

Over 40 Years Serving Ottawa and Area

tbsteenbakkers@gmail.com
www.tsteenbakkers.ca
613-806-2541

TSB



Teresa Steenbakkers
Broker of Record
Teresa Barbara Steenbakkers
Brokerage

Yes! I have Buyers searching through new listings every day looking for their ideal country property.

Thinking of selling? Call me...

According to a news release October 5th, the President of the Ottawa Real Estate Board says, "Members sold 2329 residential properties in September 2020 compared to 1,547 in September 2019, a year over year increase of 51% and a year to date average of an residential property of \$575,506, an increase of 19% from last year. For Condos, the year to date average is \$360,550, an increase of 20% from last year. The sheer volume of transactions confirms the resale market is continuing its upward trajectory. This year has not followed the usual spring and fall cycles and with the continued increase in new listings and buyer demand remaining strong, it allows us to be cautiously optimistic."



NEW PRICE!

\$269,900 Large, older property with a private lane and lovely view of Calabogie Lake. Great village location within walking or biking distance to shops, restaurants, schools, churches and public dock. Lots to do for busy families in this active, recreational community.



QUICKLY SOLD OVER ASKING!

Spacious Custom Bungalow on 3 Acre Estate lot in Manotick's Rideau Forest, Gorgeous property \$1,290,000



SOLD!

*Experienced Realtor
and Long-time Calabogie Resident*

Sunspace Sunrooms! ... Above standard of cottage & country living

ASK ABOUT OUR SUNSHADES

Custom built - Maintenance Free Living - Many colours & options

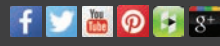
www.ccsunrooms.com



SUNSPACE

Serving you for 36 years
Greater Madawaska - Arnprior - Shawville
& Surrounding areas

613-433-1397



THE MADAWASKA HIGHLANDER October-November 2020 EMBRACE THE PAST ~ ENCOURAGE THE FUTURE ~ ENJOY TODAY

The Madawaska Highlander

Oct-Nov 2020
SPECIAL EDITION
FREE Vol.18 Issue 6
Next issue November 25, 2020

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

Welcome!

...To the Special Edition of The Madawaska Highlander! We have given our regular contributors some time off while we showcase our Short Story Contest entries. That's special! We received eighteen stories this year, which is the perfect number to fit onto twenty pages. We are happy to be able to include every submission, because every life is a story and every story counts. Even objects and buildings have stories. We will learn about a feisty automobile with character and a house with two characters who refuse to move on. Boo!

Our stories range from adventures in pursuit of an escaped Shark on rough waters and a captivating story about an escape-artist puppy, to quiet moments on an old trail, a prayer for a better future, and how a pandemic has taught us to cherish what is important in life.

Stories are everywhere and anything can inspire one, like a pair of worn discarded boots along the trail, or an emotional moment at the annual Christmas gathering. We have stories about a boy who takes a running start in life against all odds, a significant moment in an old man's life, and one about an invisible spider's web. Watch out!

Life is a series of connections, disconnections, and reconnections - lifelong journeys can lead to astonishing discoveries that help define us, as we see in a couple of stories. But who are we really? We are just people no matter the colour of our skin or the flag we wave, but which flag should you fly on the boathouse?

Speaking of boats, who would have thought there would be so much adventure around cleaning them? Well one story proves it so. We live in a world that needs cleaning, and care, as another story explores. We were born to die, but our stuff lives forever!

This is the perfect time to light a fire, put the kettle on and snuggle up with stories that we expect you will thoroughly... Enjoy!...



Malakai fishing at the end of the day at the end of summer. Pic by Cindy Pittman



Breathtaking fall colours at Camel Chute on the Madawaska. By Derek Roche

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



LINWOOD
CUSTOM HOMES

by... **GENERATION-3.ca**
DESIGN • PLAN • BUILD

Decades of Experience
— Building Homes for Life —

generation-3.ca

The Madawaska Highlander

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

The Madawaska Highlander
is a free community newspaper
published 7 times per year by
Reel Impact Communications Inc.
Connecting residents and visitors in in
the Highlands parts of Renfrew, Lennox
& Addington, Hastings, and Lanark
Counties.

**Next advertising deadline:
October 9 for October 21 publication
www.madawaskahighlander.ca
for previous issues**

Message from the editor:

Even though activities are slowly resuming, the Madawaska Highlander won't have space for the Events Page. Please make note of activities in Bogie Beat, GM News, and DV News and check the ads for updates.

Check advertiser messages right away for important information, hours of operation, specials and what is open. Tell them you saw it in the Madawaska Highlander!

We also maintain the matawatchan.ca website, which now has up to date information of what is available for purchase in store or by delivery at Denbigh, Griffith, and Matawatchan stores and farms. The Tri-County area around Matawatchan, Griffith, Denbigh and Vennachar is the primary focus of that website. Also check out www.greatermadawaska.com and other township websites for 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.

WHAT A GREAT GIFT! ...ESPECIALLY TO YOURSELF.

SUBSCRIBE AND NEVER MISS AN ISSUE !

\$39.55 (tax included) in Canada for 7 issues, May to November

Email: info@reelimpact.tv or call 613-333-9399

Thank you to our Short Story writers!

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



When African-American boxer Jack Johnson defeated white boxer James J. Jeffries in a boxing match termed the "Fight of the Century" Johnson became the first black World Heavyweight champion in 1908 which made him unpopular with the predominately white audience of boxing. Jeffries, a former heavyweight champion came out of retirement to fight Johnson to reclaim the title for whites and was nicknamed the "Great White Hope". After Johnson defeated Jeffries on July 4, 1910, many whites felt humiliated and began attacking blacks who were celebrating Johnson's victory. The riots were the first nationwide race riots and film of the white defeat was banned in the US. - Times cartoonist Edmund Waller

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

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

- Vincent Johnston, Sales Representative

WATERFRONT PROPERTIES WANTED

I have buyers looking for properties in the \$300,000 to \$700,000 range. NOW IS THE TIME TO SELL

<p>NEW LISTING WATERFRONT!</p> <p>103 Hart Lane. Calabogie Lake Waterfront 4 Season Home/Cottage with large Great room facing water \$499,900 MLS#1206759</p>	<p>NEW LISTING WATERFRONT!</p> <p>2589 Calabogie Rd. Waterfront on the Madawaska River near Springtown. Four Season Home 3 Bed 2 bath finished Bsmt \$474,900 MLS#1214297</p>	<p>NEW LISTING OTTAWA RIVER!</p> <p>81 Christopher Lane Ottawa River Waterfront 3 bedroom with a large back yard, finished basement SOLD</p>	<p>NEW LISTING RENFREW!</p> <p>215 Wade Ave- Bungalow in Renfrew, large landscaped back yard, finished basement 3 bedrooms. SOLD</p>	<p>CENTENNIAL LAKE ISLAND!</p> <p>001 Centennial Lake Rd Island MLS#1187504</p>
<p>CALABOGIE LAKE WATERFRONT!</p> <p>NEW LISTING 22 O'Neill Point Road Calabogie Lake Waterfront Home/Investment property. MLS#1206313 \$799,900</p>	<p>CENTENNIAL LAKE ISLAND!</p> <p>000 Centennial Lake Rd \$159,900 Boat to only 3.13 acres on Centennial Lake MLS#1194823</p>	<p>LOTS & LOTS OF LOTS!</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>04 MATAWATCHAN RD MLS#1175788 \$85,000 BUILDING LOT MADAWASKA RIVER</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>5254 MATAWATCHAN RD MLS#1187946 \$174,900 APPROX. 3 ACRES TO BE SEVERED WITH WATERFRONT</p> </div> </div>		<p>CALABOGIE HIGHLANDS GOLF COURSE</p> <p>3 MORNING .97 acre SOLD MLS#1183015</p> <p>8 MORNING FLIGHT CRT .82 acre \$49,500 MLS#1183152</p> <p>9 MORNING FLIGHT CRT .76 acre \$49,500 MLS#1183163</p> <p>14 MORNING SOLD 1.29 acres MLS#1183021</p>
<p>WILSONS BAY WATERFRONT!</p> <p>127 Muskie Lane. Four Season Executive Home on Wilsons Bay near Golden Lake \$769,900 MLS#1210840</p>	<p>COLTON LAKE WATERFRONT!</p> <p>13 Whispering Pines. Four Season Home on Colton Lake. Well updated, propane heat and finished basement \$589,900 MLS#121627</p>			

PEOPLE'S CHOICE Tell us which ones you think are the best.

YOU BE THE JUDGE

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

Choose your favourite in each category based purely on how much you enjoyed reading them.

Send us the title of one favourite in each category on or before November 13, 2020

By email to: info@reelimpact.tv

**By post to:
Madawaska Highlander
3784 Matawatchan Rd.
Griffith ON, K0J 2R0**

Please include your name and address, and a sentence about what you liked about your choices. The names of contest winners, including People's Choice, will be printed in the Winter edition of The Madawaska Highlander that comes out on November 25.

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

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

PRIZES:

Adult Fiction - \$200

Adult Non-fiction - \$200

Youth Fiction or Non-Fiction - \$50

People's Choice (most votes in any category) - 1st prize \$50.

- 2nd prize novel "A Time to Love and a Time to Die", by Michael Joll

FICTION - DOLLY THE MOTORCAR

Dolly the Motorcar

Dolly was a motorcar, a very old motorcar. Dolly's owner was also very old. His name was Randolph. Although Dolly wasn't very big, she was just the right size for Randolph. Driving around town together, they made a perfect couple.

Randolph took very good care of Dolly. He washed her at least once a week, changed her oil and filters regularly, and always drove her very carefully.

Randolph was very proud of Dolly because Dolly was by far the oldest motorcar in town. And in her own way, Dolly was very proud of Randolph too although she didn't say so. You see, Randolph was the oldest gentleman in town and hardly a day went by without someone dropping in to ask for advice or to admire Dolly shimmering in the sunlight.

One day when Randolph and Dolly were sitting at a stoplight, a shiny new red motorcar pulled up beside them. It was almost twice as big as Dolly and in it sat four young boys. Its driver, a slick-haired boy, rudely honked the horn and shouted at Dolly and Randolph.

"Hey old man, why don't you take that piece of junk to the dump where it belongs! Come to think of it, maybe you should go to the dump too." The other boys jeered and laughed at Randolph. The big red car sped off kicking a huge cloud of dust into Dolly's carburettor almost making her stall.

Randolph was so upset he had to pull off the road. But when he took off his dirty driving goggles and looked in the mirror, he just had to laugh. "How about that, Dolly," he said. "I look like a raccoon." But Dolly stayed quiet. "Oh don't worry about them," said Randolph. "They just don't know a good thing when they see it."

This made Dolly feel a lot better. And Randolph looked so funny, there was just no way she could feel sad. So with a cheerful "Awooga" on her horn, Dolly set off once again.

Not much further along, Randolph and Dolly heard shouting. Around the next corner, they saw a very funny sight. Stuck in the ditch, in a big puddle of mud, was none other than the same great, red motorcar. Three of the boys were behind the car, up to their knees in mud while the slick-haired boy sat at the



Pic by Sue Hughes unsplash.com

wheel angrily kicking the gas pedal. They were all shouting at one another.

When Randolph saw what was happening, he chortled so hard he had to pull Dolly over so they wouldn't crash.

"You're not pushing hard enough," complained the slick-haired boy.

"I'd like to see you try it," the other boys shouted back.

Just then, the red car jerked forward and all three fell face first into the mud. Randolph and Dolly tried not to laugh but they just couldn't help it.

"Can't you do anything right!" the slick-haired boy yelled. "Get out of my way." He jumped out of the car, slamming the door behind him. But he should have been more careful because he slipped in the mud and fell flat on his back.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the other boys. "Can't you do anything right! Can't you do anything!" The slick-haired boy looked so angry, Randolph and Dolly thought he was going to burst.

"Excuse me," said Randolph, "but could we help?"

All the boys looked up at once. They were covered from head to toe in mud. "Go away," growled the slick-haired boy. "We don't want your help."

"Are you sure?" asked Randolph.

"Of course we're sure," said the boy. "What good could two old scrapheaps like you do?"

"You might be surprised," said

Randolph. And with that, he walked back to Dolly and took out some rope. He tied one end to Dolly and the other end to the red car. "Now you boys push while I tow you out," instructed Randolph.

The boys stared at Randolph and then at Dolly and then at their own big red car. Then they started to laugh. They laughed and they laughed and they laughed. "You pull us out?!" scoffed the slick-haired boy. "Now that's funny!"

"Do you have a better idea?" asked Randolph.

The other boys stopped laughing and looked at the slick-haired boy. Very reluctantly, he climbed out of the mud and back into his car. The other boys got ready to push.

Randolph took his seat at Dolly's wheel. He leaned forward and patted her dashboard. "Come on Dolly," he coaxed, "I know you can do it." Randolph felt Dolly rev her engine in reply. "Okay girl," he said, "here we go." Then Randolph threw Dolly into gear and stepped on her accelerator.

The rope snapped tight, so tight they were sure it would break. Dolly tugged and tugged, pulling as hard as she could. But no matter how much she strained, the big car would not move an inch.

"Forget it old man," sneered the slick-haired boy. "You and that old crate will never get us out. Never!"

But Randolph did not give up. "Come on Dolly," he whispered. "Come

on, old girl. Let's show them what we're made of."

This time Randolph pushed Dolly's gas pedal right to the floor. Dolly roared. The rope stretched tight. "Pull Dolly, pull!" Randolph cried. And slowly, very slowly, the red car started to move.

"It's working," the boys yelled. "Push. Push!"

Randolph hung on to Dolly's steering wheel for dear life as Dolly tugged and pulled. And then, like a cork flying out of a bottle, the big red car popped out of the mud!

The boys cheered and cheered. "You did it! You did it, old man! You and your wonderful car!" They all gathered around Dolly and Randolph shouting and laughing and slapping him on the back. All except for the slick-haired boy who stood silently beside the now filthy red car.

Everyone looked at Randolph. Then everyone looked at the slick-haired boy. Nobody said a word.

Then slowly, the slick-haired boy walked over to Dolly where she puffed wearily at the side of the road. Gently, he laid his hand on Dolly's gleaming hood and drew his finger along the warm metal.

At last he lifted his head and looked over at Randolph. He opened his mouth, then shut it again. Finally he said: "Mister, I never thought I'd say this, but I have to. That's the most amazing motorcar I've ever seen."

The boys shouted and clapped and pounded each other on the back. Randolph introduced himself and Dolly to all of the boys and shook hands all round.

Then he walked over to the big red car which didn't look shiny or new anymore. "And that's quite an amazing motorcar, too," said Randolph chuckling. "But right now, it looks older than mine."

