Issue 483 January 2021

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THE BEACON

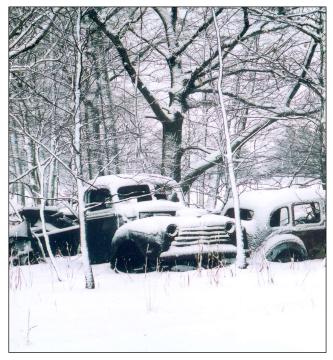
"bonum apporto nuntium, tristem nuntium, sed non malus nuntium"

THE



BEACON

TALKING ABOUT SNOW AND BIRDS, BUT NOT SNOWBIRDS



Some very stuck trucks in the snow. Photograph taken in 2006 by Don Tubb.



A group of Canada geese standing in the snow, contemplating the weather before their continued migration. Photograph taken in 2007 by Don Tubb.

KAYLEIGH GRAHAM

I have a feeling that these trucks were stuck long before this snowfall coated them in a white blanket. There are many treasures to be found on the island, some natural, some made by people. Bits and pieces of deserted vehicles can be found among the trees in the woods I like to hike through. It can be eerie sometimes, but it's more enchanting than anything to think about all the stories that those vehicles hold. Who drove them? How did they arrive in the woods? Would they ever be functional again if restored? Don Tubb had a gift for preserving these scenes in photography, island scenes that make you wonder. At least one of his photographs will always be included somewhere in this edition of *The Beacon*, in every issue, in his memory.

I hope everyone has a safe winter this year, full of mysterious, snowy scenes such as this. If you happen to capture any interesting, wintery photographs this season, feel free to send them to editor@thebeaconpaper.com to be featured here in *The Beacon* and shared with our readers on the island and abroad. I look forward to seeing all sorts of snowy wonders this winter. Stay warm everyone.

Counting Birds

KAYLEIGH GRAHAM

Every year, usually at the beginning of January, the island participates in a bird count. Most people have heard about counting sheep, but I think counting birds may be even more difficult! The birds often move quickly, or are far away, which makes identifying the species and getting an accurate count a real challenge.

The annual bird count was held on Saturday, January 2nd, 2021 on Amherst Island. Most other years birders with a lifetime of experience will come to the island to help act as guides on the count. This year, due to COVID-19 and the lockdown, the bird count was restricted to islanders only, within their own 'bubbles', in order to comply with public health recommendations.

I participated in the count this year, although I am a novice, and I am happy to say I correctly (as far as I know) identified and counted several birds of different species on the far West side of Amherst Island. Using strong binoculars, several sets of eyes, and

the checklist of possible species provided by *The Kingston Field Naturalists*, identifying and counting birds became doable. The checklist boasts 382 species of birds on the list, including 2 that are thought to be extinct. I didn't see any 'eskimo curlew' (*numenius borealis*) or passenger pigeons (*ectopistes migratorius*), which are both considered to extinct at this point. But, imagine if they're not extinct? The annual bird count is one small way of keeping an eye on the population of birds in the area and monitoring their health as a species.

Originally called the 'Christmas Bird Census', it began in Canada in 1900. Now, many people call the tradition the 'Christmas Bird Count'. The collected data is monitored by scientists and conservationists each year and is useful in informing strategies to help protect birds and their habitats. In the long term, population trends in certain areas may also point to necessary changes in conservation or protection measures. Overall, the bird count is a useful tradition that I now look forward to each year.

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JANUARY DAYS

National Winter Skin Relief Day

JANUARY 8TH

Yes, there is actually a National Winter Skin Relief Day. On January 8th we are all supposed to take a moment to think about our skin care routines, especially with the worst of the winter weather fast approaching.

Experts from the Mount Sinai Hospital recommend avoiding hot showers during the winter months, as the hot water can exacerbate the dryness of skin in the winter. When wearing layers of clothing to protect ourselves from the cold, we are supposed to keep a layer of natural fabric like flannel or cotton closest to our skin. Good luck this winter!



The most cracked skin. Don't let it get this bad.



Save the Eagles Day *January 10th*

The eagle population faces a multitude of threats worldwide. Eagles struggle most significantly due to poaching, pesticides, habitat loss, and power line electrocution accidents. Before the creation of 'Save the Eagles Day', the bald eagle population was dwindling. However, with education and support as a result of this day, the bald eagle population is on the rise again.

There are about 60 species of eagles around the world, but no eagles in Hawaii. The eagles you are likely to notice in North America are probably either bald eagles or golden eagles. I have noticed three juvenile bald eagles that like to frequent my home on the island, and I am pleased to see they are growing well. They pose a threat to prey animals as they are ferocious hunters, but they are majestic to watch. Help save the eagles this January 10th!



A bald eagle photographed by Sherri Jensen.

APPRECIATE

Squirrel Appreciation Day

JANUARY 21ST

The word 'squirrel' encompasses any animal in the rodent family *Sciuridae*, which includes groundhogs and chipmunks. So, technically, groundhogs are squirrels. There are 270 species in this family. Some squirrels in North America can swim up to 2km in open water! Squirrels also help disperse and encourage some species of trees. Since they like to stash their food, but they don't always eat it all, some of their stashes grow into trees. Technically, squirrels plant trees, even if accidentally.

Squirrels eat meat too. They have been known to eat baby birds, eggs, insects, and other small animals.

Although some people view squirrels as pests, their ability to plant trees is a wonderful trait. To celebrate squirrel appreciation day, set up a squirrel feeder and see if you can identify the species of squirrels that visit!



A red squirrel in the snow, photographed by Vicki Keith.



SPOTLIGHT SPECIES

Northern Saw-whet Owl

KAYLEIGH GRAHAM

The northern saw-whet owl, or aegolius acadicus, is a forest dweller all across northern North America. These tiny owls measure between 18cm-21cm tall, with a wingspan of about 42cm-48cm. They have somewhat oversized, round heads without ear tufts, and a face resembling a feline with large yellow eyes.

Northern saw-whet owls are highly nocturnal and more difficult to spot than they are to hear. They have a shrill, repetitive call that is hard to miss.

While roosting, they often hide amongst dense vegetation, at about eye level, close to the trunk of evergreen trees.

Hunting almost entirely at night, using hearing and sight, the northern saw-whet owl waits in low branches and surprises prey by swooping down on it. These owls mainly eat small rodents, especially deer mice and voles. However, they can also hunt for bats, squirrels, chickadees, and other small owl species. While migrating they also eat insects.

Around 5-6 white eggs are laid by this owl in one incubation cycle. The female remains in the nest for the incubation of 27-29 days, and until the youngest owl is at least 18 days old. The male owl supplies the food for the duration of the incubation period, until the young can hunt independently, and often remains with the young longer than the female. Some female owls may nest twice in one year.

Northern saw-whet owls nest in cavities in trees between 15ft-50ft above the ground. They prefer to use old holes made by woodpeckers but will also use artificial nest boxes. It is believed that they will not nest at the same site two years in a row.

Young birds in the nest are threatened by heat waves in the spring, which may become a more influential threat in the future due to climate change. Heavy rainfall can also endanger nests due to flooding.

Northern saw-whet owls are preyed upon by larger raptors including great horned owls, a variety of hawks, and peregrine falcons. Despite facing predators, climate change, and forest habitat loss, the population of northern saw-whet owls is currently not dangerously low.

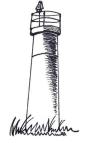
SAW-WHET OWL FACTS

- The northern saw-whet owl may have been named after the whistling or tooting sound they repeat while trying to attract a mate. The male owl makes a sound like a saw being sharpened on a whetting stone, hence 'saw-whet'.
- The oldest of these owls ever recorded was a minimum of 9 years and 5 months old. It was originally banded in Ontario in 1999.
- The owl that was found in the Rockefeller Centre Christmas Tree and dubbed 'Rocky' is a northern saw-whet owl.
- Due to their dense forest habitat, sawwhet owls often don't react to the presence of humans because they don't recognize us as a threat, as most have none or extremely few encounters with humans. This is why they are perceived as 'tame'.
- These owls will save caches of up to 6 mice for later, but during the winter these saved leftovers will freeze. They then take the frozen food and thaw it in the same position they would incubate eggs; a natural microwaving technique.

