Issue 484 February 2021

\$5 donation suggested for printed copies at McGinn's General Store

THE BEACON

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

# THE



# BEACON

### JUMPING ON THE BERNIE PHOTOSHOPPING BANDWAGON



A photograph of Bernie Sanders attending the 2021 Presidential inauguration of Joe Biden, taken by Brendan Smialowski. This picture quickly gained popularity, and eventually more press and media attention than the ceremony itself.

### attention than the ceremony itself.

KAYLEIGH GRAHAM

An outfit comprised of an unremarkable beige jacket, black dress pants and socks, brown dress shoes, a N-95 mask, manilla envelope of top secrets, and brown argyle wool mittens may become the most popular Halloween costume of 2021. Bernie Sanders' outfit, combined with the above picture of thim in a posture that suggests he is still frozen, has quickly become the most memed image of 2021. Not only did he steal the show at Joe Biden's presidential inauguration ceremony, but he continues to bring entertainment to us all as we edit him into our own images.

For those of us who think this is all utterly ridiculous, do know that some tangible good has already resulted from this meme. In response to his viral Inauguration Day meme, Bernie turned it into a sweatshirt, selling the piece for \$45 USD each. They sold out immediately. It's since been announced that 100% of the proceeds will be donated to Meals on Wheels Vermont. Wonderful that a funny meme can also do some good.

So, even if you have seen every iteration of Bernie superimposed over images, I hope you enjoy these Amherst Island unique ones. I have placed him in the big chair, as ferry captain, and on the drystone wall in the yard outside my window.



Bernie Sanders as acting captain of the Amherst Island ferry, in keeping with the 2021 trend of placing this image everywhere. Photograph provided by Saskia Wagemans and edited by Kayleigh Graham.

### He is Everywhere

#### KAYLEIGH GRAHAM

For some odd reason, what people are wearing is a popular point of fixation for reporters and social media influencers. Especially at award shows like the *Grammy Awards*, the *Academy Awards* (Oscars), the *Emmy Awards*, and so on, an emphasis is often

placed on the wardrobe choices of the attendees. I have never understood our fascination with fashion; however, I am extremely amused by the way Bernie Sanders' ensemble took the internet by storm. He looks to me like someone trying very hard to blend in, and look natural, yet he has become the biggest meme of 2021 thus far. Hilarious.



Bernie Sanders sitting on the only wall he will support, a drystone wall at Drumgoole's. Photograph taken and edited by Kayleigh Graham.

### IN THIS ISSUE

SPOTLIGHT SPECIES: BARRED OWL (3)

SELF-PORTRAIT OF AN EYE BY CHUCK CLOSE (12) INTRODUCING ISLANDERS: IAN MURRAY (9-11)

PAGE 1



#### **FEBRUARY DAYS**

### National Tater Tot Day

#### FEBRUARY 2<sup>ND</sup>

Yes, there is actually a National Tater Tot Day. On February 2<sup>nd</sup> we are all supposed to take a moment to appreciate the potatoey goodness of tater tots. Golden, fried, starchy deliciousness that hardly anyone can resist. Tater tots sure are a delight. However, instead of emphasizing their tastiness, I would like to focus on their symbolic meaning based on the popular meme, pictured to the right.

Most of us have heard the expression "sending thoughts and prayers", which has sometimes been shortened to just "thoughts and prayers".

"Semantic Satiation" is a term that describes the process by which a phrase is overused to the point that is loses meaning. The phrase "thoughts and prayers" has reached full semantic satiation in modern times. It rolls off the tongue without so much as a second thought to the tragic scenarios so often behind the message.

It feels like gibberish now.

In fact, beginning in 2015, a comedian first lauched a stand up routine focused on the popular phrase. In 2017, an episode of *BoJack Horseman* entitled "Thoughts and Prayers" was released.

There is even an 8-bit video game entitled "Thoughts & Prayers: The Game" that was created in 2016. A description of the game found in a CNN article written by AJ Willingham reads, "you try to prevent mass shootings by pressing buttons that say 'think' and 'pray'. If you press a button that says 'ban assualt weapon sales', you're rejected. 'Weak!' the game screen reads. 'UnAmerican!'. 'Pray harder!'". This excerpt first appeared in an article titled. "How thoughts and prayers went from common condolence to cynical meme".



An example of the popular meme, "Sending tots and pears".

Instead of 'sending tots and pears', save the tots for a tasty treat, and send compassion and support instead.



Laird Leader, greeting us all with a smile on his island mail route.

#### **OBSERVE**

# National Thank a Mail Carrier Day *February 4<sup>th</sup>*

About a month ago, I received an envelope in my mailbox that only had my name on it. No stamp. No address. No last name. Only my first name, scrawled across the envelope in cursive. Yet, it arrived safe and sound in my mailbox. Never have I ever lived anywhere else this would have happened. The island has a variety of small-town charms, but the unique mail-delivery system is one of my favourites. Sometimes parcels appear right at my doorstep, or maybe tucked safely in a car if it's raining.

Thank you for the essential work you do! We all appreciate you.

#### **APPRECIATE**

### National Do A Grouch A Favour Day

#### FEBRUARY 16<sup>TH</sup>

There are many different definitions for the term 'grouch', but the word is applicable to anyone who is habitually grumpy or mumbles a lot. On February 16<sup>th</sup>, it is national 'Do a Grouch a Favour Day'. Choose a grouch near you and make their day better. They may be stubbornly resistant to being cheered-up, and

stuck in their grouch-like ways, but that is to be expected.

Although they will never admit it, the grouch you choose to help will likely appreciate your efforts.



Oscar 'The Grouch' from Sesame Street.



#### **SPOTLIGHT SPECIES**

#### Barred Owl

#### **KAYLEIGH GRAHAM**

The barred owl, or *strix varia*, is a forest dweller that nests in trees all across North America. These owls measure between 43cm-50cm tall, with a wingspan of about 99cm-110cm. They can be identified mainly by their brown and white alternating stripes or 'bars', which run vertically on their underside, and horizontally across their upper breast and neck. They lack ear tufts and have rounded tails.

Some people say their call sounds like someone asking the question "Who cooks for you?", the cadence is certainly similar.

Barred owls live in large, mature forests made up of both deciduous and evergreen trees. They sometimes compete with the threatened spotted owl for habitat. Barred owls nest in large tree cavities about 20-40ft high, usually near water. Occasionally they will use stick platform nests made by other animals, or even move into a human-made nesting box. They start searching for a nesting site as early as a year before it is needed. They will lay between 1 and 5 eggs in a clutch, the eggs take 28-33 days to hatch, and the young are helpless when they hatch.

Barred owls hunt by night, preferring to devour squirrels, chipmunks, mice, voles, rabbits, birds, amphibians, reptiles, and invertebrates. They perch over water to swiftly catch fish. They swallow small prey whole, and large prey head-first in pieces.

The barred owls' most treacherous predator is the great horned owl, which will eat eggs, young, and occasionally adult barred owls.

The conservation status of the barred owl is currently 'low concern', and their population has actually increased between 1996 and 2014. The main focus of conservationists is the barred owls' impact on the population of the already threatened spotted owl. Spotted owls share territory with barred owls, who can be fiercely territorial. Barred owls have also begun to hybridize with spotted owls, which further threatens the population of spotted owls. Since barred owls rely on old forests for nesting, their population is often used as an indicator for the health of these forests.

Barred owls are nonmigratory, they are resident birds who remain in a single area for their entire lives. They will sometimes wander in search of food.

#### **BARRED OWL FACTS**

- Barred owl fossils from the Pleistocene era (at least 11,000 years old, dating back to the most recent ice age), have been found in Florida, Tennessee, and Ontario.
- Out of 158 barred owls that were banded and then found later, none had traveled more than 9.6km away.
- Young barred owls can climb trees using their bill and talons, while flapping a little bit. They can walk their way up the trunk.
- The oldest recorded barred owl was 24 years and 1 month old. It was banded in 1986, but later found dead and entangled in fishing gear in 2010.

Source: Cornell University, "Barred Owl", *All About Birds*, 2019.



A Barred Owl perched on a branch just north of Kingston, ON. Photographed by Kayleigh Graham after she got lost in the woods, editor@thebeaconpaper.com



#### **Obituaries**

#### **EARLE WILLARD (1940-2021)**

The below statement was written by Earle Willard's son, Steven Willard.

Born on October 18, 1940 at the family farm of his parents, Joe and Gertrude (nee Corke) Willard, on the Third Concession overlooking what people often call now 'Sand Beach Bay'. Although named David Earle, he always went by Earle. He was named after a neighbour, Earle Tugwell, and later they worked together on the ferry. He had three brothers – Wilbert, Elmer and Reg, and two twin sisters – Dorothy and Doris.

