

# Amherst Island Beacon



*Issue 475 There's always another boat. February 2020*

## Passings



**Freda Youell 1933-2020**

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Freda Youell.

Born September 10, 1933, Grandma's love for a quiet and peaceful place started at a young age. Born on the Isle of Wight, island life was just in her blood. Moving from England to Canada at the age of 21, grandma quickly found work as an office girl. After a short time she began working at Atlantic Packaging and then to her favourite place of work, Hinels.

During the eighties, she bought a small cottage on the South Shore and fell in love with island life all over

again. Sharing the cottage with her friends and family made her fall in love with the island even more and a few years later, in 1993, she made the decision to pack up her life in Toronto and move to the island.

Grandma quickly became involved in everything the island had to offer; from the Women's Institute to the 4-H club, the Island Legion and the Napanee animal shelter. You could always see her there to lend a helping hand. She enjoyed helping others and being involved with everything the island had to offer.

If ever there was a stray cat you could always take it to Freda Youell's house. Whether it was a sickly-looking thing or a big fat one that she found in the gutter, her door was always open to our furry friends.

She always loved reminiscing about her days in 4H with her good friend Susie, the Halloween parties at the school, and the Saturday market. She always had a story to tell about her days on the island.

When our family purchased the store in 1998 she was always there to help, no matter the job. She loved visiting with the islanders whenever they came in for their weekly grocery shop and her Saturday morning coffee club with a few favourites.

Family and friends will remember Freda fondly. I'm sure islanders have a Freda story or two. Whether she invited you over for a cup of tea (or wine), or you were dropping off donations for the animals and it turned in to a visit, she was always ready to enjoy the company of others.

We will miss her every day. But she left so many memories, she will never be forgotten.

Love you Grandma, and we will see you again.

Freda's wish was to go quietly without services but the family may announce an informal celebration of life in the spring.

Candace Dibb



### **We'll miss you Freda**

While the following is a little late, we still remember and extend sympathy.



### **Sinclair Henry Wellington KNOX**

**Jun 3, 1935 – September 27, 2019**

Former Pressroom Foreman at The Kingston Whig-Standard

After a full life, at Kingston Health Sciences Centre, Sinclair passed away on Friday, September 27, 2019, in his 85th year, Beloved husband of the late Norma Knox (nee Wemp), loving and devoted father to Danny Knox and Debbie Dermott (Wayne), dear grandfather (Poppy) of Kendra McGinn and Nathan Knox and great-grandchildren, Joseph and Nathan;

predeceased by his grandson, Troy McGinn. Dearly loved by his only brother, Barry Knox (Joan). Brother-in-law of Mary and Dan Claus, Jean Smith (Wilf) and Bob and Cathy Wemp. Fondly remembered by Ryan, Beth and Baby Ella Dermott, Alexa Dermott, Darlene Knox and Jackie Haines, as well as many others. He was predeceased by his parents, Albert and Leefa Knox.

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We would like to thank everyone that sent cards, food and condolences for the passing of Zelma Koenders. Also the Lodge for hosting the celebration of her life.

Thank You so much

Love, the Koenders

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### **Note from the editor**

Judy Bierma

Well I'm more on time this month getting on top of the Beacon. I usually try to collect from postings throughout the month. I got quite a few submissions this month so thanks very much for sending me emails with submissions and always many thanks to David Pickering for putting the Beacon together and putting it on the net.

Mom is feeling much better and has a bed at Village Green (Selby) where she is very happy. She spent a lot of time there with my Grandma Peters, her mom, and my Aunt Jean, her sister. It is like going home to mom.

We visited with Bob Filson at Helen Henderson when we were playing in the Fireside Room. Keith Miller joined us and is always a big hit. The Seniors love to hear that harmonica. We are missing Jim Neilson at Helen Henderson. He is still in KGH because of a fall. Please let me know if you want to share information about friends and relatives in The Beacon.

I'm working on interviewing two very amazing young people connected to the Island. Graeme McKee is very talented young actor in To Kill a Mockingbird at the Domino Theater in Kingston. He played Gill. I will be interviewing him on CJA radio, The Cheesemaker's Daughter Show, on Monday 17 Feb, hopefully around 11 a.m. Also, Emily Wemp, Janet Scott's granddaughter is a very accomplished figure skater and I am working on interviewing her for The Beacon as well as on The Cheesemaker's Daughter show. Ok, that's enough for now. Have a great month. Be well.

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**Dan Simpson**

### **From CJA**

Island Sunrise Radio Show  
Thursday mornings 8 to 10  
from Dan Simpson

A great way to start the day, pour coffee and listen to some great classic country music every Thursday morning 7-10. I am Dan Simpson with a love of all kinds of music. After moving to the island I was asked to start a show on CJA. I jumped at the opportunity with some reservations of not being good with computers. My show started in March 2013, playing Classic Country, aiming at the older islanders like myself and after a few years I extended my show an extra hour, including 50 and 60's Rock & Roll. I have a great pleasure in finding these old songs that I haven't heard for many years. As long as people keep listening I will keep playing.

