

# Amherst Island Beacon



*Issue 476 There's always another boat. March 2020*

## Note from the Editor

I'm very late doing the Beacon this month. Sometimes I just find it difficult to sit down and do it. The Beacon is a record of history on the Island, the people, the happenings, their animals, etc. I'm sorry it isn't always current, but I still think it's important to record the happenings even if they have passed. Thanks to all the people who have submitted stories to me and pictures and to those people that allow me to share their lives with the other Islanders in the Beacon.

The Corona Virus is creating chaos all over the world and I have noted some effects of it on the Island. People are coming together to help other people which is such a wonderful Island Way.

I'm so sad to hear about Bob Filson passing. We play at Helen Henderson the fourth Sat. of every month and will surely miss him next month. I always went and had a good visit with him.

Mom is doing well in Village Green in Selby. She asked for her walker the other day.

Hope you all "Stay calm and wash your hands."

## March 2020 Table of Contents

<b>Note from the Editor.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>How is the Coronavirus affecting the Island? .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>From Counselor Townend .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Loaves and Fishes .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Don't Go Borrowing Trouble: .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Island Pandemic in 1918.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Passings .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>CJAI .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Blast from the past .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Lorem Ipsum .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Around the Island .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Crafts.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Our people .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Neilson Store Museum and Cultural Centre .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Rossland .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Project Snowstorm.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Advertisements .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Wooly Bully 2020 .....</b>	<b>21</b>

Did you wash your paws?



**Mom and Me enjoying a sunny day**



## How is the Coronavirus affecting the Island?

From Doug Shurtliffe

Please take note that Pursers will no longer accept tickets/fares that are previously held in commuters' mouth. You will be asked to provide another ticket/fare. Also, for the immediate future, we ask that commuters in vehicles remain there during the passage unless they must use the washroom or are directed to exit their vehicles by a crew member. Thank you for your cooperation. Thanks Doug

Many people are posting when they are going to town and asking if anyone wants something from the mainland. Wonderful to see everyone looking after each other.

The Corona Virus is here and there are a lot of cancellations, the schools are closed, the radio station is sanitizing the mics and no guests are coming into the station with the programmers until further notice. Tell me about other things that are being affected on the Island. Loaves and Fishes is cancelled until further notice. Judy Bierma

The McGinn's Amherst Island General Store would like to help returning travelers to implement the Canadian Government recommended 14 days isolation.

Just send us an email to [mcginnsgs@gmail.com](mailto:mcginnsgs@gmail.com) and we will bring your mail, grocery and liquor order to your home.

For the health of our community, I think this could help. From Michael McGinn

All activities at the community centre are cancelled during the school closure until April 5. That's Open Gym/walking (finished for the season), Volleyball, Pickleball, Zumba and Yoga. Stay healthy! from Lynn Wyminga

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## From Counselor Townend

It can seem pretty bleak out there right now, and I want to affirm residents of Amherst Island in having reason to be deeply concerned. Indeed, this is serious. Yet, Islanders are resilient, creative, altruistic, and optimistic, which are the perfect ingredients for a strong community, holding together during a crisis. Those same winning ingredients are required for doing the right thing, which is to follow the advice of public health officials; that is the best way to maintain the safety of us all during the pandemic. Also, remember yours and everyone's mental health. Be extra sensitive to the anxiety this public health emergency is causing, particularly on social media and other public platforms. What we need now are words of inspiration, encouragement, and laughter. Lastly, and related to that, please access official, reputable information from local sources, such as KFL&A Public Health, and Loyalist Township. It is important that citizens receive the best possible information, and so be alert when sharing editorial pieces, which may not be to anyone's benefit. I will do my best to share with you what I know from within my role as your councillor. Above all friends, be kind and compassionate to one another, leave no one behind, and we will see each other on the other side of this, stronger.

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## Loaves and Fishes

From Janet Scott

Matthew 14:17

Send the crowds into the villages where they will find something to eat. The disciples said,

"We have only five loaves and two fishes that this boy brought."

Unfortunately, we didn't take a photo but thanks to Larry a small boy showed up with his basket to lunch on Wednesday at our Loaves and Fishes. He shared with us two beautiful fish stuffed and baked. They were so tender that they just flaked with a fork. We enjoyed them with the loaves of bread you brought as well. Thank-you Keith Miller for the lovely gift and the wonderful laugh!

### Amherst Island BEACON Issue 476, March 2020

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and its webmaster Alex Scott

## **Don't Go Borrowing Trouble:**

by Deborah Kimmett



I am a worrywart. I think I was born this way. When they slapped me on the ass, I think a crease formed between my two eyes, and I thought to myself, "Why are they hitting me? They just met me." I come from a tribe of worrywarts. Irish. Catholic. Don't let the cute accent fool ya. Our fave slogan was. "Laugh before breakfast, you'll be crying before supper." I have done preventative worrying: Where if you worry ahead of time; it won't happen! So, it has taken a lot of practice for me to stop practicing worry! I needed others older and wiser to help me. I used to go to Shirley Ann Miller's house on the 3rd concession to work through my worries. And she would make a pot of soup and say, "Don't go borrowing trouble." Meaning: Don't make it worse. (Human beings are great at making it worse!) Many times, the wheels have come off the bus financially and spiritually in my life. When 911 hit I lost all my work. SARS hit again all freelance jobs GONE! 2008 a year of holding on by the skin of my teeth. No EI. No, net. When my brother was dying, I relied on the kindness of strangers to help me get through the emotional and financial stress. Now, there is this. Again, a lot for me is gone! But in this case, a lot of people are going through the same thing at the same time. Or will. It is not a "me" problem, it is "we" one! We need to help each other. Small actions will dial down the fear! So, I am going to channel my inner Shirley Ann Miller and say: Today is all you can handle. In this day, you have enough. Enough safety, enough love, enough food. So, reach out and ask someone else how they are!

And as best you can, don't borrow more trouble! It's got a very high-interest rate.

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## **Island Pandemic in 1918**

from Joyce Brown

In 1918, my mother Pauline Glenn Taylor was ten years old. One of her memories of growing up on Amherst Island was the Spanish Flu pandemic of that year. Islanders followed the advice of Dr. Burleigh and quarantined themselves in their homes. Neighborhood visits, church services, school and community events were all cancelled. She remembered riding with her parents in a horse and buggy to attend funerals of Island residents who died from the epidemic. The funerals were held in Island churches, but were attended only by the families in their household. Islanders wishing to pay their respects lined up their buggies along the road, kept respectful silence and prayed from the safety of their buggies.

