushering him to stay silent, a bony finger held up to his lips.

When Mary stirred in the night, a friendly auntie was bringing in containers of fried noodles for dinner. She seemed so excited to have a guest.

Only Hutchy slept through the night, although he was certain he had a pretty racy dream that a lady from the bar had tracked him down and showed up in his hotel room!

At breakfast the next morning, everyone except Hutch looked a little worse for wear; tired and jumpy but no one asked each other why. Same reason all the reviews for the Pullman are nothing but positive - nobody wants to admit they're the only crazy one.

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When Cancer Called

Cancer was the first word he said to me over the phone, making Alberta seem a million miles away. My brother's words were impeded with the emotions he was hopelessly trying to conceal from me, his little sister he could barely say, "I have pancreatic cancer."

In August of 2019 his daughters brought him home for what was to be his final trip. His truck pulled up to our house and I hurried out to greet him. Joy quickly left my heart, replaced with shock of what I was seeing. An older man, very emaciated and having difficulty walking, slowly made his way towards me with open arms. As I embraced this shell of a man, I looked into his sea blue eyes, and there I found him, my big brother David.

Moments became months, weeks and days as we surrounded him with our love and support. Life happened in the four months he was home. We celebrated his 60th birthday, he spent time in the homes of his children and siblings and reconnected with other family and friends. I think he had the most joy when in Black Donald, he loved the vast openness of the mighty Madawaska and Centennial lakes. He stayed in his daughter's quaint little cabin enjoying nature that enveloped him like a warm blanket.

Each time I seen him I would not let my heart admit that he was dying. It was a very difficult truth, one that I did not want to acknowledge. His body was failing him, weight loss, nausea from treatments, and fatigue ravaged his frail frame. Trying to keep it light he joked he could be a skeleton decoration for Halloween.

I must have investigated every site about pancreatic cancer, consuming information beyond my understanding, hoping to read about a cure between the blurred lines on my screen. There were a few times when he stayed with me that he also felt he was going to make it, but now I wonder if it was for my benefit?

I remember the few nights spent in the old cabin sitting on a hill looking over the Madawaska. I slept lightly, staring across the moon lit room watching for the movement of his fragile body. He stirred and rose from his bed, in the shadows his slight frame moved through the old wooden door to the kitchen. I thought I could hear him crying so I too rose from the warmth of the covers and made my way to care for him. There I found him leaning over the worn counter, weeping quietly in pain. I helped him to sit down, whispering words of comfort to him, but inside I was screaming for help from what ever power could help him. I could see the pain etched in his face, why now, why him, just why?

Cancer affects the whole family unit; it takes its toll physically on the person they are holding prisoner. If you watch the support team made up of family, friends and medical professionals, it holds them as emotional prisoners too. I remember the look on his doctors' face when he shook my brother's hand and apologised for the news he had just delivered. Cancer, like a coward, uses others to confirm it is winning once again. Life is on hold in a way, the undertone of the day is the same, will he be with us tomorrow?



Pic by Jess Joyce Unsplash.com

gathered nervously by his side fidgeting with whatever was handy. The nice thing about Hospice is that there were quiet rooms for families to go to for a moment to gather their thoughts, the grandchildren often slipped away to take advantage of that.

December 19th, 2019, the angels gathered my brother in their arms and gently led him home. I went to his bedside, took his thin hand in mine and said my final goodbye. The pain came from the depths of my soul, I wept, 60 years of memories came flooding to the surface, all his struggles, good times, difficult times, and his time spent with his family. I had to leave the room and find solace away from everyone.

Holding my chest, wanting to keep all the good memories inside for ever, I found the strength to walk back to his room, I sat on the bed once again and looked at this shell of a man who was taken because cancer called. As I looked at him, the sparkle in his blue eyes was gone, I did not see my big brother anymore.

This journey with my brother was a painful one, terminal cancer called upon him, and he fought it like a warrior. It took David away, but before it ended his life it also brought him love, support and sweet reunions to take with him on his new journey.

This was my experience when cancer called.

Each time I would see David I would take mental photos of him, burning them into my heart, I was so afraid I would forget him when he died. Cameras were never far from any event David attended, he never complained about all the sittings with family and friends, he gave us his forever smile all the time.

This euphoria did not last long, eventually he could no longer be cared for by his family, he was brought to the hospital, cancer was winning, nothing was stopping this disease from robbing us of our brother, father, husband and friend.

