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

## THE



## BEACON

### VINOKS FOR VALIANCE, VITALITY, AND VICTORY



Vasily Boroday (architect), "Mother Motherland", the Ukrainian Motherland Monument in Kyiv, Ukraine.

#### **MOTHER MOTHERLAND**

As seen in the image above, a traditional vinok adorned the "Mother Motherland" statue in Kyiv, Ukraine, as a celebration of Victory Day in 2015. This monument was created as part of the Ukrainian State Museum that commemorates the history of WWII. The vinok adorning the head of the statue for Victory Day celebrates the victory over Nazism.

Visitors to Kyiv can take elevators, a series of staircases, and a ladder all concealed inside the statue, to travel to the top. Once at the top of the viewing area, visitors can observe most of the city from this vantage point. This statue has become an iconic symbol in Ukraine, and hopefully it survives the current war and can be celebrated by Ukrainians and visitors again.



A Ukrainian child wearing a vinok.



Ukrainian women wearing traditional flower vinoks.

## Traditional Art and Symbolism in Ukraine

#### **KAYLEIGH GRAHAM**

In Ukraine, gorgeous, handmade, traditional flower crowns have become a symbol of national pride. Historically, these crowns, called *vinoks*, were originally associated with purity and fertility and worn at festivals and wedding ceremonies. As history unfolded, vinoks also became associated with victory and independence. Perhaps the most concrete example of this symbolism was captured in the Victory Day celebration in 2015, when a vinok was added to the "Mother Motherland" monument in Kyiv, Ukraine. Vinoks have come to represent a continuation of peace in Ukraine.

Throughout history the specific symbolism of these crowns has slowly transformed into something greater, as they now carry a more universal significance to all Ukrainian people; the vinoks are a representation of Ukrainian national pride, innocence, and peace.

The flower crowns are created using strong headbands as the base from which to weave real living flowers and plants into, and the crowns are worn most commonly at joyous occasions.

Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, the news reports and imagery coming from the war in Ukraine has been intense to say the least. The resilience of the people there, and the hope they maintain in the face of such hardship is inspiring.

Many Ukrainians abroad who are witnessing the destruction of their country from afar by Russian are weaving vinoks and wearing them at protests and events supporting Ukrainians. We can only hope that the war will reach a relatively swift and peaceful end through negotiation by the time their vinoks begin to wilt.

As with any flower that has been cut for art, it will eventually wither. These masterpieces of woven flowers are examples of ephemeral, traditional Ukrainian art. The ephemeral nature of these crowns lends yet another level of allegory; not only do the crowns represent Ukrainian national pride, but they also remind people of the transient nature of hardship, which inspires people to continue to persevere through difficult times. Like the Ukrainian people, the flower wreaths are strong, resilient, and representative of their country. The flowers will not last forever, and neither will the current war in Ukraine.

## IN THIS ISSUE

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#### INTERNATIONAL PHILANTHROPY

## Opportunities to Provide Support to Ukrainians in Crisis

#### **ORGANIZATIONS OFFERING AID**

One of the most accessible ways for Canadians to help during an international emergency such as the war in Ukraine is by donating money or time to an experienced humanitarian organization. The list of organizations below are all accepting donations for the work they are doing in Ukraine and with refugees.

- UNICEF Canada: currently providing safe water and sanitation supplies, medical aid and healthcare services, child protection and psychological care, and education supplies.
- Canadian Red Cross: currently providing trained personnel, first aid services, immediate support in the crisis.

People who want to provide more generalized help, including supplies, first aid, child protection, and sanitation services, may want to consider donating to the Humanitarian Coalition. The Humanitarian Coalition is a combination of 12 Canadian international aid agencies that can respond quickly with a diverse variety of supports and services in international crises. The agencies involved in the coalition are listed below:

- o Action Against Hunger
- O Canadian Foodgrains Bank
- o Canadian Lutheran World Relief
- o Care
- o Doctors of the World
- Humanity & Inclusion
- Islamic Relief
- o Oxfam Canada
- Oxfam Québec
- o Plan International
- Save the Children
- World Vision





Image of a Ukrainian protesting the war with their pet dog. Originally published in *Quartz India* on March 3, 2022.



There are also animals in Ukraine who will need first aid and emergency assistance and rehoming as a result of the current war. The Humane Society International (HIS) is providing aid through their Animal Rescue Fund and are accepting donations.