Source: Cornell University, "Northern Saw-whet Owl", *All About Birds*, 2019.



A Northern Saw-whet Owl perched on a branch in the woods on the west side of Amherst Island, ON. Photographed by Kayleigh Graham, editor@thebeaconpaper.com



Obituaries

DORIS ANN WEMP (1939-2020)

Wemp, Doris Ann (nee Storring) – Unexpectedly after a brief illness at Kingston Health Sciences Centre on Saturday, December 5, 2020 in her 82nd year. Predeceased by her parents Norman and Freida Storring (nee Schonauer).

Beloved wife of Leigh Herbert Wemp (predeceased), dear mother to son Herbert Wemp (Cheryl) and daughter Valerie Wemp-Rochefort (Chris). Grandmother to Kailey Wemp and Adam Wemp. Adored sister to the late Douglas Storring (Betty), Ronald Storring (Evelyn), Mary lynn Bell (late Walter). She will also be missed by nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

*the above statement was originally published on December 8th, 2020 in *The Kingston Whig Standard* and on the *James Reid Funeral Home* website.

BY HERB & VALERIE WEMP

Doris was the oldest of four children, she was born in Napanee and grew up with her two brothers, Doug, Ron, and her sister, the youngest Mary-Lynn, on a farm on Centerville Road.

They all attended a one room schoolhouse not too far from the farm, Doris then attended the Napanee District High School. After high school she got her first job at Woolworths in Kingston and rented a room there.

Doris met Leigh Wemp from Amherst Island in the late 1950s and they were married on September 17th, 1960. They lived in Kingston, and their son Herb was born in 1962. Leigh got a job in Sault Ste. Marie where their daughter Valerie was born in 1963. After a few years they came back to this area and settled in Odessa.



Doris Ann Wemp (nee Storring), on Amherst Island in 1959.



Doris Ann Wemp (nee Storring), May 12th 1939 – December 5th 2020.



The horse was purchased from Mel Filson on Amherst Island, broke, trained, and raced by Leigh. The horse was named by Leigh "Lee's Tanti" after the old island name "The Isle of Tanti". It went on to be their most successful horse. Also in the picture is Doris, Leigh, Valerie, and Herb.



Doris at one of the Napanee Heritage Quilter Guild Shows with one of her many quilts.

Memories of Doris Wemp, from Herb & Valerie Wemp

Leigh and Doris both enjoyed socializing with many other families and friends on Amherst Island, at dance, dinners, card games, or even horse races, at the fairgrounds or on the ice.

Leigh and Doris owned a few standard bred horses over the years and races at the local track, as did other fellow Amherst Islanders, Moutary Wemp, Hugh Wemp (Doris), Ben Wemp (Barb), the Tugwells, the Filsons, the Caugheys, the Forresters, all island racehorse owners.

With all these activities on the island, Doris was encouraged to learn how to drive around Amherst Island, before going for her driver's license

Doris worked for the Frontenac, Lennox, and Addington school board as a custodian. She was an active executive in her local union, The Canadian Union of Public Employees (C.U.P.E.) and remained a retiree member.

Doris was also a member of the Empire Loyalist Kingston branch. Together with Leigh, they started researching the Wemp family history. They were both a big part of arranging the Wemp family reunion and plaque dedication at the Wemp Cairn on Amherst Island in 1995. This story was featured in *The Beacon* (July 15th 1995) and the Beaver "Historical Plaque Dedication at Wemp Cairn on Amherst Island".

Doris and Leigh were dancing at a wedding on the island when Leigh suffered a heart attack and died. She said he smiled, she spun around, and he was on the floor.

Doris continued with the genealogy researching, the Storring family, the Schonauer family, Cooper family, Wood family, and she found genealogy particulary challenging and rewarding. She loved taking trips to research family and online archives. Doris just recently participated in some research, photos, and information gathering on the Storring and Schonauer family history for the book "Memories of the Farm" by the North Frontenac History Society & Archives.

Doris was a big part of getting the Oswald Wemp Memorial medallion (the dead man's penny) to the Amherst Island museum from North Bay. This story was featured in *The Beacon* and the beaver "Fallen soldiers medal makes 100-year journey home".

After losing Leigh in 1996, Doris retired and started doing other hobbies. She always did love sewing, she made a lot of clothing, repaired and hemmed items for family and friends. She got interested in quilting and belonged to the Napanee Heritage Quilting Guild where they donated a lot of what they made to the Salvation Army, seniors outreach service, and the maternity wards at the local hospitals, and more. She has made several lovely quilts and other quilting projects and enjoyed participating in the quilt club shows.

She recently was making masks for friends and family to stay safe during this pandemic. She was very active in several projects; she will be missed by all.



Obituaries

JOHN GORDON MICHAEL MUNRO (1951-2020)

On December 12, 2020 John Munro passed away, surrounded by the love of his family. He was a much-loved father, husband, brother, son, uncle, grandfather, in-law, and friend. He was 69.

John was born in Toronto, February 15, 1951 to Jean and Bruce Munro. A Toronto police officer for 31 years, John loved to give back to his community. He volunteered in many capacities with the Progress Club, Big Brothers, Special Olympics, Variety Village, Loyalist Township Emergency First Response Team, the YMCA of Kingston, and the Kingston Y Penguins Swim Team.

In 2003, at the age of 52, John swam across Lake Erie becoming the oldest and fastest to complete the crossing. He then set his sights on Lake Ontario and became the oldest amateur, completing a distance of 58.4 kilometers in 35 hours and 15 minutes. John raised \$72,000 for the Kingston Y Penguins during these 2 swims.

John was known for his compassion and philanthropy. He had a quiet manner, with the ability to turn a conversation on a dime with his wonderful sense of humour and repertoire of accents and voices. His friends will remember him for his beautiful singing voice and song writing ability. Many evenings were spent around the kitchen or living room with John and brothers or friends singing favourite old country, folk and rock as well as his own personal works.

John leaves behind his wife of 26 years (Vicki Keith), his sons, Bruce (Chantelle) and Cory, brothers Ken (Linda), Brian (Faye), Lee (Anne), sister Kaycie, grandson Landon, his in-laws Brian and Carol Keith, Campbell, Gordon and Donald (Negar), as well as his many nieces, and nephews.

The family is eternally grateful for the wonderful care provided by the staff at Providence Care Hospital. His path would have been far more challenging without their continued commitment and support.

In lieu of flowers please send donations to John's favourite charity, the Kingston Y Penguins, YMCA of Eastern Ontario, 100 Wright Crescent, Kingston, Ontario, K7L 4T9 or at https://eo.ymca.ca/donations.

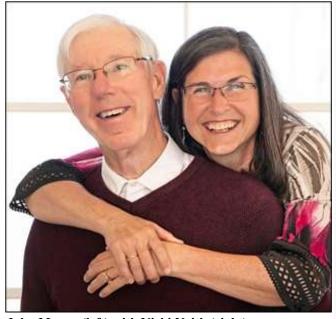
*the above statement was originally published on December 15th, 2020 in *The Kingston Whig Standard* and on the *James Reid Funeral Home* website.



John Munro (right) with his two sons.



John Munro (left), dancing with Sally Bowen (right) at the Emerald Music Festival.



John Munro (left) with Vicki Keith (right).

Memories of John

In this touching tribute to her late husband, Vicki Keith succinctly explained the life and personality of John. Excerpts of her writing are included here;

"John was a father to two grown sons; Bruce and Cory. He loved them more than anything and was so proud of the people they had become. Even as John struggled with his illness, he would smile when he heard they were coming for a visit and say simply "My boys". John's gift of music, accents, voices, and laughter continues to live in Cory, while his passion for family and his ability to think of others before himself lives on in Bruce. His caring nature lives on in both of his boys.

He was a much loved and devoted husband who would go to the ends of the earth for me. His hand resting on the back of my neck would say "I support you", his hand in mine said "I love you", and his hug could heal any hurt and make me feel safe and secure in an instant. His quick wit filled a room with joy, his everpresent support was empowering and his loving way all encompassing."

Memories of John, continued...

"During his career, John worked as a police officer. People who knew him, spoke of him as being "a credit to the force" and "what a man should be" one fellow officer said that John "was quiet but expressed his thoughts, serious in his duties but could make you laugh at any time". This officer went on to say that he remembered John even though he didn't know him well, because John had "inspired him to be a better man".

