

Amherst Island BEACON

Issue 381

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aibeacon@topsyfarms.com

December 2009



LEST WE FORGET



A Remembrance Day service was held at AI Community Centre on November 11th. For more on the service see pages 10 & 11

PHOTO BY BRIAN LITTLE

THIS ISSUE

-Ian Murray, Editor

Best wishes to Helen McCormick who is now in her last few weeks of mail delivery. She's covered a lot of miles on our Island roads in all kinds of weather for a lot of years. Ann Albertan will be taking over the job as of January 4th. The Beacon will pay tribute to Dale McGinn next month, at the request of her family. Our condolences.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Remembrance Day Pages 10 & 11
Nathan Rogers at the Lodge Page 13
Helen McCormick Retires Page 8

NEIGHBOURHOOD

- Lyn Fleming

Get Well wishes this month to Christine Archibald.

Our condolences to Susan McGinn, Kassy McGinn and the extended family of Dale McGinn, on the loss of their daughter, grandmother, sister and aunt. Dale was pre-deceased by her daughter, Wanda.

Our sympathy this past month also to Dorothy McGinn, Karen Miller (Ted) and Vernon McGinn (Dorothy) following the sudden passing of their husband and father, Kaye McGinn.

Congratulations to James Silver, son of Liz Hogeboom (Kerry) and Phil Silver (Debbie), who married Melanie Welsh in Las Vegas recently. A group of family and friends attended the wedding, followed by a reception in Kingston when Jamie and Mel returned home.

St. Alban's Church held their always successful Turkey



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(Continued from page 1)

Dinner in early November. The sell out crowd enjoyed a wonderful turkey dinner with all the trimmings.

Amherst Island Public School hosted the annual community Remembrance Day service. Students sang and did readings in the gym, before moving outside to the cenotaph for the laying of the wreaths.

St. Paul's Church held their annual Christmas Bazaar and lunch, in conjunction with the final Christmas sale weekend for several Island businesses.

November has been surprisingly calm and mild. Possibly the "calm before the storm"? Our first snow flurries this year weren't until December 1st. We look forward to the return of the Frontenac II - hopefully before Christmas.

Wishing all our readers a safe and happy Holiday Season!

COUNCIL GLEANINGS

- Ian Murray

The ongoing problem regarding public access to the government dock at the Fishing Village is too complex for the Beacon. Those interested should refer to the Minutes on the Loyalist web site.

From Session 22, October 26:

Moved by Councillor R. Bresee and seconded by Councillor Ashley that the C.A.O.'s report, October 20, 2009 re: MTO Proposal for Transfer of Ferry Docks to Province be received and that the following be adopted:

That Council accept the proposed offer from MTO to purchase the ferry docks and related

water lots at Stella and Millhaven on the conditions outlined in the letter from MTO dated October 9th, 2009, including:

1. Purchase price of \$1.00;
2. MTO will commence an Environmental Assessment for dock improvements, as soon as possible, and follow with design and construction when capital funds are available;
3. The Township will continue to hold the Berthage Fees Reserve which shall be used for ferry service improvements on the dock such as storage, office and upgrades;
4. Following the transfer of the docks, MTO will be responsible for 100% of the cost of dock maintenance;

And further, that the Township will obtain the necessary release from the Federal Government and cooperate with the Province to facilitate the earliest possible transfer of the properties.

Motion carried.

**

Councillor Ashley enquired if The Amherst Island Mens' Society (AIMS) was insured under the Township liability insurance for their activities on township property.

The Township Clerk, Ms. Hamilton, indicated that the group was insured through the municipal insurance and that this had been confirmed by the insurers.

Councillor Ashley enquired about the ownership of Centennial Park on Amherst Island and the lease agreement with the municipality.

Moved by Councillor Ashley and seconded by Councillor Hudacin that staff investigate the status of the Amherst Island Agricultural Society lease of the Centennial Park property to the

Township and report back to Council. Motion carried.

From Session 25, Nov. 23:

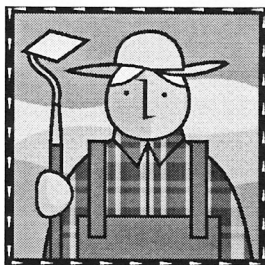
The Ameriks Scholarship Fund in Memory of Reeve Frank Fleming (Amherst Island) has received fourteen applications from post-secondary students who have been residents of Amherst Island for a period of five years or longer.

There is a base fund of \$11,850.00, which remains in the account to accumulate interest. Interest and contributions from the current year are allocated annually.

Dr. Gian Frontini, President of South Shore Enterprises (Amherst) Ltd., donated money in memory of Reeve Frank Fleming.

The Amherst Island Women's Institute donated \$150.00 for post secondary education for the students of Amherst Island.

(Continued on page 5)



AIMS NOVEMBER

14TH MEETING

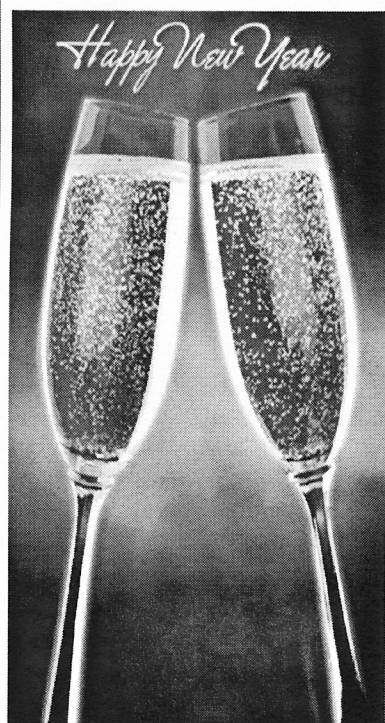
- Hugh Jenney

Seventeen men sat down to a delicious, full breakfast prepared by Shannon McFadden,

Eva and Brian Little. Woody thanked them for feeding us so well.

Woody asked for a volunteer to head the Transportation Committee. This committee tries to keep Islanders on the Island by providing transportation to hospitals, doctors' appointments, etc. All we need is a person to

(Continued on page 4)



AMHERST ISLAND MENS SOCIETY

Presents

NEW YEARS EVE

Thursday December 31, 2009 6:00 PM—Next Year

A.I. Community Centre

\$25.00 / Person

Featuring: "A Bit of Nostalgia"...
one of Kingston's premier party bands.

For Tickets Call: **Bonnie @ 613-389-5729**
Karen @ 613-389-1080 or
Susan @ 613-384-7866

Tickets available in advance only!

(Continued from page 3)

agree to coordinate these requests with our driver volunteers. Please call Woody 384-0887 to volunteer for this much appreciated service.

Greg Latiak reported that our New Year's Dinner & Dance is progressing well although some volunteers are still needed. The price will hold at \$25 a head. Brian Little has the tickets ready and he will be putting a copy in the Beacon with a little advertisement. Brian has also volunteered to get the liquor license, permission from the school board, and the necessary supply of alcohol. Dick & Ardis Shurtleff (and her sister, Pam) have volunteered to tend the bar. Door prizes and raffle items are in short supply. Jean Leblanc volunteered an item right then and there. Thank you Jean. Bruce Burnett agreed to man the sound system before and after the band.

Proposed donations for the year end: \$1,000 to the Ameriks Scholarship Fund split 60-40 between the Endowment and Bursary portions. The AI Museum and AI Radio will each receive \$250.

These disbursements will not take place until after the New Year's Dinner & Dance receipts are in.

It was agreed to donate \$500 to the school trip to the ROM to help pay for the bus.

