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As you read this, we are entering typically the slowest time of the year for real estate. After a sluggish third quarter, Canada's housing market is still on solid footing due to sound lending practices by financial institutions with the vast majority of homeowners continuing to afford their homes despite the increased cost of living. Even with the softened activity, it is expected housing prices will remain firm throughout the remainder of the year. The slower activity has allowed inventory to marginally increase but analysts suggest upward pressure on home prices will begin again. At its root, housing supply remains out of step with growth, interest rates are in a normal range, the market is adjusting in a good way over time.



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THE MADAWASKA HIGHLANDER October-November 2023 EMBRACE THE PAST ~ ENCOURAGE THE FUTURE ~ ENJOY TODAY

The Madawaska Highlander

Oct-NOV
2023
FREE Vol.21 Issue 6
Next issue Nov. 22, 2023

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

Welcome!



A young moose spotted walking along the Madawaska shore. Pic was shot by Bas van der Spek who was visiting from The Netherlands. What a treat!

...To a special Short Story Contest edition of the Madawaska Highlander. It's time to lose yourself in short stories in a comfy chair by the fire after a day in the brisk outdoors. Then you can be the judge in the People's Choice Awards. Read all eight great stories then vote for the one special story that found its way inside your soul.

These captivating stories are, by cosmic coincidence, all about losing yourself, finding yourself, being stranded, feeling trapped, unable to keep your head above water... then finding your way back (or not!). We even have a story of loss and redemption called Lost and Found.

Thank you to the eight writers who found their way to put pen to paper, or fingertips to keyboard, to enter the contest! Together they weren't enough to make a full issue, so Betsy Sayers, our News & Views contributor, came to the rescue and wrote an engaging story about Maude the Meandering Moose making her way through a bewildering world. Thank you, Betsy!

Speaking of rescues, beggars can't be choosers when help arrives, as we see in When Good Samaritans Come to Pass. Ritchie's Story is about being left to your own devices, electronic devices that is. Not all losses are sudden, sometimes they fade away in a slow trickle, as in Diminishing Portfolio of Enthusiasms. Be careful of slow trickles! They aren't always what they seem to be, as we see in Tea for Two.

Getting lost or trapped is to be avoided as we meander through life. Will Marriage on the Opeongo be a happy story? And what happens when you don't go with your gut when staying in a creepy Welsh castle? Look behind The Door! (In the story, The Door.)

We aren't always the trapped. Sometimes we're the trappers as we read in Summer Camp - A Continuing Series. Oh, those boys!

Before you immerse yourself in short stories, be sure to see what's happening in News & Views and Bogie Beat. Check the ads for services and things to do in the Highlands and... Enjoy!...

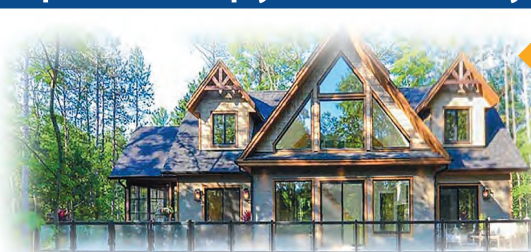


Fall colours in the Madawaska Highlands Pic by Diane Bickers who was visiting from Toronto. Another treat!

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The Madawaska Highlander

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

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 Morgana Dill Betsy Sayers Patti McArthur



Text at the top: The Plumb-pudding in danger: - or - State Epicures taking un Petit Souper. The great Globe itself and all which it inherit is too small to satisfy such unsatiabie appetites. - London February 26, 1805.

Hailed by British cartoonist and writer Martin Rowson as "the greatest political cartoon ever", James Gillray's The Plumb-pudding in Danger is typical of the Georgian-era caricaturist's biting satire. Drawn in 1805, the cartoon depicts French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte and British prime minister William Pitt greedily carving a plum pudding shaped like the world in an amusing metaphor for the leaders' battle for geopolitical power. It has been widely pastiched by later artists including Guardian cartoonist Steve Bell.
 - Information from TheCultureTrip.com

In the period before World War I, European powers controlled over 80% of the surface of the globe. The aftershocks of this period of imperialism are still felt in the present, with national borders and international conflicts alike tied to patterns put in place by the imperialist powers.

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By **Betsy Sayers** Send your news to me at HighlanderGMnews@gmail.com



Devin Cuddy and guitarist Mike Tuyp. The event at the Matawatchan Hall was sold-out for this fantastic band, and everyone had a terrific time dancing the night away.

You can make decorations like these with the new Cricut machine at the Denbigh Public Library.



On September the 16th, Calvyns held their 1st annual community challenge 3 pitch tournament in Griffith. The Denbigh-Griffith Lions Club opened the hall and hosted a BBQ. After all, what's a ball game without hotdogs?

Enthusiastic "Walk and Rollers" at the start of the Terry Fox run in Griffith. This year's run raised over \$5300 for innovative cancer research. Well done!

Welcome to our short story edition of the Highlander. What better way to start off a column in this particular edition than to share information about our libraries.

Money is tight these days and there is no greater value than a mem-

bership to your local library. Libraries are a safe gathering place where everyone is welcome. They provide many free services to residents, and their children's programming is exceptional and open to everyone.

THE ADDINGTON HIGHLANDS PUBLIC LIBRARY

provides services in Flinton and Denbigh. They now have a Cricut Maker 3 smart cutting machine. On October 19 they held a training session in Denbigh where people were invited

to make Halloween decorations. For those of you who have never heard of Cricut machines, it's described on the Cricut website as: "This is the ultimate smart cutting machine. With tons more compatible materials and tools than our other cutting machines, you'll be amazed

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Bas Van der Spek was delighted to meet "Maude the Meandering Moose" when he was visiting from The Netherlands this fall. She seems to know how famous she has become and doesn't mind taking selfies with tourists. Bas was later told he was lucky she was in a good mood!

by what's possible. Blow minds with big banners, engraved metal, debossed leather, and so much more. Plus, bust out popular projects like custom cards, T-shirts & full-color stickers. No design experience required. Works with our free Design Space app."

On October 25, from 6 - 7 pm, The Denbigh Library invites patrons to a Halloween Story and Craft night. Please call to register at 613-333-1426. The library is located in the old school where the medical centre is. Follow them on Facebook for more activities.

Non-residents can join the Denbigh Library for a nominal fee each year. The same goes for the Greater Madawaska Library. We are lucky to be served by two libraries in the area!

THE GREATER MADAWASKA LIBRARY & LEARNING CENTRE

The library was founded in 1978 as the Bagot & Blythfield Public Library by four people dedicated to literacy. In 2001 following amalgamation, it became the Greater Madawaska Public Library. While the library is physically located at St. Joseph's School in Calabogie, pickup/drop off services to the Pine Valley Restaurant in Griffith happen every 2nd week to make it easier for residents in "the West End" of the township.

Did you know that in addition to the wide range of books and inter-library loan options from libraries across Ontario, the library also offers Ottawa

National Museum and Ontario Provincial Park passes; DVDs; audio books and even magazines. They also have public access to computers, free WI-FI and offer printing services for things like hunting licenses, shipping labels, forms etc.

Don't miss their monthly movie nights this winter - October 28 will be the spooky movie *Hotel Transylvania* at the library in Calabogie.

On November 4th the library will be celebrating their 45th anniversary with lots of great things for the whole family. Live music, a Township archives display, family fun with story-time, crafting, colouring, a scavenger hunt and a very special magic show from 11am to noon. For more information see their poster under Library Matters on page 7.

Check out their webpage and the Library Matters articles in each Highlander for more information about your library. Go to greatermadawaska.com. Click on Play and Discover, then Library. For the Denbigh Library go to addingtonhighlandspubliclibrary.ca

REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICES DENBIGH

On November 5th; 11:00 am, the Arden Royal Canadian Legion will be hosting Remembrance Day Service at the Cenotaph at St Luke's United Church, Denbigh.

GREATER MADAWASKA HOUSING CORPORATION

The Greater Madawaska Seniors Housing Corporation is planning a few information sessions about Fraud Prevention, Elder Abuse and Estate Planning. While dates aren't set yet, sessions will happen in the next few months. If you are interested in attending, please call Juliette LeGal. In February they are planning a dinner and dance for Valentine's Day. Of course, there is always a healthy meal at every event. Let's keep on learning and socializing!

GRIFFITH & MATAWATCHAN FISH & GAME CLUB

As you know, the Fish & Game Club has been working this summer towards becoming an 'incorporated' club. This required a lot of hard work to define and create new vision & purpose statements; role definitions; operating by-laws; articles of amendment; creating a transfer agreement, as well as director and organizational resolutions. They would like you to know that they are almost done and will be presenting the amendments at their AGM soon.

The club has also approached Ontario Power Generation regarding their (OPG's) potential willingness to co-sponsor a walleye "enhancement" program for Centennial and Black Donald Lakes.

Check out the Griffith & Matawatchan Fish and Game Club Facebook page for more information on these and other activities over the coming months.

DENBIGH-GRIFFITH LIONS CLUB

Just because the busy summer season is over doesn't mean that activities at the Lions Hall have slowed down. Bingo nights; painting classes, Euchre games; Ladies Exercise Group; Food & Friendship luncheons and wellness visits are all in full swing for the winter months. Check out our Upcoming Events at the end of this column for dates.

On September the 16th, Calvyns held their 1st annual community challenge 3 pitch tournament in Griffith. The Denbigh-Griffith Lions Club opened the hall and hosted a BBQ. After all, what's a ball game without hot-dogs? A terrific time was had by all who attended and enjoyed an opportunity to get out on a beautiful fall day, have some snacks, watch or play a game, and chat with friends and neighbours while cheering on their favourite team.

Congratulations to "Young Guns" the first Calvyns 3 pitch tournament "champions". This year's inaugural tournament was such a success that Calvyns is already planning for next year's event.

The Lions will have their Christmas Market on Dec. 2. Vendors email DGLionsClub@hotmail.com to book.

MATAWATCHAN HALL

Thanksgiving weekend got off to a fun start with the long-awaited Small Halls event featuring Devin Cuddy and guitarist Mike Tuyp. The event was sold-out for this fantastic band and everyone who attended had a terrific time dancing the night away. Dancers and chair dancing audience members insisted

they play not 1, but 3 encores before they would let them call it a night.

As you know Hall Executive and volunteers have been busy this year with renovations. With a new floor and soon to be completed handicap ramps and wide doors the hall is in full operation once again. Hopes are for winter to hold off a bit so that outdoor work can be finished up before winter sets in. A giant THANK YOU to all the volunteers who made these changes possible.

In lieu of a Halloween party this year, there will be a potluck supper at the hall on Oct 27. Costumes are optional. The Annual General Meeting will be held November 14 at 6pm.