After retiring from the Toronto Police Service, John went on to become a volunteer firefighter on Amherst Island, a position of which he was very proud. He loved being a police officer, but I think a little hole in John's heart was filled by being able to give back to his community in this very important manner.

Friends describe John as a remarkable man. They of course speak of his musicality, his athleticism, his sense of humour and his mentorship. Many commented on his strong moral fiber, his authenticity and his empowering nature, while others spoke of his passion, his voice of reason, his kindness, his interest in others and his ability not just to tell a story, but to draw a story out of someone else. One friend described John as a "gentle and caring man who set an example for us all".

John's philanthropy is celebrated by the people who speak of his passionate support of the Y (YMCA) and the Y Penguins, and commented on how many people have benefitted from his hard work both behind the scenes and publicly.

One of the most incredible things about John was his passion for helping others. The joy John took in supporting the athletes on the Y Penguins, transporting, starting, tapping, etc. was always evident. Ever working to make a positive impact in our world, John organized countless regional and provincial games for young people with physical disabilities, helped start up the 100 Men Who Care Kingston Chapter and built and supported many other charities and events throughout his years.

The messages that meant the most to me over the last months, are comments on how John always had a smile on his face when he was around me and that he held a fierce pride in me and my achievements. I could always feel his eyes on me in a crowd and sense his quiet support. It always made me feel like we were an indomitable force who could achieve anything together.

John and I were the perfect team in sport and in life. We are both strong personalities but we understood and respected each-other's strengths and weaknesses completely. John's logic complimented my intuitiveness, his rule adherence balanced my free spirit, his calmness contrasted my spirited excitement. This, tied with our combined passion, desire, fortitude and dedication made us an undeniable and impenetrable team. I will miss him immensely but be ever stronger and better person for knowing and loving him.

You will be missed by everyone who knew you "my Johnny", and will live on in the hearts of all of us who had the opportunity to share in a bit of your journey."

~ Vicki Keith



ISLAND INFORMATION

Amherst Island Ferry Service

Ferry Schedule

The ferry leaves Stella (Amherst Island side) on the hour each day, 6:00am to 1:00am.

The ferry leaves Millhaven (mainland side) on the half hour each day, 6:30am to 1:30am.



Aerial view of the progress made to the Millhaven dock, from https://twitter.com/a_i_ferrydocks

Fares (cash or cheque only) *Currently not collecting fares due to **COVID-19 precautions.**

- small school bus \$9.00
- RV or car with trailer, large vehicles requiring up to two vehicle spaces, or large school bus - \$18.00
- Large vehicles and trailers or equipment requiring more than two vehicle spaces -\$9.00 per space used
- Motorcycle \$2.00
- Bicycle \$1.50
- Book of 25 round-trip tickets \$100.00

Note: An administration charge of \$20.00 will be added to the fare for any motorist with insufficient funds to pay fare. The administration charge is required to cover costs incurred to prepare an invoice.

Ferry Dock Construction Project

The new docks have been backfilled, and the • Car, truck (under 1 ton), van, farm tractor or installation of vehicle ramps has begun on both docks. The new docks are expected to be completed in mid-2021, although it may be longer until it is operational.

> Factors that hinder the switch over date include; requirements for testing the new electric ferry, training staff at the new docks, approvals from Transport Canada, and ensuring reliable and uninterrupted ferry service to and from the island. Passenger waiting areas and washrooms are still scheduled to open in 2021.

The Amherst Islander II, the new electric ferry, is expected to arrive in Canada in the spring of 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected its arrival.

Information and updates can be found at http://www.amherstislandferrydocks.ca/ or https://twitter.com/a i ferrydocks

Instructions

- Please separate glass, plastics, paper/cardboard, and metal from garbage.
- Place a garbage tag (\$2.50 each, or \$25 for 10) on each garbage bag.
- The township offers two free large item drop offs (FILDO) per year.

COVID-19 Precautions: tags are normally sold at the landfill site, but are not currently due to COVID-19.

LOYALIST LANDFILLS

Dump Hours and Protocol

Amherst Island Waste Disposal Site, 145 Dump Road, Amherst Island. Garbage tags can be purchased at McGinn's General Store and Fast Freddy's in Bath, Foodland, and many other township retailers, payment at Amherst Island landfill is cash only.

Open Hours	
Wednesdays	11:00am – 2:00pm
Saturdays	10:00am – 12:00pm
Sundays	2:00pm – 4:00pm

Information and updates can be found at https://www.loyalisttownship.ca/index.cfm/residents/garbage-and-recycling/

STORE SERVICES

McGinn's General Store

POST OFFICE

Open Hours

Mondays	9-11:30am, 2:30-5pm
Tuesdays	9-11:30am, 2:30-5pm
Wednesdays	9-11:30am, 2:30-5pm
Thursdays	9-11:00am, 3:30-6pm
Fridays	9-11:30am, 2:30-5pm
Saturdays	Closed
Sundays	Closed

Phone Number: 613-519-2331

COVID-19 Precautions: face mask required, 1 person inside at a time inside (please call before arriving or knock).

GENERAL STORE

COVID-19 Precautions: curbside service only, masks at the curb would be appreciated.

Owned and operated by a 5th generation island family, Linda and Dave McGinn.

Open Hours

Mondays	9am – 5pm
Tuesdays	9am – 5pm
Wednesdays	9am -5pm
Thursdays	9am – 6pm
Fridays	9am – 5pm
Saturdays	10am – 4pm
Sundays	Closed

Phone Number: 613-519-2331

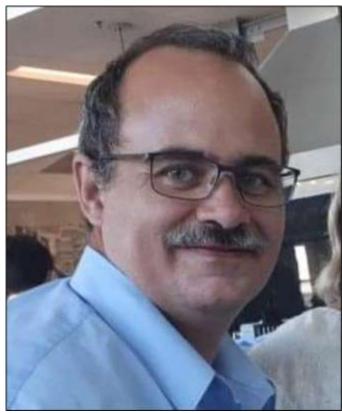




Congratulations

Happy Birthday Douglas Gavlas! Doug celebrated his birthday on December 1st, 2020.





Doug Gavlas in the good old days with a cuddly cat (left), and a more modern photo of Doug (right).

Happy Birthday Janet Scott! Janet celebrated her birthday on December 3rd, 2020.







A 4-year-old Janet Scott holding Ginger the cat while on a pony 74 years ago, in Ottawa, 1946.



Congratulations

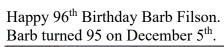
Happy December 1st Birthday Lisa Wemp! Hope you enjoyed your day!



Back in the day (from left to right) Herb Wemp, Steven Wemp, Lisa Wemp, and Valerie Wemp.



Lisa Wemp with Mia the dog.





Happy 44th Birthday as of December 25th, 2020, Gladice Koble!



Happy December birthday Cara Nye!





Happy Birthday Jess Rybka! Victoria (left) and Jess (right).



INTRODUCING ISLANDERS

Meet Barb Filson

BARB FILSON KAYLEIGH GRAHAM

The column "Introducing Islanders" will become a monthly feature in *The Beacon*, focusing on a different person each month. The goal of this column is to create a collection of biographies of islanders based on interviews with the featured individuals. This island is home to many incredibly interesting people. I hope you will all enjoy learning things about their lives as much as I enjoy interviewing them.

Barb's Family Life and History

Barbara Filson was born on December 5th, 1925 and has spent the vast majority of her life on Amherst Island. She was only a toddler when she first lived on the island, then her immediate family moved to Chatham briefly. When her grandfather died, the fishing business was left to her father and the family moved back to Amherst Island in 1939 or 1940, while Barb was a young teenager.

She remembers her family fished in the summer, then moved into their winter home in the village until spring. In the winter, time was spent filling the icehouse. Blocks of ice were cut and packed into layers between sawdust for packing fish to ship.

Out on Long Point, where Barb's family did a lot of fishing, was once a bustling hub on the island. Long before the invention of cellular data and GPS devices on phones, the men would fish

on the lake with only a compass to guide them back. At lunchtime, each of the wives had a different distinct call to beckon their husband to return for food. Barb's grandmother had a school bell that she rang as the lunch bell. At the end of the day, the women would wait at the shore to listen for the boats if the men were late. The family used to catch many red salmon, herring, and sometimes a sturgeon.