Thanks

Dan

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### Message from Ellis Wolfreys

Hello Friends and Neighbours, I must apologize for not sending my note last week. I have been having problems with a new medication that I am on, and it has a lot of uncomfortable side effects. They have cut it back to just a half dose now and am feeling a little better.

I do not have anyone coming to do a program on Wednesday, but I do have a gentleman stopping by to check us out, and he will do a program next week ( Feb. 5, 2020 ) His name is Roger Marshall, from Kingston, Ont. We may have a chat with him for a few minutes.

Some very unfortunate news, and that is that The Eastern Ontario Bluegrass Festival has been cancelled for this year. Dan Potter had a heart attack during the Christmas season, and will be having surgery in the spring. Not having dates, or knowing his recovery status, they have decided to cancel it for this year. I think that is a smart move on their part, as the work load for this event is humongous. The Winter Concert Series at Seelys Bay, will proceed as scheduled.

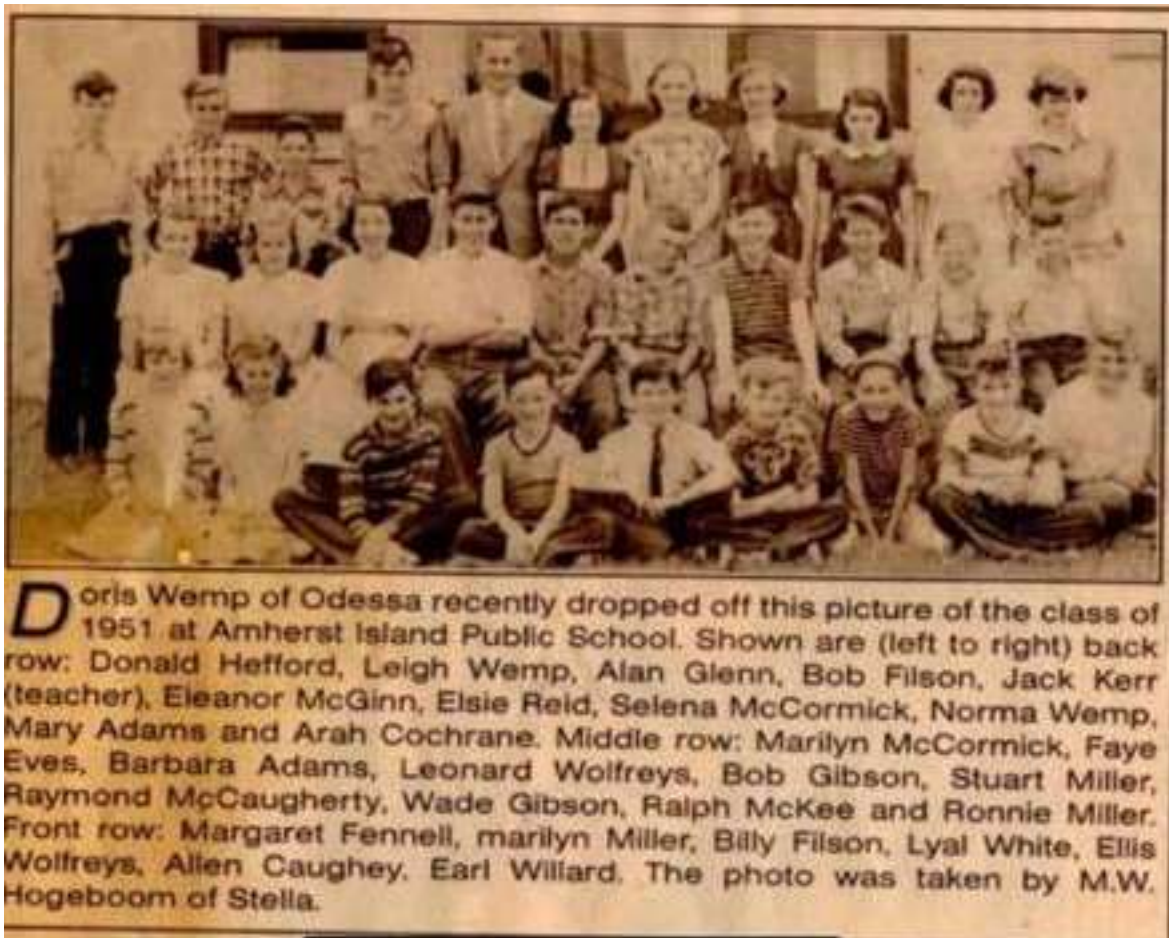
I would like to extend wishes and a quick recovery for Dan. He will be in our prayers for sure. Dan and Christine have done a great job the last few years with the festival, and sure hope they will be back at it again next year. God Bless you both.

God Bless you all, and Thanks for tuning in.  
From Mary Lou & Ellis Wolfreys, and Amherst  
Island Radio, CJA 92.1 FM

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## Blast from the past



Picture of Class in ???