#### **UPCOMING APRIL DAYS**

## National Handmade Day

APRIL 2<sup>ND</sup>

April 2<sup>nd</sup>, the first Saturday in April, is National Handmade Day. Amherst Island is home to many makers and artists. April 2<sup>nd</sup> is a day to make something by hand, buy something handmade, or learn how to make something! Woodworking, pottery, painting, photography, whatever the hobby or creative endeavour, try to appreciate the handmade things in life on this day.

There are so many mass produced products, plastic disposable products, and one time used products in the world already. It feels good to repurpose materials to make something by hand, reuse objects, and made objects that are designed to last.

Happy National Handmade Day!





#### **OBSERVE**

## National Walking Day, April 6<sup>th</sup>

National Walking Day celebrates the ability to comfortably stroll outside again now that winter has officially ended. Try to get outside and spend some time in fresh air this April 6<sup>th</sup>. We are all likely lacking vitamin D after a long winter, so soak it up and enjoy the shift into spring.

Happy National Walking Day!

#### **EXPERIENCE**

## National Farm Animals Day

APRIL 10<sup>TH</sup>

I had never lived in a community where the number of farm animals far outnumber the people until now. Thinking about the population numbers for less than a minute, I believe the ratio of the number of farm animals on the island to the number of residents is something like 5:1, maybe more! I enjoy being surrounded by the farm animals here, and on April 10<sup>th</sup> we should remember to celebrate them.

This April 10<sup>th</sup> on National Farm Animal Day, maybe give your farm animals a treat or ask a farmer a question about their animals to learn something new. Animals provide us with so much; sustenance, work, purpose, and joy, and we are fortunate to live in a farming community.





#### **SPOTLIGHT SPECIES**

#### Emerald Ash Borer

#### **KAYLEIGH GRAHAM**

The emerald ash borer, or *Agrilus* planipennis, is an invasive species of wood boring beetle. It is named both for its metallic green colouring and the way it bores through wood in order to reproduce.

The emerald ash borer originated in eastern Asia and was likely introduced to North America in the 1990s, hiding undetected in a shipment of wood.

Most North American ash trees are extremely vulnerable to this beetle. The emerald ash borer was discovered in Canada in the Windsor, Ontario area in 2002. Within the last 20 years, this species has spread to 30 states and 5 provinces. Since its emergence in Canada, the beetle has been directly responsible for the deaths of billions of ash trees in both urban and forested areas. No North American predators to this beetle have been able to slow the spread of this species or prevent it from killing ash trees. The emerald ash borer is an incredibly invasive species.

The emerald ash borer burrows into the trunks of ash trees to lay eggs. The burrowing of the beetle disrupts the ash tree's ability to feed, which eventually kills the tree by girdling. Essentially, the tunnels created by the beetles cause the trees to starve.

Once the emerald ash borer has been introduced to an area with ash trees, 99% of all the ash trees will die within 8 years.

Mature emerald ash borer larvae measure about 26-32mm long. The adult beetles are only 9-14mm long, and about 3mm wide. Individual beetles travel between 400m and 700m annually, but the population spreads faster when it is moved unintentionally by humans.

Most commonly, the emerald ash borer is introduced to a new area because it has been transported during the sale of firewood. It is important for the biosecurity of an ecosystem for people to prevent the introduction of invasive species. One way humans can prevent the introduction of the emerald ash borer is by only sourcing firewood locally.

There are clear signs of the emerald ash borer burrow markings on many ash trees on Amherst Island, which indicates this pest has already been introduced to the island. The beetles likely traveled onto the island on firewood purchased from the mainland and transported across the water. Now that they are here, it is important to slow their progress and preserve the ash trees. There are emerald ash borer traps in existence that have had varied levels of success at protecting individual trees, but not stopping the destruction of a stand of ash trees or preventing the spread of the beetle population.

#### **EMERALD ASH BORER FACTS**

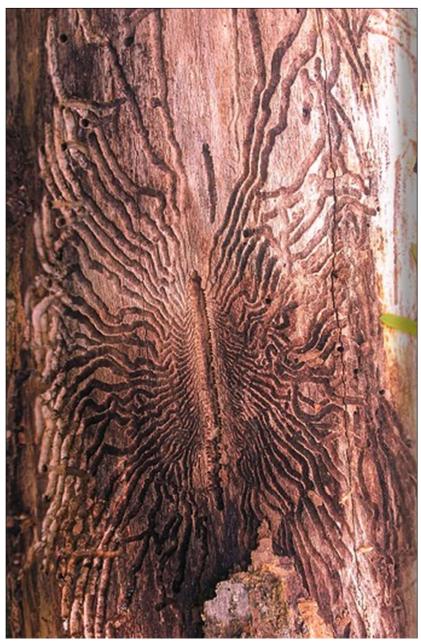
- Signs of the emerald ash borer in an area are not obvious until the population is well established.
- The emerald ash borer beetle larvae can survive temperatures of -30°C by producing antifreeze compounds.
- There are many other species that are currently not on Amherst Island.