Then, the fishing profitability began to dwindle, as they slowly caught less and less. Barb's father then bought a cruiser and guided tourists around that way.

The family added a dining room to their cottage and began cooking meals for the tourists her father guided around the island. Her father built a barbeque to help with the cooking, because they did not have hydro, and cooked with gas instead. Around 1969, her parents sold the house, and around 1990 the icehouse was torn down. So much of the physical history on this island has vanished, that records such as this can help to keep memories alive.

In my interview with Barb Filson, she remarked on how drastically the island has changed during her lifetime. However, she couldn't quite describe exactly what has changed, apart from the increasing number of commuters here. Barb and her family strike me as incredibly hardworking, honest, loyal, and generous people.



Barb Filson in her home on Amherst Island in 2020, photograph taken and provided by her granddaughter Ashley.



Barb Filson (left) with her late husband Harry Filson (right), on their wedding day c.1950.

In the 1940s, Barb recalled there was a young gentleman from New York who came to visit. He owned a hotel, and he offered her a well-paying job to do all of the baking for his company. At the time, Barb was coping with her ailing parents, and she was engaged to be married. She felt as though she couldn't leave home at the time, even though the gentleman also offered Harry (her fiancé at the time) a job if Barb would agree to go be a baker in New York. Persistently loyal to the needs of her family and her life on the island, Barb just didn't feel right about leaving, so she turned down the offer. Thinking back on it now, she wonders what would have been. She may have become a world-famous baker!

Barb met Harry Filson on Amherst Island, and they got married around 1950. She described her late husband as an "island boy" and a "pretty good guy". They raised two children together, Garry Filson and the late Valerie Filson (later Valerie Howard). Barb values family so dearly. She speaks highly of all of her relatives and would do anything for her family.

Valerie (Val) Howard, Barb's daughter (left), and her husband and Bob Howard.



Garry Filson, Barb's son (right), and his wife Susan Filson.



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INTRODUCING ISLANDERS

Meet Barb Filson, continued...

Barb's Memories and Stories

When asked about her favourite hobbies, Barb couldn't really narrow them down to a few choices. She said she did everything and liked to keep busy.

In the 1940s, Barb remembers the difference between the summer and the winter on the island well. She said a lot of people had cars, but they wouldn't use them in the winter because they couldn't get through the snow. This was before the road crew was formed, so many island roads were rather inaccessible in the winter months. Instead, she remembered using a team of horses, and a sleigh and cutter to travel around the island during the winter on social visits.

One of her favourite things to do was to go to the island dances in the village at Victoria Hall or at the old Hall near Emerald. She fondly remembers the 5th of November Balls, and says all the girls would get dressed up for that dance.

Barb's Baking

Known for her baking, it is still one of her favourite pastimes today. She said, "I learned to bake from my mother. When my grandfather died, the family lived in one house and used the other two cabins to rent to the people who came in boats from New York. A carpenter in the village made tables for the cabins, and we would serve the travelers meals there. That's where I practiced baking." It sounds like one of the islands first 'AirBnb's. Barb continued, "I started baking where the Back Kitchen is now. There used to be a school there. There was a lunchroom in there where I started baking bread, buns, pies, cookies, tarts, any everything else." She also used to bake at the old coffee shop that used to be near where the McGinn's General Store is today. Barb said, "when I was baking at the old coffee shop, I was always up at 4 o'clock in the morning making pies. I made about 700 pies each season, and I have kept a journal of everything I've ever baked." Theoretically, she agreed she could go through her journal and add up all of the baked goods to get a grand total. If you name any islander, Barb could probably tell you what type of pie is their favourite.

Her Dog 'Blitz'

Throughout a variety of conversations with Barb, it became clear that she loves animals. This is a story she told me about a dog she once had. "There were some duck hunters that came up to visit from the U.S.A., and they brought a dog with them, a lab. They kept shooting at the ducks, even when the dog went out to retrieve them, which seemed careless to me. On a return trip while retrieving a duck, their lab got a face full of pellets." Barb paused here and gestured to her face, and her expression made it clear that dog was really hurt. She continued, "The hunters said they had no use for a dog that was so severely injured, so I begged them to let me tend to the dog. Sure enough, they left the dog behind and I nursed it back to health. Shortly after, on a walk, the dog wandered down to the lake and didn't return. I followed his tracks in the snow, and he had fallen into the icy water and couldn't climb onto the shore because of the steep bank of ice. I lay on my stomach and pulled him back onto the shore. After that frigid rescue, he never left my side. I named him 'Blitz'." She smiled at the memory of her loyal dog from many years ago. She finished her story by saying, "It disturbs me how cruel people can be to animals, I enjoy spending time with dogs and cats, and I will always treat animals well." Barb's compassion toward animals was evident by the way she talked about the dogs and horses that she has enjoyed spending time with over the years.



Barb has always enjoyed baking but can't decide which baked good is her favourite.



Barb Filson in her home on Amherst Island in 2020, photograph taken and provided by her granddaughter Ashley.

Odd Jobs

Barb told me, "I worked for Bell telephone after Bell bought the phone lines that were previously privately owned. Across from Victoria Hall, I used to work at the trailer as a supervisor on shift work for the telephone connections. We only had so many lines, and we only had one line for long distance. If someone would get a call, the operators would listen, and listen, and listen, eavesdropping of course". This is when she laughed, probably from mischievous fond memories. It seems word has always travelled fast on this island. Barb continued, "I remember the lines were busy the night I had my son, I had to try to get through so I could go to town to give birth to Garry."

Another odd job Barb picked up was hairstyling. In the winter season, Barb learned to cut hair. She cut hair, dyed hair, and styled it too!

On the Farm

On the family farm, Barb said "I did everything on the farm but plow the fields, and I didn't want to do that". She cut hay, raked hay, and even used a combine for a couple of summers. I asked her why she drew the line at plowing, and she said, "I felt I had done enough", then laughed. She once swore "I'll never milk a cow", however, her daily routine on the farm would later include milking the cows, cleaning the stables, and taking care of the animals in general. She remembers a time when they had cows, pigs, chickens, geese, and ducks. Barb wasn't afraid of the challenges of farming and was a quick learner on their farm.

Helping Family

She helped her Dad, she spent time cleaning the houses of her elderly neighbours, she trapped for muskrats. She trapped muskrats for years on the island to help her family make money. She caught them, and her Dad skinned them, and they sold the pelts. Although trapping enough muskrats to make her Mother a fur coat took a while, Barb said "my Mother always did for me, so I wanted to do something for her". She took the pelts to her Dad's fishing friend, who made them into a fur coat. She gifted that fur coat to her Mother.



Trapping muskrats in order to sell their pelts was a common job some young people on the island would do to help their families earn money.



BEACON

ARTS AND CULTURE

St. Nicholas' Circle by Thomas Kinkade

DEREK OXLEY

"For if everyday was just like Christmas, what a wonderful world it would be."

These words, sung by the incomparable Elvis Priestly, reach deeply into that soulful longing that we truly could live in a timeless world, with each day playing out as a festival of joy and generosity, of reflection, of thankfulness, and of plenty. I hope that no matter how you celebrate the holidays that this is a sentiment you can relate to. I would like to share one of my favourite holiday images which I feel seeks to create this sense of a Christmas that never has to end.

Once upon a lifetime ago I used to work for Hallmark Cards in Toronto, and every Christmas it was my job to arrange the walls and displays for the then-lucrative sale of boxed cards. Of all the many different images peppering the wall the works by Thomas Kinkade stood out among my favourites; indeed, they were in high demand. Kinkade (d. 2012) was an American painter and is another artist whose work could be said to create beauty for beauty's sake. His idyllic and relatable subjects, bolstered by his company's tireless promotion of reproductions of his work (a process that made his work controversial among critics), have made him a household name. The self-styled 'painter of light' is well known for his dynamic and colourful treatment of landscapes, cityscapes, rustic cottages, and Disney characters. The style is called luminism, a term coined a century after-the-fact by American historian John H. Baur to describe a subgenre of American landscape painting particular to the mid 19th century.