This 1918 pandemic was the first one in Canada. Approximately, 55,000 Canadians died, mostly young adults between the ages of 20 and 40, almost equal to the 60,000 Canadians killed in service in the First World War (1914-1918).

A small piece of Island lore.

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## **Passings**



### **FILSON, Robert John**

Peacefully at Helen Henderson Care Centre on Sunday, March 8, 2020, in his 84th year. Beloved husband of the late Bernadette Filson (nee O'Connell), loving father of Stephanie (Cody) Filson. Father-in-law of Todd Brennan. Predeceased by his parents Gordon and Ada Filson. Dear brother of the late Bill (Mary) Filson of Gananoque and Ardeth Dodge (Donald) of Nova Scotia. Brother-in-law of Pat Watts of Oakville, Mary Bridgen (late Tom) of Kingston, Sheila Simmons (Ron) of Waterloo, John O'Connell (late Vonnice) of Kingston, the late Judy Johnston (Alan) of London, Peter O'Connell (Aileen) of Toronto; also survived by several nieces and nephews. Dear friend of Bill Grier and Myrna Alport. Bob will be sadly missed but fondly



remembered by his family and friends. Please join the family for a graveside service at Glenwood Cemetery, Amherst Island on Saturday, May 16, 2020 at 11:00 a.m., followed by a Celebration of Bob's Life will take place at the Royal Canadian Legion - Millhaven Branch 623 from 12 noon to 3:00 p.m. As expressions of sympathy memorial donations to Lung Association of Canada would be appreciated by the family.

## CJAI



Name the new Amherst Island Radio Signature Coffee!!!!

[County rd Coffee Co](https://forms.gle/vowiDRfMkj3h7Ngg6) is creating a new hand made signature blend of coffee and you have a chance to win prizes valued between \$80 and \$125.

Name our new coffee at this survey

link: <https://forms.gle/vowiDRfMkj3h7Ngg6>

From Ellis Wolfreys

Hello Friends and Neighbours, hope you all enjoyed last weeks program, of spinning CDs. That will be what you will hear on my program for a while. Because of this Corona virus, we will not be having guests in the studio until this virus is under control. It will likely get worse, before it gets better. This is a decision that the station has made to protect everyone concerned.

We will not be doing our programs this Wednesday, but will be doing a replay from February 26th, 2020. We had Jim Whan, Russell Love, and Allen Love on my program that day, and I thought it was worthy of a replay.

I talked with Bill White, and Christine Potter a few

minutes ago about the Winter Bluegrass Concert Series that was to be held in Seelys Bay. So, the March 17th program has been CANCELLED, as well as the April 21st program next month.

If you are planning to go to a function of some sort, please phone ahead, in case it has ben cancelled. Some restaurants have closed, and many other facilities as well, so check before you go.

I heard that it may be August before this may be under control. We have to be vigilant with air flights, and folks that have been on cruises, and in other countries for holidays. This is a serious situation but can be controlled if we do things right.

So folks, stay safe, and do what you think is right for you, and for others.

Thank You All, and God Bless. Mary Lou & Ellis Wolfreys, and CJAI Radio.

Top 30 for Mar 17, 2020			
Rank	Artist	Title	Label
1	Kevin B Klein	<i>They Call It Rock &amp; Roll</i>	Self-Released
2	Sweet Talk Jackie	3375	Self-Released
3	Anthony Gifford and Keith Miller	<i>Take One</i>	Self-Released
4	Futura Free	<i>Unreal (Acoustic)</i>	Self-Released
5	The Astros	<i>My Dealer is the Internet</i>	Self-Released
6	Asphalt Valentine	<i>Twisted Road</i>	HiVolMusic
7	Kris and Dee	<i>Browse Line</i>	Self-Released
8	Kasador	<i>Brood &amp; Bloom</i>	Self-Released
9	Deux Trois	<i>Reject</i>	Self-Released
10	Tom Savage	<i>Great Beyond</i>	Rabid Ear
11	Big Thief	<i>Two hands</i>	4AD
12	This Time	<i>Two</i>	Self-Released
13	Teagan McLaren	<i>From The Ashes</i>	Self-Released
14	Rott'n Dan & Lightnin' Willy	<i>Rott'n Dan &amp; Lightnin' Willy</i>	Self-Released
15	Wolf Parade	<i>Thin Mind</i>	Royal Mountain
16	Sarah Harmer	<i>Are You Gone</i>	Arts & Crafts
17	Dead Root Revival	<i>DRR Live Volume 1</i>	Self-Released
18	The Glorious Sons	<i>A War on Everything</i>	Self-Released
19	Chris Landry and the Seasick Mommas	<i>Two Ninety Three</i>	Self-Released
20	Anyway Gang	<i>Anyway Gang</i>	Royal Mountain
21	The Headstones	<i>People Skills</i>	Self-Released
22	Sue Decker	<i>Outskirts Of Love</i>	Self-Released
23	Zac Harmon	<i>Mississippi BarBQ</i>	Catfood
24	Jason Wilson	<i>Sumach Roots</i>	Wheel
25	Calum Graham	<i>Thread Of Creation</i>	Self-Released
26	The Celtic Kitchen Party	<i>Sociable!</i>	Self-Released
27	Stephen Fearing	<i>The Unconquerable Past</i>	Fear and Loathing Music
28	John Borra	<i>Blue Wine</i>	Cousin Jeb
29	The Constant Supervision	<i>Melting Like Tigers</i>	Self-Released
30	Durham County Poets	<i>Hand Me Down Blues</i>	Self-Released

**Anthony and Keith are 3rd on the latest New Music Top 30 Chart for 92.1 FM**  
**Way to go Anthony Gifford and Keith Miller**