Brian Little introduced our new member, Steve Kennedy, who bought the Krauklis house on the South Shore. Steve & his wife, Tara, have four children and he teaches K-2 in Sharbot Lake. Steve is an accomplished musician with his own band, The Crooked Wood. He will be entertaining the Seniors on Sunday, December 6 along with Deborah Kimmitt as MC

Brian Grace introduced our guest speaker, Mr. John Leblanc, who knows Andrew Grace who asked John to come over to Amherst Island to see their Farnham house. John did visit and immediately fell in love with this classic beauty. Brian gave a short history of John's ancestors who came from the Channel Islands (Jersey). They moved to Halifax when the Germans invaded and then later to Quebec and then to Kingston in 1944. Brian told us that so far they have removed five dumpsters filled to the brim with junk from their old ballroom.

John told us that he owes all his talent and skills to his father, Normand Leblanc. John quit school at the age of 15 in order to work with his father and his many skilled craftspeople. He is very sad that most craftspeople advise their sons and daughters to go to school and not to learn a trade. Fortunately he has thirty skilled craftsmen working with him to save old buildings which he considers to be works of art. Just as a symphony has many contributors to the final music so does an old house require many skills to maintain its symmetry, balance and beauty.

John identified immediately with our Island culture saying that Islanders are independent and tough as well as being caring, sharing and cooperative. He loves our world-

class concerts, our intimate and delightful social functions, our instinct of "tradition". That which Chesterton called, the "Democracy of the Dead". "This 'tradition' is evident in the care which is given to your Heritage Homes and Buildings like the Neilson Store." John is grateful to be saving Farnham which is a remarkable example of Upper Canada Architecture—serene, dignified, solid, and yet, somehow, understated as only the Victorians knew how. He bows in homage to the craftsmen who built it. When his men took down the bricks they found weathered, whitewashed boards with weathered square nails. He figures it was about twenty years before the brick was added. The frame was built by boat builders using an adze to shape each log which can not be duplicated today. This building is truly a work of art. He is up for the task because he has thirty skilled craftsmen working on his team. Two of his stonemasons worked on Fort Henry for two years.

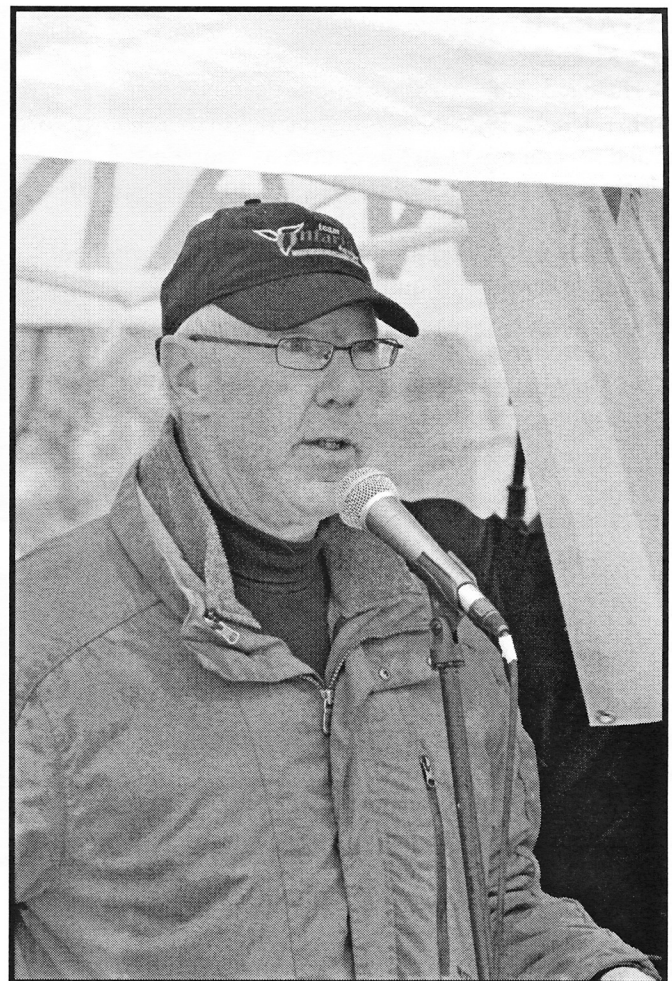
John said he is constantly learning. He still has his grandfather's library of ancient books on carving and building rescued from the German invasion of the Jersey Islands years ago. He is very pleased that Google has scanned most of the ancient building crafts books so that anyone can now read them on a computer.

His brother, Michael, is a self-taught structural engineer who is now working on the Grace's conversion of their ballroom to a master bedroom and living room.

The Leblancs were one of the first clients of Leonard Lee of Lee Valley Tools. Leonard started his hand tool business in his basement. Leonard is an English major who loves to write. He writes all the Lee Valley Tools catalogues. He is publishing old craft books too.

John Kuti asked John how he is able to compete with modern technology. John said that it was easy to compete with mass produced products because the overhead kills them. John is able to produce baseboard for \$3.50 a foot whereas the big box stores charge \$5.00/ft. for the same thing. John's company has stayed small with little overhead so they can produce a quality product for less. He refuses to build fads. He has many repeat customers.

John Kuti thanked John for his fascinating talk and was amazed that John could produce such beautiful work for less than the high tech people.



Vicki Keith (left) and John Munro (right) recently attended the kickoff event for the Ontario Paralympic Games. John Munro is the chairperson.

PHOTO BY BRIAN LITTLE

(Continued from page 2)

The Amherst Island Men's Society donated \$1,000.00 in memory of Alan Kidd and requested that \$600.00 be donated to the capital portion of the Ameriks Scholarship Fund and the balance of \$400.00 for disbursement.

Gowan and Gowan Corporation donated \$500.00 to the capital portion of the Ameriks Scholarship Fund.

The following donations were made in 2009 toward the yearly distribution amount of the Ameriks Scholarship Fund: South Shore Enterprises (Amherst) Ltd. \$2,000; Amherst Island Women's Institute \$150; Amherst Island Men's Society 400.

Interest to October 31: \$126.90

Total = \$2,676.90.

Each of the following 14 applicants will receive \$191.21 of the donations and interest accrued from the joint funds:

Beth Albertan, Trent University
David Albertan, St. Lawrence College
Talia Fleming, St. Lawrence College
Marlene Kilpatrick, University of Toronto- Michener
Melinda Laing, Nipissing University
Katherine Little, Nipissing University
Alison McDonald, The Michener Institute
Caitlin McDonald, Georgian College
Geoffrey McDonald, St. Lawrence College
Ashley McGinn, Queen's University
William Reed, Queen's University
Chrysta Trotter, St. Lawrence College
Alicia Wolfreys, St. Lawrence College

EDWARD KAYE MCGINN

- Eric McGinn

A Husband, Father, Father-in-Law, Grandfather, Brother, Uncle, Friend and Neighbour – he was known to me and several others in this church as 'Uncle Kaye'.

Uncle Kaye was born May 19, 1936, to Ellen and Edward McGinn, youngest of eight children.

Uncle Kaye attended #5 school on Emerald Forty Foot until Grade 8, when he quit school to work on the family farm.

Aunt Dorothy and Uncle Kaye were married July 11, 1959. They have two children, Karen and Vernon; three Grandchildren, Candice, Jeremy and Jason. He is predeceased by one infant daughter, Marlene, who died in 1962.

Uncle Kaye farmed full time until around 1970 when he went out to work for the Amherst Island Telephone Company, Amherst Island Township, and then to roofing for R.E. Harding Ltd, Kingston Roofing, and Amherst Roofing, from which he retired from a foreman's position in 1994 due to health issues.

