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PRICE REDUCED!
NOW \$520,000 Lovely brand new, Cardel-built 1678 sq. ft. 3 br, 2 bath bungalow on a quiet street in Carleton Place. Close to shopping and quick, straight forward access to Highway 7 and 417. Ready for immediate occupancy ML#1136983



\$619,900 In Ottawa's playground – bike, hike, ATV, snowmobile & boating, fishing, golf, downhill & X-country ski. Pride of ownership in 3 br, 3 bath home on prime Calabogie w/front, beach, dock and gardens.

CENTRAL VILLAGE LOCATION
3 MIN WALK to WATERFRONT! \$329,900 ML#1160679



Stunning views of Calabogie Lake & access to public dock across the street.
Calabogie Village Large family home with 7 bns. This active recreational community offers something for everyone, water sports, golfing, ATV/Snowmobiling, Motrosports, Skiing to name a few.

NEW LISTING WATERFRONT! \$399,900



Lakeside elevation shown
WATERFRONT Centennial/Black Donald. 3 Br, 3 Bth, walkout Basement. All storeys have a great view. Spacious enclosed porch to enjoy bug-free summer entertaining. 14000 Watt generator included, wired and on auto start if needed, 200 Amp service and a good sized floating Candoek ML#1167464

TSB



Teresa Steenbakkers
Broker of Record
Teresa Barbara Steenbakkers
Brokerage

NEW COMMUNITY CARLETON PLACE! \$499,500



Cute 2 Bedroom, 2 Bath Bungalow ready for immediate occupancy. Gorgeous white oak hardwood, 2 storey great room. Good size kitchen with large island. Located in a new community in Carleton Place, close to shopping and excellent access to Hwy 7 and 417 ML#1144932

Experienced Realtor and Long-time Calabogie Resident

WeatherMaster Windows, the standard of cottage & country living

ASK ABOUT OUR SPECIALS

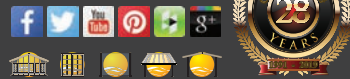
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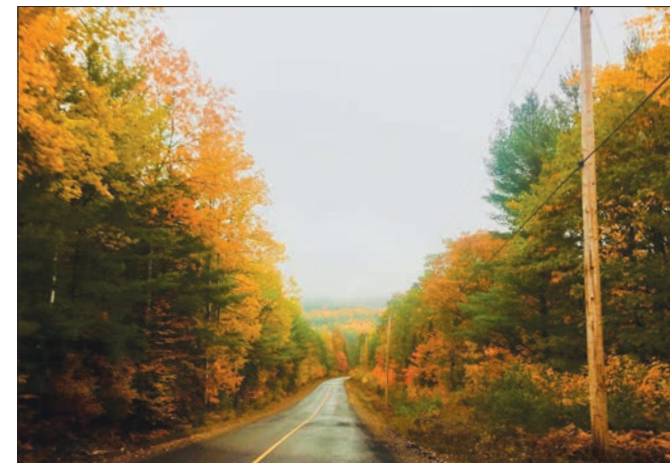
THE MADAWASKA HIGHLANDER October-November S.E. 2019 EMBRACE THE PAST ~ ENCOURAGE THE FUTURE ~ ENJOY TODAY

The Madawaska Highlander

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

SHORT STORY CONTEST SPECIAL EDITION

Welcome!



Mist rising on Centennial Lake Road. It's always a beautiful drive, but with these spectacular Fall colours it's breathtaking Pic by Melissa Shahan



Late September on the family farm. Pic by Kimberly Hass

Oct-Nov
2019

FREE Vol.17 Issue 6
Next issue November 27, 2019

...To a very special edition of the Madawaska Highlander. Yes, the Highlander is always special, but this time we have given our regular contributors a rest while we showcase other very talented writers. Prepare to be treated to wonderful stories that were submitted to our first ever, and likely first annual, Madawaska Highlander Short Story Contest.

The panel of judges has completed their work, so now the public can have their say by adding to the judges' scores. It is as though you, our readers, have become an additional judge. We can't tell you who wrote the stories yet, because we want you to vote for your favourite fiction and non-fiction stories based on merit first, but we can give you a glimpse of what to expect...

You will enjoy stories about everything from an afternoon tea with a witch to a man bewitched by the forest. We have a story about one man's karma - while being the wrong man in the wrong place at the wrong time, and another about everyday Esthers - in the right place at the right time during dark times. Time remains a theme. There's the golden hour in the forest, a crazy time in an airport, and another one where gingerbread seems to make time stop altogether. And we have one about those times when we enjoyed just being.

Back in time in Ireland we learn the significance of a spinning wheel in an escape to Canada. We have stories about launching out in life and about launching out onto the lake. We have odes to elders, volunteers, and grannies, a touching story of a boy's best friend, and a memory of a man's first car. It's enough to make you "raven" mad!

Enjoy!...

776 Mill Street, Calabogie Chris, Julie, or Kim 613-852-2789

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The Madawaska Highlander

The Madawaska Highlander
3784 Matawatchan Rd. Griffith ON
K0J 2R0
info@reelimpact.tv
613-333-9399
Business Manager: Mark Thomson
Editor and Advertising: Lois Thomson
www.madawaskahighlander.ca

The Madawaska Highlander
is a free community newspaper
published 7 times per year by
Reel Impact Communications Inc.
Mailed to 4,300 homes, An additional
2,300 available at retailers
Connecting residents and visitors in
parts of 4 counties in the Highlands.

**Next advertising deadline:
Nov 15 for Nov 27 publication
Short Story Contest Winners to be Announced**

Message from the editor:

Check the Events Calendar for events in your area. We print what you send in, so if your event is missing or incorrect, be sure to email updates.

Check advertiser messages right away for important information, hours of operation, specials and ideas about things to do in the area. Tell them you saw it in the Madawaska Highlander!

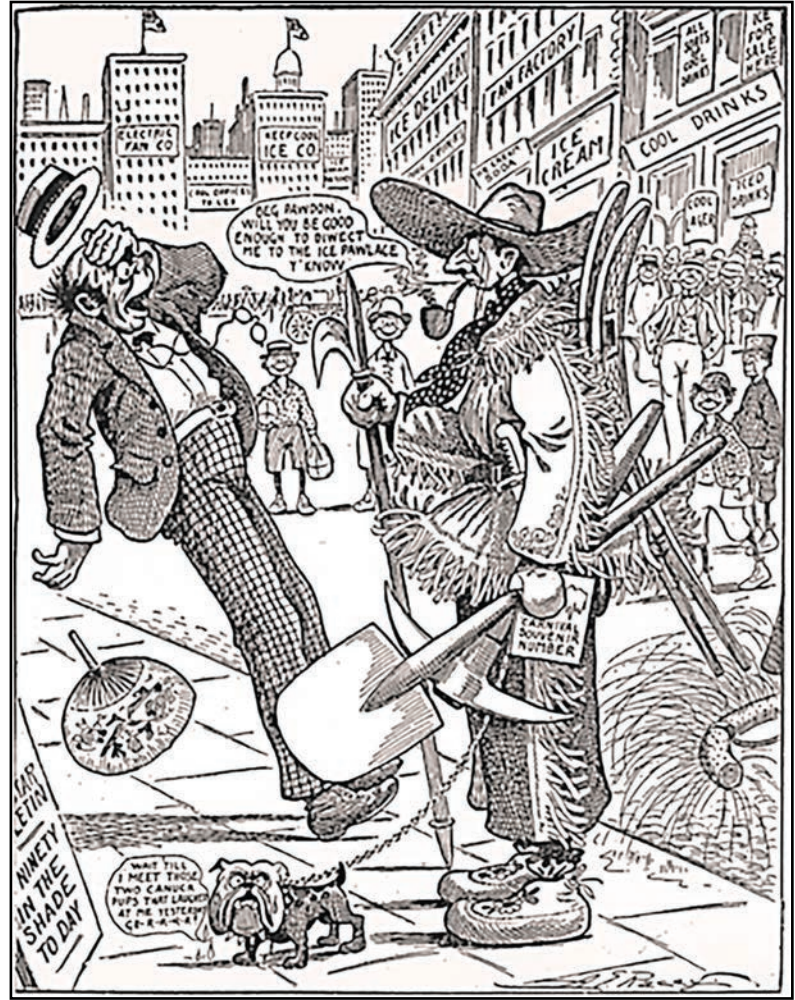
We also maintain the matawatchan.ca website, which has a handy community calendar that is updated whenever new information arrives. The Tri-County area around Matawatchan, Griffith, Denbigh and Vennachar is the primary focus of that website. Also check out www.greatermadawaska.com and other township websites for events and information around you in the Highlands. Our community paper depends on the community, so if you have something to offer that our readers would enjoy, please contact us to discuss. We keep our advertising rates low to keep it accessible for small businesses.

**WHAT A GREAT GIFT! ...ESPECIALLY TO YOURSELF.
SUBSCRIBE AND NEVER MISS AN ISSUE !
\$39.55 (tax included) in Canada for 7 issues, May to November
Email: info@reelimpact.tv or call 613-333-9399**

CONTRIBUTORS THIS ISSUE

Thank you to our Short Story Writers!

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.



A fresh and misinformed immigrant from England seems surprised to find houses in Montreal and starts to look for the 20-foot icicles he has heard so much about and is asked by many if he takes the country for a blooming refrigerator! In the speech balloon: "Beg pardon, will you be good enough to direct me to the Ice Palace y'know?" His British Bulldog: "Wait 'til I meet those two Canack pups that laughed at me yesterday, Grrrr!"

- A.G. Racey, The Englishman in Canada, 1901

Century 21
Century21 Eady Realty Inc. Brokerage
29 Raglan St. Renfrew 613-433-2254
www.vincentjohnston.com

My heart is in the Highlands. It's where my family comes from and where I like to be. I promise to do my best to ensure details are looked after and everyone is satisfied with the sale. You can trust me to list your home and help you find your dream property. New listings welcome!
- Vincent Johnston, Sales Representative

21 Crestview Building Lot **PEAKS VILLAGE** Reduced to 49,900
LT 4 Matawatchan Rd **WATERFRONT** Reduced to 104,500
BUILDING LOTS HUGE POTENTIAL! 00 Centennial Lake **WATERFRONT** 49,900
Lot 2 Matawatchan Rd **MADAWASKA WATERFRONT** 149,900

CLOSE TO CALABOGIE!

SOLD
4508 Calabogie Road
3 bedroom bungalow with a detached garage close to Calabogie

BEAUTIFUL PRIVATE HOME!

25268 Highway 41
299,900 MLS 1166787
Private spot to call home. Set on a 1.5 acre lot this home will please. Vaulted Ceilings, Finished basement, detached garage and lots of green space all around giving you great privacy.

PRICE REDUCED!

254 Tatty Hill 995,000 MLS 1098650
95 Acre Estate close to the Highlands Golf and Calabogie Motorsports Track near Calabogie Lake. Beautiful, historic, peaceful, well manicured property. Open fields for farming potential and still lots of bush for the hunter and outdoor enthusiast. Come and take in the gated long private driveway that leads to your new retirement retreat.

WATERFRONT & SKI HILL!

329 Kennedy Rd
489,900 MLS 1149973
Located near the Calabogie Ski Hill this bungalow comes with a 40X134.5 ft waterfront lot. Have the best of it all by being on the Lake and close to the ski-hill. Great investment for a rental property!

WATERFRONT & ACREAGE!

4537 Matawatchan Rd 299,900 MLS1156245
74 acres of vacant land with trails and waterfront. This land attaches to crown land at the back and has waterfrontage on the Madawaska River ahead of Centennial Lake. The property has a drilled well and 200amp electrical panel site.

NEW LISTING HIGHLANDS GOLF!

40 Spindle Drift 399,900 MLS1168347
Live on the well sought after Calabogie Highlands Gold Course in this newly renovated home. Come and see the work that has been done to modernize this gorgeous home

CALABOGIE LAKE LOT!

1142 Barryvale 249,900 MLS 101387144
Waterfront building lot near the Calabogie Highlands Golf course on a flat site. If you are looking to be on Calabogie Lake here is your chance. We have a local builder that would be happy to meet with you to discuss a plan!

CENTENNIAL LK WATERFRONT!

000 Centennial Lake Road 3.13 acre "boat to only" vacant lot \$179,900 MLS1158698
Lot 31, Centennial Lake Waterfront 199,900 MLS1164392
SOLD

UNIQUE BUILDING LOTS!

287 Kennedy Rd 89,900 MLS 1152683
Unique opportunity! TWO 1-acre building lots and a deeded access waterfront lot for shared use. 240ft of road frontage for the building lot. If you're looking to build and want a nice private lot, take a look at this.

By Lois Thomson

PEOPLE'S CHOICE

IT IS YOUR TURN TO BE A JUDGE. All of the official judges' scores are in, but we want to hear from one more judge, and that's all of our readers. This means you. We have been able to fit every story we received into this special edition, which pleases us immensely, because the whole reason for doing this contest was to encourage people to write and to share their stories. It would have been a shame to have had to eliminate some because they are all so good! **Now it's up to you to tell us which ones you think are the best.**

Categories and Prizes:

Adult Fiction – one prize of \$250

Adult Non-Fiction – one prize of \$250

Youth Fiction or Non-Fiction (There were no entries) – one prize of \$50

1st Runners-up “Down Independence Boulevard and Other Stories”, by Ken Puddicombe.

2nd Runners-up: “Perfect Execution: and Other Short Stories”, by Michael Joll

3rd Runners-up: “Persons of Interest”, by Michael Joll

HERE IS HOW IT WORKS - EASY PEASY!

READ THEM. Read all of the stories in each category. You can't compare them if you don't read them all. You don't have to read to the end if it doesn't appeal to you, but we have some great entries that we think you will be happy to read to the end.

SCORE THEM based purely on how much you enjoyed reading them. Give one point to the story you like the most in each category (fiction and non-fiction). You might consider the following:

- Did the title spark your interest?
- Did the beginning of the story pull you in and make you want to keep reading?
- Did the story touch you emotionally (make you happy, sad, motivated, relaxed, etc.)?
- Did the ending leave you satisfied?
- Was it written smoothly, so you understood what was happening?
- Was it a story you will remember and want to share with others?