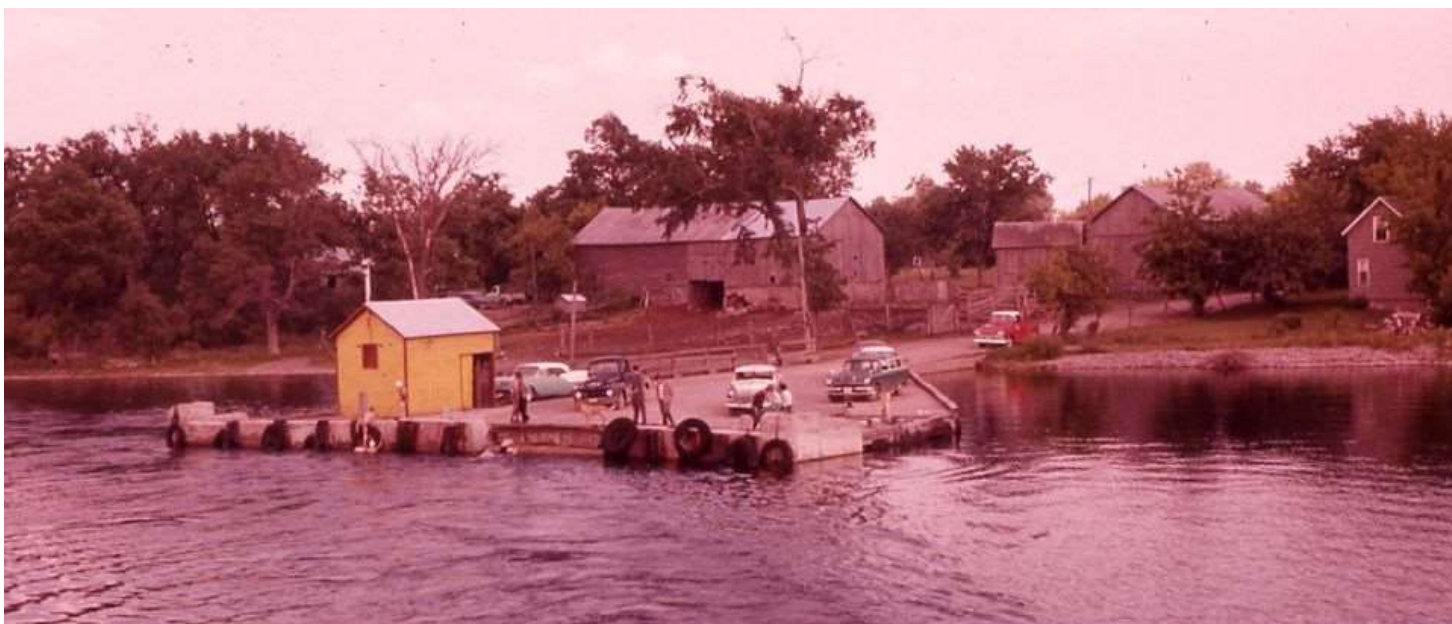
**3h. Susan Filson and Keith Miller at the Radio Station Photo from Janet Scott**

**Blast from the past**



**Bill Cochrane: the first captain of the Amherst Islander Photo from Harold Miller through Shirley Miller**





**Harold Miller took these pictures in 1960. On the previous page, you see Captain Bill Cochrane in the then-new Amherst Islander. He was the only captain for years when the boat didn't make many trips. Above, you see a picture of the Stella dock at that time.**



**Painting by Shirley Miller, Henderson farmhouse**



## Henderson's Homestead from Shirley Miller

Good day painting and while I paint memories pop up and this one is very close to Keith and me.

The Hendersons, three generations and more, have been neighbors of the Millers. This angle of the house would not be familiar to most except from driving up Miller's lane. It looks like the field is ploughed right up to the house but that is the top of the hill and a lane and dooryard are on the other side of the knoll.

Shortly after we were married, I was sent by Keith to get Etta's recipe for sugar cookies. I wrote it all down and went home to make a huge bowl of ingredients that I had no idea how to make into cookies. Etta didn't know how, she just did it. Albert was a terrible tease according to some tales of woe and Phylis was my best friend. Kids and all worked together at putting in hay bales and other farm jobs. Great memories.

*Mrs. Miller Mrs. Spence Mrs. Penney Mrs. Mrs.*



*John Henderson Mrs. Marlbank*



Photos from Shirley Miller



**A photo of Shiela  
Kearney's grandmother  
Miriam Kearney (nee  
McGinn) from 1955  
when she cut the ribbon  
for the new ferry**