Uncle Kaye lived his entire life on the farm where he was born; first in the family homestead then in 1984 he and Aunt Dorothy built a new waterfront home at the Bars overlooking the bay.

As a kid growing up, I spent a lot of time at Uncle Kaye's. I thought I was helping on the farm – I'm not sure what he thought.

Back then Uncle Kaye was in his prime. He was strong and tall, stood straight and his hair was dark. He was farming, fixing farm equipment, trapping muskrats in the marshes around Amherst Island and cutting firewood – just to mention a few things. He could throw an old chainsaw on a kitchen chair and sharpen it free hand and when he was finished it would cut like it had been done on a machine.

I remember Uncle Kaye rescuing a deer faun that had been caught in a barb wire fence. He brought it home, nursed it back to health and released her back into the wild a few months later.

As kids, my brothers and I always admired Uncle Kaye's Ford cars and trucks. I remember he bought a 1959 Ford car, yellow and white. Man, was she a beauty. Nothing Uncle Kaye liked better than taking us boys for a rip in her, showing us how she performed, but we were never allowed to tell how fast we went. When Terry, Larry and I were young teenagers, Uncle Kaye bought a brand new Ford pick-up truck. They brought it by our house to show it off, and the first thing Uncle Kaye did was flip Terry the keys and off we went on a road trip around the Island. That's just the type of guy he was.

I was visiting with Aunt Dorothy and her family on Wednesday evening past, reminiscing some of the fun times we had as a group. We were thinking back to some of the work bees Uncle Kaye used to organize to get the haying done on weekends. They were hard work but fun

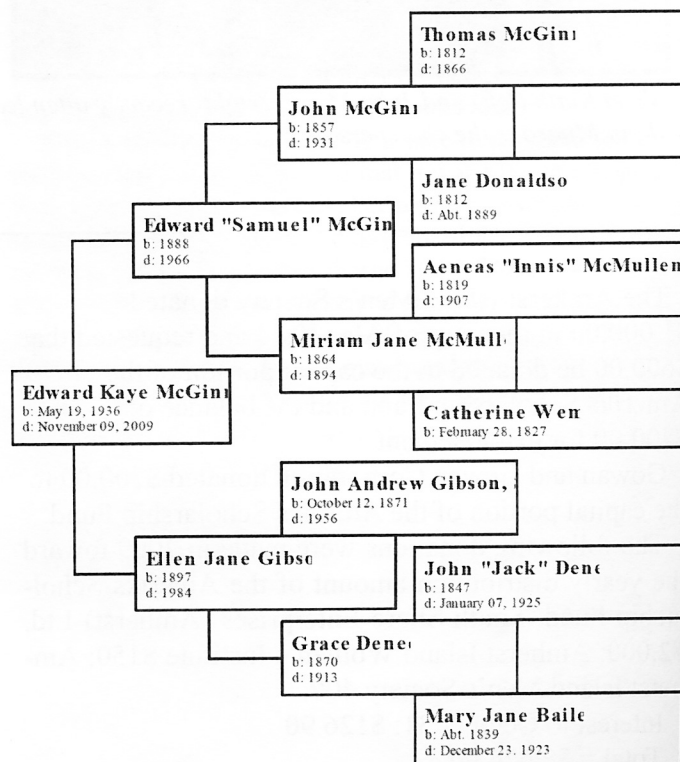
as well, and of course included a good meal at the end of the day. Uncle Kaye even built a barn with the help of family and friends.

This past summer Aunt Dorothy and Uncle Kaye celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with a beautiful outdoor party at Karen and Ted's. Uncle Kaye was at the top of his game with all his family and friends in attendance. He looked great in his brand new suit with a vest. He liked that vest!

Occasionally when Uncle Kaye and I were parting ways, instead of shaking his hand, I would give him a little kiss on the cheek. I did it to tease him because I don't think he liked it. He would say 'get out of here, old son'. The night of the Anniversary party as Janice and I were bidding Aunt Dorothy and Uncle Kaye good-bye, and thanking them for everything, I gave him a small kiss on the cheek. He gave me a hug and a small peck back, and I am going to cherish that hug and small peck for a long time.

It didn't matter what you asked Uncle Kaye for, whether it was a cigarette, something from his lunch box at work or a ferry ticket to get on the boat, his answer was always the same: "Yeah. Help yourself, aye."

In closing, I just want to say "Uncle Kaye rest in peace". Your friendship, generosity and the leadership skills you have left us will never be forgotten. You truly were a great guy.

Ancestors of Edward Kaye McGinn

PHOTOS ON NEXT PAGE PROVIDED BY THE MCGINN FAMILY UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED



50th Wedding Anniversary—with family



Kaye with Karen

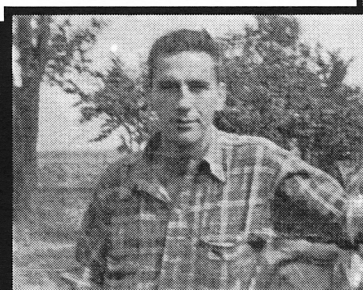


Cutting Cake on Wedding Day



Wedding Day with Parents Edward & Ellen McGinn

Below: Anniversary with Grandchildren Candace, Jeremy & Jason



Approximately age 20

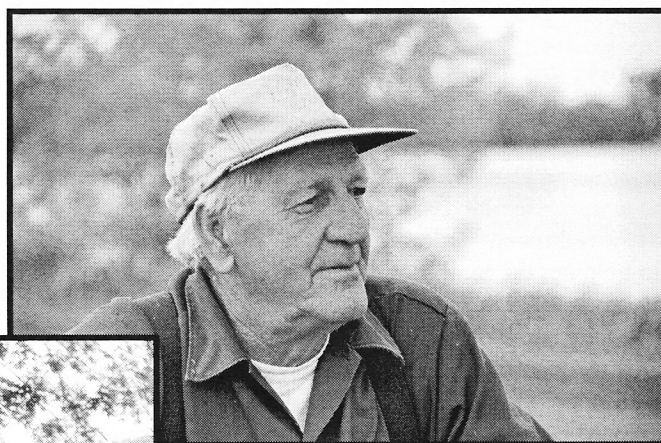


PHOTO BY TERRY CULBERT



HELEN MCCORMICK'S RETIREMENT

- Zander of DUNN INN

On December 31, Helen McCormick will retire from her job as mail delivery person for the rural route on Amherst Island. Helen is not leaving because she is tired or old or fed up. In fact, she is a vibrant, youthful and enthusiastic woman who loves the job she has had for countless years.

The years are countless because Helen has been delivering the mail with and for her husband, Edward, part time and full time since 1950. That's when her husband took over one of the two postal routes on the Island from Colin Filson.

Helen has paperwork to show that the Post Office was established on Amherst Island on July 21, 1882 at Neilson's store in Stella. Another official paper, dated September 1, 1927, shows the Post Office was still located at Neilson's Store.

Helen (McMullin) McCormick was born in 1934 in the house in which Dave and Diane Hieatt live today. She went to Number Two School, where Lorna Willis now lives, because at that time her parents lived in the house where Stanley Burke and Peggie Coulter reside today. Helen moved to the new consolidated school (the present school) when she was in grade 9. Some of her pals at school were Elaine (Miller) Wolfreys, Ann and Kay Neilson and Howard Cochrane, the son of the ferry captain, Billy Cochrane. Shortly after she graduated from grade 12, she got married in 1951 to Edward James George McCormick. She gave birth to seven children: Paul, Anne, Jack, Peter, Michael, Penny and Noel.