VILLAGE VOICES CHRISTMAS CONCERT

The Village Voices Choir is looking for new members to join them as they prepare for their Annual Christmas Concert at the Hilltop Church on Sunday, December 17. Please reach out to Debra Green at the Hilltop Church if you are interested in joining the choir.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- October 24; Nov 6 & 20: Euchre - Griffith (1pm) call Sandy at 613-333-1932
- October 27: Potluck supper - Matawatchan Hall
- October 28: Spooky Movie Night at the Library in Calabogie
- October 31; Nov 14 and 28: Lions Bingo - Griffith (7:30pm)
- Nov 5: REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICES - Cenotaph at St. Luke's Church, Denbigh
- Nov 3; 17 and Dec 1: Euchre on Friday Nights - Matawatchan Hall
- Nov 4: Greater Madawaska Township Library Anniversary Day - Calabogie
- Nov 14: Matawatchan Hall Annual General Meeting (6pm)

- Every Tuesday, Thursday & Sunday: Aerobics at the Matawatchan Hall (9:30am)
- Every Thursday morning: Ladies Exercise Group - Griffith (9am)
- Every Thursday afternoon: Art in the Highlands with Reina Coulthart - Griffith (1pm)
- Every second Friday night: Euchre at the Matawatchan Hall

IN CLOSING

Being your columnist this summer has been fun. Thank you to everyone who contributed and helped me. I have learned a lot and come to know my community better as a result. One more issue to go after this!

While doing this column has been a highlight, as I reflect back on the summer of 2023 there is one thing that stands out above all else as a collective and enjoyable summer experience for most people in Griffith. The Moose! I hope you enjoy my imaginary journey into what may have gone through her mind as she encountered us. My story is not part of the Short Story Contest. Having received fewer entries this year,

Lois asked if I would write something to add to the collection for our readers' enjoyment. It's the final story starting on page 17.



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Calabogie Folks & What they're Up To By Morgana Dill If you have news to share, reach out to me at thebogiebeat@gmail.com.



FryDayz is a long-established chip stand on Calabogie Road across from the Calabogie Campground. Watch for families crossing the road there!



Proprietor Sam at The Peeler Wagon at Burnstown Rd. Let's hope he serves Cauliflower Tacos again next summer



The Indian Curry Pot outside the Calabogie General Store adds some variety to Calabogie diets.



The Bogie Deli, located outside the Trail's Edge building. The menu features Montreal Smoked meat - direct from Montreal - and fresh cut kettle chips.



The bright yellow Bogie Grill 'N' Chill received Gold for the best Food Truck in Renfrew County this season.

As Thanksgiving weekend came along, so did the cooler weather. The leaves were fully committed to changing, and a wide variety of warm colours graced our forests. We can say now that Fall has officially arrived.

I posted in our Calabogie Folks Facebook group looking for everyone's leaf peeping pictures, and the members did not disappoint! People submitted great shots from their nature walks, backyards, final trips on the lake, and rolling hills. Each year I like to go out and try to find as many different types and colours of leaves. This is a tradition I hope to share with my daughter next year as she learns about colours and shapes. Do you have any fall traditions that you participate in by yourself, or with family and friends? I would love to hear about them, and I know that others in our community would too.

Calabogie Peaks Resort hosted their annual Fall Colours Chairlift Rides. Locals and visitors alike flocked to the mountain to take in the beautiful landscapes that Calabogie has to offer. If you're scared of heights, or a bit iffy in wet or windy weather I suggest hiking the trails instead to take in the colours. There are plenty of beautiful lookouts and landscapes along Calabogie's vast trail systems. The Madawaska Nordic trail and the K&P have had some stunning foliage with diverse coloured leaves.

Our community is very fortunate to have Long Lane Farms right around the corner. They delivered fantastic turkeys this year to many homes - surely elevating their thanksgiving dinners. Reviews of how delicious the birds were are sure to impress people to support local farms with their turkeys and other meat at future holiday meals.

This month I hosted my first holiday meal. I decided to have an intimate "friendsgiving" where I invited a few girlfriends over for an evening where we would share our gratitude for one another. I know I am so lucky to have such amazing friends that I do here in Calabogie, and it was so nice to cook and host the meal.

A member of the Calabogie Folks group posted about hearing church bells playing hymns at about 1 am in the morning for a few evenings in October. Other community members quickly chimed in that they heard the bells as well. Amazing Grace played, some residents loved it, and others were highly confused. The mystery of the midnight music was solved, and the bells returned to their normal timing. It was a cheerful mishap that many of us will remember for years to come.

Local Entertainer Caleb O'Guy (Stacie Ross) is continuing to grow and progress in their Drag King career. Recently having been accepted into a prominent Halloween Competition (Queer of Halloween) in Ottawa. Named after the village they love, they also continue to foster and promote community spirits in Renfrew County with story time events and their work with Arnprior Pride. Outside of entertaining, Stacie works close with the queer community of Calabogie and area as the organizer of the annual Calabogie Pride event. They also hosted the Calabogie Market a few seasons back.

The Calabogie Lions Club hosted a Halloween Bingo on Wednesday October 18th. Everyone dressed up and had a great time. Even adults like to have a little trick or treat and the treat bags were top notch!

The Greater Madawaska Fire Department hosted their 4th annual Haunted Walk under the rink at the Calabogie Community Centre. The firefighters put in a lot of effort to plan, set up, decorate and of course scare! Everyone absolutely loved this event. Although I don't like being spooked, I took a tour through and definitely got a bit of a fright! A big thank you to Kirk Schilling, Andrew Mohns and the rest of the team for putting on such a great community event each year.

The season of the food truck has come to an end. We're so lucky here in Calabogie to have a variety of food trucks with great food.

Frydayz is located at the Calabogie Campground, 5372 Calabogie

Road, and open to the public. Nancy has been operating Frydayz for as long as I can remember. I can always expect a smile no matter what is thrown her way. I'm a "stuff halfway" kinda gal with my fries, and we recently started ordering an onion ring poutine - it was life altering!

The Bogie Grill 'N' Chill is lo-

cated on the 511 HWY, just past the Barryvale and CMP turn off, 11790 Lanark Rd. You can't miss it because it's painted bright yellow and purple! This is a classic food truck, and they even received Gold for the best Food Truck in Renfrew County this season! I recommend trying their burgers, mozzarella sticks and awesome fries.

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Fall Colours - Cherry Point Reflection by Patti Davis-Sellers



Four happy BINGO players harnessing "Pink Power"



Calabogie has so many artists for the size of the village that art is overflowing outdoors, as seen outside Kim Lepine's "The Hairport".



View from Calabogie Peaks by Niamh Kamath



A fun Halloween activity - Take an old print and "ghost it up". Left: by Tricia Doyle, Right: by Morgana Dill (with apologies to Anne Geddes and the Stone Cottage artist.)



The Indian Curry Pot was a fun surprise for Calabogie this year. Previously this business was located in Renfrew for takeout, and this summer they purchased a shipping container and re-

located to the Bogie General Store parking lot, 4709 Calabogie Rd. You can get classic Indian dishes like butter chicken, samosas, and their twist on burgers. You can get a classic cheeseburger or venture

out and try a tandoori bacon cheeseburger or their butter chicken parm burger. They also introduced us to Chana Chaat Fries which were my personal favourite. Picture poutine, but instead of gravy and cheese curds the fries are topped with a delicious chickpea curry, red onion, fresh herbs, and a sour cream like sauce. Niamh and Kay have become a wonderful addition to our community's expanding foodie scene.

also illuminate a red or orange tint. Perfect for the Saturday before Halloween! Before bundling up with a warm beverage and a blanket or chair outside to stargaze and watch the moon rise, I recommend checking out the **Greater Madawaska Public Library's Family Movie Time**. They'll be showing the family friendly Halloween themed movie, *Hotel Transylvania* in the **Hall of St. Andrew's United Church in Calabogie at 3 pm on Saturday, October 28th**. Admission is by free will donations with refreshments available for purchase.

The Bogie Deli located at Trails Edge, 4983 Calabogie Rd, is a food trailer that is proud to use Lester's Montreal Smoke Meat. They serve fresh cut kettle chips, their signature Mad Dog, peameal bacon on a bun and of course - Montreal Smoke Meat on rye.

As the weather gets colder, some of us have the habit of becoming hermits. Getting cozy by the fire, under a blanket, and with multiple warm beverages. It's important to not recluse too much and get out there to socialize when you can. Calabogie is lucky to have different recreational events and programs that can be found on the community calendar of the Township of Greater Madawaska website. Two events that really interested me were the **Fibre Arts Workshops and Pickleball**.

A young lad named Sam who some of us may know from the team at On The Rocks, opened **The Peeler Wagon** this past summer. It's located at 1916 Burnstown Rd, just outside of Burnstown heading towards Renfrew. Although his food truck isn't located right in Calabogie I highly recommend the spot on your way to do errands to or from Renfrew. This summer he had cauliflower wings, a pulled pork Cubano, fried chicken sandwich, and some classics. The presentation was elevated, and we always had a great meal!

These food trucks have closed for the season. If you didn't get the chance to check them out this year, take notes and make sure to add it to your "must try" list in 2024.

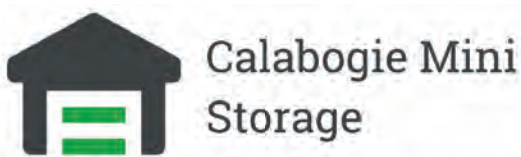
Spooky Season is here! I participated in a fun Halloween trend where you repurpose an old painting by adding spooky elements to the painting and of course some little ghosts! This trend became popular on the social media platform TikTok and has made its way around.

Located at the Treehouse Studio inside of the Calabogie Lodge, Christine Johnson is hosting **Fibre Art Tuesdays from 10 am - 3pm**. She welcomes you to join in with other fibre artists and stickers in a free open studio session and organized workshops. When living abroad I learned how to use a loom for weaving and to make macrame. This is an event you'll definitely be finding me at!

You may be just like me and wondering, what is **Pickleball**? It's a combination of elements from several racket sports. It seems easy to learn and a lot of fun! There is no fee or registration so you're able to drop in and see what it's all about. Bring indoor shoes, some water, and a good attitude! It takes place at **St. Joseph's School on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm**.

If these aren't your style, I also

Saturday October 28th marks a full moon known to some as the Hunters or Harvest moon. This full moon may look larger than others and it may



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BOGIE BEAT



What's more fun than BINGO? A Halloween BINGO! Anne was the winner for best costume at the Community Hall.



Travis and Easton McCormick, with his son dressed as his hero!

The Greater Madawaska Fire Department hosted their 4th annual Haunted Walk under the rink at the Calabogie Community Centre.

Submitted by Alissa Schlievert

Submitted by Carly Riddle

recommend the **book club running out of the Greater Madawaska Public Library** or even posting online to start up your own activity. The Calabogie Folks Facebook Group is a great place to build connections and make plans.

As the leaves turned to brilliant shades of red and gold, our commu-

nity continued to thrive with the spirit of autumn. While we cozy up for the colder months, don't forget to explore the exciting events and activities our town has to offer, ensuring that Calabogie remains a vibrant and welcoming place for all. Whether you're a lover of the arts, a sports enthusiast, or simply

seeking to connect with kindred spirits, there's something for everyone in our Bogie.