  Remember to respect the island's unique ecosystem and follow biosecurity measures to prevent other invasive species or pests from traveling to this corner of Canada.
- For more fact sheets and management resources that are specific to areas in Canada, go to the "Emerald Ash Borer" page on the Invasive Species Centre website (invasivespeciescentre.ca).

#### Sources:

"Emerald Ash Borer". *Government of Canada: Natural Resources Canada*. 2021.

"Emerald Ash Borer". Invasive Species Centre. 2022.



The patterns forged in ash wood by an emerald ash borer. The patterns are easily identifiable.



(left) Adult emerald ash borer, (right) emerald ash borer larvae.



An adult emerald ash borer.

# Mark William Commencer of the Commencer

## THE BEACON

## Island Information

#### **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, cheque, and contactless payment options available now.

- Car, truck (under 1 ton), van, farm tractor or small school bus \$10.00
- RV or car with trailer, large vehicles requiring up to two vehicle spaces, or large school bus - \$20.00
- Large vehicles and trailers or equipment requiring more than two vehicle spaces -\$10.00 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 use of the new docks has begun. The paving of the new docks has been completed.

The Amherst Islander II, the new electric ferry, has arrived in Canada. It is currently in the Picton area.

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.

The buildings on either side of the ferry route are set up to be used.

Information and updates can be found at <a href="http://www.amherstislandferrydocks.ca/">https://twitter.com/a\_i\_ferrydocks</a>

#### **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	11am – 2pm
Saturdays	10am – 12pm
Sundays	2pm – 4pm

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**

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



#### **ARTS AND CULTURE**

## A Dawn, 1914 by Christopher R. W. Nevinson

#### DEREK OXLEY

This is going to be a two-part article, because the topic is just too big to cover in one go. We are going to touch on art, war, and culture in some broad strokes. The current situation unfolding in Ukraine makes a conversation about cultural material and war rather poignant. Both the professional soldiers and private citizens have had to take up arms to try and defend their home country, something people have had to do throughout history; although it seems like a distant menace for many people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century so far.

So, to start this exploration I have chosen the World War One era oil on canvas painting by British artist Christopher R.W. Nevinson, titled A Dawn, 1914 (completed 1916). The painting depicts a seemingly endless march of French soldiers with rifle and bayonet progressing through a narrow street on their way to the front line in the early days of the war. It feels dreary, with only a few highlights of primary colour to break up the blue and grey. The angular and nondescript quality of each face erases their individuality, making it easy for the viewer to

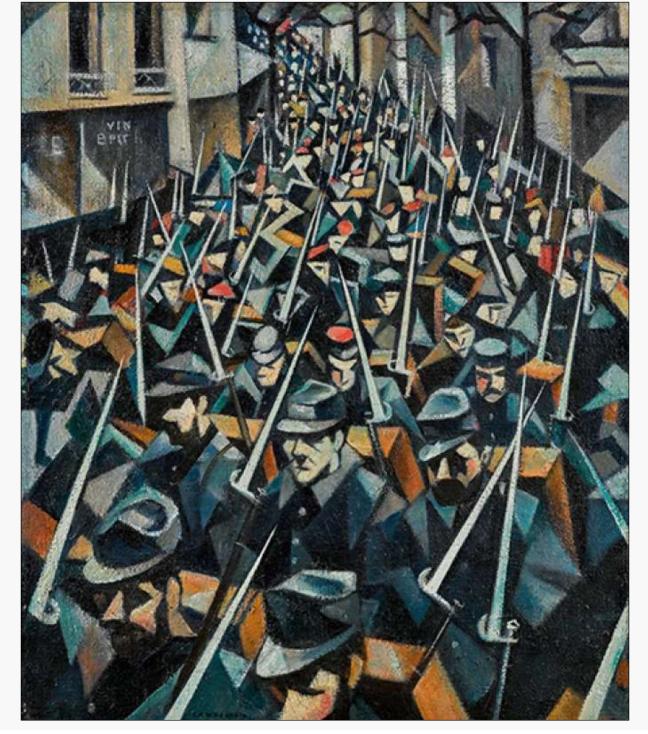
detach themselves from recognizing kith and kin amongst the unfortunate ranks. It is a relatively small painting, only 56 by 48 cm, which adds to a sense of feeling overcrowded. I'm sure most of us don't love the idea of being crushed together in a giant crowd, so it isn't hard to imagine here the sense of dreary necessity and desperation that must come with having to be a non-professional soldier called to cram into the front line of a hot war.