The few days in the hospital were a blur for me, each time I got off the elevator I would get very emotional. Slowly I entered his room, finding him resting I tiptoed around to tuck in his blanket. As I looked at this figure laying so still, I could feel the anger, like hot lava erupting from the depths of my soul. He was being taken from us and there was nothing we could do.

Three days passed and he had to be transferred to Hospice, now it was getting real, very real.

Christmas was fast approaching, festivities were all around us, especially in Davids room. A small tree, Christmas lights and festive snacks were plentiful.

David always had company, including his ex-wives, I am sure the nurses giggled at this scene. Davids first wife, second wife and third wife all in the same room, and his first love as a young boy. I loved this, we all got along just fine, cancer could not take that away from him. We all fussed over him, he loved it, drank it in like a fine wine.

On one visit I found my brother staring up at the ceiling, in particular the left-hand corner of the room. He was reaching out and mumbling in a low whisper, I watched for a few minutes in curiosity as to who he was talking too. His arms lowered to his sides, and he

closed his eyes, I stepped in and quietly sat with him as he slumbered. When he woke, he was happy to see me there, I did not ask about his special "chat" he had earlier. His children were with him a lot in those last few days, grandchildren



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A Monastic Vow

The Monasterio de Osiera is famous throughout Spain, in spite of this very few Spaniards have ever visited it. Difficult to access, the monastery is located at the top of a remote valley in the province of Ourense. The monks chose well when they sought out the solitude demanded by their order.

The road to the complex paralleled a mountain stream. Although it was not always visible, it announced its presence with each sharp rise in elevation. As I had already been hiking for three weeks, the steep incline didn't pose a problem. The concern I had was whether I could find food and shelter for the night. There had been rumours among fellow hikers that the monks no longer welcomed visitors. My stress lay in wondering whether other accommodation might be available in this remote region. Perhaps I would be sleeping outdoors and dining on my last can of sardines.

As I rounded the last bend in the road, the monastery came into view. It was an awe-inspiring sight. Built in the twelfth century, its many buildings had seen better days. Now managed by just twelve monks, the place was originally designed to be



the home to many hundreds.

Brother Andre greeted me at the front entrance to the church. A small intense individual, he carefully scanned my face while we made introductions. He explained that although they no longer accepted regular guests, hikers such as myself could make use of a dormitory near the edge of the property. No food was available in the monastery but possibly one of the villagers would supply a meal. He directed me to where I would sleep, all the while apologising for the lack of hot water.

The dormitory was located inside a long, stone, medieval building with narrow slits for windows. It

was adjacent to an ancient graveyard. From its close proximity, I suspect that it was originally used as a staging place for bodies awaiting interment. A heavy wooden door was the main access to the building. The ancient lock moved grudgingly as I double handed the key. I had the impression the monks didn't entertain many guests. As the door finally creaked open, a stale musty smell wafted past me, as if anxious to get out and mingle with the fresh mountain air. The cavernous room was empty save for a long wooden table, six bunk beds and an outsized painting depicting an angry, sword wielding, avenging angel. Not the ideal image to see before drifting off to sleep. I tossed my backpack onto one of the upper bunks and selected the clothes I would wear after my cold shower. My daily laundry chore would have to wait until the next destination, cold washed clothes never feel clean.

Describing the few houses grouped together as a village would be a stretch. A lone figure worked tending a vegetable patch. I explained my predicament and the woman insisted that she would make me a meal. I could repay her kindness by turning over the soil in her huge compost heap. Happy with the trade I worked in the garden until she called to me that the food was ready.

The meal was excellent, consisting of chicken with fresh garden vegetables. As I was in Spain, a large tumbler of red wine sat alongside my plate. We ate, chatted and before I realised it my wine was finished. I accepted a refill, in spite of already feeling the effects of the first glass.

Making my way back to the monastery by moonlight was an interesting experience. The ground seemed less solid than on my outward trip. In my befuddled state I thought the occasional stumble could be put down to being out of balance without my backpack. The graveyard was silent and eerily still as I made my way along the passages between the

Pic from wisepilgrim.com

crypts. A glimpse of light somewhere off among the monuments gave me a momentary shiver. The idea of someone poking about in the dark seemed ludicrous, so I put it down to an over-active imagination.

Once again, the door lock resisted. The key just didn't seem the right fit. When it did finally locate it was the turn of the door to join in the resistance.