Let's stay connected! As always, if you have exciting suggestions, upcoming events, or captivating stories to share, reach out to me at thebogiebeat@gmail.com.



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

LIBRARY MATTERS

45th Anniversary Celebrations By Patti McArthur

It is the beginning of Fall, and the Greater Madawaska Public Library and Learning Centre is thrilled to have our St. Joseph's kids back in the school. We love to see the new and returning faces and hear laughter in the hallways. I always say, "This is the happiest place in the Township". Welcome back!

Did you know that the Greater Madawaska Public Library and Learning Centre (GMPLLC) is celebrating its 45th Anniversary?

To share our celebration, there will be an **Open House on November 4th from 9am to 2pm at the library located in St. Joseph's School in Calabogie.** Magician John Peart will put on a show from 11am to Noon, that will delight young families. There will also be **live music, refreshments, a view to the GMPLLC archive material and family-oriented crafts/activities** through the event.

Founded by 4 amazing ladies who wanted to bring the gift of learning to their community, **Mrs. Eileen Brydges, Mrs. Margaret Norton, Mrs. Karen Cockwell and Dr. Catherine Downing built the foundation for the learning center we are today.** Everyone is welcome to attend! Come in to see your Library, meet our wonderful staff, volunteers, partners and Board.

Our program collaboration with St. Joseph's, started up within the first weeks of September with classroom visits and sign-up for the weekend reader program. These programs encourage learning through extended reading after class and exploration of materials in the library. We heard you... A big request from our young readers was to **expand on our graphic novel section. We were able to bring in quite a few new titles that we know you will enjoy.**

Our Pre-School Story-Time continues on Thursday mornings from 9:30 - 10:15am. Story time, songs and crafts engage little ones and their moms to have some fun together and with others. Our stories and crafts reflect the seasons and there are some spooky



Saturday, November 4, 9am-2pm
12629 Lanark Road, Calabogie, ON in St Joseph School
Greater Madawaska Public Library and Learning Centre

Get ready for a day of making memories, and enjoying a wide range of fun-filled activities. Here's what you can expect:

- MAGIC SHOW with John Pert
- Family story-time (library)
- Craft station & activities
- Contests
- GMPLLC Archives
- Live music
- Refreshments
- and more...

☎ 613-752-2317 ✉ gmpllc.staff@gmail.com

The schedule was still being arranged at the time of this publication, so be sure to watch the library's Facebook page or call for more information. The library was waiting for confirmation of the Beaver Tails mobile truck setting up here for a few days during the event. We'll have to keep our fingers crossed on that one.

crafts to be created for Halloween. **The first week of October was the First Nation Public Library Week (FNPLW).** The theme this year is: **STANDING TOGETHER.** We welcome everyone to explore our growing indigenous collection. To celebrate lo-

cally, the Bonnechere Inòdewiziwin Abinòdjinjish Kikinàmagan (BIAK) Early ON mobile unit came out October 3rd to share music, stories, Algonquin teachings and the Algonquin language. Always well attended and enjoyed. We will invite our BIAK partner

back through the Fall. Follow our Facebook page or call the library if you are interested in attending future sessions.

The Book Club is always looking to add more readers. The Club meets monthly at the library and it is possible to join virtually, if travel is a problem. We would be happy to "Zoom you in" to share some great books and fellowship. **November 15th is the next meeting date** and the novel to be discussed is "City of Thieves" by David Benioff. **If you wish to join, call the Library at 752-2317 or email gmpllc.staff@gmail.com** to let us know and we will get information to you directly.

Scary times at the St. Andrew's United Church hosting a **Family Movie Event on Saturday October 28** with the Greater Madawaska Public Library and Learning Centre. We schedule start time at 3pm and run to about 5pm. Votes were collected through the library to choose between the movies: Coco, Hocus Pocus or Hotel Transylvania and the movie *Hotel Transylvania* won the vote.

Dressing up for the show is encouraged! We would love to see your costumes. **NEW MOMS - get in touch with the library and ask to be included in our Baby Book Bag Program.** Get an invitation to the mom and baby get together and receive a Book Bag that is filled with some items for the little one, a book and a library card. We believe it is so important for families to share stories together and we know Moms love to meet other new Moms in the area. Call us or email for more information. We are working to a later date in November.

Don't forget to join us for our **Open House Birthday Celebration on November 4th in the St. Josephs School in Calabogie.** For information on the Open House, any of our programs and upcoming events, or how to join please email, call or follow us online.

Phone: 613 752-2317 or email gmpllc.staff@gmail.com or online [facebook.com/Greater.Madawaska.Library.Calabogie](https://www.facebook.com/Greater.Madawaska.Library.Calabogie)

Wabanakwut “Wab” Kinew has made history after being elected as Canada’s first-ever First Nations premier in Manitoba. Will have Indigenous women in cabinet

The NCC held a ceremony to unveil the new sign for the Kichi Zibi Mikan (“Great River Road” in Algonquin) ahead of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

Family seeks apology after study material using outdated terms for Indigenous people handed out in London, ON classroom – fear use of those terms in community.

Trans Mountain route change will ‘desecrate’ Secwepemc sacred site just to spare the project from costs and a 9-month delay. Nation did not consent to route change.

First Nations in Ring of Fire wonder, will promised prosperity bring a high school, clean water, jobs, housing, a paved airport runway for medical access? No answers.

Ottawa woman, 97, charged with historical sexual assaults at residential, day schools. Someone went to police late last year about alleged crimes in 60s and 70s.

Canada’s House of Commons voted in Greg Fergus, a member of the Liberal Party representing Hull-Aylmer in Quebec, as its first Black speaker.

The NHL has banned recognizing “any Special Initiatives” on the ice, which includes Pride Tape or jerseys. Are National Anthems considered Special Initiatives?

Sask. human rights commissioner resigns, in honour of her transgender son, calls pronoun policy ‘an attack’ on gender-diverse kids.

Alberta school trustee claimed ‘the Holy Spirit’ told her to post Pride flags with Nazi swastika meme. Needs sensitivity training before she can return to the board.

Federal government looking to cut \$1 billion from National Defense budget, just weeks after endorsing NATO pledge to hit 2% spending benchmark.

Costco sparks a frenzy as its official Assay Certificate gold bars sold within hours. Spot gold is used as a hedge against geopolitical and economic turbulence.

Canadian fire chiefs deliver climate change message to UN after fire season. ‘We’re spending money on the wrong end of the problem,’ West Kelowna chief says.

Wildland firefighters in many parts of Canada struggle to get compensated for serious illness. Unlike urban firefighters, they are not covered in all provinces.

Ontario promising to improve system for preventing and responding to occupational diseases, such as cancers resulting from exposure to workplace toxins.

\$67 Billion of Rare Minerals Is Buried Under One of the World’s Biggest Carbon Sinks – Vast Peat Bogs in Canada.

Yale Says 78% of Ocean Microplastics Come From Vehicle Tires as they wear down.

Kingston joins Toronto and Thorold in saying no to the province’s quest to ramp up gas-fired generation, clearly expressing it would not be a willing host a gas plant

Achieving net zero and limiting global warming to 1.5 °C remains possible though momentum needs to increase rapidly according to IEA’s Net Zero Roadmap.

Tim Horton’s restaurant is signing on to Too Good To Go, an app that sells surplus food at a discount in an effort to reduce waste.

New tiny device can generate electricity from the difference in saltiness between seawater and freshwater. This could be a new source of coastal clean energy.

Engineers at North Carolina State University have developed a new material that allows windows to easily switch between letting in heat, light, or both.

Autonomous sailing drones with cutting-edge acoustic technologies and machine learning deployed to classify marine wildlife, to study impact of offshore wind farms

Pollution woes are hampering Indonesia’s economic ambitions as more tech firms seek vast spaces for energy-intensive data centres across Asia.

The US FAA has proposed that the amount of time a private rocket’s upper stages stay in orbit should be limited, to limit the growth of new orbital debris.

A Flying Car That Wowed the Detroit Auto Show Could Be in the Skies by 2025. The Gull-wing Alef Model A attracted a mob of viewers at its first public debut.

Ontario premier Doug Ford announces reversal of Greenbelt land removals. Proposal to build hospital on protected Greenbelt land in King Township cancelled.

Ontario had targeted more Greenbelt sites without public’s notice, documents show

Ontario cabinet minister Kaleed Rasheed resigns over Vegas trip with Markham developer Shakir Rehmattullah, whose land was removed from the Greenbelt.

Canada Post made \$800M “renting” personal info last year, “only” losing \$300M in 2022, not \$1.1B. Privacy Commissioner has deemed it illegal. Now what?

Amazon Prime Video users will see ads on shows and movies from early next year

unless they subscribe to an ad-free tier that would cost more, the tech giant said.

With the rise of AI technology and language models like ChatGPT, more people are creating simulations of texting and email interactions with their lost loved ones.

AI and increased automation can help lessen the load for workers at a time when Canada faces a labour shortage in the construction and manufacturing sector.

Huge lineup of people applying for jobs at Bed Bath & Beyond job fair in Scarborough shows the reality of Toronto area job market.

Newfoundland asks oil sands workers to return home from Alberta with the lure of new jobs. More than 10,000 Newfoundlanders are working in Alberta.

Learn AI now or risk losing your job, experts warn. Tasks that normally take two to four hours every day by a few people can be reduced to under 15 minutes.

You can now prompt ChatGPT with pictures and voice commands. The AI chatbot has been a text box. Now it’s learning to understand your questions in new ways.

John Grisham, Lawyer writer Michael Connelly and other U.S. authors sue OpenAI over copyrights for using their work to “machine-learn” how write like them.

Tom Hanks is warning fans he had “nothing to do with” an artificial intelligence version of himself that is promoting “some dental plan.”

YouTube’s biggest star MrBeast seemed to launch the ‘world’s largest iPhone giveaway’—but it turns out that, like Tom Hanks, he was the face of an AI scam.

Getty Changes Tune on AI, Reveals Art Generator Trained on Its Own Images while in a lawsuit against Stability AI over its use of Getty images for training AI.

TeslaBot shows off new skills in latest video. The humanoid robot from Tesla demonstrates its vision, dexterity, and neural network in a new video.

With its tiny body, expressive tilting and bobbing of its head, two wiggly antennae, and short, stubby little legs, the new Disney robot is extremely lifelike – and cute.

Microsoft stores 7TB on glass sheets handled by crab robots. Once the data is encoded on the glass, it requires no energy to maintain for the next 10,000 years.

Honda to test its Autonomous Work Vehicle at Toronto’s Pearson Airport. The robotic EV will inspect fence lines, haul cargo and tote baggage trolleys.

Elon Musk’s X (formerly Twitter) to test \$1 per year subscription to fight bots

The Ontario Provincial Police is warning the public about a phone spoofing and cryptocurrency scam that bilked a Renfrew County resident of more than \$50,000.