Photo from Lynn Fleming

Just a comment about the school picture; in the front row between Ellis Wolfreys and Allen Caughey are Lloyd Strain and Paul Glenn.

from Lynn Fleming and Shirley Miller: For several months I have been trying to paint three children in oils, not a medium I have used a lot. So yesterday I ask Christopher Laffin to come and see if he could help. He paints beautiful portraits and has a good eye. So thank you Chris! For the first time in a long time I am excited to paint. Sometimes a few words from the right person can get us back on track.

Also.....



Today Lynn Fleming posted a picture from the early seventies at a time when snow machines were the only way to get to the mainland. It reminded me that I had done a cartoon for the Beacon of a misadventure that Helen Caughey had while traveling to the mainland where she taught school. She was in a sleigh behind Art Drumgool's machine (he carried the mail back and forth from the mainland) but the sleigh "got upset".

Another story about Crossing the Ice in the past.

from Joyce Brown

I have a story too. My mother, Pauline Glenn Taylor was 8 months pregnant with my twin sister and I, and living on the Island with her parents, Robert and Ellie Glenn. Dad was overseas (1943). My grandfather hitched up his sleigh, bundled my mother up and headed for the mainland to KGH. Half way across the horse went through the ice. He held the horse's head up told my mother to "run for shore for help!!" She waddled to the Milhaven Inn, owned by Wemp relatives in those days. Four men raced to help with horse. All turned out well. But we have had a story to tell forever.

**Commuter Parking  
during the ice  
season.**



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### **Basic Excel**

A lesson from the Internet Café by David Pickering

Had a friend who expressed an interest in knowing more about Excel and spreadsheets in general, so I figured I would start a bit of a lesson series. Feel free to skip over this if you have no interest. I'll try to scale back on the techy stuff and keep the initial talks pretty basic.

Excel is Microsoft's version of a spreadsheet, though there are many others from different companies. If you're in the Apple world, they call their spreadsheet program Numbers. If you use Open Office, they just call it Calc. In any event, the concepts are the same.

Spreadsheets are great for whenever you want to store tabular data. I've used them for transaction data (date, time, product, amount, tax, total, customer name, customer address, delivery instructions); for address books (first name, last name, phone number, e-mail, street name, street number, postal code, city) and for library information (book name, author, ISBN, date of pub, number of copies). I know you could put all of them in a normal list, but once they're in Excel you can do all sorts of neat things like sort by city, or only show purchases above \$500.

Any spreadsheet is comprised of rows and columns, making a grid. The example headings described above would be in row 1 (the top row) and would describe what I would put in each column. After that, every transaction, or address, or book would be a separate row beneath the header row. Each column would be

populated by the appropriate data.

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Systolic</b>	<b>Diastolic</b>	<b>Heartrate</b>
<b>2</b>	5 Jan 20	08:30	80	63	63
<b>3</b>	5 Jan 20	16:00	93	65	73
<b>4</b>	6 Jan 20	09:45	114	70	78

Above, you see a table which carries blood pressure readings ... another example.

Each of those ‘boxes’ seen above is called a ‘cell’. Each cell is referred to by its column and row. So, the cell with ‘70’ in it would be column D and row 4, or D4. If you wanted ALL the pressure readings, this would be a ‘range’ and is a rectangular block, designated by the upper left and lower right corners. In this case it would be C2:D4 for the six readings.

Now while it APPEARS there is no difference between the contents of the various cells, there is one fundamental one. Some are TEXT, and some are NUMBERS. You can do things with numbers which you cannot do with text, by making use of a third data type: FORMULAS.

I’ve put in a fifth row, and I will show you what I put in each:

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Systolic</b>	<b>Diastolic</b>	<b>Heartrate</b>
<b>2</b>	5 Jan 20	08:30	80	63	63
<b>3</b>	5 Jan 20	16:00	93	65	73
<b>4</b>	6 Jan 20	09:45	114	70	78
			=sum(C2:C4)	=average(D2:D4)	=Min(E2:E4)

While that is what I typed, what was displayed was this:

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Systolic</b>	<b>Diastolic</b>	<b>Heartrate</b>
<b>2</b>	5 Jan 20	08:30	80	63	63
<b>3</b>	5 Jan 20	16:00	93	65	73
<b>4</b>	6 Jan 20	09:45	114	70	78
			287	66	63

The formula at the bottom of the C column says “insert the sum of the range which extends from C2 to C4”. The other two ask for the average of the D range and the minimum of the E range. What’s more, if a numbered cell is changed, the formula will recalculate the new sum, average, minimum, maximum, or whatever the formula demands, instantly so you can see the impact of a change. The number of different FUNCTIONS (such as sum, average, min and max) number in the dozens. You can also do count functions such as =COUNTIF(C2:D4 >100) which would tell me how many of my pressure readings are too high.