Aesthetically, the style is defined by having areas of hard, non-diffused light, a tendency toward using aerial perspectives, a focus on and a precise desire to conceal brushstrokes, and an overall sense of timelessness and tranquility. It should be noted that no painter in the 19th century self-identified with this as a style or a movement, and so the grouping of these like images together under such criteria is a tool of historians and curators. The original piece, entitled Saint Nicholas' Circle, was finished in 1993 and has seen countless studio reproductions and prints; sadly, I was not able to track down the location of the original. Kinkade was a devout Christian and many of his original works were given to charities, hospitals, churches, and other fundraising institutions, so hopefully it sits somewhere where it can be publicly appreciated. There is an interesting conversation to be had about originals vs. reproductions and their place in our cultural fabric, but that is a conversation for a future article.

I was reintroduced to this painting a few years ago while visiting an aunt and uncle over very much like many country farmhouses that I the holidays. Although it was an image that had returned year after year on the shelf, I had forgotten about it until I saw a print hanging in their living room. My appreciation came flooding back. In this image I imagine it being just about dusk on Christmas eve in a New England town around the turn of the twentieth century. The work has finished for the day, hearth fires are burgeoning, the smell of smoke for all of us in this new decade. Stay well my wafts through air, and the satisfied sense of

finally being able to relax and celebrate is settling upon the people as they arrive in their fashion at the centre of town. I like that this piece shows the liminal space of the gathering of the community before any specific celebration has begun. It lets us all imagine how the impending celebrations will unfold in any way we choose, and we can insert ourselves for a moment into this world as we wish for our fantasy to come true. Personally, I dream of an evening spent with dear friends, mulled wine, and hopefully a large choir which could encircle the space and ring out my favourite carols. I suppose there is no concealing the parallel between this image and the animated centre of Whoville, from Dr. Seuss' now famous story of The Grinch. It's hard to see the foreground tracks of the horse-drawn sled leading into town centre and not think of little Max pulling the sleigh down the hills into the village at the end of the story. Perhaps I should add an Electro Who-Cardio Floox to my dream? In any event, the scene is heartwarming, and I have to give a note of personal appreciation for the colourful cottages with their wood panelling, shuttered windows, and their steep attic rooves visited in my youth.

I hope everyone had the best holiday season they could. I think most of us from time to time through this holiday can admit that we were caught imagining and wishing for better, safer circumstances. Let's place a hope that as the days grow longer and warmer in this new year that it will parallel the growth of stability and security friends.



Thomas Kinkade, St. Nicholas' Circle, 1993, Arlington, Vermont.



JANET'S JOTTINGS

Project Snowstorm News

JANET SCOTT

Exciting news this week for sure. Simcoe, a snowy owl, who was fitted with a transmitter in February 2020 right here on Amherst Island, has returned. The banding team was bunking at 2150 South Shore Road and managed to tag two owls that trip, Amherst and Simcoe. On a previous expedition Stella and Emerald had been caught and received their electronic equipment right on my dining room table.

Simcoe took her time returning to the Arctic. She had enjoyed her winter vacation on Amherst Island with gourmet meals consisting of meadow voles (microtus pennsylvanicus) with side trips to Simcoe Island and out on the ice to catch ducks for delectable dining. She was a mature female, so the time had come, hormones were kicking in, and it was time to start a family. She rested and hung out for a while at the southern end of James Bay. In May, Simcoe headed for Ungava, the nesting area for our snowy owls, and also some of our short-eared owls. There, her transmission points show she settled down on a 70ha area and nested. At first, the male would do all the feeding trips, but as the chicks grew you could tell that she expanded her hunting territory until August and September, when she took a huge loop around Ungava, starting south in October. Again, she rested and fattened up in southern James Bay and then south through Algonquin Park, to Point Traverse and on December 22nd checked in on the nature reserve at the south east corner of the island. Christmas eve she spent on the gravel bar. Probably watching to make sure Santa got through to Susan Filson's house on time.

Stella has been a star performer for *Project Snowstorm*. She was first to check in this year and headed south on the west side of Hudson Bay. Stella has once again chosen the Dakotas as her vacation site for 2020/2021. On Christmas day, she was south of the border between North and South Dakota.

When these owls come into cell tower range, they download all the location data from the summer visit to the Arctic and scientists are able to learn about their hunting and nesting locations from the data supplied. The Arctic is changing and the creatures who call it home are having to adapt in order to survive. This project begun on a whim because so many snowy owls were pushing south has provided information and technical development that we could only dream of ten years ago.

I so love watching and learning about these amazing migratory owls and we are so blessed that so many stop and visit on Amherst Island.

(below) Rebecca McCabe is removing a hippoboscidae from Stella's feathers. It is a parasitic, flightless fly.







(above) Rebecca McCabe, a PhD student at McGill University, Jean-Francois Therrien, a graduate of Laval University and now Senior Research Biologist at *Hawk Mountain Sanctuary*, and Tom McDonald, founder of Snowy Watch in Rochester, NY (1989) and creator of the radio-controlled box net that catches the birds. Tom has forty years' experience with snowy owls. Tom is attaching the solar-powered transmitter. These transmitters record latitude, longitude, and altitude.



(left) Stella's wingspan is measured and her feather pattern recorded. She is a first-year bird. Consistent colouring indicates that no moulting has taken place.



(above) Simcoe the owl returned to Amherst Island this year. Photograph courtesy of Simcoe County Banding Group.





CJA1 92.1FM

The Spiral Groove Radio Show

DEVIN STEWART

The Spiral Groove celebrates 8 years on the air! Host Devin Stewart would like to say thank you to everyone on the island for being so welcoming since he joined CJAI 8 years ago.

The Spiral Groove is an all vinyl record format radio show, broadcasting on Amherst Island Public Radio CJAI 92.1FM, in Stella Ontario.

Host Devin Stewart spins the best in vinyl. Featuring a variety of musical genres spanning the age of vinyl, from as early as 1940 to today's freshly printed records.

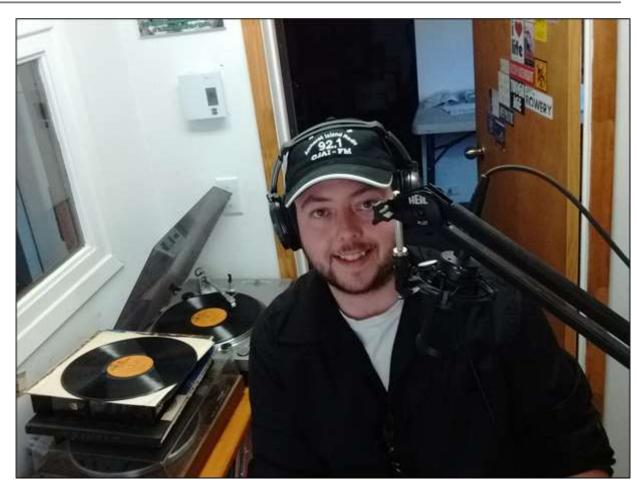
The first show aired on Saturday, January 12, 2013 playing Jimi Hendrix – 'First Rays of the New Rising Sun'.

On Saturday, January 18th from 5-7pm there will be a special anniversary show featuring the same record from the very first show.

The small island radio show has received messages and vinyl records from listeners around the world including Africa, England, and Russia.

Host, Devin explains, "each week we play two or three records from the beginning to the end like they were meant to be played. Most radio stations cherry pick the most popular songs from an album. On *The Spiral Groove* you'll find some favourites that may have been forgotten along the way."

Devin mentioned, "I graduated from the radio broadcasting program at Loyalist College in 2008. I worked in professional radio for about a year and a half. During that time, I realized how volatile corporate radio could be. At any moment you could be fired without a hint of notice, for reasons beyond your control. I took on a more stable career outside of the radio industry and started volunteering at Amherst Island Public Radio CJAI 92.1fm. It was so refreshing to have complete creative control over my show. I can barely believe I've been hosting this radio show for 8 years. I guess the expression is true, time flies when you're having fun." - Devin Stewart.







Devin Stewart, host of The Spiral Groove radio show on CJAI 92.1 FM. In the bottom left picture, his daughter Belle joined to guest host.