## Lorem Ipsum

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## Around the Island

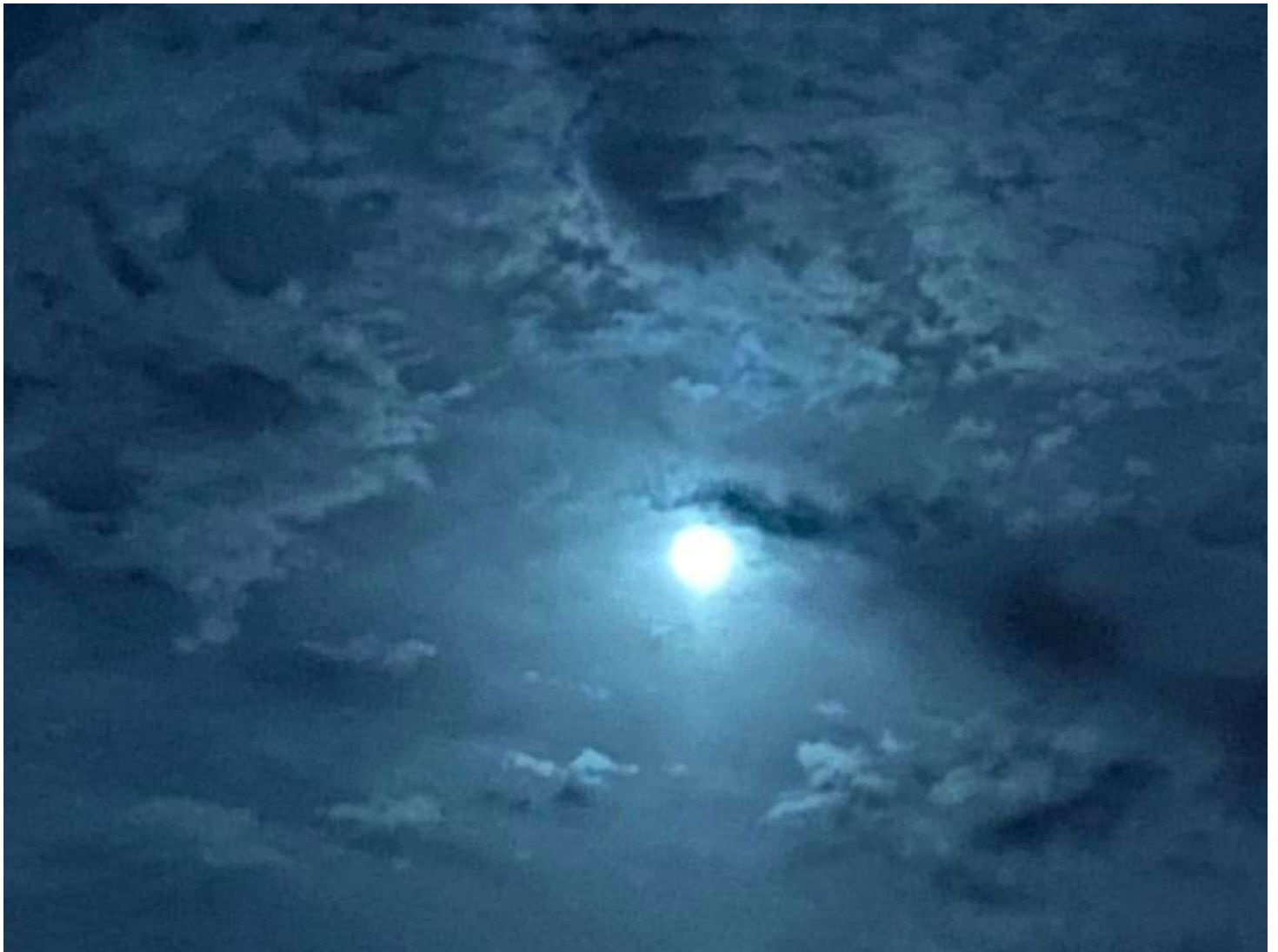


Red, furry and in my tree. Yes, it's a fox at my birdfeeder. Above him is my cat Jazz. From Janet Scott

A Red Fox on the Third Concession  
from Sherry Claus

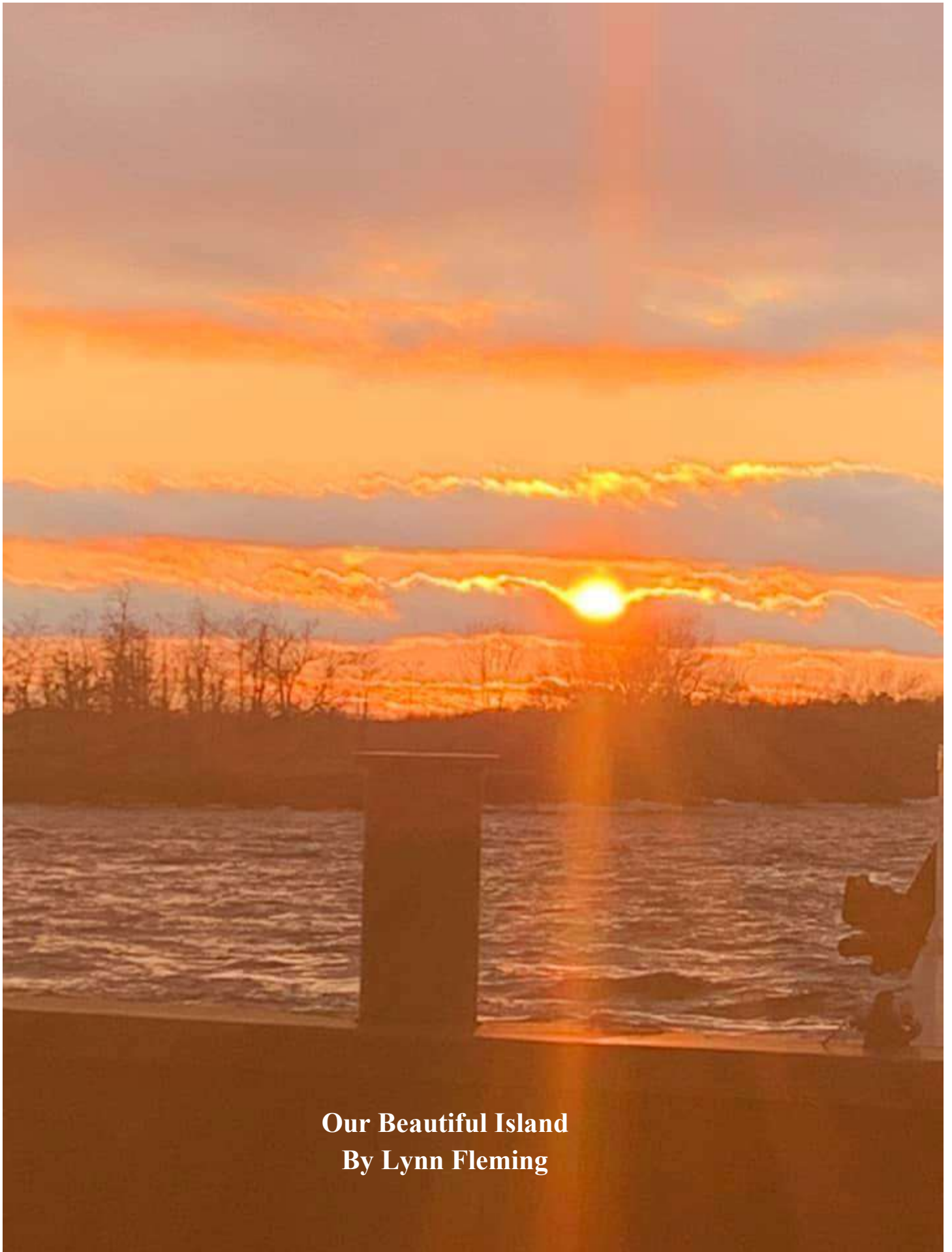
So, I had some excitement this morning while house and pet sitting on Amherst Island. I heard this awful screaming. Then I heard Earl, one of Peggie's cats, screaming. I came running out into the hallway just in time to see a fox! Yes; I said fox!! It followed Earl into the house. I yelled and it hopped on to the counter where the other cats jumped up to get away. I yelled at it again and it ran down and went into the T.V. room. Good thing this room has pocket doors. I managed to close them and opened the T.V. room's door that leads outside. The only thing is the fox ran under the couch. Meanwhile I had the door open so the fox could get out. I ran around the house to make sure the cats we're ok. And all 4 were just fine. Thank goodness .... but what to do with the fox trapped under the couch? I wasn't too sure it ran out because there was a very strong odor coming from under the couch. I phoned Mom (Mary Claus) and she suggested I call the neighbour Bruce down the road to help me lift the couch. He came over to help me lift the couch and there was a scared little fox underneath it. So, we moved everything out of the way and took a stick and just slowly coaxed him or her towards the outside door. It finally found its way out. My nerves are frazzled. I won't be leaving the door open a crack so the cats can come and go like Peggie does for them. They can come when I open the door. And I am not letting them out in the evening ..... lol. It didn't hurt the cats or anything. It could probably smell the cat's food. But wowza, what a morning!! Thank you Andrea Cross for lending your husband to me so we could fox hunt. The poor thing was more scared of us then us of it. So how is your day going?