In 1955 Edward McCormick began his first full contract with the Post Office as the mail deliverer for one part of the Island. When Edward became a member of the ferry crew in 1962 he was able to deliver the mail only during the winter, when the ferry did not run. In the summer he either hired others to do the job for him or Helen pitched in to help get the mail around.

In 1966 Helen did the work full time. To do that, she had to take some of the kids with her on her route. She laughs when she remembers how Syke Fleming thought it was so interesting that she put her daughter, Penny, in a cardboard box in the back seat, in the days before seat belts and children's car seats. The car had a faulty muffler so that the motor made a deafening racket. Fortunately, Penny slept through the noise. Unfortunately, she woke up as soon as the car was turned off and the cacophony subsided.

Up until 1973 there were two rural routes on Amherst Island. Herb Wires, who became the Post Master in 1964, and operated the Post Office out of The Brick building where The Back Kitchen now stands, had one route and the McCormicks had the other. At first Herb would deliver his mail in the morning while Helen looked after the Post Office. Then, in the afternoon he would take care of the Post Office while Helen went around her route. The Postal

Authorities decided that was not right and that all the mail had to be delivered at the same time so someone was hired to look after the Post Office while the deliveries took place.

When the Brick building burned down (with no loss of mail), the Evelyn Taylor House (now owned by Caroline Ackerman, became the Post Office for awhile.

The Post Office was moved to the Glenn Store (operated by Les and Irene Glenn), now our General Store, in 1973, and Helen took over Herb's route and made the two into one route for the entire Island. It was not until 1990, the year of her husband's death, that Helen took over the contract in her own name. So you could say she has been delivering the mail to the entire Island for 20 years! But, as you have already seen, she has been delivering our mail for many more years than that.

Helen used to go over on the ferry each morning with the mail to the mainland and return on the ferry with the mail for the Island. She would then help sort it and set out on her route.

Florence McCormac loved to tell the story of the time when Helen was delivering mail up at the fishing village and a fire broke out in her car. Florence admired Helen's speed in rescuing both her baby and the mail. The fire fighters, whom Florence called, were not able to save the car which was a complete write-off.

Helen says her life as a mail delivery person has been comparatively uneventful. She had a few flat tires, many of which she changed herself. On other occasions passersby would change the flat tires for her.

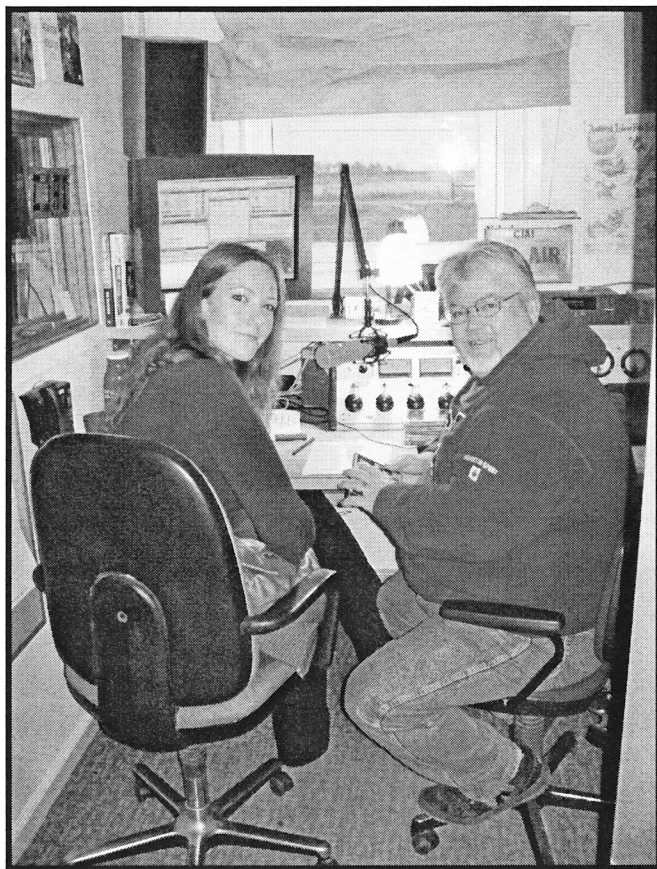
Perhaps her scariest moment occurred a couple of years ago. Helen was driving along the South Shore road near the Hubbard property when a tractor, pulling a wagon barreled down the drive-way right in front of her. She was able to stop and avoid a collision but watched with dismay as the tractor and wagon went over the shore far out into the lake. She was relieved to see the driver emerge from the water without injury.

Years ago there was much less mail to deliver than there is today. Today we receive, via the mail, many different magazines, packets of advertising fliers, notices about Island events and countless appeals by mainland charities.

The job was unionized in 2004 and, while the pay is not that great (especially when you consider the motor vehicle expenses involved), the benefits are generous and advantageous. There is no age limit to the job that Helen is leaving but she feels this is a good time to stop. She has not lost any time due to sickness and can remember only a few days when she was unable to drive her truck through the snow or the ice. Helen says she will miss the job because she always got up looking forward to driving around the Island. It has never been boring to see the animals, the changes in the lake and to greet various people. She knows she has been able to offer an important service to all the

(Continued on page 9)

L.A. MEETS A.I.



On a recent visit to Amherst Island, former Amherst Island resident Bonnie Marshall, who now resides in Los Angeles stopped by CJAI to spend some time with Hosts Terry Culbert, and Brian Little on the Friday Morning Show.

PHOTOS BY BRIAN LITTLE

(Continued from page 8)

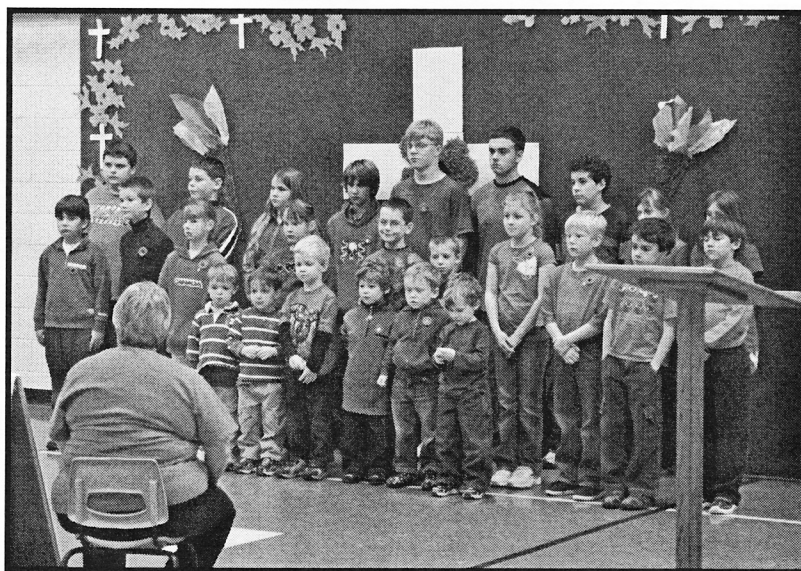
Islanders who depend upon her.