Gen Z can’t work alongside people with different views because they ‘haven’t developed the skills to disagree’ says British TV boss.

A New Parkinson’s Trigger, a malfunction in the synapses between neurons that manage dopamine production, shows an early indicator far earlier than thought.

Cambridge University and DIOSynVax created a vaccine using an antigen that could protect against an even greater range of current and future coronaviruses.

Participant Trial Will Test if Antiviral Paxlovid Can Help With Long COVID.

AI holds much promise in medicine, beginning with easing doctors’ paperwork.

Keith Richards says new clean lifestyle is “a unique experience”. “I still like a drink occasionally – because I’m not going to heaven any time soon.”

Plant Fungus Infected a Human in First Reported Case of Silver Leaf Disease in Humans. The patient, a mycologist, couldn’t recall having worked with the species.

Mark Zuckerberg, Wife Aim To Eradicate “All Diseases” By 2100 by designing a computing system with AI to catalogue cells and predict how they act when diseased

Invasive, mutant, self-cloning Marbled Crayfish, now found in ON, threaten aquatic ecosystems. Report them to MNRF at 1-800-563-7711 or online using EDDMapS

Discoveries at Kalambo Falls, Zambia revealed that nearly .5M years ago, human ancestors, predating Homo Sapiens, were engaging in advanced woodworking.

A man who prosecutors say ordered the 1996 killing of rapper Tupac Shakur was arrested and charged with murder in one of hip-hop’s most enduring mysteries.

A Couple Given \$1410 By An Airline After A Dog Kept Farting, Drooling On Them During A 13-Hour Flight, Forcing Them to Move From 1st Class to Economy.

SHORT STORY CONTEST - PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD

YOU BE THE JUDGE! At last! Here are this year's short stories. I'm sure you will read them all and when you do, please tell us which one was your favourite in any category, Fiction or Non-fiction. The judges have a score sheet to go by to make sure all of the stories are judged by the same criteria, but our readers are tasked with choosing the story they like the best. Which one meant the most to you? Which one made you laugh, gave you chills, or made you say, "You've got to read this!" This isn't a popularity contest, so please don't vote for yourself or get others to vote for your story to stack the votes. **Send your vote to the email, phone, or address for The Madawaska Highlander that's on the inside front cover of the paper.** Include your name and postal code and a quick line about why you liked it. We'll share that feedback with the writers. If you have good things, encouraging things to say about any of them, please include them along with your number one choice by **November 17.**

SHORT STORY CONTEST - NON FICTION

A Diminishing Portfolio of Enthusiasms

Pic by Ben White, Unsplash.com



As I jerked my hand away from the log splitter my first thought was how will I ever learn to play guitar left-handed? My next thought was yeeeee-owch! that hurts. For over 40 years I have used that old Super Split machine without any kind of injury and yet here I was slowly removing my intact thin leather glove to find a gaping hole in the skin web between my thumb and forefinger, no blood, a contact injury that looked like an open mouth and when I moved my thumb it yelled at me "Yer an idiot!". I was unable to make a fist and I could see bruising on the back of my hand radiating up from the knuckles of my baby finger and the one next to it.

"Second splitter accident today" said the cheerful Emerg intake woman who did not respond when I asked how the first one turned out. Four hours later, with six stitches and a negative broken bones report, I returned home to heal and after a couple of days, I was able to form chords and play my guitar. Nine days later I was working in front of the splitter when a large chunk of heavy maple slid off the I-beam and landed edgewise on my left big toe. My first thought was yeeeee-owch! And just maybe, I shouted out that thought.

The next day I hobbled into the emergency department to have my hand stitches removed and declined a wait of four hours to have my toe examined. But this is not a rant against the splendid work that our hospital staff do every day. No, this is an introspective into the reality of a condition known as aging, a condition that, until it affects a person, is either hidden by bullet proof bravado or embraced by those too young to really experience its effects.

My father, before his death at 83, knew his health was declining as he aged and that his physical limitations were apparent, would address it by saying: "It has something to do with the year I was born."

After reflection, I determined that everything that moves or that even remains stationary; man, machine, animal, me, were now out to get me. On the very last maple block to be split, I jammed the middle finger (there must be significance to that) on my right hand and lost a nail. So now that the wood splitting was done for the season, and I had bashed my way through that old saying that bad things come in

threes, I was on to the next task from the rural living job jar.

Are there things that I should stop doing or at least get some help? Probably. Cutting down maple and birch, blocking them up, splitting and piling at one time was good, honest, and rewarding work that I looked forward to in the spring and early summer. But now the tasks seem more like a trial than a satisfying job.

There is an old Chinese proverb that kind of goes like, "Man who finishes house dies", and although I can do minor plumbing, electrical, carpentry and painting, I have noticed that it takes way longer to both get around to it and actually complete the small jobs that crop up. Must have something to do with the year I was born.

Back in February of 2020, an abdominal aortic aneurism that had been growing silently within me had reached an operable size. Known as a "widow maker," it became necessary to repair and so it was. The recovery from the successful operation, whereby I was opened stem to stern, was supposed to leave me in a weakened state for six months to a year. I would have none of that and so merely seven weeks later, I started a landscaping project in my backyard.

With chainsaw and ATV, tractor, axe, and various cutting tools, I tackled the acre, so overgrown with grape vines that the apple and ash trees were being strangled and killed in their insidious grip. I worked at it four or five hours a day until only a few strategically placed, healthy trees remained on the rocky ground. Then came the backhoe. For days we dug out boulders and stones - some the size of small

cars, most too heavy to lift by hand, and moved them out of sight. At the same time, we scraped up topsoil from a nearby field and spread and shaped the yard in preparation for planting grass. While this was going on, I built a post and beam woodshed, cutting and milling cedar logs and erecting and finishing the project. That was only three years ago, and I felt strong and steady.

So, what the heck happened? My best analysis points to a physical decline that was years in the making. Since 2015, I have undergone a hip replacement, a rare full ankle replacement with assorted pins and screws and I also got a new left knee. I can still joke that I should have bought titanium stocks but osteoarthritis, degeneration of the joints through injury and wear and tear is a constant companion, and after a while the pain and movement limitations associated with it can slow a fella down.

Other than physical injury there may be other factors involved

too. I often used to consider guys that couldn't wait to get off work to go fishing and would go every day if they could. But shortly after their retirement, when you asked them "How's the fishin'?", "Not getting out much" would be the reply. It appears to be related to what one of my favourite authors described as "a diminishing portfolio of enthusiasms". On many days in the summer, I would have completed minor tasks around home like grass cutting and whipper snipping and then sit on the deck and contemplate the 15-minute drive with boat and motor to the Madawaska River to troll for walleye or musky. Contemplation would be as far as I would get.

Interestingly, through all the physical trials and tribulations, my enthusiasm for daily guitar practice/playing has never waned. I realized long ago that I am less an entertainer than a musical contributor and although I play the odd local gig, my weekly participation in a Sunday morning worship team at a local church is both satisfying and spiritually uplifting.

Is it possible that there is something ever working its way through our lives that prepare us for a time such as this? Could it be that the physical limitations that become more apparent as we do things that we have always done are simply there to adjust our focus from our past to an ultimate achievement?

I think the answer is yes, and I am more than willing to forgo further bodily desecrations and pain to focus on that goal. I must believe that there will always be help to do the hard stuff. Here is the woodpile, here is the splitter, now let me show you how it works.

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When Good Samaritans Come to Pass

Pic by Stormseeker, Unsplash.com

My parents were playing with a country gospel group that took them all over Eastern Ontario. This was about twenty years ago, when I worked the summer months at a lodge. I was unable to attend those gospel concerts where I jammed either the keyboard or bass guitar. Their luck eventually ran out on them while driving on a back road past Harlowe. Mother describes the vehicle's stopping and it did that, "cold turkey."



There they are, desperate for help, stalled on a deserted back road, with no cell phone, OnStar, or nearby homes to get any help. The band would have realized they had not arrived, which could result in them sending out a search and rescue crew to help locate their stranded band members. Who knows how long that could have been and what kind of trouble might have escalated? Besides, they could not spare the time to do so, as they had to play for the service. To add humor to this story they were on en route to play at a Memorial Service in a cemetery, when the truck died.

This back road has very little traffic, and the very few vehicles that did go past would only smile and wave. One person wagged their finger suspiciously at them and Mother wondered what they would be accusing them of what they could not do at home in a more comfortable environment? After an hour of waiting much to their astonishment, a truck pulled up behind them,

and three men got out that looked like they could be escaped convicts. They could definitely give the 'Hells Angels' a run for their money. Needless to say, my parents were shocked. Wearing leather, long hair, jewelry, tattoos, and generally sporting a greasy appearance, they approached their vehicle, to volunteer their help. Fortunately, two of the strangers, who seemed to know something about the inner workings of a truck, got the

hood up to investigate the problem. One stayed with Dad, instructing him to try this or try that. Nothing they tried would restart the truck. Finally, they concluded that it had been the fuel pump was to blame and there was no chance of an on-the-spot repair.

One man suggested either Mom or Dad go with them to the nearest available cottage in order to phone for assistance. Mother was disgusted when Dad

motioned for her to get into the vehicle with those three men, and he said he would stay to "watch the truck and instruments" for any potential vandalism and theft.

My mother said she had never been treated with so much respect. These gentlemen held the truck door open for her. She sat in the front seat between two of the strangers, and one sat in the box. They travelled about 10 kilometers before they noticed some sign of life at a cottage. She had difficulty getting through to the garage because no one was answering the telephone. My Mother was thinking that perhaps their saviors might become antsy and drive off. But they continued to wait patiently for her at the cottage. They drove her back to Dad, where they were finally rescued by the tow truck.

We never heard from the gang again, and they did not want any money. Who knows how that day could have turned out for my parents, left stranded out on the deserted back road, and what kind of bad company could have arrived if it hadn't been for the kindness of those three good Samaritans. They did not have to do anything more than just smile, wave, and drive by? But they did.

Just another example of when "you can't always judge a book by its cover." Another interesting 'gospel truth' I concluded from this experience is that - a man and his guitar are not easily 'divorced'.

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Boys will be boys, so one day Rob and I decided to come up with a plan to catch a chipmunk. Many of you will relate to our plan and probably anticipate the ending. Why not use a wooden box, a stick and a piece of string? Simple, right! Well, almost. It was an hour or so before we remembered that we had to have some bait to attract the critter. There must be some peanuts around here somewhere. A thorough search produced the last piece of Nan's peanut brittle, but I was sure she wouldn't mind too much. With bait in place and a proper hiding spot secured, we waited in joyful anticipation.