He started primary school at the school on the Third Concession. He walked to and from it every day and later commented that some of those walks in January and February could be very cold, but he soon moved to the new school in Stella. From there he went to the Continuation School. But as he said, in those days you had to go out and find a job. In those early years he had a few different jobs. He worked in the Wilton Feed Mill where he learned to carry a pair of 100lbs feed sacks on his hips and pitch them into the back of a truck. He remembered that in 3 months of doing that it made him much more slender and his pants didn't quite fit after that. He also drew milk from the many dairy farms on the Island, including taking it across the ice in the winter by horse and sleigh to the mainland. He spent a time working in the cheese factory in Stella where he acquired his life-long love of cheese. He often said that he couldn't stand the stuff before he started working there, but after a while he got used to it. Then he loved it. He helped Francis and Howard Welbanks with their fishing nets out on the open lake.

His early life was a lot of hard work and some tragedy. His elder brother Wilbert caught tuberculosis and was very ill for over a year. His other brother, Reg, was killed in a car crash one night on the Third Concession. The early death of his brother affected him his whole life.

On July 9, 1960 he married Donna Ellenor Strain at St. Alban's Church in Stella. He knew her since their early days at school. She too came from a long line of Islanders. Over the next ten years they would have three children, Christopher David, Laurie, and Steven. During this same period he started to work on the Amherst Islander.

On a fall day in 1964 he started as a deckhand on the ferry and four years later, on his birthday, he became one of the captains. He had studied and completed the course work at George Brown College with his brother in law Lloyd Strain. On his second day at work in 1964 he remembered that it started to blow from the west early in the morning and by afternoon it was a full gale. The captain was Billy Cochrane and this captain didn't mind stormy weather. They left the Stella dock at 2:00 pm and made it out past the end of Fish Point and then turned westerly to keep her

bow into the waves. There was no way they could go straight across to Millhaven with the waves hitting her side, so they pushed slowly up the channel toward Bath and looked for space between two waves to turn her to run back to Millhaven. In later years he thought that Captain Cochrane came too close to the shallow area on the north side of Fish Point and the waves got steeper over the shallow area. My father was in the wheelhouse and he remembered that Captain Cochrane just decided he had had enough, and he turned the Amherst Islander hard to starboard in the trough of a wave. He said, "she rolled hard over, and I thought she would keep on going and capsize. The lifeboat on the upper deck was deep in the water and you could hear glass smashing everywhere. I had one foot on the floor and the other on the wall and I was standing upright. But she rolled back out of it. I knew then that you couldn't sink her." After that he never really minded rough weather. Over the years many of his crew members could attest to it. His Mate for many years, Earle Tugwell, would just turn his pipe upside down and keep on smoking it in the wind and spray. His engineer was Howard Welbanks and wasn't bothered by it either, as he was famous for eating a huge lunch in the galley while the ferry rolled hard from side to side. His purser, Bert Glenn, would go into the tiny purser's office and wedge himself onto a chair in the corner.

Over the years he had seen many ferries at Amherst Island. He remembered well the old wooden ferry. He captained the Amherst Islander and the Frontenac II, but he also captained the various relief ferries; the Upper Canada (he said "she rolled like a ball") and the Wolfe Islander II, which was built during the Second World War. She was under powered and not in the best shape. He remembered that in rough weather he would keep an eye on her large, bluff bow to make sure it was going in the same direction as the rest of the ship. He thought she might break apart. He also captained the Quinte Loyalist (he thought "she sailed like a cardboard box") and the Charlevoix as the Frontenac II was known before her reconstruction.

Since his passing many crew members have commented and let the family know how much our father's mentoring meant to them. He always wanted everyone to succeed. He took the responsibility of moving people to and from the Island very seriously and he wanted the crews to do the best job possible for everyone's safety. He enjoyed passing on his skill and experience. Like many Islanders of that time, he liked being around horses and dogs. For many years with his brother Wilbert he raised, trained, and raced standard bred horses. Up until the last few years of his life he always had a dog or two. He greatly missed his hunting dogs Keeper, Cindy, and Peggy after they each passed away.

He looked forward to the changing of the seasons on Amherst Island and what the Island offered in each. The spring was for fishing. Over the summer when the bass would bite he liked taking other people out fishing with him.

#### **Memories of Earle Willard**



Four generations in one photograph (from left to right); Troy Willard, Earle Willard (holding Brody Willard), and Chris Willard.



Earle Willard as Captain of the old Amherst Islander in the middle of the 1970s.



Earle Willard and Donna Willard in Florida.





#### **OBITUARIES**

### Earle Willard, continued...

In later life he enjoyed taking his grandchildren fishing with him. This past summer he took his then 7-year-old grandson, Simon Earle Willard, fishing for his first time. He loved gardening. The first ripe tomato of the summer was a big treat. In the fall it was hunting. He was a very good shot. His favourite time of day was at first light on a cool, autumn morning while duck hunting. To him hunting was a social time. Over the years, he often hunted with Stirling Glenn, Earle Tugwell, Bill Sippel, Rick Martin, Lance & Vincent Eves and his brother Elmer, his nephews and his own sons and son in law. In the winter, in the old days, people on the Island would often go to each other's homes for 'supper & cards'. He enjoyed playing cards. As many who have played cards with him will admit – he was always lucky. Watching him play cards with his sister Dorothy was pure spectacle and dangerous for anyone who didn't pay attention. In those 'old days' there would often be dances at the Victoria Orange Hall in Stella. He played the violin for many years at those dances. He had an ear for music and had taught himself how to play the violin.

In retirement, he and Donna enjoyed travelling to Florida each winter. It became a much-anticipated trip for them. They would spend time with family and new friends they had made there. He enjoyed sharing stories of his travels when he returned after each trip. He was very happy to see his three children married and he was very proud of his son in law (Gord Gee) and daughters in law (Michelle and Diana). He always said they were his son and daughters too. His joy was even greater with the arrival of each of his grandchildren (Jennifer, Nicole, Troy, Ethan, Tristan, Madeleine, and Simon). He loved them all. He considered himself a lucky man to be able to attend the weddings of two of his older grandchildren and to see his great grandchildren arrive. He loved seeing his great-grandsons James and Ben playing on the beach with Simon and Madeleine. He was especially happy to welcome the arrival of his latest great grandson, Brody David Willard, the fourth generation of Willards.

He was happiest with his family, but always spoke with nostalgia of his crew members and the many stories from his days on the ferry. He was a true patriarch of the family, hard-working, dutiful, determined, strong, dependable, faithful, loving, and wise. While deeply proud of those he loved most, in his quiet way, he was just happy to be an Amherst Islander.



Earle Willard after a morning of hunting.





Earle Willard pictured for an article the *Kingston Whig Standard* that was published when he retired.



#### 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 <a href="https://twitter.com/a\_i\_ferrydocks">https://twitter.com/a\_i\_ferrydocks</a>

#### 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.

LOYALIST LANDFILLS

### **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.

### **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.

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

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

Information and updates can be found at <a href="https://www.loyalisttownship.ca/index.cfm/residents/garbage-and-recycling/">https://www.loyalisttownship.ca/index.cfm/residents/garbage-and-recycling/</a>

#### STORE SERVICES

### McGinn's General Store

#### POST OFFICE

#### **Open Hours**

9-11:30am, 2:30-5pm
9-11:30am, 2:30-5pm
9-11:30am, 2:30-5pm
9-11:00am, 3:30-6pm
9-11:30am, 2:30-5pm
Closed
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 Danielle Wolfreys! A dedicated worker on the Amherst Island ferry, Danielle celebrated her birthday with ice cream cake on January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

Happy Birthday Mayo! A wonderful Amherst Island artist, Mayo celebrated her birthday on January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

### Open Letter to all Islanders

#### FROM KEITH MILLER

Every once in a while I get the inclination to have a small rant!

I was honoured to be asked to judge the Christmas lights on Amherst Island. The lights were very impressive and beautifully done. Everyone should be pleased with the end results. However, right away I had trouble reading the grid signs (the green signs with the municipal number for your driveway). Most of the entrants' signs, and a lot of others, were very hard to read, some were bent, and others were obscured by leaves and branches. In order to see signs in the headlights, the signs must be at exact right angles to the road, slanted or bent ones are impossible to see from the road. Please, on the next nice day, go out and inspect your sign and restore it if needed. The first responders use these signs on their 911 calls. Some dark night your life may depend on the readability of your sign!

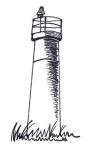
P.S. If you have any extra time you might try and sort your garbage better. I see a lot of cans and plastic in the garbage bags. Recycling may save our environment!