Whoever gets Helen's job will have a tough act to follow. And the applicant the Post Office authorities choose will have to possess a driver's licence, enjoy full insurance, get a police check and receive clearances for all manner of things. Helen hopes that whoever the new mail deliverer is, that person will enjoy the job as much as she

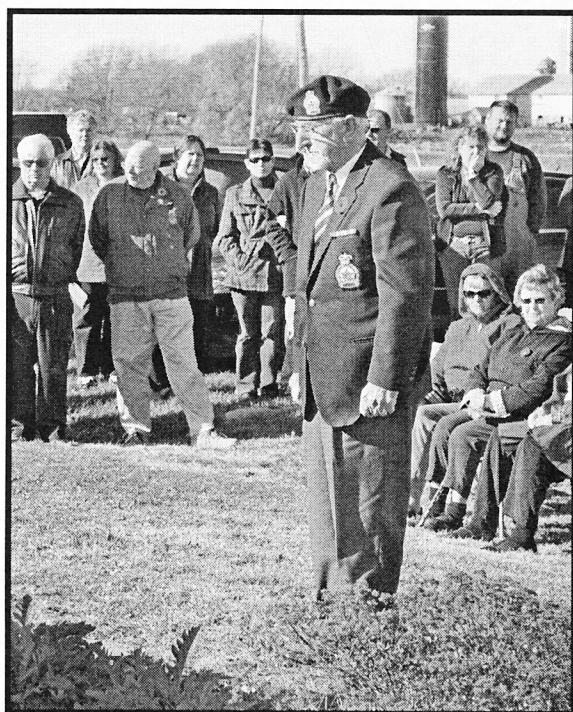
has enjoyed it. When she retires, Helen will not become inactive. She will continue to keep the books for her son Noel's business, a task she says will occupy much of her time.

Thank you, Helen, for your faithful, efficient and helpful service. We appreciate you and all you have done for us. Enjoy your retirement.

REMEMBRANCE DAY ON AMHERST ISLAND



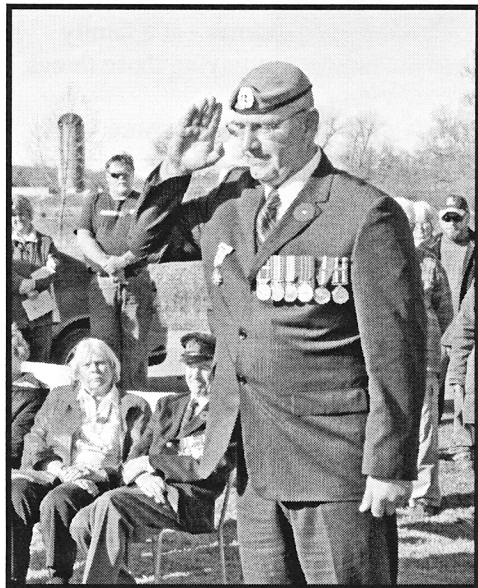
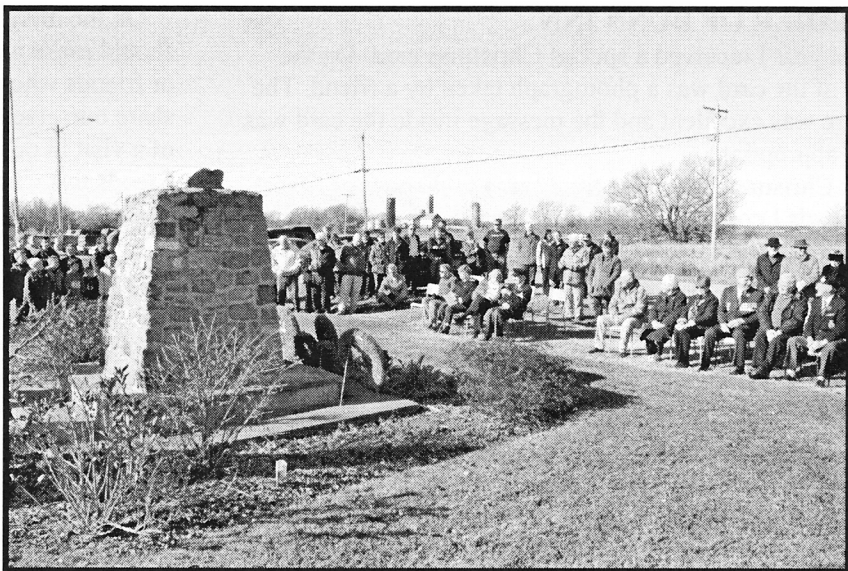
AIPS Students led a service inside the Community Centre, before everyone went outside to the cenotaph to lay Wreaths.



Jim Whitton



Stanley Burke



A SIMPLER CHRISTMAS

- ZANDER OF DUNN INN

Last year I received a special Christmas card. On the front of the card was a photograph taken by a friend. The picture was excellent and the message inside the card was most appropriate.

After Christmas when the time came to dispose of Christmas cards I could not bring myself to throw away that special card. What to do with it? I could put it in a scrap book, but it would not be seen very often. I could get it framed and put on the wall, but I've run out of wall space for pictures. I've simply left it as I received it and have put it on display on a table top. Whenever I look at that card I think of my friend and I can't bear to get rid of the card.

That card made me think of my preparations for this Christmas. What am I going to give as gifts to my friends? In the name of my sons and their wives I've already decided to give pigs, chickens and goats via Presbyterian World Service and Development to people in need in the Third World. But what about the friends who might like to get a personal gift from me at Christmas?

I've read and been told frequently that we should give to others, not just "stuff" anybody can buy at a store, but we should give something of ourselves. So, for some friends I'm going to give a coupon book for future services: a family photograph, baby or dog-sitting so my friends can get out for the evening, a pizza (so simple, even I can make it).

For other friends I will make up a packet of 10 cards, each sporting on the front a photo I've taken, in the hope that the cards will encourage my friends to send "thank you" notes for gifts they've received.

If I were better organized I might offer to promise rides in my car to some of the people whom I know who cannot drive or who are too old to drive. Nance and I could send a "promise" to a friend that we would provide lunch on a day convenient for all of us and serve it and even eat it with the person to whom we give that gift. Nance can deal with the food; I can look after the transportation.

I know the giving of your self is much appreciated by those who receive that personal gift. This summer Nance and I went to visit an old college chum who has to go to the hospital in Burlington to undergo dialysis every second day. We told him we were coming to visit and we made sure we visited him while he was receiving the dialysis treatment. He was effusive in his thanks to us. He said we were the first people who had come to visit him during the time he was in hospital going through the dialysis procedure. He appreciated our company because his dialysis time was usually a dull, boring drag. He loves to talk and we were able to share with him some of what we had been doing and then were able to listen to him tell us about his family. Then we got involved in some heated discussions about world affairs, Canadian politics and religious issues.

Before we knew it, three hours had flown by and we had enjoyed the time together.

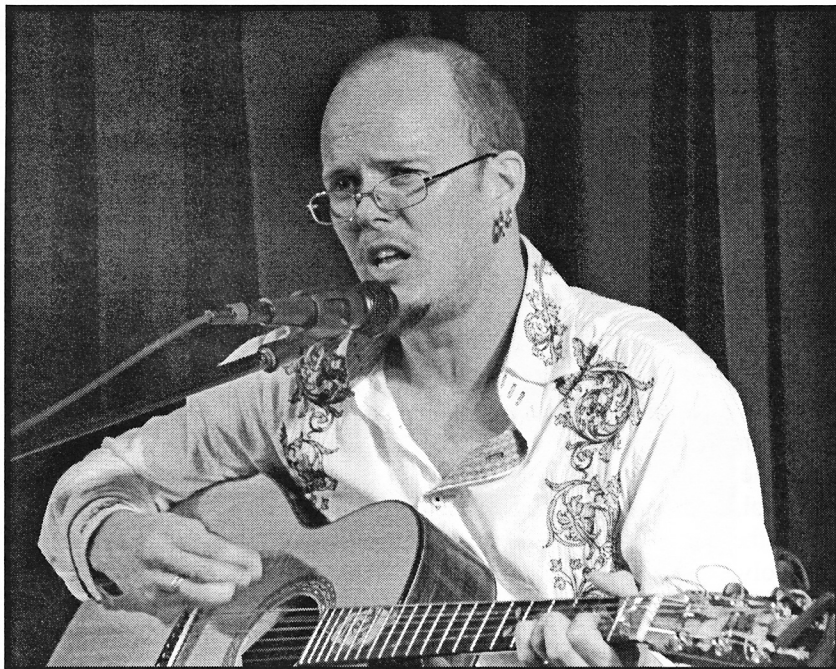
On the drive home I suggested to Nance that we should make a trip once a month to visit some old friend or friends whom we have not seen for a long time and share ourselves with them. We could send the promise of a visit in our Christmas card to each one of our friends this Christmas. In that way we could make Christmas last longer than merely one day. And it would be a great gift for ourselves, too because to share time with a friend is a mutual blessing.