LOCAL POLITICS: LOYALIST TOWNSHIP

A Notice from the Township

LORIE MCFARLAND



CONDITIONS RE USE OF BACK BEACH

Loyalist Township advises that effective January 1st to September 2nd, 2021 Back Beach is available for public use under the following conditions:

- 1. All-terrain vehicles, dirt bikes, dune buggies and other motorized vehicles and bicycles **are prohibited**. All vehicles must be parked in the designated parking area.
- 2. No persons shall be allowed to camp, light fires, hunt or discharge firearms on the Beach.
- 3. Use of the Beach is permitted only during the period from January 1st to Labour Day and at no other time.
- 4. Persons using the Beach do so at their own risk as the Beach is unsupervised.
- 5. Keep the area clean by placing all garbage in the garbage receptacles provided. Users are encouraged to take their garbage with them when they leave the Beach.
- 6. No one shall use the Beach for sleeping or residential purposes or for the storage of personal effects or articles.
- 7. No trees of any nature may be cut or destroyed in the Beach or adjacent areas.
- 8. Consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited.
- 9. Management reserves the right to make such other and further reasonable rules and regulations as in its judgment may from time to time be needed for the safety, care, cleanliness and appearance of the Beach.

For information concerning this notice, please contact:

Lorie McFarland Director of Community & Customer Services Loyalist Township 263 Main Street, P.O. Box 70 Odessa, Ontario K0H 2H0 Phone: (613) 386-7351, ext. 117

E-mail: <u>lmcfarland@gmail.com</u>



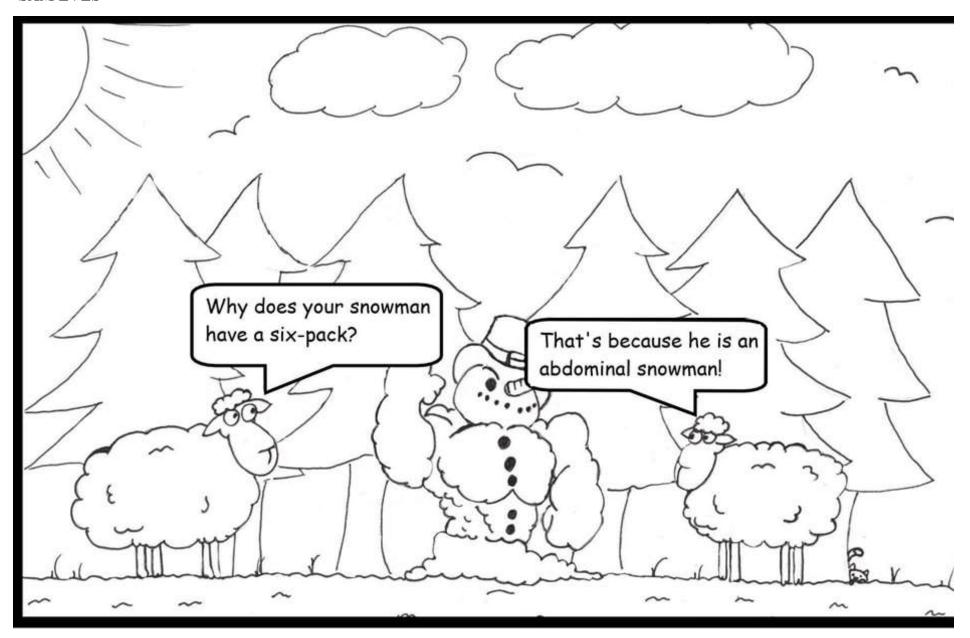


COMMUNITY CARTOONS

Comics Drawn by Islanders for Islanders

Snow Puns

SAM EVES





An odd set of tracks photographed and submitted by David Pike.

Can you guess what in the world made these tracks in the snow? The answer will be revealed in the next issue of *The Beacon*.

If you observe any odd tracks, send them in to editor@thebeaconpaper.com to give everyone a chance to guess who or what made them!



GARDENING

Must Love Mulch

VANESSA VAN

I am saying goodbye to 2020 with cautious optimism. 2021 begins with hope for the use of new vaccines to help control the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. I look forward to the possibility of the pandemic ending by at least 2022.

For many people in the Amherst Island community, our relatively remote location along with related factors have acted as a protective shield from the most severe and immediate impacts of the pandemic. Over 2020, this relative luck was paired with creativity and preparation.

Many people on the island have worked together in the face of this global health crisis. An on-island influenza vaccine clinic was organized, free masks were distributed, and people engaged in creative projects during the darkest months.

In the past year, with the support of the Island community, a number of people on the island have created new businesses, helped support themselves through side hustles, or even expanded their existing businesses. As I embark on my own journey with a new gardening season, I am reminded of this tremendously supportive community.

This month, I just want to say thanks to everyone supporting Amherst Island entrepreneurs during this difficult time.

I look forward to talking to you all again soon. Until then, stay well and mulch on (ok, so maybe my slogan doesn't work as well over the winter months).

- Ferns thrive with indirect light
 - Many (but not all) ferns are most at home in shaded damp forests.
 - If your fern has yellow, dry spots or dead leaves, consider relocating your fern away from a window or direct light.
 - Look at the shape of the foliage on your fern and research its exact species in this regard. Customize these instructions based on your findings.
- Ferns need regular showers (just like us)
 - Dust and dirt can accumulate on the leaves of your fern. You can wash them off every few months in the shower.
 - You can even keep a small potted fern in your shower because they love humidity that much!
- Ferns need regular haircuts
 - Use sharp and clean pruning shears.
 - Remove dead and dried out leaves by cutting them at the base (go right down to the soil).
 - For half-yellowed and dry leaves, prune off only the dry/yellow bits and keep the rest.
- Ferns need both meals and snacks
 - Use a liquid fertilizer every month (follow the directions on the package).
 - Add plant food to the top of the plant to help feed it every time you water it (follow the directions on the package).
 - o If you see dry or yellow foliage this might be a sign of over fertilizing.
- Ferns need to be repotted every few years
 - Add coconut husk to your soil-less mix (that is 50 percent peat moss) to improve water retention, aeration, and act as an antifungal.
 - Make sure your new pot is at least twice as big as your old one.
 - Plan to repot your fern in the spring.
 - Do not fertilize newly repotted plants for four to six months.
 - o Divide overcrowded plants by cutting carefully between rhizomes.
- Ferns are people too
 - So, ferns are obviously not people, but they are not paperweights.
 - Consider naming your fern and remember that all house plans are (or were) living things.

January Gardening Suggestions:

January is the perfect time to focus on indoor ferns. Here is a list of tips:

- Ferns love water
 - Mist your fern once a day using a spray bottle. Misting the plant will also help keep bugs away.
 - Water your fern every 3-7 days by soaking the base of the plant for a few minutes and then letting the soil drain before returning it to its decorative pot. Keep water at room temperature.
 - Put a tray of pebbles and some water under your fern. This will keep the plant hydrated while making sure the roots don't get soggy and rot.
 - Put moss around the base of your plant to help retain moisture.
 - If you see wilting leaves, you are probably overwatering or using water that is too cold.

Vanessa Van, monthly gardening columnist for *The Beacon* newspaper.







AMHERST ISLAND COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

January Update

STEPHANCE LEVAC & AICA

The Amherst Island Community Alliance (AICA) is an incorporated not-for-profit organization that was formed by members of the Amherst Island community to enhance the quality of life on the island. Membership in the Alliance is free. To become a member, click here to fill out the Google form.

AICA also maintains the island website located at http://www.amherstisland.on.ca/. Groups are encouraged to use the website to publicize upcoming events. Once on the website, select the **Events** tab and scroll down to the **Add a New Event** section or email your details to Stéphane (slevac@gmail.com).

Advertising space is also available on the website for groups, individuals and businesses. For more information, contact Stéphane.

December Board Meeting

Our meeting was held on Friday the 4th via Zoom. Some of the topics and issues discussed:

- The island logo has been finalized.
- A Welcome Wagon/Basket committee was created and is moving forward with identifying what types of information and/or gifts that could be included that would be useful to new residents of Amherst Island.
- Work on the Amherst Island Garden Studio Tours continues. More details to come in the February edition of The Beacon.

