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The good news continues! Overall average prices have increased considerably from 2020 but more importantly, year to date values are holding steady. Consumer confidence is still very high for investing in real estate, while conditions continue to favor Sellers. The Ottawa Real Estate Board dated September 3, 2021 states we are in the midst of another strong year and although inventory is gradually moving higher, we are not yet in a balanced market. Bungalows are still in high demand and while sales overall remain strong, they are consistent with the summer months. There is still no better time to sell and Sellers are wise to seek the guidance of an experienced and local realtor.



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THE MADAWASKA HIGHLANDER October-November 2021 EMBRACE THE PAST ~ ENCOURAGE THE FUTURE ~ ENJOY TODAY

# The Madawaska Highlander

**Oct-Nov 2021**  
**FREE** Vol.19 Issue 6  
Next issue Nov. 24, 2021

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

## Welcome!



Autumn brings an explosion of colour to Margie McAlear's hilltop garden in Matawatchan  
Pic by Donnie McAlear

...To the third annual Madawaska Highlander Short Story Contest Special Edition. We received eleven wonderful stories that we're sure you will enjoy. We are happy that we are able, once again, to print every story we received, even leaving room for Bogie Beat and Griffith and Matawatchan News. Exciting new programming and better access to fiction and non-fiction from the Greater Madawaska Public Library dominate the pages of both columns, plus so much more.

We are always impressed with the stories our talented volunteer contributors send us, and all of the short stories are worthy of the same honour, featuring a wide range of adventures and misadventures. You can tell by the title of, 10 Dumb things I did as a Kid, that misadventures abound in that one. In Lily we sniff our way through an adventure seen through the eyes and nose of an off-leash hunting dog.

The theme of man vs beast, or woman vs squirrel, continues in The Bird Feeder. Not your pastoral backyard theme! We learn how sometimes good things come out of adversity in A Covenanter in Canada, a truly pastoral theme. Not so for Cold River that comes with a moral for some adventurous kids in a rocky Canadian wilderness. We see how the great outdoors can be life-altering for city dwellers, in If I had Listened. Outdoor Horror or Heaven? Well, one person's Heaven is another person's Hell, as we find out in Misery Sticks. Try it, they said. It will be fun!

There are times that you do all the right things, but a little Gremlin, or an impish Leprechaun plays a little trick, as it seems happened on a "routine" visit to Ireland in The Irish in Me. Maybe both! And then the completely unexpected that can blow your day, as we see in From a Secret Location. And sometimes the unexpected can change you forever as it does in, I've Fallen and I can't get Up!

You will gasp. You'll cry. You will laugh 'til you snort. Then you'll read The Snoring Cure and laugh again. These stories will do anything other than put you to sleep, snoring or not. Enjoy!...



Spectacular fall colours and Hutson Lake viewed from atop Dan's Mountain on a beautiful day in Matawatchan.  
Pic by Derek Roche

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# The Madawaska Highlander

The Madawaska Highlander  
3784 Matawatchan Rd. Griffith ON  
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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 Denbigh-Griffith Lions Club and the Eganville Leader for your support.

Skippy Hale  
John Neale  
Anne Dougherty

Eleven mystery contributors who submitted stories for the Short Story Contest



Electric vehicles first appeared in the 1850s, holding the vehicular land speed record until around 1900. They did not have the vibration, smell, and noise of gas cars and did not require gear changes or a crank to start them. By 1900, 38% of autos were electric, and 22% were gas. By 1912, many homes were wired for electricity, enabling the surge in popularity. Most early EVs were massive, ornate carriages popularized by upper-class customers. Sales peaked in the early 1910s and continued up to 1942. The high cost, low top speed, and short range of battery electric vehicles, compared to gas, led to a worldwide decline in their use as private cars, although they continued in loading and freight equipment and public transport - especially rail vehicles. More recently, improved battery tech increased driving range and power, and sales of EVs achieved 1M units globally in September 2016. In October 2018, 1 in every 10 passenger cars on Norwegian roads was a plug-in and 74% of new car sales were electric, proving it can be done here too with infrastructure improvements. Image and info source: wikipedia.org

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- Vincent Johnston, Sales Representative

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<p><b>NEW LISTING WATERFRONT!</b></p> <p>257 Bonner Road Black Donald Waterfront Gorgeous Year Round Home. Over 500ft frontage on Black Donald Lake MLS1256489 \$1,100,000</p>	<p><b>NEW LISTING WATERFRONT!</b></p> <p>1141 Centennial Lake Rd .72 acre waterfront lot on Black Donald Lake Waterfront. Perfect to use as a water access lot \$199,900 MLS 1256445</p>	<p><b>THINKING OF SELLING? WE HAVE BUYERS! Take advantage of the HOT MARKET Call me now 613-433-2254</b></p>			
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		<p><b>BUILDING LOTS!</b></p> <p><b>12 BARRYVALE Road</b></p> <p>2.26 acres \$135,600 MLS1224596</p>			
		<p><b>HOBBY FARM!</b></p> <p>1035 Mt. St. Patrick Rd Hobby Farm with 63 acres \$699,900 MLS 1265790</p>			

By Lois Thomson, with a note from John Neale

*I love writing about this wonderful community.*

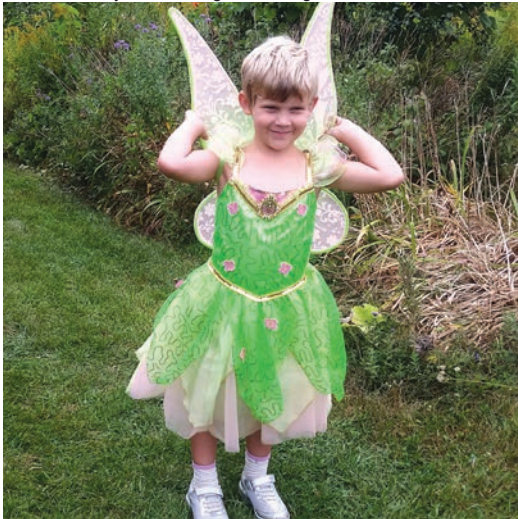
*I thought that I would have many more years to immerse myself in its unique culture and natural beauty.*

*Unfortunately, I have been diagnosed with Stage 4 pancreatic cancer.*

*Prognosis is not good. Wish me luck as I deal with the challenges that lie ahead. - John Neale*



The M Hall book borrowing collection has grown considerably since its humble start of 200 books donated by the Greater Madawaska Public Library in Calabogie. It is a good mix of current and classic books with children and young adult books, too. Story below.



A young pixie participates in the Festival of the Wild Child scavenger hunt on August 28 at High Lonesome Nature Reserve in Pakenham, a fundraiser for the Mississippi Madawaska- Land Trust. Story next page.



Wolf posing for the trail cam on Richard and Audrey Copeland's property in Matawatchan. These elusive creatures don't often pose for photographs.



The work on the bridge over Colton Creek on Matawatchan Road is finally complete.



Above: Glaeser's Vintage and Thrift Shop in Glaeser's Store in Denbigh. Below: Denbigh Griffith Lions present Erwood Reynolds with a Chevron award for 45 years of service.



**The Greater Madawaska Fire Department** is looking for scrap cars to use for vehicle extrication training. The type of vehicle or age does not matter, and they will remove them from your lot. For each vehicle they will give a \$250 charitable tax receipt. If you have a vehicle, please contact Chris Peters at 613-432-1856 or Luke Holtzhauser at 343-357-0403.

**Denbigh Griffith Lions will be having a drive through Hunters Lasagna Dinner** on Friday November 12th from 4:30 to 6:00 pm. Dinner includes lasagna, garlic bread, salad, and dessert \$20. Pre-order by calling 613-333-1984 or e-transfer [DGLionsClub@hotmail.com](mailto:DGLionsClub@hotmail.com)

Griffith and Matawatchan is served by the **Greater Madawaska Library and Learning Centre (GM-PLLC) in Calabogie**. Getting a library card is super easy, so give it a whirl if you like to read and like free reading. They also have e-books and movies and provide programming and free museum passes. **Contact [gml@bellnet.ca](mailto:gml@bellnet.ca) or call 613-752-2317** to set up an account and begin ordering books online for pick up at the Greater Madawaska Public Library in Calabogie at 12629 Lanark Road or at the Pine Valley Restau-

rant. Go to [greatermadawaska.com/en/play-and-discover/library.aspx](http://greatermadawaska.com/en/play-and-discover/library.aspx), or just search for Greater Madawaska Library to order books online.

**GMPLLC continues to help people here to borrow library materials.** Library Board volunteers have taken over the service Gary Guilmette did for years. Library Board President Patti McCormick will pick up your library materials in Calabogie and drop off and pickup at the Pine Valley and Griffith General Store every second Wednesday.

**The Matawatchan Hall's book collection** has expanded quite a bit since it started a few years ago, but access to the books is limited during the pandemic. If there is enough interest, the Hall could hold book exchange days on a regular basis. This could include a story time for children. The GMPLLC is in discussions with the M Hall to bring guest speakers, and help us with books and programming. Take a look at Bogie Beat to see what they are currently doing in Calabogie. If you would like to host a kid's storytime or join a book club, contact GMPLLC and they'll work with the Hall to set something up.

**The Matawatchan Hall's Annual General Meeting is planned**

**for November 9 at 6:00 pm** at the Matawatchan Hall, 1677 Frontenac Road. Apparently, people are pleased with what's happening at the Hall before and during the pandemic, as there haven't been any angry mobs at the AGMs, in fact, no one except the board members attended the last few meetings. Please join them to hear about their accomplishments and challenges, find out where they stand financially and help them plan future programming. The Hall belongs to everyone in the community with the

primary purpose being, "To take an active interest in the civic, cultural, social and moral welfare of the community," so your ideas are very welcome! Would you like to attend movie matinees, book exchanges and storytime, tree lighting and caroling, exercise or other wellness events? Hopefully they will be able to host pancake breakfasts, Canada Day, potlucks and games nights, dances and concerts again soon as they work through the pandemic. Please let them know what you would like to participate in.

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continued from pg. 3

**High speed Internet and cell service** are getting closer to the area. The Improving Connectivity in Ontario (ICON) and Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED) programs have announced that Cogeco Connexion has been awarded funding for a project that was submitted for Greater Madawaska and McNab/Braeside. As a result, Cogeco will be able to provide broadband service to approximately 1,209 unserved and underserved premises in the following areas: From Glasgow Station along County Rd 54 to Sand Point. From Sand Point up along County Rd 1 to Bonnechere River. From Lundy's Corner along County Rd 508 through Burnstown, Springtown to Calabogie. The project total cost is approximately \$5.5M and ICON and ISED will contribute approximately \$3.9M. This project will be providing fibre-to-the-home (FTTH) to all homes except the homes in Calabogie where they will upgrade Cogeco's current 1-way system coax network to a 2-way system. Both of these solutions will deliver download speeds of up to 1 Gbps as well as IPTV and VoIP services.

Meanwhile in the Matawatchan area, Rogers is expanding its cell network in Eastern Ontario and is currently scouting for tower locations on high points for maximum coverage. All of the townships continue to work with EORN to help us get connected.

While the NU-2-U Shop has closed for the season and possibly for the long term, the volunteers for the **Greater Madawaska Seniors Housing Corp.** are still working to help seniors in our area to stay in their homes as they age and enjoy a good way of life. If you are interested in helping, please contact Nancy at 333-9556.

If you miss the NU-2-U Shop, you will be happy to know that **Glaeser's Vintage and Thrift Shop** is nearby in Denbigh. Go through the main door and head to the back of the Glaeser's General Store to the doorway at the left of the counter to enter. It is open every day from 8am to 7pm.

If you miss the annual Christmas Market at the Matawatchan Hall, you will be thrilled to know Margie McAlear's **Little White Barn will be open to sell handmade Christmas Décor** on a few dates in December. Well, actually, the Little White Barn itself won't be ready until spring 2022, so Margie and Donnie will be opening their home for business on the sale dates. For this reason, they are encouraging people to call ahead to book a time so there aren't too many people at once. Décor Dates are Friday, Dec. 3 6 pm-9 pm, Saturday Dec. 4 10 am-6 pm, and Sunday Dec. 5 4 pm-7 pm. Like them on Facebook.

**The Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust** is an organization that strives to keep the Mississippi-Madawaska wilderness protected

for all time, where all species thrive, and people connect with nature. On October 3rd they held a Fall Colours Walk at Blueberry Mountain Trail in the Flower Station area of Lanark. On August 28 they held the annual Festival of the Wild Child with scavenger Hunts at High Lonesome Nature Reserve in Pakenham. Five unique and exciting scavenger hunts were created, improving upon some of last year's hunts and adding some brand-new ones. These hunts all focused on encouraging young children to act as young naturalists and experience the fun of nature! If you care about nature in our area, you should look into the organization at mmlt.ca to join the team, volunteer, or enjoy their fundraising events in nature. They also hold members-only events such as with guest guides. Currently they are looking for a new treasurer. Their rules require all board members to step down after a 6-year term and the outgoing treasurer will help out the newcomer. Contact admin@mmlt.ca or call 613-253-2722 for more information.