Finally, our prey was within range and inched ever closer to our cleverly designed trap. Inch by inch he moved toward the peanut brittle, cautious at first and then with a final mad dash he raced into the trap and ran away with our bait. We would have to practice pulling the string a lot sooner in order to catch this guy. He was too quick for these young boys. It is said that practice make perfect, so we practiced, and practiced, but now without bait. It would be two more days before we found enough pop bottles to cash in at the store to buy some fresh bait. Now with a whole bag of peanuts, we were convinced that victory was within our grasp. We had a plan that



could not fail and we were now the fastest string pullers in all of Matawatchan. It was just after lunch on a sunny Tuesday that we were ready to try again. Let's see now, box, check, stick, check, string, check, bait, check. Back in our hiding spot, string puller in place, we waited.

Once again the little guy poked around the Hemlock and headed for our trap. You could tell that he now had a taste for peanuts and wanted more. The string is grabbed, tight and ready. "There he goes, Rob, pull hard." Plop, down goes the box, we have caught the chipmunk. Now what? We really never thought we could do it and had not thought through

just how we were going to get our hands on him. Well, we have to try something. Better get some gloves, or Nan's oven mitts, yeah, that will work. Suitably protected with the oven mitts, I reach under the box and grab the critter, only to have him bite right through the oven mitts and into my thumb. Of course I released my grip and off he goes, with our bait, again.

This is going to be tougher than we thought, but we are not giving up. Just need to refine the plan so that we can actually say that we caught a chipmunk.

We decide to place the trap on a piece of plywood. That way all we have to do is turn the whole thing over, peek in, and grab him. Ok, now the plan is perfected and we must try again. Just to be sure, this time we put out a small pile of peanuts. The smell will drive him crazy. Sure enough, within an hour he is back, inching cautiously toward the peanut pile. The string is grabbed, the chipmunk grabs a peanut, we pull the string and success! We caught him! But, he is not happy! We turn over the box and take a peek, just to be sure, and yes he's there. Now we have to figure out where we are going to keep him, assuming we can actually get our hands on him. The minnow trap, yeah, that will work. This time we actually get our hands on him while he has his mouth full of peanuts and transfer him to the minnow trap. At first it was fun feeding him peanuts through the end of the minnow trap, but then we started to feel sorry for the poor guy. We were free to come and go, but now he was trapped with no where to go. Guilt is a strong motivator, so we let him go. It was a lot of fun and kept us occupied for a few days and gave us a cherished memory that I am pleased to share with you.

Then there was the time we...
...continued in the next issue



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Ritchie's Story

Laying in the hospital bed worried what was going to happen to him? Where would he end up living?

As a child Ritchie's mother was too busy with her own life, she didn't have time for an over active child, a child that was constantly craving her attention. She found it was easiest to put him in front of the computer screen and set the game for him – at three years old he had mastered the building block game, tetris.

Staring at the screen he told himself to move quicker, the single blue block on the blue block the green T shaped set of 6 blocks down the center between two stacks of three blocks. The left angled red L set of four blocks fit perfect, turned down to the far left side and that line disappeared. Excited, he quickly dropped the right angled L upside down into an opening 2 blocks high and on top of another row. The row disappeared. With speed and accuracy he reversed the direction of the blocks that were dropping, they fit perfectly into the hole and across two blocks and poof! -- two rows gone.

He was trying to beat his score of yesterday, which was 1223 rows completed before the blocks came too fast and he crashed the game, he was at 987 rows and worried that his mother was going to come in and turn his game off, listening he could hear she was still on the phone with one of her sisters, so he moved with speed and expertise building rows with the blocks, and to keep the lines disappearing.

When his mother ended her phone call he thought, "oh NO" she's coming, and he moved with accuracy and speed, she opened the door and entered the room, he looked at his achievements for the day, 1243 lines!! Yes! He screamed. As she turned the machine off.

He was taken to the kitchen and seated at the table in his booster seat, too eat. There it was, his favourite, fries with



Pic by Markus Spiske lar, Unsplash.com

ketchup. After lunch he was taken to his bedroom, for a nap, closing the door behind her, she disappeared.

Within seconds he climbed out of the bed and headed for his building blocks, the wooden shapes were his favourite toy, he could build the walls he created on the screen, and then knock them down when he finished a wall to his satisfactory.

As he was growing up, he had a very hard time turning off his brain, sleeping and falling asleep was very difficult, he was always thinking, designing, figuring out how to do things, such as how to get onto the fridge, so he could get to the cupboards and indulge himself in some hidden candy. Or how to get the coke bottle open.

Finally he went to school, he had looked out the window and asked his mother many times where the kids on the street were going in the morning, and why they were not around during the day, but some days they were there all day? Now, he knew where they were going, and he was thrilled to go to school each day.

He attacked the puzzle as he would have attacked the tetris game. Quickly he rearranged the puzzle pieces into the picture, his teacher was shocked

at his speed and accuracy. She had to be creative to keep him busy and amused in kindergarten.

He continued through school as if he was in a contest, with himself of course, how fast he could learn the information and apply it to the work the teachers provided.

By grade eleven he was thinking way ahead of the other kids, snapping up the information and applying it. He took only seconds to learn the new computer programs, and then could apply them where needed. Quite often in high school he was called upon to fix or figure out what was wrong with the computers, or the internet connections, for the school board!

He left high school early and went to college for computers. Upon finishing the course he was offered a job, troubleshooting and testing for three companies, to keep them safe from break in's and to make sure there was no way to break into the system, protecting the information for the company's. He loved his work. When his friend Joel finished school the following year, they moved with another friend Sandy to Toronto, closer to work for him, and a new life for all of them.

Ritchie was earning \$60 an hour. They were living the fast pace life of the big city. Parties, clubbing a couple nights a week, meeting people and generally enjoying City life.

He bought himself a 1998 new Transam, not driving it in Toronto, but using it whenever the group of them wanted to make an escape from the big city, and go home to Lyza, Joel's mother's

house and his two younger sisters.

Years before, when Ritchie went to college for computers, he had lived with Lyza, Joel and her two girls, Samantha and Cherie.

Ritchie had moved into Lyza's home so he could be closer to school, while he went to college. In grade 10 his parents had divorced, Ritchie and his younger brother were moved to the country, far away from his friends and the city, so the move to Lyza's was good for him. He could take a bus to anywhere he wanted to go.

When he moved in to Joel's mother's house, he became a part of the family, he fit right in, got along well with everyone, and became another son and brother for the girls.

Now, here he was in the hospital, what had happened? He could not sleep and could not remember things that had happened for a few days, the missing days.

Apparently, what the doctors had found was that the wifi and cell phone connections was affecting his brain, in short it was messing with the lithium in his brain.

The hospital studied him for a few days, ran tests and then called the families, {including Lyza} to the hospital to talk things over, and explain what had happened. Every time he turned on his cell phone his brain scrambled, and he could not remember who he was or where he was.

He really didn't want to go with either of his bitter, angry parents, he just wanted to go back to Lyza's house.

Lyza okayed the idea of him coming home with her, and she watched over him, he was not able to go on a computer, or use his cell phone anymore, so he took a job with a home builder, as a general labourer, he laughed and said "I make \$9 an hour"! But his brain was working fine, and he could find many happy things to do, without playing on the computer or using the cell phone. Thank goodness Lyza still had a land line in the house and many board games, Risk was a board game they all enjoyed.

Lyza asked Ritchie "so what happened to you for those 2 days you disappeared"? Ritchie laughed and said "you wouldn't believe it if I told you"! That's another story.

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The Lost and Found

The hot sun beat down on Abigail, as she lay on the scattered debris of the forest floor.

Abigail had an average life in her small community, married with two children. She kept busy with her daily routines, getting up early so she could have time with her husband Kirk, when he left for work, she busied herself with preparing breakfast for the two boys. As usual they were late and the bus was coming down the dusty country road, the boys flew out the door ignoring their mothers' words of "have a great day!"

Turning back to her kitchen she sighed and started cleaning up, she thought how mundane her days were becoming, her tears flowed freely, and she felt an overwhelming sadness envelope her. Falling to her knees in such deep despair she openly wept.

Anxiety filled her body with the desire to run, just run, and she did.

Tiny pebbles stung her bare feet like angry bees, as she blindly ran down the dusty country road. The woods enveloped her into its darkest hallows, she stumbled landing on the debris of the forest floor. Mentally and physically drained she did not fight the desire to close her eyes, she was exhausted in so many ways.

Abigail felt the warmth of the sun on her aching body, and her head ached terribly. Confusion set in as she slowly woke to her new reality, she was no longer in the confines of her kitchen. Shielding her eyes from the brightness of the golden sun, she slowly looked around.

Pine trees towered above her and her mind raced to understand where she was. Her body was soaked in pain, the mere act of sitting up took heroic effort. Abigail scanned her surroundings, there were no roads or paths that she could have followed, just a jumbled forest floor. She steadied herself and stood up grateful for the aid of an old pine tree. It was then she noticed her feet, swollen and cut up crimson blood oozing from open wounds.

The sound of running water echoed around her, nearby a brooks glimmering water cascaded over shiny rocks inviting her in. Abigail looked at her swollen bloodied feet and entered the coolness of the stream and experienced pain and relief at the same time. Standing ankle deep she looked up and down the stream and drew a blank, nothing looked familiar to her.

Abigail waded out of the water and found cool solace under the pine trees; her headache had eased allowing her to think without pain.

Out of habit she found herself twisting a gold band on her left hand, it felt cold to the touch. She looked at it shining in the sunlight, she could feel anxiety building inside, why did this gold band evoke such feelings?

Abigail took in a deep breath, closed her eyes and tried to relax, and



Pic by Nelson Eulalio, Unsplash.com

slowly snippets of her life played out in her mind.

She recalled a sadness within, a desperate need to find herself, her true self. Slowly she pieced her life together, her husbands name was Kirk, she had two teenage boys and she lived down a dusty country road. They must be so worried about her, or were they? Abigail remembered she felt this way for a long time, just available for her family without acknowledgement from them. One day running into another, a robot performing duties for the good of others. Fresh tears erupted like a volcano finding release, she cried for what seemed hours. She cried for what she lost in her childhood that led her to be the person she became as an adult, always giving to others leaving nothing for herself.

Abigail had a troubling childhood and believing she was not affected walked into a marriage and motherhood. Now, alone in the woods her thoughts became more clear replaying on a loop in her head. Kirk left for work without as much as a goodbye, the boys went off to school oblivious to the words she spoke to them, and in the moment, it became too much for her to bare. She could not remember running into the woods or how long she was there, or how she would get home.

Abigail sat in quiet contemplation for hours, she knew her thoughts and emotions were coming from a place

that she had no tools to repair. She had come to the realization that she would seek help when she made it back home. She glanced up to see the sun was falling behind the pines, it had to be late, did anyone miss her yet?

Her thoughts were interrupted by the sounds of someone or something walking on the twigs and debris of the forest floor.

She stayed still and silent waiting for whatever was coming her way.

Barking was initiated when Abigail tried to hide behind the tree, she stepped on a brittle branch snapping it

in half. A German Shepard was eyeing her up and bounded towards her, Abigail yelled for the dog to stop, and in return she heard someone call her name. Afraid to respond she stood frozen, watching and anticipating the worse. She was surprised to see a man in a uniform bounding up behind the dog. Are you Abigail he asked once again as he quickly assessed her for serious injuries.