Loyalist Township Update

- Loyalist Township has begun preliminary budget discussions
- A report concerning possible Ferry Payment Systems is being prepared

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Friday January 8th @ 7 PM.

AN UPDATE

Amherst Island

Women's Institute

Updates from the Amherst Island Women's Institute

The Amherst Island branch of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario (A.I.W.I.) (https://fwio.on.ca) hopes you had a safe and warm holiday season. We all wish you the very best for the New Year. We are encouraged by the release of the COVID-19 vaccines and hope 2021 brings continued advances in controlling the global pandemic.

The A.I.W.I. last met on December 14, 2020. In keeping with social distancing recommendations from public health officials, the meeting was held via Zoom. The A.I.W.I. thanks and congratulates Phuong MacNeil for leading a new Polar Dip fundraiser for the W.I. on New Year's Day! The event was a success, and we are grateful for all who participated and donated.

The A.I.W.I. Advocacy Committee continues to follow and discuss potential changes that the Ontario government plans to make to childcare legislation (Read more: http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/). This month we devote the A.I.W.I. *Beacon* update to explaining our reasons for supporting efforts to expand access to childcare across Canada.

Journalists have called the 2020 recession a "she-cession," given the impact the COVID-19 virus has had on women. Research and reports on 2020 have shown an increase in domestic violence, increased risk for those in caring professions, school/childcare facility shutdowns, and a disproportionate number of women exiting the workforce (Read more: https://nyti.ms/38md8sq). Some fortunate people have family members who take care of children or have the funds needed to rely on local caregivers. Some people do not have access to affordable support and have experienced compounded stress while caring for children who are at home due to lockdowns (Read more: https://bit.ly/3h1d4lK).

Recently, the Childcare Resource and Research Unit led by Martha Friendly stated that the national childcare strategy is crucial for economic recovery. At the beginning of December, the federal government announced plans to invest \$20 million over five years to develop the new childcare system. The Hon. Chrystia Freeland, Minister of Finance, appears poised to expand childcare access across Canada (Globe and Mail, p. A4, Dec.16, 2020).

The A.I.W.I. wants to know if childcare access is expanded in Ontario, how this could impact people on Amherst Island? The Women's Institute is currently seeking information on the need for childcare on Amherst Island via its Facebook page. We want to find out more about childcare needs on Amherst Island. Many people on the Island are discussing the possibility of establishing a medical clinic on the Island. We want to know, is there a need for a childcare centre, in addition to the informal care being provided to children across the Island? If so, we want to be ready to talk to government representatives.

Here are a few questions to consider:

- 1. In your family, can you anticipate needing care for a young baby 6 months to 18 months?
- 2. In your family, do you need care for a toddler 18 months to 3 years?
- 3. In your family, do you need care for a 3 to 4-year-old?
- 4. Would you like to know about potential costs for caring for your child or children at a childcare centre?
- 5. What hours would you like a potential island childcare centre to be open? Daytime hours, overnight hours, or something else?

Please use the A.I.W.I. Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/AIWInst) to give us your advice, feedback, or to respond to these five questions. We may also reach out by phone to families and individuals who express interest. Your feedback will spell out what additional childcare supports could benefit children and parents on the Island.

We also remind all Amherst Island community members to update their contact information for inclusion in the new Amherst Island Directory. Please email us at amherstwi@gmail.com to update your contact information or to request more information.

The next A.I.W.I. meeting will be held remotely on **January 27, 2021**. All are welcome to attend. Please RSVP by reaching out to amherstwi@gmail.com





Neilson Store Museum and Cultural Centre Inc.

Your Island Museum would like to thank you for your continued patronage over the past year!

Although it has been an unusually quiet year for us, we continue to receive artifacts for our collection. If you, like many, are going through your attic, basement and garage, cleaning some

of those areas that you never get around to during non-COVID times, and discover family collectables that you think are valuable and worthwhile documenting, then please consider

sharing your family treasures and heirlooms with us and your fellow Islanders.

We are also interested in photos about Island life that we might copy for our photo gallery.

At the start of Summer 2021, May two-four weekend (or Victoria Day as us old-timers call it), we hope to re-open with new displays of some of our newly-donated family treasures.

We look forward to seeing you, your visitors and friends over the summer!

Featured items from the Museum

1. The William Perceval Map of Amherst Island – 1857

This map is the earliest record of the physical community of Amherst Island. It records the occupants, lot numbers, boundaries, and acreages; principally to identify and locate the Estate's leaseholders. A very interesting and important historical document that your family will find fascinating – a look into our past. Both matte and glossy finish posters cost \$50 (33 in. x 14 in.)

2. The Birds of Amherst Island poster

Amherst Island's birder/photographer Sherri Jensen has produced a beautiful poster of some of the common and unique birds found on our fair isle. Cost is \$10.

Speak to one of the Directors of the Museum if you are interested in purchasing a map or poster.

3. The 1935 Assessment Roll of the Township of Amherst Island

One of the projects that was completed in 2020 by Thomas Sylvester and Sherri Jensen is the 1935 Assessment Roll for the Island. These rolls were prepared annually for municipal taxation and voter franchise. This manuscript provides a rare nominative list after the 1921 Federal Census. You can find this document at our website – http://neilsonstoremuseum.ca

4. Historical Books and DVDs

The Museum has several books about Amherst Island, farming and rural living in the 19th and 20th Centuries, and other histories of the areas. You can borrow these items from the Museum...just contact Janet Scott at 613-389-4608 or <u>jiscott@kos.net</u>.

- U.E.L. A Guide to Tracing Loyalist Ancestors in Upper Canada by Brenda Dougall Merriman
- Once Upon an Island by D.E. (McDonald) Henderson a fictional account of pioneer times
- *Tales of Amherst Island* by Dr. H.C. Burleigh true stories from the doctor in Bath who used to travel to Amherst Island. He covers pioneer times to the mid-20th Century on Amherst Island. (Compliments of Shirley & Keith Miller)
- Up Before Five the Family Farm by Terry Sprague stories of Big Island (off Prince Edward County) in the '50's
- A New Lease on Life Landlords, Tenants & Immigrants in Ireland and Canada by Catherine Anne Wilson stories of the coming of the Irish to Amherst Island and elsewhere
- A Children's History of Prince Edward County 1784-1918 by Suzanne Pasternak
- The Story of the 1918 Halifax Explosion and the Boston Tree by Suzanne Pasternak a dvd with blank screen
- The Vanishing Legacy the History of the Lake-Faring Families in Prince Edward County by Suzanne Pasternak a dvd with photos and video

The Board of Directors of the Neilson Store Museum wishes you and your family a great holiday season – Happy Hanukkah, Merry Christmas & Happy New Year! Stay safe until we see each other again.

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

Plans are afoot to have the Wooly Bully Races again this year. Save the date – Saturday, 17 August 2021!



PHOTOGRAPHY

Views of the Island



A tree ornament after an ice storm, taken and submitted by David Pike.



 $Northern\ Harrier\ on\ the\ hunt.\ Photographed\ by\ Don\ Woodiwiss\ Photography,\ woodiwiss photography.com.$

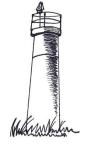






I'm watching. A short-eared owl photographed by Don Woodiwiss Photography, woodiwissphotography.com.





A THANK YOU

From Your Neighbours

Martin and I would like to say thank you for all your support. As military family, we have been part of many communities, from Quebec to Alberta, and the sense of feeling at home as never been stronger. This is certainly due to the abundance of gems of human beings that live here on Amherst Island. The Women's Institute gathers a lot of amazing people and take care of each other. The help with meal delivery after Martin's surgery improved our family bonding, and also allowed us to bond with the community. It allowed us to have more time to spend together, and it was priceless. Martin is going to start treatment this week and we are very optimistic for our future. Thanks to all, and if you need something from us let us know so we can find a way to give back and be a part of this community.

Gladice and Martin





Gladice Koble, Martin St. Louis, and their daughters.

MYSTERIOUS HERO

Anonymous Donations to The Beacon

KAYLEIGH GRAHAM

My Random Ramblings

When I originally began creating my edition of this wonderful community newspaper, I didn't realize the plethora of costs associated with its production. Many people said I didn't know what I was getting myself into, or they echoed the well intentioned, mostly kidding words of the late Don Tubb, who said, "you fool"!