**The "Griffith Mile Survey"** was released this summer by the township to find out how people feel about the safety of Highway 41 through Griffith. Although the highway cuts through the village, the ultimate decision on changes to posted speed limits and passing lanes lies outside the municipality's jurisdiction, but we are all hopeful that this information will assist in guiding any decisions. The survey results will be a starting point for a meeting between the township, representatives from The Ministry of Transportation, and concerned citizens as soon as it can be held. It was a fairly comprehensive survey and, as you will see from the comments, the results give a clear picture of the situation.

Here are people's accounts of accidents and near-misses from the survey. Full survey results are available on the township website.

**Have you experienced an unsafe situation when you were attempting to access or exit Highway 41? If yes, please elaborate:**

Twice I have witnessed cars in front of me coming close to being t-boned as they were about to turn left into the gas station by a car passing south bound. Entering & exiting the BMR, Pine Valley Restaurant & The General Store are extremely dangerous.

I was hit by the speedy car last Sept 15, 2015 and leave on the highway. Until now I am not normal since then and I suffered the consequences day & night. I keep busy to ignore the aches & pains specially my knees & shoulder surgery. Summertime the highway 41 is so bad from early morning to night & watch the traffic even at night and I cannot sleep.

I have had 2 near collisions turning

R from Church @ Gen Store truck westbound started pass and I would have been hit dead on front, turning right from Pine Valley Restaurant, once again, car passing eastbound. I had to stop my car to avoid a head on (on the highway)

I could not turn into my driveway because a tractor trailer was on my bumper even though I signaled a 1/4 mile back. I had to turn into the restaurant parking lot. Also, vehicles do not have the ability to slow down quickly enough when the fire trucks are pulling out. Most people drive faster than 80 kms because they pass me doing 80 kms.

I was turning to go into the store and a transport behind me almost hit me even though I had signaled in lots of time. He ran off the road to avoid hitting me and I hurried to turn.

Pulling out of work having to look and make sure no one is passing; may times I have gone to pull out and have to stop split second because a car or motorcycle has pulled out to pass right off the cars bumper in front of them. There are also Motor cyclists constantly cat walking on this section of Hwy.

Turning right out of Finn's Road where the dump is we narrowly avoided a multi-car pileup. Already going at a high speed down the hill toward Griffith, three cars pulled out to pass three other cars at the same time, resulting in two rows of cars coming at us as we started our turn onto Highway 41. That is a busy intersection but is hardly noticeable to drivers who are anxious to pass. Normally passing isn't allowed at an intersection, why is it allowed there?

Need to have turn off lanes to the Business. Need slower traffic going through the small town

Trying to turn, someone passing near accident

Turning left into my driveway off 41 - either traffic racing down 41 or trying to pass up the hill. One summer 3 accidents on the bridge - many people in the area during the summer

Excessive speed

Lots of speeding from locals in ATVs!!

I have almost been hit by oncoming passing cars coming out of the shops

Turning onto Church (Left) from Pine Valley Hwy 41, to go home. Car passed car behind me good thing I used my mirrors and brakes, or I would have been hit on driver's side **KILLED POSSIBLY**

What I have observed was a transport truck going approx. 80-90km/h along over bridge with pedestrians being

frightened who were crossing over. Making a right hand turn into the general store with a truck riding on my tail - very uncomfortable

Coming out of BMR car passing

Exiting at Matawatchan Road has traffic slamming on brakes or trying to get around on shoulder

Coming out of BMR car passing extremely fast

Coming out of Pine Valley Restaurant (turning right) someone was passing therefore in my lane, so I had to wait in the parking lot. Most people don't notice (turning right from Pine Valley or Lions Hall) people passing and start to advance onto Hwy 41. Potential accident waiting to happen (It's a long stretch of "passing lane" - shaded between General Store to Lions Hall - misjudge car passing)

Pulled out restaurant but quickly stopped, someone was passing and was in my lane. Too many busy entrances along here "No Passing" would make it safer

Almost daily - they go way too fast

At least weekly, if not more often, excessive speed, aggressive driving

As a kid growing up here it was always so dangerous around the highway, even though I was never on the road, cars aren't able to see anything when passing at the rate they drive. The amount of roadkill & collisions prove that. People don't slow down at all which makes pulling out of any small road onto the highway dangerous they don't take into consideration the village that is here. All villages are supposed to have an automatic 60km/hr, why doesn't ours?

Someone will pass at extreme speeds and you're just pulling out going the opposite direction. Near misses many many times. Lots of Tractor trailers

We try to manage situations by signaling well in advance and being extremely mindful of dangerous situation. However, there is bound to be a serious accident, if not already, on this stretch.



A speed monitor was placed on the Griffith Mile in 2019 at the request of the township. It was used to monitor speeds but is designed to reduce speeds. Why not reduce the speed limit and install a permanent one?

## Bogie is a Happenin' Place!

This is your column. Contact me to report on anything you find interesting. 613-433-1131 maryjoanhale@gmail.com

By Skippy Hale

Local conversation: 'Hi, how're ya? Got yer wood? Yah? Who from? How many cords?' I want to thank all who offered to help me stack. Carrying a few at-a-time just wasn't cutting it, no pun intended! A request on FB was answered quickly as well as knocks at the door and emails, etc. It's done and I am ready for anything! The stacks also provide good wind breaks and keeps snow drifts from the porches!

Speaking of preparing for winter, **the weather report!** Well, we have had blistering heat, followed by very cool weather. I went to Mass one Sunday in short sleeves and light cotton pants because my house was so comfy. Everyone at church was dressed for the drop in temp. Following that, we have had rain and rain and more rain, so the river level is at spring melt levels. It sounds lovely and the kayakers are loving it, for now. It's back down again! Today is a beautiful, warm October day.

**This is a continuing update on our wonderful Township Library. It is now open to the public after 4 pm** and on Saturdays. Access the online catalogue from your home at [greatermadawaska.com](http://greatermadawaska.com).

Our new CEO, Ruth Jones is amazing! Ruth has used the opportunity of being in the school to cement a warm relationship with the children. The younger students were given treat bags from the library and the older ones were given journals to encourage story-writing. An exciting program, **'Weekend Reader Binge Bags'** is so exciting! The children sign up and get a bag with 4 books to take home for the weekend and return it the following week for a new one. As more children sign up, it will be more labour-intensive and hopefully, children will begin to self-select through the ILS System! Parents have said they are delighted. There are presently 18 children registered and with peer-to-peer conversations, it should grow. This is part of the ongoing Literacy Program. A student survey was submitted to grades 5-8. Student class visits are part of the partnership with St. Jo's. When the move to the school was initiated, this was part of the plan, so I am delighted to see it come to fruition. Thank you, Ruth and Staff!

GMPLLC remains a valuable part of our Community and activities are ongoing. **A Book Sale was hosted at St. Andrew's United Church Hall** and \$1,310 was raised as well as \$600 in donated new books, many in hard cover. The proceeds stay in the Township and will be used to fund programming for patrons. Many thanks to the sponsors and patrons. There was a great Silent Auction with gifts donated by local businesses. I went with the idea of writing a cheque but left with a bagful of gifts and won a huge box of Children's items in the Silent Auction which I gave to my grandchildren and a neighbour buddy.

The library participated in the OV-CAOS on the **Community Book Art project**. Anyone missing out on the October 1 deadline, may visit [ov-caos.org](http://ov-caos.org) to view upcoming activities.

The **Bonnechere Inòdewiziwin Abinòdjinjish Kikinàmagan EarlyON BIAK group** was to visit the rink on October 2, for a presentation of Indigenous drumming, singing, teachings, Algon-



Big River Cannabis owners Nate Mivile and Alexandra Yeo

quin language and crafts for children and families, but cancelled due to the heavy rain. They have been visiting the Story Time since before COVID. When it is rescheduled, registration will be required due to limited numbers and all COVID protocols will be in place.

**The Boundless! Book Club** will be starting. It will be held off-site, and the library will supply the books. The plan is for two groups of a maximum of 10, one in Calabogie and one in Matawatchan. The focus will be author/genre, rather than title. If interested in joining the book club, please call the library 613 752-2317 or email them for details [gmpl@bellnet.ca](mailto:gmpl@bellnet.ca).

**The Nancy Gorra Book Bag** will be started again. Nancy was a charter member of Calabogie Women's Institute along with her mother and grandmother. From the beginning, the WI has funded this program in honour of Nancy. If you are a resident parent or guardian who has welcomed a baby in the last year, please register at the library before the end of October. The baby will receive her/his first library card, some baby surprises, and a copy of 'Memories of Poppa' by Sharon Nichols, a local author. Family members, not patrons yet, may apply for their own membership.

**TOGETHER WE READ:** A digital Book Club launches on October 18. Download the digital version, and/or audio book of 'Frying Plantain' by Zelika Reid-Benta. A physical copy is available in the library as well. Now isn't this state-of-the-art!

**On Saturday, October 16, 10:30 am - 1:30 pm at Barrett Chute for a trail walk with Colleen Hulett.** Colleen is a fungi fan and Madawaska Highlander "Highlands Hiker" contributor. She will lead a walk up the hill to hunt for mushrooms. Wear long pants and waterproof clothing to protect against weather and poison ivy. Bring a light nut-free snack/lunch and bottled water and hand sanitizer. Pre-register with a library card and guests are welcome.

**Saturday, October 30, 9:00 - 2:00 pm Drop by in your costume to the library for a spooky treat and some ghoulish books.**

There are four Part-time Library Assistants to aid Ruth in providing service to all of our patrons: Emma Carey, Madison Laronde, Lisa Howard and Tracey Strudwick. The Board of Trustees and all of us owe Tracey Strudwick, who held the fort and worked hard to facilitate the changes due to COVID, cataloguing, organizing curbside pick-up and many details too numerous to note. Thank you for your dedication to the patrons and



An assortment of Newfoundland goods and things that will make you homesick for The Rock from Mudders Cupboard. Have you tried Roast Chicken Chips?

our Township Library!

One of the local businesses who will be at the November 20th Evening Sale at the Rink is **Mudders Cupboard**. Lori Pitcher and her partner Ray Green, an active Armed forces member, two Newfoundlanders, just celebrated their First Anniversary in the Ottawa Valley.

Like Ireland, the biggest exports from 'The Rock' are their people. The ties to the island are strong and heartfelt. They miss items from home. When her IT job in Ottawa ended after about 20 years, as a result of closing up the Canadian team during COVID, Lori decided to put her skills, degree, post-grad education and experience in corporate business to use by starting an online start-up business to stave off some of the homesickness for family and the comforts of home, by providing goods from Newfoundland! For Islanders, COVID meant no visits due to the lockdowns. Well, she calls her mother 'Mudder' as do they all, so she thought Mudders Cupboard would be a perfect name choice for her business.

There is no bricks and mortar store. Orders are online. She brings in the products and she and Ray do porch delivery to those from Ottawa and the Valley where many have settled. It developed a remote Newfoundland community where Lori, Ray and customers could talk about home while socially distancing. Mudders Cupboard supports many small Newfoundland businesses which were so badly hit by COVID, which depend so much on tourism. Some of these products are from Canadian Candy, Nostalgia's Rum&Butter chocolate bar, Newfoundland Chocolate and Buche's Caramel log. They bring salt meat, coffee, mussels, pre-packaged salted fish, Eternity and Coffee Roasters from Gros Morne, chips, pop, and soon special Christmas gifts such as Mummer's mugs, aprons, stockings, cards and candies. [mudderscupboard.ca](http://mudderscupboard.ca)

**Big River Cannabis** opened on October 7. It is Calabogie's first recreational Cannabis Dispensary. The first store was established January 2020 in Clarence-Rockland, Ontario and the owner has spent the last few months renovating the former Convenience Store beneath the original Pizzeria. They are ready to serve our community for all of our Cannabis needs. Smoke, vape, eat or grow Cannabis and they will be able to serve you, even your pets! There are chocolates, teas, infused juices, sparkling

tonic water, gummies, the flower (weed), hashish, bath salts, bath bombs and Hemp4Paws for your pets! Items include CBD or HTP, depending on the need or use. The best bet is to go for a visit and have a tour. The staff is very knowledgeable and willing to explain the different products and uses depending on need or request. The store is bright, clean and the merchandise is well displayed.

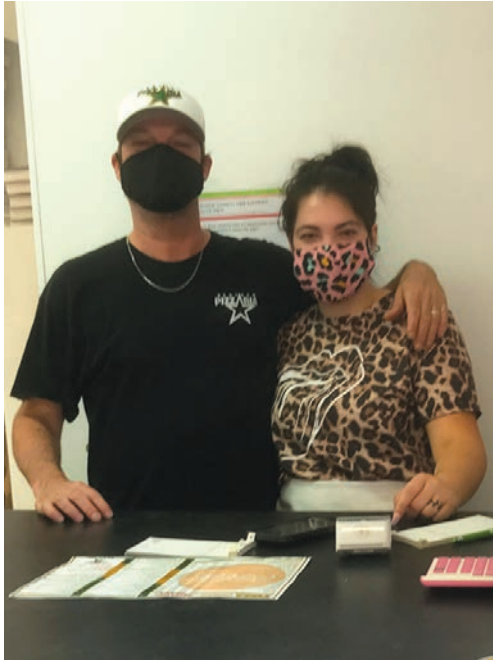
Nate Mivile is the Owner. Cooper Castonguay is the Manager and his Assistant is Alexandra Yeo. Cooper and Alexandra both live here in the village. They want to become part of the community and shopped from local businesses such as Charbonneau's, the Bogie Store and local restaurants while renovating. They have been most pleased with the reception they have had here and look forward to meeting you all.