SEND IN YOUR SCORES BEFORE NOVEMBER 15, 2019by email to: info@reelimpact.tv

by regular post to:

Madawaska Highlander

Short Story Contest People's Choice

c/o Lois Thomson

3784 Matawatchan Rd.

Griffith ON, K0J 2R0

Include your name and postal code, the name of one fiction and one non-fiction story. No youth stories were submitted. You may include votes from several different people in your letter.

PLEASE NOTE: Only one vote per category, per person. Do not vote if you wrote a story or know who wrote one, if you were a judge, or are a paid Highlander contributor.

Winners to be announced in the Winter edition**Looking for part time work?**

The Greater Madawaska Seniors Housing Corporation is looking for people who would be interested in helping seniors with the following tasks:

Housecleaning**Home maintenance/minor repairs****Snow removal - Wood stacking****Transportation - Garbage removal - Other**

The pay scale will be discussed with interested parties and will be related to the need to use personal equipment. Some police checks will be required. The Corporation will cover the cost.

To submit your name**or for more info please call:****Steve Green 647 454-8589****or Juliette LeGal 613 553-1355**

Funded by:

Ontario **NU 2 U Shop****Open Saturdays only until Dec. 7, 2019****Watch for special sales!!!**GREATER MADAWASKA
SENIORS HOUSING CORPORATION

The Board of Directors of the Corporation would like to thank the Fish and Game Club and Mr. Rick Klock for their generous donations of \$204.10 and \$205.00.

This fund raiser was organised in Memory of Pat Holleran who was a founding member of the Corporation, Sandy Sutcliffe and Shirley Vanierstine who were both strong supporters of the cause.

Your donation is truly appreciated!

SENIORS (Ages 55 and up)**Please let us know if you need help with one or many of these tasks:**

Transportation___ Home maintenance___ House cleaning___ Meals___ Other___

Call: Steve 647 454-8589 or Juliette (613) 553-1355**You can also drop this in the mailbox at 4141 Matawatchan Road or at the Hilltop Church, 25197 Hwy 41, Griffith**Funded by: Ontario 

Name _____ Phone _____

Jim Pine, Hastings County CAO, co-lead for EORN, has been named advisor on consultations to strengthen and modernize public health and emergency health services

Ontario launching a study of bridges and interchanges along the 401 between Kingston and Hwy 416 near Prescott to evaluate transportation needs of Eastern Ontario.

Hydro One and OPG to deploy over 100 electric-vehicle fast-chargers in 43 locations from Kenora to Cornwall in the east, and as far north as Ignace, by end of 2020.

Court rules Ontario broke the law by not consulting public on ending cap-and-trade, but the case was dismissed, meaning they won't have to reinstate the system.

The Ontario government is looking to save \$115 million a year by pooling the benefits of the broader public sector by 2021

Red Tape Reduction Ministry Launches New Webpage to Hear Directly from Business to modernize regulations and ease burdens on job-creators

Ontario Investing \$765 Million to Build New Public Safety Radio Network

Police investigating man claiming to be Renfrew Mercury staff, approaching young females. Call the newspaper at 613-432-3655 or 1-800-884-9195 for ID verification.

Shayne Neuman, 38, of Carlow-Mayo Township man arrested and charged in connection with counterfeit 100-dollar bills after an incident in Barry's Bay.

Consultants have been working with Calabogie Motorsports Park for almost a decade on a plan to make a full resort with accommodations and other amenities.

"Silky" or "Silken" plastic tea bags could leave billions of microplastics in your cup. Such bags look like silk, but are more structured, keeping their shape with plastic.

A woman in Israel mistook wasabi for avocado, triggering a heart dysfunction Except for allergies, researchers said the dysfunction wasn't known to be caused by food.

Two new studies now add to the existing evidence, finding an association between dog ownership and a significantly lower death risk following a stroke or heart attack.

Juul vape manufacturer names new CEO, suspends all advertising in U.S. — but no change in Canada where its product selection and flavour range is already limited.

Injured Vancouver hiker stranded for being slow, had to be rescued in same spot where another hiker disappeared. Rescuers admonished her group to no avail.

Mint's new \$20 glow-in-the-dark coin features Canada's most famous UFO. The Shag Harbour incident coin sells for \$129.95 and 95% were sold the day they were released.

B.C. and Yukon to table legislation to scrap "spring forward" and "fall back" times.

Canadian cannabis company Canopy Growth is buying a majority paving the way for Canopy to begin offering CBD-infused sports drinks as soon as next year.

Ontario is out of Capacity in Wholesale Cannabis Sales - Considering new sales model to save consumers money and increase product selection.

CannTrust to destroy \$77M of pot plants and inventory to comply with government rules. That's a lot of product that won't go up in smoke.

Scientists: Starchy vegetables (potatoes, sweet potatoes, corn, green peas, parsnips) are better for your gut biome when cooked, but beets and carrots, etc. are best cooked.

Moscow man suing Apple stating his iPhone turned him gay. An app gave him 69 GayCoins, not Bitcoin, with the message "don't judge without trying."

Google Maps added voice guidance feature with "more detailed voice guidance and new types of verbal announcements for walking trips" for better accessibility.

A counterfeit OMG iPhone-compatible Lightning cable that enables remote hacking of connected devices is now widely on sale. Only buy genuine products.

Tesla Smart Summon app will summon your vehicles in parking lot. YouTube videos showing ridiculous crashes suggest the app isn't perfect.

Vancouver police cancelled \$368 distracted driving ticket after woman complained her cellphone was merely sitting in the cup holder while she was stopped at a light.

Air Canada staff will no longer greet 'ladies and gentlemen' onboard planes, opting for gender neutral "everyone".

Woman denied bathroom access for 2 hrs. forced to sit in her own urine on 7-hour Air Canada flight

Paralyzed man walks again with brain-controlled exoskeleton. Device not ready for public use.

Intriguing Study Suggests Humans Have Hidden 'Salamander-Like' Ability to Regrow Tissue. They doubt whole limbs can be regrown, but perhaps new cartilage

Indigenous educator is asking clothing franchise Urban Planet to remove its line of T-shirts that feature the word "savage", saying it's the N-word for Indigenous people.

Ford issues recalls for 2019 F-Series Super Duty, 2020 Explorer and Escape. Ford suggests using the parking brake during all times the vehicle is stationary, until serviced.

Zantac in global recall over 'unacceptable' levels of potential carcinogen. Heartburn medicine pulled by GlaxoSmithKline while it investigates source of impurity

Recall: PC lower iron milk-based infant formula in the 900 gram size, UPC 0 60383 69839 3, expiry Aug. 29, 2021, due to contamination which could cause fatality

Scientists led by Jeff Dahn, a professor at Dalhousie University and Tesla research present the concept of battery able to power an EV over 1M miles before replacing.

The world's first hydrogen-powered 367-foot superyacht was unveiled at the Monaco Yacht Show. It's only emissions will be water

Israeli breakthrough could turn hydrogen into the fuel of future for vehicles and fuel cells.

Dyson abandons multi-billion dollar electric vehicle project. They designed a great car, but can't make it economically viable.

Explosion at a Russian biological research facility that keeps samples of the fatal smallpox virus. Statement – "No threat to local populations", is hopefully true.

Study shows a 53% increased risk of autism spectrum disorder in children born to women who had excessively severe nausea and vomiting in pregnancy.

Antidepressants' effect on sugar metabolism and weight gain could perhaps be related to increased risk of gestational diabetes and should be avoided during pregnancy, with Dr. supervision.

Canadian, Peebles, 84, wins Nobel Prize in physics, sharing \$1.2 million with Swiss scientists for revealing evolution of universe and discovering planets of distant suns

Three scientists won the 2019 Nobel Prize for discovering how the body's cells sense and react to oxygen levels, paving the way for strategies to fight anemia, cancer, etc.

Margaret Atwood and Bernardine Evaristo share 2019 Booker Prize

3D bioprinter used to cultivate bovine cells into small-scale meat for the first time in microgravity conditions on the ISS – an efficient way of producing meat for long space voyages.

ABC News mistakes footage from a Kentucky gun range as Turkish militant attack on Syria

16-year-old won \$3M in the Fornite World Cup, with 2 million viewers watching.

Epic Games settles with 14-year-old over selling Fortnite cheats for the wildly popular video game.

Canadian lawsuit accuses Fortnite maker of designing game to be addictive. Charging that many players had to seek treatment for addiction.

South Park episode "Band in China" now banned in China after mocking Chinese government censors.

The personal information of about 37,000 Canadians held by TransUnion may have been compromised this past summer. In 2017 Equifax Inc. exposed info of 19,000

'Absolutely nuts': Squirrels hide 200 walnuts under hood of car in Philadelphia. Owners say, "If you park outside you should check under the hood in the fall."

A married BC man and his wife sued his girlfriend for the cost of a diamond ring and car repairs after his wife found out about the affair. The suite was unsuccessful.

By "infecting" Mars with the bacteria, viruses, and fungi that support life's processes here on Earth, scientists claim the Red Planet could eventually become habitable.

Elon Musk unveils SpaceX's massive Starship designed to fly up to a 100 people at a time to the Moon

Also check:

www.matawatchan.ca
www.greatermadawaska.com
www.addingtonhighlands.ca
www.northfrontenac.com

CHURCH SERVICES:

Matawatchan St. Andrew's United
 Sundays 8:30 am from February through July and 11:30 am August through January

Griffith Hilltop Tabernacle

Sunday School 10 am, Sept. - June.
 Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.
 Office 613.762.7130
www.hilltopchurch.ca
 Facebook Hilltop Church in Griffith

Vennachar Free Methodist Church

424 Matawatchan Rd. 613-333-2318
 Sunday service 10:30am year-round
 Pastor Laurie Lemke 613-479-2673
 Facebook: Vennachar Free Methodist Church

Denbigh St. Luke's United Church

Sunday Worship and Sunday School 10:00 a.m.

The New Apostolic Church

Sunday School 9:00 a.m.
 Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.
 Wednesdays 8:00 p.m.

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Sunday School 9:00 a.m.
 Sunday Worship 9:30 a.m.

Schutt Emmanuel United, 8:30 a.m.

Burnstown

St. Andrew's United Church
 Sundays at 10:30 a.m.

Calabogie

St. Andrews United Church
 1044 Madawaska Dr. (on the waterfront)
 Sunday Worship 8:30am
 Communion 1st Sun. of the month

Most Precious Blood Catholic Church

504 Mill St., Father Kerry Brennan
 Sunday Worship 8:30 a.m.

Mount St. Patrick

St. Patrick's Catholic Church
 Father Holly, Sundays at 10:45 a.m.

REGULAR EVENTS CALABOGIE:

Youth Sports Night

Tuesdays 6:00 pm to 8:00 at St. Joseph's Catholic School, Calabogie

Pickleball, Tuesdays and Thursdays

6:00 pm to 8:00 at St. Joseph's Catholic School, Calabogie

Well Baby Clinic

2nd & 4th Thursdays 10:30 am to 11:30 am at the Greater Madawaska Library. It is aimed at children from 0 - 6.

Public Library Book Club

Last Wednesday 11:00 to 12:30

Falls Prevention Program

Chair exercises

Seniors 65+ Mondays and Wednesdays 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 at the Calabogie Community Centre
 Contact Susan 613-752-1540

Pilates and More

Monday evenings and Thursday am

Back Fitness and Stretch

Mondays 3:45

Mindfulness Meditation

calabogiemindfulnessmeditation.com

Calabogie Seniors Dinner & Meeting

Last Thursday - 5 pm Oct. to April at the Community Hall. May to Sept. Barnet Park Seniors 55+ welcome. 752-2853

Renfrew South Women's Institute

www.rsdwi.ca CalabogieWI@gmail.com
 Branch meetings held at Calabogie Community Hall 2nd Thursday 7:30
 Contact: Sara MacKenzie, Pres.
 613-432-3105 Guests and new members welcome!

Calabogie Arts and Crafts

Every 2nd Monday (If holiday, then 3rd Monday), 10:00 am - 1:00 pm, Community Hall, (\$15 per year), 752-1324

Lion's Club Bingo every Wednesday,

6:30 pm, Calabogie Hall, 752-0234.

The Calabogie and Area Ministerial

Food Bank 538 Mill Street, Calabogie
 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month
 9 am to 10 For emergency situations, please call 752-2201

SPECIAL EVENTS CALABOGIE:

Fall Roast Beef Dinner, Oct. 26 4pm to 6:30 Calabogie United Church. Adults \$15, Kids 7 - 12 \$7, 6 under free. **Jean Libbey 613-752-0014**

Bogie Lights Nov 15th at Heritage

Point at 6:30 pm. Celebrate the turning on of the Christmas Lights, Carolling, Hot Chocolate, Apple Cider, Cookies and Roast Marshmallows **Jean Libbey 613-752-0014**

Christmas Bazaar Nov 23, 11:30 to 3 pm.

Calabogie United. Homemade soup, sandwiches and dessert **Jean Libbey 613-752-0014**

Fall Roast Beef Dinner October 26th

4 - 6:30 Calabogie United
Jean Libbey 613-752-0014

REGULAR EVENTS

GRIFFITH & MATAWATCHAN:

Matawatchan Hall Events, 1677 Frontenac Rd.: Check calendar at matawatchan.ca

Aerobics and Cardio Dance to suit all

fitness levels at the Matawatchan Hall. \$5 Hall donation appreciated.
Tuesdays and Saturdays 10am - 11am
check matawatchan.ca for changes

Matawatchan Walking Club

Wednesdays April to Oct. 9 a.m
Nov. to Apr. 10 am Start at the G'Day board mailboxes. Brigitte 613-318-8308

Sustainable Living Choices Group

Every 2nd Monday Nov 4, Nov 18... starting at 7pm at the Matawatchan Hall. Contact Ken Birkett at 613-553-1109 or just show up. Free.

Matawatchan Book Exchange at the Hall any time it's open, or contact a Board member. Sign out a book and return it later. No membership required.

Denbigh-Griffith Lions Club Events at the Community Hall Hwy 41 Griffith: Bingo every second Tuesday at 7:30

TAI CHI at the Griffith Hall 613-333-1423 Beginner's, Mondays 12:45 \$10, Holiday Mondays, Thurs @ 9:00 a.m.