The practices of modern war artists in Europe grew out of the rise to prominence of corporate bodies and the decline in the wealth of the aristocracy through the latter 17th and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. As unlucky aristocrats fell to selling off their assets of rare art, newly formed corporations and civic entities alike began to snap them up for new museums and private collections. This helped create an entire body of art connoisseurs that steered the direction of art collection in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The practice really picked up during the Napoleonic wars. Napoleon had a staff of historians, scholars, and artists who knew where old and famous cultural treasures were kept. In one campaign around the

Mediterranean in the late 1790s this staff was 180 strong. War artists had to be skilled at quickly sketching – much of the work they do on the ground is illustration, quickly capturing the nuanced experiences of soldiers and civilians on all sides of the conflict. While armies tended to hire dedicated artists for campaigns, many fine pieces (such as this one) have also been created by enthusiasts among the ranks as well as civilian witnesses – some praise these examples for the lack of bias they represent, as sometimes official war artists were contracted to make the campaign "look favourable" for the leaders back home. The British and French were especially prolific in generating war images from their global skirmishes throughout the modern era.

Prior to the outbreak of war Nevinson had become friends with the Italian poet Filippo Marinetti, who wrote the Futurist Manifesto in 1909 (more on that next month), and this contact with the Futurist artists had a direct influence on his ideology and artistic development. Nevinson personally felt that Futurism was the most appropriate way to portray the brutality of Modern warfare. In England this manifested in Vorticism – a short-lived style that emerged in London around 1914 which touted a rejection of traditional artistic forms in favour of geometric designs and abstraction. This piece, while sharing stylistic elements with Futurism, does not express the same level of chaotic timelessness and fracture that was a key element in the Futurism of Italian artists, and in general Vorticism did not share the same desire to primarily represent elements like technology, machinery, and speed. To my eyes the work looks more like a prototype of the Deco style that would flourish in the 1920s and 30s.

Nevinson (1889-1946) was initially very eager to enlist with the British Army during the First World War but was declared unfit due to poor health. Eventually he served as a Red Cross ambulance driver and unofficial war artist in areas of France and Belgium which allowed him contact with both the war and the official artists it employed. The image has a rhythmic quality, as though the individuality of each soldier is unimportant – the sheer number of them becomes a blur to the eye, perhaps a statement about the increasing loss of life that was seen as meaningless by many observers. Nevinson helped tend to hundreds of wounded soldiers, but unfortunately suffered a terrible anxious disorder after this experience (most likely PTSD). Today Nevinson is considered to be one of the most influential English war artists of the First World War.



Christopher R. W. Nevinson, A Dawn, 1914, oil on canvas, 1914. Private collection.