Cannabis dispensaries are licensed through the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario. The rules are strict, and patrons must be 19 years of age or older. If concerned, staff will ID customers. When you approach the store, it is locked, by law, and you must ring or knock to be allowed in. For parents who are concerned, their children may not enter. There are 9 cameras including one at the door. In order to become a 'Bud-tender', one must be certified through the Cansell Program. Sellers must understand the laws, and details about concentration of THC, etc. I spent a while interviewing Nate and his friendly staff and there is so much to learn especially to eliminate the stigma attached to this natural product which has been in use for centuries. Masks must be worn and all COVID sanitation protocols are in place. [calabogie.bigrivercannabis.ca](http://calabogie.bigrivercannabis.ca); email: [info@calabogiebigrivercannabis.com](mailto:info@calabogiebigrivercannabis.com); phone (613) 514-0493. Open Monday to Saturday, 11 am to 7 pm.

When you need groceries, the family business which has served the village for four generations is **Charbonneau's, from the store and butcher shop on Lanark Road to the large store on Mill Street**, we have everything close at hand. Annette, following in her Mom, Dad and Grandfather's footsteps, has been supplying us with our needs. If she does not have it, she will usually order it for us! No funeral reception in the 'before times' was complete without a meal catered by Annette and her staff. She catered many of our St. David's Day Parties for years. During the first COVID lockdown they were doing curbside pickup and even deliveries to those who needed it. Countless young people over the decades got their first job in this store. Some of the staff members have worked there for many years. I hesitate to mention any names in case I miss any, but they are all friendly and patient even through the extra pressures of COVID protocols, so, say 'Thank you' to Annette and her front-line workers who were and are there for us during these frustrating pandemic days!

Pizza, anyone? **Calabogie Pizzeria** is open now in the Trail's Edge Plaza at 4983 Calabogie Road, for takeout and delivery. At present, delivery is free, but later, there may be a charge for out-of-town ones. Entrance is at the back off Francis Street or from the side off 508. The owners are Julie and Donald Rodgers

with their daughter Haley and Sam Wolfe as staff members. Donald was a graphic designer in Ottawa but loves Pizza and could eat it at every meal even after many years in the business. He purchased Ren-frew Pizza 14 years ago and has branched out to Calabogie. There are about 150 items on the menu including subs, wings, salads, poutine, burgers, finger foods and of course, Pizza! Vegan/lactose-free cheese is available as well as gluten-free pizza. With limited fryer options, other gluten-free meals are not on the menu. Open: Monday – Sunday 11:30am to 8:00 pm. Phone: (613) 570-4983



Calabogie Pizzeria is now open. Say Hi to Donald Rodgers and his daughter Haley when you pick up your pie.

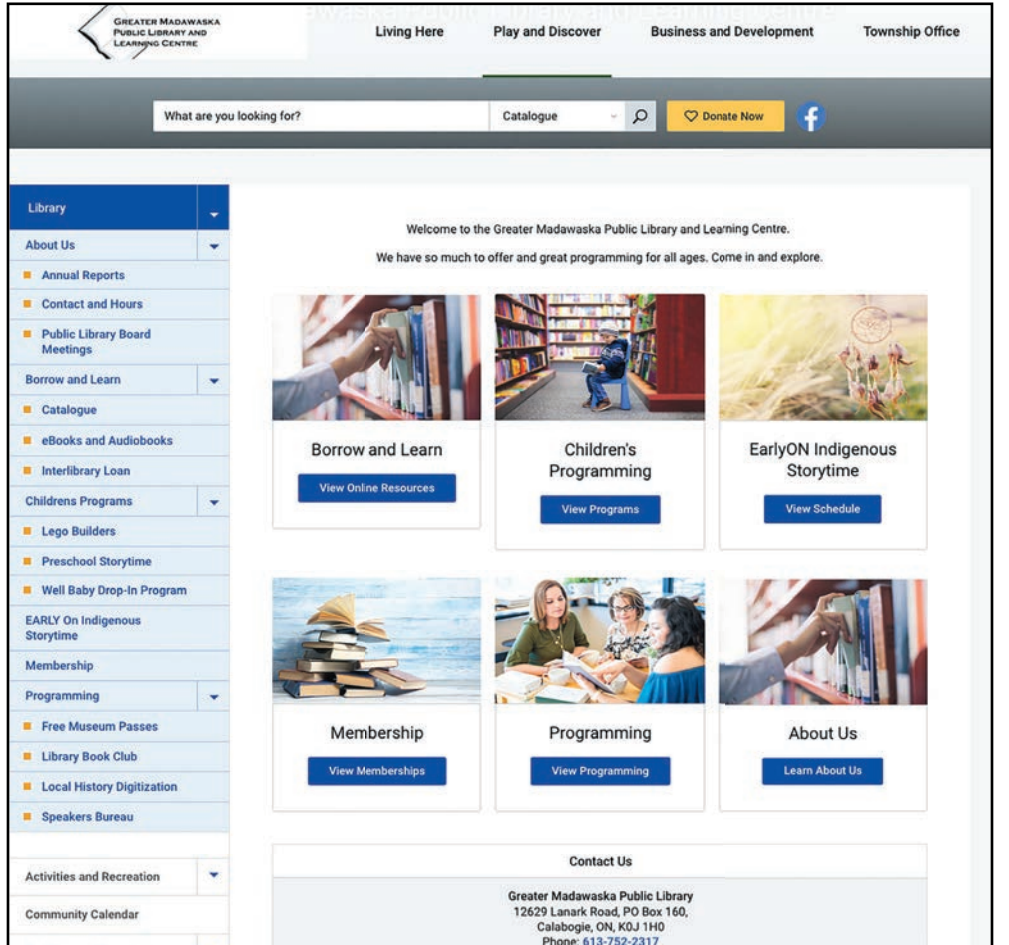
There are lots of baby kittens needing fosters. Let me know if you are interested and I will connect you.



BLAK – Bonnechere Inòdewiziwin Abinòdjiniish Kikinàmàgan EarlyON program provides Indigenous and Algonquin Teachings, Algonquin Language, Crafts, Storytelling & Drumming at the Library. The group was to visit the rink on October 2, for a presentation, but was rained out. Hopefully it will be rescheduled.



We keep welcoming new businesses, but we can't forget our old friends who have served this community since 1933. Charbonneau's Grocery is still serving smiles 7 days a week, first on Lanark, now on Mill Street.



The Township of Greater Madawaska has completely redesigned their webpage [greatermadawaska.com](http://greatermadawaska.com) to make it much more user friendly and more compatible with mobile devices. Forms are easy to find and download and frequently requested By-laws are listed to make it easier for people to understand the rules without taking up staff time. If you need an unlisted By-law there is a link to the appropriate staff member who will provide it for you. It really is a good idea to start with the township website whenever you are looking for information, rather than putting out a question to the general public on Facebook or other social media. Dump hours, COVID-19 rules, library hours, dog tag, businesses, tourism information, etc. is all there. You can also subscribe to the page to receive updates in your inbox as they happen. Council meetings are live streamed on their YouTube channel.



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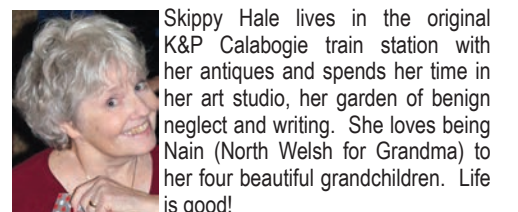
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Toll Free: 1-800-307-1545  
Email: [CraigArmstrong@RoyalLePage.ca](mailto:CraigArmstrong@RoyalLePage.ca)



Calabogie is being enchanted. Faerie houses are popping up like toadstools. Enjoy more pictures on Calabogie Enchanted Wee Folks facebook page



My pet "Gourdy" the Turkey.



Skippy Hale lives in the original K&P Calabogie train station with her antiques and spends her time in her art studio, her garden of benign neglect and writing. She loves being Nain (North Welsh for Grandma) to her four beautiful grandchildren. Life is good!

## Lily

I hardly ran today so think I'll slip off this rope from my neck collar and go for a run. The moon is brilliant so should see all things. I can hear my man snoring above all the others. Not many scraps tonight so maybe I'll pick up some meat in the woods.

There, it's off. And now heading down the trail taking my time so as not to miss any new scent I suddenly see the jack jumping across my path. Hey doesn't he know how fast I am? Or maybe he didn't see me. Think I'll have rabbit stew tonight.

I jig jagged up and down and over fallen trees and kept him in my nose for hours and hours. I let out a few yells when I got close to him to maybe scare him into a stand still. No luck.

Got to stop for a rest. I dozed off and woke to the sun shining bright. Better get back to the camp for some grub. None of the men went out with their guns today and so didn't need me and my friends to find any deer for them. Easy day.

Night time came and again I felt the need to run. The moon was out full. Cold but fresh and just right for another foray into the woods.

This time one of my friends decided to come with me. So the 2 of us set out on the same trail as I had gone the night before and after about an hour of running 2 really big jacks crossed our path. Man were we glad to see some action. My friend picked the white one and I took the darker one and the hunt was on. We kept calling to each other as we had to go in different directions to keep the jacks in smell range as they split up shortly after our chase began. Smart jacks. But we'll catch one tonight for sure.

I ran and ran and ran and finally stopped by some water cause I lost the scent. Jacks don't swim. Maybe he jumped over the creek. Ouch it's cold. Oh that stone is sharp! I make it to the other side and still no scent. Called out 7 times to my friend but no reply. Well I'm not going back to camp tonight so I'll just lie down under this bush here for awhile. My paws are pretty sore and I'm hungry and tired.

Opening my eyes to warmth and light from the sun overhead I cried out. Holy cow. It must be near noon. Better get back to camp. Oh this is going to be tough. But have no choice if I want to please my man. He told me not to run off again. But he's got the men to play with and he expects me to just lie there waiting for his command. If he didn't feed me I think I would not hang around.

The sun was just going down when I crested the hill hobbling along slowly and saw the camp. What a welcome sight. As I got closer there was no one about. No smoke coming from the chimney. No friends in their boxes. No wheels. Nothing. What do I do now? I'm so hungry and sore and sick and tired. How could they leave without me? They've used me all week and this is the thanks I get for working for them?

Well guess I'll have to try and find them. I'll follow the track of their machines and the smell of their farts and maybe they will have stopped at another camp.

After what seemed like forever - it was now dark - I found the place where they had unloaded me when we first came into the woods a few days ago. Nobody around. By now it was getting light. I'll keep on following this path. A mixture



of smells now but all I want to do is find my man and get some food. Another few minutes and I smell a new smell. I think it's coffee. Hey where there's coffee there has to be grub so I'll check this camp out.

I can't run anymore. I can hardly put any weight on my front left foot. It's so sore.

There's a big building and a couple of small ones and hey there's a wagon with lots of leaves under it. I'll just rest there and just maybe someone will come by.

I dozed for what seemed a long while and then woke to a man and a woman talking as they walked past where I lay. They sound happy. They don't smell dangerous. Will I come out from under the wagon and say hello? What if their mood changes like some humans do and I feel their wrath and not their warmth. But they smell good now. They are going away to that open field. Maybe they will return.

Sure enough. In a few minutes I see them coming back from the open field. They're talking and laughing and are now passing in front of one of the smaller buildings. I feel in my bones they will be kind. Here goes.

I manage to come out from under the wagon and sit down where they can see me just beside the wagon and hold up my left foot. I looked at them hoping they will help me out and wow - a few seconds later they stopped and immediately the tall man says 'he's hurtin.... he's lost....I'll get a rope and tie him up... I'll be right back....you stay with him' and since the lady was standing there looking at me I decided to hobble over to her and sit down at her feet and let her know for sure I wouldn't bite her. But sure enough I just sit down at her feet and those friggin fleas start to bite behind my left ear and up I put my hind leg and man did I scratch them into silence.

She didn't move. She didn't say the usual. 'Oh that dog has fleas' and take off or shoo me away. She just stood her ground. Hey I like her. I'll stay with her and see what the tall man brings back.

He has a rope and gently took my neck collar and tied it to it and then to the wagon. He says she's a female. I told him

I wasn't going to run away and if you have any scraps I'd sure appreciate some.

The lady must have heard me cause she said let's use that bread we have and put some milk on it. So the tall man went into the big camp and the lady stayed by me. I told her I liked her company but if she had something else to do I'd understand. Well she stroked my back and made me feel right at home. I was shivering from the excitement of finding some new friends and anticipating some grub. She thought I was really cold. True but not that bad. I'm just happy to be so lucky.

And then the small frequent feedings began. Bread with milk. Biscuits with water. Both warm. Some really sweet biscuit stuff they called chocolate bars which they laughed about and said 'Jordin will miss these when he visits next year'. I wondered who Jordin was. Maybe he could be a friend for me.

They gave me an old coat which was nice but I don't lie on strange stuff so I just left it there. The man went away on his machine and the lady kept me company. It felt so good to just lie down and be quiet and lick the soles of my feet. Sure hope they soon stop stinging.