In near total darkness the interior seemed gloomier and even more oppressive than before. I searched the pack for my head lamp, but its beam made little impression on the vastness of the room. The avenging angel looked even more threatening by lamp light. Feeling a little nervous, I decided to check out the rest of the room. There were only two doors. The main one I had fought with as I entered, and a smaller one in the opposite wall. It could be that the small one had once been a shortcut to the graveyard, a possible confirmation of the room's original purpose. This door was locked and looked as though it hadn't been opened in many years. Returning to the front door I carefully locked myself in. I was confident that no other hikers would turn up at this late hour. It was cold and damp in the cavernous room in spite of a mild outside temperature, so I crawled fully clothed into my sleeping bag and switched off my headlamp.

After sleeping for what seemed like a short time, I was awakened by a loud moan and a sense of movement close by. I lay in the dark, now fully awake, holding my breathe while trying to get my bearings. Turning slowly toward the neighbouring bunk I was shocked to see a figure lying silhouetted in the gloom. My mind raced, trying to catch up with my heart rate. How did the figure get into the room through the locked doors? No hiker could have arrived this late. Besides, there was no one around to direct them to the dormitory. The front door was securely locked with the key on the inside. The entity could only have entered through the small graveyard door and that didn't seem humanly possible.

Fearing the worst, I groped for my headlamp switched it on and directed it onto the adjacent bunk. My backpack was lying just where I had tossed it. The profile perfectly matching that of a figure lying prone on the bed.

From that day on I vowed to limit my wine intake to a small glass with dinner and no refills.

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A Rainforest Romp

After what felt like a long week of work I was staring at the clock and wondering where the pending happy hour would materialise. Deciding to make an effort to organise friends, I glanced at my phone and to my surprise a plan was already in the works. My partner Tyler had found plane tickets for a song, and we were heading off to Sumatra, Indonesia for the weekend. As we were living in Kuala Lumpur - just a hop, skip and a jump away - I asked no further questions. There would be only one reason we'd be heading to the jungle...We were off to see the orangutans!

Coming from different directions in the city, we met at the airport, scurried through security and onto the flight, landing in Medan, Sumatra fifty minutes later. Upon arrival we hopped in an awaiting car and headed for Bukit Lawang, unbeknownst to us, a four hour drive away. Although very tired, it was impossible to sleep on the drive. The combination of terrible roads, radical driving and our spirited chauffeur throwing obscenities toward any vehicle/animal/person that dared to get in the way was enough to make anyone double check their seatbelt. Other than our chirpy driver, the only noise heard from us was the occasional crack of Tyler's head as it bounced off the window. When finally arriving in one piece, we quickly arranged our next day's jungle trek, checked into a modest bungalow and said goodnight.

Having arrived in the veil of darkness, we were very much unaware of our surroundings. Waking up the next morning to the steaming rain pouring down through the thick green jungle made us quickly forget about our hellish work week and sorted journey. We met up with our guide, Thomas, and three German exchange students that would make up our trekking group. As we prepared to head off for our overnight hike, we stood awkwardly with our new groupmates and assessed our gear. Gear being a generous term for what we had arrived with—a one litre bottle of water, camera and a bathing suit all thrown into a somewhat ragged 7-Eleven plastic bag was what we deemed essential for this adventure. As it turned out, the other trekkers also seemed to be sizing us up, as they hesitantly expressed some concern about our kit or lack thereof.

So you might be thinking what's the big deal about orangutans and why make a special trip to see them? Well, our interest had been piqued by these



Pic by Pat Whelen Unsplash.com

real-life sasquatch-esque jungle dwellers for some time—along with being adorable, they behave and resemble humans. In fact, the word orangutan comes from the Bahasa Malay language and means 'person of the forest' - the word 'orang' meaning people and 'hutan' means forest. Aaaaand we share 96% of our genetics, so we're basically family and it'd be rude not to call in.

Our trekking guide Thomas was the whole package. He was a standup comedian in his own right, had a ton of knowledge about the jungle and its plants and animals, and genuinely loved and felt concern for the orangutans. As we wandered he chatted away about the different fruits that grew (starfruit, cocoa, mango, etc), the different animals that roamed, and the various effects farming has on the rainforest. Previously, I had no idea that palm oil plantations were such offenders. At first glance, to someone coming from North America, you think "Wow! Palm trees!" I love a good palm tree. To me they represent hot sun, pina colodas and vacation. For the orangutans, and the rainforest, it means devastation. Unlike natural trees and plants found in the rainforest, palm trees deplete the soil of all nutrients and water, ultimately leading to a dead ecosystem. Throw in poachers, and the orangutans are in big trouble. I digress.