#### **ARTS AND CULTURE**

## A Dawn, 1914 by Christopher R. W. Nevinson, continued...

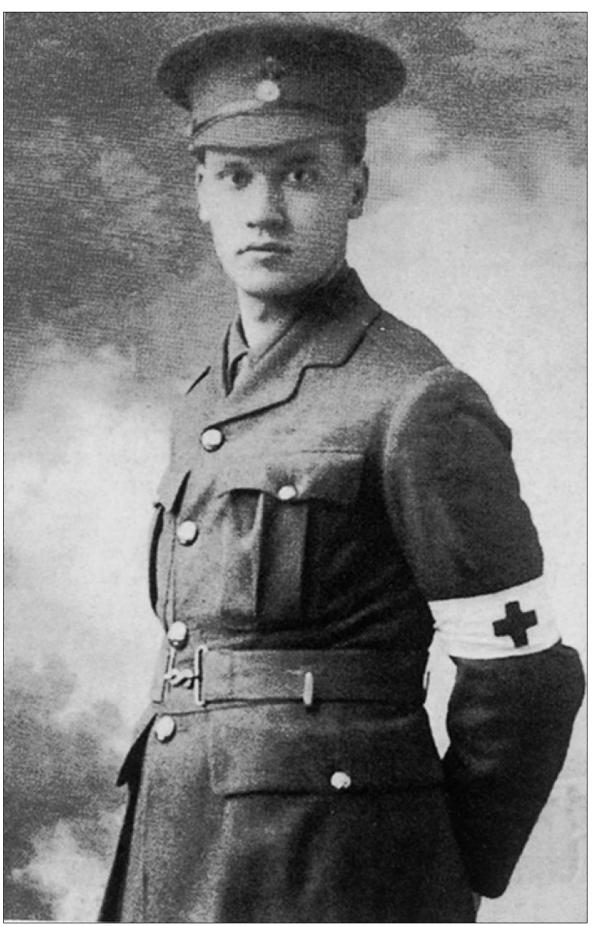
#### **DEREK OXLEY**

Conflict and war can have a hugely transformative impact on cultures in several ways. Looting (spoils, plunder) or destruction of cultural icons is demoralizing to the vanquished, who then might experience a loss of faith in their cultural symbols and practices. Often all sides of a conflict end up adopting some technological methods and artistic styles from each other, which in turn can change the production and function of art. Throughout history, the victors of military conflicts have considered it their right to take valuable art objects from defeated states back to their capital cities, often putting them on display in acts of self or state aggrandizement. When sacred objects are removed the psychological effect can be even worse for the losing side. The theft of religious objects is frowned on by some, considered taboo by others, but that has rarely stopped it in practice. The spoils of wealthy religious sites have been a major part of financing large military campaigns for thousands of years. Sites famed for pilgrimages had difficulty hiding their wealth, making them welcome targets during military campaigns. There is a phenomenon called the "migration of stones" which refers to the taking of serviceable building materials (usually stone and marble) from an old or conquered building to help construct a new one. This 'spolia', as it is called, adds layers of meaning to the new façade. This also happens with cultural artwork, which is taken as spoils of war and given over to numerous ends including repurposing, altering, or melting down for raw materials.

Let me spin a short yarn that spans 1500 years that I think helps give a good perspective of this. Over the course of the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE the western Roman Empire fell into serious decline while the eastern Roman Empire (centered around Constantinople) remained stable. As Constantinople grew in power it started a program of aggrandizement, brining spolia from far and wide to adorn construction projects in the new capital. One of these pieces was an obelisk from Egypt that had been standing near the temple of Karnak since the 15<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Egypt was a Roman province at this time, and so could do nothing to prevent this decision. What survived the journey was placed in the enormous Hippodrome (like a racetrack stadium) as decoration. To adorn the gates of this grand stadium a series of bronze horses were placed. But while the obelisk remains there to this day, the bronze horses do not. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century CE, the Byzantine Empire was in decline, having been sacked and occupied by the Venetian Republic in 1204. Venice was a rising star at this time, and it decided the bronze horses would look better adorning the Basilica of San Marco. The wealth that flowed into Venice helped pave the way for their renaissance with its grand artistic and construction projects, including the famous altarpiece for the church of San Zacharia. And while the bronze horses are still in Venice, this altarpiece was taken by the armies of Napoleon after the Republic fell to the French in 1797. You see how this is going.

The sacking of one great city leads inevitably to the growth of others, although this is probably of little comfort to those on the ground facing it in real time, fighting to sustain life as they know it.

I'll leave it there for today. Next month we will continue to explore how war and conflict have affected international relations and museum practices in more recent times.



Christopher R.W. Nevinson.

#### Sources:

Demus, Otto, *The Church of San Marco in Venice: History, Architecture, and Sculpture* Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library, Harvard. 1960.

Facos, Michelle. Nineteenth-Century Art. New York and London: Routledge. 2011.

Gazzola, Piero. "Social and Economic Factors in Assessing the Value of our Monumental Heritage," in *The Past in the Future*. Rome: International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and the Restoration of Cultural Property. 1969.

Gould, Cecil. *Trophy of Conquest: The Musée Napoléon and the Creation of the Louvre.* London: Faber and Faber. 1965.

Mango, Cyril, "Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder" in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol. 17. Trustees for Harvard University Press. 1963.



#### **JANET'S JOTTINGS**

### A Little Bird Told Me

#### **JANET SCOTT**

As I sit here with snow drifting and decorating our beautiful Island in a soft lacy, fluffy shawl, wrapping the trees and posts in bridal veils, and decorating the bushes and fences with tiny diamonds and pearls. Not only that landscape all around the old farmhouse, but Chris and family have built a man of snow with a brimmed hat. They have also created a dog and kindly created a dish of snow for him. Looking around one would think it was winter, BUT NO, a little bird told me it is almost spring!