Lions Fellowship Lunch at Noon-Third

Wednesday of the month at the Griffith Hall (not July & Aug). \$8 Everyone is welcome. Contact Mary McKinnon 613-333-2791

Northern Lights Seniors at the Griffith

Hall Third Wednesday of the month at 1pm. (after Fellowship Lunch)

General Wellness Assessment by local

Paramedics available from 11:00 am until after Lions fellowship lunch

Denbigh Griffith Lions dinner meet-

ings on the 2nd Wednesday and business meeting on the 4th Wednesdays at the Griffith Hall

Euchre First and Third Friday of each

month, 7:00pm - 9:30pm at the Griffith Hall Contact John/Nancy Reid (613) 333-9556

Bert's Music Jam Every Wed or Thurs

5 to 7:30 p.m. at the Pine Valley Restaurant, Hwy 41 Griffith

SPECIAL EVENTS

GRIFFITH & MATAWATCHAN:

October 26, 8pm Halloween Dance, Matawatchan Hall, 1677 Frontenac Rd. \$7 cover. Live band, The AshDads, cash bar, sandwiches available. Prizes for best costume. 19+

Nov 30, 9am - 1pm Christmas Market,

Craft & Bake Sale. Matawatchan Hall, 1677 Frontenac Rd. Chili and a bun for lunch from 11:00 - 1:00, baked goods social from 9:00-11:00, and Christmas market from 9:00 to 1:00, anyone wanting a table contact Nancy @ 613-333-9556.

Fish & Game Club Hunter's Ball -

Saturday, 9 November 8pm. DJ, Licenced. Everyone wellcome. 19+

NU 2 U Shop Open Saturdays Only

until December 7, 2019
Watch for special sales!!!

Potluck, Santa & Tree Lighting Party

Saturday, 7 December 5:30 - 9:00pm
 5:30 potluck, 7:00 tree lighting in "Downtown Matawatchan" 8:00 Santa arrives! Contact Tracy at 613-333-9589 so she can let Santa know if your little ones will be there. Free. Donations appreciated.

Winter potluck supper & Games nights

at 5:30 Matawatchan Hall 2nd Fridays: Jan 10, Feb 14 Valentines, Mar 10

REGULAR EVENTS DENBIGH &

VENNACHAR:

FREE weekly "Play to Learn" play-group at Mayo Community Centre in

Hermon, Tuesdays 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. snack provided

Denbigh Diners meal Supported by

LOLCS First Monday of the month **8:30am - 1:30pm** Stat holiday, 2nd Monday. Full Course Meal \$8.00 Nancy Dafoe 613-333-5164

Denbigh Recreation Euchre,

Denbigh Community Hall, Hwy #28, Denbigh, Fridays @6:30 - 9:30 p.m. Contact Bev 613-333-9852

Meals on Wheels is available in the area;

contact Bev 333-9852, or Lori Cuddy at Community Services 613-336-8934/1-877-679-6636 for all the details.

Land O Lands Community Service

Exercise on Tues. at 9:30, Denbigh Hall basement after Wellness (not July and August) Contact Mary McKinnon 613-333-2791 **Coffee Time Friday mornings at Heritage Park from 8am-10am** Denbigh Recreation sponsor

LOLCS Exercise Program, Tuesdays 9

- **10:30** Denbigh Hall basement Marlene Dacuk 613-336-8934

LOLCS Denbigh Craft Group, 2nd and

4th Wednesday of each month from 1pm-3pm Denbigh Hall, Marlene Dacuk 613-336-8934

SPECIAL EVENTS DENBIGH &

VENACHAR:

Santa Claus Parade Dec 7 at dusk. Party at the Denbigh Hall afterwards

DACRE REGULAR EVENTS:

Games Night, 2nd and 4th Fridays

Open to ideas. Contact Michael at dacacommunity@gmail.com

FLINTON, CLOYNE & NORTH-

BROOK REGULAR EVENTS:

Exercise Bootcamp at the Clar-Mill Hall Plevna Tuesdays & Sundays 7pm \$5

Land O'Lakes Garden Club meets at

the Pine View Free Methodist Church, **7pm, on the second Thursday** of the month from April to November

Bingo, Mondays at AH Recreation

Centre, Flinton, Lower level - doors open at 5:30pm Contact Joel (613-336-2666)

The Cloyne & District Historical Society

meet on the **3rd Mondays Sept, Oct, Nov, Jan, Feb, March, April and May 1:00 p.m.** in the Barrie Hall, across from the Cloyne post office. Everyone is welcome. Our program is inspired by local history. info: www.cloynepioneeremuseum.ca

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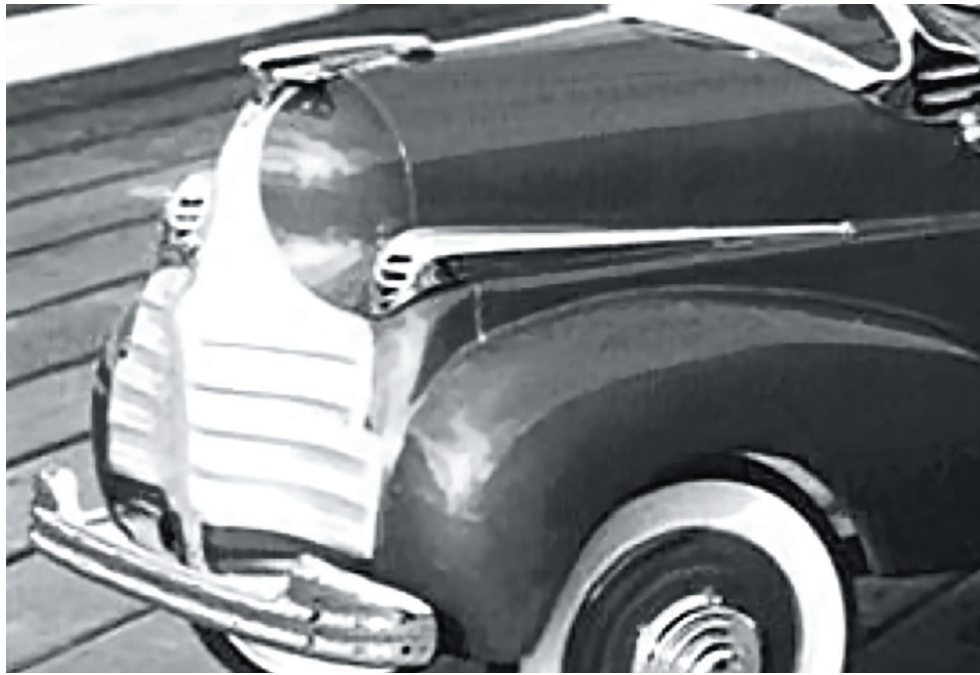
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Ok guys, let's be honest. We all remember our first car, it's a guy thing! Mine came shortly after I accidentally smashed my grandfather's brand new 1950 Dodge station wagon. Somehow I bumped the parking brake handle and the car rolled backwards down the driveway and into a tree. That is bad enough, but the top window portion of the tailgate was open and it was completely smashed.

Grandfather's only concern was if I was OK. The car could be fixed. But maybe I should have my own car instead. And about a week later, my new car arrived, compliments of my grandfather. It was a beautiful blue convertible, and everything I could ever ask for or dream about.

Now I could drive my car around our neighbourhood much to the envy of every other guy who saw me whizzing down the street. I wonder if that cute red headed girl across the street would like to go on a ride? I will have to work up some courage to ask her, but not today. What a feeling of pride and joy as the wind flowed



through my hair as I drove around our neighbourhood. The trips would eventually extend up the main street all the way to the local SUPERTEST gas station see Tommy, who tended the gas pumps when he was not out with the tow truck or racing stock cars at the local speedway. This sta-

tion is my grandfather's preferred gas station and where he had a company account for his vehicles at that time. I would often accompany my grandfather when he went to fill one of his vehicles, and Grandfather would have Tommy "Put it on the account". I don't want to run out of gas on my

first date if and when I get up enough courage to ask the red headed girl on a date and end up having to push the car to a gas station. You may remember full service gas stations, where the attendant washed your windshield, checked the oil and even the tire pressure. Not like to self-service stations today.

So it was only natural that I too would soon need to fill up my car. Pulling into the pumps, Tommy was on the run as soon as I drove across the hose that rang the bell. With a large smile Tommy asked "fill it up?" I said sure and put it on the account please. Tommy grabbed the hose and let a few drops fall into my gas tank, which was really just an empty soup can that I had tied onto the side of the car.

I felt like a king and was soon off back down the street to our house. When you get fifty pumps to the drop of gas, you can go a long way in a pedal car.

0002 NON-FICTION, GOLDEN HOUR

There is a snippet of time in a hardwood bush when an ethereal golden aura descends and marks a special period that heralds the transition of animal movement from daylight to nocturnal activity. From my lofty perch in an old, but well maintained treestand, with my trusty recurve bow across my knees, and the golden light of "magic hour" enveloping me, a drama was about to be played out.

For most of the last hour or so, I had been treated to the beeping and scurrying of what seemed like a million chipmunks as they went about the business of gathering beech nuts, acorns and maple seeds within the blanket of dry leaves that covered the October forest floor. Their antics were both entertaining and annoying as I listened intently for a snap on a fallen branch or crunch in the leaves that would alert me to an approaching deer. The chirping and rustling seemed overwhelming in an otherwise windless perfect evening, as the little creatures, with their cheeks stuffed to the limit, raced over and under logs and wood litter.

And then everything stopped. A deafening silence surrounded me and every chipmunk seemed to have complete-



ly vanished! No distant dog barked. No bird sang a night song. No whispering plane crept by overhead. Nothing. I knew something was going on but I did not have a clue what it was as I sat perfectly still in the stand, trying to not even blink as I stared down at my hunting kingdom in the golden light.

In the natural world, especially where human activity is minimal, the hierarchy of predator and prey has remained unchanged from the time God set all of His creatures upon the earth. The predators are very good at surviving and being successful, both in lean times and bountiful, as the cyclical nature of

our world provides. The prey too have almost supernatural instincts to ensure their survival as a species. I was about to be taught a lesson.

And then I heard something moving over the forest floor from my left. A wall of balsam separates a non-maintained roadway from the open hardwoods where I sat and the soft shuffling sounds seemed to be coming from that thick barrier. I caught movement from the corner of my eye, something dark and close to the ground was approaching. The racket from the once-busy chipmunks was completely quelled and the only sound now was the soft disturbance of dry leaves as the dark creature crept closer to the base of my lofty hiding place.

The fisher is a remarkable animal. It is the second largest member of the weasel family - only the otter being bigger. With a deep chocolate coloured glossy coat, this mammal has short legs with retractable claws, and averages 30 to 40 inches long with a 12 to 16 inch tapered tail. And the lone male that was closing in on my tree was on the hunt!

The fisher passed directly below my stand, took two more bounds, leapt onto the trunk of an ironwood in front of me, turned around so his head was pointing straight down, and flattened himself against the tree about three feet up off the ground and then remained absolutely still. I sat perfectly still too and so did the unseen chipmunks. And time stopped as the golden light of magic hour began to wane.

It would be hard to determine the attention span of a chipmunk. Maybe like people, some could be distracted more easily than others but the fisher didn't blink, the only movement was the barely discernible rise and fall of its flank as it breathed steadily. A minute passed. And another and still, not a sound could be heard - not a creature moved.

And then, below me and to my left, a yellow leaf moved. The leading edge of the leaf raised ever so slowly and I could see the fisher stealthily turn its head to follow the movement. Another leaf moved on the forest floor and another but the fisher was focused on a spot about a metre from its perch on the ironwood.

What happened next was a blur of movement and sound. The fisher launched from its tree and slammed into the leaves right on the spot where the chipmunk was emerging. Dry leaves and dust rose through the golden glow of dusk and the fisher emerged from the chaos with its striped prize dangling from tightly clamped jaws. And with three or four more jumps, the fisher melded into the lengthening shadows of the balsams from where it came.

I sat in awe of what had just occurred.

There is a balance in the natural world. Something must die so that something else can live - be it plant or animal. Many have lost sight of this truth mostly because of the technological advancements that have made urban living more appealing. But on their small lawns in the city, the robin must still pull a worm from the ground for its survival.

As the golden light of magic time resolved into the deepening shadows of dusk, I tied my bow to the draw rope, lowered it to the forest floor, and slowly climbed down from my stand. And I once again thought about how we are so truly blessed as witnesses to the beauty and reality of our God-given natural world and the circle of life that He created for all of us.

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Indeed, there are many wonderful reasons for so many senior women to be called "Grand." Throughout time these special ladies have often been the stuff that have kept families together, taught us so much, and simply been fun to be around. We can all, each and every one of us, reflect on how much our Grand Mothers have enriched our lives and built an extraordinary loyalty...seemingly both ways.

There is a place in time that most of us have benefitted or at least enjoyed, that special senior person in our lives. That sweet lady that we simply called Nana, Oma, Gramma, or Grandma or another endearing title depending on our cultural origin. Upon reflection her vast knowledge and warm personal attention seemed to assist our growth and development ...perhaps to the point of spoiling us without us even realizing it happening to us at the time.

I recall my one Gram singing to me in her original language that she brought with her from "the old country", but also in English, plus songs in an indigenous tongue from the area of Ontario that she grew up in. But I recognize now that even more than music and good books she also tried to teach me to be kind. She was also a teacher of personal manners, family tradition, and how to be happy and not even know or accept that it was "tough times" out there. Funny how I still associate the sweet scent of Lilac with that special old lady. Grandparents are certainly our links to the past in so many ways. Albert Einstein once said "You don't really understand something unless you can explain it to your Grandmother." They hold an extraordinary position for many extraordinary reasons.

The observer considers the quieter you become, the more you are able

to hear. While our Grandmothers recognize her actions have their valid effect but are surely supported by her selected and appropriate amount of milk and cookies. Encouragement is always a highlight. A Grandma remembers all of our accomplishments and deliberately forgets all of our mistakes. Probably a Granny's hug is the most comforting thing on the planet. Both my Granny's were a ray of sunshine in my life and somehow always knew exactly what I needed for a snack.

My Mom's Mom was a bit stricter as she would threaten us visiting grandkids within an inch of our lives, as she hollered out the window to "Git outta those apple trees or get the switch". However, at the end of the day she would place a nice big slice of her still warm apple pie in front of you. There again were special memories of her spires of Hollyhocks street side in a small town. Neighbours could hear her singing down the block while playing her organ in the parlour after church. Even later when she had turned blind and suffered terribly with diabetes this same old Granny continued to care for her "brood". She never stopped teaching us all how to love and live. She was special for sure. I often thought how fortunate Grampa was to have married this tough Canadian Scot's lady.