The lady kept going in and out of the big camp and every time brought me

a small treat. Hey I like it here.

The tall man returned. They talked but I didn't listen to them. No need to be on guard. Then the tall man brought me a bone with some raw meat on it. I chowed down for the rest of the day. Boy it was good. Then nap time. I could relax and soak up the healing air with a warm and full belly. Life is good.

I woke at some point when it was dark and shook off the rope from my neck band but did not want to leave a good thing so decided to stay with them for awhile.

The sun was just coming up over the water and the door of the big camp opened and out came the lady with another dish in her hand. Wow breakfast already. Am I happy to see her. In fact I jumped up on my hind feet with my front legs held out to welcome her. And she gave me a big hug saying she was so happy I had not froze to death and that I seemed to be getting stronger. I sure felt great. Some warm milky mush to start the day. I'm not complaining although some more meat on a bone would be good. And what does she do but go to a smaller cabin and bring me another bone with some meat on it. She understands me.

I chow down for another while then after licking my feet I take another nap. Good to rest awhile.

A motor sound wakes me. I hear the truck over by the camp. Then the voice of the man from my first camp. The tall man and the lady are telling him about my visit. Darn he'll probably take me back to my owner at the kennel farm. I'll miss the tall man and the lady. The 3 of them walk towards where I am. I decide to quietly welcome my man with 2 wags of my tail. He strokes me twice and is happy to have found me. He's not a bad man. He's happy I'm safe and that he doesn't have to pay my owner for me. I could make a home here with the tall man and the lady but I have no choice. At least at the farm I'll be with my friends again..

My man snaps a leash on my neck collar and we all walk over to his truck. As he stood thanking them I turned to the tall man first and then the lady and thanked them ever so much for their kindness. And she heard me as she said you are most welcome and come back anytime. Wow what a good feeling I had as my man put me in the back of the truck. I heard her ask 'what's her name?'

My man said Lily.

She had tears in her voice as she gently said 'we won't forget her'.



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**PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARDS**

1st prize \$50

2nd prize "Unfathomable and Other Poems" by Ken Puddicombe

*Please join us in thanking all of the people who poured their hearts into writing these high caliber stories to share with our readers in the third annual Madawaska Highlander Short Story Contest. Bravo!*

What is the best thing to read if you want to become a writer? No, not those two hundred or so books about how to write, but those other countless brilliant books and stories. The best way to become a writer is by reading. You might not know how the title got your attention, or why you couldn't stop reading after the first paragraph. You just know that it did. And you know that when it was all over that it pleased you. It left you a little richer than when you started.

Well, now is your chance to learn by reading, then tell us which of these eleven stories stirred you the most, drew you in and left you satisfied. While our panel of judges put numbers beside things like: title, opening, plot, style, mechanics, and closing, you need only do one thing and that is to tell us which story you feel is the best short story.

All you have to do is read them all and send us an email with your choice of best fiction and best non-fiction story. The author of the

story that receives the most votes in either category will win a fifty-dollar prize. The second place winner will get a copy of Ken Puddicombe's newest novel, "Unfathomable and Other Poems".

We don't want the author's family and friends to flood us with votes in an effort to get a prize. That's not what this is about. To keep it fair, please don't send in a vote if you are the author or know who any of the authors are and which story they wrote.

**We will need the title of your choices and your name and address plus a sentence or two saying why your favourite story struck a chord with you. One vote per person.**

Send your choices to [info@reelimpact.tv](mailto:info@reelimpact.tv) with People's Choice in the subject line or send a note in the mail to: Madawaska Highlander 3784 Matawatchan Road Griffith, Ontario, K0J 2R0

All of the winners, including People's Choice, will be announced in the Winter Edition of the Madawaska Highlander that comes out on November 24, 2021. We will also let

you know who wrote each of the entries. You might be surprised to learn your friend is one of the authors. You might think to yourself, if they can do it I can do it! And hopefully that might get the wheels turning for next year's Madawaska Highlander Short Story Contest. Why not?

This is the third year of the contest. We received eighteen entries the first two years. The only youth entry we ever received was last year, and guess what? That thirteen-year-old girl got fifty dollars for her efforts. If you think about it, with only about eight other writers to compete with in each category, your chances of winning this contest are way better than your chances of winning the lottery and you will be able to say that you are a published author just for trying.

We had eleven entries this year and we think that one reason there might have been fewer entries is because we only had room for the basic contest information in each issue until now. The first two years we had room to encourage people to write. And writing does require encouragement. So, in case we don't have room again next year, we'll try to pack it all into this issue.

**Words of Encouragement Part 1**

**How not to Quit**

First and foremost, every writer finds their own way of doing things. Your way might be completely different from what is here, but these techniques might help you deal with some common issues.

A really important thing to remember is not to listen to the **nasty little critic in your head**. That dreadful creature can freeze you up before you begin. Out! Out! Mr. Nasty.

**Don't edit as you go.** Editing as you go is what happens when you listen to Mr. Nasty telling you the first sentence is no good. If you can't think of how to say something, just describe what you are trying to say, or you could end up rewriting the first sentence so often that you have no energy to go on. Yes, you should pause to think of the best way to express yourself, but don't let it distract you. If you get stuck on a sentence consider putting in a placeholder, a note to self, something like (describe the room) or (Add dialogue. Character gets angry). Some writers block out the whole story that way before even attempting that all-important first sentence. In many cases, the first sentence and the title are the last parts of the story to perfect.

**Writers write and editors edit. You can't be both at the same time.** Once you have a complete, rough story, take a break from it. When you return to it you will be more likely to read it from the point of view of an editor who is seeing the story for the first time. Now is the time to put your objective editor's hat on and tell your writer friend what

needs to be done to improve things. Better yet, show your rough story to someone else. The point is to find out what needs improving, so try to leave your ego in another room. Don't let the editor try to take over the writing. Their job is to suggest changes, not to rewrite your story. It's your story after all.

**Words of Encouragement Part 2**

**How to Start**

**Read, read, read.** To write a story that other people would like to read, you should try to write a story that you would like to read. How can you know what you like to read if you don't read? And how can you know what a good story is if you don't read stories? Learn from other writers. Analyse opening sentences written by the masters. Join a book club or a writers group or both. Discuss books you have read and learn from them.

**Observe, observe, observe.** To develop characters and storylines, no matter how extreme or unusual, your best source of inspiration is real life. Characters and their stories are all around you. The Simon and Garfunkle song, America, is a good example of how you can create characters and storylines simply by observing people around you.

*"Laughing on the bus  
Playing games with the faces  
She said the man in the gabardine suit  
was a spy  
I said "Be careful, his bowtie is really  
a camera"*

Stories are all around us and humans are natural storytellers. The Madawaska Highlander is pleased to be able to provide a forum for storytellers to share their stories with us. We hope these stories will inspire more writing and more storytelling, for generations.

Simply by writing and sending a story in, every writer here is already a winner. Thank you, and thank you to all of our contributors.

Enjoy!

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## Cold River

At first, Jake couldn't quite figure out the sound that had made him look up from his work lashing branches together for his fort but as he listened more intently, he recognized the wail of a far off siren. He ran to the top of the rocks just in time to see, way down below, flashing lights through the trees on the road that led to the mouth of the river. His heart dropped out of him. What have I done! Donny and Gordy must be in trouble and its all my fault he thought. Jake dropped to the ground and wrapped his arms around his bony knees feeling totally hopeless for the first time in his life. A thick afternoon fog, an almost daily occurrence, started to absorb the lake and the shoreline below and now he was cut off from seeing the town. Jake would never come down off Second Rock — he was too scared.

The Dakabii River roared down through the rock slides and boulders and poured into a protected bay at the mouth of the river and then quietly flowed into Lake Superior. Jake loved the short car ride with his parents and brothers down to the sandy spit that divided the big lake from the bay where they walked on the beach and had picnics. From his street in the town site above the lake, Jake could see over the bush to the mouth of the river and the big island miles out in the lake where his father and uncle fished lake trout.

The small company town had been carved out of the North Shore wilderness to take advantage of the Dakabii River which supplied water for hydro-electric generation and also to transport thousands of logs for the booming pulp and paper mill. The company laid out the street plans, designed and built small family homes for their workers, schools for the kids, a recreation complex and a central shopping strip. Young couples and single workers came by the hundreds for the good paying jobs and benefits. Babies were born, municipal council created and the self-contained town flourished in the 50's and 60's.

Jake loved to fish and wander in the bush around the town site and shoot his green fibreglass bow and arrows or his homemade slingshot (red rubber tire tubing was the best) at squirrels and cardboard milk cartons. One time he accidentally shot an arrow into the radiator of his dad's 63 Pontiac Laurentian the day before a family road trip. Like most kids, he could find trouble and occasionally tell a fib.

"We're going to the mouth of the river!" yelled the two kids on bicycles, rolling into Jake's driveway. Don



Pic by Evan Boehs unsplash.com

Plotz and Gordy Jansenn were two of his best school pals, hockey line mates and all round explorers. Their bikes were weighed down with a hatchet and hammer, bent nails, a rope and other stuff. "Watcha gonna do down there?" Jake asked as the boys rolled up.

"Oh just hang around, maybe build a raft." Gordy looked around to make sure no parent was listening.

The mouth of the river was off limits to Jake unless he went with his folks. His Mom and Dad allowed him to fish and explore the little creeks around town, after all he was 10, but the fast water of the Dakabii was too much for his swimming ability — and too cold.

"I can't today, I'm gonna go and climb up on Second Rock and maybe start building a fort up there. You wanna come with me?" Don and Gordy looked at each other shaking their heads and said "Naw, we're gonna build a raft." "Wait!" Jake cried.

"You're too chicken!" Gordy shouted and off they went to catch the gravel road down to the lake.

Jake watched them go, knowing inside that it was wrong and probably dangerous, but what to do? Tell his Mom and lose his buddies' friendship? Follow them and try and keep them out of trouble? Jake shook his head and gathered his tools and headed for Second Rock. Maybe they would roll in after supper with heroic tales of their mighty journey on the sea, chasing pirates, spearing whales or finding treasure.

It took Jake a half hour to climb up to the top of Second Rock after he hid his bike behind the ball field and followed the trail past First Rock. From here he could see the entire town, the pulp mill to

the east, belching clouds of stinky smoke that his Dad said was the smell of money.

He saw the black stretch of highway splitting the town, its great transport trucks like toys, the houses and lake beyond. He could see railway tracks leading away from the station where the train dropped off a dozen or so Globe and Mail newspapers that he delivered. And to the west he could see the misty canyon that held the roiling Dakabii River as it ripped its way to its mouth on Lake Superior.

Jake climbed to a little cave in the cliff where he had stashed boards and rope and started to figure out how to build some kind of rain proof shelter using the trunk of a Mountain Ash tree and the natural formation of rock but all he could think about was Donny and Gordy and the fact that, not only did he not tell his Mom where they were going, he hadn't even told her where he was going. He would make sure he was home by supertime and maybe his Dad would take him and his brothers pickerel fishing up the Dakabii to Snead's Bridge.

A few people had seen Jake talking to Gordy and Don in the driveway that afternoon but nobody knew if they had all gone down to the river. One person had seen Gordy and Don hanging on to scrap wood that was floating toward the fast water where the Dakabii

slammed into the rocks at the bottom of its run and that same person was screaming at them when she saw the raft catapult into the air, and the boys disappear into the boiling water.

It was almost dark, way past supertime, when Jake looked down the trail to see his brother and father slowly climbing and calling his name. With tears streaming down his face, his Dad wrapped big arms around Jake's trembling body. "Thank God, thank God, thank God you're OK. We thought you had gone with Gordy and Donny."

"Are they alright?" Jake was crying.

"They drowned in the river Jake. They are not coming home. We didn't know where you were. There's a lot of people looking for you. We've got to go call off the search. We love you Jake"

Two small coffins rested side by side at the front of the sanctuary in the little community church. Jake sobbed but heard the pastor say: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother: which is the first commandment with promise, that it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long on earth." Jake knew what he had to do.



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## From a Secret Location

Pic by Ben Collins unsplash.com

Five minutes to air. The makeup woman is sent scurrying and a segment producer lobs a few more notes even though nobody's listening. The door shuts behind them. Now it's just me behind the camera and the man himself. He winks. I think he trusts me. Maybe even likes me. I wish I could say it was mutual.

Now he's got all his little tics, like I'm not even there. He clears his sinuses with repulsive snorts, and he does some Stevie Wonder head swinging, and he chants some Latin phrase. Is all of this for my benefit? Does he know how little regard I have for him?

Nobody knows how pathetic the set looks. It's a small room, like a porno set. The desk looks like a sturdy oak number, but it's hollow. Plastic. It feels real on camera because I'm good at what I do.

Finally he gives one deep, rattling exhale. "You're ready?" I ask.

"Always," he says. He says shit like that.

I put my hand up to count down. It's not necessary really. He could just nod when he wants to start, but he loves the hand thing, so I do it.

Three. Two. One. And I've got the camera ready. And from that point on, I try not to listen.

"They're at it again." He gives no introduction, just this phrase and a world-weary headshake. "Those people. The ones who govern your lives. The ones who tell you to be very afraid. They're. At. It. Again."

He rises from his seat and leans forward, pounding his fists on the desk. It's fire-and-brimstone time. Earlier than usual.