The European starlings are lining up on the deck railing to steal cat food from our feral, visiting cat and annoy my inside cats lined up at the patio door. These birds are native to Europe but were introduced to North America in 1800 by a lover of everything Shakespeare. They now number in the millions. They don't migrate but their physical appearance is telling me it's spring. They are changing their dark beaks of winter for the yellow beaks they will wear in the summer. They are moulting slowly from their star studded, warm brown winter coats into the iridescent, purple, black feathers of the summer. This tells me spring is just around the corner, ready to appear.

Sign number 2 was the arrival this week of redwinged blackbirds at my feeder joining the usual starlings and cowbirds that were breakfasting there. I thought it was rather early, but I see in my records that Sally Bowen recorded them February 21st in 2020. She was well ahead of me. The next day was warmer and I heard that familiar "Oh-ka-ree" coming from the tops of the poplar trees.



Snowy owl.



Mourning dove.



European starling with yellow beak and iridescent spring feathers.



Red-winged blackbird.

That week Bonnie Livingstone driving me around the island looking for snowy owls pointed out that the pussy willows were swelling with little catkins in the willow bushes along the Sylvester-Gallagher Conservation area. Another promise of spring! Their cousins, the weeping willows in gardens and fields that we saw as we drove along the island roads were turning a brilliant yellow green, as their fronds danced in the breeze.

The brave little horned larks were back along the edge of the Stella Forty-foot picking away in the gravel looking for seeds and insects in the plowed edges. The western race with white foreheads will nest in our fields as soon as bare patches show among the snowy fields but the horned larks with yellow foreheads are migrating to nesting areas around Hudson Bay where the myriads of insects will feed their young.

The common ravens on the island are in nesting mode. The ravens at the McKinney Farm and at Rossland are already nesting and the ravens at the Fleming Family Farm were carrying some branches the other day so must be renovating a bit at the old nest. The ravens have increased in numbers on Amherst Island since I first started birding here in 1984. Now we see more ravens than American crows.

The rock pigeons and mourning doves have no sense of propriety, they are showing off to the females and so involved in their strutting and puffing up that they are easy pickings for the resident Cooper's hawks.

If you like gymnastics watch the crazy antics of the common goldeneye, known as whistlers by the sound they make as they take off from the water. They throw their heads right back on their backs as a move to attract the darker female. Meanwhile the young bald eagles are catching ducks along the icy edges of the open water ponds off the South Shore.

The local Canada geese are pairing up and heading off into the island fields to begin their 28 day sit on the eggs through, snow, rain, sleet and ice as they defend them from foxes, coyotes, and raccoons for the next month until the end of April when suddenly proud parents lead out their broods and everywhere we see goslings grazing on the green grass of home.

Yes, yes, a little bird or many little birds have told me that spring is right around the corner. Enjoy.





## Amherst Island Community Medical Clinic



WENDY SHELLEY

#### **Don't miss our upcoming AICMC Information Events**

After the success of our "Living with Arthritis" information session last November, we have been planning to arrange more **Public Information Events** on a variety of **Health and Wellness** subjects in 2022.

April 11, 2022 at 1:00 pm, come to our "Happy Feet" Information Event at St Paul's Presbyterian Church. Jenn Morris, Registered Foot Care Nurse will be talking about the importance and benefits of regular foot care. Learn some tips and techniques to keep your feet happy and healthy.

May 11th, 2022 at 1:00 pm, also at St Paul's, Melissa Smith RN, a Diabetes Nurse Educator with the Napanee Area Community Health Centre, will be talking about **Diabetes**. Melissa is sure to have some tips we all can use for healthier living.

Both these Information Events promise to provide information all of us can apply to our daily lives, that will enable us to remain active in our community.

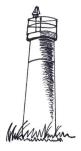
Everyone is welcome. All current **Covid** protocols: masking, distancing and use of hand sanitizer will be respected. If you are feeling unwell, we ask that you stay at home.

Keep your eyes open for further information on our **Website**: <a href="https://amherst-island-community-medical-clinic.constantcontactsites.com/">https://amherst-island-community-medical-clinic.constantcontactsites.com/</a> Should you want to contact us, our Email address is: <a href="mailto:aicmc2021@gmail.com">aicmc2021@gmail.com</a> Look for more information in next month's Beacon.

Wendy Shelley



Photographed by Don Woodiwiss Photography, <a href="https://woodiwissphotography.com/">https://woodiwissphotography.com/</a>.





#### **COMMUNITY HISTORY**

## School Bus Driving

#### IAN MURRAY

In the 1980s, Topsy Farms was really poor. Buying fencing, grain, and other vital supplies at retail prices, but selling our meat and wool at wholesale prices made farming more of a challenge than usual.