One moment a mother, the next an all knowing and fully understanding Gramma and then hopefully growing into that distinctly loving person called "Great Grandma" that knows for sure that this other thing called aging... is



not for wimps! They too guide us slowly and become a lifetime best friend. Hug and pamper plus boast and brag, are just some of these Grannies qualifications. They strongly show that love may be the greatest influence and gift that one generation can leave to another.

Throughout history we could recognize the huge number of Granny's in North America that actually have raised their own family's off springs. While we do not have their names here, you may be interested in their care that seem to have turned out OK. Just a handful are Oprah Winfrey, Willie Nelson, Jack Nicholson, Carol Burnett or Jamie Foxx. They may tell us something to the effect that "Nana said we could" so we did! There is an old Welsh proverb that says "perfect love sometimes does not come until the first grandchild". A different but true view.

In days gone by, our aboriginal elders across Canada acted as early Grandparents to protect and preserve their native culture. While the men hunted, fished and carved, the women taught

their families sewing and dancing and especially how to survive. They passed on their language and crafts and had fun in doing so. The family gathered and prepared their foods much as the white settlers that followed, when Granny also passed on her favourite old recipes, and many ways of gardening and living. Today's modern Gramma however may have careers in business and simply not enough time to go around and enjoy the worldly title expressed here. A large loss of talent to be sure.,

While not all of us have experienced the same happy memories of Gramma that I portray, but I hope to claim the majority. These superlative seniors may not be rich and famous as seems to be the value of life today but their grandchildren believe they are priceless. Granny always attempts to place others in front of themselves...they usually have time to listen or time to play, or time to consider and show us the way. Seems Granny will try to be there for us...for as often and as long as she can be with us.

From Nana's point of view, she believes children are like a garden that she can attend with patience, perhaps wisdom, courage and grace. She holds those tiny hands for just a very short time. But she seems to remain in our hearts forever! Why do so many Grandmothers enjoy a walk in the rain...yet are the sunshine of life? They have had a way to make us laugh a little louder, smile a little bigger and live just a little bit better.

Perhaps the very least we can do is to remember our Gammie, our Meme, or Bubbe, and the list builds largely due to family origins and personal experience, is to celebrate her on National Grandparent's Day. This comes up soon on September 8, 2019. If possible, why not let us try to do it with Granny.

0004 NON-FICTION, SENIORS & VOLUNTEER GROUPS

Do we actually believe that our population becoming older puts a strain on the ability of volunteer organisations to function? Every year more and more people retire but are not ready to sit back and allow life to pass us by. To volunteer at something productive can be fun and rewarding. To an organisation this is a renewable source of time, interest, knowledge and experience. That support for important projects is dwindling due to the age of participants shouldn't even be a consideration. There are so many hands and minds that willingly help and enjoy doing so when asked. Are we depriving an entire generation of fulfillment and comraderie by assuming a lack of interest or reluctance to commit. All we have to do is ask. If

it doesn't fit and we are refused, we must accept the fact that older folks



have appointments, family, hobbies, vacations etc. We take twice as long to do half as much but when we agree to help we are reliable and capable. If we only contribute when we want to, it is with complete focus until the assignment is completed. Such resource is nowhere to be found in business or industry. This is because we only do what we want to. We have earned that privilege and need not

apologize. Let's celebrate retirement by including occasional participation and switch from the "All or Nothing" theory that volunteer groups have had a tendency to subscribe to in the past. It is important to be a part of something, to laugh, to accomplish, to share. We can enjoy life on our own terms while benefitting worthy causes. We have so much to offer and our skills are needed. Never before in life could we do what we want, when we want and enjoy doing it. Volunteering is not a life sentence. We can opt out or ask for help or replacement without apology. Every community has an interesting spot for every individual. If leadership is your strength, consider shared positions or offer to take on a temporary duty. There are groups like Meals on Wheels, Community Services, Gardening, Building, Visiting, Elder Support, Choirs, Musical and Event projects. To complete life doing what we enjoy is a bonus and the group we prop up wins as well. Doing only what fits is a benefit to all.

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The Joy of Just Being.....

Summer was coming to an end, the mosquitoes and blackflies no longer thirsty for human blood. The days were warm and the nights cool; I loved this weather. Curled up in the old wicker chair, tracing the aged curves with my fingers, I reveled in this balmy paradise nestled along the Madawaska River. This family trip, we stayed in the Summer Cottage sprawled along the shoreline we couldn't tell where the cottage ended and the river started, it was that close. It was roomier than the usual choice on the hill. It boasted many bedrooms, an inviting veranda that looked out onto the glistening water. From here, I could hear the whippoorwill calling for its mate, the loon with its soulful call urging his own family to heed the darkening sky, there was a chill in the air that signaled evening had arrived.

Beside the cottage laid the large group of flat rocks that were as old as the land they settled on. I wondered how they formed so perfectly by the shore to serve a wonderful purpose.

We watched as dad gathered twigs for his kindling, then a few pieces of wood from the old wood pile, we were anticipating what would come shortly after the fire was lit. Dad started whittling our roasting sticks, sometimes slowing down just to see our expressions! Wieners and marshmallows were the choice of snacks, as seven little sets of eyes stared into the dwindling



logs, making way for the perfect coals.

With each of the kids coveting their roasting stick, the feast began. We were old enough to put our food on the stick, but still young enough to be impatient waiting for the pink color to change to a charred look on the wieners.

Finally, it was time to roast our favorite treat, marshmallows. Seven kids and seven sticks, meant seven marshmallows thrust into the coals at the same time!! Dad stayed close by for the big event, catching them on fire. Squeals of delight echoed down the river as flames leapt around the marshmallows turning them from puffs of sweet clouds to chunks of black coal. The sound of breaths being forced upon the coal like goodies, meant one

thing, it was time to indulge and enjoy immensely the sweet, sticky taste of burnt marshmallows!

Sweaters and blankets found shivering shoulders and laps to drape over, as the chill deepened, and night fell. The fire was built up again, and sent flames licking toward night sky. Embers glowing, an aura of orange and red shadowed our little faces, which still had traces of our sticky delights. Ready for some camp fire music, dad gathered his guitar, and we all began making requests. Stoking the fire even more, he settled on his woolen blanket with mom. Brothers and sisters sat close to keep the evening air at bay. Dad would sing Merrill Haggard, George Jones and Burl Ives until we were satisfied our song we had chosen was in-

deed sung.

Natures lullaby graced our ears that night, as the waves brushed the shore in rhythm with the guitar, my dad's voice echoing across the lake, and the stars dancing above us. A mild breeze made sure to include the rustle of the leaves to the wonderful music being made. I was sure the animals of the forest were listening with their babies curled in beside them, settling in for the night.

Watching my oldest brother, I seen our baby brother laying on his back. "Are you comfortable?" I asked him. With a little laugh he said, "The fire has heated the rocks so I am toasty warm!" Well, we all wanted that spot and we each found a place where indeed we could feel the heat from the rocks.

As kids we didn't notice the hard surface beneath our little bodies, we just felt the warmth of the rocks, the sound of music from our dad and nature, the smiles shared between our parents, and the pure happiness of just being.

As the wonderful sounds surrounded us our eyes began to lose the battle with the whisperings of the dark, the coals seem to envelope us with warmth and invite sweet slumber.

Those rocks are still there today, and seeing them evokes such warm memories on the Madawaska River.

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It was, surely, the worst moment of my life up to that point. The doctor rolled a stool across the white, polished floor of the hospital room and sat down beside my bed. Looking over his glasses at us, with no easy way to break the news, he said, "there's a problem". I will never understand how the brain tells the eyes to form tears so quickly, but they were instant and the first of many over the next few months.

This story is not just about us, our tears, or our daughter's brush with death. It is about someone else – it's about you. I don't believe in coincidence, but that people are placed along our path for a reason, in the right place, and at the right time. The Bible tells the tale of brave Queen Esther who risked her life and did the hard thing to save her people from annihilation. Her uncle bolstered her to action by assuring her that she was put in her place of privilege "for such a time as this". You may recognize yourself in our story or one like ours. You were the person quietly doing your job, calming the distraught, soothing the fears, healing the wounds, doing your bit to ease the burden where you could. You were there for such a time.

The nurse on duty in obstetrics that day was our neighbour and friend (thank you small town!). She noticed that we had been in the night before and took the time to call us at home. She invited us to come back so she could check my progress. We went, and the fetal heart monitor thumped out a suspect rhythm that raised a red flag for the wise, experienced nurse. I am so glad she called us. Our doctor, the messenger of troubling news, had no doubt faced this grim responsibility before. An ultrasound had revealed that our unborn child had severe complications and could not be delivered in our small-town hospital. He was kind, calm, and reassuring.

Freezing rain pelted down from a pitch black sky that night as the paramedics transported me across dangerously slick roads to a larger city hospital. A stop part way was required to replace a broken, ice-encrusted windshield wiper. I'm grateful the paramedics were there, risking their own safety to help preserve the life of this terrified mama and the precious, unborn passenger. From then on there was a sea of faces that are blurry in my mind now, but their actions are not.



They monitored every need and brought a blanket to the tired husband sprawled out beside the bed. A c-section was scheduled and our little girl arrived not breathing. I cannot tell you how many people played a role in delivering, resuscitating, and caring for our fragile one - only that there were many.

Machines hissed and beeped away the hours and weeks and eventually we stopped jumping at every noise they made. Nurses bustled in and out, resetting alarms, adjusting wires and tubes, and making sure she was as comfortable as possible. After her first surgery we were invited to a room within the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. A table, a few chairs, and a kleenex box were the only furnishings. My mother-in-law, a tender and generous soul, sat beside us as the gravity of our situation was carefully explained. She bore witness to our hearts breaking and shared in our pain. She did this on a continual basis during our most difficult hours.

Weariness overcame my faith and hope a time or two, and one day I lamented to the nurse that I felt like I was pumping breastmilk that would never be needed. She did not give me false hope or lie just to make me feel better. She simply said, "she'll let us know". It was a gentle reminder to be patient, to not give up, and that our baby girl wasn't done fighting yet. Our family doctor was patient with my tears in her office and even called me at home to offer to come out to our house if we needed anything. I don't believe I ever thanked her properly for being so willing to go above and beyond

what is expected in her profession.

There were arms that held our daughter in times when we could not be there. My husband's aunt lived nearby and frequently went to sit with her. When our daughter graduated from the NICU to pediatrics I met Bob. He was sitting with a little girl on his lap who was blind and clearly a frequent visitor with multiple medical issues. He knew her by name and called her his "Jazzy girl". He spoke softly to her, rocking back and forth, and as I listened I could hear him softly humming hymns that I have known since I was a little girl in Sunday school. He made the rounds, bringing comfort in rocking chairs all over the ward.

I wish that prayers were visible, like shooting stars in the night sky, and that I could have witnessed them rock-

eting heavenward. Our church family, along with people who didn't even know us, were praying for our girl. Their prayers were felt, and their actions spoke louder than words. One night as my husband left a church meeting a friend followed him to the gas pumps and filled up the tank for him, knowing the hundreds of extra kilometres we were driving. Food kept flowing into our home, lovingly prepared by many hands, alleviating the stress of cooking for weeks on end. Flowers and notes of encouragement graced the kitchen table and lifted our spirits on many a stressful day.

"I don't like my scar," she whispers to me on occasion, tracing the long scar on her tummy, as I tuck her into bed. I whisper back that I love her scar because it means she is here with me. It is also a constant reminder of the Queen Esthers in our life. The ones who show up to do what they can to carry us through the darkest of times. I also hope that my tale is a reminder and encouragement to you, dear reader, that you are capable of doing the brave things, the hard things, and the necessary things. Look around you. Someone needs you today. Maybe you are here to set foot on the path of a dark-haired, blue-eyed, little girl with your skills, your talents, your loving heart, and generosity. A smile, a kind word, or small act of service might be all it takes to carry another through a troubled time. You are here for such a time as this.

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My dream, a trip to Egypt. One week in Cairo to see the Pyramids, Sphinx, Tombs, Mosques, Antiquities Museum, King Tut's Treasures, Valley of the Kings and a trip to Abu Simbel. Another week cruising the Nile to Luxor, Kom Ombo and Karnak.

Returning to Cairo a farewell party with friends. Returning from the grocery store my eyes were burning and I began to choke. People were running towards us yelling "RUN". We then realized it was teargas. We ran into our hotel, we could hear loud noises outside our balcony and investigated. There were thousands of people demonstrating chanting and walking past our hotel. It all looked very peaceful.

We attended the farewell party, our guide informed us that the people were demonstrating against rising cost of living, unemployment, police brutality, poverty and corruption in the government. We watched CNN to find out how bad the situation was. Things were not looking good.

Day 1
Time to go home.

We left for the airport with a Marshal to protect us. The city became a War Zone, 1 million people rioting in the streets, teargas, 20 story government buildings on fire, people being hit with water cannons, military tanks all over the streets running people down. The devastation was unbelievable. We were hardly moving it took hours to get to the airport. At the airport another scene as thousands of people were trying to escape the city. Our flight was cancelled. We were trying to get another ticket for the next flight



but there were hundreds of men pushing, shoving and yelling. This went on all day, flights cancelled. I guess we are spending the night here.

Our first night was not bad.

Day 2

Things were not much better. Flights cancelled, people rioting, pushing, shoving, screaming, military personnel with guns and thousands of people pouring in.

We were spending another night. There is a revolution going on in Egypt.

Day 3

Things are getting worse as tempers flare. No flights out, lots of rioting, women yelling and crying. Food has become scarce and bathrooms are filthy. The phone and television service has been cut off. We call the Canadian Embassy to let them know we are here. A recording indicates the Embassy is closed, if this is an emergency press 1 which then routes the call to Ottawa, Canada. There

is another recording saying "Mailbox full" WHAT!!!! Are you kidding. Our children know we are in Cairo frightened by what they see on TV.

Day 4

Things are escalating and getting scary. We have not eaten or slept much. My husband is trying to find us a way out of here with no luck.