Formulas can also work horizontally, either by using functions (like sum and average) or by using ‘normal’ math. For instance, in our store example:

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Item	Cost	Tax	Total	Taxrate
2	Fridge	899	= b2 x .13	= b2 + c2	.13
3	Stove	599	= b3 x 13%	= b3 + c3	
4	Dishwasher	399	= b4 x taxrate	= b4 + c4	
5	Total	= b2 + b3 + b4	= c2 + c3 + c4	= d2 + d3 + d4	

This would display as:

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Item	Cost	Tax	Total	TaxRate
2	Fridge	899	116.87	1015.87	.13
3	Stove	599	77.87	676.87	
4	Dishwasher	399	51.87	450.87	
5	Total	1897	246.61	2143.61	

Notice, I’ve computed the tax in three different ways to show Excel’s flexibility. In C2, I used the rate as a decimal; in C3, I used a percentage; and in C4 I used a NAME for the cell in E2. The latter is handy, because if the taxrate is changed, you only have to change that one E2 cell, instead of hundreds, or thousands, throughout the spreadsheet.

Finally below, I can tell Excel that the cells in B, C and D are currency, and it should format them accordingly. There are LOTS of formatting options including a wide variety of ways to display dates.

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Item	Cost	Tax	Total	TaxRate
2	Fridge	\$899.00	\$116.87	\$1015.87	.13
3	Stove	\$599.00	\$77.87	\$676.87	
4	Dishwasher	\$399.00	\$51.87	\$450.87	
5	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1897.00</b>	<b>\$246.61</b>	<b>\$2143.61</b>	

As you see, the table can analyze numbers, perform calculations, and display the results using numbers based on the formulas I typed. (Note that the CONTENT OF THE CELL is still the formula. The RESULT of the calculation is what is displayed.)

Dates and times are also considered numbers, and I can perform calculations on those.

For instance:

	A	B
1	Birth	1955/10/09
22	Today	=TODAY()
3	Days	= (B2-B1)

Would result in:

	A	B
1	Birth	09-Oct-55
2	Today	07-Feb-20
3	Days	23497

We get this because there are 23,497 days between today (when I wrote this) and the day of my birth. Needless to say, these types of functions are very handy when computing interest or depreciation in financial sheets. Other functions would allow me to calculate in years, months, days, hours, minutes or seconds.

That's enough for a first lesson. Text, numbers and formulae, placed in cells which are in rows and columns are the basics of spreadsheets. If you want to know more, either drop me a note via the editor of the Beacon or stop by the Internet Café on Tuesday. If no one is interested, I won't do it again. Happy to give one-on-one though, if someone wants help.

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### **Amherst Island events**

By Deb

Sundays February 2, 9, 16, 23

11:00 am Worship at St. Paul's

No services at St. Alban's until April 5. Contact Hubert Groot for information about bible study.

Week of February 3 Closure of Sand Beach Wetlands to be confirmed

Public Works has had to postpone the sand beach cleanup this week as the mild & wet weather has made the sand too soft to safely operate in. Hopefully cooler weather will allow the cleanup to continue next week.

Please be advised that the Amherst Island Sand Beach & Wetland Conservation Area will be closed to the public next week from Monday to Friday to permit the cleanup of trees that have fallen from the 2019 high water. It is estimated that approximately 100 trees are down.

A work plan has been developed by Public Works staff and approved by both the CRCA and the Ontario Heritage Trust.

Exciting changes at the Community Centre!

Mondays February 3, 10, 17, 24 at the AI Community

6:00 to 7:00 pm Adult Open Gym (see poster for details)

7:00 to 9:00 pm All Ages Volleyball

Tuesdays February 4, 11, 18, 15 at the Neilson Store Back Room

9:00 am to 2:00 pm Internet Cafe. Bring your computer, phone, and wireless challenges and try to stump David Pickering! He needs company! (Needs? Well, he LIKES company. If no one shows up, he works on the Beacon.)

Tuesdays and Thursdays throughout February at AI Community Centre

6:30 pm Pickleball

Wednesdays February 5, 12, 22 at the AI Community Centre

6:00 pm Zumba \$8 per session \$40/5 pass

6:55 pm Yoga with Tagget

Wednesdays February 5 to April 8 at 350 Third Concession

12:00 noon to 2:00 pm Loaves and Fishes at Janet Scott's 350 Third Concession

Enjoy hot soup, sandwiches and convivial company. Free. All welcome!

Please contact Janet if you wish to help or donate.

Saturday February 8 at the Neilson Store Museum (see pictures below. 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday Jan/Feb/Mar/Apr)

2:00 to 4:00 pm WI Market Social

Come and see your friends and neighbours! Cider and muffins and Island vendors! Contact Andrea Cross for info

Sunday February 9 2020 Neilson Store Back Room

2:00 to 4:00 pm Back Kitchen Annual General Meeting

Come and learn about the fundraising status, plans for 2020 and financials. All welcome!