We did not yet have the retail wool business. Our only decent source of farm income was meat sales in the fall. The costs of shearing were far higher than the return on wool; this is an ongoing reality for sheep farmers.

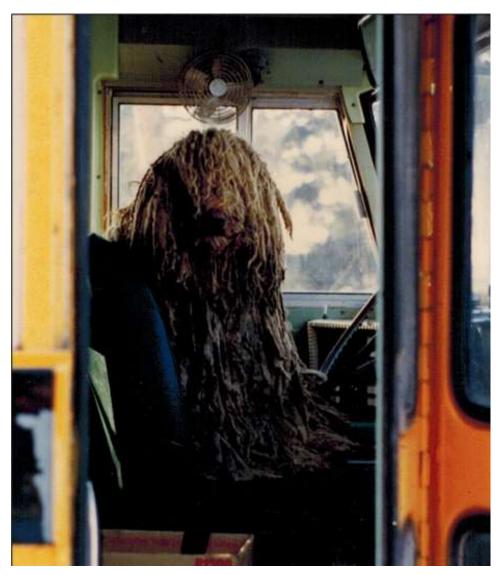
So, when the retiring island school bus driver asked her backup driver Christopher Kennedy if he wanted the bus job, he said yes. School bus driving is a good source of income for a small, struggling farm. The driving times are regular, and the farm work can (usually) bend around those times. Chris, Sally (Bowen) and I shared the driving.

I liked the morning run as there was always something interesting to see; such as, sunrises, critters, the lake - and the passengers were mostly groggy - missing their warm beds.

The afternoon run usually interfered with farm work, so Chris and I were always relieved when Sally drove the more rambunctious kids home.

At that stage we had two cows needing to be milked in the morning and evening and two little kids: Jake had just started school, but Kyle was still at home. We were slowly building our breeding flock to over 1000 ewes, so chores, fencing, haying, and all the other tasks were demanding. We were trying to expand and improve farm buildings and resources as well.

The morning driver had to leave home at 6:30am, which was hard on Leah who had to leave with the bus, circle the island for the high school kids in time for the 8am ferry, and then around again for the public school kids. The bus circled the island with both groups together in the afternoon.



Bear, Topsy Farms' Komondor dog, in the school bus driver's seat.

Chris remembers driving in some terrible weather, with roads narrowed to one lane and visibility down to a few feet due to blowing snow. He put on his flashing lights and prayed he wouldn't literally run into the snowplough. He recalls that the spring run-off on the south part of the Emerald 40 Foot could completely cover the road with water over the step of the bus. The kids thought this was great fun. The driver was just hoping not to flood the engine or find the ditch.

One afternoon in early fall, a very small person completely swathed and in coat, hat, mitts, and scarf, with only the eyes visible, came onto the bus and said in a whisper "I'm going to Grandma's". At that time, nobody had notes or anything about where kids should go. Chris was trying to figure out who this was, so he asked, what's your Grandma's name? "Grandma" was the reply. He had worked out who she was, which left two possibilities. The next query, where does Grandma live? "At Grandma's house". Realizing that a total collapse was imminent, he called an older cousin from the back of the bus, who figured out the destination.

We were always aware that our cargo was precious; the next generation of our island was on the bus.

Once, Sally was driving during freezing rain, trying to go fast enough to catch the ferry while trying desperately not to land in the lake. The roads were not nearly as well graded then as they are now. The South Shore Road sloped slightly towards the water in a few places. On one slick stretch, the back end of the bus started to slide. Sally decided there were worse consequences than being late for the ferry.

I liked the kids. It helped to know most of their parents and grandparents. Two of the public school girls would keep a sharp eye out for balloons caught on fences or bushes. They would call out and I'd pause the bus for a balloon rescue. Sometimes there would be a message attached.

Once, I stopped to pick up a snapping turtle that the kids took to school. It was the subject of much study and interest. The turtle went back on the bus in a very flimsy box to be returned. Breaking out of the box, it was free ranging under the driver's feet. One of the older boys took it out, to Sally's relief, returning on the side of the road where it was found, to continue digging a nest for her eggs.

Sally had crazy spring hay fever, so wore what the kids called a Darth Vader helmet that filtered air in spring so she could drive. It is impossible to sneeze with your eyes open, and driving a school bus with your eyes shut, isn't best practise.

We all enjoyed learning more about the Island, its families, the names not only of the little kids, but the dogs and some cats too.