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**An Amazing photo from Helen Sychra Trotter**





**Our Beautiful Island**  
**By Lynn Fleming**



## Crafts



Topsy was offering a bunch of cool craft days, and it's a shame we'll have to miss them, but given the current circumstances, it was the right thing to do.



So, for those who want to build bird houses, do fibre crafting, tree grafting, or mend knits – see you next time.

Keep safe – from Topsy





## Our people



**Brelynn watching curling.  
Papaw watching Braelynn.  
Photo from Karen Fleming**



**Happy Birthday Dave  
at the Tim Hortons Briar final  
with Tara Photo from Tara**

**(Right) Fun in the mud fixing things.  
AlexanderMcGinn Photo from Alicia Wolfrey**



### **Rosy and Brian Findlay**

Photos from our property very near the northern extremity of the Island and a few hundred metres from the eastern shore. We enjoy snowshoeing and occasionally cross-country skiing over the pastures and woodlands of the "lower East Side" of Amherst Island. From time to time we also enjoy winter (and summer) sports near Orangeville and spend time in Toronto, where we do most of our walking: for groceries, hardware, other shopping and occasional visits to local cafes. Rarely do we venture out of Ontario in winter. For evening and storm-day relaxation we read a lot and watch movies and old TV programmes from many parts of the world on Netflix.

During the other seasons we often travel to distant areas: in Europe, out west, the south Pacific. But, we hurry back for the summer chores and maybe some canoe/kayak excursions. It's a good life!



## **Neilson Store Museum and Cultural Centre**

Meeting of the Board of Directors

Tuesday, February 4, 2020

Present: Anders Bennick (President & Chair), Bruce Burnett, David Fleming, Carol Glenn, Warren Kilpatrick, Bonnie Livingstone (Secretary), Karen Miller, Janet Scott, and Thomas Sylvester

1. Welcome: Anders Bennick thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and particularly welcomed David Fleming, who was joining the Board.

2. Approval of Agenda: The Agenda was approved.

3. Minutes of January 7, 2020: Bonnie Livingstone reported that Janet Scott had corrected the minutes when she indicated that the Prohibition Era in Canada was in the 1920s, rather than the 1930s, as shown in the minutes. It was moved, seconded and carried that the amended Minutes of January 7, 2020, be approved.

4. Business Arising from the Minutes.

4.1 – Virtual Museum of Canada – Anders led a discussion of the opportunity that had been presented to us regarding a grant of \$15,000 to tell stories from our Museum. He suggested that we consider dry stone walls on the Island. At this stage, because of an impending deadline, we are looking to possibly applying for a 2021 grant. Before we consider this further, Anders suggested that all directors review the Virtual Museum's website before our March meeting.

4.2 – William Perceval Maps – As a follow-up from the last meeting, Thomas Sylvester presented a copy of the new matte maps for review. Everyone was delighted with the new format, although the need for glossy prints was also confirmed. It was decided that the Museum would charge the same price (\$50) for a copy of the map, regardless of format. Anders thanked Thomas for pursuing this issue.

5. Treasurer's Report for January 2020

Carol Glenn reported that there had not been much banking activity since we last met, as this is traditionally a quiet time of the year for our Museum. Once again, we continue to have a healthy balance in our bank account. Carol has spoken with Linda and Dave McGinn concerning the suggestion of having a barrel for wine bottles, sitting outside the General Store. They are considering the proposal. Carol will follow up with them. It was moved, seconded and carried that the Treasurer's Report for January 2020 be approved.

6. Committee Reports

6.1 – Building and Maintenance Committee: Bruce Burnett reported that nothing significant has happened over the past month. The Township has received our suggested dates for refinishing the floors. It is expected that this will occur in late February. Additionally, Bruce noted that the Back Room floors would be painted and varnished.

6.2 – Exhibits Committee: Janet Scott reported that the committee has not met in 2020, so she had little to report. Lynn Fleming has given her a photo of a gathering of snowmobiles on the Island that looks interesting. As well, Keith Miller explained the annual bushing of the ice road for our archives. Carol and Thomas both reported that Sherri Jensen seems to be thrilled at helping us with transcribing the 1935 Tax Assessment Roll. For this year's exhibit, Carol has discovered the purpose of a recently-found small steel container, from the previous century. This will become our annual featured exhibit, "What is it?".

6.3 – Publicity Committee: Bonnie Livingstone distributed draft posters for Suzanne Pasternak's talk on "True Canadian Stories" on February 16. On the back is an introduction to Stephen Bruce Medd's talk in March on "If Lilacs Could Sing". She asked for feedback to improve this poster. Warren Kilpatrick, Carol and Bonnie will be providing refreshments for Suzanne's performance. Carol has followed up on the proposed April Back Room Talk on Maureen and Mallory's Indian Wedding Experience, with wedding items and Indian tidbits. A date for their talk will be settled shortly.

6.4 – Fund-Raising Committee: Bruce explained that a team had met with Joe DuVall on January 15 to review and cover the planning of the Woolly Bully Races for this August. Everything seems to be on track for another successful event. Carol noted that she had received permission from the Bath Legion on County Road #4 to use their parking lot for runners' cars. In this way, the cost of a mainland bus will be eliminated this year. Bruce indicated that the Trophy House has agreed to do the medals at the same price quoted as last year. He noted that



the website for the race would be up and operating next week. It was moved, seconded and carried to accept the committee reports.