I met a gentleman named George. He is Egyptian but lives in the USA, he is a police detective and is here visiting his brother. With everything that is going on he wants to get out. He told me that if his flight does not go by 6:00p.m. he is leaving the airport and going to this friends hotel near the airport. I knew his flight would be cancelled. George starts leaving, I look at my husband begging him to go with George. I just want a shower, clean clothes and a bed. We agree to go. Can you believe we went with a total stranger in a foreign country to an unknown place. Desperate people do desperate things.

It was a nightmare trying to get out of the airport when so many were trying to get in. We finally reached the hotel, a 1 star to our standards but it has a shower and bed. George arranges food and I just want to lie down.

At midnight there is terrible noise going on outside and I can see fire. There are many men with machetes, knives, guns and clubs. I am terrified and call George to find out what is happening. George informs us that men are protecting the neighbourhood as prisoners from 3 prisons have broken out and are breaking into houses.

Day 5

In the morning we have breakfast and the hotel owner is taking us back to the airport. The local men have the road barricaded, George flashes his badge and money and they let us pass.

The airport now has 18,000 people trying to leave Egypt. People are

5 deep and they are only letting Americans in as the USA have sent an airplane to evacuate them. George tells us to stick close to him as he pushes his way to the front of the line. I tell George they will not let us in as we are Canadian, he says "don't worry". George speaks to the guard in Egyptian, shows his police badge and money tucked under. He said "They are with me" and the guard lets us in. George wishes us good luck and goes to board his airplane.

I get sick with digestive problems. We see a lot of foreign Embassy Employees with their flags looking for their people as they are evacuating them. France, Germany, England, Australia, New Zealand, USA, etc. but no where do we see our Maple Leaf.

Day 6

Someone told us they saw our Canadian Embassy outside. Still sick my husband goes to find our Embassy. A terrible riot breaks out right next to me.

Hours later we see our flag go up on the concrete wall in the back corner of the parking lot. They are not looking for us, we have to find them. We are sitting on the curb, in the heat of the sun with no food or water until they are ready. It is now 2:00p.m. and we get registered.

At 10:00p.m. (8 hours later) they take us into the airport to board our plane. I am expecting to see a big Air Canada Jet but what we have is an old airplane that I didn't think would get off the ground. They finally give us water and a box lunch. We are being taken to Paris, France then on to Canada. This will be a 5 hour flight.

We are finally leaving this country. In the air for only 2 hours and the pilot announces we are landing, I tell my husband "we can't be in Paris yet".

It is midnight and we land at a deserted airstrip. Lights turned on and we are taken to a small building. We do not know where we are. A young guy comes with sweet rolls and juice. We ask him "where are we"? He tells us we are in Amman Jordan. What!!!!. Why are we here? There is no one around to ask. We are spending the night in another airport.

Day 7

Early morning and back on the same airplane. We are off to Paris. We never did find out why we were sent to Jordan.

We arrive in Paris, the Canadian Embassy great us with food, phone cards to call home and hotels to stay in.

The next day the big Air Canada Jet takes us home.



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Like most people around me here in Renfrew County I am somewhat older now. I reluctantly admit that I have more memories than hopes and dreams, yet I share the following because I have always believed that the age of the storyteller matters little if the tale is fresh.

Raising our three daughters decades ago provided so many thoroughly enjoyable moments. I am quite sure that there must have been a few episodes of emotional stress long forgotten, but I cherish and hold onto a few of the inspirational gems. My children remind me, through their eyes, to wake up and witness the mysteries in life, to fully expose the hidden richness and quality in almost any daily experience, no matter how mundane. During those rare times when both my heart and my eyes are open I am able to gratefully acknowledge this.

My daughters inspire epiphanies, those moments when time slows down, when I am fully present, more awake and attentive. These were rare, but highly cherished experiences. This story is about one such moment. Although it has been over twenty years, I can still remember the day, and the preceding week as though it were yesterday.

It has been said that there is a strong connection between memory and the sense of smell. Perhaps it was the gingerbread.

The move to Halifax had been hard on all of us, but decidedly harder on our first little girl Molly, than her mother Gloria and me, and significantly more than her younger sisters who always had each other. She was older by four years than her infant siblings and I began to suspect that making friends in this new country and culture was going to be difficult for Molly.

Although Gloria and I were born and raised in Canada, our graduate studies had brought us to the home of our ancestors, the monarchy and Margaret Thatcher. Having been born in Cambridge, England was all that Molly had ever known. For a few months after our return to Canada, our little four year old would continue to speak with a sweet, barely discernible British accent, until the inevitable, gradual softening of her unique lilt. To this day I grieve the loss of her pronunciation of "Dadday"!

Somewhat unexpectedly, my daughter became my teacher. Molly has been showing me how to be a better person since that March day when our eyes first connected. Just moments after her entry into the world, while the nurses tended to her mother, I held her tiny flannel wrapped body in my arms and looked down into her large, trusting, wise, and mesmerizing blue-grey eyes. She has a way of looking directly into my soul, and this was, and continues to be, both disarming and enlightening.

We had no extended family with us in Britain, no support network to share the everyday activities in raising three young children. Yet our struggles, as is often the case, had some wonderful benefits. Over the first few years of



her life, Molly and I spent a considerable amount of heart-warming, quality time together. Our love for each other reached a profundity that I previously did not realize existed. I especially enjoyed bedtime story telling, a time when our imaginations would run amok with tales of the legendary and heroic "Princess Molly"! As it turns out, the young heroine in the stories was a fairly accurate portrayal of the real life girl, or vice versa. Princess Molly, like her namesake, was smart, strong, brave, independent and adventurous, but most of all, she was kind. This short description soon became a common introduction in each and every story in the vast Princess Molly collection.

I would love to take credit for the multitude of successes in this young woman's life, but her independence and drive was always a wonder to behold. In order to really understand our relationship, it is useful if you are familiar with the popular comic strip, "Calvin and Hobbes". I think that we both enjoyed the antics of this imaginative little boy and his stuffed tiger toy because we saw ourselves in the characters. (We could debate who was who, but the relationship was much the same!) We would shop, play, go to the park, ride together on my large antique bike and even enjoy the occasional treat. I will never forget the look on her face when her "health fanatic, environmentalist, natural-everything" father finally relented and allowed her to try an ice cream cone on a warm Spring day in the park. She had noticed the swarm of excited children surrounding the ice cream truck, and I could no longer keep her from knowing the pleasures of this confounding substance that was simultaneously divine and devilishly alluring!

Molly waited in anticipation in her flowery stroller. I begrudgingly handed her the small, single scoop of vanilla. She slowly licked the cool, sweet cream as it oozed down onto her hands, and turned to look into my eyes with a piercing gaze, (not unlike when she was born), only this time with a simultaneous expression of incredulity and joy! It was as though every cell in her little 4 year old body was screaming with delight and indignantly wondering where this heavenly substance had been all her life, and, justifiably so, wondering why we had kept it from her.

The fact that Molly was bright, inquisitive, big hearted and kind to a fault, was a blessing for her parents, siblings and friends. However, it seemed to ex-

acerbate her natural emotional sensitivity and vulnerability. Unlike most people living their lives with "bullet proof vests" on to protect their hearts, Molly's unusually large heart was right out there. Paul Simon wrote a fitting description in the song Graceland, where he sings, "Losing your love is like a window in your heart, everybody sees that you're blown apart." For this reason, I dreaded dropping her off on the rapidly approaching first day of school. I suppose that I could have seen school as an exciting new beginning, however the thought of our special times coming to an end brought feelings of grief to me, as I suspect it did for Molly.

The first day of school was everything that I had dreaded, and more. Even the weather was cold and drizzly! (Comforting in one sense in its familiarity as it reminded us of the British weather!) I tried in vain to put on a happy and proud facade, but I have always been a bit of a "soft touch", which, come to think of it, is probably where Molly gets it. Just watching her bravely march into the school in her new dress, single file with a quivering lip and a tear in her eye made my heart ache. Although only for a half day, it was stressful for all of us. For the rest of the first week, we both endured this morning ritual. I had hoped that things would eventually get better.

By the second week, after a wonderful Autumn weekend together as a family, little Molly's sweet demeanour began to fade starting Sunday evening. Never one to cause trouble, she was characteristically bottling up the emotions inside. It wasn't until the middle of a chaotic Monday morning of babies crying, breakfast cooking, dishes clattering, diaper changing, getting dressed, toaster popping up, packing a lunch box, listening to the blaring CBC on the kitchen radio, and, finally, heading out the door to walk to school that I caught a glimpse of those big blue eyes, and they were not happy. There was something wrong with the entire situation.

That was the moment, the epiph-

any, when it dawned on me. My deepest inner beliefs about humanity, caring for each other and life itself overwhelmed me.

Those who know me well will attest to the fact that, of all the things I hold in high regard, rules are not one of them! I was excited about the prospect of letting go of all the rules and expectations that I had bought into about discipline, raising children, and the importance of education. "For crying out loud," I thought to myself. "What harm would missing a day of classes at this time of year be?" I felt a joy and a clarity that left no room for doubt. The only question that remained for these two truants was, "what would we do with this new found and glorious freedom"?

Being new to Halifax, we had been told by a variety of people how beautiful Peggy's Cove was, and how the restaurant at the base of the world famous lighthouse allegedly served a legendary gingerbread. As it would soon become obvious to us both, a warm gingerbread cake was the ideal food when you have spent any time facing the salty breezes and mist-producing waves from the Atlantic Ocean. As it turns out, It was also ideally suited to skipping school with your best friend on a beautiful day. The expression "soul food" comes to mind. While it may be true that there is room in every story for a better ending, it is hard to imagine one for this story.

When we arrived to see the iconic lighthouse, it was not what I had imagined. All of the summer tourists had returned home, the parking lot was barren. It was one of those days that, for lack of a better word, felt surreal. There was a warm breeze infused with salt and seaweed. It was quiet, sunny, and brimming with possibility. That morning was spent laughing, dreaming, breathing in the sea, and skipping stones. More importantly, I found myself watching the entire experience through a child's eyes. It was all so magical, the clouds, and the waves crashing into the rocks as they had for centuries. We would also enjoy eating a world-famous treat.

The warm ginger bread was served with either apple sauce or ice cream. I had the apple sauce, you can probably guess what Molly had!

These days time is not an ally, as it marches on incessantly, but on that day, time stood respectfully and obediently still. Sometimes I yearn for that simpler time in our lives. The memories continue to inspire me to be the best that I can be, to be present, but most of all, to be kind.

Thank you Molly.

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The five of us, myself, Shine, Lee, Steve and Paul were sprawled across the furniture in Shine's living room, pretending to be studying for tomorrow's Christmas chemistry exam. We tried, but the conversation always came back to girls, cars, music, hockey and more girls. It was 10pm, or so, when Shine's mom, Lucy, returned from her weekly bingo night. Lucy was well known in town as a witch of sorts. A psychic who told fortunes, read teacups and possessed a centuries old crystal ball, handed down from mother to daughter through multiple generations. She played the ponies, picking winners regularly but always at the two dollar window and won an inordinate amount of the time at bingo. Lucy claimed it was just luck. It was more. Shine's dad, Murray, told us of the time Lucy levitated the bed he was lying on almost to the ceiling until he apologized for doubting her inherent powers, then let it float to the floor. Point made.

When she came through the door, she made a beeline for the kitchen, plopped down a wad of bills on the table and put the kettle on. "Anyone for tea?" she hollered. "Sure thing Lucy" came the reply. Tea being a welcome diversion. When we had finished our tea, Shine, still looking to avoid the books, suggested Lucy might read our tea leaves if she

wasn't too tired. Another good idea, we all agreed. After turning our cups upside down on their saucers, Lucy began to read the leaves with uncanny insights and observations of our lives. Details that she should, logically, have no way of knowing. It was an impressive display to say the least. When she came to Paul, last in line, she hesitated, scrunched up her face. Humming and hawing for a few moments, now very serious, she told him "Someone deceased has a message for you Paul. Was there a drowning in your family?" "Yes, my uncle, when I was ten. He committed suicide. Jumped off a bridge." he replied. "I might be able to speak with him, see what it is he has to tell you. But we would need to do a séance" Lucy told him. "Come on Paul, let's do it" we cajoled him. with yet another diversion in mind.

In short order we were seated around the circular oak dining table, holding hands in the dark, save for a lit candle on the sideboard, next to a glass of water. "To guide the spirits and quench their thirst" Lucy enlightened us. In the middle sat the crystal ball. Paul was seated opposite Lucy, as per her instruction. I sat left of Paul, Lee to his right. Steve and Shine flanked Lucy. All settled now, Lucy asked us to stare into the ball and describe what we could see. "Only the candle's reflection" was the unanimous reply. "Then someone hum a tune, any tune. The spirits are drawn to music." Shine began to hum, oddly enough, as this was a pagan ritual, "Onward Christian Soldiers". A few snickers from the assembly were audible. Lee began wiggling his ears and rolling his eyes, which brought several stifled chuckles. By now there was a tangible doubt in the air. It

wasn't long before things got real weird.

Out of the blue, Lucy's head snapped back like a puppet, her arms stiffened and she began to moan. Low and slow guttural sounds, animalistic and increasing in volume, filled the room. Then the chanting began in a higher wailing voice as she began rocking back and forth in her chair. Simultaneously, Paul's grip on my hand intensified until it pained me and he too began moaning and rocking until he began sobbing. His body heaving with each sob. Tears poured down his face. I caught Lee's eye, staring at Paul, then his hand. His eyes darting back and forth until he raised his eyes at me as if to say, "What the f*%& is happening?" Everyone was stunned into silence. All skepticism banished, replaced by shock, fear and recognition that there were forces in the room beyond knowledge or control.

As suddenly as it had begun, it ended. For how long it lasted, I can only guess. Five minutes, maybe. With one last shriek, Lucy collapsed. She might have even fainted. At the exact same time Paul collapsed forward, head onto the table, still holding hands but limply. Like all his energy had just vanished. It was unbelievable that Paul, a strong, quiet, self contained guy could be transformed into this sobbing bag of jelly. Long moments of awe inspired confusion ensued as we tried to digest what we had witnessed. No one spoke. Steve was the first to stand, walk around, shake if off, go for a leak maybe. We just sat there waiting for Lucy. When she regained her form enough to speak, she explained that her body was possessed by her spirit guide, the chief of an ancient nomadic tribe who could speak with the dead. Through

him she was able to give Paul the message. Simple enough, I thought to myself. Meanwhile, Paul sat in silence. Lost in thought, shaking his head in disbelief. When we made eye contact he raised his eyebrows and shrugged his shoulders, as if to say "I don't know, I just don't know".