But it was a relief when a few years later, our farm economy eased sufficiently to pass on the responsibility for driving Island kids to the public school and to meet the ferry for the high school.

We were replaced by 2 busses and 2 drivers.



Ian Murray and Bear the Komondor.





#### **COMMUNITY HISTORY**

## ISLE Cheese Order

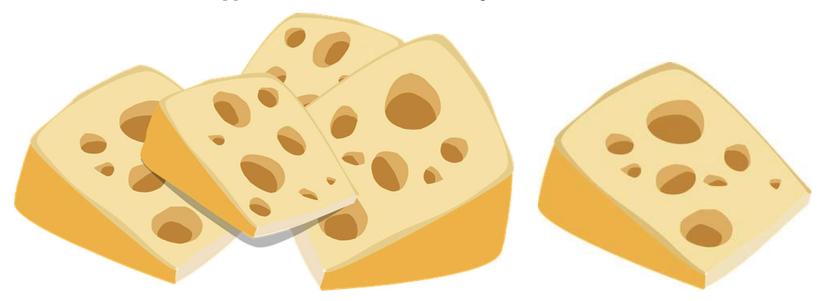


## **ISLE CHEESE ORDER**

Email your order to amherstislandisle@gmail.com

PRODUCT	PRICE
	(\$ per pound approx.)
Extra Mild (tastes like curd in cheese form!)	\$8.94/lb
Mild Cheddar	\$8.94/lb
Medium Cheddar white / colour (please specify)	\$10.00/lb
Old Cheddar white / colour (please specify)	\$10.00/lb
Extra Old Cheddar white/ colour (please specify)	\$11.42/lb
Colby	\$8.94/lb
Mozzarella	\$8.94/lb
Mozzarella- Grated	\$9.36/lb
Grated Casserole (Cheddar and mozzarella)	\$8.94/lb
Onion and Garlic	\$10.00/lb
Hot Pepper	\$10.00/lb
Marble	\$10.00/lb
Swiss	\$10.99/lb
Havarti	\$13.06/lb

- The funds raised from the ISLE cheese order goes toward the Amherst Island Public School (busses for field trips, weekly lunches, and contributions to bigger ticket items such as playground upgrades).
- The cheese order happens every month, with pickup happening at the school.
- Contact amherstislandisle@gmail.com for more information, or to place an order!







#### **ISLAND VIEWS**

## Wildlife Photography

#### FRED LEMIRE



A fox yawning. Photographed by Fred Lemire Photography, http://www.fredlemirephotography.com/galleryf-oxes.

#### **QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES**



A rare photograph of the ice road to Amherst Island, from the Queen's University Archives. Les Glenn and Harry Filson, with the dog named Chief.



#### **CLASSIFIEDS**

### Support Local Businesses

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

community pharmacy

We provide free drop-off of prescriptions to the Amherst Island ferry. We have a virtual walk-in clinic inside the pharmacy. We are also providing the flu shot this season, no appointments necessary.



## **Store Services**

- Quick & Easy Prescription Transfers
- Convenient Medication Packaging
- MedAlign Manage, Review & Synchronization
- Free Local Delivery\*
- Diabetic & Ostomy Supplies
- Vitamins & Supplements
- Home Health Care Products
- Footcare Clinic
  - ...and more! \*see store for details



\*To be eligible for the discount, a customer must be at least 60 years of age. Valid at participatir Pharmasave Ontario locations only. Does not include prescriptions, products with codeine, insulin, Ideal Protein products, lottery tickets, gift and phone cards. Cannot be combined with any other offer. Other restrictions may apply. See store for details.







#### **CLASSIFIEDS**

## Support Local Businesses

#### 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-2pm and Saturdays 11am-2pm. Check us out at www.lodgecoffeehouse.com

#### **Rossland Gallery**

## rossland gallery

rosbilt.com · bijouxbead.com

stringed metal instruments artisanal glass jewellery

by appointment gallery@rosslandgardens.com

#### **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

#### 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 Chad Osmond, who relamped the star on Dayle's silo, where the various antennas are now. We all appreciate having that star shining once again.

#### **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.

#### Thank-you!

Thank you to David Pickering, who diligently posts each issue of *The Beacon* as a downloadable PDF online at: <a href="http://amherstisland.on.ca/Beacon/">http://amherstisland.on.ca/Beacon/</a>.

### The Beacon

#### Available to Read at:

- Issue 497 of *The Beacon* will be available in print, for \$5 at McGinn's General Store, Stella, ON.
- 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="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.