Respectfully yours,

Keith Miller



 $Chilly \ shore. \ Photographed \ by \ Don \ Woodiwiss \ Photography, woodiwiss photography. com.$ 



#### **HEALTH & WELLNESS**

### The.Naturals.Collections.

#### **NANCY GRAHAM**

Hello to all the residents of Amherst Island. My name is Nancy, and I work as a Holistic Health Practitioner. I recently moved to Stella, to provide live-in home care services to Peggie Coulter. Working with Peggie is very fulfilling. Now that I am settled in on the island, I look forward to sharing my passion for holistic health and well-being with this community. Over the years, I have worked on building a career in Holistic Health and Wellness. I hold diplomas in homeopathy, naturopathy, and massage therapy.

With winter upon us, I introduce to you the "Winter Collection". This collection contains 5 of my favorite products. I have chosen specific vitamins, minerals, and homeopathic remedies that work together to strengthen your immune system and help prevent cold and flu symptoms. All the products are high quality, natural, and holistic. Each one has played an effective part in keeping me healthy throughout many winters, past and present.

Our immune system is our first line of defense and winter is an important time to make sure it is functioning at an optimal level.

The products listed below are not a replacement for your standard medical care. I advise you to use them as a part of your wellness routine to help protect you during cold and flu season.

#### The.Naturals.Collections



A holistic collection aimed at supporting the immune system & relieving the symptoms of colds & flu.

homeopathic cough & cold syrup
homeopathic influenzium
trace mineral copper-gold-silver
trace mineral zinc
vitamin D3 drops

\$90

tax included & free delivery on island

#### ORDERS & INQUIRIES

Nancy Graham Holistic Health Practitioner

cellular: 613.483.6601 the.naturals.collections@gmail.com









#### Trace Minerals

- Trace Minerals are concentrated liquid dietary supplements that strengthen and support your immune system to naturally resist viruses, infections, illness, and dis-
- These minute doses are absorbed directly into the cells of the body
- Some have a slightly metallic taste

#### Copper-Gold-Silver: (60ml bottle)

- This combination is the perfect trio. It provides the body with antioxidant, antiinflammatory, antiseptic and immunemodulating properties to help strengthen the immune system and prevent cold and flu symptoms, as well as shorten the duration of symptoms
- Copper helps to fight viruses, infections, inflammation, and fatigue by triggering the production of antibodies
- Gold is recognized for its anti-infectious properties
- Silver helps to fight against fatigue and viruses

#### Zinc: (60 ml bottle)

- Taking zinc at the first signs of a cold may reduce the length and severity of cold symptoms
- Zinc is needed for the body's immune system to work properly
- Zinc plays a role in cell division, cell growth and wound healing

### Homeopathic Cough & Cold Syrup Night Formula: (100 ml bottle)

- This syrup is nontoxic, natural, and has no harmful side effects. It is a combination of low potency homeopathic remedies that address many symptoms related to cold and flu
- Relieves pain, dry cough, and congestion
- Reduces fever
- Thins and loosens mucus
- It allows for a restful sleep without feeling drowsy or dry the next day

#### Homeopathic Influenzium: (6 tubes per box)

- This is not a replacement for the flu vaccine. We advise you to take these remedies in addition to medical treatment
- This is nontoxic and safe to be taken with medications and flu vaccinations
- Use as a preventative to flu symptoms
- Influenzium prevention is prepared every year with specific homeopathic remedies to address the current and specific flu symptoms of the season
- Each box will give 6 weeks of protection against flu viruses
- For those more susceptible to flu viruses an additional 6 weeks of influenzium can be purchased for \$14

#### Vitamin D3 Drops: (30 ml bottle)

- Vitamin D3 improves overall lung function, helps produce surfactants in your lungs that aid in eliminating fluid
- Vitamin D3 lowers viral replication and strengthens your immune system
- Vitamin D3 is a vital part of building immunity to resist cold and flu symptoms

Call: 613-483-6601 Email: the.naturals.collections@gmail.com



#### **INTRODUCING ISLANDERS**

### Meet Ian Murray

#### IAN MURRAY 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.

#### Ian's Family Life and History

Ian William Murray was born on Prince Edward Island (P.E.I.) on July 1st, 1943 to John Sweet Murray and Ruth Eliza Coughlan. Ian's father received an education at the Prince of Wales College in Summerside. However, after graduating, he couldn't abide the idea of a desk job and so he pursued the life of a farmer instead. Thus, continued the long tradition of farming in the Murray family. Ian's mother, Ruth, helped many people as a nurse and was quite gifted in that trade. She pursued her nursing education and continued to work in the field of healthcare after graduation, spending time working in hospitals and sanatoriums. Ruth even had the opportunity to assist Dr. Norman Bethune, the Canadian medical professional famous for revolutionizing field medicine.

Ian Murray spent his early years growing up on the family farm in Piusville, P.E.I. He recalls they kept a few hundred chickens, they grew potatoes, and they had Guernsey cows which they kept for selling cream. Ian had a little white cat named Snowball, and he fondly remembers the family dog named Shep. He described in vivid detail the layout of their family farm, including the house his father built, the nearby pond where he played, and the sawmill also constructed by his father. John Murray also practiced beekeeping, and he allowed the bees to sting his hands as a pain management technique for coping with his arthritis. Ian remembers his mother used to prepare a tub of hot wax for his father to soak his hands in before work each day, so that his hands could be more mobile.

Ian remembers when he was still very young, there was a chaotic scene playing out around the sawmill that his father often used. It turns out his father had an accident while operating it, which resulted in the loss of most of the toes on one of



Ian Murray with Shep, the family dog.



John Murray (left) in his Prince of Wales College sports uniform, and Ruth Murray (right) at her graduation from nursing school.

his feet. Ian reminded me as we spoke, that this event occurred long before workers were obligated to wear PPE like steel toed boots. This painful misfortune, which could have been much worse, likely exacerbated his father's arthritic condition and led to the family relocating to the Greater Toronto Area (G.T.A.) in 1948. Ian explained that his family moved to the GTA from Piusville, P.E.I. seeking more reliable access to medical care, when he was 5 years old.

Continuing the family farming tradition, Ian remembers their first home in Ontario was also a farm. They settled on Winston Churchill Drive, in an area of Toronto now referred to as Peel Region, but long before it was developed into skyscraper buildings. Ian attended a one room schoolhouse, the S.S. #10 Trafalgar (pictured to the right), about a mile away from the house. Ian remembers his father taking him on a road trip back to P.E.I. the next spring, where they took apart the sawmill. Upon returning to their farm on Winston Churchill Drive, his father built several multilevel chicken houses out of the materials gathered from the sawmill. This chicken condo may have been the first condo building in Toronto.

Ian figures the family collected a few thousand eggs from their chickens each week. They became a major egg supplier in the Toronto area, selling their eggs to the grading station, where they would be assessed and distributed all over the city. The family was one of the primary egg suppliers when the Chicken Marketing Agency began. Ian laughed as he explained he'd probably be a multimillionaire today if he had continued in the chicken egg supply business.

As John Murray's arthritis worsened, he began using cortisol to help with the symptoms. In 1954, John died of complications related to the use of the cortisol, Ian was only 10 years old.



A family Christmas photograph from 1950.



Ian's elementary school, S.S. #10 Trafalgar, also known as 'The Little White School House'. It was in use between 1824 and 1960, although it was rebuilt in 1872.



John Murray (left) with his children (from left to right); Leith Murray, Janet Murray, and Ian Murray, holding some of the chickens.

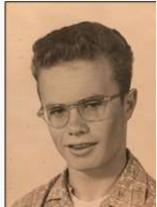


#### INTRODUCING ISLANDERS

### Meet Ian Murray, continued...

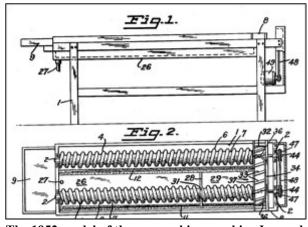
The family sold the farm on Winston Churchill Drive to developers in 1955 and moved to a different farm in the G.T.A. near Georgetown that was around 300 acres. Ian went to secondary school in Georgetown. He described his high school experience as kind of crummy, mostly because of his struggles to pass French class. His favourite class was physical education because although he was small, he was strong. Ian was extremely self-aware about his appearance in his early teenage years, and said he knew he looked easy to pick on. Despite his appearance, he was strong, as some people in the family call it, he was 'farmer strong'. So, when a bully or bigger kid would bother him, he never backed down from a fight. He admits he didn't always win, but he never backed down.





Ian Murray as a grade nine student (left), and then again at the end of secondary school (right). A few years changed a lot, but not the glasses.