We only walked for an hour and came across a couple of orangutans way up in the trees. Amazed, we gawked for a long while. We continued just a bit farther

and were suddenly face to face with a mama and her baby at ground level. It was awesome to see them up close, just hanging out. The orangutans close to the village are considered semi-wild, and while one of the guides shared a snack with the mom, we were all told to keep our distance, as she has bitten over 50 trekkers (and apparently decides when it's time for YOU to move on).

As orangutans mainly eat and sleep, and apparently head off for an afternoon siesta, we trekked the latter part of the day sans orangutans. We did see monkeys, lizards, peacocks and a baboon, but no more orangutans. We

arrived at the camp seven hours later, completely covered in mud and soaking wet. That night we had the most amazing meal made for us over the fire three kinds of curry, chicken two ways, potatoes, and rice. After the day of hiking, and our 7-Eleven bag of supplies depleted, it was one of the most satisfying meals we've eaten. That night we slept in a lean-to on bamboo mats listening to the nighttime chorus of the jungle come alive.

The next morning we were thankful the trekking portion of the trip was over, as our legs were feeling stiff. We crossed the river, headed to a waterfall and 'showered off' which was super fresh. Next we swam around in the river, jumping into the rapids and trying to fight the currents. Finally, we packed up our 7-Eleven suitcase and jumped on a make-shift raft. For the next hour we floated down the river, as Thomas used a long bamboo stick to keep us from crashing into the rock walls that lined the banks. As rewarding as the trek was, and being able to see the orangutans was amazing...a day in a natural water park is always going to be pretty hard to beat!

We arrived back in Bukit Lawang with a couple of hours to spare; just enough time to buy a souvenir and have a beer. We later arrived at the airport only to learn that all the day's flights had been cancelled due to an active volcano in the northern region of Sumatra. Without a doubt, our flight was delayed too. We arrived home in the wee hours of Monday morning, setting our alarm for a few hours later to face another work-week. Was it a problem? Nothing a coffee couldn't fix! How's that for a happy hour?

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The Close Call

During the summer that I turned 16, I worked in a small corner store with my childhood friend Bob. The store was owned by a friendly, trusting old man everyone called Johnny. As kids, it was the place to go for treats when we had our weekly allowance or lawn cutting money. Twenty-five cents would buy a Sweet Marie, an Oh Henry and a roll of grape bazooka gum. I had just started smoking and a pack of cigarettes was 51 cents.

As a teen going into my last year of high school, working at Johnny's was a great summer job. Johnny would often leave early and allow us close up the store. Bob and I would go into the cold storage room in the back and try out various beers. I pretended to like Labatt blue. I still had not developed a taste for beer but I liked the look of the label, and I felt mature and unique as I drank a pilsner. Bob preferred Molson Canadian, probably because of all the ads on Hockey Night in Canada.

Late one Friday night after a couple of pints we discovered our "liquid courage", and decided that we would steal an entire case of beer, take it down to my house by the river, have a few laughs and stare at the stars.

With the lights out and the door locked, the two of us marched audaciously down the peaceful boulevard like puppies with a new toy. We would take turns carrying the case of beer. After a couple of blocks, we turned a corner down the street where Bob lived and walked towards my house and the river. By this point we each had a handle on the heavy case as we marched down our normally



Pic by Jakob Rosen Unsplash.com

quiet residential street. All of the houses were dark and no one but a black cat was stirring. In hindsight, it may have been an omen that we missed. We never even considered that we might be seen. We were simply enjoying a warm summer night of adventure and mischief.

We had almost reached my house when we heard a car at the top of the street turn the corner with its bright lights heading directly toward us. It was after midnight, and they were driving quickly for our neighbourhood. My heart sank when I saw the lights on top of the car. That could only mean two things. It was the cops, and we were in big trouble. We were not only under age, but we were carrying stolen alcohol.

Thinking quickly, actually, more like instinctively panicking, we ran off the road and quickly sat down by the

cedar hedge surrounding our neighbour's backyard. We threw the case of beer through the hedge. The police car pulled up and we were both blinded by the bright spotlight directed at us.

"What are you boys up to"? A very serious looking officer got out of the car. He put on his hat, which told me that he meant business. He approached us with his extremely bright flashlight in our faces. It was excessive force if you ask me.

"Would you mind moving apart so I can look into the hedge"?

Ok, he had seen the case of beer and knew what we did with it.

We tried to act calm in spite of the fact that we were so deep in trouble I could barely breathe. We both shifted to one side and allowed the officer to point his flashlight into the hedge. There are

many clichés to describe such a situation; the jig was up, our goose was cooked, and we were toast! I was sure that he would discover the stash, arrest us, wake up our parents and most probably end our summer.