So many people complain about how much they spend at Christmas. Some are dismayed and disturbed about going into debt at Christmas time. As an alternative, why not enjoy a simpler Christmas - at a family meal with friends and loved ones, enjoying those things which money can't buy?

Jesus, whose birthday we celebrate at Christmas, was born to peasants, was a poor man, even by the standards of his day, and died in poverty. I don't think Jesus is heartened or praised by our excessive and self-centred Christmas gift buying. I suggest he might be encouraged when the gifts we give one another are of ourselves.

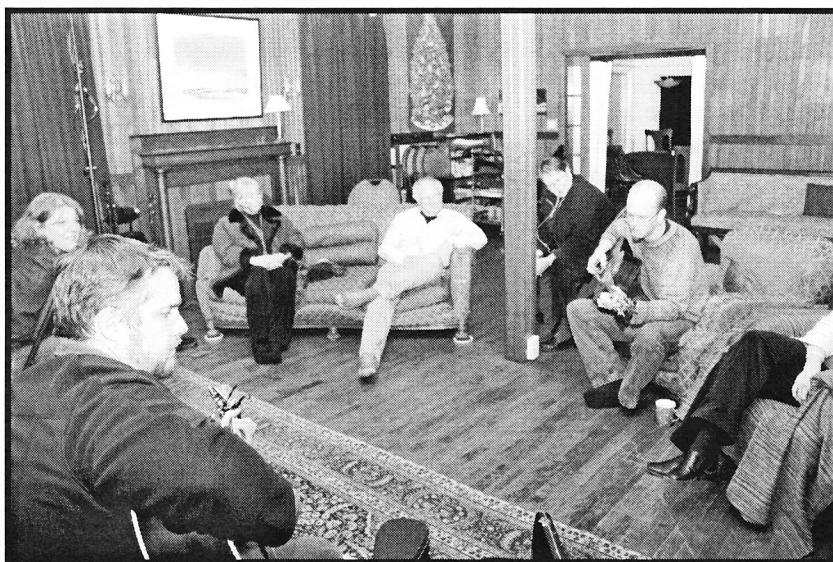


NATHAN ROGERS PLAYS AT THE LODGE ON AMHERST ISLAND



AND HAD AN IM-
PROMPTU JAM SES-
SION WITH STEPHEN
KENNEDY AFTER
THE SHOW

PHOTOS BY BRIAN LITTLE



WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

-Mary Kay Steel

The evening of Wednesday, November 18th our branch held its regular meeting, at the home of Joyce Reid, with eleven members present. The meeting started with each attendee showing and explaining a quilted item special to her; some were old, others new, and all were interesting with several having personal memories attached.

On to the business part of the meeting which included a review of our financial situation (pretty good!) and reports from our various standing committees. The 2010 special calendar honouring our 110th anniversary, containing wonderful old photos, was hot off the presses, and members enjoyed getting a look at it and purchasing copies. Kirsten, meeting chair, thanked the three-member committee who developed the calendar, Jackie Sylvester, Liz Harrison and Mary Kay Steel. We discussed plans for the calendar's launch on November 21st during the pre-Christmas sale weekend here on the Island. Our next major project will be to produce a new Island phone directory, and we plan to get down to work on that early in the new year.

Joyce Haines reported on the completion of the ROSE Buddies program at the school, and the upcoming lunch party on December 2nd with the participants, marking its conclusion. The project involved several Island seniors who shared biographical information and accounts of "olden" times with selected students; the student in turn wrote up his/her version of the senior's biography. Next topic of discussion was our upcoming Christmas Dinner Party for seniors on December 6th; looks like the preparations are well in hand. Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 9th, commencing at 6pm at St. Paul's church hall; we will enjoy our usual Christmas pot-luck supper and gift exchange.

We then enjoyed a fine lunch, prepared by Joyce Reid and Diane Hieatt, and got down to our evening's craft lesson, ably led by Jackie Sylvester. Amid much giggling and moans of exasperation, we all made a good effort at making cards adorned with snowflakes made of string. Jackie showed infinite patience with her students. It was great fun.

SHORT-EARED OWL RESEARCH

-Janet Scott

Last May I was blessed with the arrival in my home of two McGill students, Kristen Keyes and Catherine Doucet. They soon became part of my extended family. Over the next few months many Islanders and I got to know these students better and were impressed by their enthusiasm and dedication. Some of you may have heard their talk at the Backroom at the Museum on July 31st or have heard your children talk about the Owl Girls who shared their expertise at the

school. Amherst Islanders made them welcome and leaned over backwards to help them find Short-eared Owls.

Kristen's project is still continuing and she has joined with Bird Studies Canada, the Kingston Field Naturalists, the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Migration Research Foundation and the Lennox and Addington Stewardship Council to study the Short-eared Owl as a species of special concern in Ontario and Canada. Southern Ontario supports some of North America's largest concentrations of wintering Short-eared Owls which creates an excellent opportunity to study their habits and habitats. The Islands of Amherst and Wolfe are two areas where Short-eared Owls both breed and spend the winter so a study began in November 2009 to document the population status.

Volunteers doing roadside surveys will now be seen here on a regular basis over the next few months. These volunteers need to be on specified sites at least twice a month during the next few months. The best time to observe these wonderful owls is just at dusk so please bear with cars parked at the sides of the roads. They will have 4-way flashers on and are not entering your land, only observing from the roadside. You Islanders have been so supportive of our project so far and we ask for your help now. Please report to one of the following whenever you have a sighting and record place, time, number of birds and behaviour. Thanks already to Carol and Rick Morgan and the Reids for their excellent reports.