Everyone had to laugh at the sorry sight of the dirty red car, even the slick-haired boy. "Maybe if I take better care of her, she'll be just as amazing as Dolly when she gets older," he said.

"You may be right," nodded Randolph. "You just may be right." And with that, he tooted Dolly's horn and they drove away.

The black truck rolled slowly down the dusty laneway past the kitchen window. This was the third time the truck with its heavily tinted windows had quietly slipped by and no dog barked to mark its passage. Bertram sat rigidly at the scarred old wooden table, his bony elbows resting on it and his chin on his gnarled folded hands. The table had been here it seemed since the stone house was built over a hundred years ago, or at least here for as far back as Bertram could remember. In good times it had been covered with feasts of venison and beef and vegetables. Now there was just a pot of macaroni, soft simple food that Bertram could boil up to fill himself for a couple of days. The cracked birch top was littered with dog hair and flyers and scraps of paper with block printed phone numbers of names of long disappeared acquaintances that he would never look up.

Bertram's old dog Lady, whose sole reason for existence was to lay on her side under the kitchen table so that Bertram could hold her front paw, was gone. Her dying was a reminder of how the lives of dogs marked the passage of time in ten to fifteen year increments. His dogs were always named Lady and for the most part they were all black and white female Border Collies. Bertram never forgot the Lady that had lost a batch of pups born late in the fall under the summer kitchen. She had nursed them there when an early December ice storm pounded the farm. Bertram had been feeding her a buck carcass behind the building when her chain got tangled in its horns. The pups all froze to death before she could save them.

The blacked out truck made no sound as it moved slowly through the front yard. Cold ashes in the old Renfrew woodstove lifted in the fire box from the down draft across the stone chimney. The stove pipe would needed cleaning again; a task that required pulling the pipes apart, carrying them outside, tilting them on a bank, stuffing them full of newspaper and lighting the bottom end. The freight train sound of the burning creosote had shaken the house a couple of times when the cleaning was neglected and a chimney fire had sucked the oxygen from the old stone building.



Pic by Tim Doerfler unsplash.com

The house stood on a three foot wide field stone foundation topped with rough-hewn cedar beams, the dirt basement floor was crisscrossed with planks for walking on when a particularly wet spring would turn it into a muddy quagmire. Thick stone walls inset with weathered wooden window and door frames rose up two stories. A sagging front veranda with some ragged holes in the tin roof, sat on cement pillars over the front door. Bertram had made the holes in the roof one sleepless spring night after enduring the constant peeping of tree frogs. Loaded up on "Tanglefoot", a fermented concoction of red flavoured water from boiled beets, sugar and yeast, Bertram had let loose with both barrels of his Iver Johnson 12 gauge, up into porch rafters and then staggered into the house and finally passed out on the couch in the front room.

Bertram had lived, mostly alone with a dog, in two of the ground floor rooms; the front room where he slept on the couch and the kitchen where he now sat. Over the years, other people, mostly relatives, would come and occupy the rest of the house but they never

stayed long. Bertram was a widower and although he could occasionally be sociable, he kept to himself when others were in his house. He had been known to lock his doors and play "Lilley Marlene" on the upright piano in the front room for 24 hours straight, banging the bass notes with his left fist and playing the melody with the index finger of his right hand. No amount of pounding on his kitchen door could pull him from his tympanic revelry.

The black truck ghosted past the stone-walled tractor shed toward the foundation of a barn that had stood on the edge of a thirty acre field. Years ago, the roof of the barn had been found a mile away in a neighbour's bush after being hit by a rare tornado of mythical proportions. The storm, it was told, had pushed an unhitched plow from one end of the field to the other, leaving a deep straight furrow in its wake.

The field was surrounded by a low stone fence, a tribute to the generations that had worked what Bertram called "hazard land". He would head out in the spring after the frost came out of the ground and start picking the stones

that had pushed up over the winter. Bertram used the bucket of his old David Brown tractor mostly to carry his tools; a six foot iron bar, a spade and a pick. No stone was too big for Bertram. He would dig around the huge ones until he could get the pry bar under to lever it up, just an inch, and then he'd drop smaller stones into the gap beneath. Sometimes it would take days but eventually, the rock would magically rise from the field to be rolled away by hand and deposited on the fence.

Bertram was a worn out man. He had been as tough as they come, his ropey muscles powered large calloused hands that were meant for work. He was a passive soul; sometimes he could be fearful, though a couple of times, when he was younger and under the influence, a dormant aggressive trait showed through. The men from the factory where he had worked liked to go out and drink at the local taverns and although he knew God disapproved, Bertram would on rare occasions join them. The last time he went, so long ago, a brutally obnoxious drunk had needled him into striking out and with one round house blow, Bertram knocked him unconscious and into an ambulance. Bertram never set foot in a bar again.

But this spring he did not go out to pick stones, he did not plant the yellow beans, he didn't cut up any dead elms for firewood - he may have forgotten how. Something had unhooked in his mind. Maybe he banged his head on a beam going down the crooked basement stairs or some weird infection had swollen his brain. He could barely talk and the garbled sounds that came out of his lips sounded like the chatter of Inuit hunters. He wandered around in the old house for days and couldn't find his dog. He'd sat down at the table - no paw to hold.

In the kitchen everything was quiet except for the occasional buzzing of flies. Those damned grey flies that crawled out of the wooden window frames in the fall and congregated in a warm corner at night. One of them walked across Bertram's unseeing eye as the black truck rolled to a stop in the yard. The licence plate read, "Welcome".

Pine Valley Restaurant

Hwy 41 in Griffith, East of the Madawaska River

Groceries (baked, dairy, canned & frozen), Pet food, Toilet paper, OLG, Crafts, Puzzles, DVDs \$2 each



Post Office & Grocery OPEN
We carry hand sanitizers and
Personal Protective Equipment

-552-
(333-5523)

Restaurant EAT IN
Or at **PICNIC TABLES**
Delivery on special request

Open 9am - 3pm daily during COVID-19 If you require take out food after 3pm please call in advance and we will make sure it's made for you.

Home from work, Eve collapsed into the couch. Her rescue calico Sam, climbed determinedly into her lap, purring loudly. Eve fished out her driver's licence renewal, and what looked like a greeting card from the pile of mail she had picked up. She sent in payment for her licence, and (obviously), checked the box for organ donation. That completed, Eve opened the card. The birthday card, from her friend Val, contained a gift certificate for Ancestry.ca. Val knew that Eve had little information about her birth relations.

Ken Kerr (she will never forget that name) taunted 9 year old Eve and told her she was adopted. At home, Eve's mother tried to comfort the heartbroken child, as she told Eve that she was, in fact adopted. No additional information was offered and Eve, even at that tender age, was reluctant to ask. Years later Eve received a bit more information from the Children's Aid Society (CAS), Toronto branch. Eve's birth mother, Treva 19, was involved with a married man. Treva declined to identify him. It was assumed she did this to protect him from the scandal. Treva's own dysfunctional family offered her no assistance. There was no Mother's Allowance from the government at that time. Treva needed to work to support herself and her newborn. Treva had difficulty managing, and couldn't afford day-care for Eve. A despondent Treva took 2 week old Eve to CAS where she was placed in foster care. Weeks later Treva took Eve out of foster care, and attempted to care for her newborn again, with the same predictable result. Treva, devastated, returned Eve to CAS again, and then vanished, never to be heard from again. CAS was unable to locate Treva when her signature was required for Eve's adoption forms.

Reading the Ancestry.ca forms, 32 year old Eve felt a flutter of excitement. What would it be like to meet people who were her flesh and blood? Eve quickly filled out the Ancestry.ca paperwork and mailed it before she changed her mind. She emailed Val to thank her and promised to tell Val when she got a response.

8 WEEKS LATER.....

Eve woke to an orange sun pouring in her bedroom window. She got up and took her coffee out on the deck to enjoy the glorious Spring sunshine. She admired the flowering Crabapple tree that was in full bloom, and then walked into the yard to fill the birdbath. Reluctantly she went back inside to eat her oatmeal and pack her lunch for work. She fed Sam, and left for work.

Twenty minutes later, Eve arrived at the real estate brokerage where she worked as a stager. Checking her computer Eve saw that she had 2 morning appointments, at opposite ends of the city from each other (of course). Her appointments went smoothly so Eve was back in the office by 12:30pm. She ate at her desk and worked on a Sudoku puzzle she had been struggling with. Eve was sheepishly aware of the sense of accomplishment she felt upon completion of the "diabolical" puzzle. She was a perfectionist, and needed to excel at everything she put



Pic by Heike Mintel unsplash.com

her hand to. Sometimes she drove herself crazy. People called her a "Neat Freak". Eve had to agree. She felt anxious and unsettled when her surroundings were in disarray. Did she need to address this Eve wondered. She also wondered why she had difficulty saying no to people, and was always trying so hard to please. Were all adoptees like this, she wondered?

Eve was checking email, and her breath caught as she saw the notification from Ancestry.ca. There were several pages of information and numerous contacts, including her half brother! Eve was distracted from her work for the remainder of the day, and raced home to finish reading her news. Sam sat on the computer keyboard, demanding Eve's attention, but happily settled for her lap, swishing his tail in her face. Eve discovered that Lukas Taylor, a Pharmaceutical rep residing here in Ottawa was 15 years old when Eve was born. Lukas had no knowledge of her existence until now! He wanted to meet, and left Eve his phone number. This was all moving so quickly!

Gathering her courage, Eve responded that she looked forward to meeting him. Lukas suggested 11am Saturday, and they agreed to meet at a local cafe that was famous for its desserts. Eve happily acknowledged that even if the interaction with Lukas went poorly, at least she was going to have a slice of delicious coffee cake!

Eve arrived at the cafe Saturday morning just before 11am. A tall, nice looking man with wavy hair and green eyes (like hers!) got up from a table and walked toward her. "Eve?" he asked. Eve nodded. They shook hands awkwardly and went to their table to sit across from each other. As Lukas and Eve chatted, Eve noticed that some of Lukas' mannerisms were similar to her own. Impossible, she thought! The small talk completed, Lukas told Eve there was an older sister, Becka. Becka was estranged from her father. Lukas' parents divorced when he was 16 (Eve was 1 year old), and Lukas and Becka went to live with their mother. Their father remarried and Lukas and Becka never connected with his new wife. Becka

hadn't spoken to her father since she was 18. Their mother suffered from depression, and her condition declined after the divorce. Becka blamed her father for this. Lukas' face grew grave as he revealed that their father was seriously ill and in desperate need of a kidney transplant. Family members are the best match, but Lukas was diabetic, and therefore ineligible as a donor. Lukas was sorry to drop this on Eve so soon, but the situation was dire. Lukas hoped she would give this some serious thought.

Eve's heart sank. Her newly found sibling hadn't contacted her because he wanted to get to know her. He needed something from her- a kidney for their father. A stranger who most likely wished she had never been born. Until now, that is. How ironic! Eve felt tears welling up and she rose and fled the cafe, Lukas calling after her.

Back at home, Eve thought about the huge sacrifice Lukas had asked of her. She looked down at her phone. There was an email from L.Taylor Sr. Her father! He wrote that he was sorry and that he hoped it wasn't too late to have a relationship with her- his daughter. He added that he had accumulated sizeable wealth, and wanted Eve to be a beneficiary. These people must think they can buy anything, even a relationship, Eve thought. Eve remembered filling in the organ donation box on her licence. How could she decline someone in need of organ donation right now? Eve wished she had never met these people!

Eve decided to reply to Mr.Taylor in person, at the hospital. Eve shook with trepidation as she walked toward his room. He was dozing, and looked frail, vulnerable, old. "I dont want your money. "The old man's eyes fluttered open. "I will give you a kidney." "Not because you're my father- you're not. You're simply flesh and blood."

"The Only Place to Go"

BEST PRICE

**Smitty's Warehouse Operation
For NEW or GOOD USED Appliances**

BEST GUARANTEE

Smitty has been keeping customers happy for 40 years

BEST SELECTION

In the appliance business and

Smitty plans to be around for another 20 years!

This PROVES Smitty has the BEST

PRICE, SELECTION, GUARANTEE, QUALITY & SERVICE

Same-day Delivery, Seven Days a Week

We sell Gas Refrigerators, too!

IN-HOUSE FINANCING AT NO INTEREST

These are just a few of the many reasons to visit

BEST SERVICE

**Smitty's for your
new or used appliances**

BEST QUALITY



**SMITTY'S
"KING OF APPLIANCES"**

(613) 969-0287

**Open Evenings & Seven Days a Week
River Road-Corbyville, Just North of Corby's
www.smittysappliances.ca**

Carefully stepping around the trail marker and over large, mossy rocks, she ventured along the old trail. It had been years since she and Fergus had hiked there, not having fancy hiking boots or neoprene jackets, just well-worn running shoes and buffalo plaid jackets. The exertion of climbing up the rising path and steadying herself on the nearby saplings made her puff, her breath coming heavy at first. Then the movement warmed her muscles, and the musky scent of the pine trees filled her throat and nose. There was little sound but her footsteps, and an occasional far off crow's call.

She decided to come on a weekday, warned in advance of the growing number of walkers on the weekends, and the snaking lineup of cars along the highway's shoulder. Fergus had come up here many times to be alone, all those years ago, striding easily up the rock-strewn trail to reach the high cliffs at the top at last. When courting, she came with him, and they gloried in the panoramic scenery, the vast green gold forests and winding creeks, the sunshine glinting off the dark lakes, and the lazy circles made by eagles gliding on the wind currents. The trail had been considerably cleared of the big rocks now, and footprints were left



Pic by Evelin Tomić unsplash.com

where none were seen in their time.

There were trail markers now, even a sign reminding hikers how much the native people loved their sacred land, and to remove their trash. She pulled a carrier bag from her pocket and began gathering castoff tissues, water bottles and gum wrappers from the ground. No sign was needed to remind her of the

holiness of the earth, no reminder could chide her for not removing the trash that sullied the old trail. Fergus would have been outraged to see that. A breeze sighed through the surrounding forest and ruffled a thousand leaves; she received its thanks.

A figure approached on the trail, a lone man with a safety vest. He nod-

ded his greeting as he passed, a by-law officer who patrolled the trail. She answered his smile, a fellow traveler who loved the land like Fergus had, moving on it until his last sickness prevented him from leaving the house. He turned the leaves of photo journals and coffee table books, filled with glorious pictures of the boreal forest, but she knew he grieved for the days when the scent of pine filled his throat, and the sounds of the wilderness thrilled him, in nights in the old canvas tent. She was there when his hand loosened, then went cold, in that hospital bed, the light fading from his grey eyes.