In his senior high school years, Ian began playing football. Ian grew up quickly while in high school. On the weekends he helped work on the family farm with his sister, Janet, collecting and washing eggs. He described an elaborate egg washing machine that he and Janet would deposit the eggs into. The machine was patented in 1952, and contained a series of padded, spiral conveyor belts that carried the eggs through a washing compartment, as well as a drying compartment. The blueprints for the patent application are pictured below, it was a pretty handy machine.



The 1952 model of the egg washing machine Ian and his sister Janet used while helping on the family farm.

Ian was eager to get off the family farm by getting a job in the summertime when he was about 15 years old. His first job was at Sheraton Nurseries, hoeing the ground by the little saplings. Shortly after that job he was hired at the new store in town; Loblaws. He remembers he worked for about \$0.65/hour at the time. Toward the end of high school his mother, Ruth, got him a job at a rehabilitation center for people recovering from workplace injuries.

Ian remained consistent as he reviewed the part time jobs he held as a teenager; he didn't find any of the work particularly difficult or interesting, but he enjoyed talking to the coworkers and patrons he met at the jobs.

Ian received his formal, post-secondary education from the Ontario Agricultural College (O.A.C.), which became the University of Guelph when he was in third year. He graduated with a degree in civil engineering in 1966, and continued on to receive his Master's degree from Western in applied science (engineering) in 1968. Ian admitted to lacking maturity during university, and he says he struggled to become immersed in the academic side of the experience. However, he revelled in the sports activities available at the university, and became rather involved in rugby. He remains interested and entertained by rugby to this day.

Throughout the latter part of his university studies, Ian was hired at the Department of Highways Ontario (which later became the Ministry of Transportation, M.T.O.). Although he spent some time building bridges and putting his knowledge of engineering into practice, it was also a desk job. It was a job opportunity in functional planning at the Department of Highways that ended up bringing him to Kingston.



Ian Murray at his job at the Department of Highways, making the face we all make when office work drives us crazy.

Once in Kingston, Ian worked for the Department of Highways. His first wife, Randi (now Randi Kennedy), was hired as a teacher for the school on Amherst Island. They took the first opportunity there was to move to the island, in the spring of 1970, when they rented the manse near the Presbyterian church.

At the end of 1971, Ian, Randi, and their friends Bill, Alice, and David, bought a property on the island with the intention of starting a 'hippie commune'. This property included the building they call the 'Frame House', which remains as the home base building for *Topsy Farms* today. Ian said, "before Leah arrived (his eldest child), I started thinking about starting a commune because I had no idea how to raise a kid." Leah was born on February 12, 1972. He defined the commune as a way to build a different life, get away from being part of the 9-5, and develop a support system in order to raise a family as a collective tribe. Ian recalls they wanted to tear down the barn and build a Geodesic dome in its place. However, they were talked out of tearing the barn down, and eventually they were talked into farming. Ian remembers they acquired a few heifers first, in 1972, and he liked having the cows around. A bit later they acquired more cows, a few goats, and then 50 suffolk ewes from Manitoulin Island. From that small flock, the farm grew. Due to the unprofitability of farming on a small scale on the commune, people would go and work other jobs to bring money in. Ian would often work construction jobs and contribute his earnings. Ian recalls several fond memories from the commune days, mostly outdoor parties with live music and good company. He also remembers the difficulties associated with the commune. Ian said most of their troubles stemmed from strained personal relationships, and the struggles that come along with cohabitation.

In 1975 the commune officially disbanded, however, most of the original members still keep in touch with Ian occasionally. Around 1977, due to financial pressures, they decided to sell the cattle and focus on the sheep flock. Unfortunately, the market for cattle was terrible that year and they only earned about \$0.10/lb. They profited more from selling hay that year than selling cattle.

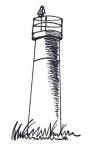
Ian met Sally Bowen in the late 1970s, and she came to live on Amherst Island shortly after they met. Ian says that their relationship has worked out so well over the years partially because each of them think they got the better end of the deal. Ian and Sally were married in 1981, and they had their eldest son, Jacob in August of 1981. Kyle, their youngest child, was born in November of 1983.



Ian Murray with his wife, Sally Bowen, who is seen holding their youngest son, Kyle, and his eldest daughter, Leah, who is holding his eldest son, Jacob.

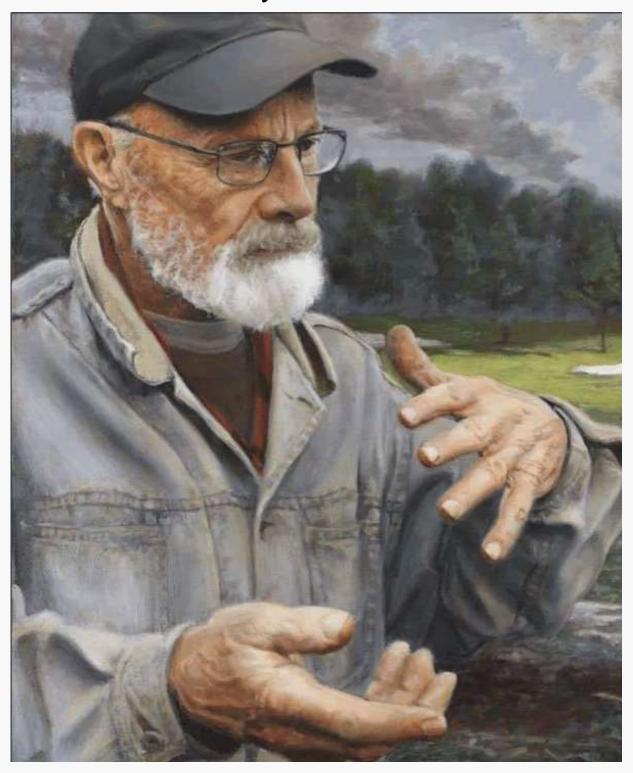
Ian says one of the things he is most thankful for is that his children all have the same postal code. He values spending time with his family, his reliable tribe, and he is proud of all three of his children. Over the years at *Topsy Farms* Ian maintained the fences and spent a lot of time haying and bringing hay back to the farm. He remembers looking after a flock of 1400 ewes at one point. Then, some worrying symptoms in the flock led to the order of some autopsies on the sheep. The results were devastating, as the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (C.F.I.A.)

PAGE 10



#### INTRODUCING ISLANDERS

### Meet Ian Murray, continued...



contacted the farm to announce one of the sheep had 'Scrapie'. Scrapie is a degenerative disease that can affect sheep and goats, but the disease cannot be detected on a live animal. This news meant that the CFIA had to respond by culling over half of the flock. The flock was reduced to around 600 ewes, the experience was tragic and financially damaging for the farm as well. Ian predicted that the farm would need about a decade to recover and grow the sheep flock again.

In the meantime, Ian dedicated time, energy, and investment into establishing a retail shop that he hoped would grow to be profitable one day. For years Ian referred to the sheep's wool as just a weed, because it didn't benefit the farm at all, and it needed tending to every year. He kept thinking of ways to profit off of the wool instead. He wanted to sell blankets and yarn out of a shop that would become known as the 'Wool Shed'. The Wool Shed is now one of the most profitable aspect of *Topsy Farms*, and Ian is thrilled by the way it is taking off so successfully.

Over the years on Amherst Island, Ian has been on council, served as Reeve, contributed and edited *The Beacon* newspaper, and come to call this island home. He says the island has always been interesting, with rarely a dull day.

Ian enjoys sharing his life on the farm with his grandchildren Nathan and Michael and is pleased they are contributing to the farm now too. Ian says he has always tried to lead by example for his children and grandchildren. He believes living with integrity to be one of the most important things in life and has tried to model that for his family. He remains stoic and hardworking, even in his late 70s. He recently said, "all my life I depended on my strong body and good mind. Now I am having to depend on my children with their strong bodies and minds."

A painted portrait of Ian Murray completed in oil on canvas, by artist Christopher Laffin.





Ian Murray, walking on a sheep drive, with his grandchild Nathan Murray.

Ian Murray, inspecting the grapes that grow around the farm.