Friday February 14 Happy Valentine's Day

Saturday February 15 and Saturday March 21

10:00 to 4:00 Foot Clinic appointments available

To book an appointment email or phone Jennifer Morris at: [jng.morris@gmail.com](mailto:jng.morris@gmail.com) or 613 329-0271

Jennifer Morris RPN FCN routinely holds the Foot Clinic in Bath Pharmasave and has been asked and accepted to hold foot clinics on the island for the winter months. Services available include Advanced and Diabetic foot



care and foot detox. The first winter clinic was held in December. New and existing clients are welcomed to take advantage of the winter clinic option. She is highly qualified and a lovely person to boot! Don't miss out....Book now

Sunday February 16 at the Neilson Store Back Room

2:00 pm True Canadian Stories!

The Old Woman and the Wishing Tree and The Tibetans of Belleville At 2 pm on Sunday, February 16 (Family Day Weekend), join us at the Neilson Store Museum for a bit of story-telling and song with Suzanne Pasternak. The Wishing Tree was the oldest Sugar Maple in the world at 731 years. Considered a powerfully magic tree by both the first nations peoples and the white settlers in West Lake, she had the ability to grant wishes. This is her story.

In 1972, the United Nations asked Canada to allow the gentle followers of the Dalai Lama, Tibetan refugees from the Tibetan Himalayas, to immigrate to Belleville and Lindsay, Ontario. This is the story of their remarkable journey and how the good people of Belleville embraced them. Bring your children to listen to Suzanne. Refreshments will be served after the performance.

Monday February 17 Family Day

Friday March 20 at the Neilson Store Museum Back Room 7:00 pm If Lilacs Could Sing!

On Friday, March 20 (almost the first day of spring!), join us at the Museum for an evening of song and poetry with Stephen Bruce Medd, author of "If Lilacs Could Sing". Bruce writes and adapts historical ballads for a journey through time in his book of songs and history. He retells the stories of the Loyalists refugee settlers, the First Peoples (Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe) that lived in our area. Stephen writes, "Folk music, with its evocative lyrics about people, places and time, was the most natural way for me to tell some of the fascinating stories of our past.

Lilacs were brought to North America in the early seventeenth century by the first European settlers. The sweet fragrance of their softly clustered flowers is a harbinger of Spring. But they also mark the beginning of the colonization of North America and the transformation of the traditional lands of the Indigenous people. Imagine what ballads we might hear If Lilacs Could Sing!"

July 1 Canada Day

Ottawa Valley Horse Pulling Association come here to the fair grounds on Canada Day 2020. For more info and to find out how to get on board with a sponsorship contact the Michael McGinn at the store!

!!!!!! NEW HOURS Stella General Store and LCBO!!!!

Monday to Wednesday 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

Thursday 9:00 am to 6:00 pm

Friday 9:00 am to 8:00 pm

Saturday 10:00 am to 6:00 pm



AMHERST ISLAND REC COMMITTEE PRESENTS

# *February Fun Day*

**10 AM - 12 PM: A.I. REC. CENTRE**

Pickleball

All ages Pickball - for all who have wanted to try but haven't had the chance. All experts welcome as well!!

**1PM: A.I. FIREHALL**

Bonfire

Treats and Hot Chocolate  
while supplies last

Games

Bring your own chair

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2020**

## At the Winter Market Social

Photos and text by Andrea Cross



**Entrance into the Market Social**

On Saturday February 8th the Amherst Island Women's Institute hosted their monthly (January - April) Winter Market Social at the Back Room in the Neilson Store Museum and Cultural Centre. The Weasel & Easel was also open. It was a huge success with lots of laughter and smiles on a cold winter day - even the sun was shining! Impressive to see all the very different items made by Islanders. Thank you to the vendors who came. We hear that many vendors will be returning and new vendors have expressed interest in attending as well. Mark it on your calendar - March 14th from 2 pm to 4pm for our next Market Social at the Back Room at the Neilson Store Museum. Here are some photos of the very busy day..... A big thank you to everyone for their interest and support.