Eventually, someone said "Where's Steve?" Good question. He'd been gone for 15 minutes or so. After shouting for him in the house, to no avail, it became clear he was hiding or outside. His boots and coat were inside but reluctantly we stepped out onto the porch. It was blizzard like and cold as hell. we saw him almost immediately. He was standing like a fencepost, staring up at the halo of a streetlight three doors down, wearing only thin socks and a cotton shirt in half a foot of snow. Lucy, standing in the doorway, shouted at us to not startle him. "Wake him up gently. He's in a trance," Shine approached him, touched him on the shoulder and spoke his name. "Steve, Steve, it's me. Your buddy Shine." It took a few seconds for Steve to react, turning his head to Shine and shouting "What the f&^* am I doing out here? I'm freezing!" Then, shaking the snow off, he bolted toward the house as we jumped aside and he plowed through the doorway into the warmth.

Steve was never able to explain why he went outside that night. It just happened. Paul never spoke to us of the conversation he had that night and Lucy recovered unscathed. Just another day in the life of a witch, I suppose. Me? I failed the chemistry exam and never went back to Shine's for a study night. Shine suggested we do it at someone else's house next time. We all agreed it was a good idea.

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"What the hell do you think you're doing?" "They're cutting into my wrists?" The fat cop with the smug look ignores my comments. "They're on way too tight". I try to use my angriest tone. What came out was a high-pitched unrecognisable voice. Must be how this guy gets his jollies. "What's your problem?" "That's right, protect my head getting into the back of the car. It doesn't matter that I've no circulation in my hands". As if banging my head could hurt more than these damn plastic restraints.

If I hadn't taken the time to pull the dead guy out of the weeds I would've been long gone. Way before this sadist and his sidekick arrived. I could kick myself for getting distracted. Too sympathetic, that's me. I've always been an overly compassionate person. Never did believe in karma and now I never will. So much for being rewarded for good deeds.

When I arrived at the river, my only intention was to feed ducks. I am likely the only reason they stay around all winter, so I take my responsibility seriously. Feeding them once a week, or when I remember. They like to show their appreciation with a feeding frenzy. My friend Dave tells me that bread isn't good for them. I wonder who came up with that pearl of wisdom. Did anybody ask the ducks? I get a kick out of the squawking and posturing to get the most food. One minute all peace and harmony and the next total chaos. They get very aggressive over a handful of day-old bread. Wandering gulls fly in, that's when things can get really interesting.

The cops arrived quite unexpectedly. I'd noticed a dog walker on the opposite shore talking on his cellphone, but these days who isn't? It must have been him who called them. I wonder what he thought he saw?

When I arrived at the riverbank, I passed a bright tartan rug spread out with



all the fixings for a picnic. Someone trying to get an early start on summer. Lying discarded beside the food containers and plastic cutlery was a very expensive looking phone. Out the corner of my eye I spotted a wallet sticking out of a purse. I made a point of not passing too close. It felt odd having to share my special spot with strangers, I'll have to scout a new location.

The pile of clothes looked out of place caught up in the weeds. From marks in the mud it looked as though someone had slipped down the bank into the water. I spotted some dark clothing pulsating with the river flow. Then a heavy black shoe at the end of a trouser leg confirmed my impression. I gripped his shirt collar and the skin felt icy cold on my finger tips. An odd sensation travelled to my core causing me to shiver. It evoked the memory of my mother taking chicken out of the cooler for dinner one night. My brother and I poked and prodded at it until she finally took it away. Well this guy's skin felt just like that chicken, cold and clammy as if it had just been taken out of a cooler. Squatting down on the slippery bank it was all I could do to not join him in the river. I pulled him nearer the shore ensuring he wouldn't be swept off downstream. The next person on the bank would spot him easily. A black bundle of clothes caught

up in a clump of brown reeds stood out. I had no intention of getting involved, the guy was beyond my help.

There was not much I could do as I don't have a cell phone. Never managed to have the spare cash to buy one. Anyway, who would I call? There's only Dave. He's been around so long now we've run out of things to talk about. According to him I became unemployable after the accident, for me it was because of the divorce. Joan managed to extinguish any enthusiasm I might have had. I thought not hiring a lawyer to be a cost saving, I've been paying for that ever since. My basement room is a place to be avoided whenever possible. Its really only one step away from being homeless. That thought is truly depressing. Since the divorce that's all I can afford. My view of the world is from below ground level. People passing my window would need to have their names tattooed on the shins for me to recognize them. Can't imagine what it will be like after the first snowfall next winter. At least I'll save money on curtains. Some people have kids to look after them in their old age. Its way too late for me to develop that as a life strategy. Anything I have will come from my own efforts. An unkind person might say that's the reason I have nothing. Its hard for me to get motivated these days, unlike when I was younger. Surrounded by

friends and workmates I had a good life. I'm on my own now, Now, no-one even cares if I even wake up in the morning. Just me and the ducks. I have the feeling that even Dave doesn't care. We've both reached the age where we feel the need to look out for ourselves. At least he has a family to fall back on. I'm starting to feel way too sorry for myself and should make an effort to snap out of it. After all I am doing a whole lot better than the guy in the reeds.

I looked around for anyone else in the river, either living or dead. After all, the picnic rug was set for two. There wasn't much to see just squabbling ducks and the dog walker on the opposite shore. I figured anyone who fell in the near freezing river was way beyond any help I could give them.

Moving to the picnic blanket I thought it might help identify the owners. At least I should know the names of the people I didn't rescue. Flipping through the woman's purse I found a photo of a middle-aged couple. The guy was the one I'd pulled ashore. He looked a little healthier in the picture. They looked to be in love. I felt a twinge of jealousy. Seemingly, they'd had some good times together. A shame that everything has to come to an end. There were little bundles of paper money stuffed in each bill section. I didn't see anything that might actually identify the pair so I slipped the purse into my jacket pocket to check out later. The phone was a new-fangled unit. One of those where you type on the screen. It lit up when I touched it. I'd no idea what to do next but reckoned it might be worth something to someone, just not me. I had no use for the picnic stuff but the blanket could come in handy. I flipped everything off onto the grass and folded the rug under my arm.

Walking back toward the road I heard the siren.

1001 FICTION, WITCH ART IN HEAVEN

Two men descend a hill via the skidding trail that only weeks before wore a thick coat of hard packed snow. A skidder jockey now fights to keep his tires from rising out of the melting double ruts, that, a few weeks earlier, held his machine to the trail like train track. Now the ruts are dark with emerging soils that could be easily pushed aside, exposing clay laden over-burden that sticks to everything like peanut butter. It is time for tree fellers like Hermes and his cutting partner to abandon the difficulty of spring travel in the woods and let the emerging trees go about the business of making wood.

This year Hermes has decided he will not leave for the city. He needs to bolster his spring blood with enthusiasm and he knows he isn't going to get that there with her and her friends. What awaits there is what the city is good at: snipes, tattle-tales and name calling. He couldn't get away from all that fast enough, this last time. The outcome of an election was the target of their gripes then, a foreign election, no less. That's what started it; as if they needed an excuse.

He has chosen to stay behind in his natural world, his beautiful world, his bewitching world, a world uncluttered by judgements and innuendos and the kind of mea culpa guilt that blows from the backside of politicalized fads as if it was the word of God. It is a choice, for Hermes, as compelling as the choice between heaven and the other place we are warned of.

He feels his saw bite into his shoulder and he daydreams how exist-



tence must have felt when fellers carried axes and cross-cut saws, how half the able bodied Ontario men worked in lumber camps. "Those guys were the real deal", he remembers his grandfather saying. "Salt pork and beans at the end of a backbreaking day and then to bed on plank cots with forty others." Now that's reason to gripe.

"I'm not going." Hermes tells his partner. "All I want is what's here; birds singing and the smell of good air." He employs a tone that says he is serious. "I don't want to hear any arguments, just those birds and the wind in the trees." The partner counters. "We gotta go. Ain't no work here for months. We'd get construction jobs in the city...good jobs." "Rather not." "Why?" "Just don't want to." Hermes is getting tired of this argument every spring. "But we had good times down there." "Drunk times."

"What you got against that?"

"Why do you still want to?"

"Have you gone religious on me?"

Hermes won't look. He imagines the look on his partner's face; the one that is belligerent and gets them into bar fights and trouble every darned year. It would be better if he did not respond but some things need said.

"You're obnoxious when you drink." He tells his partner. "You've always been that way." And he steps up his pace to create distance.

"And you're not?" He feels his partners unfriendly tone that sounds like crud pushing down a hole.

Hermes pulls his jaw tight, 'not anymore' he promises himself and he pretends to stop to adjust his load. His partner does not wait and Hermes is thankful for the space. He can feel the sun's heat as he lifts his nose to the air. Pure and sanitized, percolating with pine scent like tonic. Melting ice crystals light

the trees with fractured sunlight. Nothing from his civilized life can give him such gifts. Creation's art. He feels indebted to this place as if he should give thanks. He wonders if he remembers any words. "Our father which art...". He stops. He is amused by the phrase. He mouths the word. "Bewitching". He does not finish the prayer.

At the base of the hill where the bush recedes and the log landing draws his notice, Hermes' cell calls to him, demanding attention. 'Ping'. The sound pricks him like a poke with a stick like it always does. That device is as subtle as the cell door on their last trip to the city. It is always dogging him from inside his pocket. It is an invasive species here in his bewitching domain. He won't look. He knows. It will ping again. It will sound of fingers tapping, drumming impatiently.

The men that have gathered are coatless and do not clutch themselves from the cold, the machinery now splotted with brown, not white. He studies the ground around him and is surprised. Much bare ground is poking through. It is squishy under foot. This is the kind of mud that could swallow things; forever.

Hermes does not care of the consequences. Someone may find it stuck in the mud or maybe not; he does not care. As he steps away a glitter of mud covered technology lays discarded and lifeless. It will ping no more.

No. This year he will not go to the city.

"La - la - la - la - la." Eight-year-old Charlie Parker held his hands over his ears and chanted to block out the sound of his parents' arguing. His body rocked back and forth with the rhythm of his chant. Charlie's dog Enoch lay quietly in the corner of the living-room watching him. "We're just enabling him when we don't stop the stimming," said George Parker, "and the best place to stop it is right here at home." Intellectually George knew that he was wrong.

Stimming, or self-stimulatory behaviour, works to comfort the autistic and it can be almost impossible to stop. In extreme cases, like violent head banging, physical intervention might be necessary, but in Charlie's case he mostly either rocked his body back and forth, or he stroked silky or furry textures over and over (and over!) again. Sometimes, like now, he also moaned or chanted to drown out unwanted sounds.

While acknowledging that Charlie wasn't hurting himself or anybody else when he stimmed, George was still uncomfortable with the stares they garnered when they were out together as a family. Charlie's mother Evelyn gently removed Charlie's hands from his ears. "I think Enoch needs brushing now, Charlie."

Relieved, Charlie fetched a special soft dog brush and brushed Enoch exactly fifty strokes. Then he took Enoch into the study while he did some homework.

The homework was mathematics. Charlie liked mathematics because the numbers never lied. He didn't like reading, because stories could be sometimes true and sometimes not true. You never knew which.



Evelyn and George Parker had found their lives much improved since two-year-old Enoch had joined the family. Enoch was a highly trained autism support dog, and one of the most important things he did was to stop Charlie if he tried to run out into traffic.

Nobody seems to know why some autistic children do this, but it can be terrifying for their families. When Enoch and Charlie were tethered together, the Parkers didn't have to worry. Strangely, Charlie showed no resentment at being stopped by the big black Labrador.

Still, Enoch wasn't allowed to go to school with Charlie. Here were the reasons why:

1) Some of the other children were allergic to dogs.

2) Some of the other children were afraid of dogs.

3) Some of the other children didn't like dogs.

4) Some of the staff members were allergic to dogs.

5) Some of the staff members were afraid of dogs.

6) Some of the staff members didn't like dogs.

7) Charlie already had a full-time aide named Heather.

Those were the school board's reasons, said the principal.

Charlie didn't relate to the other children at his school at all, and there was no Enoch there to help him out. At recess he counted paving stones, or studied leaf patterns, or went back and forth, back and forth on a swing. He rarely had trouble with bullying because his aide was always nearby.

While at school Charlie followed Heather's directions, but he never looked at her or smiled.

Charlie had twin cousins the same age as himself, and he didn't relate to them any better than he related to Heather or to his fellow students. Sometimes Jamie and Jane would come to visit, but it was as if Charlie didn't even notice they were there.

At first Jamie and Jane had tried to play with Charlie, but as they got older they gave up. They even grew uncomfortable around him, though Charlie never threatened them in any way.

"Charlie's creepy," Jane told her mother. "We try to be nice to him, but he doesn't answer our questions. He doesn't even look at us. I don't think he likes us." That's just the way Charlie is," said Aunt Cheryl. "He's that way with everybody. Keep inviting him to play with you, and maybe one day he will."

Charlie used to have terrible nightmares, but now that Enoch slept at the bottom of his bed the nightmares were gone. Charlie knew if any monsters or bad people came into his room Enoch would scare them away.

Enoch was usually very quiet, just like Charlie, but one day he barked and barked when a window salesman came to the back door. Charlie thought it was because Enoch didn't know if the salesman was a good person or a bad person. Charlie put his fingers to his lips.

The very next time Charlie put his fingers to his lips Enoch barked, thinking that's what Charlie wanted.

Charlie was very excited. He had just taught his dog a trick. While Enoch knew how to do many wonderful things,

they had all been taught to him by the trainers at the service dog centre. Charlie told Enoch he was a wonderful dog, and Enoch thumped his tail on the floor.

Over the next few weeks Charlie talked more and more to Enoch. Enoch listened politely and would answer with either a tail thump or a paw on Charlie's arm or leg. Like the numbers in the mathematics books, Enoch never lied to people.

The crowning Enoch moment for Evelyn Parker came the next time her sister Cheryl was visiting with Jamie and Jane. Charlie sat on the floor lining up his toy cars in order of largest to smallest. Jamie and Jane asked if he wanted to play a computer game with them, but he didn't look at them and he didn't answer. Jamie shrugged.