Report to: Kristen Keyes - Migration Research Foundation - Kristen@migrationresearch.org
For more information contact:
Kurt Hennige - Kingston Field Naturalists - khen-nige@explornet.com;
Hazel Wheeler- Bird Studies Canada- hwheeler@birdscanada.org

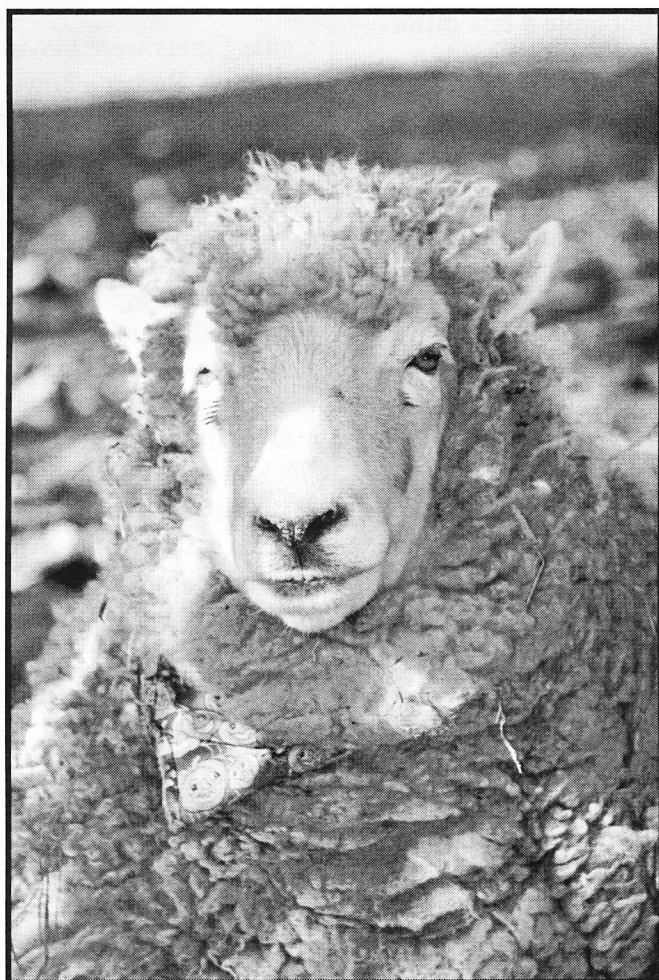
Thanks so much for your ongoing help. If we know more about these owls then perhaps we can stop the declining numbers.

A NOTE TO OUR READERS AND CONTRIBUTORS

- Sue Murray

This is a reminder to all of our contributors that submissions are due on the 25th of the month. Contributions are coming in later and later all the time, and are forcing the Beacon to come out later and later each month. Please remember! Many Thanks.

AMHERST ISLAND'S ONLY TRAINED SHEEP



Icycle, who resides on the property of Gwen and Paul Lauret, is a known face on Amherst Island. He knows how to smile, and to "Slap 5", and is easily recognizable on Front Road as he's usually wearing a bandana.

PHOTOS BY BRIAN LITTLE



JANET'S JOTTINGS

- Janet Scott

White Birds! Well that seems rather a bland topic to be writing about this month but quite a few different species have been brought to my attention recently and they all are white. I've been looking at cars lately and have been impressed by all the different ways we can describe white. My daughter-in-law commented on the fact that when you go to buy paint, it is not just white but that they too come in a multitude of whites. Rebecca in her wry way, looked over the exciting list of colours with two and three descriptives like Naturally Neutral Metallic and commented but black is just black!

Over the past month I have been looking at birds that are small and white with a peach tint and black dots, medium and white with yellow beak and legs, bigger white with some spotting and large white with black bills. Now you know why you can't just say, "I saw a white bird today". Identifying birds needs descriptives such as size, habitat and behaviour. What was it doing, flying, sitting, and where was it feeding, water, grasslands, or is it bigger than a crow or smaller than a robin?

Once you start looking at characteristics then you can more easily identify the bird.

The first white bird was identified by Andrew Patenall who was kind enough to trace my whereabouts to the school and brought a coloured photo of the most beautiful Mourning Dove. The shape is all Mourning Dove but the colour is from the most delicate peach shading to pure white with the dark spots along the upper wing. It was feeding with other doves and in sunlight just glowed. Thanks Andrew, they are beautiful pictures.

Mourning Doves are about 12 inches in length and appear to have a smaller head than their bodies require. They are usually soft brown with white outer tail feathers and black spots. They moan sadly in a cooing sound and hence their name. They are the clean-up crew at your feeder busily eating up dropped seeds such as millet or oats.

The next bird was reported first to me by Lyn Fleming and I misidentified it because I didn't ask about size. Keith Miller set me straight about this bird and later Sam Miller told me about it. There is a Cattle Egret hanging out at the Miller farm on the Third Conc. Cattle Egrets are a hardy and adaptable bird but Canada is about the most northern area of their range.

They are common in Africa and in about 1940 expanded their ranges east and west. Some birds reached South America and then gradually pushed northwards through North America. At the same time Cattle Egrets were moving through India and south to Australia. Rather a brave explorer. In Africa they travel with migrating herds and eat insects and small creatures stirred up by the hooves of these animals. In North America they settled in with herds of cattle and as Keith says this one rides on the back of one of the cows and then hops to a bale of hay when he appears. Cattle Egrets are about 20 inches in length and are white with yellow beak and legs. In breeding plumage they have buff-orange plumes on their back, crown and foreneck. The immatures have lighter legs.

Over the month of November many have spotted the Snowy Owl hanging out at the Kingston Field Naturalist's Sanctuary or along the gravel bar. It is a mature male and very white with few spots. The more spotted a Snowy Owl is the younger it is. Females are spotted but bigger than males.

Snowy Owls are 23 inches in length with a 55 inch wingspan. In the Arctic they depend on lemmings but here in their wintering grounds the vole is the menu choice and an owl can eat as many as ten voles a day. Last year a few straggling Snowy Owls stayed until June. If the owl stays about 7 months and eats ten voles a day then it consumes about 2100 voles. On one day last winter we had about twenty Snowy Owls on Amherst Island.

That's a lot of voles!

The biggest white bird visiting Amherst Island this fall is the Tundra Swan.

There are about 80 Swans hanging out around the gravel bar. You can also see swans feeding at Elevator Bay in Kingston. They feed like Canada Geese by tipping up their bottoms and feeding underwater. The Tundra Swan is all white with black legs and black beak with a yellow spot in front of the eye.

The bird is about 36 inches in length with an 80 inch wingspan. They hold their necks up straight with the bill held level. Kristen heard this large flock talking to each other as they rested on the gravel bar last Sunday.

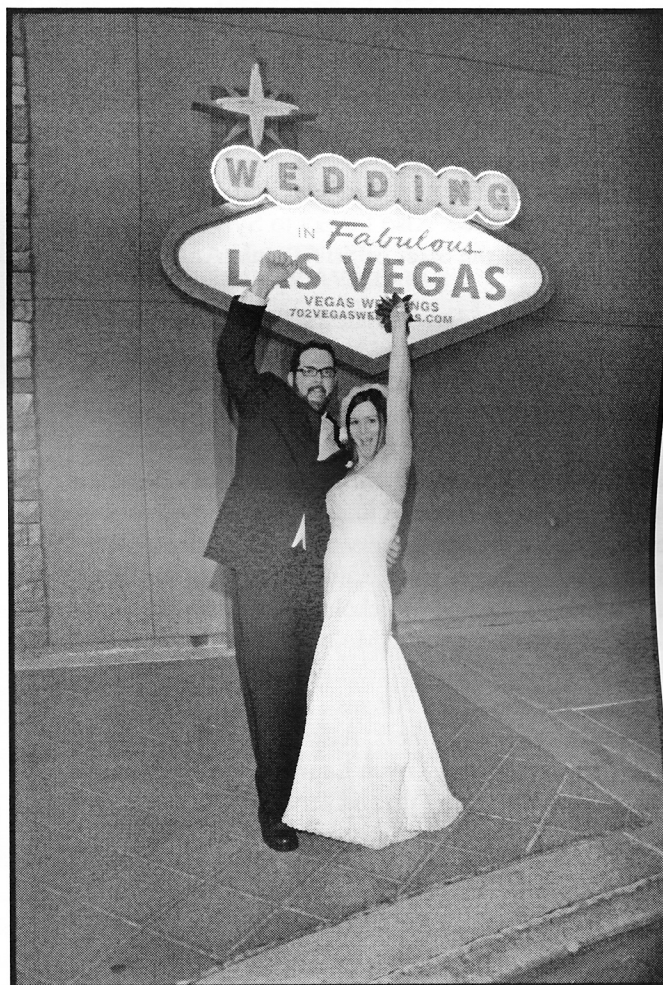
So white birds are not just white and come in a wonderful array of shapes and sizes. Keep watching and we'll move on into colours next.