7. Unfinished Business: There was no unfinished business.

#### 8. New Business

8.1 – Museum Archivist – Anders introduced this item as a response to issues concerning access and control of our photos and artifacts with the public. Currently, there appears to be no one on the Board who has a full understanding of what we have, where it is, and how to access this information. Shyanne Shurtleff and Terry McGinn initiated a comprehensive listing of what we have, but this was a little over three years ago. Since then, any new artifacts and photos have been left upstairs, but not catalogued. Carol believed that we would be able to find someone to do this cataloguing for us. It was suggested that Shyanne be contacted to see if she was interested in a part-time role to complete this project. Warren agreed to speak with her about this opportunity. Carol agreed that the Museum could afford to pay Shyanne in this role at a suggested \$15 per hour. Karen Miller indicated that she would enjoy working with Shyanne to finish the cataloguing. Warren also volunteered to assist with the work. Once this project has been completed, Bonnie suggested that all Directors be trained on accessing the artifacts and photographs so that we would not find ourselves in the same predicament as we now find ourselves. Everyone agreed. As well, to re-introduce our resources to the Island, we might also consider having a Back Room Talk to explain how to go about accessing this information, as there have been enquiries about using our photos. For Carol, this item also raised the issue of a suitable printer for printing photos, cards and plain copying. A new printer needs to be bought before our annual exhibit frenzy. Regarding photos, Thomas asked if there was a photo of the Museum that could be used for promotional purposes. Bonnie agreed to send him a copy of a photo that had been taken by Brian Little. Janet suggested that she had an electronic “picture frame” that displays pictures continuously. She was interested in donating it to the Museum for next summer’s display. It was also suggested that we develop a new website that includes all our artifacts and photos so that they are more easily accessible to the public.

8.2 – Dry Stone Festival – As requested by Andrea Cross, and with approval from the Board, Anders suggested that he would be willing to write a letter of support for the upcoming Dry Stone Festival in October 2020. The group’s project this year is a restoration of the dry stone fence at the McMullen House. The Board agreed that we continue to support the Dry Stone Walls of Amherst Island.

8.3 – Dock Logs – As some of our long-standing docks are disappearing, Warren has suggested that we ask to remove a log from what is still left standing to preserve some of the original timbers that were felled on the Island in the last century. Warren agreed to follow up on this issue to see what he could retrieve.

9. Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

10. Next Board Meeting – Tuesday, March 3, 2020, at 7 pm.

Anders Bennick  
Chair & President

Bonnie J. Livingstone  
Secretary

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Laird Leeder is making syrup in his new sap house.

This picture is of that barn and the “probably” Allan home originally. It was where Bob and Gordon Tugwell lived when I came to the Island. Bob gave me a tour inside and said that it was built of logs.

# JACK & JILL



# JON & TALIA

## SATURDAY. APRIL 25

**7 PM - 12 AM**

*St. John's Hall, 216 Church St., Bath, ON*

• RAFFLE • GAMES  
• CASH BAR • FOOD & FUN

## ADMIT ONE • \$5

**As with all events, it would be best to check if  
this is still taking place given the current  
conditions.**

### **Rossland**

#### **Finding Gordon**

The morning sun made the water shimmer and sparkle across Collins Bay as I drove down Bath road heading for the ferry. Winter still, I'm thinking of summer days, of summer coming...

I remember the summer when I sat on the front step of our Parr St Toronto house and looked at the house next door. Such a lovely summer day it was: deep blue sky, children drawing with chalk on the sidewalk, dog on the porch, airplane droning in the midsummer sky.

I was trying to will away the thought that someone, myself, had to go into Gordons house today, as in right now, and verify that Gordon was no longer living. It wasn't that there was a smell or anything

tangible to do with decomposition: it was the stillness. The house itself seemed still, hollowed out and empty like a vacuum of outer space. Looking at the house, at shadow beyond the window, the beckoning emptiness and I knew it was time to go into it and find Gordon.

It wasn't only the stillness though; for the last two days the little torn cloth curtain, the rag that Gordon had hanging over his bedroom window, had not moved. The bedroom window was clearly visible from our back yard. Every late evening the cloth came down, signaling that Gordon was going to bed. Every morning the cloth came up again and signaled that Gordon was up. Up and down, up and down, every day with regularity... except for the last couple... the cloth remained hanging down, like a silent announcement that Gordon was no longer there.

Yet he was.

We first met our neighbour Gordon when he came over to tell us that it was he who had made the 911 call concerning Mr. Yoneyama. Gordon said, in his broad Londoner English accent, opening his pale blue eyes wide under the large pink wrinkled forehead, with straggles of blonde hair on the mostly bald scalp: "Well, I was just coming home from my trip abroad and I thought I saw something moving in the windows, so I went a little closer to take a look, you know? Well! The windows were covered in flies! Just thick with flies! I said to myself... Gordon, don't you look any further! So I didn't, as I knew exactly what had happened and I called for the police".

He was right in his assumption of what had happened and Mr. Yoneyoma, the previous resident of number one Parr St, alone and deceased in his house, had been eaten for weeks to a skeleton by fly maggots and sewer rats. His remains were taken away by men in hazmat suits. The house was fumigated by the authorities in jurisdiction with the requisite fumigant 'bombs' and remained vacant for years. Gordon became used to having a vacant house to the East side of his own. We moved into number one Parr St in 1988 and made it our own; the house had been vacant for two years as a derelict building.

Over the years, we got to know Gordon quite well as our neighbour. He told us he had bought his house, number three Parr St, in 1968 for seventeen hundred dollars and that he had worked as a chemist at the Cadbury chocolate factory on



Gladstone Ave for his entire working career. He became the head chemist but retired as soon as the opportunity for pensioned retirement presented itself. "I have never understood why people want to spend their lives working" he said to me once "I never have. Soon as I could I took early retirement and have never regretted it."

It seemed the key function of the head chemist was to verify the quality of the sugar that came to the factory by the truck load.

One of his favorite stories described the day he rejected a tankerful of liquid sugar as inferior quality.

"It was unheard of, to reject a shipment like that, Ross, no one had ever done it before - but it was my job and the sugar was inferior so I couldn't allow it. I think the shipper sent me a load meant for something else, seeing if he could get away with it and then the shipper wouldn't take my word for it and the tanker driver would not leave. They had to call the owners son, who came down to the shop floor. Came all the way down to the shop floor, Ross! He walked in and he stood beside me and he said: "If Gordon says the sugar is no good, then the sugar is no good" and that was it, the entire shipment was taken away"

It was plain to see that this was Gordons finest hour and I heard the story more than once.