Just then Enoch got up and went to Charlie, and Charlie remembered Enoch's new trick.

"Enoch can bark when I ask him," he said to no one in particular. He put two fingers to his lips, and Enoch barked. "Hey, neat," said Jane. "Can I try?" Charlie nodded. Jane put her hand to her face instead of putting two fingers to her lips. Enoch looked at her intently, but he didn't bark. "Like this." Charlie showed Jane again. This time Jane put her hand over her mouth, but nothing happened. Charlie went to her and took her hand and gently guided just two fingers to her lips. Charlie barked.

"I did it!" said Jane. Charlie looked at her and nodded. Once Jane had perfected the trick, Jamie had to try. Then Charlie let Jane and Jamie brush his dog - twenty-five strokes each. When it was time for them to leave, Jane had decided Charlie wasn't quite so creepy after all.

"It isn't a cure," said Evelyn to George that evening, "but it's a start. I've never seen Charlie relate to another child before." George nodded.

A few minutes later Charlie came into the living room. Enoch followed, ready to lie down wherever Charlie settled. Charlie looked at his mother, who was sewing a button on a red blouse, and at his father, who was reading a newspaper. "I love Enoch," said Charlie unexpectedly. Love wasn't a word Charlie had ever used before. His mother and his father both looked up in astonishment. Then his mother said quickly, before that precious word could fly away, "And I know your very special dog Enoch loves you back."

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Maeve woke up hungry and every muscle and bone in her body ached. It was not because she spent long hours bending and digging for tatties in the field. There had not been a healthy spud for near on to a year. The straw mats on the beaten earth floor were thinner by the day due to the rats leaving the fields to find something to fill their bellies. It was hard to get comfortable with her bones almost breaking through her skin. Her husband Dan rolled over and continued to snore. At least when asleep, the hunger pains did not bother. She let the twins Jackie and Katie sleep as well.

She went to the shelf to see if any grain was left to make a thin pap to stave off some of the gnawing pains in their bloated bellies. There was little left to grind, so there'd be a thinner offering this morning. She walked to the nearby stream to fetch some water. As she ground the grain, she prayed that they would live another day in their wee house. So far the Lord's men hadn't come to evict them, but she watched her neighbours leaving as their tiny houses burned. She could still hear the screams of the children and the babies clinging to their mammy's breasts trying to suckle where there was no milk left to drink. She could feel the tiny kick within her womb. She thought, "What would become of her family once the grain was gone? Best not to think o' that; don't borrow trouble 'till it bashes down the door." She stirred the coals on the hob and put on a turf log to start the only meal of the day.

Grannie stirred and sat up. "Maeve sure and I would like a cup of tae to warm me bones." "Sorry, Mammy, but there's not a leaf to be found unless you wants to make it with the straw on the floor." Grannie went out back to make her water and returned wrapped in her shawl which once had been a beautiful shade of green. Now, it was tattered and full of holes. "At least the rats were



not starving", Maeve thought. Grannie Doyle had been famous for her knitted sweaters and bonnets. No wean went to the baptistery without one of her white bonnets and jumpers. Father O'Neill knew the babby was ready for the baptismal water when the family arrived with babe in arms dressed by Grannie Doyle! There would be no more bonnets and jumpers. All the other families had left or died from the fever.

Maeve stirred the pap. It was much thinner today, but the extra water should help fill the empty bellies for a while. "So far, we have managed to avoid the fever, but unless we get more to eat, I don't know how much longer we can hold out", she thought. She took a few spoonfuls in a cracked cup, leaving the rest for the family. Dan would be walking out to see if he could get some work in the Lord's fields. The crops were ready for harvesting: vegetables and fruits of all kinds to ship to England, America and to feed the Lord's family.

Maeve asked Grannie to watch the twins while she walked up to the Manor House. Maybe if she went to the kitchen door, they would give her some bread or scraps to feed her family. She could make a thin soup with vegetable peelings. She walked through the fields and orchards to the Manor House and knocked. A stout cook came to the door. "What do youse want ya filthy Pa-

pist?" Maeve used her best clear voice to ask for some scraps or dry bread for her starving children. The cook laughed and said that the filthy Irish deserved to starve and there would be no scraps or bread. She added that those were saved for the dogs. "After all, how could they chase foxes on an empty stomach?" She slammed the door and left Maeve on the doorstep. She had never had to beg in her life. Until the scourge on the tatties, there was always enough to eat. Potatoes provided nutrition and the crops were bountiful. They had to give most of the efforts of their labour to the Lord and pay rent for the croft, but at least they could eat all the spuds they grew.

When she walked through the door, Dan, Jackie and Katie were eating the pap Grannie doled out to them. "Where was ye Mam?" the twins asked in unison. "Sure and a healthy walk as the sun came up t'was good for me soul. Did ye ask God's blessing fer breakfast?" Dan said that it was hard to ask His blessing when the belly was knockin' at the backbone. Maeve gave him a dirty look, but the twins giggled.

On a rusty nail hung a spinning wheel which had been passed down through the family. No one knew exactly how old it was, and every girl learned to spin on it. It was Maeve's treasure and though it now hung idle since there was nothing to spin, it was a sign of hope

that maybe things would get better. It was different. It was vertical and smaller than ones her neighbours had. Those had been sold to pay the rent or for Trevelyan's corn. Maeve was determined she would not let go of the precious article. If that went, it would mean giving up and that was not an option!

As they were cleaning up the wooden bowls, there was a loud rapping at the door and the Lord's overseer barged in. "Yer rent or get out!" he shouted. There were constables with him who began to overturn the few pieces of furniture in the one-room croft. They eyed the spinning wheel and were about to grab it. Maeve pleaded with them to keep it. What use would it be to them? After all it was only for women's work. They let it be, but the family were pulled out of the house as the thatch on the roof blazed. The family huddled together with the children sobbing as they watched their wee home go up in smoke. The roof caved. As the straw mats caught sparks, the furniture joined the conflagration. "Mammy, yer spinnin' wheel!" the twins cried. "Whisht", said Maeve. "Sure and I gathered it up in me skirts!"

They spent a cold damp night outside. In the morning, the overseer returned. "His Lordship wants you off his land now. He purchased tickets on a ship to Canada. You will land at Quebec City and sail up the St. Lawrence River to Montreal. The Captain will provide you with oats for the voyage. Use it sparingly. Now go!"

They set sail five days later. Each member of the family carried a part of the spinning wheel in their bundle. "When we get to Canada, I will make us some woolens. They say it is colder than Ireland" said Maeve. Hope takes many forms, but for Maeve and her family, it was a wee spinning wheel!

1004 FICTION, THE WAKE

Blue pastel and white coloured flowers filled Alison's eyes as she entered the funeral home parlour. She blinked several times as she noticed the casket, the colour of black coffee placed against the far wall amidst the shrubbery and muted yellow lighting. Alison surveyed the room; it was ready to receive visitors for the wake. She inhaled deeply, smelling the earthy scent of chrysanthemums and the sweetness of jasmine; scents that would have been calming if she had been visiting a botanical garden. Instead, the smells evoked a feeling of disbelief, this serene scene before her was to honour her father's passing. The bastard didn't deserve it.

Agitated voices interrupted her thoughts. She could hear her brother Jonathan in the hall arguing with the funeral director.

"That is the cheapest casket Mr. Gannon; we don't sell cardboard boxes. The dead deserve their dignity, and when we host a wake, we prefer not to have the body spill out onto the floor and horrify the guests," the funeral director stated tightly.

Jonathan replied: "We told you a cardboard box would have been too damn nice for him. I assume that is a loaner coffin; we are not paying for a pine box for him."

"Yes, we have arranged that a coffin is available to you for today and tomorrow on loan."

"Good." Jonathan boomed. "He



doesn't deserve shit. And make sure that after the funeral service tomorrow that you are serving good whiskey. The aunts can sip their tea while they politely scoff the neatly squared egg sandwiches, but I will need a few shots to deal with these past few days."

Alison nodded, quietly agreeing with her brother. Her father had never been a sturdy tree rooted in their lives. He was more like a barrel of moonshine; he tended to the illegal, not very reliable and best in small doses. He was never one for employment or supporting his family, he loved guns, whiskey and his own opinion, in that order. The only person that stuck by him, in the end, had been their mother.

Alison sat on the plush royal-blue couch of the funeral home, opposite the coffin and all the flowers crowning

it and gazed at the open room, willing tears or some promise of sadness to appear. But she couldn't summon anything. Alison hadn't seen him in years, not since the police had hauled him away after he shot the neighbour. Her last memory of her father was the afternoon after high school graduation when she woke up late, still basking in the fuzzy warmth of receiving the precious piece of paper and realizing this was the first day of the rest of her life. Alison managed to finish high school, despite having moved nine times, and witnessing the police arrest her father every few months for either having pilfered various construction equipment to start his next new business or using his fists to talk to her mother because, well, she was there and he was drunk. Her brother quit after grade ten. Despite all this, she obtained straight A's and was off

to University next year - the first Gannon to do so.

She remembered the breeze fluttering the ripped soft-pink bed-sheet hung like a curtain, nailed to the wood above the window as she lay in bed, thinking about her perfect future that involved moving far away and becoming a teacher when she overheard her father and the neighbour arguing. The neighbour was a retired gentleman with a long grey silky beard, eyes the colour of rust and a gummy smile, who lived alone. Always working in the dirt, he grew plump green and red vegetables of every type, and his flower beds were regal and well-manicured. Polite and kind, he asked her about school and offered her delights from his garden, though she sometimes sensed that he felt sorry for her. Her father and the neighbour rarely spoke; her father convinced he was the enemy who called the police repeatedly. Her father kept threatening to visit the neighbour and "fix-em up", but he never did.

Shrill voices interrupted her reverie. The next thing she heard was a popping sound like a bicycle tire that had been filled with too much air, and she launched out of bed and peered out the window. Through the ripped screen from her second-floor perch, Alison could see her neighbour lying on the ground, clutching his stomach and his mouth shaped like he was trying to find a voice

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to scream. Her father walking calmly away, and as he disappeared from her view, she heard the sound of his work boots clomping across the wooden porch and into the house.

Alison could never forget the frantic call to the police, her father sitting calmly in the living room chair sipping a glass of whiskey, the shotgun leaning casually against his left knee. Mr. Gray-

don survived, thankfully. She abandoned her family home the day her father was sentenced to fifteen years in prison. Her mother, ever the martyr, visited her father weekly until cancer drained the life out of her.

A crush of mourners, friends and enemies would be arriving at the funeral home within minutes. For some, it would be to confirm he was gone, for most in town, a social gathering and free

lunch wearing stiffly pressed shirts and black dresses, and for a few long-suffering souls, sadness. Alison's eyes stared vacantly at the framed photo Jonathan had placed on the casket and thought about her father - the man, the attempted murderer, the failed entrepreneur. Despite his many shortcomings, his DNA had served her well; she was tough, resourceful and as one university professor had exclaimed in frustration - dogged.

Alison smiled sadly as she looked down at her lap, gazing at her narrow bony fingers, and thought how ironic it was that she was now a psychologist with the police force. She wondered if her father had known. Her shoulders sagged the longer Alison stared at her hands; her brain slowly registering that her long fingers were just like his. And then the tears fell for her dead father, but only a few.

1005 FICTION, A CAUTIONARY TALE

I was the fourth one born of my mother on a lovely summer's day in July. She was the best mother that anyone could have. I loved to snuggle up to her along with my brothers and sisters. Our home was a large cardboard box lined with warm sweaters that the Missus brought down from the house for us.

As we got older we would climb to the rim of the box and peer over. Sometimes we would lose our balance and fall over the other side. We were intrigued by the other occupants in our house. There were woolly sheep and little curly lambs, big pigs and little pigs and really biiiiig cows. When we chased the lambs they would jump up and down. When we chased the piglets they would run and squeal their heads off.

And if we were not hobnobbing with the lambs, or chasing the squealers, we would be playing hide and seek in the hay, soccer with the beef pellets or swinging on on the baler twine. Our life was idyllic.

But somehow I longing for something different, more thrilling, more



exotic than our little old life in the barn. My mother and siblings would find me in a window or at the barn door, staring out curiously. Soon I began to wander. Just little trips into the newly mow hay field, or down to the sugar bush where mice were plentiful. I longed for something, more exhilarating.

When I broached the matter

with my mother, she did not try to dissuade me, but she did point out some pitfalls that I might encounter. She went out and caught several half grown mice, nice and tender and made me several mousenip sandwiches to take with me when I left. Now for those of you who are not in the loop, a mousenip sandwich consists of finely ground up mice mixed with some cream that had spilled from the separator, and placed between two leaves of catnip. Yum, yum. .

It was sad to say good-bye to my family, and my playmates but I knew that this was something I had to do. I felt so free as I skipped down the path that lead to "the golden road of dreams". I scrambled over the split rail fence and scampered along the pathway, singing to my heart's content.

When I reached the main road, I took a gamble and turned to my right. I guess I thought that things would be different the moment I hit the main highway. They weren't. And my skipping soon turned to trudging as I got hotter and thirstier and hungrier.

Suddenly I heard a cheery voice, calling out to me. I looked to see that it was coming from in front of a large rock by the side of the road. Leaning up against the rock was a very, very large mouse, no, maybe it was a rat. My mother had told me about these creatures. His legs were crossed and he was puffing on something that made an awful lot of smoke swirl around his head.

"You look awfully tired," came the smooth voice. "Come over here and join me in a puff and you will be as right as rain." He offered me a puff on something that came out of a can, but as soon as I breathed it in, I fell to coughing and spluttering. Mr Rat roared with laughter at my discomfort. I finally stopped wheezing but after all that exercise I was hungry. I took out my bag with the mousewich in it and offered Mr Rat a bite.

"What's that?" he inquired. I looked at him in surprise and said what would be obvious to anyone, that it was "food". Already being tired and hungry I was becoming impatient with his comments. He shook his head and stared at

me uncomprehendingly. I offered him a mousewich and began eating mine. You actually eat food," he gasped, between roars of laughter.

"Well what do you do with it?"

"Oh, you silly little kitten," he replied. "With food you either have to grow it, or catch it or buy it. We rats, long ago, learned how to live a life of freedom. Our Rathead (that's our big chief) told us that all we needed to grow, and live, and laugh and be free from all worries, was a pill. We take one pill three times a day - no hassle, no work, no worry."