Abigail responded with a weak yes, but inside she felt a renewed energy, she was found!

As the officer wrapped her feet with bandages from his emergency kit, he said your husband Kirk reported you missing at noon when you failed to answer the phone, you always answered the phone when he called at lunch, you were always home. Arriving at the house he found your car keys, purse, and shoes right where you always set them. He could not locate you, he called 911.

As the officer helped Abigail out of the woods, she looked up at the tall pines, the sun was setting high above them, the sounds of the babbling brook slowly faded. Sitting in the cruiser, Abigail's thoughts went to the revelation she made in the solitude of nature.

She didn't think much of her childhood, she didn't want to, but now she would have to. Abigail realized it did affect who she had become, how she coped or did not cope as a wife, mother and a person in her community.

Walking up the familiar steps, Abigail felt the old familiar feelings of in trepidation, she stepped inside, her heart leapt with hope as her husband and sons were there with open arms. Through her tears, she saw the love they had for her, their swollen eyes told her they were suffering too.

Abigail did seek help, and family therapy brought a new understanding of what she needed to be her best self, and not to feel guilty about finding time to just be alone with her thoughts. Abigail was given the tools to heal from her past and go forward with new goals. A woman once lost has now been found.

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Tea for Two

He woke up when he started hearing the pitter-patter of rain against his window, but he laid there for a little while longer, at peace in the comfort of his fluffy blanket that shielded him from outside his bed, and the pillows his head gently sunk into, dulling the noise of the rain. More than likely, Tom would have stayed in bed all day, when he remembered something; Mari is here.

He shifted out from under the covers and made his way to the kitchen. He filled the kettle up with water, just enough to make two cups. A minute passed, and the water was ready.

"Mari likes green tea," he recalled aloud, adding the respective bag to her cup. In the living room were two cozy chairs and a small table, perfect for reading on a rainy day, or, perhaps, for sharing a beverage with your companion. He sat down across from where Mari was already seated comfortably and placed their cups on the side table.

"Hello Mari," he greeted, "How was the market today?"

"Oh, it was quite nice. I found everything I was looking for. I also happened to run into Sal, he's doing very well."

"Sal? Gosh, I haven't seen him in ages." He said, sipping his tea. "We really should catch up sometime."

Mari swept her long auburn hair behind



her ear. "Have you finished writing it yet?" she asked.

He tapped his finger against his cup. "Welllll..."

"Oh, come on now, you." She chided playfully.

"You know how it is," he protested with a hint of a smirk. "It takes time for inspiration to come when writing."

"A long time, in your case." "I'm sure I'll have it finished when it needs to be."

"If you're so sure then, carry on." She said with a smile tugging her cheek.

When she smiled, her beautiful brown eyes seemed to shine. Her eyes were like

the colour of her tea.

"The weather's been nice, hasn't it?"

"Yes," he agreed, gazing out at the swirling gray sky and the endless raindrops. "I've always loved the rain." He raised his cup to his lips, only to find it empty. "Pardon me a moment, I'm going to get a refill."

Standing in the kitchen as he prepared his drink, he noticed a dull plip sound close nearby. He looked over and saw a raindrop dripping through the ceiling and splattering on the counter. He furrowed his brow and took a closer look at the leak, then decided that sticking a bit of duct tape should hold it off for now. He took his tea and sat back down with Mari.

"Anything the matter?" she asked.

"Just a bit of a leak, nothing to be troubled about." He assured her. "Anyhow, we haven't talked about you much yet. I know you love making those paintings of yours, how did your last project turn out? The one with the gorgeous swirls of blue and crimson?"

"Well, I'm actually still working on that one..." she confessed.

"Really? But you started it ages ago! And here you were chewing me out for not finishing the-"

She chuckled. "I guess that's something we do have in common."

He smiled back and began to respond, but something caught his attention: Plip. Plip. Plip. He glanced back at the kitchen and noticed the rain was leaking through faster, in larger drops. "Uhhh... give me a moment, Mari." He walked to the counter to find that the water was simply dripping through the duct tape as if it wasn't there. "I don't have time for this right now," he grumbled and reluctantly stuck more duct tape on top.

"And you're sure there's nothing wrong?" Mari asked when he had sat back down.

"You worry too much."

She stared at her tea. "Have you heard from Louis recently?"

"I... haven't spoken to him in a while." He stirred his drink. "Well, I mean, I've been busy, you know? And he's probably been quite busy himself, I wouldn't want to bother him."

"Right," she said half-heartedly. "I was just thinking of the times when we would all go out to town and spend the whole day together, driving around... we went to the bar in the evening, and Louis would get so drunk he'd start singing in front of everyone, and you and Sal had to help get him to the car..."

Tom's hands shook slightly holding his cup. He realized the drip behind him had not only returned, but was now a steady stream of water leaking onto the counter and starting to spill over to the floor.

Mari continued. "...Sal would look around at us all with his big smile and say to remember these nights when we become old and stuffy, to remember the time when we were all friends..."

"I... w-well..." Tom got up and rushed to the kitchen. The ceiling was gushing rain now, so much that the water was up to his ankles. He grabbed whatever was nearby and tried to block the leak, but it was futile. The water kept pouring in, and all the while Mari's words were ringing through his head; Sal would look around at us with his big smile... remember the time when we were all friends...

"But you haven't been doing that, have you?" Mari was staring forlornly out the window. Her eyes were as gray as the storm outside. "You've just been trying to forget."

The water had risen up to his knees now.

"Tom," she continued, "why couldn't you have just shown up?" She ran a finger across the rim of her teacup, still completely full. "When you didn't come to Sal's funeral... it broke our hearts. Don't you know it was hard for us too? We needed to be there for each other, you, Louis and I, more than ever. But you never came. You couldn't even bother to finish writing your eulogy for him."

The room was filling with water impossibly fast, already past his waist.

"And you couldn't even bear to leave your house since then. Were you too afraid to look us in the eye after? Or was it too painful to remember the friend you never gave yourself closure for?"

The water was up to his neck. Tom struggled to breathe as Mari's words echoed in his mind. He thrashed in the water, trying to stay above the surface, but he felt as though his limbs were numb. The water rose above his chin, up to his eyes, then over his head. He felt his strength give out as he sank to the bottom, heavy as a tombstone.

He woke up.

It wasn't raining today.

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A Marriage on the Opeongo Line

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I remember that cold day in January 1881. I was in our yard with Maria and Franz, my young sister and brother, feeding the chickens, when our parish priest arrived by sleigh from Brudenell with a man I had never seen before. I curtsied, as Papa said we must whenever we meet a priest. By the way the stranger looked at me I thought he believed I was curtsying to him. He was wearing a homemade woollen coat, baggy pants, and worn-down leather boots. He started to smile but then looked down and turned away.

They didn't stop to talk to me but went straight to the front door of our house where Papa came to greet them.

"Ah, Father McCormac, such an honour, welcome to our home," Papa said.

"Ignaz Schäfer," the priest said, "I would like you to meet Josef Bauer who has come from Denbigh on a special mission. May we come in?"

"Yes, yes, please do," Papa said, and held the door open for them. They went into the house and Papa closed the door behind them.

The men were inside for less than half an hour. When they came out I curtsied again to the priest who said "Good-bye for now, Theresia" as he walked quickly by me to his horse and sleigh. The stranger didn't say anything. He didn't even glance my way before riding off with the priest.

A few minutes later Papa came out and asked me to come into the house. He sent my brother August out to watch over Maria and Franz.

"Theresia," Papa said, "this man who came with Father McCormac, Josef Bauer, would like to marry you and take you to live with him on his farm in Denbigh."

For a moment I thought I wasn't hearing him right and I couldn't speak. Papa must have seen the shock on my face, for he continued, "Your mother and I think this is a godsend, a blessing, and we have Father McCormac to thank for it."

"But Papa, Mama," I said at last, "this is crazy. This man, he doesn't know anything about me, and we don't know anything about him or his family. How can he want to marry me? How can I agree to marry him?"

"Oh, but Father McCormac has met his family," Papa said. "As you know his parish extends all the way from here to Hastings County. On his latest trip he met the Bauer family at their farm in Denbigh. There are several German families there but the Bauers are the only Catholics. All the others are Lutherans. When Father McCormac learned that Josef's older brother had married a Protestant he told the parents it would be wrong for Josef to do the same. He said he could arrange for Josef to find a German-speaking Catholic bride here in Brudenell. And so he has brought Josef with him to meet our family. Josef has



already asked me for your hand in marriage. Of course I told him we would have to speak with you first."

"But Papa, Mama," I cried, "I can't believe this. I don't want to marry a strange man. How can I? And don't you think a man should ask me, first, before asking you? That man, what's-his-name, Josef, he wouldn't even look at me. He would show more interest if he was buying a cow."

"He is maybe a little shy," Papa said. "You should be pleased he isn't treating you like a cow. Father McCormac says that Josef and his family are good Catholics. He has a farm of his own. What more do you want? He'll be coming back tomorrow. He can ask you directly then."

I fled to my room and shut the door. I'd had my own room since my older sister Annie went to work as a housemaid for a wealthy family in Renfrew. It was my refuge, the place I could go when I needed to be alone to think. But I couldn't think at all, so many questions were whirling in my head.

Before long a gentle rapping came on my door and Mama came in and sat on my bed. "You know how much we love you, my dear," she said. "We want what is best for you. You're 23 years old

now. What choices do you have?"

"I want to stay here with you and Papa and August and Maria and Franz," I said.

You know there is no future for you here," Mama said. "August will inherit this farm. And the prospects in town are poor. Annie makes five dollars a month in Renfrew, not enough to save anything even though she has her room and board. This man, Josef, he seems like a good man. Father McCormac says he and his family are good people."

"Father McCormac!" I cried. "I don't trust that meddling Irish priest. How would he know what is good for me? And he knows all my sins! How much has he already told this Josef? And Mama, how can I leave Maria and Franz? You've been frail ever since Franz was born. How will you get on without me?"

"The real question, my dear," Mama said, "is how will you get on? You know your father and I don't like the Irish boys around here, and the other Germans are all Baptists. And anyway, dear, as you know, none of them has shown any interest in you."

I couldn't sleep that night. What Mama said was true. We had been in Canada only four years. It was my own shyness, my poor English, and my parents' prejudices that kept the local men away. I knew from my sister that going to town was no option for me. And to start my own farm was unthinkable without money and a man. By the morning I felt I'd been trapped, not only by that scheming priest but by my circumstances.

When I sat alone with Josef that morning, and he asked me to marry him, I had only one question.

"Will I have a room of my own?"

"Yes, of course," he answered. "I want you to be happy."

Father McCormac read the banns from his pulpit. Mama made my wedding dress. Papa gave me away to Josef in our church on a bleak day in February. As we left on Josef's sleigh the next day for Denbigh Franz and Maria stood broken-hearted in our yard and wailed.