**Janet Scott and Anne Henderson**

**Left: Anders and Nathan**







**Above: Selling tarts to keen customers**

**Left: A busy day**



**Above: Joyce Groot – coffee and muffin  
Right: Karen Miller and daughter**



**Above: Molly Stroyman and Rae  
Left: Paul and a bunch of others**



## Congratulations



**Happy Anniversary Kate and Rich  
Married 10 years ago**



<= Angus

Jack =>

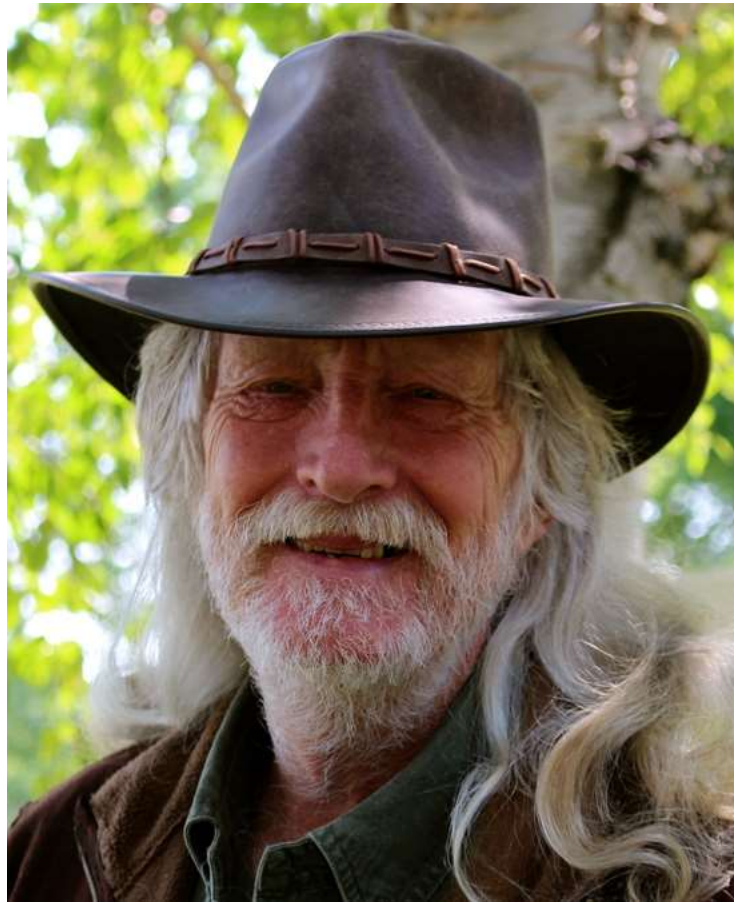
Happy  
Birthday  
Guys

Photos by  
Brian





**Happy Birthday, Dan Simpsosn**



**Happy Birthday Anthony Gifford  
Photo by Judy Bierma**



**Left: Happy Birthday Talía Fleming  
Shown with her mom Karen Fleming**

### Chico and the crow

Chico likes to go on rambling walks by himself through the Lilac Forest. We used to worry about it: the fisher for example that hung out by the well, or the transient coyotes that we heard but rarely saw.

With half an eye to the woods at the bottom of the hill we watch for possible threats to our little dog. We can't see into the woods very far; it is part of the highway that the animals use to traverse the Island year-round. Our Lilac Forest that runs along the Emerald Forty Foot is also large enough and dense enough, in summer, to hide eyes and teeth; a whole herd of deer can stand in the lilac forest and not be seen in the summer. In the winter however the leaves are gone from the lilacs and visibility is much better from the house: we can see his strawberry blonde fluffiness meandering along in the snow, his nose sniffing and snuffing like a pokey little vacuum cleaner. Sometimes he disappears from sight altogether and is invisible to our eyes - but he is never really all that far away: he just gets hard to see, hidden by sloping trunks of lilac, dead logs and branches - or sometimes just by virtue of him standing still and blending into the surroundings.

I don't like it when he is out of sight for too long, it makes me nervous and hard to focus on what I'm doing. The best method of finding Chico's whereabouts, when he is meandering and out of sight, is to step outside, face the lilac forest and cry out his favorite word combination: 'CHICO TREAT!' If you cry out: 'CHICO, TREEEAT!' and rattle the jar of freeze-dried beef liver pieces at the same time, one is usually rewarded by the sight of a pair of squinty black eyes, little snout and cocked ears of Senor Chico - once perfectly blended into the landscape, now in stark relief as he judges the validity of your exclaim. The treat entreaty works every time: he rushes over.

If no treat is offered, such as, say, when it is time to get in the car to go to the ferry, his response to an urgent summons can be quite different. Calling for him, with keys in hand and hand on the doorknob, he doesn't exactly refuse to come: he will bound down from upstairs where he naps, all the way to the inner parlour doorway, across from the front door, and then inexplicably stop. Repeating the command with increasing severity becomes futile: 'Chico... COME'. 'CHICO COME!!' You can slap your leg and wave the door back and forth but to no avail. 'CHICO COME!!' With cocked head and furrowed brow, the little dog stands rigid, staring at your face as if you have lost your mind. Which makes you feel like you are going to.

Senor Chico is smart; smart enough that if you point at something, he will not just look at the end of your finger: he will look off into the direction in which you point, often trotting out a-ways to search for what you might be pointing at. 'Chico, treat!' results not only in an immediate appearance of said dog, but also in perfect physical responses to 'shake a paw', 'roll over' and 'sit' before the administration of said treat. He will even stand on his hind legs and dance the cha-cha-cha, a tactic that can melt the sternest of hearts.

Now we have to head off and go to town, time to get into the car and make the ferry... 'CHICO, COME!' He stands in the parlour doorway, ears perked, eyes intently on your face, head cocked to the side as you plead with him to get his butt in the car. This is not a 'treat' moment; this is a no nonsense 'get your fuzzy butt in the car' moment. There's only so many treats a dog is allowed to have and blatant bribery over something so simple just doesn't feel right.