With beads of sweat emerging on my brow, all of the harsh punishments that I was about to endure flashed before my eyes. The officer came closer. I can still remember the smell of his after-shave, also excessive. He peered into the hedge, searched thoroughly, paused for a moment, looked at both of us, turned off his flashlight and headed back to his car. Bob and I looked at each other in complete disbelief. "You boys get home now."

We waited for them to round the corner and drive out of sight before we both dove onto the ground to look into the hedge. There was no case of beer. There was nothing, just grass! We looked carefully for the missing case of beer. Bewildered, we decided to count ourselves lucky and go home to bed, still shaking our heads.

The next day we were told by our neighbour's teenage daughter that her older brother Gary was watching the scene unfold from the kitchen window, snuck out the back door and quietly claimed his prize. He came to our rescue, and earned himself a free case of beer! I suppose that I was a little upset that he stole our stolen beer. But I was much more relieved that we did not get caught! I learned two very important lessons that summer. On the one hand, you never know when someone, even a stranger, is unexpectedly going to help you out of a jam! On the other hand, there truly is "no honour among thieves".

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Opeongo

Well, here we are living in the Ottawa Valley, specifically in the area of Bonechere Valley, on Opeongo Road, which is part of the Opeongo trail. The trail starts at highway 41 {which runs from the 401 up to Pembroke}, and ends in Barry's Bay. We did not plan to move in this region, our goal was Bachawana Bay over near Suite Saint Marie, so how did we end up here?

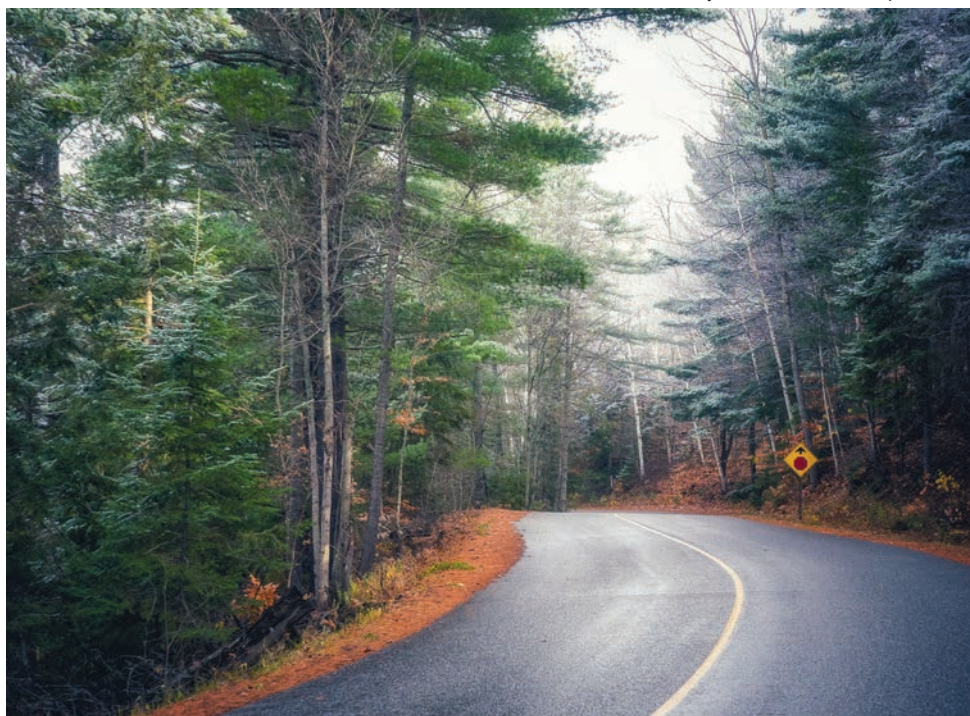
We sold our home, we had 28 days to find a new home and move. Travelling back and forth to the area we wanted to move too was a lot of time and expense. The drive was roughly 12 hours one way. At first we were staying in motels while we looked in the area, but as quick as a home went for sale it was sold, many times without the persons actually travelling to see the home. There apparently was a rush to move north/west Ontario from the Niagara and Toronto areas.

Finally, we built a camper for the back of our truck over one weekend, with a pop-up lid where the bed was, just like the older Volkswagen camper vans. We stayed in this in parks, while we looked for a home, but after 2 weeks we decided we couldn't keep this up, so we started turning off highway 17 into the Ottawa valley.