That was 45 years ago. It turned out that Josef was a good man and he kept his promise to give me a room of my own, where I sit now with these memories. But farming on this rocky land has been hard and we have had no children of our own, to my sorrow. Oh, we have so many nieces and nephews I couldn't name them all, but it's not the same. I sometimes wonder how my life would have turned out if I had been able to refuse Josef that day, but there is no answer to that.



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The Door

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Ron and Louise were staying in an old Medieval Castle in Wales which was being renovated by a young couple. The bedroom was furnished with old worn-out furniture which had seen better days. The fireplace, which had not been used for decades, was blocked with such thick cobwebs that it was as if a dirty woolen blanket was hanging over the opening. The oriental rug covered a rough stone floor, yet there was a creaky sound as you walked over it, which was strange since it was not wooden. The tall, dusty windows had lead panes with the remains of stained-glass panels. Where some had broken, the missing pieces were replaced with plain, modern glass. This created a distorted image and shivers ran down Louise's spine when she viewed them. Some even gave the appearance of spidery fingers trying to break through the glass. In the corner was a writing desk with notepaper supplied by the owners of the castle.

To provide income for the renovations, rooms were rented to travelling guests. The chair was rickety, and the air was cold in that part of the room. Louise avoided the spot since it gave her an uneasy feeling, not just because of the unstable chair, but because she sensed that she was not alone and being watched by an unseen entity. The large, heavy wooden door creaked when opened and slammed noisily as if a large boot was kicking it shut! The ceilings were high,

and the remains of wooden slats were apparent in some areas. It was supported by enormous wooden beams with irregular cracks seemingly ready to break free at any time and fall, taking the dirty, stained ceiling with it. Against the far wall, was a tall four-poster bed with a maroon canopy and curtains surrounding the foot and sides. The curtains were tied back with tasseled gold ropes. The canopy was supported by carved wooden poles and the foot board and headboard were intricately carved. The footboard was cut out in the centre with applied dragons surrounding the opening. The headboard was delicately carved. On

close inspection, it was a scene from Dante's inferno.

Ron was delighted with the room, but Louise wanted to leave immediately. There was not a thing appealing to her, but Ron loved the quaint setting. She wanted to ask for another room in the castle, but they were booked up due to a local Eisteddfod. There was not another room to be had in the tiny Welsh village. Poets, writers, harpists and choirs were there for a celebration of Welsh culture.

At suppertime, they strolled down the road and over an old toll bridge built in the mid-fifteenth century. There was only room for one car at a time, but there was an area butting out at the side for walkers when the cars passed by. Louise and Ron were amazed that this centuries-old bridge had stood the test of time. There was no longer a toll, but the Toll-master's house was off to the side and served as a tea house serving clotted cream with scones and jam. The village was alive with crowds of tourists and contestants. The sounds of Welsh Male Choirs and Harpists could be heard emanating from some of the pubs.

They found a pub and sat down only to find out that the custom is to go to the bar to give your order. The servers bring it to you when ready unlike in North America. They loved that an empty chair said 'Welcome' and enjoyed meeting locals who greeted them in their musical Welsh accent. Around the room, there were many Welsh speakers. For centuries, the Welsh were forbidden to speak their native tongue by their British overlords. A nationalistic spirit arose in the latter part of the twentieth century and Welsh is now taught in schools. Road signs are bilingual, Welsh and English. Occasionally when asked to translate a traffic direction into Welsh, the Welsh may make a joke with the translation much to the ignorance of the English!

During the evening, there were spontaneous recitations or singing in Welsh or English. When the Welsh sing, it comes from the heart. The tradition began as the miners were walking to and

from the mines.

As they descended into the mine, they sang. Many songs were Welsh hymns from their Chapel hymnals. Louise, a nurse, noted that considering the awful black dust they inhaled from morn to night, singing would help to stave off somewhat the ghastly black lung which took their lives too early.

When the locals heard where they were staying, they dropped their eyes and asked if they noticed anything peculiar at their lodgings. Ron said, "No, they were quaint and comfy". Louise asked why they made these queries. No one would really give them a straight answer and rapidly changed the subject. There was a flurry of 'Farewells' and promises to meet again the next evening.

Ron and Louise began the walk back to the castle. The trees formed a canopy overhead and the road seemed longer and was ebony-dark. Ron talked about the great evening and Louise became exceedingly anxious as they neared the castle gates. Suddenly, a large Peacock landed in front of them with the most Godawful screech! Even Ron jumped as the massive avian walked majestically away. There was a wall about the castle and entry was through a small door inserted into the massive wooden gate. Ron rang the bell and the aupair let them in.

They walked up the stone steps to their room that countless nobles, even George the V and Queen Mary stayed in when they were Prince and Princess of Wales. Louise wondered if there had been 'no cobwebs', and a fire in the grate for the Royals.

They settled into bed and Ron fell asleep immediately. Louise had the oddest feelings and looking at the canopy, she was reminded of the novel about a couple smothered in their sleep by the canopy falling upon them. No amount of Yoga breathing or relaxation techniques could quell Louise's anxiety. Try as she might, the thoughts of an entity in the room would not leave her mind. She switched on a bedside light and started to read. The choice of a murder mystery had hardly the calming effect desired.

She tried to rouse Ron, but his snoring would not be interrupted. She tossed and turned until she heard the bedroom door opening with such a loud screeching sound, that she jumped up and screamed so loudly, that she awakened Ron. "What's the matter?", he mumbled. "The... the... the door, it just opened, and I feel really cold!" Ron said that the room was too hot, and he was going to open a window. She begged him not to leave her because she was certain that there was someone or something in the room. He told her not to worry and he got out of bed. She heard him walk over the rug and the floor began to creak. With a loud bang, the bedroom door closed. She peaked out from the bed curtains and called out for Ron. He didn't answer.

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Maude the Meandering Moose

By Betsy Sayers

I was born deep in the bush near Griffith. Life started off peacefully with Mom and I spending our days quietly. At first, even getting up was really hard, my long legs seemed to have a mind of their own and didn't want to work together to keep me from falling over. I didn't mind, lying beside Mom was warm and nice, but she kept moving around, grunting, and pushing me with her nose until I tried again and again and finally could stand up. I was super hungry, but she wouldn't even feed me if I was lying down!

Finally, my wobbly legs started to work, and I stood proudly leaning on Mom while getting a good long drink of her warm milk – yummy! With my belly full, I started to feel sleepy and boom, my legs collapsed, and I lay down in the soft grass and drift off. Only then would Mom finally leave me alone to sleep.

After a few days my body figured things out and I was beginning to scamper around and become aware of my surroundings. Mom had giant legs! I loved to run under her belly when she wasn't looking and watch her jump. But most of all, I loved every chance to snuggle up for a drink.

As I got stronger, we started to leave our nice soft grassy bedding spot and go for walks. Mom kept telling me it was critical that I get big and strong immediately because at any moment we could be in danger. "What's danger?" I would ask, but she said I was too young to know the details. I just needed to know that if she lowers her head and makes a long moan or cough then I need to run as fast and hard as I can to escape.

As the summer passed the days started to get colder and the leaves and twigs we ate all day long began to disappear. Mom told me it was now 'Fall' – whatever that is. At 4 months old, I was getting big and strong, and Mom was losing patience with me spending all my time playing and going off to the river alone to drink. We began venturing further and further each day while always coming back to the same place at night. One night, she finally explained 'danger' to me. She talked about something called 'hoomans' who only have 2 legs and will kill us if they see us. Then she told me about wolves who will chase us down and try to kill us! Why does everyone want to kill us?!!!

Mom spent the next several days teaching me to stand very, very still for a long time so I blend into the bush and am less likely to be seen by 'hoomans' and wolves. Sometimes we stood still so long I thought I might collapse again. Other times I got so good at it that I could hide between the trees so well even Mom couldn't find me.

One time I heard another moose off in the distance and wanted to go meet them. Mom got really mad and told me I was too young to have other moose friends and I needed to never leave the safety of the bush and river where we bed down each night. Right after saying this, I woke up one morning and SHE was gone! I didn't know what to do. I ran back and forth calling her, but she didn't answer.



Pic supplied by Laurraine

As day became night I got really scared. I had never spent a night alone without Mom. I remember there was a full moon this night and so it didn't get very dark. Worried and nervous I kept pacing and calling to her until finally I was so exhausted that I couldn't call anymore. I lay down and fell asleep on the spot where Mom always laid. Laying in her favourite spot, I could smell her presence and at least I felt a little bit like she was with me.

The next morning, she was still gone – why would Mom leave me like that? The only thing I could think of doing was to stay very close to where I last saw her and hope she would find me again. I was afraid of wolves and 'hoomans' but knew this was a safe spot, plus I had food and water close by. Surely, she would come back for me soon.

I think 3 nights passed and then one afternoon while I was drinking from the river, I saw movement out of the corner of my eye. I jumped and turned to see Mom coming out of the bush! She was back!

I was so thrilled she was back I ran circles around her for what seemed like hours. I told her I was very brave and just knew she would come back for me soon. Where did she go? Did she meet other moose? Why didn't she take me with her? Can we go again together?

Mom wouldn't answer any of my questions and said it was time for us to move deeper into the bush for winter.

What's winter?

We walked for days. I didn't understand, what was wrong with our little spot by the river? Why do we have to keep walking day after day after day?

Finally, Mom stopped and said – "We're here. This is where we will spend the winter." Instead of bedding down in nice long grasses like before, Mom decided we needed to sleep under big pine trees with low hanging branches. We would not wake up to the warm morning sun on our bodies under here. I wanted to sleep somewhere else, out in the open

where I could feel the sunshine. But Mom kept ordering me back under the trees.

Man, it got cold quickly. Mom wasn't big on explaining things, but somehow there was no question 'winter' somehow meant cold, really cold. It also meant not much food and eating something called 'snow' instead of drinking from the river. Even the sun disappeared most days. One morning when I woke up, I was f-r-e-e-z-i-n-g cold, and my fur had turned white! Scared, I jumped to my feet and the white stuff fell off. What on earth was going on?

Mom said this was called 'snow' and that when we're thirsty, it's good to eat. Eat? You couldn't eat this stuff. As soon as you put it in your mouth it disappeared. Not a single bite ever made it to my stomach. And my stomach needed food, not this stuff.

The days and weeks dragged on until I thought I would never be warm again. Oh, how I longed for a few hours munching on a nice maple or birch tree in the warm sun. I couldn't figure out what I was doing wrong. Why was Mom getting fatter and I was getting skinnier?

Finally late one afternoon the sun came out and for a few minutes I could feel it's warmth. I had found a pile of fallen trees and was peacefully munching away (gosh I was hungry!) when I noticed the white stuff on the pile turning to water and dripping off the branches. I wondered what this meant and asked Mom. She said don't worry, it's just 'Spring.'

What's Spring?