Good birding everyone and please keep up those excellent birding reports.

WATCHING FROM ABOVE



PHOTO BY BRIAN LITTLE



James Silver and Melanie Welsh are thrilled to announce their recent marriage that took place November 17th, 2009 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

James is the son of Liz Hogeboom (Kerry) and Phil Silver (Debbie) and Melanie, daughter of Ron & Lorna Welsh. The groom was attended by best man and brother Jason Silver. Bride was attended by her dear friend Jennifer O'Donnell and sister Veronica Welsh.

A special thank you for all who could join us in Vegas and to the many wonderful people who helped us celebrate upon our return.

THANK YOU



It is with deep appreciation that we give our heartfelt thanks to all who comforted and supported us in our time of need and deep sorrow.

Thank you to Paul Payne's funeral home and staff for their excellent service. Also thanks to Sylvia Dopking and Mary Raddon for the offer of St. Albans' Anglican Church, Odessa.

We were proud to have nephews Terry, Larry, Eric, Leon & Kelly McGinn and Christopher Willard as pallbearers. A special thanks to Eric McGinn for his warm eulogy; it was straight from the heart.

There are no words to express how grateful we were to have Reverend Don Bailey constantly at our side at this time of need; to comfort us in our sorrow, to arrange and perform such a wonderful service, along with his wife Elaine's beautiful voice. We also know he arranged to have Reverend Andrew Chisholm present for the readings.

Another special thanks to Molly Stroyman and staff for offering the Lodge for the enormous reception. Thank you to the parishioners of St. Albans', Stella for preparing the lunch as well as many others. Also thanks to Bonnie Caughey, Susan Filson, Gwen Lauret, Eloise Gowan, and Andrea Cross for setting up and serving at the reception.

Many thanks for the floral tributes, cards, visits, and donations to the First Response Team and St. Albans' Church, Stella. The response has been tremendous.

The food that came into our homes was just overwhelming; meals at a time and we were so grateful to all of you. Many thanks to family and friends who surrounded us with their love and support during a long week and to caring family and neighbours who continue to show their support.

Once again, a huge thank you to the Amherst Island First Response Team; to all of you who came and especially to Gary McDonald and Maureen McGinn who stayed with us for hours. We can't imagine how the island survived without the First Response Team. You are great.

What a wonderful community to live in. May God Bless you all.
Dorothy McGinn, Karen, Vernon and families.

Thank you to all of our friends and neighbours who continue to support Topsy Farms and The Wool Shed. We greatly appreciate your business, and look forward to providing you with our products for many years to come! Please watch for exciting changes coming in the New Year, including Interac.

We wish you all a safe and happy holiday season.

Chris, Dianne, Ian, Sally, Don, Kyle, Jake, Sue Nathan, and Michael

Season's greetings to all my Rawleigh customers. Thank you for buying so many of my Rawleigh Products. I really appreciate your support and thanks to all of you my business is growing.

I would also like to thank AIMS for sponsoring the Farmers' Market. The weather did not always cooperate this past season but AIMS members came out to set up the market.

The Farmers' Market is a great place to socialize and for Island vendors to sell their products.

Marie Ward

We would like to wish all of our contributors, subscribers and readers a very happy holiday season. We thank you for your continued support, and patience when we fail to meet our own deadlines.

Many thanks,
The Beacon Staff

I would like to wish all my customers at market and the farm a Merry Christmas and a Happy Healthy New Year. A hearty thank-you for your patronage through-out the summer. I would like to thank Beth Forester for all her help in the pouring rain
Barbara Reid

We would like to thank all who patronized our turkey supper on Nov. 7. Those who helped from the community and church ahead of time getting it ready and at night. We would also like to thank all our church people who worked hard cooking, baking, and serving the supper making it a great success.

Thank you everyone.
The Wardens of St. Albans

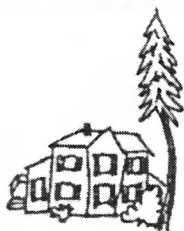
AT THE LODGE

Pub Nights at the Lodge co-sponsored by the Rec Committee. Save these dates to brighten up Winter. The Lodge and the Recreation Committee working together bring you Three Saturday nights of just plain fun!

January 30th - Irish pub theme with football, darts and other games

February 27th - Poker Night (and other games) learn the game at the beginners table(s)

March 20th - Country comes to the Point (believe it or not)



~ CLASSIFIEDS ~ ~ CLASSIFIEDS ~

WOMEN'S INSTITUTE CALENDARS

Our special 110th anniversary calendar for 2010 is now available for sale, at \$10 each. It features wonderful photos of past days on the island. A great Christmas gift and treasure to keep! Call Jackie Sylvester at 613 389-1320 or contact any WI member.

FOOT CARE

at the Ferry Office/Library back room Please call Sue Irwin R. N. 613-545-9379

**STELLA BEE HONEY**

Fresh Island honey at Topsy's Wool Shed. Dave Meikle's bees found a lot of flowers in our fields. 613-389-3444

Also available at the General Store, and at the Weasel and Easel.

PET SITTER

Muressa Fabian-Robinson is available day or evening to walk, feed, & visit with your pet.

Reliable, animal lover. Call 613-634-3075.

BETTY'S AFTERMARKET MARKET

Too busy!!! No time to cook!!!!



MY MARKET GOODIES AVAILABLE ALL WINTER TOO!!!

A few days notice and cooking for company just became easier.....



Call Betty 389-7907

WOMEN'S INSTITUTE CALENDARS

Our special 110th anniversary calendar for 2010 is now available for sale at \$10 each. It features wonderful photos of past days on the island. A great Christmas gift and treasure to keep! Call Jackie Sylvester at 613 389-1320 or contact any WI member. Also available at the General Store in Stella.

FOR RENT


Room for rent with kitchen privileges including private bath and TV/sitting room. Great view and excellent home gym! \$300 monthly. Leave voice mail at 389-1656.

CHIROPRACTIC CLINIC HOURS

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Make great Christmas Gifts—all price points. Call Sue Murray 613-384-2478 sue@topsyfarms.com



Deb Kimmett, an original Gift Bag

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Creative Writers' Workshop
January 21, 2010 Amherst Island \$100⁰⁰

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DINNER GUESTS? WONDERING WHAT TO SERVE?

Topsy Farms now has individual cuts of our fresh frozen lamb available at the farm. Quantities vary. Available cuts: Roasts, chops, shanks, and more. Please call before coming to find out what's in stock. 613-389-3444

Also available: Gift Certificates

WILD PREMIUM BC SALMON

Sockeye currently in stock. \$18.99 per pound. Call first.

Other varieties available by order only: Salmon (5 varieties), Black Cod, Albacore Tuna, and Rock Lobster Tails. Selection may vary month to month.

All products are certified wild caught, individually quick frozen and vacuum packed. All varieties are skin-on and boneless.

Please call or email for pricing and ordering information.

Sue Murray 613-384-2478 sue@topsyfarms.com



HELEN MCCORMICK RETIRES



Thank you, Helen, for your years of hard work. Enjoy your retirement.

PHOTO BY TERRY CULBERT

The



Foot