"They're coming for us friends. Oh, I tried to play by their rules for a little while. I worked their game, and you know what? I got such great ratings they drove me out of town. They couldn't handle it. **THEY THREATENED MY FAMILY.** They banished me to this secret location."

Again with the secret location shit. You want to know where we've built this secret fortress? Dallas. Next to a Denny's and down the road from another Denny's.

"They couldn't stop us though, friends. And it drove them crazy. Because you were still coming here, and you were getting the truth. Now I don't know whether we'll survive."

He digs through his notes and holds up the cover of the New York

Times. It's got his face and the headline just reads "TRUTH-TELLER DISGRACED". It's a fake. I saw the Times--he didn't make the cover. He was just a little article in section H or whatever. Does he know it's a fake? I can never tell whether he knows how little the world cares about what we do here. I could never know anything about him, really. I do love that he can never be pinned in the role of either showman or madman. Always maybe either. Always maybe both.

I used to get a kick out of this job. It was so strange to be this close to someone and have no idea whether he was dangerous. I'd watch him rant about the most absurd things, with those jowls trembling and sweat gleaming through his makeup. He always wears these black silk shirts so no one will see the sweat

that's pooling in his armpits by the third minute of the broadcast, and he wears the collars wide, with a gold necklace in a nest of grey chest hair. He looks like a mafia stooge. How so many people trust this man is beyond me.

"Oh brothers and sisters, are you students of history, like me?" he says. "Do you know how tyrants operate? They don't drag their jackboots across the carpets of regular folks. Not right away. Not as long as you stay silent. The first ones to go are the truth-tellers. **PEOPLE LIKE YOU AND ME ARE THE FIRST ONES FOR THE OVENS.**"

I fight the urge to check my phone. I've seen all this before.

"They control the media. They control the information. They dose the water. Oh, they do. Be afraid."

He's going red-faced, and the tears have thickened his voice.

"We can't go on this way. This is the moment of reckoning for liberty."

Every fucking week with this stuff. How can it always be the moment of reckoning? Always right before an ad break.

The gun changes things. He pulls it out from under the desk. It's a long, silver Dirty-Harry thing. Even his choice of firearm is tacky. And all I can think to do is scale back the audio in case there's a bang.

"We can't let liberty die this way, friends. **NOT IN THIS NATION.**"

He hurries to the set door and bolts it.

"Oh, have we got their attention now? Are they seeing this? **ARE THEY NERVOUS?**"

I zoom back in, centering him at

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the desk. He crashes back into the chair, shaking his head.

"They can say anything, and people will believe it. They get to throw around words like 'sex offender'. WHAT DO THOSE WORDS EVEN MEAN?"

I assume that question is rhetorical. He raises the gun and points it straight at the camera, and I pull back to refocus, so we can see right down the barrel. This is going on my reel.

"We did this. They never owned us. And you know what, I bet they think they've got me licked. Oh, boo-hoo, I'm done for. I'm a quote-unquote disgrace.

I'm a quote-unquote sex offender." He raises the gun to his temple. "I'm gonna blow my brains out in front of my loyal viewers." He laughs.

"YOU WISH."

He sets the gun on the desk, and we're back to the same old nonsense. When the moment of reckoning came, he proved he was more showman than madman. Yet where is the showmanship in putting the gun down? Where is the madness? This is neither. He is nothing. It's good sense and bad entertainment.

I scribble a note and hold it up. PICK UP THE GUN AGAIN. He picks

it up, and I zoom in so close that he blurs and refocuses. First his bloated face fills the screen then the barrel eclipses everything.

"There comes a time when you have to prove you mean it. YOU HAVE TO PROVE YOU BELIEVE IN LIBERTY."

I'm watching the monitor, and I'd swear I see the muzzle flash, but I guess that can't be true. There wouldn't have been time.

He shot me. The gun goes off after all, courtesy of Chekov's Dumbass.

The camera swings towards the

ceiling as I fall, revealing how thin and sad the backdrop really is. All the work I put in to making it look perfect is undone in a second, and I want to correct the angle, but there's a shrieking pain in my side when I move, and I collapse on the concrete floor. A studio light fires up and spotlights me. Who controlled that?

"Oh no, oh no, oh no..."

That's all he can say, it seems.

He crouches at my side, helpless and hysterical, and I know too late which one he really is.

## I've Fallen and I can't Get Up!

Not sure how it happened really, it took me by surprise, out of the blue, from nowhere...A big crack, maybe small, didn't see it but I know it was there... waiting to trip me...Unsuspecting!

So I lay spread eagle with face pressed against the gritty surface of the sidewalk.

The apples I purchased at the corner store rolling past my nose like weeble wobble dolls. The pavement feels picky yet smoothed out from billions of dirty rubber soles pushing it into the earth beneath. The flotsam and jetsam of life is milling about my head, being blown haphazardly by the wind...at whim...pieces of gum wrappers...Kleenexes...cigarette butts...unmentionables. And those are just the "free floaters"...what about the "stick here forever"...like a rainbow assortment of gum squished into boot patterns and crevasses. Or the "just here til it rains" variety...like the yellow slime left behind from hundreds of those who care



Pic by Mauro Mora unsplash.com

not to use a Kleenex.

This is where I lay...it's actually familiar down here...I almost don't want to get up...my legs are not burdened, my head is no longer heavy resting on the pave. The world floats above me as I see the insides of nostrils staring down at me. I don't have to be part of it as life whizzes by...but for me...the ground keeps me

stable...I can't fall any lower!! I'm at the bottom!

I can hear a young voice shouting from the street corner...asking someone to help...hmmm...thought it would be someone older. But the bodies continue to whirl past in a frenzy...some even unaware! I lie there, waiting...for what? I'm not quite sure! Waiting to be

rescued? Waiting for a hand up? Waiting for the sun to shine? Waiting for someone to drop a handful of cash into my hat? Waiting for a smile? Waiting for a smoke? Waiting!

Then suddenly, from out of nowhere, the figure of a woman stands so close, her shoes are almost touching the tip of my nose. I look up to see her look down at me...and she smiles...warmth...teeth shining...her cheeks pressing into sparkling eyes and making them disappear. Giggle growing in belly...we both realize how funny this all looks. The funny slipped into the serious...and we laugh...we laugh until the tears come...we look up to the sun and drink in the heat and laugh some more! She extends a hand and before I realize it, I am up on my feet and laughing at the state of my clothes...my scraped chin...my bruised apples! And we laugh some more...until the sounds don't come out...just tears!

Just tears!



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**If I had Listened**

You know that box, the one you never unpacked when you moved. You've probably moved it around your house for years. Maybe you even peeled off the tape and cracked it open, but seeing the items from your past made you tuck the box flaps in and cast it away to depths of your basement or attic. There would always be another day to deal with it. A year and half after moving to my new home, I'm sitting in my living room with that box.

The box came from a period of my life of great hope, dreams and what I believed to be a clear, planned and carefully constructed career ahead. I looked through high school yearbooks, grad pictures and snapshots of old friends that now occasionally pop up as friend suggestions on Facebook. My college sweater was at the bottom of the box, carefully caressing some items from the same time. Sitting in the middle of the pile, a letter addressed to myself. Carefully unfolding and sliding the paper out of the envelope, struck my memory as to where it came from.

I had taken a Law Enforcement course in college, which included a team building weekend at a wilderness camp. Having grown up as city kid, camping and outdoor activities were not in my wheelhouse. I was naively confident in myself for many things, simply from never having exposure to them. I was out of shape, terrified of dogs and hated bugs. This camp had all those challenges and I was not looking forward to exposing my weaknesses (a theme that was regularly drilled into us throughout the program). I never admitted it, but at 20years old, it was my first time sleeping away from home.



Pic by Tegan Mierle unsplash.com

Overall, the camp was a lot of fun. Games, swimming, great food and I even stepped out of my comfort zone and did a polar bear dip. I had cleverly avoided the camp dogs by walking in groups, and was always clothed head to toe to avoid the plus sized bugs of Northern Ontario. There were ropes courses, that I didn't excel at, but performed well enough to not embarrass myself. That was until the last morning.

It was announced at breakfast that the next 3 hours were going to spent in "Solo Wilderness Meditation". My heart immediately dropped, and fear raced through my body. I had never really been alone before. I grew up in a home with a Grandmother, who was always home. I was involved in lots of clubs throughout school and had lots of friends. I have a brother. Being alone, in the woods terrified me. The Camp leaders led the way and dropped us one by one out of earshot from one another. They handed us a pen and piece of paper and told us to write a letter to ourselves about what we wanted in life, and they would mail them to us at the end of the

school year.

I was frozen in place. I knew nothing about snakes, rodents or birds of 'the woods' and the noises wouldn't let me relax. I looked around and found a log to sit on. I was fuming mad. Why would they do this to us? What was the point? I knew what I wanted in life. I wanted to work in a Supermax prison, make good money (again, maybe a little naïve), get a BIG fancy house, a beautiful car and have lots of friends. How would writing a letter to myself help that? In my stubbornness, the letter I wrote was profanity filled, spiteful, and angry. It was black and white, well written, and factual, but it was a lie.

I worked hard towards my goals, but was never able to get ahead and always gave up to try something new. I never ended up in a Supermax, and only lasted half a decade in Corrections. I held over 30 positions in every imaginable job type over the next 15years, and was burning out, hard. While working as dog trainer (yep, got over that fear), fate finally intervened.

A client invited me to a ladies camping weekend. She insisted it was more like glamping, and I would love it. With flashbacks of being alone in the woods running through my head, I reluctantly agreed. My new friend was truthful, and we were in a Provincial Park Group Campsite, with no one around but the dozen women on our site. That night, mother nature stepped in and changed my whole world. The silence of the night enveloped my soul. The groans of frogs beat along with my heart, and around that campfire, I saw true friendship. People who didn't talk everyday, but could pick up where they left off at the drop of hat. No one cared where you lived, what u wore how fancy your things are. I went to bed early that first night and listened to the symphony that nature provided. I was changed, and my life was ready for one too. A few months later, I was introduced to kayaking, while on another, more rugged camping adventure. I rescued a dog, who rescued me too. Solo camping and a week long solo kayak adventure also happened, and I finally found real pride and purpose in myself.

Now, about to turn 40, I sit in the living room of my TINY home in the middle of the woods, laughing at those words that I scribbled in anger so many years ago. My rescue dog beside me, and a second one at my feet. I am at peace. I hear nature's symphony every night, and prefer the sounds of waves and wolves to engines and sirens. I know now, mother nature was speaking to me in the woods that morning at camp, I just wasn't listening. Luckily for me, she was still there when I figured it out.

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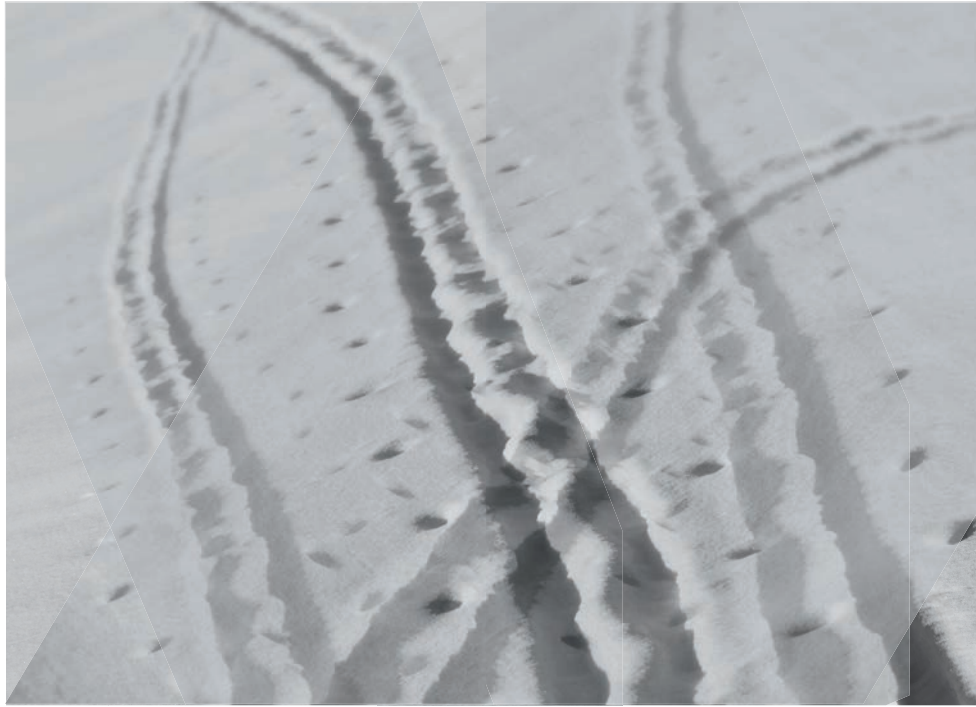
## The Misery Sticks

Doctors orders. Time to embrace skiing and address my fear. Except he suggested cross-country skiing instead of downhill. My brain, always trying to unearth a shortcut, computed that cross country seemed like a gentler solution than being pole-vaulted through the air as your feet are ripped from your bindings. What could be so tricky about a sport so romantic as sliding and gliding through an ethereal, snowy landscape?