The only other option in this circumstance, apart from simply picking him up, is to say: 'Okay fine, then. BYE CHICO!' and close the door. One has to wait about twenty seconds before opening the door again and he will invariably be standing right behind it. You politely thank him for choosing to join you and invite him to go get into the car. At this invitation he will step carefully outside towards the car and then veer off into the bushes for a pee, or trot over to the special spot near the pile of stones for a quick sniff before dashing in a sudden frenzy to the car and making a big leap inside. Now we can go.

Today he accepted the morning invitation to step outside after his breakfast. It was a cold morning, still and clear, the sun was out but coming up without warmth. Snow and ice, ice from the big melt last week, made slippery pathways and ridges on the ground. I watched from the window in the back door as Chico picked his way along the frozen path, heading towards the compost heap: a favorite haunt of rabbits, deer and small Havanese dogs. He looked back at me once and I waved to him.

Inside the parlour, I tended the parlour fire. I got the potatoes on for the breakfast and put the percolator onto the woodstove top. It would take some time still for the coffee to come to a boil as the fire hadn't warmed the firebox



all the way through yet. It would though, the flattop gets very hot, hot enough that the pans are elevated on steel trivets or they get too hot and everything burns. A lot of what we make on the woodstove top are slow cooked stews. The favorite, Irish stew, with mutton from Topsy Farms, our neighbour to the West, goes on simmering all day; we enjoy it in the evening with fresh bread from the bread oven. Mutton stew is a treat though, most often it's a vegetable bean stew, rich and hearty. Today, so far, it's potatoes, steamed through in the microwave, flattened and laid in the big cast iron pan, left on the woodstove to get crispy in some olive oil, with sliced red onions laid on top. Once the upstairs fire gets the upstairs ceiling air warm enough, the thermostat starts up the main blower fan and warm air circulates through the house, spreading the delicious smell of onions and potatoes frying slowly on the woodstove. I'm waiting for the coffee and the workshop to warm up. d- having switched on her kiln, waits by the upstairs fire for her kiln to heat up. We will have our coffee by the upstairs fire.

I made bread dough in the kitchen, ritually, lost in thought, looking through the big kitchen window down the hill to where the well and the old apple orchard are. I love the view of the well and the old apple orchard; I gaze down at it often. I think that if I die in this house and my energy gets trapped here, you might see my ghostly face in this window looking down at the well and the orchard as I do it so often. My thoughts eventually drifted over to the whereabouts of our dog and I took the bowl and dough and walked over to the other kitchen door. Squinting into the snowy bright light of the Lilac Forest, I gazed into it, trying to discern between light and shadow for a small furry dog but no dog could I make out. I looked down the hill again and then back at the Lilac Forest. I could see half of the compost heap from where I was standing but the sky was shielded by the porch overhanging roof. I knew Chico was out there somewhere. I was still half lost in thought, with the metal bowl in the left hand and the right hand working the dough, when I saw the dark shadow on the snow of a very large pair of wings wheeling over the top of the compost heap. The owner of the wings was obscured by the porch roof. I hurriedly put the bowl down on the kitchen table and ran to the back-parlour door crying out 'Oh no! Oh no!' with rising panic and horror in my chest.



I had seen, from the side kitchen window, a large pair of wings, the shadows of which, getting larger and larger as the bird descended, almost to the edge of the porch roof then swiftly rising up and beginning to descend down again in a spiraling motion. These were large wings, maybe of a bald eagle... a snowy owl... a hawk... and they were coming down again fast, right outside the back door, near the compost, right where a little maple sugar donut of a dog liked to sniff and snuff.

I rushed to the back door crying out 'OH NO' imagining our little Chico in a taloned eagle grip, sailing off

over the tops of the Lilac Forest to be torn apart in a lonely and barren field; I threw the door open and ran out onto the back porch. At that same time was a great whirring and swooshing sound coming around the side of the woodshed, just outside my vision, large wing shadows on the ground. Around the corner of the woodshed came the biggest crow I have ever seen in my life. It was about fifteen feet away from me and about human head height off the ground. I was as big a surprise to it as it was to me. It came whirring and whooshing as if it were going to go under the porch overhang but veered off immediately once it saw me, in surprise. Its wings made a lot of noise and it whirred and swooshed like a clockwork beast. On its feathers was a purple sheen, with some iridescent green along with the black. Its feathers seemed to shimmer and its large black beak was like a horn on its face. I was immediately reminded of Ian at Topsy telling me how the crows liked to pluck the eyeballs from lambs in the field and how the lambs would die from shock. I went, now with some caution but also with relief,



onto the snow and ice in my house slippers to get a better look. The crow had veered off and began to climb. At the same time a little four-legged ball of fury came tearing up and leapt into the air, barking as the surprised bird gained altitude. Chico chased along the ground, barking and excited, his tail curled tightly against his back like a coiled spring - appearing, as he so often seemed to do, from nowhere and then stopped as the bird was now gone. Turning to me in triumph he took a bulldog stance; then, spotting a Blue Jay in the mulberry tree, charged the tree in noisy outrage, ousting the indignant Jay from its perch.