Sooty clouds scudded over the skies, and the growing wind stirred the trees, their voices joining in a wild chorus. It seemed fitting to her to return to the hiking trails, to be close to Fergus again, a year after his death. A woodpecker knocked on a tree trunk as she passed, eyeing her warily, then skittering out of sight. As she turned her steps to the trail end at the parking lot, she became aware of her aching calves, no longer used to hiking and scrambling. A few raindrops spotted the windshield as she pulled out onto the quiet highway headed home. She will come again now, again and again

FICTION - THE BOATHOUSE FLAG

Some years ago, my brother and I bought a little old cottage on a small lake in Quebec, not too far from Ottawa. Our mother had grown up summering on this very lake, and the purchase was really so she could spend time there and visit with her now-ancient childhood friends.

It was a small, irrelevant place. My brother and I envisaged summers sitting on the dock sipping cold beer in the hot sun, napping all afternoon and listening to crickets and woodpeckers. We imagined fishing with our children and picnicking on little rocky islands. It would be heaven. Or so we thought. This vision turned out to be a fantasy. The creaky old place needed constant fixing and updating, and as quickly as we fixed one thing two other problems appeared. Vacations became projects – long, complicated, projects. Cold beers could only be drunk once the power tools were put away for the day, and by that time the hot sun was disappearing over the trees, and cold beer just doesn't taste as good in the dark. There was never any chance to nap.

As well as the main cabin, the property has a sleeping cabin and an old boathouse filled with forty years of spiders, cobwebs and detritus from the previous owner. It is a small, white boathouse, with a simple, gently sloping, gabled roof. At the front of the roof, over the lake, there is a wooden flagpole perhaps two-feet high. Although the previous proprietor of the cottage hadn't seemed to have thrown anything out for decades, there was no flag.

A flag for the boathouse was nowhere near the top of our enormous list of cottage projects, but it went on the list, nevertheless. But what kind of flag?

The obvious choice would be the National Flag of Canada – the 'Maple Leaf'. We were in Canada after all, and our mother is Canadian. My brother and I, however, are British, and he was in favour of us flying the Union Jack. My aunt, who has a cottage on the same lake thought both of these were terrible ideas. As we were in Quebec, we should fly the Quebec provincial flag – the fleurdelisé. "As you are in Québec," we were admonished, "you need to embrace the culture." When the septic tank needed pumping,



Pic by Aaren Burden unsplash.com

when local workmen were needed to fix ice damage, when a new water pump needed to be installed, flying the fleurdelisé would be of great benefit. It will tell them, "Dans ma coeur, je suis quebecois". Second best would be the Maple Leaf. The Union Jack would be a huge mistake, my aunt assured us.

My brother and I discussed the situation and came up with a different idea.

My mother's parents had first come to the lake in the 1930s, as had many of the other families that still had neighbouring cottages. Being close to Ottawa, many of those families were initially from the diplomatic corps of various countries, the fathers having been sent to Ottawa as ambassadors. Many of those families stayed in Canada and the cottages remained with children and grandchildren.

Two cottages down from us were the Kaminskis. Mr Kaminski had been the Polish ambassador for several years in the 1950s, and the Kaminski children had become good friends with my mother and her siblings. It was from Mrs Kaminski that my grandmother had learned to prepare delicious pierogis. Across the bay were the Bianchis, whose father had been posted to Canada from Rome. The Bianchis always had the fastest speedboat, and each of the five sons were excellent water skiers. The Helios children from Greece, on the other hand, were

excellent sailors, and could seemingly traverse the lake on a breeze that would barely carry a butterfly. There were families from Europe, South America, Asia, and many of these families were socially connected with my mother and her sister.

It was against this backdrop that my brother and I decided that the flag to be flown above the boathouse would reflect, and honour, whoever was a guest of my mother's. The Italian 'tricolore' would be flown when the Bianchis came over for cocktails; if we had American friends to stay, it would be the Stars and Stripes. What better way to acknowledge the heritage of our guests?

Unfortunately, things went very badly right from the beginning.

My mother, having invited Mustafa and Sinem Yilmaz for an evening of cards (gin rummy), we duly hoisted our new Turkish flag. It is a beautiful flag, a red background with a white crescent and a white star. Everything went well until the following morning when Grandma Helios paddled by. She took one look at the Turkish flag, spat into the water, and unleashed a torrent of venomous Greek towards us. When we finally got in touch with her son, Stefano, all he would say is that the Greeks and the Turks have "a lot of history".

A similar thing happened when Old Lady Ivanov came over. Within a day my mother received a terse letter from

Mr and Mrs Kivjärvi explaining that both of their parents had had to spend some months under a Russian flag in their native Finland in 1939, and they didn't intend to spend one minute under another one. We were shocked – the Kivjärvs and the Ivanovs had been at many social gatherings together over the years with never a cross word.

It didn't end there. When the Singhs came over, it was impossible to raise the Indian flag if the Lakhans, from Pakistan, were at the lake, and the Eastern European nations were impossible to keep track of! The Scots and Irish were both offended by the Union Jack. And when we tried to raise the German flag because Otto and Ingrid Schmidt had come to dinner, the entire lake was in an uproar.

What had happened? What had we done? These families had been on the lake for two, three maybe four generations. We had canoed together, eaten together, camped with each other. There had never been any tensions. At celebrations, Mrs Helios would bake a moussaka, Mrs Singh would bring a biryani, Mrs Yilmaz a baklava. Now nobody wanted to break bread with anyone, at least not under someone else's flag.

Then we realized – that was the point. We all got along because we were Canadians. As Greeks and Turks, as Germans and Brits, as Finns and Russians we all had our tensions and history. As Canadians, none of that existed. We packed away all the flags.

Cottage season ends on Labour Day weekend, and all of my mother's lifelong friends from around the lake were invited over for a beach barbecue. They all stood and stared, flummoxed. Flying over the boathouse was a flag that had been an official flag only from 1939 to 1941. A white background with a blue pentagon. Inside the blue pentagon was a white, five-pointed star, inside which was a blue one. But in its own way, it represented Canada, our simple little lake, and all our friends around it. Originally it had been the flag of the League of Nations. What better flag for our little Lake of Nations?

On July 2, 1991, the day of our first summer boat cleaning job, following our rollicking Canada Day celebrations, a Citynews camera crew stands near a boat partially blocked off with caution tape. Its hull looks as if someone splattered paint across its alabaster body. Is that blood? A coiffed, blonde newswoman holding a microphone, stands in front of a cameraman. "...man's body ...floating ... marina... cause of death...early this morning...police...witnesses...foul play." Her forced broadcaster voice emphasizes the words 'foul play'. Erin's eyes catch mine. I shrug nonchalantly as my heart beats wildly. Our employer, the Repo Guy, an Andy Warhol look-alike, told me we'd be cleaning a boat named Mainship and the proximity of this dead man's boat to ours is an unsavoury coincidence. My stomach roils with the hastily eaten stale Timbits.

We gather cleaning supplies from the trunk of the van, rousing the visiting tennis pro, a swarthy kid, Nils from Sweden who lies in a fetal position in the backseat. His sweaty stench permeates the vehicle. In an offer of inebriated exuberance at Erin's party last night, Nils decided to become the third member of our crew. Nothing could have pleased Erin more - a reluctant business partner in need of a handsome male incentive. It doesn't seem to matter that Nils can neither speak nor understand English; Erin will mime the tasks he needs to perform.

I somehow managed to get the job in a moment of ebullient swagger and youthful bravado at the lakeside bar last night, but Erin's the only one with real knowledge, having grown up on boats. Yachts, actually. She is the brains behind the operation; I'm the deal maker.

Mainship is a thirty-two-foot pleasure cruiser with white leather seats and glossy, wood trim paneling. Think Miami Vice. It was likely owned by some now dead drug dealer, or a man who'd over-extended himself during the booming eighties. Quite possibly he'd suffered a similar fate to the one whose body had been pulled from the murky water this morning.

Julian Simons, aka Andy Warhol instructed us that we are to have the boat spotless by nine a.m. - under three hours from now. Julian wants to impress the bankers, secure the contract to sell Mainship. He failed to mention anything about his sales lackies using it for a final bender. They are still sleeping off their hangovers and lie splayed, semi-conscious, in various states of undress in the cabin. I retch at the stench - a mixture of sour whiskey, flatulence and vomit. The deck is filthy, littered with empty liquor bottles, beer cans and dirty shoe prints, all signalling a massive Canada Day blow-out. Isn't this boat technically owned by the bank?

We eye each other uneasily. By now Nils' hangover fully kicks in; his face takes on a pallid hue. We committed to have the boat ready by eight-thirty a.m. with time to spare. Since we are already getting on to six-thirty, panic starts to settle in at the realization of what we face



Pic by Timothy Eberly unsplash.com

- an inordinate amount of work in a mere two hours (even with three people). We promptly usher off the sales guys, watching them bob and weave their way towards the office, still drunk.

We attempt to attach a hose to a nearby water nozzle but discover it is turned off and requires a key to open the valve. Nils dry-heaves off the side of the boat. Erin discovers that one of the sales guys has left fresh projectiles of, call it 'regurgitated' chicken wings all over the v-berth. We play rock, paper, scissors to determine who gets to clean up the mess. I lose, but then persuade Erin to take it in turns - in ten-second intervals to be precise, so that we can also each share the responsibility of cleaning the head, (a job neither of us is anxious to tackle).

We assign Nils the task of fetching and carrying pails of water from the nearby washroom, protracting the progress. The race against time persists - we don't appear to be winning it.

Erin and I begin our task. One scrubs vigorously while the other counts to ten. One Mississippi, two Mississippi. We breathe through our mouths until we manage to clean up most of it. Several times we nearly add to it.

Next up is the head. We have the unenviable task of cleaning yet another regurgitation and a toilet which hasn't been wiped since Don Johnson debuted on Miami Vice in the early eighties. With bilious stomachs, we attack it.

As sweat streams down our faces, Erin asks, "how much are we getting paid for this?"

"One hundred."

"Each?" she asks.

"No, to split."

"Hardly seems worth it."

We finally finish, putting extra vigor into shining the chrome instruments and steering wheel when Julian arrives, brusque and business-like in all white linen and leather loafers. He scrutinizes the deck, immediately pointing out areas we missed. He shakes his head, "This means less money, folks!" I stiffen but keep my irritation at bay - nothing to jeopardize the bigger contract. He enters the cabin and immediately complains about it smelling like a horse's ass. He or-

nearby restaurant, then abruptly departs without acknowledging our presence. We watch him, obsequious and smarmy guiding out the Mainship into the harbor past the Citynews crew packing up.

A red-faced man in a pink polo shirt with zinc on his nose, approaches us. "Say, do you kids clean boats? I'm on the hunt for someone." He gestures to the luminous yacht behind him, an enormous boat with two levels and a diving board. Erin and I are agog.

"Looks like you did a swell job on that one." He fixes his gaze on the Mainship exiting the harbour, her white hull glistening in the sun.

I take the lead and begin describing the crisp white leather seats and spacious cabin and how we can take any boat in a state of complete disarray and put it back in order, like Mary Poppins but for boats. I tell him that our company name is Starboard Boat Cleaners while Erin rolls her eyes.

"Sold!" The man says. "When can you start?"

"Well that depends," I say. "We're not the cheapest but we are the best."

"Make me an offer," the man says.

"Seventy-five an hour and we can start today." I'm not sure if Erin is enticed or beleaguered but I can feel my body awakening despite its fatigue.

"Great, how about now?" A jaunty smile plasters his cherubic face.

M&R Feeds and Farm Supply
RENFREW **MORE** than
a Feed Store!

Get ready for WINTER...

Huge Selection:

**Salt and Enviro-Friendly Ice Melter,
Shovels, Wood Pellets,
Winter Work Wear, Bird Feed**

*Need something special?
Give us a try!*



FARM - COTTAGE - COUNTRY - TOWN
400 Raglan Street S, Renfrew 613-432-8886

Ontarians have been painting rocks during COVID-19 to have fun and spread joy. Ontario Parks says paint could negatively impact wildlife.

Wave of non-existent cottage rental scams in Ontario prompts warning from police

Residents near a Toronto lookout are concerned about speeding motorcycles, prostitution procurement, garbage, and drugs in their quiet neighbourhood.

Airbnb suspends 40-plus 'party house' listings across Ontario that have received complaints or violated the short-term rental website's policies on parties and events

Air Canada offering complimentary COVID-19 medical and quarantine insurance to international travellers in an effort to encourage more Canadians to travel abroad.

As pandemic dog ownership is increasing, dog poop has become a problem. Owners objecting to Vaughn condo that is asking owners to provide DNA for poop tracing.

Sports retailers see early rush on skis, snowshoes, exercise gear as people plan for ways to stay active in pandemic winter.

Facebook users will now be able to watch videos with their friends online using the social media company's Messenger app, enabling them to see reactions in real time.

The Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities' support of Starlink calls on the CRTC to permit it a basic international telecommunications service licence (BITS).

SpaceX claims the company is aiming to start offering services to the northern United States and Canada this year, before moving onto the wider world next year.

Statistics Canada: Retail e-commerce sales soared to an all-time high, reaching a record \$3.9 billion in May -- an increase of 110 per cent compared with May 2019

An overwhelming situation: Canada Post begs Iqaluit residents to pick up their parcels daily as residents have turned to online shopping, Amazon, with free shipping.

"Schitt's Creek" goes into syndication across U.S. this fall. Canada's Lionsgate DeMar-Mercury owns the domestic broadcast rights to the series.

Dan Levy Calls Out Indian TV Station For Censoring 'Schitt's Creek' Same-Sex Kiss The show's co-creator called the decision a "harmful statement."

The popular 'Schitt's Creek' motel in Hockley Valley, Ont. will soon be up for sale.

Ottawa Mayor add his voice to Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police call for changes to Ontario's Police Services Act to allow suspensions without pay.

New Black cultural centre at heart of fundraising campaign by Ottawa musical artist. Justice For Peace #Black Lives Matter, is hopeful, intended to inspire justice and love

The Uncle Ben's rice will be Ben's Original next year. Parent firm Mars Inc. is the latest company to drop a logo criticized as a racial stereotype

Disney+ Adds Racism Warning To 'Peter Pan', 'Dumbo', 'The Jungle Book', and more

Anishinaabe/Ashkenazi producer/director Jennifer Podemski has created The Shine Network platform to empower and celebrate Indigenous women in film and TV.

Canadian tourist returns stolen artifacts from Pompeii blamed for 15 years of bad luck – mastectomies, family's financial struggles, asks forgiveness to stop curse.