Here I am, standing at the trail-head, skis on, poles in hand. The boots slid on easily. At least I didn't have to jam my heel into the back of the boot and contort my body to shove my foot into an L-shaped plastic moulded straight jacket that freeze your feet after ten minutes. Cross country ski boots are soft, comfortable to lace up and constructed of a yoga stretchy black fabric. It did take some bendy callisthenics to throw my upper torso down towards my feet and try to hook the metal clip at the front of my boots into the matching groove on the binding; I finally heard a click. I always knew I couldn't touch my toes, and this effort confirmed it. Who needed to see my 60-year-old lady butt as I bent over for days trying to snap my boots into the front binding? No one said anything, but a gaggle of Lululemon bunnies bounced by me, barely pausing to strap on their skis and launch onto the trail, laughing and talking.

I noticed that aside from buying the basics, not one salesperson shared anything about attire with me. Everyone's dressed in sleek skin-tight outfits, bright colours with aerodynamic beanie caps and barely-there mitts. I gaze at my feet, my pair of slightly oversized Gortex pants from the 80s, a black jacket with a white racing strip down the arms, earmuffs and hunter orange gloves which give me a rather gorby look. According to the cross-country world, Gorby is Canadian slang for a skier who is clueless. Whatever, luckily, I'm past the point in life where I give a shit.

Planting my poles, I push off the ground and glide two feet. Whew! This sport is going to require serious flabby arm effort. And there are two sets of ski tracks. Which one am I supposed to ski in? I select the outside grooves, slide my skis in and gently shuffle one foot in front of the other, propelling my legs back and forth, shifting my weight from my leg to the other, simply trying to keep my hips over my feet. I'm not sure I'm really sliding; it feels more like walking with gangly tentacles attached to my toes.



Uh oh. I'm falling backwards. I throw my body forward, trying to counterbalance but crash land in a pile. All I notice is the bluebird sky above me. How did that happen? I was literally standing upright a second ago, and now my poles and boards are a tangled mess. One of the spandex suits yells at me to get up and move to the inside track. His mouth opens greedily, sucking in air, way too much of a workout rather than a peaceful day in the bush.

After clawing my way to the other side of the tracks, I unclip the bindings and start the process. Again. This time, it only takes four minutes to click both feet into the bindings. The tights fly by me, and I am desperately working to find some rhythm to skiing, left arm out, right leg back, right arm out, left leg back. Or is it left leg back and left arm out? I don't know. The YouTube video with Tish the Ski Master made it look so uncomplicated. But I'm moving — barely inches at a time.

A light wind caresses my cheeks, and I wonder about the weather forecast I didn't bother to check. As each second passes, it's becoming a bit brisk. I snap my head up in time to glimpse the trail drop out of view before me. Damn! A hill. It dawns on my thick grey matter I am trapped in a track, and unless I miraculously jump out, I'm stuck, not able to snowplow, with majestic pines charging past me. And the tights continue to blast by me at space rocket speed in a tuck position.

"Call an ambulance! Someone, please!!" I screech as I'm picking up speed. This can only end one way - in the

orthopaedic ward. Think this through, I tell myself, stand up taller; create less aerodynamics. Frantically, I toss my hands with the poles towards the sky and lengthen my body and arms as much as a five-foot-two pear-shaped woman can do. Now, the tights are bounding out of the track beside me to escape my splayed arms, my lungs and the disaster unfolding. I need to change the course of the next few seconds of my life. One of the Lululemon bunnies' skies beside me, shouting, "pull one leg out of the track. You can snowplow with one ski, leave the other leg in the track, and it will slow you down."

I peer at the two planks on my feet and take a leap of faith. Holding my

Pic by Anne Nygard unsplash.com

breath, I clench my quadricep muscle, yank my knee and ankle upwards, and lift one board out of the track in one swift movement. For what seems like an eternity, my leg and ski flutter in the air as it's debating whether to launch or land.

Shockingly it lands. My one leg is independent of the track. With a quick push from my ankle, I ram the edge of the ski outwards, and my half wedge grabs the crusty white surface. My head and torso lurch forward, decelerating rapidly - with a giant wobble, I remain upright.

I shout with glee. I wasn't going home in an ambulance! Success! This hill is mine, I tell myself. I turn my head to thank the snow bunny, and my left pole wedges itself in the whiteness, pitching me forward and drilling the top of the carbon stick into my mouth. I manage to stop. Like a baby who takes three seconds before they start howling, I sense hot liquid gushing out between my quivering lips, snaking down my cheeks to my chin. The ski bunny screams, "you're bleeding!!!"

I faint. I don't remember much after that moment. It was all deafening, red and white. But mostly red.

I'm sitting in my favourite ugly brown comfy chair at home, reading a novel, Greenwood by Michael Christie, about a dying forest. Every once in a while, I glance out the window at the beckoning white landscape and dream of, well... anything but cross-country skiing. I've given up the misery sticks. After \$4000.00 of dental work to replace my two front teeth, I've purchased snowshoes for next winter. It's really just walking, isn't it?

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## The Snoring Cure

Snoring has been the bane of my life. As I get older it seems to become ever more intrusive. Perhaps I'm just becoming more sensitive to criticism, but perhaps not. Throughout my adult life I've never shared a room with a person who didn't complain about my snoring. Scout camps, fishing trips and even sleeping at home are stress inducing situations. All of my sleeping companions, even people in adjoining rooms, come to realise that earplugs are essential to them getting a good night's sleep. The only positive comments I ever heard about my loud snoring was on a wilderness fishing trip with friends. They declared that my nasal noise probably kept the bears away.

My plan for a four-week hike in Spain came with a worrying concern. It wasn't the prospect of hiking up to thirty kilometers a day, hot temperatures or even the steep hills that had me worried, it was having to share sleeping facilities with other hikers. Sarcastic comments from close friends are bad enough but from total strangers they can really hurt. My initial idea to solve the problem was to carry a box of ear plugs and distribute them liberally among my fellow travellers. I dropped this strategy thinking that it would only bring an unwelcome focus on the problem before it even started. As I would be sharing accommodation with many different people on the trip, a more drastic action was called for.

Before leaving on the trip, with the aid of my long-suffering wife, I tried a few experiments in snoring control. Lying on my front, though uncomfortable, seemed to lower the intensity. It was reduced but not completely eliminated. Adhesive nasal strips changed the noise but was apparently still loud enough to be irritating. The best strategy I found was to tape my mouth completely closed with white, highly adhesive, athletic tape. Much to my wife's delight, the reduction in noise was dramatic. This particular solution came with a few potential down sides. The main one was that I had to hope that my nose didn't block up during the night, the result of that didn't bear thinking about.



Pic by Darius Bashar unsplash.com

My first overnight hostel stop had an enormous co-ed dormitory, probably around forty beds. I put off my sleep preparations as long as possible, in an attempt to be the last person into a sleeping bag. Long after the overhead lighting was switched off, I continued reading with the aid of my headlamp. This was an attempt to have my fellow travellers fall asleep before me. The down side of this consideration was that it gave the other snorers in the room a head start. At that time, I was more concerned with the comfort of others rather than

with my own.

Just prior to falling asleep I located my roll of tape, peeled off a strip and pressed it firmly over my mouth. I nodded off quickly secure in the knowledge that with the tape in place, my snoring would be under control.

Things went well until about halfway through the night. I woke with a need to visit the little hiker's room. The route to the washroom was down a narrow passageway, dimly lit by low wattage exit signs. There was just enough light for me to find my way so I didn't bother taking my headlamp. As I was sporting a bushy moustache, I decided to leave the tape in place. Removing it, apart from the pain, would also involve me parting with half of my whiskers. After all no one would see me on my jaunt down the dark hallway. The dorm was relatively quiet with everyone sleeping peacefully so I would creep along as silently as possible.

I slid out of my sleeping bag and felt a way between the bunks in the semi darkness toward my goal. All went well until the return journey. At that very moment a lady hiker had decided to visit the washroom. Her screams woke the entire dormitory. On reflection it was hard to blame her. In her half-awake state, and in the semi darkness, she had come across a wide eyed, underwear clad man with white tape over his mouth silently groping his way across the darkened dorm. I must have looked like an escapee from a sex romp. When the lights came up, I was unable to explain myself to the thirty-nine shocked pairs of eyes as my tape was still in place. Mumbling, and ineffectively gesturing apologies, I crawled back into my bed aware of the angry glares and whispered comments.

There would likely have been less anger directed at me if my snoring had been the only issue. I lay fully awake in my sleeping bag for the rest of the night. It was during this sleepless time that I realised it would be a good morning to make a very early start. I would use my time on the trail to develop a new, and tape free, strategy for the following night.

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## 10 Dumb Things I Did Growing Up



Pic by Junior Ferreira unsplash.com

My dad had a 1963 Pontiac Stratochief. It was red. I loved that car. It's long, wide hood, it's vertical head lights and it's single vertical taillights. Only thing wrong, it was a four door so it could carry five kids in the back. But enough about the car. It's just one way of remembering the dumb things I did as a kid.

1. Fishing and outdoors is what I did. When I was maybe 10 I had this knack for faking I was swallowing worms like people fake swallowing swords. It grossed the girls out and they remembered. In 1964 my friend (he's still my buddy today) met two girls from school. One night we met at the schoolyard. My buddy started kissing his girl. Well, alrighty, I turned around to find the girl I was supposed to be with hightailing across the field home. She wasn't going to kiss any boy who ate worms!

2. I was working at a paper mill and we were on strike. I had just got married and had bought a house. Strike pay was \$25.00 a week. I picked fruit, helped in construction, any job I could find. In December, I got a call to be Santa at a mall in Hamilton. Reluctantly, I said "yes". I really needed the money and this paid well. You meet all kinds and see very desperate grownups and kids. This woman came up to me in my Santa chair with a little boy, maybe age 5, and a younger little girl and told me that her kids weren't getting much for Christmas and could I come to their home and cheer them up. A few days later I had my brother-in-law drive me over to her place. It was a trailer park. I went to the door and could see the kids playing on the floor. They both looked up, wide eyed to see Santa at the door. As they were opening their gifts, I

started looking around for their mother. Now, I was 21, just married. Out from the bedroom comes mom in a see-through nighty. She comes up to Santa, smothers him between her breasts and picks me up and twirled me around like I was tissue paper. Terrified I was! I broke free, waved to the kids and backed out of the house. I fell down the steps and as I was running to my brother-in-law's car, I was yelling, "START THE CAR, START THE CAR!" I jumped into the backseat and laid down. Bob asked what the hell happened. I told him and he started laughing so hard he had tears in his eyes. I was as white as a ghost. To this day, when I hear the IKEA commercial, I swear they got the "start the car" from me.

3. At one time there were eleven paper mills in my area. You could walk by every one of them in less than half a day. I was fortunate to work in three different mills in my life. Being young I would go days with only a few hours sleep. One night, on the midnight shift, I was standing at the end of the dryer section, waiting for the paper to finish winding. The paper is very "static" when it was wound up. If you check the roll and feel the sheet, sparks come off your feet. I was standing, eyes half closed, when the lead hand checked the roll. He gets his tape measure out and starts feeding it out towards me. I'm not looking, he gets his hand on the roll, tape aimed at my zipper ~ yes, my pant zipper ~ hits it and I jump a mile, run to the nearest hose and cool down my pride and joy. Number 1 and Number 2 machine crews were laughing their heads off. I'm walking around the rest of the shift too embarrassed to be mad. I never daydreamed on the job again.

4. I was at the same bank (credit union) for all of the 25 years I worked for Domtar Paper. I was coming off day shift and was in a hurry. I needed to cash my check and go somewhere. I took a shower and hopped in the car, got to the credit union, opened the door and everyone started laughing. I thought they had just finished a joke between themselves but when I walked up to the teller, she was laughing so hard, she could not serve me. She went and got the bank manager. I knew him well. He looked at me trying not to laugh, cashed my cheque and I leave. Now I know darn well they were laughing at me but I don't know why. I check my clothes, my zipper, my face. I don't see what was so funny. I'm driving home and it's still bothering me. Now my hair is starting to dry and I'm shaking my head, still looking at myself. Then I feel it. I have this big yellow comb sticking out of my hair. I must have put it in there after my shower and forgot to comb my hair. OK, now I know. The following day I stop by my wife's friend's house for something. Now the credit union has two entrances. I walk in one door, put this huge circus comb in my hair and walk out the other side. Non-stop laughter. Someone calls for me to stop as a teller wants to take my picture. Nope, I hopped in my car and left.

5. As kids, we used to go to the old canal and swim. It had cement foundations where the lock masters worked

the locks. They used to have structures on them. They made great diving platforms and they all had steel ladders attached to them. Before you get to the "butts" (that's what the foundations were called, meaning abutments) you passed railroad spur lines. They usually had boxcars and flatcars being shunted around. Walking along the tracks, one of the guys spotted a package that looked like a large ravioli. We picked it up (dumb, dumb, dumb) but at the time only one guy knew what it was. It was an explosive they put on the tracks so when the engineer was shunting the train the crew would hear the explosion and make sure they were out of the way. Hey, let's take it over to the butts and blow it up. Now, one of the butts had a wall in the middle, about 2 feet high. We placed the explosive on one side, got a huge piece of cement, dragged it up on the other side, stuck our heads over to make sure it was lined up, got back over our side and pushed the cement over. KABOOM! That cement shattered into a million pieces. It rained down on us and into the canal. WOW! Never found another.