"Surely you have to drink something," I replied.

"Sure thing," he said. "Our Rathead and his advisers prepare a wonderful liquid that we are given and can drink as much as we want. When we drink that we don't have any more cares or worries."

"Don't you want to do anything?" I asked amazed.

"Not really," he replied, "Why should we? Well, come along with me and I'll show you the sights of the city."

Mr Ratty lead the way and we headed off down the road. As we progressed along the road, we heard a roar behind us and loud yelling and shouting. I headed for the ditch but Mr Ratty just laughed at me, turned around and shouted back to a pack of rats skimming down the road at an awful speed. They pretended that they were heading for Mr Ratty, but he yelled back at them and jumped out of the way.

I emerged from the ditch full of terror but Mr Ratty cajoled me into travelling with him some more."Where are all those rats going?" I innocently inquired of Mr Ratty.

"Who cares," he replied, "I don't know and they don't know, but they gotta get there fast."

Back on the road we continued to trudge onwards. But as we continued, I saw more and more rats by the side of the road, either smoking or yelling or fighting. More rats on what seemed to be some kind of wheels, continued to menace our progress. .

Of a sudden I thought to myself, "I don't have to be here. I don't have to travel this rod with these weird rats. I don't have to be this scared. I hunkered down in the ditch so my guide would not see me, and when he was occupied with yelling at other rats, I slunk off into the bushes by the side of the road and headed for home. By the time I reached there, I was tired, hungry, thirsty, and my fur was matted and in knots from all the dust from the road.

My mammy and siblings were so happy to see me again as I was to see them. I relayed my tale to an eager audience and we all agreed on one thing - and that was to be happy and content with what we have - our precious, peaceful life on the farm.

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Do you need help with that Ma'am? he asks.

I am knee deep in the water at the Centennial Lake boat launch on this misty September morning. I must look like I am struggling with my ride but the fact is my body fails to respond immediately to any directions I command it. I am still young at heart but my body has other plans for me lately. I make new discoveries almost daily in the art of aging well or trying to anyways. I thank this good Samaritan but politely decline. This kayak trip is my own from beginning to end. I need to do this to feel empowered and believe that I can still do things by myself and for myself. It has been a hard year. The worst one yet. I have lost dear friends to diseases, accidents and suicide. I am getting older and these departures have only served as reminders that my time here on this earth is also coming to an end.

I look forward to pushing off and just paddling my thoughts away but first I must get my gear in this floating craft, which means going back to my car to get that empty milk crate which will serve as the right size container for my marine emergency kit, the dry bag and some fishing bait. Not only am I venturing alone on Centennial Lake on this sit-on top Kayak for the first time, I am also bringing my fishing rod to attempt a catch or two. I pull the kayak back to the shoreline and head back to my parked car. I return to the shore with my arms full, carrying milk crate, emergency marine kit and dry bag. A second trip to the car gets me the bait and my fishing rod. This might be a long day as I am already winded.

I place the milk crate in the bungee cargo hole at the stern of the kayak. It's a perfect fit. Next I pack



the marine emergency kit I recently purchased at Canadian Tire in Arn-prior. This little gem contains a long rope, a whistle, a waterproof flashlight and I can use the container as a bailing bucket which I doubt I would ever need on a sit-on-top kayak. While at Canadian Tire I also bought a Woods Light Weight Dry Bag. The bag holds a polar sweater, a T-Shirt, yoga pants, socks and a sandwich bag containing 3 granola bars and 3 chocolate mixed nuts bar. I place the bag sideways in the crate and adjust the bungees to hold my precious cargo in place. There, I think, the stern is ready and I am on a roll. I strengthen up to stretch my back when out of the corner of my eye, I see two kayakers emerging from the distant fog further up on the lake. They are paddling towards the boat launch. Looks like a couple of overnight campers probably coming back from one of the islands. It's a common sight out here. I resume the mission.

I place my bait in the cargo hatch at the bow of the boat. It is the perfect size to hold a small box of worms I purchased at the Griffith Country Store yesterday. I quickly look inside the bait box and con-

firm the worms are still cool and fresh. Perfect! I grab my fishing rod and place it inside on the right-hand side fishing rod holder of the kayak. The kayak looks lopsided, but it isn't. Something is missing. I mentally go through the list I made last night and forgot this morning (of course) to identify the missing link. Ah yes, the net, the fishing net is in my car. I pull the kayak safely on shore and head back to the car for what I hope is the final trip. The net is in the back of the car lying on top of my life jacket! Okay, I really need this relaxing excursion on the water, don't I. I am grateful to find both and return to the kayak to take off. I place the fishing net in the fishing rod holder on the left side. There, the kayak looks great. I slip on my new Outbound Paddling Vest, you guessed it, purchased at Canadian Tire during my earlier shopping trip, grab the kayak by the bow handles and begin pulling the kayak in knee deep water to get in.

I clearly remember the sales guy at Kayak Barn showing me how to reach for the opposite side of the kayak farthest from me while I swing one leg over and basically hop in. I have practiced a few times on the

deck at home. This should go flawlessly. Here goes!

I try to stabilize the kayak enough to climb in but am really struggling to find my balance in this knee-deep water. I almost fall in on my first attempt and jump around trying to find a footing before attempting another boarding. To my right, those two kayakers in the distant are closing in fast on my location. I wonder if I will have time to get in before they make it to shore. I try a second time but fear stops me short of lifting a leg to get in the kayak. Thinking fast, I decide to pull the kayak closer to shore at mid-shin now. There, this should be much better and it is. I'm in. Yes!! I am so proud of myself for the better part of 5 seconds. Something is wrong with this picture. I am in the kayak but the kayak is sitting firmly on the bottom of the lake at mid-shin depth and it isn't budging. That is not the problem with this picture. I can't make it budge. I have to get out. The two kayakers are paddling up now. There is no faking this out. I need help. I have no paddle. I shoot a leg out of the kayak and shimmy and bend myself in half towards the bow to climb out. My kayak exit is as graceful as a pig on ice.

The couple that just kayaked in our pulling their individual kayaks to shore and ask me in unison, "Need some help Ma'am?"

"No thanks," I reply, "I'm just pulling in too".

1007 FICTION, RAVEN MAD LILY

Hope writes for the Toronto Star's Thursday Life column and is driving to Pembroke to interview Lily Wilson for her next story. It's Monday already and she feels rushed. The column falls on the 10th anniversary of this girl's dramatic 1975 rescue. Hope can't believe the child survived 12 weeks alone in the boreal forest just north of Algonquin Park. Torontonians were enthralled with Lily's story of survival but no one could believe how contently her big brown eyes looked as she stared into the cameras that day. The Star sold every issue.

Hope is driving through the forested county roads from Toronto to Pembroke passing places with unfamiliar names like Maynooth and



Foymount. Being city-raised she felt uneasy and isolated on the trip. She couldn't fathom how 10 year old Lily coped with a dead father at the bot-

tom of a crevasse. Hope got the shivers. After several hours of driving Hope was happy to reach Pembroke.

Lily, on her way to be inter-

viewed, cannot believe it's been 10 years. She was ten then and remembers having the comprehension of a young adult. Side-benefit of being an only child she thought. Her family escaped Bancroft often to camp on Canoe Lake in Algonquin Park. Dad was a classic hippie who was obsessed with Tom Thomson and his paintings so Canoe Lake it was. Dad loved the fact that Tom was a fishing guide, a forest and lake guy, a real Canadian. Just then she pictured two ghosts in a canoe. It was dad and Tom fishing on Canoe Lake. She had these thoughts often and it helped her cope.

She spent the anniversary camping on the banks of Canoe Lake

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and loved it there. But today she wished she had a shower instead of having to plunge into the cold lake. She was wide awake, though, and speeding down the curvy iconic 61. She was frustrated with herself. She should have taken the tent down last night but found it hard to leave the lake's memories. She didn't want to be late for the interview either and was ready to tell the truth.

Lily started to recount in her mind what she would reveal about her life and survival to the journalist. Hmmn, she thought, I'm now in my second year of forestry at Algonquin College and I love it considering the tragedy. I'm the only girl in the program and worked hard to get enrolled. The most awkward plea against my enrolment came from the school counselor. He said 'Where on earth will you pee when working in the middle of a forest? Can you tell me that, Lily?' 'Did you think about that?' Lily laughed out loud. Did the counselor not know he was an animal? Did he even realize it's 1983? Dork, she thought.

Lily has been camping and mushroom hunting with her dad every summer since she was five. That's when her mom died. Whenever Lily remembers her mom she hears her offering her sorrel to nibble

on. Lily's mind hears 'sorrow'. Lily sighed. Mom loved wild plants but my father, Simon, is the reason why I know trees. Dad was a mushroom hunter and had to know the identity of every tree in order to find companion mushrooms. He taught me how mushrooms and trees 'communicate' with each other. Now in 1985 it's getting some serious hype. Lily recently learned too that all continents used to be one big island called Pangaea. She loves this theory and wishes her dad was still alive to discuss the implications with her.

She thinks of the tragic day her dad accidentally slipped into the hidden crevasse. It was horrible. He died instantly. He fell with the compass, map and tent on his back. There was no way she could retrieve them. His body still lies there today as rescuers couldn't descend safely. They recorded the facts and the case was closed.

Lily knew the scheduled Cessna would not return for weeks. Dad taught her survival skills relentlessly just in case something like this happened. She knew she had to stay put but not too close to her father's body. It will attract carnivores. So she walked back to the lake they had passed earlier. Dad taught her not to fear the wild and now she was grate-

ful he did just that because she wasn't afraid. She was alone. She cried for several hours before she became hungry. She foraged for her next meal and it kept her mind off everything. While foraging she came across an empty cave and made a fire. Her dad always made sure she had waterproof matches in her knapsack. So she stuffed wild mushrooms on a stick and cooked them over the fire. She remembers wishing they were marshmallows.

Completely saddened and still driving on the 61, she knows she needs to focus on the road. But now all she can think about is the interview. What was the single most important thing that sustained me out there? Thinking about the raven Lily burst into tears. She missed that bird. The raven was curious and followed her while she foraged trying to steal the food. So she started to forage extra treats to toss to the raven. She named the raven Thomson after the painter because her dad would approve. The raven would come and go but always seemed to appear instantly when she would cry. One day he brought her a beech nut. Then many gifts to cheer her up. An acorn, a shiny rock. Another day, while waiting for her dad she heard Thomson mimicking her and together they loudly wailed. It

was bonding. She spent the rest of the days trying to teach Thomson to talk. It kept her sane. She would play school with Thomson and that raven loved it. She did teach it several words. Up until now she never told anyone because she knew the story was unbelievable. 'A talking Raven? She must be 'RAVING MAD!' she pictured the headlines on the front page of the Star. Well today she decided to tell the truth. If it wasn't for Thomson's love and friendship she might of never survived. It's human nature to want to be loved and love didn't have to be human. This is the lesson she learned...

Lily entered the bar and shook Hope's hand. Hope already ordered wine and began the interview telling Lily of her lonely ride through the forest. She then asked Lily 'How ever did you keep your sanity?' At that moment they heard a raven croaking outside the bar window. Lily visualized her dad and Tom on Canoe Lake and suddenly a raven was soaring above the canoe! With a tear rolling down her cheek, Lily smiled and began to tell Hope how she met Thomson. No not the painter, the Raven. I'd be raving mad if I said I saw Tom Thomson's ghost out there! They laughed. Hope moved forward in her chair. She was dying to know more.

NEWS RELEASE

GMSHC RECEIVES A GRANT

The Greater Madawaska Seniors Housing Corporation is pleased to announce it has received a grant for \$20,585 from the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility. A unique aspect of this grant is that it will cross Township and County borders to include the villages of Griffith, Matawatchan, Denbigh and Vennachar. The grant is intended to help seniors stay in their

own homes for as long as they wish to. The money will allow us to help with transportation, home maintenance, snow removal etc.

In addition to helping seniors stay in their own homes for a longer period the grant will provide for experiences in arts & culture culminating in a community dinner & show. Northern Lights Seniors

will offer a tour and a meal for seniors. The Village Voices will receive funds to purchase music and risers and offer a concert & meal. The risers will be available for use by the whole community. Therefore, this grant will provide opportunities for seniors to socialize, learn, enjoy a few healthy meals and have equipment that can be used by the whole community. It will also provide a few part time

jobs for the people of the area.

The Honourable Raymond Cho, Minister for Seniors and Accessibility, stated in his letter of approval "I am inspired by your organization's values, dedication and support of seniors activities".

Stay tuned for more information on the activities funded by this grant.



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EDITORIAL

There isn't much room for a full editorial in this issue, so I thought I would turn it into a public service notice that a friend of mine suggested. My friend was excited to tell me she would be receiving two energy-efficient refrigerators, an air conditioner, and her basement will be insulated, all for free. It might sound too good to be true, but if you heat with electricity and are struggling to pay your electrical bills, you too might qualify to get assistance through the Ontario Affordable Ability Fund. The amount of support is based on your household income and electricity costs.

Free upgrades for electrically heated homes may include:
 1) Home Energy Kit*: ENERGY STAR® certified LEDs, a smart power bar and more products – value of up to \$200!

2) ENERGY STAR® certified appliances, draft proofing, insulation and more – up to \$5,500.

3) Insulation, ENERGY STAR® certified heat pump and more – up to \$15,000. One phone call is all you need to do to get things started, 1-855-494-3863.

The provincial and federal governments have many programs you might not know about. 211Ontario.ca helps you find programs and services in Ontario, or call 2-1-1. canada.ca/en/services/benefits.html helps you find more. If you are a senior in the Griffith, Matawatchan, Denbigh, Vennachar area you will be delighted to know there is even more help available. Please read the news release on the previous page and the ad on page 3. It's good to know help can be as close as your phone.

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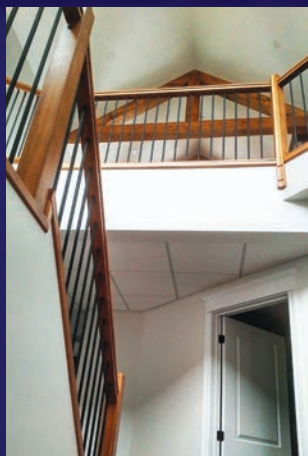
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