B.C. senior who was called a 'loser' for demanding accessibility in condo building wins \$35K. Human Rights Tribunal orders action on barriers that trapped woman.

Consumer Reports Confirms EV Owners Spend Half As Much On Maintenance

A Tesla Model S owner in Alberta was charged with dangerous driving after being pulled over for sleeping, fully reclined, while traveling at speeds of 150 km/h

50 tickets issued, 8 with stunt driving on one night in Ottawa including one driver estimated to be travelling 200 km/h on Woodroffe Avenue in the city's west end.

Ottawa OPP nab two GTA drivers 'literally racing' at 177 km/h on the Queensway Stunt driving carries fines of \$2,000 to \$10,000, license suspension.

School bus driver charged with speeding during Ottawa Police back to school blitz. Police issued nearly 130 tickets in school zones, including 91 for speeding.

OPP East: Suspended G1 driver caught speeding in moving truck on Hwy401 with 2 passengers, no qualified driver AND passenger in the back with insecure load.

To keep people out of Service Ontario offices, licence plate stickers that expired on or after March 1 will remain valid until further notice, but some are getting ticketed.

Google Maps updated its busyness feature to show you live information about how crowded shops and restaurants are. Parks, too.

'Minimoon' approaching Earth may be 'space junk' from 1966, when multi-stage rocket parts would fall back to the ground for reuse while others became space junk

Thousands in China tested positive for brucellosis, that commonly infects livestock, after a pharmaceutical factory accidentally vented bacteria into the air last year.

US man's heart stops after he ate 1.5 bags of black licorice every day for weeks. Glycyrrhizic acid in black licorice can cause low potassium, electrolyte imbalances

'Alberta Premium Cask Strength' produced by Alberta Distillers, named 'World Whisky of the Year'

Pot prices at Ontario Cannabis Store rival those of illicit market for the first time

U of T Researchers have mapped the genes that allow cancer cells to avoid being killed by the immune system - paving the way for development of immunotherapies

Evidence shows wearing masks work, but other COVID prevention measures are more beneficial, like physical distancing and keeping interactions low.

Masked Canadians continue to pack movie theatres despite COVID-19 surge.

Toronto man arriving in Moncton to host anti-mask event arrested at airport for creating a disturbance and sent back to Toronto, ordered to quarantine 14 days.

COVID-19 can last on smooth surfaces like glass for 28 days. Scientists confirmed that the virus lasts longer on surfaces in colder environments than warmer.

Ontario impressed with Renfrew County Paramedics who have been swabbing residents at home, assisting with virtual triage – Hoping to replicate province-wide.

Two Elgin Street bar owners say at least five restaurants had to close and have staff members tested for COVID-19 because of the actions of two irresponsible drinkers

Newborn babies who get a heel prick blood test have a reduced response to pain signals in their brains if held by a parent with skin-to-skin contact, over in clothing.

Ontario providing a temporary wage increase for personal support workers who deliver publicly funded services.

Colorado Orange apple, thought to be extinct, found and resurrected. Apple lasts all winter and tastes better as it ages. Thousands of species extinct due to monoculture.

Documents suggest international banks made \$2T in profit from business they knew was suspicious, accused of profiting from money laundering and organized crime

Unifor says Ford Motor Company has agreed to spend nearly \$2 billion on Oakville (electric vehicle) and Windsor (engines) plants. Getting \$590M government support

The International Energy Agency announced that solar energy is now the "cheapest electricity in history." saying that coal will soon enter an irreversible decline.

Late for work, Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson Rips Huge Front Gate From Hinges After Power Outage. Co-star Ryan Reynolds Tweets, "The gate opened the OTHER way."

Canada ranks #1 in the world for quality of life for the 4th year in a row and recently ranked the 2nd most beautiful country, and now being hailed for its quality of life.

Ontario's move to axe its out-of-country health insurance violates the Canada Health Act, a court ruled as it ordered the province to reinstate the coverage.

Ottawa's house price gains fastest in country since 2017, reversing previous 4 years

Less immigration, travel restrictions, fewer students downtown, work-from-home, shift to cheaper areas, more completions leading to lower Toronto rent prices.

Office vacancies spike in Toronto, Vancouver as pandemic fuels work-from-home

Montreal is seeing a 72% rise in condos being put up for sale, suggesting the city's housing boom may be fading as the effects of the pandemic start to bite.

Tent cities out of control in Toronto parks as homeless avoid crowded shelters.

Canada commits \$1B for cities to buy motels, hotels for rapid affordable housing as hospitality business slumps and more families at risk of being homeless.

Number of people sleeping on Ottawa streets up about 67 per cent over COVID-19 pandemic, new report says. Typically 90 people has since jumped to 150.

World's First Retractable Lightsaber Created By Canadian YouTuber James Hobson

Edmonton teen featured in 'Ripley's Believe It or Not' for unique talent for trotting and jumping like a horse on all four "legs." This is now a thing.

"French Spider-Man," in cowboy boots scaled skyscraper in Frankfurt without a harness. In the comments: How 4th graders expect janitors to get a ball off the roof.

Subway's sandwiches aren't actually made with "bread" rules the Irish Supreme Court. With 5X normal sugar content they are deemed to be confections, not a staple.

Coffee before breakfast could give you diabetes, experts warn

The albatross is history. I handed over the silver keys to Mr. Kerry with a smile on my face. It was a practised smile, the one where I crinkle my blue eyes, squint and the motion pulls the edges of my mouth and lips upwards. It looks like I'm radiating positive energy, but in reality, it hid a bit of sadness and mostly relief at having rid the family of the snare circling our necks for more than two decades. I had practised this fake smile a million times in front of the mirror for just these types of occasions. My client was now the proud owner of a notorious, historical and dingy grey wood farmhouse – a house once loved and cherished, named Maple Acres, for its 100-foot-tall maple trees that lined the half kilometre gravel roadway leading up to the house, just off of Union Road.

Living in Iron Bridge, population 900 meant that not only had I breathed the history of each room and window, but everyone else presumed they had as well. The wood house, sagging from its past sat empty for a decade, abandoned and photographed by the nosy, the sleuthing and the creepy. My sisters put me in charge of renting it out for the past 15 years since I was a real estate agent in the area, and they all lived as far away as possible. You see, this house belongs to my Aunt Jillian and her husband, Don. My four sisters and I had spent many glorious days playing hide-n-seek, constructing elaborate tree forts with greying lumber from the barn, climbing the limbs of the giant ash tree, feeding the horses and trying to tame the feral cats in the barn outback. It was home for us kids for two full months every summer while our parents worked in the city. Aunt Jillian and Don were hippies, believing in roaming, late bedtimes and few rules for summer. It was freedom for us. Jillian taught us to ride a horse and cooked endless meals of fried peanut butter and jam sandwiches for us to pack in our bags when we were out on our all-day adventures. Uncle Don tended to an immense garden, showing us how to tell when the corn was ripe for picking. Those perfect endless summer days of youth, shattered by an axe. A sharp edge, wood chopping axe stored behind the summer kitchen door. Our Aunt Jillian and Don were violently murdered almost twenty-five years ago on a chilly November night.

Newspapers trumpeted gruesome details, and the local chatter mill ran in high gear for the better part of two years as the trial raged on. Visitors, newspapers and the morbidly curious took pictures of Maple Acres, and it al-



Pic by Dan Visan unsplash.com

most became a tourist attraction with the number of cars that would snake by. Three men convicted and sent to prison for life; the rest of us scattered to finish high school and continue living never speaking of that awful day.

Today, I handed over the keys to Mr. Kerry. I had been renting the house out over the past number of years to try and keep it from sinking into the earth and being entirely reclaimed by the sumac and spindly popular trees. Sometimes, tenants would stay for a month, other times they lasted almost six or seven, but rarely beyond a year. It's noisy! they all said. Your dead aunt walks the hallways at night, her light slipped footsteps almost floating over the well-worn honey hardwood floors. Your uncle clomps up the stairs at 11:00 pm seven days a week, like clockwork, dragging his left foot slowly up each step, lame from a farming accident. And the air in the house at 2:20 am every single night, feels chilly, a blast from some unknown source even in the thick of a hazy, humid summer.

At first, I discounted these stories as people with overactive imaginations who knew its past from a quick search of the internet. But after one tenant left in the middle of the first week, vanishing into the inky night leaving the front wood door thrown wide open, I couldn't ignore the possibility that the ghosts of my aunt and uncle inhabited the house.

I never entered the place except with a contractor who had to fix a broken pipe or faucet. My bad luck as a landlord had ended with Mr. Kerry. He and his wife, two teenage kids, showed up one day about a year ago and needed somewhere to live while he taught at the high school. Mumbling, I had told them about the ghosts. The presumed ghosts.

They didn't seem phased. After a few months, Mr. Kerry matter of factly

shared that the ghosts of my aunt and uncle were alive and well, but they were not threatening. Yes, Uncle Don went upstairs every night at 11:00 pm, his footsteps clearly heard by those still awake in the house. My Aunt Jillian definitely walked the hallways at night, and the smell of strawberry rhubarb pie wafted through the kitchen once in a while in the middle of the day, when no one was cooking. The cold air blast at 2:20 am every night was a little upsetting, but they like the place and felt that the ghosts were just part of the charm. My sister Melanie laughed at that one.

"Charm," she bellowed over the phone. "Are they crazy?"

"It's not haunted, it's stigmatized," I replied. She laughed.

"Stop with the real estate talk. It's haunted and should be torn down. That would stop the murder tourists, and selfie-takers and all the other creeps who seem to need to wander down memory lane."

A few weeks later, my phone rang. Officer Poirier, the one police officer who had stayed in touch with me since the murders was trying to reach me.

"Elizabeth, I have some news." My heart leapt through my mouth and pounded in my ears. I hoped that the last remaining convicted man had not been paroled. It was almost twenty-five years, and I knew that at some point, this would be a reality.

"Sawyer is dead," he stated." He died two nights ago in the prison hospital. He was to be paroled in three months, but he didn't make it."

I dropped my cell phone. I grabbed it from the kitchen floor, trying to breathe deeply. I closed my eyes and slowly exhaled.

"Elizabeth, are you ok?"

"I am. I am ok. It's really over." I replied, more to myself than to him.

"It is. All three are dead. Died in prison. Good riddance."

I opened my eyes and stared out the window in front of me.

Two weeks later, I stopped by the house to pick up a rent cheque, and Mr. Kerry offered to buy the old house. I stuttered, uncertain that I had heard the words correctly.

"The ghosts have stopped, Elizabeth. Your aunt and uncle no longer roam. It happened overnight. We almost miss the smell of strawberry rhubarb in the summer kitchen."

I thought to myself, it took twenty-five years, but the ghosts were finally gone. Maybe happiness had a chance to return.

Exp REALTY
 Kelly Derue, Broker
 Phone: 613-433-2681
 kellyderue.exprealty.com
 Email: kelly.derue@exprealty.com

**Inventory is Low
 Demand is High
 Now is the
 Time to SELL!**

Just Listed/ Just sold!
138 Blake St, Renfrew One bedroom home on large lot in town of Renfrew. Completely renovated and ready for you. MLS# 1213691 \$129,900

Just Listed/ Just sold!
76 Harry St, Renfrew 2 bedroom bungalow on desired residential street. Full basement that could be finished to your liking. Beautiful back yard overlooks ravine. MLS# 1211716 \$199,900

Just Listed/ Just sold!
300/302 Bonnechere St, Renfrew Semi-detached home under one ownership. One side is rented and the other ready for occupancy. Separate hydro meters, 2 natural gas furnaces

Large Family Home!
119 June St, Renfrew Large Family, no problem... 4 bedrooms, 2 baths, main floor living room and family room. Large fenced rear yard. Brand new gas furnace. MLS # 1208186 \$179,900

New Listing Renfrew!
340 Haig Ave, Renfrew 2 bed 1 1/2 storey open concept home, main floor and a mud/storage room at the rear. Detached single garage. Natural gas heat. MLS# 1213950 \$159,900

Large Home on Double Lot!
129 Airth Blvd, Renfrew Large well-built bungalow on double lot. Attached garage. Full basement with rec room. Main floor family room. Two fireplaces. MLS # 1210104 \$350,000

Excellence
 by Kelly Homes...

KELLY HOMES
 CUSTOM BUILT HOMES

- Experienced
- Licensed
- Fully Qualified
- Competitive pricing
- References

Built with the highest quality

Turn-Key Homes, Cottages, Garages, Post and Beam, Log and ICF homes
613-433-1035 KellyHomes78@gmail.com

TARION
 Like

Canada's own singer-songwriter, Joni Mitchell, once said: "You don't know what you've got, til it's gone". No truer words could be spoken when referring to 2020. To say that the year 2020 has been challenging, is an understatement. Yes, it started off somewhat normal, but within months, the Province of Ontario was shut down due to a deadly virus. To have 2020 vision is to see clearly. Perhaps Canadians will see clearly after this is all over.

The Corona virus, later referred to as Covid-19, quickly spread throughout the world. Panic ensued. People were dying. Many Canadians were glued to their televisions, listening to the daily press conferences from our Premier, Doug Ford, and our Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau. There were a lot of 'unknowns'.

In an unprecedented move, Ontario schools were shut down as of March 13. Parents began educating their children at home and had to 'don their teaching hats'. To some, this was overwhelming, especially with parents having more than one child and working full time. Stress was heightened. Children stayed inside and couldn't see their friends. Children connected with their teachers through online learning. Birthday parties and celebrations had to be postponed indefinitely. High school exams were cancelled and there were no Graduations or Proms of any kind. Sports teams were given a long rest. Arenas, parks and playgrounds were closed.

Restaurants were only open for home delivery and take-out. This meant being creative in the kitchen. Facebook



Pic by Long Truong unsplash.com

began seeing a surge of foodies posting their creations and recipes. Everyone seemed to be making Apple Fritter Loaf and trying their hand at baking bread! Soon, of course, the grocery stores were running out of flour and yeast at a record rate. Yes, there was panic buying and hoarding. Not only flour and yeast, but toilet paper became a hot commodity. What a crappy situation! As predicted, a shortage of hand sanitizers and cleaners came next. Non-essential stores and shops were closed. The Federal government offered the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) to assist those that found themselves suddenly unemployed.

Canadians were warned to stay at home and travel was banned. The US/Canada Border was closed and remains closed to this day. In social gatherings, the public was told to social distance and

keep 2 metres apart, so as not to spread the virus through water droplets. Justin Trudeau advised the country to avoid speaking 'moistly'. Travel halted. Many were left stranded at their March Break destinations. A social isolation period of fourteen days was enforced after travel. No one was driving anywhere, so gas prices were at an all time low. In the beginning stages of this pandemic, limits were imposed on gatherings. First it was five people outside your family. Then this increased to ten. Social circles and 'bubbles' were created.