#### **ARTS AND CULTURE**

### Self-Portrait of an Eye by Chuck Close

#### DEREK OXLEY

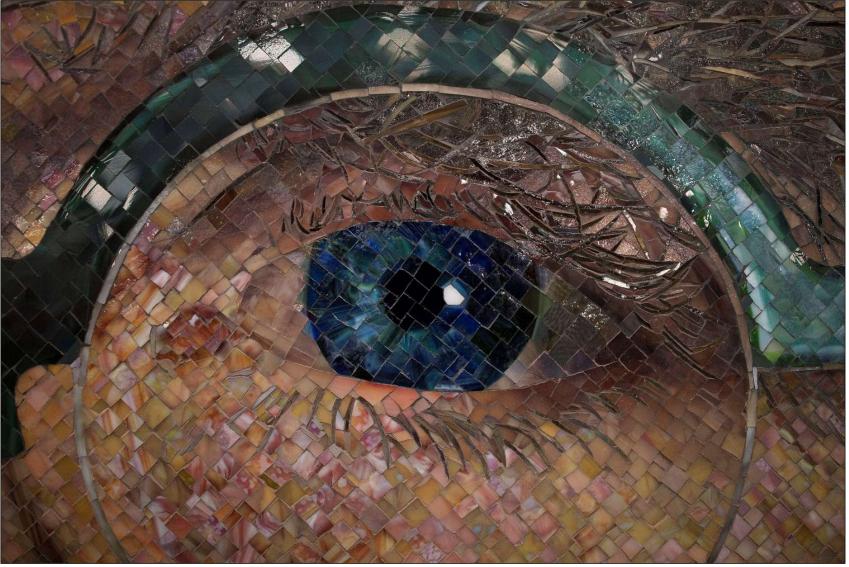
A patient wait has led me to a foremost spot in the new long-distance lineups of my local grocery store. As I await some signal from a cashier to move forward I find that more and more I have to seek this invitation by watching their eyes – the store is bustling, their mouths are masked, and their hands are busy, leaving only that primal eye contact to invite you. As I approach the youth behind the counter I connect with glimmering, caramel irises framed by dark lashes, and for the instant before I lay my groceries on the tray, I am entranced. The pandemic has made masks mandatory for now, but in this I have found an unforeseen joy, because it allows me to make more eye contact than I could before, and I am realizing that a lot of people have stunning eyes.

Rather than discuss a straightforward painting this month I have chosen to talk about a mosaic piece of public art that involves painted elements. In 2012 the New York City MTA commissioned artwork for the upcoming 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave Subway line, which was completed in late 2016. To adorn these new subway stations the city sought artwork by well-known New York based artists, requesting tilework versions of their art to decorate each station. Murals and civic mosaics are as prominent as graffiti in most major American cities (more popular here than the statuaries that adorn many European cities). Transit stations represent highly used civic infrastructure and offer equally fertile soil for art and advertising, and many North American cities use these spaces to reflect their municipal as well as national identity.

American artist Chuck Close (b. 1940) has lived and breathed the art movements of New York City for nearly a century. Through the 1960s and 70s he gained prestige as a realist portrait painter of celebrities including Lou Reed and Philip Glass, and I personally appreciate these earlier works. In 1988 he suffered a spinal injury and paralysis from which he has had to persevere in order to continue working as an artist. Unable any longer to create the same level of exacting realism, Close began working with mosaic imagery. Twelve mosaic pieces by Close, each just under three square meters in size, are on permanent display at the 86th Street Station of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue line. Most of them are portraits of New York artists including Kara Walker, Alex Katz, and Cecily Brown. This eye, a selfportrait of the artist's eye, is amongst them. The evolution of mosaic styles is a fascinating study onto itself with examples of the craft reaching back over three millennia across the globe. But down to its core, a mosaic is an overall image that is wrought by a myriad of smaller elements (usually glass, stone, ceramic, metal, etc.) fixed on a surface in a particular arrangement by a binder (cement, gelatin, glue, etc.). Examples of pristine mosaic work still survive in places like Istanbul and Ravenna, key sites with a heritage of Byzantine art. In Europe the popularity of grand mosaics faded with the end of the Medieval period and was not truly revived until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In this contemporary work Close used a process of breaking things down to what he called "bite-sized decisions" to help him progress. He openly applies this

process when approaching mosaic work, having developed a knack for seeing both the forest and the trees, so to speak, in his creations. He begins by taking a photograph of his subject for reference, and then devises a grid for both the photo and the canvas to maintain the right proportions for the image. Each square of the grid then becomes its own image, with mediums including paint, charcoal, water colour, ink, and various textured media, all which must complement the 'forest' at large in cobbling together a realistic image from the panoply of smaller impressions. It is painstaking and spectacular work, just as the old mosaics were.

Mosaic work, be it sacred or secular, exists most effectively in lived-in spaces, jockeying for a moment of private interaction with the viewer, attempting a dialogue in a space where (unlike a gallery) there is no barrier between them and no alienating pretenses. No alarms will sound nor docents wail if you decide to run your hands across the tiles, allowing for a physical relationship that the artist appreciates, and it is interesting to consider the reality that more people will be exposed to this artwork than one placed in a gallery. Although I cannot touch it, nevertheless I am drawn to this eye. Close is gazing out at us as we gaze back at him. To engage with someone in unbroken eye contact is to truly feel the power of their presence as you are, for that moment, more connected with them than with anything else. You are seen, and you cannot hide. A lot can pass between eyes in these moments: truth, attraction, understanding, vulnerability, ire... if you lie to it you are only lying to yourself. But then, each private dialogue is truly up to the viewer.



Chuck Close, Self-Portrait of an Eye, 2016, 86th Street Station of the 2nd Avenue Line, New York.



#### JANET'S JOTTINGS

### Swan Identification; U's, V's, or Knobs

#### **JANET SCOTT**

This month I would like to chat with you about identifying the three species of swans seen in our area and how to identify: tundra, trumpeter, and mute swans.

Trumpeter and tundra swans are native to North America, while mute swans were introduced to North America from Europe and like our other introduced birds, like starlings and house sparrows, they have adapted well to life on the continent. Mute swans take over nesting sites and don't know any migratory routes.

The male swan is called a 'cob', the female a 'pen', and the young a 'cygnet'. One of the questions I've been asked was 'are swans good to eat?', when I researched the topic, I found that in the time of King Henry VIII and then Queen Elizabeth I, they were served and considered a delicacy. During Queen Victoria's time, she preferred swan for Christmas dinner. Chef Mario Batali told *Esquire* that the one time he ate swan it was lean, red, and succulent". Another source suggested it needed to be a cygnet, a young swan, as older birds tasted fishy. There's your gourmet hint for the day.



A mute swan photographed by Colleen Pattison of Amherstview in early 2021.

The easiest swan to identify is the mute swan, and no, they are not really mute. They have a variety of hisses, grunts, and groans and *The Crossley Guide* reports that their wings whistle in flight. They choose nesting sites in marshes, and other water bodies, and defend their nests vigorously from people, geese, or other swans. When Riley Lambert was still in elementary school, he described to me a nest with eggs he discovered in the marsh near Jane and Russell McGinn's home on Art McGinn Road.

I have seen them in Sandy Bay attacking and trying to drive off the smaller tundra swans from a preferred feeding area. As the mute swan cygnet matures and moults it loses its dusky colouring and it becomes white. The dull beak turns orange and a knob begins to form where the beak joins its forehead. This knob takes a couple years to develop and is bigger in the males. When mute swans sail gracefully across a castle moat or an island marsh, they arch their necks and sometimes lift the fore part of their wings in a *Swan Lake* moment of exquisite beauty. Colleen Pattison of Amherstview captured this moment and has graciously permitted me to use her photograph in *The Beacon*. The photograph was taken on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at Shore Park just opposite the former Celanese plant on Bath Road.

Susan Filson watches her calendar closely as October fades away and we arrive in November. She has been host to hundreds of tundra swans as they complete their migratory journey from the nesting areas in the Arctic tundra of North America. Susan has recorded their arrival dates for over twenty years and numbers of swans may reach 140. They are so faithful that on her drive by 70<sup>th</sup> birthday on November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020, a flock of about 25 flew in with their hoots and whistles in spite of the cars, trucks, and golf carts arriving on the roadway. Sharen English, another resident on Sandy Bay, was kind enough to have me over several times in our Pre-COVID days to hear the flocks of tundra swans as they excitedly gathered in a family get together and discussed last summer's events while they caught up with this, that, and the other branch of the family. Sharen says they talk away day and night with their somewhat goose-like calls, the husky young ones, and the high-pitched adults. It's described as a sort of yodel, but I made them truly Canadian by calling it bubbling 'Bublé' after the singer Micheal Bublé. Please pronounce it with the acute accent, and you've got it! Roxanne Guttin allowed me to use her recordings of the tundra swans on my radio show on CJAI, "Just for the Birds". If you are her friend on Facebook,



A photograph of a tundra swan, taken by Vicki Keith of Kingston.