I didn't understand why, but Mom was really grumpy these days. She was nice and fat while I was just skin and bone. She just wanted to sleep all day, every day. As the sun got warmer and teeny tiny bits of green grass started to show up between patches of snow, I wanted to jump for joy and explore. I was so itchy I rolled again and again on the ground – oh that felt so good. I had so much energy I zoomed around excited to finally feel alive and not too cold to move. Mom was not impressed. It seemed no

matter what I did she was not happy with me.

As the world started to turn green again, Mom suddenly said it was time to move. Why? Things were just starting to be good here. She didn't care what I thought and just started walking away. She didn't even seem to care if I followed her or not. I didn't know what I had done wrong but knew I didn't want to be without her. I quietly tagged along behind her as we walked and ate, walked and drank, walked and walked for several days again.

A few days later Mom said it was time for me to learn to swim.

What's swim?

She walked into the river and just kept going. What? Don't we just drink on the edge? Why is she in the water so far? I called for her to come back but she just kept going. I worked up my nerve and stepped into the water after her. Man, it was cold! Somehow my long winter fur kept my body kind of warm and since I sure didn't want to be without Mom, I followed her out into the river.

Suddenly I couldn't touch bottom anymore and my head went under the water! "Hold your head up and walk faster and harder" Mom called. "You won't touch bottom, but you will learn how to swim". Why do I need to learn how to swim? This isn't fun. It's too cold and hard to do!

Finally, we reached the other side of the river. I shivered with the cold for several minutes. But the sun was strong now and it didn't take long for my fur to dry and for me to start feeling warm again. I stood on the shore looking back at the other side wondering what we did that for.

We didn't walk much further after swimming across the river and stayed in the heavy bush along the river's edge. Mom put special effort into making us a nice dry place to sleep and it wasn't long before other small animals also started to appear near us. I especially like something Mom calls rabbits. They move funny.

We spent a few nice weeks there as the days got longer and the sun got warmer. Trees that had just been stick-like branches all winter suddenly had luscious, green, sugary buds on them. Man, they were good to eat! The river water was still very cold, but if you found a shallow spot in the sunlight it would warm up by afternoon and be much better than eating snow!

During these weeks I was happy to just eat and drink and hang out with Mom. I don't know why, but I was still super itchy. I almost destroyed trees scratching so hard that big chunks of hair fell out. Mom did the same and told me not to worry, it was just our way of taking off something called a 'winter coat'.

While life was good, Mom was not fun anymore. No matter what I did, it was wrong, and she would grunt at me way too much. One day I even grunted back – not a good idea. She lowered her head

Maude checking out Marie-Claude & Pierre's house



and charged at me! I ran away quickly and gave her time to calm down. But she didn't calm down. Each time I came closer she grunted and put her head down, ears back yelling at me to go away.

I didn't mean to make her angry when I grunted back at her. I didn't understand why she was so mad at me. Over and over again I tried to approach her and tell her how much I loved her, but she just kept getting more mad at me. I slept alone at a safe distance that night hoping that tomorrow she would forgive me.

In the morning, I woke up and cautiously lifted my head hoping Mom was in a better mood today. She was gone!

I jumped to my feet and ran over to where she should have been sleeping. She must be just up early I thought, so I called for her. No answer. I ran around in ever widening circles calling her, but she was nowhere to be found. How could this happen? Did the wolves or 'hoomans' come in the night and take her?

She's, my Mom. She wouldn't just leave me here alone again - would she?

I thought maybe she had gone back across the river for some reason and went down to the shoreline to see if I could follow her scent or find her tracks. She had crossed the river, I needed to go find her.

But today the river was much higher and faster than yesterday. I walked into the water and got only a short distance from shore when the water grabbed me and

started pushing me downstream very fast. I held my head high and walked as fast and hard as I could but was still moving in the wrong direction - away from where Mom would have gotten out of the water on the other side. Afraid I would get lost, I decided to go back to where we slept last night and wait. May-

be this would be like last time and she would come back in just a few days.

I waited... and waited... and waited. Mom never came back.

For days I walked along the river calling her. There was never any response. Then one day I heard something. It was a low kind of moaning sound like Mom might make. It must be her! I moved quickly through the trees toward the noise. Then I saw them - they moved fast like me except their legs were not long and lanky, going up and down like mine, their legs were short, round and turned in circles [cars/ATVs]. Suddenly one of them stopped and moved away from the round legs and I could see them more clearly. 'Hoomans' - the ones who are dangerous and only have 2 legs. This really scared me. What were they doing here? Why so many of them?

The sound I heard was coming from them, it wasn't Mom. I was so sure this would be Mom.

I ran back to my safe place and waited. Several days I waited, too scared to move - too scared to stay. I needed to stay where Mom could find me again, but the 'hoomans' kept coming every day and I was afraid they would find me.

After a few days of them not even noticing me, I became curious about what was happening in the grassy part where the 'hoomans' spent their time every day. When all was quiet, I decided to go have a look. I wandered over and began tasting the funny smelling plants with red berries on them. They weren't all that bad, but I far preferred tree buds and sugary leaves.

It was fun to explore in the early morning. I wasn't afraid anymore, I could hear the 'hoomans' coming from a long way off, so it was easy to head back into the bush before they arrived. It was interesting to watch them. I became less and less afraid of them. They seemed harmless.

They were much smaller than I am. It takes them a long time to walk anywhere - I'm sure I could just outrun them. I wonder why Mom was so afraid of them.

One morning I was wandering with my nose stuck in the berries trying to figure out why these trails between the red berries didn't go anywhere. Just up and down - up and down. As I concentrated on trying to figure this out and casually looked up there was a 'hooman' quite close by! She didn't look very threatening. She looked like she was more afraid of me than I was of her. I just wandered away, and she slowly moved to another area further from me and where I wanted to go. What's so dangerous about this I thought.

As the days went by there started to be more and more 'hoomans', and even scarier, more of those round legged things that make noise. I decided it was time for me to move further into the bush upstream.

I wandered around for a few days until I came across a wonderful area full of my favourite foods, Aspen, Birch, Maple, and Cherry trees. Not only was this a food bonanza, but there was a good swampy area close by and lots of nice, sunny grassy areas to sleep during the day. I settled in nicely and gradually my thoughts of Mom were fewer and I realized I would likely never see her again.

Over the coming weeks I met 'hoomans' several times. Sometimes on the road where they thought they could scare me along by bringing those round legged things close. I overheard someone calling it a 'truck'.

Often there was a loud, barking animal with them. One time I was in a grumpy mood and imitated Mom when she was mad at me. Ears back, head down, grunting I took a few fast steps towards the truck and boy did they scramble. Who knew I could be brave and scare others?

I meandered around this part of the bush seeing 'hoomans' many times. They would talk kindly to me while standing very still or slowly back away from me. Some made funny clicking sounds [camera] when they saw me, but I didn't care. I now knew how to make them leave me alone. After all, I'm much bigger and stronger than they are.

It seemed no matter where I went there was some 'hooman' following me. It got really crazy. They started talking to me and calling me Maude (and Strawberry; Beauty; Daisy). The ones who called me Maude were very strange. Every day they walked through the bush and got into the river at the same spot. I thought they would swim across, but they didn't. They just stayed in the river letting the water take them downstream for a very long way. Then they would get out and do it again. They never, ever swam to the other side of the river. Why on earth would they do this?

Many times, I saw bright red, yellow, green things floating down the river with 'hoomans' inside. They would stop when they saw me and stay very still for a long time. That's what you do when you are trying to hide. Did they not think I could see them in the middle of the river? That's dumb. A few times they came



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Maude practicing her "Don't Mess with Me" look at Glenyce & Jack's cottage.

too close, and I just moved away into the trees.

Over time, I became even more curious. A few times at night I looked in the windows of the boxes [houses] these 'hoomans' went into, and boy did that scare them! I was just curious. As long as they didn't threaten me, and especially if they didn't have those barking animals with them, I was ok with them being close.

After a few weeks I started to get bored. I had eaten most of the good trees and brush and so I decided it was time to move on. Once again, I heard the low moaning sound that I thought might be Mom and moved closer to see. It wasn't Mom. It was just another 'hooman' in one of those strange moving things with round legs. I was lonely, tired of this happening almost daily and clearly showed my anger. Boy did she take off! My eyes aren't that great though and somehow, she disappeared amongst the trees. Good I thought and continued my wander.

Later that same day I found a delicious tree and was helping myself when suddenly another 'hooman' appeared to come out of a big funny looking tree with no upper branches [out-house] and startled me. I jumped and barked with ears laid back, and did he ever jump back inside the tree quickly! But then he started making loud noises pounding and yelling from inside the tree. I was ready for him. He didn't scare me. He never came out though and soon gave up making so much noise. After a while I got hungry



and continued on my way.

As the days became shorter and the sun lost its warmth, I realized this happened

last year too. This was when Mom moved us deeper into the bush on the other side of the river. Maybe if I went there again, I would find her. I walked back through


the swamp to the spot where we first crossed the river. I was back where I first met 'hoomans' months ago. There were only 2 'hoomans' here now. I decided to rest in the trees for a few days before crossing the river and looking for Mom.

Early the next morning I heard what was for sure another moose calling from across the river. Not Mom, but at least it was a Moose. I dove into the water and surprised myself with how strong I had grown over the summer. I had no problem holding my head up and swimming straight across. I called back to the other moose. A few minutes later he called back and suddenly we were both running quickly through the bush towards each other.


I stopped for a moment and thought about my summer months around the village of Griffith. Even though I was the only moose in Griffith this summer, it wasn't so bad. There sure was lots to see and do. Mom knew what she was doing when she brought me here. Who knows, maybe someday I will have a baby moose of my own and will bring them back to Griffith - the food was sure plentiful and good.

Written by Betsy Sayers and dedicated to: Maude - the Meandering Moose who brought joy, fear and wonder to our Griffith summer in 2023.

Author's Note: Moose are very powerful, fast and dangerous wild animals. Never try to get close to or pet a moose or any other wild animal.



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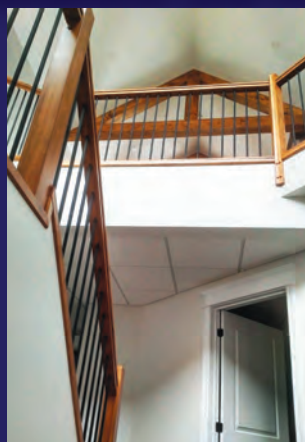
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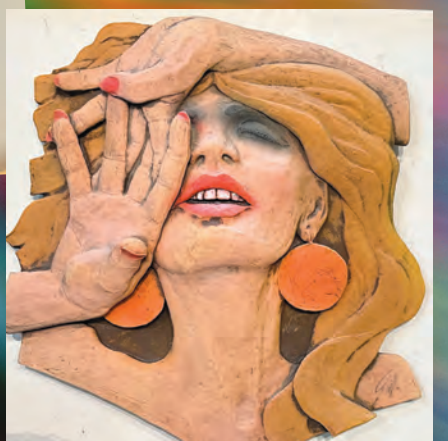
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