These stories are getting too long. I could tell you about a pair of pants, a man and a squirrel, my worst spanking, about mortar bombs and an airplane ~ well, maybe not about the airplane. Some other time...

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## A Covenanter in Canada

On a sunny afternoon in June 1892, a grandmother holding tightly the hand of her young grandson, Tom, joined a crowd of several thousand, who wandered up a hillside in south-west Scotland. They continued silently along a narrow dirt pathway, another hill in the background, a mixture of summertime yellows and greens.

She had a thin, spare body, not tall but not short either, her hair drawn back into a bun, wearing a black woolen dress, her Sunday dress. It covered her neck and hung over her narrow hips ending at the tops of her boots. Life for Elizabeth had been hard as women's lives on farms always were - so many chores each day and so many more tomorrow. It was a hard life but not a tragic life. Neither disease nor injury had intruded, not to her, not to her daughter Jane, now married for twenty-four years, not to her son-in-law, Robert, who worked steadily as a ploughman on the large farms in the area. Her nine grandchildren, Tom included, had been mostly healthy although Agnes had died suddenly. She lay buried in the Auchencairn Churchyard.

Just six, young Tom, had a wide-eyed look in his blue-eyes as he followed hand-in-hand beside his grandmother. He wore black boots, black woolen pants which suspenders held in place, a white shirt somewhat frayed at the neck, his school tie and a woolen cap, slowly sliding back over the top of his head. These were family clothes, which each of his older brothers had worn before him but as the youngest son, he realized that there was no one else to wear them when he outgrew them.

Tom noticed the others walking with them. Some were neighbours like Mr. Lawson, one of the school teachers at the Lauriston School but many others were strangers, all with a look of determination on their faces. There was little conversation, just the sound of boots on the path. Tom knew that this was not the time to disturb the silence with questions. Still he wondered what was happening.

Off to his right, the fields stretched up and down the rolling hills.



This was cattle country with a few sheep interspersed. Suddenly the path veered down into a bog, where ten to fifteen trees of various sizes surrounded a pointed stone structure, which rose twenty feet into the air. Tom glimpsed a stone wall along the side, ending where the trees ended.

As Tom and his grandmother walked down, the crowd stopped, blocking his view. Elizabeth guided him through the crowd to its front so that the stone monument filled his sight. Tom heard a voice above the people, welcoming everyone to the Martyrs' Memorial. The voice continued, "Two Hundred and seven years ago, five young men, were martyred at this spot in this wilderness because they refused to renounce their

religious beliefs. We remember their sacrifice and swear to live up to their standards in our own lives." Five bouquets of wildflowers were placed at the base of the monument as each of the names was pronounced. Tom's grandmother squeezed his hand tightly when he heard the last name, "Andrew McRobert".

After a recollection of the cause for which they died, a prayer was said for their souls. The crowd then sang a hymn Tom knew from Sunday School at the Free Church, "Onward Christian Soldiers". At the end, the voice turned solemn and slowly recited the words of the Scottish Psalter:

"O, may you meet the Lamb when earth and seas have fled, and hear the Judge pronounce your name with

blessings on your head."

The crowd swarmed forward to the memorial. After some time, Tom and his grandmother were directly in front of the stone. Elizabeth took Tom's hand and ran it over the names etched deeply into the rock. She stopped at the name of Andrew McRobert. "This man" she told him, "was your ancestor". And what remained in his memory all his life was the cold feel of the stone.

Tom's life took him many places throughout the years. Canada became his new home eight years later. When his grandmother came to live with his family in Montreal in 1904, Tom made a life-changing decision. Although he had an office job with an import company downtown in the Port of Montreal because he had a natural understanding of figures, instead he began the long journey through high school and nine years at the School of Religious Studies at McGill University to become a Presbyterian Minister.

His career took him across Canada to various churches with different congregations, from pioneer communities on the western prairie to the mining communities in Ontario and finally to more established farm communities in Ontario such as Matawatchan. He arrived in Matawatchan during the summer of 1914 and remained until 1916. He had a unique influence on people, always searching for the love that was within each person and warning against the evils of intolerance and hate, evils that had ended the life of his ancestor. Always he emphasized that Christianity dwelled inside everyone, that it was the duty of Christians to remain true to their principles, no matter what occurred. It was the Covenanter message that Tom learned firsthand at the Martyrs' Memorial.

In 1958, Tom retired after his life-time work was recognized for his unique contribution to religious life. That year Tom and his wife returned to Scotland where he revisited the Memorial. He spoke of his memory of "Andrew McRobert" and the ceremony sixty-five years previously. Tom, like other Covenanters, had not forgotten the sacrifice of the Martyrs.

## The Birdfeeder

I like to feed the birds. I like to have them around, doing their daily business enjoying summer. Different sounds and colors they bring, like humans, just in a different form. Most creatures enjoy the feeders, with a mixture of nuts, grains, and seeds, coming and going as they use up their energy tending to their families. Its those that abuse the system that cause problems for the rest, like humans too. Squirrels and Grackles are the worst offenders on my property. Grackles, the gangsters of the bird world with those beady yellow eyes guarding everything, and they hunt in gangs, taking over feeders in the spring, nonstop, relentless on their mission. And the squirrels must be related to pigs somewhere down the family tree of evolution. These pests can wipeout a couple litres of feeder seed as quickly as a cooler of cold beer goes down on a hot summer day.

At my feeders come Mourning dove, Downy and Hairy woodpecker, Bluejay, Chickadee, Cardinal, Redwing blackbird, Goldfinch, and many others, most of which are welcome.

The other day I finally got around to taking care of, fixing, changing or ren-



ovating my feeding setup. Firstly I relocated a feeder to a more varmint safe spot about 40 feet from my patio door, under a forty year old pine, on a branch about twelve feet high. So I rig up a skinny wire about forty inches down with a handtwisted circle hook. This wire is so thin it looks like the feeder is hanging in thin air. So proud of myself, until the next morning when I see Houdini, (a

gray squirrel) pigging out on my feeder like its his birthday.

So, as the wheels start turning for the 'cure' looking in the garage, in a box with 'stuff', I pick up a spool that contains Flypaper. Yep, the sticky, dirty, tape....Bingo! No squirrel not even a flying one, could get past this.

With the excitement of a kid on Christmas eve I wrap this miracle around

the invisible wire, under the pine branch feeling like the entrepreneur heading to Dragons Den. And guess what? The next morning I see birds on the feeder and squirrels eating leftovers on the ground. WooHoo!

That night we got a bit of a storm, mostly high winds, and the next day while cleaning up and raking the yard I hear 'eek, eek, eek' and heading to the noise I see Downy on the ground under the pine tree flailing away wrapped in the flypaper. OMG, now ive gotta move, and with my canine Abby and her nose right in there with me I cradle up Downy in my left hand while trying to unstuck the paper with my right. Then, just as we're almost clear Downy jerks out of my hand and rolls back onto the sticky mess back on the ground. Now, I pick up Downy with my sticky right hand, the 'eek's have stopped as Downy is now pecking my hand with his sleek little beak. With a little bit of calm and missing feathers Downy jumped onto my forearm and held on like he had fallen out of a boat. I think he smiled as I put arm out to the tree as he jumped up the pine and rested on that first branch for a good twenty minutes.



Robinson-Huron chiefs petition to settle treaty annuities. The \$4 annual payment hasn't increased since 1874. Increases in revenue from the lands was to be shared.

Court slams OLG for breaching revenue-share agreement with 132 First Nations for the third time in two and a half years.

After winning back stolen land in Vancouver, Squamish Nation to build \$multi-billion real estate on it. Senákw will have 6,000 units, rentals, and Squamish residences.

'Making money off of our trauma': London Indigenous artist says her orange shirt designs being stolen. Her authentic website is [urbaniskwew.com/digital-artwork](http://urbaniskwew.com/digital-artwork)

Six city wards in Ottawa are slated to get new names, including Rideau-Goulbourn, named after Sir Henry Goulbourn, a British plantation owner with no ties to Canada

Ottawa's Amherst Cres. won't change name. City says there's no proof it was named after advocate for genocide of Indigenous people, and because no one complained.

Racism, prejudice contributed to Joyce Echaquan's death in hospital, Quebec coroner's inquiry concludes. Premier denies the existence of systemic racism.

Catholic Church provided \$28M in in-kind compensation to residential school survivors, that really went toward evangelizing and converting Indigenous people.

Abdulrazak Gurnah, won the Nobel Prize in Literature for his "uncompromising and compassionate penetration of the effects of colonialism and the fate of the refugee."

CTV News reporter reconnects with Indigenous mother, once missing for decades. Ben Miljure grew up mostly in foster care, with no contact with his Mother.

Canada loses appeals of First Nations child welfare rulings, ordered (and consented) to pay \$40,000 to thousands of First Nations children and their families.

'Most diverse in history': Ottawa Police officially welcome 2020 class of new recruits

Oxford English Dictionary adds 26 Korean words commonly used in English.

Oldest fossilized human footprints in North America found in New Mexico dated at 23,000 years, pushing back date of human habitation by thousands of years.

Meteor destroyed ancient city near Dead Sea some 3,600 years ago likely inspired Bible tale of Sodom. Rain of 'burning sulfur' matches 'cosmic impact event'

Quebec's Magpie River becomes first in Canada to be granted legal personhood by the local municipality urging the Quebec government to formally protect the river.

BusinessWaste.co.uk a UK waste management company, ranked the world's greenest cities according to their recycling habits, ranking Vancouver #1

One to charge them all: EU demands single plug for phone chargers to reduce waste

Charges laid after police find 32 fish on boat's live well on a lake in Greater Madawaska, released the live fish and offered the rest to anglers within limit

Starting on January 1st Ontario will be divided into four Bait Management Zones. You will need to purchase and use baitfish and leeches from where you are fishing.

A rare orange lobster discovered in an Ajax, Ont., grocery store, a target of the other conventionally-coloured lobsters, has found a new home in a Toronto aquarium.

OPP search: Age 35-40 Caucasian male, who was driving an unmarked older black sedan with emergency blue lights, for impersonating an officer, assault, on Hwy17

Two former Ontario employees charged for defrauding government of millions from COVID-19 relief fund, depositing over 10,000 cheques in 400 fake bank accounts.

B.C. server who was fired after asking to be addressed by correct pronouns awarded \$30K. Jessie Nelson was discriminated against because of their gender identity.

157,000 new jobs in September get Canada's economy back above pre-pandemic level

Amazon to hire 15,000 employees across Canada; increase wages. Expansion plans come amid significant labour shortages in certain segments of the economy.

Eidos Montreal Announces Workers Switching To Four-Day Weeks. The Square Enix studio behind Guardians of the Galaxy won't have to come in on Fridays.

Office vacancies at highest levels since 1994 amid new supply, pandemic concerns

TO police warn of rental scam. Scammers rent a unit for a few days, pose as an agent of the property owner to sell fake long-term leases, get deposits, then disappear.

Birth Rates Decline In High-Income Countries. Couples Postpone Due To COVID.

Ontario government had right to cut number of Toronto wards from planned expansion of 47 down to 25 during 2018 Toronto mayoral election.

The RCDHU says public needs to know military must show CAF-issued vaccination booklet along with their military ID. They are vaccinated under Canada, not Ontario.

A Clip From The '80s When Seat Belts Became Mandatory Is Going Viral Because It's Being Compared To The Way Some Americans Are Acting About The Vaccine

Disruptive behaviour on US flights prompt calls for a crack down. Data suggests an escalation in Canada with angry passengers who refuse to wear a face mask.

Ont vaccination passport non-compliance: Individuals up to \$100K fine and prison. Corporation director up to \$500K fine and prison. Incorporated business up to \$10M

Experts: Vaccinated People Are Not 'Just as Likely' to Spread the Coronavirus as Unvaccinated People because they are much less likely to have the virus at all.

If cleared, Merck's drug would be the first pill to treat worst symptoms of COVID-19. All COVID-19 therapies now authorized in the U.S. require an IV or injection.

Research: If you've had COVID, especially a mild case, you should still get vaccinated. Vaccination combined with natural immunity provides the best protection of all.

Ontario students will have access to free menstrual products this fall after the government partnered with Shoppers Drug Mart to give students equitable access.

Ontario Creating 8 New Ontario Health Teams to Provide Better Coordinated Care for Ontarians, 3 of them in Eastern Ontario. \$9M in funding over 2 years for setup

Mozart sonata helps reduce brain signals associated with epilepsy, in small study.

New therapy for babies can reduce likelihood of autism diagnosis by two-thirds in study that teaches parents how to pick up on non-verbal communication cues.

Medical experts urge caution over use of acetaminophen-based painkillers found in hundreds of pain-relief drugs during pregnancy. They may impact fetal development

Waterloo teen's eye-care project wows at International Science Fair. Portable imager uses a \$300 camera with AI to look for eye diseases, less than standard \$5K cams

Canadian supermodel alleges CoolSculpting left her "brutally disfigured", is seeking US\$50M in damages from a lawsuit she filed in New York, according to Reuters.

Suicides in Canada fell 32% in first year of pandemic compared with year before. Timely psychiatric services should become national suicide reduction strategy.