First of all, I have realized I don't know much at all about Amherst Island. I am learning. Slowly, but I am learning. Secondly, each issue of *The Beacon* takes me an average of 30 hours to produce each month. Some issues take more time, some less. Currently, my time is being offered as a volunteer, but I do enjoy the process. Then, there is the cost of printing and the travel into town to pick up the fresh copies. The cost of printing has been covered by all of you lovely readers. Thank you.

With permission from Dave and Linda McGinn, *The Beacon* has been made available for purchase at their General Store. Each copy is available for a donation of \$5.00 cash. I decided to make it 'by donation' because I believe in the goodness of people on the island, and so far, it has been working out splendidly. I recommend a donation of \$5.00 because that is the cost of printing with taxes included. Sometimes, if someone doesn't have the cash on them, another islander will cover for them. Often, I will see that someone has overpaid to make up for a few that were taken.

I would like to be transparent with you all about the finances of *The Beacon*, mostly to thank you all. In September, *The Beacon* was produced out of pocket (with a few donations that helped). In October, the newspaper profited \$19.86 (not factoring in my time or travel). In November, *The Beacon* ended the month with \$3.38 in the account. In December, the account balance rose to \$5.61 thanks to paper sales. All of this to say, I haven't had to go into debt to keep the paper going, and I am thrilled by this.

In December, some visitors from the mainland took all of the paper copies that were in the display but didn't make a donation. Maybe they didn't understand the box was for donations. Assuming I would finish the month in the red, I accepted that. Then, an anonymous islander donated \$40 for their one copy. Just like that, *The Beacon* was back in the black. Thank you.

Subscription Information

I reinstated the yearly subscription to *The Beacon*, starting for the issue released on January 1st 2021. This is mainly so that I can have a reliable minimum number to print, then add to that number to supply the General Store with some extra copies to sell. With enough subscribers, I was hoping to reach the number that would allow for bulk printing which comes with a discount. We did it!

Currently, there are 30 on-island subscribers, and 9 off-island subscribers. I am excited to see that *The Beacon* is appreciated and enjoyed by many! For those of you who are interested in signing up as subscribers, it is \$60/year for on-island paper delivery, and \$75/year for off-island mailed newspapers. You can pay by cash or cheque (made out to Kayleigh Graham) delivered to the General Store, or you can e-transfer editor@thebeaconpaper.com to join the subscribers list.

Thank you all so much for your continued support.





MIND GAMES

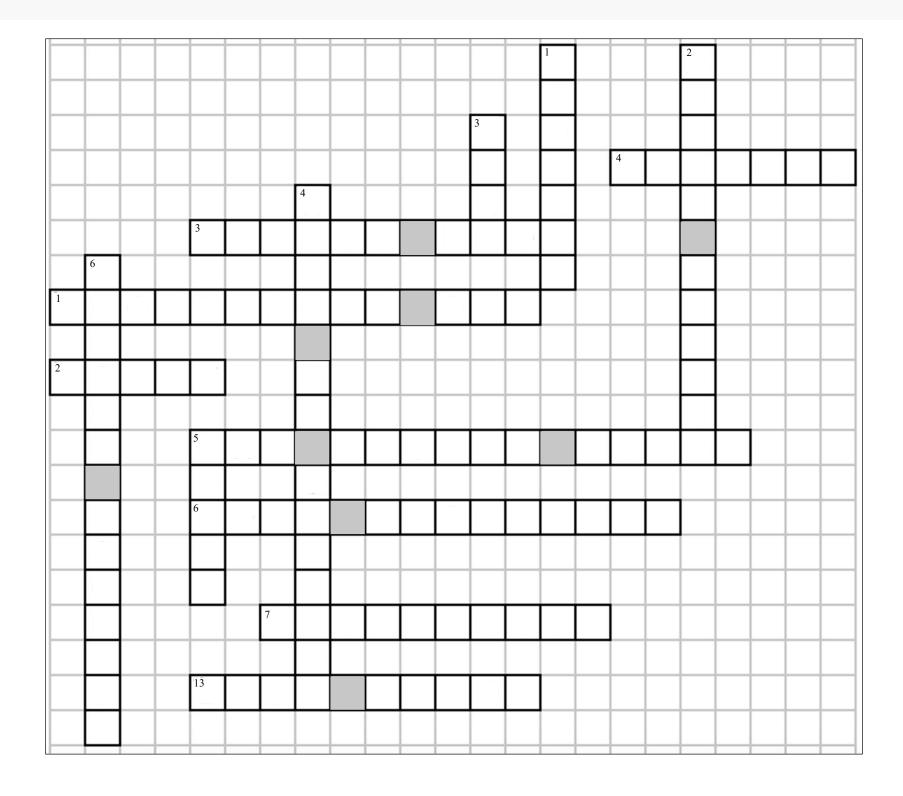
Community Crossword

DOWN

- 1. George Gavlas' Christmas tree was made out of several.
- 2. The only person who didn't jump in the water during the annual Thanksgiving 'polar dip' in 2020.
- 3. The name of the feed-pushing robot at Poplar Dell Farm.
- 4. The name of the new hair salon on the island.
- 5. The island was once called by another name.
- 6. They went for a 'polar dip' as part of a fundraiser for the A.I.W.I.

ACROSS

- 1. The most photographed bird species on the island in November 2020.
- 2. The number of feet every road on the island seems to be measured in.
- 3. Stéphane Levac had a new one installed in December 2020 to improve insulation.
- 4. Owl Woods was closed to the public between November 16th, 2020 and December 6th, 2020, which somewhat coincides with this season.
- 5. The islanders' favourite boat other than the ferry.
- 6. If there is digging to be done, he will do it.
- 7. The namesake of *The Beacon* is one of these.
- 8. Rankin was looking for this item on December 1st, 2020.



^{*}The answers will be posted in the next issue of *The Beacon*.



BEACON

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Topsy raises happy sheep; winter makes better wool. Topsy offers 100% Canadian sheep wool blankets and natural products to the eco-ethical kindred spirits out there. Our 'Connect to the Land' programs give back to the community by offering green spaces of calm and quiet to visitors.

Come see for yourself. Get dirty, leave happy, stay cozy. Follow the adventure @topsyfarms, and www.topsyfarms.com



"Rosie Peeking Out", photography by Don Tubb.

The Lodge Coffee House



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Your Ad Here!

If you are interested in advertising and showing support in *The Beacon*, e-mail editor@thebeaconpaper.com for more information.



Services

Thank-you!

Many thanks to Ida Gavlas for all of her hard work organizing the flu clinic on the island, and looking ahead to organizing a potential vaccine clinic in the future!

Medical Supplies

The Amherst Island Women's Institute has a medical equipment lending cupboard. We have crutches, rollators, walkers, raised toilet seats, and wheelchairs. We also have an upholstered electric lifting chair. We ask that you kindly return the equipment when you are done with it. If you would like to donate to the W.I. that is appreciated.

Contact Sharen English or David Pickering at (613)-384-6535.

Landscaping

Ken Rock is looking for work on the island. He has a background in landscaping, forklift operation, masonry, concrete, and cement. He has very reasonable rates.

Contact him at (343)-996-4850, or reach him through his Aunt, Norma-Lynn Colson at (613)-445-3456.

The Beacon

Available to Read at:

- Issue 482 of *The Beacon* will be available in print, for a \$5 suggested donation, at McGinn's General Store, Stella, ON.
- *The Beacon*'s new website will host the current issue for reading without the need to download a PDF at https://www.thebeaconpaper.com/.
- This edition of *The Beacon*, as well as archived editions will be available as a downloadable PDF files midway through the month on http://amherstisland.on.ca/Beacon/.

Submissions:

The Beacon eagerly welcomes community participation! If you have **photographs**, **stories**, **events**, **articles**, **comics**, **drawings**, or anything else you would like to share in the newspaper, please send files to <u>editor@thebeaconpaper.com</u>
The submission deadline is the 25th of the month.

If you are interested in advertisement space, contact editor@thebeaconpaper.com for more information.

Thank you!



An afternoon photograph of the Amherst Island Beacon, the namesake of The Beacon newspaper. Photograph captured by Kayleigh Graham.