#### JANET'S JOTTINGS, CONTINUED

look up her site. She has a video with sound of the tundra swans. Tundra swans were first recorded in the Kingston area when Samuel de Champlain was trekking across the Loughborough Lake area on October 28th, 1615. My identification hint for this swan is to look at their completely black beak in the gentle shape of a 'U' between the eyes. My photograph for the tundra swan was taken by Vicki Keith in January 2021, here on Amherst Island. The photograph shows their gentle, slightly curved beak, which is all black. Sometimes a yellow spot appears on the lower mandible, but not so often here as that is found more in the Eurasian variety. Remember our snowy owls, short-eared owls, and tundra swans don't recognize the Russian border. They nest in the Artic and depending on food supplies nest circumpolar; your guide may call them whistling swans.

Now our third swan of the area has been reintroduced. My first trumpeter swan was introduced to me by Susan Filson. She called to let me know that one of the swans at her house had yellow tags attached to its wings. I went down to look and that's the only time I can ever say for sure that I saw a trumpeter swan. I called some of my birding friends in the K.F.N. and was told that the swan was part of a breeding program at Wye Marsh to reintroduce trumpeters to Southern Ontario because they had been extirpated by over hunting in the 1800's. They are found breeding from Alaska and the Yukon, and Northern British Columbia to Southern Montana and in Saskatchewan. To give you an example, The Hudson's Bay company sold 17, 651 swan skins for their breast feathers between 1853-1877. It is not surprising that they disappeared. In 1982, Harry Lumsden of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources began a release program at the Toronto Zoo, Wye Marsh, Isaac Lake, and 51 other sites. By 2005, 523 trumpeter swans were estimated to be in Southern Ontario, excluding Eastern Ontario. Four swans were released in Portland in 1999, 11 in Mac Johnston Wildlife Area, and 12 in Little Cataraqui conservation area in 2001. By 2005 there were 5 to 10 pairs, and they are permanent residents at Waupoos, Big Island, and Lyndhurst. They are fitted with yellow wing tags that only last about four years, but they do not migrate, only travelling to open water if their home marsh freezes up. I am hoping to visit the Lyndhurt area and learn to identify them without depending on the yellow tags.

Our local photograph of the trumpeter was supplied by a listener to CJAI. When he heard I was struggling to tell the trumpeter from the tundra swan, he sent the wonderful photograph seen to the right. Thank you, Bob MacCallum, from Gananoque for showing the face of a trumpeter swan showing the black 'V' between its eyes at the top of its beak.

Now we should all be able to practice identifying the three North American species of swans, provided we can persuade them to stop putting their bums in the air and turn around and face us. Only a minor technicality, right? Look for the knob, the 'U' or the 'V'.



A photograph of two tundra swans, taken by Vicki Keith of Kingston.



A photograph of a trumpeter swan, taken by Bob MacCallum of Gananoque.



#### **BIRDING**

### 2020 Christmas Bird Count Total

#### **ISLANDERS**

Wonderful job this year on the bird counts on Amherst Island. It was a bit more difficult because experienced birders from the mainland were not able to join due to COVID restrictions. Overall, the islanders did extremely well identifying the birds here on the island at the moment. Here is the complete list for your perusal.



A greater scaup.



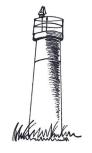
A ring-necked pheasant.

2020 C	inistinas di	rd Count - T		
			Field	Feeder/Property
Species	Total	Abbr.	Count	Count
Horned Grebe	1	HOGR	1	0
Double-crested Cormorant	7	DCCO	1	6
Snow Goose	1	SNGO	1	0
Canada Goose	2449	CAGO	2362	87
Mute Swan	51	MUSW	49	2
Tundra Swan	55	TUSW	55	0
Trumpeter Swan	1	TRSW	1	0
American Black Duck	8	ABDU	8	0
Mallard	228	MALL	228	0
Greater Scaup	5	GRSC	5	0
Long-tailed Duck	3	LTDU	3	0
Bufflehead	24	BUFF	16	8
Common Goldeneye	134	COGO	94	40
Common Merganser	45	COME	45	0
Red-breasted Merganser	164	RBME	112	52
Northern Harrier	37	NOHA	35	2
Bald Eagle	19	BAEA	16	3
Bald Eagle IMM	3	BAEA	3	0
Cooper's Hawk	2	COHA	2	0
Red-tailed Hawk	16	RTHA	15	1
Rough-legged Hawk	57	RLHA	54	3
American Kestrel	6	AMKE	6	0
Hawk species	7	hawk spe.	7	0
Ring-necked Pheasant	1	RINP	1	0
Killdeer	1	KILL	1	0
Wild Turkey	9	WITU	9	0
Gull species	49	gull spe.	49	0
Ring-billed Gull	1	RBGU	1	0
Lesser Black-backed Gull	1	LBBG	1	0
Herring Gull	34	HEGU	34	0
Rock Pigeon	28	ROPI	20	8
Mourning Dove	247	MODO	151	96
Barred Owl	3	BAOW	3	0
Snowy Owl	13	SNOW	12	1
Short-eared Owl	72	SEOW	72	0
Great Horned Owl	1	GHOW	1	0
	4			_
Northern Saw-whet Owl		NSWO	9	0
Red-bellied Woodpecker	11	RBWO		2
Downy Woodpecker	31	DOWO	23	8
Hairy Woodpecker	5	HAWO	3	2

The total numbers Amherst Island submitted for the Christmas Bird Count of 2020.



Snow geese. PAGE 15



#### **BIRDING**

### 2020 Christmas Bird Count Total

#### **ISLANDERS**

	1			
Northern Flicker	1	NOFL	0	1
Pileated Woodpecker	2	PIWO	2	0
Northern Shrike	2	NOSH	2	0
Blue Jay	179	BLJA	119	60
American Crow	49	AMCR	49	0
Common Raven	37	CORA	34	3
Black-capped Chickadee	272	BCCH	238	34
Red-breasted Nuthatch	9	RBNU	9	0
White-breasted Nuthatch	50	WBNU	36	14
Brown Creeper	5	BRCR	3	2
European Starling	1266	EUST	1063	203
Northern Mockingbird	1	NOMO	1	0
American Tree Sparrow	110	ATSP	97	13
Song Sparrow	2	SOSP	2	0
Sparrow Species	1	sp.spe.	1	0
Dark-eyed Junco	50	DEJU	40	10
Northern Cardinal	47	NOCA	23	24
Snow Bunting	543	SNBU	543	0
House Finch	17	HOFI	6	11
Common Redpoll	221	CORE	171	50
Hoary Redpoll	1	HORE	1	0
Red-winged Blackbird	3	RWBL	0	3
Brown-headed Cowbird	4	BHCO	0	4
Common Grackle	3	COGR	2	1
Pine Siskin	4	PISI	4	0
American Goldfinch	139	AMGO	119	20
House Sparrow	197	HOSP	169	28
63 species	7049		6247	802

The total numbers Amherst Island submitted for the Christmas Bird Count of 2020.

#### IBA Waterfowl Count - January 10, 2021

-7C, overcast for most of the day with lake fog, but some sunny periods 3 to 5 inches of snow cover  $\,$ 

Snow Goose - 1

Canada Goose – 455

Mute Swan - 84

Tundra Swan – 14

Mallard – 197 Greater Scaup – 28

Long-tailed Duck – 28

Bufflehead – 11

Common Goldeneye - 350

Common Merganser – 38

Red-breasted Merganser – 58

Ring-billed Gull – 2

Herring Gull – 16

Gull species – 5 Common Loon – 5

Great Blue Heron – 1

Bald Eagle – 5

Participants: Nick Bartok & Jenny Newton, Ethan Bartok, Janet Scott, Darlene Martin-Stuart, Ida & George Gavlas, Alex Scott & Julie McKee-Grabell, Dayle Gowan, Nancy Pearson, Cathy Showalter & Emma Showalter, Richard LaPointe & Wendy Shelley, Diane Pearce, Fred Lemire, Sharen English & David Pickering, Kayleigh Graham, Sally Bowen, Bonnie Livingstone



A pileated woodpecker.



A dark-eyed junco.



A common loon.