Canadians wanted to 'flatten the curve'. But, perhaps the hardest part of all this was the lack of hugging and seeing loved ones, especially the elderly. The elderly were told to self isolate. Nursing homes and long-term care centres had outbreaks of the virus. It was soon realized the deficiencies that occur in these

centres. It was time to make changes and some changes were made.

Canadians are known for being polite and helpful. Canadians do not give up. Throughout the pandemic, it has forced creativity in everyday lives. Phone, text, Facetime, Skype and Zoom became the method used to reach out to families and friends. Families played games together, danced together, learned new skills together. Window visits with grandparents became popular. Drive by birthday parties and celebrations were common. Churches began having their services in parking lots and drive ins. Some churches offered online services. Doctors' offices had virtual appointments. Some learned to cut and colour our own hair. Businesses came together to make sanitizers, face masks, ventilators, and other PPE (Personal Protective Equipment). Many sewed face masks for others and blue ribbons became prominent on trees, thanking the new heroes: the frontline workers. As a human race, people stepped up and helped the most vulnerable (long term care residents and the homeless).

This pandemic taught Canadians to make the most of the time they have together. In the future, we won't take things or people for granted. We learned that kindness goes a long way. Canadians have learned to see clearly now - to have that 2020 vision. Yes, as Joni Mitchell warned us, we realize what's important and what's not. Cherish what you got, because you never know when it will be gone.

R.J. SELLE & SON

Sand & Gravel Ltd.

Snow Plowing
Excavating . Road Building . Topsoil



613-649-2688

Hauling sand, gravel & topsoil
excavating & building roads and laneways in the Highlands
and the Ottawa Valley for over 40 years

Joe, a veteran of the Gulf War, was living on the street spending his day walking around downtown, looking for cigarette butts with enough tobacco left to put into his zip-lock bag. When he accumulated enough, he would roll a number of cigarettes which he treasured and kept in an inside pocket of his jacket. His feet were often damp and irritated from the inside of his boots which he snuck home with him when he demobbed. His socks had long worn out and his bare feet constantly rubbed on the rough insides and edges of holes in these old boots causing infections. Constant walking to avoid being abused by business owners who did not like him loitering near their entrances, further irritated and increased his pain. Some nights he was able to get a bed in a Men's shelter. However, there were no showers or anyone to check his feet. In the morning, he was pushed back onto the street.

Mary was a young nurse who worked in a van which circulated around the city looking for vulnerable folk. She and her colleagues stop and provide clean socks, toothbrushes, toothpaste, wipes, oranges and water.

At one corner she saw an older man shuffling along with difficulty walking and obviously in pain. They stopped the van and Mary approached him tentatively, so as not to cause him anxiety. He was wearing an old desert camo jacket so she was concerned he might be suffering from PTSD. 'Hello, I'm Mary. My partner Fred and I noticed you look as if you may have sore feet. May we look at them?' Joe had trouble with authority figures after his experience in the military and a few nights in jail for loitering. He hesitated and started to walk away. Fred said, 'Where did you serve?' A conversation developed between these two veterans about annoying superior officers and bad food. Mary returned to the van while the men were visiting. She began to unwrap the sterile basin, swabs, a cleaning solution and bandaging supplies. Fred, a Paramedic, came back in with Joe and asked him to sit down. They asked Joe if they could take his temperature and blood pressure. He hesitated for a moment or two and started to get up to leave. Mary said, 'If you'd rather not, that's OK. It's just a common routine, but don't worry. However, we would really like to look at your feet and see if we can make you more comfortable.' Joe sat down and began to untie the old rope which acted as laces and remove his boots. He had difficulty pulling off his boots. They had been on his feet for months. When he stayed in the shelters, he kept them on. If left under his cot, they'd be gone



Pic by supplied by story writer

in the morning. He cringed with pain as he slowly pulled the first one off. The second one was stuck. Mary feared that dried blood and perhaps purulent matter might be sticking his feet to the insides of his boot.

Mary asked if she could drip some sterile Normal Saline into the sides of the boot. He was concerned that his boot might be ruined from the solution. Mary assured him they would dry out the boot afterwards. When Fred gently and slowly removed the boot, both he and Mary were not surprised to see the state of Joe's foot. It was swollen and covered with multiple infected sores. Joe was apologising for the dirt and odour. He was embarrassed that these strangers were seeing how he had fallen down so low in life.

Mary asked him if he'd like to have a shower first since the van was equipped with one. He looked from one to the other and his eyes teared up. He wanted to get cleaned, but was uncomfortable. They gave him a towel, soap and some shampoo. Fred took him to the back and then shut the door behind him as Joe prepared to have the first shower since he did not know when. The shower was equipped with a chair so he could sit down if he felt weak. As the warm water flowed over his weary body, he began to feel again like the man he had always been. It felt like Heaven as he foamed up the shampoo and massaged his head. He scrubbed with the soap and could feel the life coming back into his bones and joints. After the water was turned off and he towelled down, he opened the shower door and prepared to get back into his clothes which he left hanging on a hook, but they were gone. Panic set in. 'These people were just like everyone else! They tricked me and stole my clothes. That's all I have!' He banged on the door and yelled at Mary and Fred. 'Give me back my clothes and let me go!' Fred knocked

between them. Before his shower, Mary had taken a swab to send for analysis at a lab. Now, she gently dabbed his foot dry, applied an ointment and bandaged it.

Fred gave him a backpack containing his clean clothes, socks, soap, toothpaste, water, disposable wipes and oranges. He was given a card to call for the results of his tests and medication, if necessary and for any time he needed to talk. Joe asked if they'd take his temperature and blood pressure before he left. It turns out they were both normal and all his walking was probably good for his heart health. He thanked both these kind people and he walked away, much more comfortably. The boots felt much better now with clean feet and soft socks.

Mary and Fred cleaned up the van and headed out to see if anyone else needed their assistance. They stopped by a small cluster of men and women under a bridge and asked if they needed anything. The folks were suspicious and defensive. They brought out blankets and supplies for each person.

Joe found a secluded bush in the park to settle for the night. In the morning, he ate one of the oranges. Listening to the birds was far better than the sounds of cars and sirens. Occasionally, a car would back-fire causing a panic attack. When he awoke, a new pair of boots were beside him with a note 'From a fellow Vet. Peace, brother'.



LOCALLY OWNED
LAYTON KNIGHT-LOCKE
CONTRACTING
PLUMBING & HEATING

FULLY LICENSED AND INSURED

SPECIALIZING IN PROPANE!

**SALES & SERVICE ON ALL PROPANE
FIXTURES & APPLIANCES.
FURNACES, FIREPLACES, HOT WATER TANKS
FRIDGES, STOVES & MORE**

PLUMBING
Repairs, Renovations & New Housing
HOT WATER TANKS, SUMP PUMPS, TOILETS
SUBMERSIBLE WELL PUMPS, EVERYTHING!
SALES, SERVICE & INSTALLATION

**HEATING &
AIR CONDITIONING**
Sales, Service & Installation
BOILERS (NATURAL GAS & PROPANE)
10 YEAR PARTS & LABOUR
FURNACES, FIREPLACES



NAPOLEON
Authorized Dealer

613-433-1111 RENFREW



PURA VIDA
NUTRITION STORE
267 Stewart St. Renfrew
613-433-9437

Mon - Wed 9:30 - 6:00
Thurs - Fri 9:30 - 8:00
Sunday 10:00 - 5:00
Saturday 9:30 - 6:00
info@puravida-nutrition.ca
www.puravida-nutrition.ca

Vitamins, Herbals, Aromatherapy, Homeopathy, Sports & Diet Supplements
Gluten Free, Organic, Specialty Foods, Teas, Books and much more

"Your #2 is our #1 priority!"



Murphy's Septic Service

murphysseptic.com

Serving a wide area. Located 30kms west of Denbigh
in Fort Stewart / McArthur Mills Area

NEW SERVICE: PORTABLE TOILET RENTALS



A local, reliable option for your Septic Pumping needs.
Call us to book your appointment today!

613-318-9070

We are a Family owned and Operated company with 2 trucks on the road to allow us to accommodate you when you require our service.

FICTION - ADAM

12



Pic by Erik Binggeser unsplash.com

On a crisp autumn morning, Marlene watched three cars roll up the dirt road leading up to her house. Soon her three children would gather around the kitchen table in the old farm house and life as they knew it would be changed forever. As they made their way from the driveway to the house, Marlene motioned them inside and to the kitchen. A tray filled with freshly baked goods sat squarely in the center of table, scones for the twins, Jack and Jill, and muffins for Tom, their big brother. Freshly brewed coffee and a pitcher of orange juice were at the ready on the kitchen counter. She had placed an envelope on each of their seats.

"Grab yourselves some breakfast, take your places and do not open your envelope yet!"

Her adult children laughed, fussed over the baked goods and one by one took their seats, exchanging silly faces like they always had as they nibbled on their breakfast.

Marlene joined them and solemnly began telling them a story.

"Kids, I called you over because I wanted to tell you something. Your father left us last year but I know he is standing by my side right now, and help-

Cottage & Home Transformations you will love!

J. SCOTT MacDONALD
GENERAL CONTRACTING INC.
jsmacdonaldcontracting@hotmail.com

Home: 333-5207 Business: 333-5597
LICENSED CARPENTER AND MEMBER OF ONHWP
(Ontario New Home Warranty Program)



**Residential Construction & Renovations . General Carpentry Additions . Roofing . Siding
Soffit and Fascia . Commercial Septic Installation**

We've been building in The Highlands for over 30 years
Renovations and Remodeling • Building Dream Cottages • Constructing New Homes

ing me with what I am about to say.”

Jill looked nervously at her mother. “Mom, what is it? You are scaring me.”

Marlene gently padded her daughter’s shoulder and smiled at her through watery eyes.

“Its okay Jill. Please let me finish. This is hard. Please let me say what I need to say, there will be time for questions later.”

Taking a deep breath, Marlene pressed on. “When I was young, I told you I went away to Montreal to McGill University to study French amongst other things. Well, I was young and I met a young man. We were inseparable and like young people, we fell in love and we were sure we would spend the rest of our lives together but unfortunately, this young man was in a terrible car accident and he passed away. I was devastated. I came back here and never returned. My heart was broken because he was gone but also because we had shared more than love. We shared a child. I was pregnant with his baby when he passed. I was young, a student and far from home. I could not tell my parents. Back then, I would have brought shame to my whole family. I had no one else to turn to except the church and their solution was adoption. I had to give up my baby to the

nuns. They promised me the baby would go to a good home. I gave birth and came immediately home. I never spoke to anyone about it except your father. He knew the whole story and loved me even more. Please kids, open your envelopes now, in them you will find a copy of the letter I received. Please read it and you will understand the rest. I need some air.”

Marlene slowly rose from the table and headed out the door. She needed to give her children time to absorb her words and the content of the letter. She also needed time to let their love for each other and the love within this family radiate amidst this enormous news.

Tom was the first to rip the envelope and start reading the letter. Jack scooted by Jill and they both opened theirs at the same time and leaned against each other for comfort as they too started to read their letters.

Dear Marlene Robertson:
My name is Adam Brodeur. I have been trying to connect with you for some time. A few months back, I took a DNA test with AncestryDNA. I am adopted so I thought this might be a good way to find some family. I was born in Montreal, September 14th, 1978. I know that my biological mother was 18 years old when she had me. At the time of my conception, she had been a freshman at McGill University taking French classes.

My father I was told was also a student there but he was died in a car accident before I was born. My mother was from a rural town in Ontario. I was told she was petite with curly brown hair. She cried a lot during the interview with the nuns because could not keep the baby. When I received my DNA results, I matched your sister Ann, who also had taken a DNA test a while back and is in the AncestryDNA database. I contacted her and she told me you studied in Montreal when you were younger. She agreed to give me your address and here I am. I believe you are my biological mother and I would like to speak with you. Mrs. Robertson, I am 42 years old now. I am married, a father of two boys and one girl, and I live in Montreal. I would like to know my roots. I would like my kids to know their roots. I had a good upbringing but have longed all my life to know my biological family. Who do I look like? Do I have half siblings? Aunts? Uncles? Cousins? What happened? So many questions have run through my mind for years, and as I look at my kids now, I know that these questions need answers...for them... for me... for generations to come... I understand that this might be scary, difficult and present some challenges for you and I promise you that I mean you no harm. I just need peace of mind. I bear no judgment on you nor on past decisions. I need to thank you for my life and the life of my children. I respectfully ask that you meet

with me in person or by telephone to have a simple conversation. I have been waiting for 42 years Madame. I reiterate that I mean no harm to you and will respect your privacy. Life has blessed us and brought us together again for a reason. Please, get back to me. I am your biological son.

Adam

The silence in the room felt like a weighted blanket on each of them as they took in Adam’s words and what that meant to them individually and as a family. The siblings exchanged only glances while they stared, read and reread Adam’s words. Without uttering one word, they stood up from the table at the same time and headed outside to join their mother.

Hearing the sound of the kitchen door swinging open, Marlene turned around in time to see her three grown children hurry towards her with arms open-wide.

Hugging their mother, in one voice, the kids said: “So? When do we meet our brother Adam?”

“Soon, I hope, soon.” Marlene uttered through the tears streaming down her face. For the first time in 42 years, she finally would have all her children together. With her family by her side, it was time for her to plan this long-awaited reunion.

From start to finish and everything in between...

**BMR
PRO**

**Project estimates, Tool Rentals,
Custom Windows and Doors,
Lumber Cutting Service, Electrical,
Tools, Sico Paints, Plumbing,
RV and Seasonal items, Hardware,
Stove and Fireplace,
Drive-through covered Wood piles
and so much more!**

**PROPANE REFILL STATION
RACK STACKER FEED
PRODUCTS**



✓ We have ALL your building needs

**Watch for our Flyers and Coupons
Apply for your
BMR 360 points card**

BMR Griffith Building Supply Inc.

☎ 613.333.5596 📠 613.333.1121

✉ griffithbuilding@xplornet.com

Mon - Fri 8:30am - 4:00pm Sat 9am - 1pm Closed Sundays

25937 Hwy 41, Griffith, ON K0J 2R0 bmr.co

On a Monday, Marcus wakes up around six and goes for his favourite cereal if there is any, raisin bran with hot water from the kettle. He stares at the window, the best view in the house and goes for a lengthy walk before the bus comes. Every day he wants to go further within the same forty-five minutes. He does a full minute sprint to start, then paces his jog until the final stretch. Next year is grade nine and that means track competitions, finally. He figures he doesn't need much improvement, he's going off Olympic times and grade nine won't be anywhere close. But if he is close enough to those times he sees on television, he will win and continue to grow, his stride will get longer and his breathing more paced.