Number three Parr St was a mirror image of number one Parr St, only number one was detached on the end of the street and number three was part of a row of townhouses. The houses were built between 1905 and 1910 during Toronto's massive building boom of that period and were typical, solidly built, no frills, houses of the day: two and a half stories tall with flat roofs.

Not long after we settled in, we heard one night wolf like howling coming from somewhere around Gordons back yard. We were surprised to see that Gordon was sitting on his flat half roof, howling into the night sky, glass of orange soda pop in his hand. I queried him the next day about this practice and he said he did it every full moon to see if he could rouse the neighbourhood dogs to howl along with him. He always got at least a couple to howl mournfully along. I found out later that the orange pop was more Canadian sherry than pop, which he seemed to enjoy a great deal.

This moonlight practice stopped one night when he fell off the roof. The chimney cap that he sat on was

right on the flat roof edge and one night, when he stood up, he tipped over sideways and plummeted twenty feet to the ground. He landed directly on top of the rusty chain link fence that ran between our two properties. The neglected old fence had sagged over time like folds of cloth between the poles and when he landed on it, lengthwise, he miraculously bounced off and rolled down our basement cement steps: where he stayed until I got up in the morning to go to work. The seventy-two-year-old received a cracked vertebra from the fall but was fine otherwise - except that he never again roused the neighbourhood dogs in the light of the full moon.

One afternoon while sitting on his small wooden back deck, watching as I dug in my garden, he said to me: "Do you know what I think would be a most embarrassing thing to have happen..?" When I looked at him quizzically, he continued: "...to be rescued. I think having a team of people to come out and have to rescue you, would be terribly embarrassing." He was referring to a radio report on some lost hikers in some National Park somewhere and then he continued: "You know, Ross, I am very pleased to have you as my neighbour. I am quite happy being alone in my house but sometimes I worry that I won't be found for a while once I am gone. Do you know what I am going to do if I know that I am dying? I am going to run and get into the bathtub. Then I won't make a mess." He didn't add "like Mr. Yoneyoma" but I knew what he meant.

"I'm enjoying watching your family grow up, Ross and I want to ask you... would you like to have my house when I don't need it anymore? I have no relatives except for my sister who is older than me. She has brain cancer and lives in Vancouver."

Of course, I said: "yes".

He began to pay me to do odd jobs inside his house for him saying: "It's like you're working on your own house, Ross". I discovered his entire diet consisted of corned beef from a tin, cocoa powder, orange pop and cheap Canadian sherry. I also discovered that he had a wide variety of friends all over the country, used to be an enthusiastic Morris dancer and did a lot of bicycle touring: his bicycle, complete with panniers, was propped up on its kickstand in the downstairs living room. He had a bureau full of black and white photographs of places he had been and boxes of vinyl LP's, which I never really looked at but seemed to center around ballroom dancing; but very little furniture. The house was Spartan and relatively clean, for an older

bachelor.

So, there I was, sitting on the front porch steps of my house, staring at Gordons house, knowing, yet not knowing, that he didn't need it anymore.

I knew where the spare key to the front door was kept hidden, wedged between two cinder blocks in the outer basement stairwell retaining wall. I finally got up and retrieved the key, putting it in the front door lock after first knocking loudly and calling his name.

Inside, the house was the usual cool, dark and musty. The household wiring was still knob and tube; the hallway switch plate had two buttons that got pushed in: top for 'on', bottom button for 'off'. In front of me were the stairs leading to the second floor. I knew that he would be on the second floor, for that was where he lived. I called his name: "hi Gordon, it's me! It's Ross! I'm coming up..."

The house seemed to be holding its breath, so still that I stood at the bottom of the stairs not wanting to go up. That there was death in the house was unmistakable. The break in the stillness was the drip of water that came from the shower head in the bathroom at the top of the stairs, the room to the left. The shower head dripped constantly into a bucket Gordon had placed in the old clawfoot bathtub; the bucket was always full and overflowed down the drain. Why it was there I never asked, nor did I offer to repair it. The slow, punctuating 'bloop' echoed inside the house. I began to ascend the stairs, calling his name just to hear my voice in the silence.

Half way up the stairs I could see through the bannister spindles and into the bathroom. I could see through the open door: there was a foot. The foot protruded from the bathtub. It was a naked foot. I could see the bathtub rim and the foot came from a leg sticking out of the tub. I ascended the stairs all the way and I couldn't help myself but say: "Ah, there you are. Okay. I have you now."

I stood and stared at the corpse for a few minutes. Gordon had quite obviously gone, just the corpse remained. His right hand was folded across his body, the left clutched the shower curtain. It was like he had fallen backwards into the tub, grasping the curtain to slow his fall.

He had done exactly what he had said he would do.

In the little second floor kitchen there was a small table on which he did his paperwork. I could see that he had been busy at the table, it had little books

and some pamphlets on it. I looked at the first two little books of which there were three. The first was a bank deposit and transaction booklet, the 'old school' kind that one handed to the teller for updating: I could see it had a balance of \$583,000. The second booklet was also open so I looked at that one as well: it had a balance of \$760 000. The third booklet was not open so I couldn't see. On the table, propped against the wall were two pamphlets about the procedure surrounding changing ones will. I realized with sudden shock that Gordon was not only going to give us his house but that he was going to include all his earthly possessions as well – and this man, who drank cheap sherry mixed with orange pop, who held up his pants with a strip of torn cloth and who thought Dick Francis was the greatest author that ever lived – was a millionaire, possibly twice over – and he was going to give it all to us.

I went back into the bathroom and looked at the shell of Gordon again, noting how the molar teeth were worn to little black nubs, possibly from the corrosive orange pop, and I said to him: "Did you do it? Did you actually do it, Gordon? Did you make the change?" I looked at him another minute in that deafening silence and said to the tightly closed, sunken eyes: "Either way, Gordon, I really enjoyed having you as a neighbour too, thank you. Rest in peace."

Then I went downstairs, outside into the sunlight and made the 911 call. I begged them not to put the sirens on as there was no need - Gordon did not require rescuing; but they did anyway, wailing onto the street. I don't think Gordon would have figured it counted though.

His sister inherited all of his assets, including the house.

Fourteen years later, Kim is waving me onto the ferry. As the mighty engines on the Frontenac II rev up and propel us towards home, I reflect again on how fortunate I am. As I top the hill, I am reminded of what d said once about the property: "everywhere you look, it's a million-dollar view". Amen to that; riches abound.