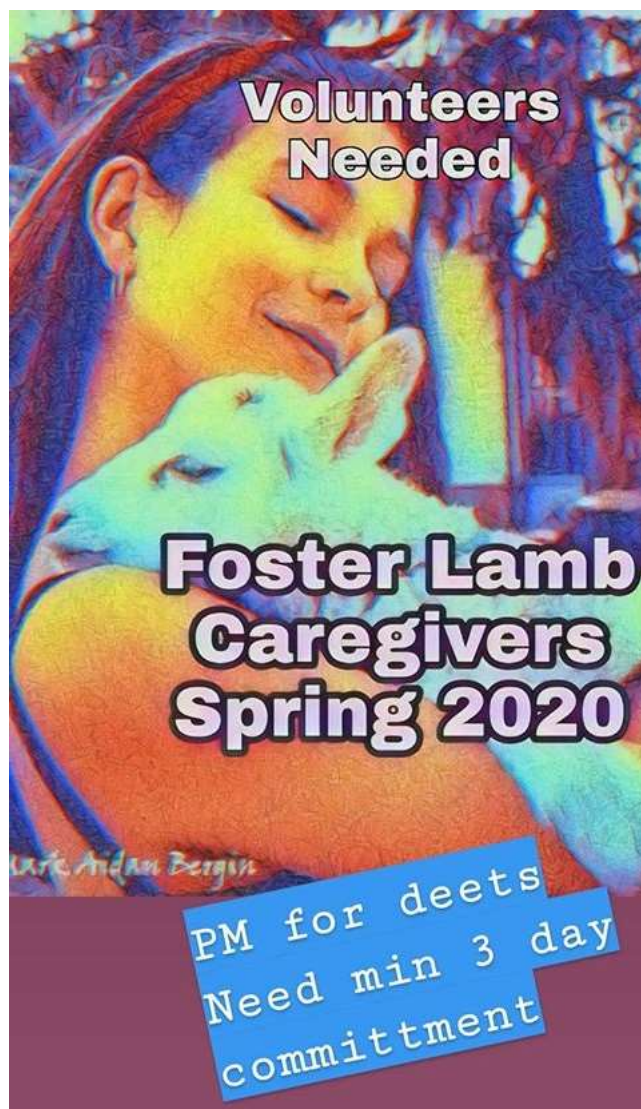
He turned around under the mulberry tree and Chico and I looked at each other. He with his stocky little body and fearless bulldog stance, and me with flour on my hands in a dressing gown and slippers, and he said to me loud and clear, as if he were speaking English (with a slight Cuban accent) 'It's okay, Rossie, I got your back!' He looked at me, I looked at him and it was a good moment: we were looking after each other. It occurred to me though, as I looked at him under the mulberry tree, that all the times I was outside and he was inside and I found him looking at me through the window, usually through the upstairs bedroom window, he was checking on me, making sure I was okay, the way I do for him.

I went back inside and Chico stayed out. When the coffee was ready, I looked for him again and he was ready to come inside and go upstairs and sit with us.

I gave him a treat when he came in. Just because.

**The magnificent owl picture, which I included in the story above, is by Fred Lemire.**

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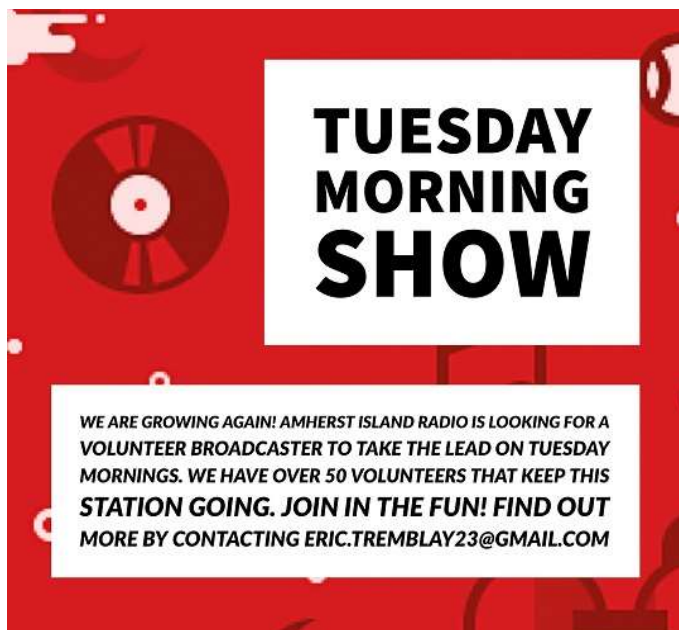
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**Snowy Owl on The Beacon**  
photo by Kayleigh Graeme





**Left: Sand Beach in 1985 Photo from Lynn Fleming**  
**Right: Sand Beach 2020 photo from Kass Wronski**