Marcus packs his lunch himself, he has been doing so since last week but groceries are getting low so cold hot dogs will have to do. School is fairly dull until gym where he shines. He gets a couple looks from the girls but his friends aren't helping with his social skills and he does nothing with the attention. At lunch perhaps his best friend, if he had to choose, Tony asks him why he's eating cold hot dogs without the buns. Marcus tells him beggars can't be choosers and Tony laughs but offers him some of his crackers. Some kids get a pack of dry noodles so to be honest, Marcus



Pic by Dominic Blignaut unsplash.com

doesn't think he's all that out of luck with his wieners.

Nothing much happens on a Monday, not that Tuesday is better but Mondays always seem off. The adults agree and maybe even the dog who Marcus has been feeding random items not covered in mold. He doesn't dare ask his father to go out, he'll go out when he wants and Marcus knows the drill well. By Wednesday however the pickings are slim. Thankfully it's May so the peppers on the window ledge are coming in, not great but edible. Plus the mass of frozen carrots, at least a few more days can do. On Thursday Marcus brings a can of ravioli for lunch and asks a lunch staff to open it for him.

Everyone loves a Friday, even those

working on the weekend, it's always easy going. The gym teacher sets up a bracket tournament for basketball, three on three with at least one girl on each team. Marcus isn't exactly a ball hog, but he is a stellar talent and is even asked to carry the load. His team wins and they all get a Subway card of ten dollars. Unfortunately it's raining and the Subway is a twenty minute walk as buses come in.

Nobody is coming over this weekend, although that might be typical it's been six going on seven without company by Marcus' count. Dad has slept the week away apparently but he has a leg issue and gets disability because of it. That money covers the house, covers the food and if Marcus does his weekly chores he gets his

twenty too. Off-line gaming seems to be what parents do nowadays but as Marcus says, beggars can't choose and he's lucky to have a game system at all and the tv works perfectly well, crack in all.

Carrots all weekend is something few kids have probably survived, but Marcus counts himself among them. There are even some left over for Monday lunch but Marcus brings nothing. He won't do his run this morning, just too damn tired. He'll skip class to grab that sub for lunch, twenty minutes walking means a five minute jog but Marcus doesn't want to catch Mr. Peterson's class anyway. He asks too many stupid questions about his family. He's weird, probably a creep and science is Marcus' worst subject, but he passed it second semester so failing is absolutely an option for the final.

Marcus' sub is the twelve inch steak with everything on it plus sweet teriyaki and a little hot sauce. He decides to enjoy the walk back and stops at the soccer field to sit down. A bunch of parents have gotten together and organized some tyke match. It's funny like timbits hockey but Marcus doesn't laugh, he wouldn't want any of the kids to feel bad or parents to give him mean looks and ask him questions about why he isn't in school. Marcus arrives early for Mr. Waxman's gym class and is caught for skip-

Dear Friends,

We are writing on behalf of the **Denbigh/Griffith Lions Club - Christmas Food Baskets** for families and individuals in our area - Griffith, Matawatchan, Vennechar and Denbigh. **We would like to increase awareness and raise funds** from individuals, our businesses and organizations that are in our area or working in our area for this year's Christmas Basket campaign.

As you are aware, all service clubs are struggling in the Covid - 19 pandemic. We have been unable to have our Fellowship Lunches, Bingo, Car Show, Toll Roads etc. to raise funds for our organization. We have been able to donate to Hospice Renfrew, 2 bursaries for 2 local students and to Pine Meadow Nursing Home.

During this time of the year many will be hurting due to difficult circumstances. Why not extend a helping hand to those who desperately need it? Christmas 2020 will be a different year for many people in our area.

Your contribution to these efforts will go a long way in making Christmas this year a joy for a family or individual in our area. **This year the need will be especially hard.** Your donation will go a long way in helping individuals and families and offset the cost of medical transportation this Christmas. In return for your generosity, we would be more than happy to include you, or your business or organization in our **thank you letter in the Madawaska Highlander Newspaper.**

We would like to thank you for considering our request **for a donation for our Christmas Food Baskets and the cost of medical transportation in our area.** If you have any queries about our organization or the Christmas fund please feel free to contact one of us.

**Thanking you,
Yours sincerely**

**Lion's Club Food Basket Committee
Gail Fritsch, 613-333-2224 - President
Sandra Downs, 613-333-1932 - Director
Jan Roche, 613-333-1748 - Treasurer**



**Denbigh-Griffith Lions Club
25991 Hwy 41, Griffith, Ontario**

ping. He doesn't spend much time at the principal's office because no other kids were there. The principal also knows his father is unavailable to get a phone call or an email and any mail notice won't get a response either. So principal Morgan tells Marcus he's a good kid and not to start skipping class.

Mr. Waxman organizes Volleyball, a sport Marcus isn't fond of. He still does pretty well but just doesn't put too much effort in. The final class is Mrs. Pearson's geography, probably Marcus' best non-gym credit going. Maybe it was volleyball boring him that entices a burning hot run of five in a row correct markings on a map

of Quebec. The day is done and for a Monday, it was stunningly strong. Normally Marcus talks with his friend Jody on the bus but today he sits alone and looks out the window the whole ride. He hums a song he can't remember the name of.

The drop off is at the end of a hill for Marcus alone. Normally he'd look down at his feet and take some time, as long as the path is. Today he decided to look straight ahead and walk briskly past his house and the officers there. They are there to tell him his father has been dead for a number of days but Marcus already knew that. One officer spots him and yells out. After a few minutes the officer in his

car catches up and rolls down his window.

"Hey you're doing pretty good. Ran a lot farther than I figured."

"Thanks."

"Where you running to?"

"Just as far as I can in forty five."

"You training?"

"Yeah."

"Long distance?"

"No. The eight hundred."

"Well you look like you'd do great. Making sure you have plenty in the tank eh?"

"Train your body for more than you need."

"So listen, I need to know if there is anyone we can get for you. Because

you can't stay here."

"Why not?"

"It's not safe."

Marcus makes a tight right turn into the forest. He knows it well enough. Maybe things will be tough for a while but it's almost June. The Cranstons rarely use their house. The church has plenty of canned food and school is almost finished. He just needs to make it to sixteen. He knows the law, he knows he can be on his own at sixteen. And the real money from track is at sixteen too, for age limits. Just two more years he says to himself out loud. Just two more years from this Monday.

NON-FICTION - AN UNEXPECTED CHRISTMAS STORY

As we left our little church's Christmas Eve service, soft snowflakes drifted silently over our small town, transforming it into a charming wintry scene. While much of the congregation stayed behind to exchange season's greetings, we were anxious to get away, for we had been invited to Mrs. O'Neal's annual Christmas Eve at-home, an event not to be missed. Her Christmas soirees were legendary: the food and drink were plentiful, the guests invariably interesting and the children confident that a jolly Santa would appear. Though many might have hoped to attend, most would be disappointed, for Mrs. O'Neal's sole iron-clad criterion for issuing an invitation was that her guests' house had to be visible from her front porch. This guaranteed that an unlikely cross-section of local society would be present: merchants to mechanics, pharmacists to farmers. Neighbours, who barely nodded at each other during the rest of the year, would chat amiably for that festive evening.

For myself, I always looked forward to talking to my elderly friend, Len. Len was a delightful gentleman, slight of frame, white of hair and invariably in good spirits. I was always a willing audience as Len told fascinating stories of the small-town life that he had known, some 50 years previously.

On this Christmas Eve, the gentlemen had gathered in the kitchen to sample Mr. O'Neal's collection of scotches. It might be said that our host often poured with greater enthusiasm than wisdom. Nevertheless, his generosity ensured the usual stories of the past summer's activities became very energetic. Just as the conversations were becoming boisterous, Santa arrived and most of the men dutifully strolled out to the parlour to watch the kiddies receive their presents.

As Len showed no sign of joining the exodus, I stayed behind as well, hoping that he might launch into some of his stories. He didn't disappoint; but to-night was different. Perhaps motivated by the alcohol, Len began to tell tales of his war years, stories I'd never heard before. He spoke of growing up in a small town and



Pic by Mathis-Jrdl unsplash.com

going to work in Northern Ontario lumber camps, where he had learned to operate a bulldozer. When war was declared, he had immediately volunteered. He confided that his dream had always been to join the Governor General's Foot Guards, but at a modest 5 foot, 6 inches, Len was about half a foot too short for that regiment. Instead, the Army assessed his skills and with surprising accuracy assigned him to the Forestry Corps. He went on to tell colourful stories of being crammed into a troop ship, transported across the stormy Atlantic and then packed off to the wilds of Scotland where he began work in a sawmill. For the next 4 years the World War, as Len saw it, consisted of days sawing lumber and nights of cinemas, pub crawls and Saturday night dances with the local girls. (It was there that he met and wooed the lovely, though formidable, Emma, who later returned to Canada with him as a war-bride.)

Shortly after the D-Day landings, Len and his bulldozer were dispatched to Normandy to build roads and camp sites. Though, now much closer to the front-line action, Len's days remained relatively dull, until December, 1944 and the Battle of the Bulge. Suddenly, the Canadians discovered that they had no weapons capable of defeating the new German tanks and the best they could do was to retreat and attempt to delay the enemy's progress. As his unit began withdrawing across one key bridge, Len was told: "Look, we've got to stop

those tanks somehow, so you stay behind with your bulldozer and knock down some big trees across that road; but pay attention to the time, as the Panzers will be here in 4 hours."

Accordingly, Len mounted his machine and got busy trying to block the roadway. After 45 minutes of satisfyingly destructive work, he glanced down the road and spotted a large cloud of dust approaching. Len knew immediately that the unstoppable tanks had arrived. Realizing the danger of his situation, Len knew his only hope was to retreat, just as his comrades had done a short time before. As he trundled his slow-moving bulldozer back across the bridge, the oncoming German tanks began firing high-velocity shells about his ears. With the bravado of a young man, he vividly remembered thinking: "German shells can't kill me, I'm gonna live forever". Naturally, I sat on the edge of my chair, fascinated by these new tales.

In the parlour, Santa departed and there was a sudden wave of people wandering through the kitchen, mixing drinks and distributing Christmas treats. In his little corner, Len became very subdued and I assumed he was re-living times and places that he'd tell me about afterwards. Sometime later, Mrs. O'Neal swept through the kitchen, chivvying everyone back into the parlour to sing Christmas carols. As before, Len showed no interest in joining and so I remained with him in the kitchen.

But this time, Len remained very quiet and thinking that he might like a cup of tea, I got up to prepare one. When I returned, to my complete surprise, Len was sitting with his head in his hands, large tears rolling down his cheeks and moaning: "They're dead. They're all dead." Not surprisingly, my first thought was: "What in the world is he talking about? Who's dead?"

However, I had neglected to consider that the ever-vigilant Emma was in the adjacent room. Once she was told of Len's weeping, she immediately took command of the situation. She marched through the kitchen door, assessed the scene, glared daggers at me, bundled Len into his winter coat, whisked both of them out the back door and went off home. After a slight pause, the party continued as before, but I was stunned by what had just occurred. Mr. O'Neal, seeing my bewilderment, took me aside to explain the story behind what I had witnessed. In the latter days of the War, Len had volunteered to serve with an American regiment that suddenly needed a bulldozer operator. The American unit had just liberated one of the Nazi death camps and the newly-arrived Len was assigned the grim task of digging mass graves with his bulldozer. It must have been a dreadful and profoundly life-altering experience for a young man from the Ottawa Valley. No wonder that ghastly memory was so deeply buried and would only escape briefly when alcohol supplied a key to unlock that terrible door.

Sadly, Len is gone now, but I still often muse about the unexpected stories that I heard that Christmas Eve. For a lengthy time thereafter, whenever I looked across our church on Sunday morning and saw the cheerful, easy-going Len chatting away in his usual pew, I would marvel at the amazing resilience of the man. Few others could have coped with what he had experienced and his determination to persevere through difficult times was a testament to his extraordinary character. He was truly a remarkable man, who I was happy to call my friend. It's unlikely that we shall see his like again.

Good Morning Angels, Spirit Guides, Jesus, Mary, Buddha, St. Germain, Mother Earth and Creator

Walk with me today... so we are all awake, full of self love, kindness and compassion for ourselves and others.

Walk with me today...so I may gather wisdom, so I may see what needs to be done to nourish my mind and body with the proper nutrition, so I may have the energy to remain productive and maintain clarity in all situations.

Walk with me today ... so I can master my emotions, so I can love the unlovable parts of myself and therefore love others.

Walk with me today... so I may recognize when people are aggressive or angry or having a difficult time, that I have the wisdom to know they are just showing me their pain and sadness and they need a smile and some comforting thoughts to let them know they are enough just the way they are, and this feeling shall pass and there are better days ahead, and for those who are tackling an addiction or illness to realize and acknowledge their bravery.

Walk with me today... so we may have the wisdom to love each other.

Walk with me today... so that I may understand what is happening with the pandemic.

When I ask for guidance, the right book, documentary, information and/or person shows up, thank you.

How will we reset the global economy? And this is the guidance You have sent.

After all, haven't You taught us to ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find? And did Jesus not say, "You will do greater things than I"?

Walk with me today... to create a Peoples' Bank where all the interest comes back to the communities. Collectively, the banks in Canada last year made approximately \$49 Billion dollars. The pandemic has seen the debt rise to \$340 Billion. It's feasible, that in a short period of time, that debt could be paid off by the Peoples' Bank. How many people would join a Peoples' Bank knowing it is in their best interests to do so and how many countries might



Pic by Ben Van 't Ende unsplash.com

be encouraged to follow the same example.

Walk with me today... so that we may have total corporate funding out of our universities so we can have unbiased research on health, education and environment. Imagine a world without Alzheimers. Well, that book has already been written.

Walk with me today... so that all doctors and scientists, before they publish a medical paper or give their opinion on radio, TV, or media outlet, must disclose all the companies with whom they are involved. The science is only as good as its sources of funding. Presently, most funding reflects only the interests of the donating corporation. For instance with respect to climate change the argument is "is it cyclic or manmade"? The truth is that both are correct. Students need the freedom to study both aspects and only then would we have real balanced solutions.

Walk with me today... so we have proper trade agreements in every country. For instance, if a business like Hershey is going to move to Mexico or China, they must follow the safety standards for infrastructure and working environment, humanitarian rights, and fair wages from their own country. Are we not the civilized nation to set examples for every person to give them a hand up and stop creating more slave

camp. With these regulations having to be followed, companies might choose to stay in their own countries.