## Project Snowstorm

By Judy Bierma



**Amherst, sporting her very fashionable hybrid-transmitter. Photo from Project Snowstorm**

Project Snowstorm at last had success on Amherst Island. The Island has long been famous as a winter owl hotspot including Snowies. We also are known for having short-eared, long-eared, saw-whet, boreal, great gray and northern hawk owls. The Island is also a good spot to see rough-legged hawks and northern harriers.

At the first of the project, they didn't tag owls on the Island. Other Snowies came and would stay on the Island for most of the winter, for example, Baltimore, who was the first of the radio equipped Snowies we got to know. Previously they had captured and tagged two Snowies, Stella and Emerald, as was detailed in a previous issue of the Beacon. Last year they came again and did not catch a Snowie. This year they captured and tagged two more Snowies. Amherst has been staying near the village. Simcoe has been more adventurous; traveling to both Pigeon and Simcoe islands, though regularly returning to the south shore. Check out the tracks at [projectsnowstorm.org](http://projectsnowstorm.org).

Amherst has the updated version of CTT's hybrid Argos/GSM transmitter, which communicates both through the GSM cell network, as well as the Argos Satellite system.

The team was headed by our McGill University

Ph.D. student, Rebecca McCabe. They "had a lot of help and support from the terrific community on Amherst, including local "bird lady" Janet Scott and many landowners who granted them permission to enter their property."

The Snowie population on our Island were lower than usual because of the decrease in vole numbers. There were only about eight Snowies this year in contrast to 16 last winter and 26 the year before.

Thank you to Rebecca McCabe for much of the info in this article.



**Charlotte-and-Simcoe**

A red promotional poster for the Tuesday Morning Show. It features a large white box with the text "TUESDAY MORNING SHOW" in bold black letters. Below this, a smaller white box contains the text: "WE ARE GROWING AGAIN! AMHERST ISLAND RADIO IS LOOKING FOR A VOLUNTEER BROADCASTER TO TAKE THE LEAD ON TUESDAY MORNINGS. WE HAVE OVER 50 VOLUNTEERS THAT KEEP THIS STATION GOING. JOIN IN THE FUN! FIND OUT MORE BY CONTACTING ERIC.TREMBLAY23@GMAIL.COM". The background is red with white circular patterns and a large white CD-like graphic on the left.



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**AMHERST ISLAND CHIROPRACTIC** 14005 Front Rd. Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. For appointments call 613 328-8892

J&J Taxes 613 539 5849

[Judyhineman@gmail.com](mailto:Judyhineman@gmail.com)

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## Wooly Bully 2020

This will be the 9<sup>th</sup> Edition of the “Wooly Bully Races.”

Date/Time: Sunday, August 16, 2020, 9:25 am - 11:15 am

Location: Wooly Bully Race Site on the South Shore of lovely Amherst Island.

This Wooly Bully is a terrific family event which has three different distances: 1K Kids Fun Run, 5K/10K races. The 10K counts for points towards the KRRR Race Series standings. The 10K is also the final event in the “Tri-Island Race Series“, which also includes the “Howe Island Hustle” and the “Wolfe Island 5K.”

Races: The five and ten kilometer events are held on a very scenic out and back route along the South Shore of Lake Ontario. There will be at least 2 aid stations, each kilometer will be marked. The one kilometer Fun Run is a timed event for children 5-12 years of age on an out and back course. It will be timed but there will be no prizes for top runners. Parents can run with their children if they feel it necessary but are not required to register. Each child will receive a souvenir ribbon at the finish line and refreshments.

The race site is at the farm of Dave Willard, Amherst Island, 600 South Shore Road. Signs will direct you to the site once you leave the ferry. There will be portable toilets and a baggage check service will be provided.

Other Important Information:

- Amherst Island Ferry Info
  - Take the Amherst Island Ferry, located east of Bath, Ontario on Highway 33. The ferry departs from the dock located on Highway 33 (Bath Road), Millhaven, Ontario, every hour on the half hour. The race start times are designed to give passengers on the 8:30 a.m. trip across ample time to land on Amherst Island, get to the race site and warm up. We have moved the start times back 10 minutes from last year. The ferry departs the Island every hour, on the hour.
- Shuttle Service
  - Those who wish to take our shuttle can park their cars at the Millhaven Legion, located on County Road 4. It is a 200 metre walk to get to the ferry dock. Walk onto the ferry for the 8:30 a.m. crossing and a bus will be at the Stella dock to take you to the race site. The cost is \$6 and you can reserve your space online when you register. The bus will get you back to the ferry in time for the 12 noon trip back to Millhaven. These must be purchased by Friday, August 14th.
- Runners who opt to drive over can purchase their ferry ticket while registering on line at a reduced cost of \$6 each. They will be passed out on race morning at the Millhaven Dock. These must be purchased by Friday, August 14th.
- Car pools are highly recommended, especially if travelling over on the 8:30 a.m. trip from Millhaven over to Amherst Island. You can also park at the Millhaven Legion.

Registration:

Online registration for the 2020 Wooly Bully Races will open on February 1, 2020 at [www.raceroster.com](http://www.raceroster.com)

Race Kit Pickup / Final Registration will be at Runner’s Choice, 56 Brock Street, Kingston on Saturday, August 15th. 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. Browse or pick up those last minute items inside the store. Pick up your race kit or register for any of the three events at that time. You can also pick up your race kit over at the race site on race day on Amherst Island, starting at 8:00 a.m. THERE IS NO RACE DAY REGISTRATION.

2020 Race Fees (not including online charges or HST) are as follows:

	Feb. 1-July 15	July 16-Aug. 15th
1K Fun Run	\$ 7.00	\$ 7.00
10/5K Races – 19 Years and Under	\$15.00	\$15.00
10/5K Races – 20 Years & Older	\$45.00	\$50.00
KRRR Members (5K and 10K Races)	\$40.00	45.00

## Post Race

The Amherst Island Emergency Services Association will serve all runners a bar-b-que lunch (there will be veggie burger options), along with a soft drink and chips. Bring a lawn chair and enjoy the bar-b-que under the tents.

## Contact

Joe Du Vall

Email [joesens1@outlook.com](mailto:joesens1@outlook.com)

Phone 613-292-7102 evenings only

Website [www.krra.org](http://www.krra.org) or [www.racerooster.com](http://www.racerooster.com)