Scientists are developing smart toilets that uses sensors and artificial intelligence to analyze waste and send info to an app to monitor health, diet, drug use, and exercise

Canada's biggest cannabis market, Ontario, reaches 1,000 legal stores, oversaturating some markets.

SpaceX launched the first all-civilian crew ever launched on a 3-day flight to Earth orbit, to be operated by ground-based flight teams and onboard guidance systems

Taiwan angry after China sends waves of fighter planes toward island. October incursion was largest ever by China's air force into island's air defence zone.

Philippine leader Rodrigo Duterte announces plan to retire from politics. Duterte took office in 2016 and launched a drug crackdown that left thousands dead.

GM Asks Chevy Bolt Owners To Park 50 Feet Away From Other Cars. Perhaps it's time for GM to buy back every Bolt it ever produced.

British government races to avert food shortages amid crisis triggered by soaring energy costs. Natural Gas is used to make ammonia for fertilizer.

B.C.'s government is now trying to convince tech companies and organic farmers to get along in a bid to make its food supply more sustainable.

CDN Pho restaurants scrambling for noodles as prices for South Asian ingredients soar. Pressures on supply chains have made prices on ingredients more than double.

A camouflage-print Mustang and a black Infiniti — were caught racing on Highway 10 in Caledon, reaching speeds of at least 187 km/h. Note: camouflage doesn't work

Toronto police Insp. Chris Boddy, a high-profile senior officer, has been suspended with pay after he was charged with impaired driving in August in Richmond Hill.

The Pickering pedestrian bridge over the 401 was verified by Guinness as the world's longest enclosed pedestrian bridge, officially measured at 820 feet long.

Enticed by a viral TikTok challenge, students have pilfered or vandalized items at schools and then provided proof of their crimes to earn "devious licks".

A North Dakota man who parks his truck near a black walnut tree had to clean up after a squirrel decided to store its walnuts - all 158 kg of them - inside the vehicle.

Kingston customer returns rented "Role Models" movie nine years late and incurs \$2,700 in late fees... which are being waived during the pandemic. Coincidence?

## It's The Irish In Me

When I was growing up, my parents' favourite expressions were, "that sounds Irish", or "that is the Irish in you"! Apparently the majority of my ancestors are from the Emerald Isle. I had always yearned to visit Ireland, and in the summer of 2018, that is what I did.

From the moment I stepped off the plane and heard a sweet Irish accent, it felt like coming home. I was completely enamoured with the vibrant dancing, the lively music, and the fiesty writings based on historical wrongs by the British and the clergy. I enjoyed delightful and unique Irish gems such as pub dinners and fresh Guinness on tap.

The entire trip was magical. I learned that the belief in the "little people" was still alive and well. The Banshees, leprechauns and fairies still inspired a respect for those mysterious forces that sometimes bring chaos into our lives, in spite of our attempts to maintain order and predictability. At the end of my visit, I would come to witness signs of these mischievous imps. I love everything Irish, but it is their irreverent sense of humour that would eventually save me when the little people intervened to introduce a completely unexpected crisis on the flight home.

On the way through airport security, I was asked to empty my water bottle. Once through the scanners and on the other side, I noticed a water fountain outside of the washrooms. I happily filled up my bottle again and placed it into my

backpack. I boarded the plane, and it was filled to capacity. I have always wondered if it might be harder to fly with so much weight.

Before sitting down, I took out my noise-cancelling headphones and stuffed my backpack into the overhead luggage. I had just settled into my seat and was preparing for the long flight when a young woman informed me that I was in her seat. Mine was on the other end of the row. I left my backpack in the overhead bin and settled into my new seat with my headphones. As fate (or if you prefer, the little people) would have it, this would end up being somewhat pivotal to what was about to unfold.

While ignoring the stewardess and her safety presentation, I set out to find a lengthy movie for distraction. I decided that a comedy was just what my heart needed. I clicked on my headphones and found myself in blissful silence. With my shoes off, belt loosened and title selected, I became completely absorbed in a hilarious movie.

I was in another world. I didn't even notice the take off! A while later, I sensed commotion at the other end of my row, a few seats to my left. The co-pilot and a number of attendants were all around the young woman, now standing, whose seat I had mistakenly sat in. I abruptly returned from whatever alternate reality I was enjoying. To me, the scenario appeared both surreal and serious.



Pic by Suhyeon Choi unsplash.com

All eyes were fixed on the overhead compartment. There was a liquid dripping from the light and, from the expressions on their faces, everyone in the vicinity seemed to find this alarming. The pilot came on the intercom and said that the plane, now an hour over the Atlantic Ocean, was returning to Dublin to make an emergency landing!

Amid the ensuing commotion, I got out of my seat and, trying to look casual, walked around the other side of the plane and retrieved the now empty bottle from my soggy backpack in the overhead compartment. I took a flight attendant to one side and told her that my water bottle was full when I placed it in the upper bin. She explained that emergency protocols had already been engaged and that we had no choice but to return to Dublin. In hindsight, it may have been foolhardy to get involved, for when I returned to my seat, all eyes were now on me!

The tension on the plane was escalating. Everyone was chattering loudly and the flight attendants were scurrying up and down the aisles trying to calm people. I could only imagine what was going on in the Dublin Airport. Apparently, all air traffic had been suspended and a runway was cleared and awaiting our emergency landing. The trouble that a leaky bottle caused the airline, airport emergency crews and thousands of travellers on that fateful day seemed exaggerated. However, as we were 10,000 feet over the Atlantic ocean and many miles from shore, I was relieved that caution was chosen over expedience.

The mood in the plane was very tense for the hour it took to return to Dublin airport. Personally, I am not a nervous flyer. However, on that day I witnessed a lot of people who were! Many of the passengers, red faced, were now perspiring profusely and the attendants, while trying to maintain composure, had a look of concern on their faces that they had difficulty disguising.

The bumpy landing was particularly tense and there was a palpable, collective sigh of relief when we set down safely.

Although I was feeling a wee bit guilty, I was more disappointed that we were all going to be several hours late getting home. You would think that that would have been enough drama for one day, but the little people were not through yet.

The maintenance crew and mechanical engineers came on board and took apart the entire upper section of the plane. They exposed all of the pipes and wires and technology I had never seen before behind the upper baggage compartment. As one of the few aboard that knew that there was nothing really wrong with the aircraft, I remained quite calm, somewhat bored. My mind wandered and I recalled stories of how, according to lore, the banshees would scream to signal the imminent death of a mortal human. If there had been a banshee scream, that may have rattled me.

Suddenly, there was a loud scream a few rows back! "My husband, someone please help my husband!"

While I might have been more helpful in that instant, as I have a certain amount of medical training, I figured that I had caused enough chaos and controversy for one day, so I remained seated. Ambulance attendants boarded the aircraft and squeezed by the maintenance crew. They scurried down the narrow aisle to take this stricken man, gasping for air, off the plane, into an ambulance and off to the hospital. The rumour that circulated around the plane sometime later was that he had had a heart attack.

To this day I continue to wonder which interpretation of events is more accurate. On the one hand, the little people and I saved this man's life because he would have had the heart attack midway over the Atlantic Ocean, and died on the plane. Alternatively, as many of the more cynical amongst us would believe, my leaky water bottle and the ensuing calamity caused the heart attack because of all the stress. It may be just the Irish in me, but I sleep much better at night believing the former.

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By the beginning of World War One in 1914, the colonial powers, their colonies, and their former colonies extended over approximately 85 percent of the Earth's surface and economic and political control by leading powers reached almost the entire globe.

That's a lot of people who continue to be affected by colonialism all around the world. A few individualistic powers, focused on the acquisition of wealth, replaced or pushed aside "relationship" cultures that were surviving and thriving with subsistence economies.

The online Oxford Dictionary, among other prominent English dictionaries, defines subsistence through a colonial lens. It equates subsistence with poverty, with making only enough to survive. But subsistence means something much more robust to Indigenous peoples. In the Americas, Indigenous peoples thrived for over 23,000 years within subsistence cultures. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Subsistence defines subsistence as *"The customary and traditional uses of wild resource for food, clothing, fuel, transportation, construction, art, crafts, sharing, and customary trade. In sum any wild resource for human use is considered subsistence."* But it's much more than that, it's based on an understanding about what we recently have been calling sustainability - an ever-renewing circle of life.

It took a scant four or five hundred years for the new wealth-focused world view to push nature to a tipping point and the way to healing the wounds is to pay attention to what Indigenous societies have been trying to tell European powers since first contact - We are neither owners, nor masters, nor protectors of the land. We are OF the land.

Warnings about what might happen with Climate Change are starting to turn into "I told you so's". Powerful storms, droughts, flooding, recurring wildfires, and now what is likely to be the first of a wave of pandemics seem to have finally pushed people and their governments to act with a sense of urgency.

This comes at a time when Indigenous peoples in North America have started to recover their voice, silenced for centuries by newcomers. What those voices have to say has the potential to change the world, but only if the other powers listen - really listen.

A common theme in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to action is to establish

a nation-to-nation relationship. This is something that Individualistic wealth acquiring cultures have trouble understanding. This could be part of the reason changes are coming slowly. When you see power as a zero-sum game, you fear giving power to others, but if you are used to working in a relationship society you will know working with a nation-to-nation approach means sharing collaboratively. That's what Indigenous peoples thought they were going to get when treaties were signed and what they are hoping to get today through negotiations over unceded lands. This cultural misunderstanding is perhaps one of the most significant hurdles to reconciliation.

Before Canadian municipalities send delegations out to work with International cultures through Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) programs, Canadian delegates receive cultural awareness training. In 2015 FCM International produced a Volunteer Orientation video. In the video, Intercultural Specialist Randy Weekes explains the difference between individualistic cultures and relationship cultures. One of the principles is that if you ask a person in a relationship culture who they are, they will usually start by saying the name of their tribe or band and where they live, followed by their family names, leaving their own name until last. People in individualistic cultures tend to start with their own name, perhaps give a job title and say where they live, never mentioning their family or origins.

The main reason for the difference is that people in a relationship society know that no matter how hard they work, a drought or a flood can occur, and they can depend on people in their group to work together to restore the situation. The worst punishment for bad behaviour in a relationship society is to be expelled from the group. Residential schools broke those bonds in an attempt to turn subsistence societies ones who would speak English, get jobs, make money, put coins on church plates, and pay taxes. They tried to break relationship societies into individuals by breaking their relationship with each other and the land.

That wasn't good for anyone. Wealth economies, global supply chains, extreme resource extraction and unwinnable wars, remnants of colonization, aren't good for most of the Earth's inhabitants including wildlife, or the water land and air.

We have to start thinking about

our relationship to each other and nature if we are going to survive this climate crisis, pandemic, and future pandemics. We have to support one another, because if the group fails, the individual fails. If Indigenous people fail, the country fails.

We must learn and do what Indigenous cultures have known and practiced all along, because what most people are doing is not sustainable. Some of this is happening now, but we all need to pick up the pace. The floods, fires, storms, and droughts of climate change are demonstrating that we certainly are part of nature and nature always balances itself.

We can forgo conspicuous consumption. We can shop locally. We can think of ourselves as part of a greater society over being individuals. We can stop thinking that nature is something separate from ourselves - something to conquer and subdue.

All of the creatures on Earth evolved together and depend on one another for survival. The composition of the human body demonstrates the complexity of that concept. The human body contains trillions of microorganisms - outnumbering human cells by 10 to 1. We cannot survive without them. Think about that. We are nature. This really demonstrates how complex nature's web is and how intricate our interdependencies are. Individualism is killing us. We need to restore our local relationships with people as part of nature.

This won't be accomplished by government decree, but by a change of thinking. Indigenous peoples have the right idea. Subsistence is sustainable and

is necessary for our collective long-term survival. The idea that we can all become wealthy if we work hard is patently false. There just aren't enough resources to go around and a lot of those resources are needed by the ecosystem that supports us.

I believe that one of the factors in our current global shortage of workers is what happens when we stop spending on lavish destination weddings, designer clothes for galas, or office wear. People have discovered that it's better to work hard enough to live comfortably than to work extra-long hours, never seeing your family, just to accumulate extra wealth. Conspicuous consumption is losing its appeal. Nature-time is more important.

In many parts of what is now the United States, communities have in recent years replaced Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples Day. In Canada, June is now National Indigenous History Month and June 21 is National Indigenous Day. This is just a start that provides a great opportunity for everyone in Canada to learn or relearn Indigenous culture and the importance of the land. This is followed by Thanksgiving Day, that started in 1859 when Protestant leaders called on the colonial government to create a day for giving thanks. There are calls to make this holiday a day to honour Indigenous food (You're Welcome Day, one woman jested). We must become like the three sisters - corn, beans, and squash - who grow together, provide nutrients for one another, and carry each other up. We also need to amend our constitution to end "Indigenous Apartheid".



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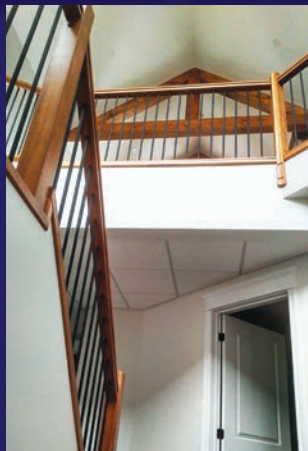


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