Walk with me today... so that companies will stop merging into conglomerates. We need to have controls in place to limit monopolizing of the market so that honest competition between companies has a chance to reap the best outcomes.

Walk with me today... so that farmers have the opportunities to make a good living within safe, healthy guidelines to produce organic food that does not deplete the soil. Let's take the farmers out of the commodity market so they can set their own fair price for beef, poultry, pork and produce so they will receive the true value for their hard work. Let's get our crops back to the place where the farmer can keep his own seeds and not be controlled by Monsanto. At one time, farmers grew their crops following the flow of the seasons, the moon's cycles, and rotated crops so that soil continues to be nourished, frequently using manure to replenish the soil for the proper balance of minerals and trace minerals. Our soils are what keep us healthy. Immune building vitamins and minerals have the potential to strengthen our immune systems, keep inflammation down and fight infections. Healthy soils produce healthy food for healthy people.

Walk with me today... let's get cattle back on pastures. Smaller farms must be able to sustain the farmer and manage transport of animals to local areas for market. Our farmers should be our millionaires.

Walk with me today... so that we can learn to debate. It is okay to have different opinions and to ask questions on all topics. A different opinion does not mean it is a conspiracy theory.

Walk with me today... in a world where there is so much information, we no longer know what to believe. We are asked to believe nothing. We need a simple way to cut through the illusions and ask questions. Where does my information come from? First, who is educating me? Second, who is influencing my beliefs? Is it advertising? Is it the media? Is it the lobbyists? All of these?

Walk with me today... we know something is wrong but we cannot put our finger on it. As in, it does not matter who I vote for, nothing changes - same trade agreements, same laws, same banks, same education, same health policies.

Walk with me today... whistleblowers are our heroes. We need to document all their files and cases so we can have the truth. Whistleblowers risk their livelihoods, their families to give us information. We have to listen.

Walk with me today... we need our freedom back to be able to think, to look at all sides of information, not just what is in front of us. Let's look past the obvious.

Walk with me today... for wisdom and freedom with respect to how we manage our farms, health, environment, and education. Nature's laws are universal. No man, corporation, or government is above them.

Walk with me today... so that we remember that we are not in nature, we are nature.

Good Morning Angels, Spirit Guides, Jesus, Mary, Buddha, St. Germain, Mother Earth and Creator... Thank you.



**GLASER'S
STORE
COUNTRY**

Milk
Cheese
Icecream
Groceries

Fresh Produce - Confectionary
Bacon - Sausage - Eggs
Art & Giftware
Hunting & Fishing
Fresh Brewed Coffee

Open 7 days a week
8:00am - 7:00pm

156 Bridge Street, Denbigh 613-333-1313
Drop by for a visit and let us know how we can assist you.

**DENBIGH POST OFFICE
BOTTLE RETURN DEPOT**



**Milligan's Meats
Loads of Fresh Produce
Scooped Ice Cream
Special Orders Welcome**

See you in
Downtown Denbigh!
Owners, Karen & Peter Lips

613-333-1553

Griffith General Store

Hwy 41 at the Madawaska River Bridge - Come by Car, Boat, ATV, Bike, Boot...



New Gas Station Pay at the pump
Low prices!

Groceries, Gifts, Ice Cream, Butter Tarts, Dairy & Eggs,
Canned and Frozen Food, Butcher Shop Meats,
Hunting & Fishing Licences & Supplies, Live Bait
Sporting Goods & Clothing, Pet Food, Hardware & Tools,
Keys Cut, Propane Exchange, Automotive Supplies

A Genuine Country Store with a bit of EVERYTHING!

AUTHORIZED AGENT FOR:




APPROVED RETAIL PARTNER &
AUTHORIZED
EMPTY BOTTLE DEALER

NEW HOURS:
Mon - Tues, 9am - 5pm
Wed - Sun, 9am - 7pm

Let me tell you about a mysterious island dotted in the middle of a small lake. Let me first tell you why it is mysterious. It's mysterious because it's hard to find with the naked eye, GP signals, telescopes, phones and the like.

It is covered in a fog-like veil. I can't fully describe it because I usually can't see it. It's mostly round, edged by rocks and things of that nature and a few scraps of trees- some pines reaching up, up, up into the clouds. Sometimes I can see peaks of branches, whips through the fog. But mostly, it's covered in a white cloud thicker than fog. Fog is ghost-like. This cloud is snowy. Yes, mostly cold and wet. No one like cold temperatures when it's supposed to be warm.

I hear it everyday- talk about the weather and I see the cold wrapped around arms and bellies. The cold infiltrates- plunges.

But I'm not born of the stone and earth and trees or even snow. Tall trees I visit- in silence. A holy grail in secret. And what can I perceive?

In my mind, I see mostly tall buildings and brick work outside windows. I hear sirens and motors for birds and the wind is usually the echoes of planes and footsteps: voices that speak thoughts I can't quite make out.

And then, there's here. A place that no one knows. That is silence except for the odd sound of a chickadee; a bird call, a blue jay, a hummingbird, a wasp, a squirrel.

I can make out the rare sounds. I can identify each flutter. And what do they say? To me they are the voices that belong to the otherside. An orchestra of music that speaks to me in the dream voice and in the dream-world.

Now my eyes. I look outside my window and in every window I see trees- like being in a tree house: green foliage- brown trunks like old bones. In the "Day of the Triffids" the trees have tentacles and ferociously take



Pic of Buildings by Note Thanun. Insert of Foggy Forest "sky" Pic by Markos Mant unsplash.com

over the world in a post-apocalyptic nightmare. But here the trees creak to give warning. If the wind is strong enough. I know I too can be crushed. Ancient voices awake! Stonehenge with roots that breathe and drink water.

In the city, my only fear is someone creeping into my home: mouse or man both potentially dangerous. It doesn't matter. Like John Steinbeck wrote in his novel "Of Mice and Men": "Maybe everybody in the whole damn world is scared of each other." It was a novel set in the depression about two drifters trying to find home and make a life on a homestead. However there were too many walls and not enough land and they couldn't make it. Something I know only too well.

But let me come back to my story, here in this place uninhabitable by folks who crave strong lights and paved woods, the dangers I face are tree or mouse or bear. Although, even bears don't come around here too much. Human's can be trouble.

A bear would be like a movie

star! A sight to be seen and if I had the courage I would be a paparazzi and take pictures documenting where it was sighted, what it was doing, wearing... What fashionable piece did it have on? Black, brown fur and heavy limbs. No wonder, like the limbs of trees, I wear black and brown and die my hair green. Clothing made just to fit in. Some people might call that camouflage. I call it resistance and you may understand later on why.

In the city, it's all suits and timetables- every mumble sprawled out on a computer screen, watch, tablet.

Let me pencil you in?
A charcoal stub
Lines on a flat rock
The earth is a _____

One day I happened to wake up early, just after dawn. The sky was no longer peppered in bright twinkles. And I could see the horizon! Imagine that? I could see a bright light at the edge of the lake (and no, I still won't tell you where). Open sky. Remember in my usual home, in the city, the sun has a hard time peeking through.

When two grey, huge planes like missiles hung low. Low, almost touching the tops of the trees, moving fast in a North Eastern direction coming from the South. I could almost grasp them with my hands, crush them with my fingers but they were moving too fast and the sounds they made: earth rumbles. Invaders!

They broke the dream in half and then disappeared and I couldn't trace them with my eyes. One second was all it took to break the dream and toss everything into the garbage heap that you and I know has grown taller than all the towers of Babylon.

Gone, gone, gone. The memory of things yet to come. I have not yet climbed to the tops of mountains of heaps and when I do what will I find? Stuff. Stuff, mostly unused or used in unusual ways. Usual would be according to the cycle of a tree. Is that not the pattern of the earth? Born to die. But our stuff is born to live forever.

And while the tree branch raps at my window or taps at my skin and brushes against my arm, all I have to do is chop it down.

"YOU ARE BORN TO DIE!" I scream in my mind. I am neither born (since I don't die) to live forever.

The stains on the table top carved into the rock- a petroglyph of timelessness to tell future generations that

WE

DON'T CARE

About the cycle of life and the earth's laws. We are the invaders or the victors of life and death. Even Oppenheimer, "father of the atomic bomb" thought it might be a good idea to remind us and our progeny after the first atomic bomb party went off in a quiet western town.

"Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.

NON-FICTION - JUST PEOPLE

I grew up in a rural area in the outskirts of a small village that was primarily settled by United Empire Loyalists and their descendants. In grade one the caretaker at our school, Mr. Ball, was dark skinned and the only none white I had ever known to that point. He did not seem unusual or threatening in any way. He was just Mr. Ball. We all said "Good morning" or "hello" to him if we happened to see him in the building or yard. I don't recall any derogatory remarks or actions against him. My parents were of Eastern European descent and we were frequently reminded that we were lesser. We knew better than to be defined by this. My parents constantly reminded us that we were no different than anyone else. Not better but not lesser.

After the Second World War many folks began arriving into the community from, Holland, Italy, Poland and other oppressed countries. Many of my friends and classmates were from these families and basically accepted. Able to



Pic by Charlein Gracia unsplash.com

overcome minor roadblocks while contributing greatly to improvements and services.

In my working years I was privileged to interact with folks of many co-

lours, nationalities and orientations. Some occasional remarks would sometimes be exchanged but no serious harm ever resulted.

A neighbour I was chatting with

one day told me her five year old daughter was excited because a new girl had just come to her kindergarten class and she now had a new friend. Her mother asked her about the little girl. What is her name? Where is she from? What is she like? All the usual questions one might ask a child. Her daughter just said "Oh, shes just like us. I like her". A few weeks later I was chatting with the mother and she told me that she had encouraged the little girl to invite her new friend over after school one day for play time. The girls showed up laughing and holding hands and for the first time the parents realized that the new friend was dark. Yes, just like us. (they are a white skinned family) Why does it matter if we are short or tall, thin or heavy, handicapped or challenged? Human characteristics are just packaging. It's what is inside that defines us. Everyone has a roll in the world. Without the contributions of diversity there would be no learning no reasoning, no understanding.

It looked menacing. The wind was picking up, dark clouds were forming in the west and waves were beginning to crash over the bow. It was time to head for home. I was 17 years old and had been sailing most of my life, but never had I been allowed to experience the joy and responsibility of sailing my father's 24-foot sailboat on my own. This magnificent yacht was called a Shark. It was a sleek racing sailboat with a cabin, four beds, a small kitchen, and even a toilet!

Back home on the lawn that blustery Autumn afternoon, my parents were entertaining a large gathering of friends and relatives with a barbeque and drinks. We lived on Lac St. Louis just west of Montreal and many of my father's friends were experienced sailors. My father possessed a number of racing trophies and cups. I knew that they would all be watching as I came sailing down the lake and attempted to moor in front of our house.

There is little room for error when attempting to land a large sailboat, but it is especially difficult when attempting this maneuver on your own in near gale force winds. The task before me was to sail past the anchored buoy, turn around sharply heading back into the wind, and hopefully have the boat stop just as I arrived at the float in the water. If I turned into the wind too early, I would sail right past the mark. If I turned too late and didn't reach the buoy, I would then be blowing backwards down the lake in shallow waters with everyone watching.

It took both hands and most of my strength to control the rudder, but on that day, in front of all those people, I absolutely nailed the landing as the majestic yacht slowed and came to a stop precisely where the buoy waited for me to tie up. I ran quickly to the front of the boat, dove flat onto the deck and grabbed the rope bobbing in the waves. With the sails lowered and stowed away, I was feeling pretty good about myself as I rowed the small rowboat back to shore. A number of guests smiled and nodded their heads



Pic by Joel Bengs unsplash.com

in approval as I approached the gathering. My father smiled at me as he flipped a burger and my uncle said "well done".

For most of my friends, coming of age meant getting a driver's license and being able to take the family car out for a spin. All I ever wanted was to skipper this beautiful yacht on my own and be allowed to take friends out sailing. I felt that my display of expertise that afternoon would seal the deal and allow me to take the Shark out whenever I wanted, perhaps overnight!

The next morning I woke to howling winds and pouring rain. It was Monday morning and I was still smiling from the events of the day before. I made my way downstairs for breakfast with a spring in my step. My father had already gone to work and my mother was busy in the kitchen. Just before I headed out the door to school I looked out the window in order to relive my moment of glory, and to make sure that 'my' sailboat was OK.

There was no boat! There was only the floating buoy thrashing about in the relentless waves. I felt panic.

Not wanting my mother to realize what had happened I shouted goodbye and ran outside and down to the shore where the four-foot waves were crashing against the rocks. I frantically

looked down the stormy lake and spied the boat about a mile away bobbing up and down on its way to the mighty St Lawrence River.

Instinctively I jumped into the rowboat and began rowing as fast as I could. I had no life jacket and water was gathering around my feet as rain and waves were splashing into the rowboat. I did my best to keep the outmatched dingy going in the right direction but occasionally the wind and waves would spin us around. I would find myself picking up speed as I caught a large wave like a surfer, only to crash to a halt on the next wave.

I was soaking wet and my hands and arms were growing weary. After about 30 minutes of hard rowing, I was somewhat relieved to realize that I had been making progress and getting closer to the "ghost ship"! I lost all sense of time, but after about an hour, I finally approached the mighty vessel.

My relief at having arrived was short-lived. My heart sank when I saw that the rope, which I had proudly used the day before to tie up the boat in front of a captivated audience, had broken. There was only a short piece for me to grab onto. Under the front hatch there was an anchor and rope. With both boats bobbing up and down and water splash-

ing about my feet, I managed to get the anchor into the rowboat and began making my way to shore, with the sleek white yacht in tow. The strong winds made a haunting sound in the metal wires that made up the rigging.

As my back muscles and arms were tired and numb from rowing, my only chance was to row in the same direction of the wind towards the shore and find a place to tie up. Unfortunately, this was taking us further from home. I spotted a small bay protected from the storm with a number of boats on moorings. I was relieved to find a buoy with no boat attached to which I could tie up.

When the shark was finally secured, and I felt that the worst was over, I bowed my head down and cried. No harm had come to my father's precious yacht, and I was still alive.

I pulled the rowboat up onto the shore and, cold and soaking wet from head to toe, I began the long walk back home. After about three miles, half the way home, the wind calmed down, the rain stopped and the sun came out. My wet socks and running shoes would eventually stop making the slushy noise.

On this long journey homeward I passed a number of familiar landmarks. Though tired and hungry, I enjoyed the reminiscing. I passed the church where I had my first communion. I strolled through the small village where my mother did the grocery shopping every week, where I played hockey for hours on the outdoor rink in the winter and tennis in the summer. I passed a number of my friend's houses that brought back memories of the police, my first kiss, sleepovers, and endless crazy antics. In the final hours of my long journey, all of my clothes dried out completely. Emotionally and physically exhausted, I arrived back home. I opened the screen door with a familiar creak and smelled my mother's oatmeal chocolate chip cookies in the oven. She turned to me with a smile and said, "Hi dear, how was your day?"