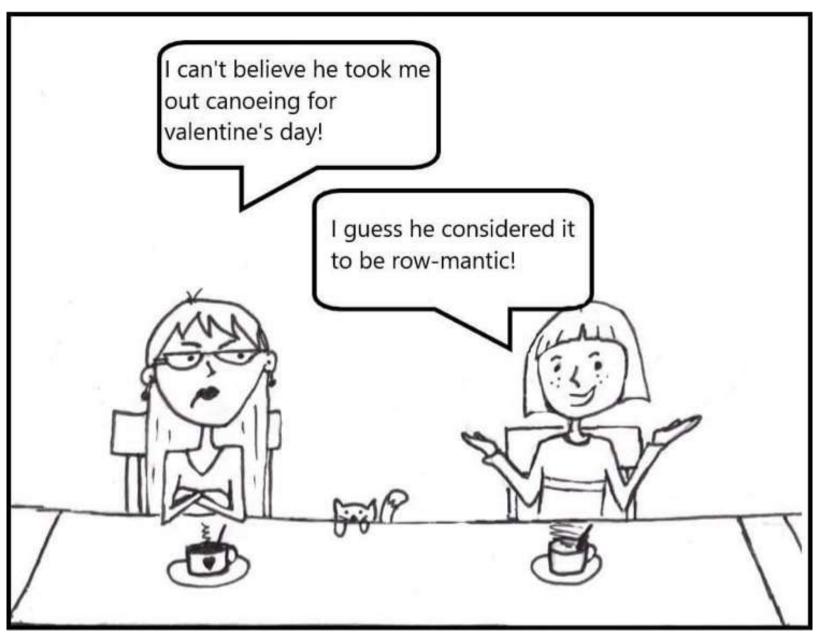


#### **COMMUNITY CARTOONS**

### Comics Drawn by Islanders for Islanders

### Lovely Puns

**SAM EVES** 





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

Included in the last issue of *The Beacon* as a guessing game, these tracks were a mystery! The tracks were made by David Pike's neighbour, who uses a walker, walking her dog, whilst David walked the other way, walking his dog.

If you observe any odd tracks, send them in to <a href="mailto:editor@thebeaconpaper.com">editor@thebeaconpaper.com</a> to give everyone a chance to guess who or what made them!



#### **GARDENING**

#### Must Love Mulch

#### VANESSA VAN

Life continues to change rapidly as we begin the new year. Many of us celebrated with our neighbours to the South during the inauguration of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris. Curbside pickup, Zoom, and Blursday are now firmly part of our vocabulary (https://bit.ly/3a4ghOF). On some days, our ferry now transports at least as many cardboard packages as it does cars. Kids are at home for virtual schooling. And some of us are stress-eating chewable Vitamin C.

I have been moonlighting as an elementary school tutor since last summer. Reviewing and teaching new concepts online involves finding or creating inventive activities. I like crafting them as much as the students seem to like learning from them. This month, my gardening advice is inspired by my hours of virtual elementary school tutoring, all done while living in one of Ontario's best-known spots for winter birding.

Over the winter, gardens can become a wonderland to observe and enjoy from the warm side of a living room window. I offer you an indoor project to help feed the birds while teaching kids a bit about wildlife. This activity is great for kids at home, kids on Zoom, kids at heart, and those who are just really bored. Best of all, you can do this activity while chewing on a sugar-coated gummy vitamin.

Here's to mulching again soon!



Preparing treats together for the backyard birdfeeder.

#### Background information and links to educational resources about wild birds

#### Amherst Island is an important place for birds

This island is home to many birds. People who carefully look at birds are sometimes called naturalists, birdwatchers, or birders. Birdwatchers look for birds, photograph birds, and frequently keep track of the birds they have seen. Some of the types of birds seen on the island include owls, hawks, harriers, shrikes and waterfowl, shorebirds, and passerines. Some of the types of owls include the Northern Saw-whet Owls, Long-eared Owls, Barred Owls, Great Horned Owls, Boreal Owls, Great Grey Owls, Snowy Owls, and Northern Hawk Owls. You can read about the best locations on the island to spot different types of birds by visiting the Lennox and Addington birdwatching webpage: https://naturallyla.ca/explore/bird-watching/Kingston Field Naturalists (KFN) is a nature club and charitable organization dedicated to the preservation of wildlife and natural habitats. You can learn more about local birds and see loads of bird photos on the KFN webpage: kingstonfieldnaturalists.org

## February Gardening Suggestions:

February is the perfect time to focus on birds. Here is a fun activity to help teach kids about birds while preparing snacks for birds!

#### What you'll need

- One or all of these: Birdseed mix, black-oil sunflower seeds, peanuts, millet
- One or both of these: Suet cakes (there are vegetarian options too)
- One of these: A silicone mold or parchment paper
- One of these: An ice cream scoop, spoon, or you can use your hands

#### Five easy steps

- Step One: Put the suet in the fridge for a couple of hours or until it is about room temperature.
- Step Two: Mix one part suet and one-and-a-half parts birdseed. Mix it with your hands until the mixture clumps together.
- Step Three: If you have a silicone mold, press the mixture into your mold.
- Alt Step Three: Shape the mixture into balls and put them on parchment paper
- Step Four: Put your mold into the oven until the suet melts. Remove from the oven and let cool. Once cooled, put the mold in the freezer so that it gets firm.
- Alt Step Four: If you put your mixture on parchment paper. Use your spoon, ice cream scoop, or your hands to make balls. Put it all right in the freezer (do not heat).
- Step Five: Hang your bird-treats outside.





#### **GARDENING**

### Must Love Mulch, continued...

#### VANESSA VAN

#### Staying warm takes energy

Like many of us humans, birds crave high-calorie food in winter. Colder temperatures mean birds and other animals are expending more energy to keep their bodies warm. Birds like to eat suet, fruit, nectar, seeds, and nuts. They get energy from the fat in suet and seeds. Researchers at The Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center at the National Zoo help explain how birds survive the single-digit temperatures in the winter in this Smithsonian article: https://www.si.edu/stories/keeping-warm-winter-birds Both the Canadian Broadcast Corporation (CBC) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provide short articles about how birds rely on various adaptations for living in cold climates: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/how-birds-survive-winter-1.4465936 and

https://www.fws.gov/midwest/news/WinterWarmth.html

#### Birds hate chocolate

Even if you want to share, never give birds chocolate. Chocolate is toxic to birds because it contains theobromine.

#### **DON'T FEED THE FOX!**

Experts agree that hand-fed wild animals lose their fear of humans. Foxes, raccoons, deer, squirrels, and coyotes need to keep a safe distance from humans, cars, and roads. Also, if fed by humans, some animals can come to depend on those hand-outs and reduce or stop looking for food on their own! Not good. Toronto Wildlife Centre (TWC) is a charitable wildlife rescue organization providing medical care to sick, injured, and orphaned wild animals. TWC does not encourage feeding wild animals and has outlined their reasons why: https://www.torontowildlifecentre.com/wildlife-emergency-rescue-hotline/answers-to-your-wildlife-questions/should-you-feed-wildlife/

Experts also advise that you should **NOT** start feeding wild ducks, geese, swans, gulls, herons, or eagles. The National Geographic Education Blog has a Teachers Toolkit that includes a list of foods that are safe-for-waterfowl that have already started taking food from humans:

https://blog.education.nationalgeographic.org/2017/03/27/stop-feeding-ducks-bread/ CBC's *As It Happens* produced a radio segment about the controversy around feeding bread to ducks. In 2019, Carol Off interviewed animal rescuer Wendy Hermon about the pros and cons of this practice. You can access the show archive and transcript here:

https://www.cbc.ca/radio/asithappens/as-it-happens-wednesday-edition-1.5332037/should-you-feed-bread-to-ducks-it-s-better-than-nothing-says-animal-rescuer-1.5329117

#### Some birds travel regularly

A migratory bird travels from one place to another at regular times, often over long distances. Wild Birds Unlimited is a store that specializes in bird feed. They created a fun resource about bird migration. Informed by Dr. Dan Klem of Muhlenberg College, the post helps connect the global scope of bird migration to what is happening in your own backyard! https://www.wbu.com/migration/

Laws protect some birds that travel long distances. Some of these protected species belong to groups of birds that live in the United States as well as Canada, Japan, Mexico, or Russia. You can learn more about the birds protected under the Migratory Birds Convention Act by visiting the Government of Canada's website: https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/migratory-birds-legal-protection/convention-act.html

#### Feeding migratory birds

Bird feeding is one of the most popular forms of human-wildlife interaction worldwide. Experts disagree about whether feeding migratory birds is beneficial. It is generally considered alright to feed migratory birds when natural resources are limited, like in Canadian winters. The National Audubon Society protects birds throughout the Americas using science, advocacy, education, and conservation. Jennifer Huizen, a writer at Audubon Society, interviewed Daniel Becker, a then Ph.D. candidate at the University of Georgia's Odum School of Ecology, about simple guidelines that can help make feeding migratory birds safer: https://www.audubon.org/news/to-feedor-not-feed

#### Keeping birds safe

Never feed birds by hand. Place feeders at least four meters away from windows. Use UV window decals and window stickers to prevent injury. To keep birds safe, ensure feeders are not accessible to predators, like cats and rodents. Keep your bird feeders very clean so birds don't get sick. The Canadian Wildlife Federation (CWF) works to conserve and inspire the conservation of Canada's wildlife and habitats. The CWF offer tips about backyard bird feeding https://cwffcf.org/en/explore/wild-about-birds/athome/tips.html They also have a rich collection of free teaching resources posted online: https://cwffcf.org/en/resources/foreducators/?src=menu

In addition to teaching resources, CWF offers instructions for fun DIY projects. One of these articles suggests a craft that involves drawing marks on the outside of your windows with soap or special oily chalk. The craft is creative, easy, and can help keep birds from getting hurt: https://cwf-fcf.org/en/resources/DIY/at-home/keep-birds-from-hitting-windows.html

A goldfinch at a backyard birdfeeder.