There it was a little log hunting cabin, empty, and for sale! It was so sad looking, the property had not been cared for, the interior was less than desirable, but it was empty. Calling the agent on the for sale sign we had a look inside then we put in a bid. Because they had not had an offer in a couple of years, they jumped on our bid. I was so sad.

The work we had to do! With all of our belongings from a fully furnished large 3 bedroom home, with a full finished basement, double garage and work shop, to this tiny space with no out buildings, no garage, and my husband with all his tools, collected over his 63 years of life. I was so beside myself, with boxes and furniture everywhere, and the second floor of the 'A' frame, stunk very badly of mouse nests! We were back in Ontario, that was all that seemed too mattered. But, as the weeks went by, we both cried many times. Especially when the cold bitter storm in January, knocked the chimney down, and we were being smoked out, the fireplace was the only source of heat, we had to fix it then and there. So there we were at 2 in the morning, standing on top of the camper on the truck, in a blizzard, trying to put the chimney back together.

The following day we were watching a movie when a chipmunk decided to visit with us! It ran in front of the couch then into the bathroom and out a hole in the floor. Something



that had precedence over everything else, was fixing that hole!

It started off very sad, but, as time went on and all the work was getting done, kitchen cupboards built, a gas fireplace to assist with the wood burning fireplace. All the insulation gutted and all the mouse nests removed, with new thicker insulation it made the cabin just a little more like a warm home.

We ripped, and scraped, repaired, and painted, until we had a product we could live with.

NOW, we love it here, we don't think of moving, this is home.

The town of Eganville is quite charming, we shop there, grocery stores, car parts store, 3 hardware stores, bank, we visit the library often, and the museum had a map with our Opeongo trail on it. On the long map of the region we saw all the many lakes and rivers in the area, to be explored. We found our swimming hole! Lake Clear, with its sandy bottom and warm shallow waters. We love to play football in the water, diving and jumping for the ball, falling in the water until we are tired and cooled down.

The valley is breathtaking, in the fall all the colors- reds, oranges, yellows, since the mountains are full of hardwood trees, everywhere you look its beautiful. The winter also is fun for us since we love to play in the snow, and snow shoe on the trails.

Griffith, around the corner, is a little hamlet with a hardware store, a cozy restaurant and a small store with, food, gas and an LCBO. The drive down highway 71, along the Madawaska river with its hills and greenery is relaxing and brings to mind a time when living was slower and more enjoyable. The Madawaska Provincial Park along the river is a scenic place to stop for travellers, remembering travelling and stopping here many times to stretch our legs and take a dip in the water on the hot summer days.

Pic by Michael Krahn Unsplash.com

week, something we're interested in. Calabogie is close, sometimes, we go to the Redneck restaurant for a meal, and entertainment with friends who travel to meet up with us. And I can't forget Barry's Bay, on your drive to Algonquin along highway 60, we go for the Pizza at Vito's.

We have discovered many things for us to do in the valley. Only by moving here did we know we would love it.

I am an artist, well, a self-made artist, no education, but I love to paint, the valley offers so much for artists, there are the art tours we enjoy going to, and mingling with those of like spirit. The ART store in Renfrew has supplies for those of us who enjoy passing our time with creating pictures of the beautiful valley we live in. We don't always have to travel to Pembroke for supplies, thank goodness.

Algonquin is within an hour from us, we have gone there a few times, visit the stores and art gallery in the park, on our way home we realize how we live in the same environment as the park, its truly beautiful. We live in an amazingly beautiful park!

Thank goodness the Batchawana bay area was unattainable for us!

So, here we are its 2022 and we are living in this picturesque country side where, rivers, lakes and mountains cover the landscape. We listen to the station 98.7 a local radio station, which plays Irish and country songs mostly, the Irish fiddle tunes are very lively and always produces a reaction of toe tapping for me, often with dancing around, {for exercise of course}. This radio station is also very informative it has a good schedule of what is happening in the region, euchre games in Renfrew, Eganville and Griffith throughout the



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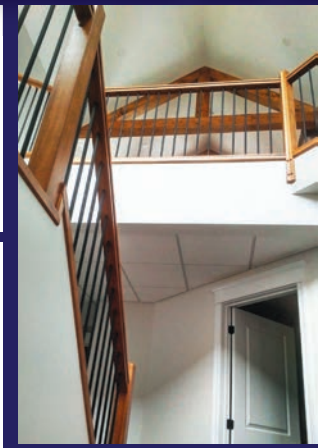
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