NON-FICTION - TOTO

Ok people, it's not the early 1900's, and we are not in Kansas anymore. It's actually 1976 and we are in North Bay, Ontario.

To my surprise we have been gifted a small black and white mutt, that my daughter immediately named Toto after the dog in her favourite movie, "The Wizard of Oz"

In retrospect, we should have called him Houdini, because that thing could escape at the drop of a hat, leaving me searching the neighbourhood at all hours of the day and night.

Thinking back when I was young, I have fond memories of our faithful dog. Now that I had young children of my own, I had high hopes that this young pup could become a loyal companion for my children. The trick would be not to let him escape.

To keep peace in the family, it is decided that we need a sturdy, collar and leash etc., so, it's off to the hardware store.

We all know that sending a man to a hardware store is a lot like sending a kid to the candy store. You just never know what might happen.

The pet section was located at the back of the store, next to a power tool display and power saws just happened to be on sale today.

Maybe I should get a new saw, just in case. That red one should do the trick. Picking out a good collar and sturdy leash and a chain with a clasp, I head for home confident that Toto may



Pic by Andrea Lightfoot unsplash.com

not be able to escape quite so easily. I was wrong! He was gone the next day as soon as someone opened the door.

Searching the area, no dog was to be found. I returned home and told the children that Toto was now lost. The next day a man came to the door complaining that Toto was caught being "friendly" with his poodle.

The man had captured Toto and was now returning him along with a stern warning that the next time Toto visited his place, the Dog catcher would be called. Well, that certainly paints a different picture. Best to keep an eye on this little Romeo or we may have to bail him out of jail.

True to form, Toto continued to escape and now appears to have made

friends with the local butcher. Toto sometimes brings home a variety of bones, some almost as big as him.

Within another week, Toto was gone and did not return. I searched the area to no avail. I even called the Humane Society to see if he had been picked up as a stray, but no luck. I kept searching the area in hopes that Toto would be found, but again, no luck. The household was not a happy place and could certainly continue that way until Toto was found.

A week passed and still no Toto. More calls to the Humane Society provided no news on the whereabouts of our wandering canine.

In desperation, I decided it was time to pay a visit to the pound to see for myself if that pooch was really there.

Upon entering the office it was impossible to miss the large signage that explained the costs if a wandering pet was busted along with charges for room and board. There was a smaller sign that outlined the costs for adoption which were significantly less. The attendant asked if he could help and I immediately said that I was interested in adopting a dog for my kids and would like to have a look at what they might have available.

Leading me into the back room, I heard the barking of numerous caged dogs. I asked the attendant to open the cages of several dogs so I could have a closer look at each one. As I got closer to the end of the row a familiar bark caught my attention. Sure enough, it was our Toto, bouncing around the cage in sheer excitement and anticipation. The attendant opened the cage and Toto jumped all over me, barking wildly, wagging his tail, obviously thrilled to see a familiar face. I casually mentioned that this dog certainly appeared friendly and could make an excellent pet for my children. I told the attendant that I wanted to adopt this dog.

The attendant knowingly stated that he wondered what we would call him. At that point I knew that I too was now "busted". Once back in the office, the adoption paperwork was completed and Toto and I were soon on our way home.

However, Maybe I should first stop at the hardware store for a new leash and collar.

Everything was silent as Melissa sat staring out the window, everything except her music that was blasting through her headphones. 'Pretty boring today huh,' Melissa thought as she watched the spider on her window weave a web, it was the most interesting thing she saw that day. The silk weaving a perfect trap for unsuspecting bugs 'it must suck getting stuck on a spider's web, you would have no clue of what's to come until it's too late' she thought as she got up from her spot beside the window.

Taking her phone with her to the kitchen, as she rummaged through the refrigerator she saw nothing that looked appetizing at the time, sighing as she took a seat at the dining table, she whipped out her phone and smiled as she saw a notification 'WAZZUP' read the message. It was from her online bestfriend, debby.

She met debby on a comment on a post she liked, they messaged and got along almost instantly! They had been messaging each other for the past couple months and never once got a flaw in their friendship.

Melissa would say her and debby were inseparable online, constantly messaging each other, they talked at least once a day, that past hour the girl messaged about their day, melissa ecstatic to hear her friend was doing ok, but not only that but debby told melissa that maybe she would have the opportunity to come to her town! 'now that would be fantasy, we could do so many fun things! Like hang by the beach and watch all our favorite shows' thought melissa. It truly would be a perfect opportunity to hang out wouldn't it?

Such a boring time in Melissa's life, hopefully her parents would allow it, they did not know Debbie. Melissa never told them about her online friend, they just assumed they knew each other from a school club, Melissa checked the time as it read well past 12:00. she cursed as she told debby goodbye and started her nighttime routine.

She awoke to a loud beeping "SHUT THE



Pic by Manav Kabir unsplash.com

HELL UP" she yelled as she slammed her phone desperately attempting to turn off the annoying alarm keeping her from the comfort of sleep, but after she turned off the alarm she had come to realize that she had school today and had no more time to sleep. She sluggishly rolled out of bed to get ready.

As Melissa checked to make sure she did not miss any of her school supplies she confirmed she had everything. She picked up her phone and texted debby she was going to school, Debby responded quickly to tell Melissa to have a good day, and text her when she got back. Melissa quickly said goodbye to her cats and mom. she grabbed a piece of toast, she walked out the door on her mission to get to school quickly, or at least before the bell rang. as she stepped through the school gates the bell had not rung yet and she had time until she had to check into class, she whipped out her phone to text debby before she got into class 'heyo girl it's cold af outside i can't believe im saying this but damn can't wait for class to start' melissa text Debby responded quickly.

Odd, wasn't she supposed to be in class also? The thought left Melissa's mind as fast as it went in, the bell rang and she had immediately had started the new

task of getting to class before she was trampled by the large groups of students also taking up the same task

'whew ' Melissa thought as she finally got through the door and made her way to her seat, as she finally got to her seat and started getting ready for her lesson, "What's the square root of X children?" the teacher asked, multiple people answered but Melissa couldn't care less in fact she did not care at all, her full attention was on the little spider resting on the window weaving its silk web without a care in the world other than what delicious bug would care to fall victim to its web next. The class bell rang dismissing the students from the class from lunch, that certainly broke Melissa's concentration on the 8 legged creature.

As she packed up and calmly exited the classroom she felt like a human amongst the wild animals, all running crazy to meet up with friends and eat food, looking fanatic and energized, excited that class was finally over! However Melissa was calm, focused and more importantly happy to finally go on her phone to message her best friend Debby. Debby always said she got lonely when Melissa did not text her. Saying Melissa was a bad friend for not being there when she could,

Melissa was always happy to talk to

debby so what difference did it make that debby was a little clingy. A little lonely, so was Melissa it's a common trait she did not question any of it. They chatted all lunch Melissa barely focused on her lunch and she texted fast on her phone to type the letters to send to debby, Oh Melissa could not be more happy! She was practically BEAMING! Debby was coming all the way from Texas to her town because her grandma lived close to where Melissa lived!

Melissa asked debby who her grandma was but debby told her that she did not like strangers so Melissa thought nothing of it, after all nobody likes strangers. Melissa knew she would not be too happy. the lunch bell rang telling her to go back to class all throughout her classes Melissa could not pay attention all she thought about was debby and finally being able to meet in person! It would be perfect.

Today was the day she would meet her best friend for the first time! She was bouncing off the walls as she frantically got ready to meet by the spot they had been planning for weeks, under the bridge by the lake, a small spot nobody went, debby was in town! She ran down the road. It was sunset when she finally reached the location, everything was perfect except.. Where was debby? She said she would be here at this time!

Melissa pulled out her phone only for it to be wacked out of her hand, 'plop' it splashed into the water with a plop and before she could turn to see the culprit of her now destroyed phone her head was shoved into a bag, she screaming and screeching but the bag was so suffocating on her face she was sure she wasn't making much noise, she felt so tired suddenly. WHY WAS SHE SO TIRED???

She was energized less than 5 minutes ago and now she was so tired she could barely move... she felt her body being shoved into a van? Car? She did not know she did not care. As she drifted to sleep all she could think was

"I was caught in the spider's web"

Wellness Natural Health Centre

Proven Effective Best Recommended Flu & Cold Prevention Remedies



Give your immune system what it needs to help you stay healthy

OCTOBER SPECIAL
15% OFF

Call 613-752-1540 to order

FREE SHIPPING

Pickup by appointment only at 44 Norton Road, Calabogie ON

www.wellnessnaturalhealthcentre.com

HOLDEN'S
HEARTH AT HOME
YOUR FIREPLACE SPECIALISTS



Fireside Gallery
Custom Wood Carving
& Fine Art

Proudly Serving the North Country

Sales and installation:
Wood and Pellet stoves, BBQs,
Fireplaces, Chimney systems,
Custom carved mantelpieces.

Service:
Chimney sweeps,
Maintenance and Repairs

PACIFIC ENERGY
CAST IRON
WOODSTOVE

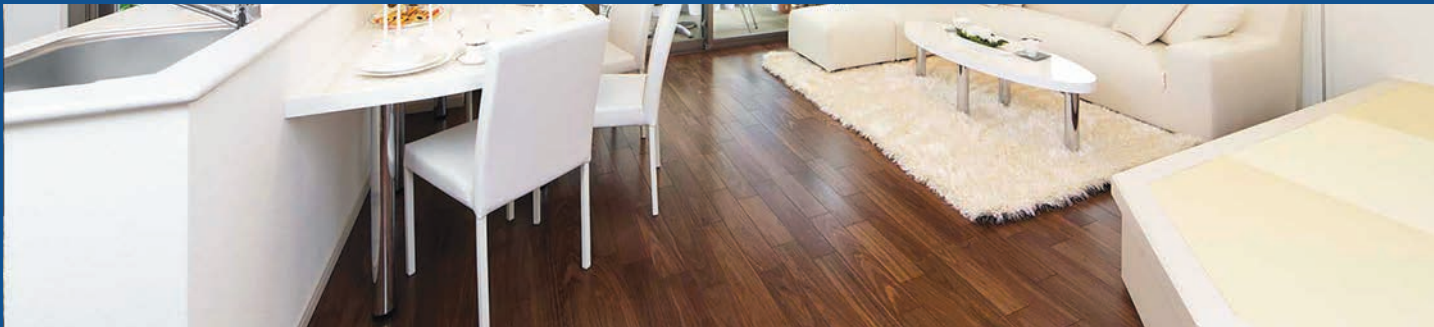


holdenhearthathome.com

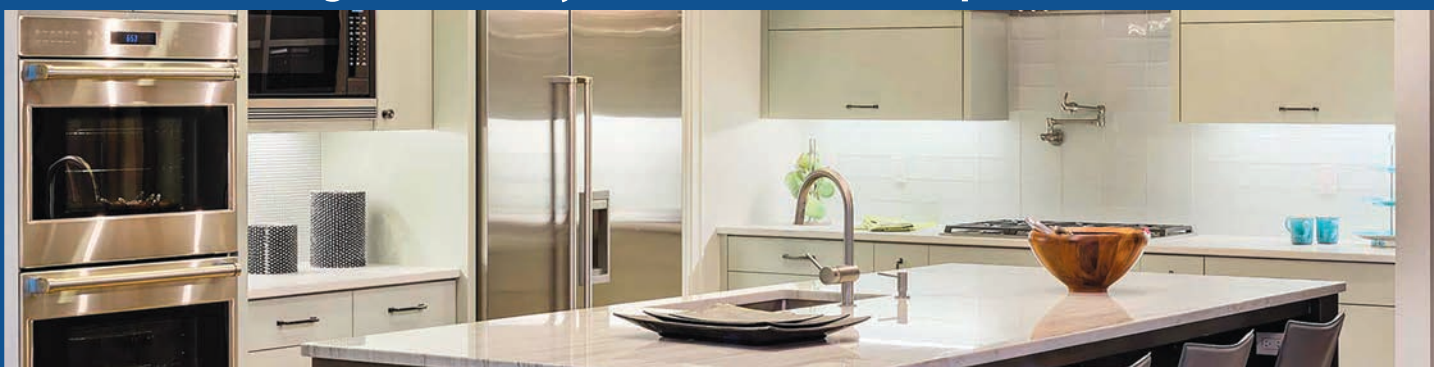
Competitive prices. Outstanding service. 14226, Hwy 41 Cloyne, ON 613-336-0046



IT IS TIME TO UPGRADE: Insulation, electrical, plumbing, ductwork, windows and doors, and all those systems that make your home efficiently comfortable.



IT IS TIME TO UPDATE: Floors, counters, cupboards, faucets, handles, lighting, and all those things that make your home a beautiful place to live and entertain.



IT IS TIME: To visit Renfrew and Burnstown Castle Building Supply to explore the possibilities - investments that will add value to your home - for you to enjoy.



1054 Gillan Road Renfrew
613-432-4809
info@renfrewcastle.ca

30 Building Supply Road Burnstown
613-432-2449
info@burnstowncastle.ca

Shop online
www.renfrewcastle.ca
www.burnstowncastle.ca

Faucets and Shower Systems are the stars of your kitchen and bathrooms.
Always start with the faucet.



Your trusted building & hardware supply partner

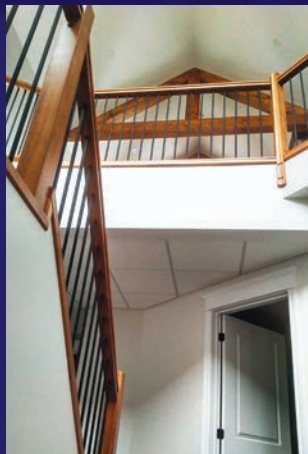


over **30** years
of quality work
Cell: 613.312.0704
j.lacourse@xplornet.ca



Custom, R 2000, Pre-fab and Log Homes Renovations and Decks

SPECIALIZING IN:
Post & Beam Entrances
Custom Interior Stairs
Railings, Beams,
Ceramic Showers
AND MUCH MORE!



**NOW OFFERING ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY
BLOWN IN CELLULOSE INSULATION**

bittersweet
FINE CRAFT & ART

Open 11 - 5
Wednesday to Sunday
5 Leckie Lane, Burnstown
burnstown.ca/bittersweet
613-432-5254

Just Arrived at Bittersweet...

Magical Mosaics by Gwen Pappas and...



...Fused Glass Works by Pat Forrest