### Attracting birds naturally with native plants

Native plants evolve and grow naturally in a given geographic area, like Amherst Island. By planting native plants, you can help all kinds of birds all year long. Native perennials, shrubs, and trees provide natural food and shelter. Hearty plants that last long into the fall/winter or emerge early in the spring months offer birds food and shelter when few other plants are around. Located in Ottawa, the Fletcher Wildlife Garden is a long-term project of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club. The garden is named after James Fletcher, the first Dominion Entomologist and a founding member of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club. The FWG physical garden site encompasses a variety of natural habitats and their website offers tips on gardening for butterflies, creating a safe garden for birds, and feeding birds: https://ofnc.ca/programs/fletcherwildlife-garden/make-your-ownwildlife-garden





A sparrow at a backyard birdfeeder.



#### 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.) last met on January 27, 2021. In consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and other health experts, a declaration of emergency was made on January 12, 2021, for all of Ontario. As of January 14, 2021, a stay-at-home order went into effect for the province (https://bit.ly/3c89xle). In keeping with the order and physical distancing rules, the January A.I.W.I. meeting was held via Zoom.

Remaining committed to physical distancing, two Amherst Island community members brought many of us together online through a digital charity event on New Year's Day. Phuong MacNeil led the Island's first Polar Dip fundraiser. A polar dip, short for Polar Bear dip, is an event where people collectively run, jump, and plunge into a lake or ocean in the winter. These events are a New Year's tradition throughout the Maritimes. For some small villages, it is the event of the year with hundreds of residents coming out to watch.

Phuong was first introduced to the event when visiting family on the east coast. Like so many, the MacNeils were disappointed to have to cancel their annual holiday trip to Cape Breton. Despite all of the loss and upheaval associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, Phuong found a way to keep one of her family's traditions alive by planning her own Digital Polar Dip fundraiser on the South Shore of Amherst Island.

On January 1, Phuong and her daughter, Elizabeth, took the plunge into the icy cold water. Once they got back to shore, Phuong's husband greeted the two with towels. A digital video of the plunge was uploaded to the A.I.W.I. Facebook page and the Amherst Island community Facebook page. Together, Elizabeth and Phuong raised over \$800 for the A.I.W.I. Over the coming months, the A.I.W.I. will discuss how best to use these funds. We thank everyone who donated and supported their efforts! While many in the Amherst Island community couldn't gather in person over the holidays, the digital fundraiser helped some of us feel a little more connected. The A.I.W.I. thanks Phuong for leading this successful event and introducing the community to the beach dipping tradition.

Active cases of the COVID-19 virus continue to decline in Ontario, and over 70,000 vaccinations have been completed across the province since last month (https://bit.ly/3qOI0JG and https://bit.ly/3t2Utvs). Limiting contact with others has helped keep those at greatest risk safer and may reduce the length of the current restriction orders. There is good reason to hope that by next year Phuong and Elizabeth will be leading us in an in-person Polar Dip event.

The date for the next A.I.W.I. meeting has not yet been set. As always, all will be welcome to attend. Please contact us via email (amherstwi@gmail.com) for more information.

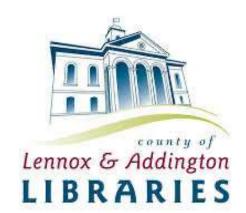




Phuong MacNeill (left) and her daughter Elizabeth MacNeill (right) embarking on their polar dip fundraiser for the AIWI on January 1st, 2021.







# Book Club in a Bag Program

L&A Libraries



Whether you currently belong to a book club or want to start one the "Book Club in a Bag" program might be a service for you. These sets make the process of organization easy and affordable. Each bag contains 8 copies of a book and are checked out for an extended loan period of 6 weeks. They have multiple choices of both fiction and non-fiction to choose for the group and the list of available books is revised regularly to include new library books in the system. All that is needed is a L&A Library card and the book bag will be delivered to the library of your choice. It is the responsibility of the person requesting it and is delivered back to the circulation desk at any of the L&A libraries.

Contact Julie, Readers Services Coordinator at the Library Administration office to reserve a set. They like to have a schedule of book reservations and meeting dates.. Call Julie at 613-354-4883 ext.3371 or by email at <a href="mailto:jwendland@lennox-addington.on.ca">jwendland@lennox-addington.on.ca</a>.

Over the years there have been a number of book clubs meeting on Amherst Island. The Emerald Book Club started over 6 years ago and uses the Book Bag program, picking up books at the Amherstview branch. The number of participants is limited by the number of books in the bag (8) and meets in individual homes or at the Back Kitchen every 6 weeks for discussions. The group reads a variety of books and meetings are lively. One book bag was a play written by a local author and the group had a table reading. If someone has a Kingston Library card the Book Bag program at the Kingston Libraries is also available. Happy Reading!



Afternoon snack for a short-eared owl. Photographed by Don Woodiwiss Photography, woodiwissphotography.com.



#### **PHOTOGRAPHY**

### Views of the Island



John Lambert, a member of Hunt Club at the end of the Third Concession, photographed this abandoned tractor on Nut Island. He believes it to be the only thing on Nut Island, and quite treasured. It is the epitome of rustic charm.







Knackered from a night of hunting. Photographed by Don Woodiwiss Photography, woodiwissphotography.com.







#### **MIND GAMES**

### Answers to January's Community Crossword

#### **DOWN**

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

#### **ACROSS**

- 1. The most photographed bird species on the island in November 2020.
  - SHORT EARED OWL
- The number of feet every road on the island seems to be measured in. FORTY
- Stéphane Levac had a new one installed in December 2020 to improve insulation.
   GARAGE DOOR
- 4. Owl Woods was closed to the public between November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020, which somewhat coincides with this season. HUNTING
- 5. The islanders' favourite boat other than the ferry. THE MIGHTY MOOSE
- 6. If there is digging to be done, he will do it. NOEL MCCORMICK
- 7. The namesake of *The Beacon* is one of these. LIGHTHOUSE

<sup>\*</sup>A new community crossword will appear in the next issue of *The Beacon*.



 $Hanging\ out\ with\ a\ COVID\ buddy.\ Photographed\ by\ Don\ Woodiwiss\ Photography,\ woodiwiss photography.com.$ 



# **BEACON**

#### **CLASSIFIEDS**

### Support Local Businesses

#### **BURT'S Greenhouses**

### burtsgh.com 539 Maple Road Odessa





Growers of annuals, perennials, shrubs and vegetables.

#### **Topsy Farms**

### EST. TOPSY FARMS 1972 ·AMHERST ISLAND·

In 1972 a boatload of free-thinking, peace-loving hippies showed up at the West end of Amherst Island. Since then, Topsy Farms has prioritized stewardship of the land and harmony with nature above profit.

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



Visit The Lodge at 376 Main Street, Bath. Serving coffee, teas, artisan sandwiches, from-scratch baked goods, and more!

Currently open Tuesdays-Fridays 9am-3pm. Check us out at www.lodgecoffeehouse.com

#### **Pharmasave Bath Family Pharmacy**

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#### **Store Hours:**

Monday - Friday: 9am - 6pm Saturday: 10am - 3pm • Sunday: Closed

#### Services:

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Bath Family Pharmacy offers competitive pricing and speedy service! Free delivery to your home or the ferry!

#### The Soup Can



Wholesome, and Homemade Soups!

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#### Rossland Gallery







ROSSLAND GALLERY artisanal glass jewellery stringed metal instruments ALLERY@ROSSLAND.ESTATE





#### **CLASSIFIEDS**

### Support Local Businesses

#### Schell's Market



Happily serving the island and shoreline communities from Kingston to Prince Edward County and points west.

Open daily 9am-7pm, check our Facebook page for holiday hours.

408 Main Street, Bath, ON, K0H 1G0 (613)-881-0404





#### 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 <a href="http://amherstisland.on.ca/Beacon/">http://amherstisland.on.ca/Beacon/</a>.

#### 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 25<sup>th</sup> of the month.

If you are interested in advertisement space, contact <a href="mailto:editor@thebeaconpaper.com">editor@thebeaconpaper.com</a> for more information.

Thank you!



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