

The Townships Sun

Townships Life & Culture: Past, Present, and Future



Photo by Courtney Williams.

Greenery in February, a photo spread to beat the long winter p. 4

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Mountain Lions in the Townships p. 8

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The Townships Sun

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The Townships Sun, P.O. Box 28, Lennoxville post office, Sherbrooke, QC J1M 1Z3
Tel: 819•566•7424 E-mail contact@townshipssun.ca Website www.townshipssun.ca

Canada 

The 16th Annual Robin Burns Lecture

By the Eastern Townships Resource Centre



Soldiers from the Townships circa WWI

Photos courtesy of ETRC

The Eastern Townships and World War I

The Eastern Townships Resource Centre invites you to attend the 16th Annual Robin Burns Lecture on Wednesday, February 26, 2015, at 7:00 pm, in the Cleghorn Common Room (McGreer) on the Bishop's University campus. On the centenary of the First World War, the Centre has invited author and historian Michel Litalien from the Canadian Forces Museums and Historical Collections of the Department of National Defence.

When Canada entered the war in August 1914, the Eastern Townships was already well aware of military and defence issues. Because of its particular location, the region had been historically compelled to militarize as it had to be ready at all times to repel a most threatening neighbour who had tried to push its way in a few times. Around 1880, few were the towns and villages that did not have at least one military unit or sub-unit. Therefore, on the eve of WWI, Sherbrooke and its region already had two cavalry brigades, one infantry brigade, artillery units and auxiliary units.

In August 1914, although Minister of Militia and Defence Sam Hughes chose not to mobilize the non-permanent active Militia units for active duty, several of their members quickly volunteered to fight on the European front. With its two linguistic communities, the region became a very interesting recruitment territory for the Canadian Expeditionary Force and several Montreal battalions even set up recruiting centres directly in the region.

Many Townships citizens distinguished themselves throughout the conflict. For example, rather than merely encourage its citizens to enrol, Lieutenant-colonel George Harold Baker, a federal MP, acted on his beliefs and volunteered in the Canadian Expeditionary Force. He would also be the only politician to fall in the line of duty. As for the 5th Canadian Mounted Rifles, a unit raised in the region, two of its members received the Victoria Cross, the highest military valour decoration of the British Empire. The instances of bravery from Eastern Townships' citizens on the European front were numerous...

The event is free and all are welcome. Refreshments will be served after the lecture. Please RSVP to etrc@ubishops.ca

About our guest speaker:

*Michel Litalien was a member of the Canadian Forces for more than 25 years. He is now working with the Directorate of History and Heritage at the Department of National Defence in Ottawa as manager of the Canadian Forces Museums and Historical Collections. His passion for history has earned him a Masters' in History at the University of Ottawa and he is newly enrolled in a PhD program at the Université de Montpellier in France. Michel Litalien has authored 10 books on the military history of Quebec, notably *Les Fusiliers de Sherbrooke, 1910-2010 : L'épopée d'une institution des Cantons-de-l'Est* which also addresses the history of the region.*

For more information contact Fabian Will, Executive Director ETRC

How to Beat the Winter

Photos taken by Courtney Williams



Bouquet of colours



Vividly coloured orchid



Roses



Branches, leaves, ferns, and ivy

Soothing sounds of water



Icing Sugar Magic

By Christine Eva Aspinall

Sifting swiftly o'er the hills,
Icing sugar swirls and spills,
Small tornadoes curl and twist,
Against a background hazed with mist.

Surging through the bare-boned trees,
Icing sugar crests on seas
Of basic white, with sculptured trim,
Waves and ripples formed at whim.

Shifting clouds of stormy froth,
Icing sugar lays a cloth
Of muted mauve enlaced with blue,
The whole a weave of mystic hue.

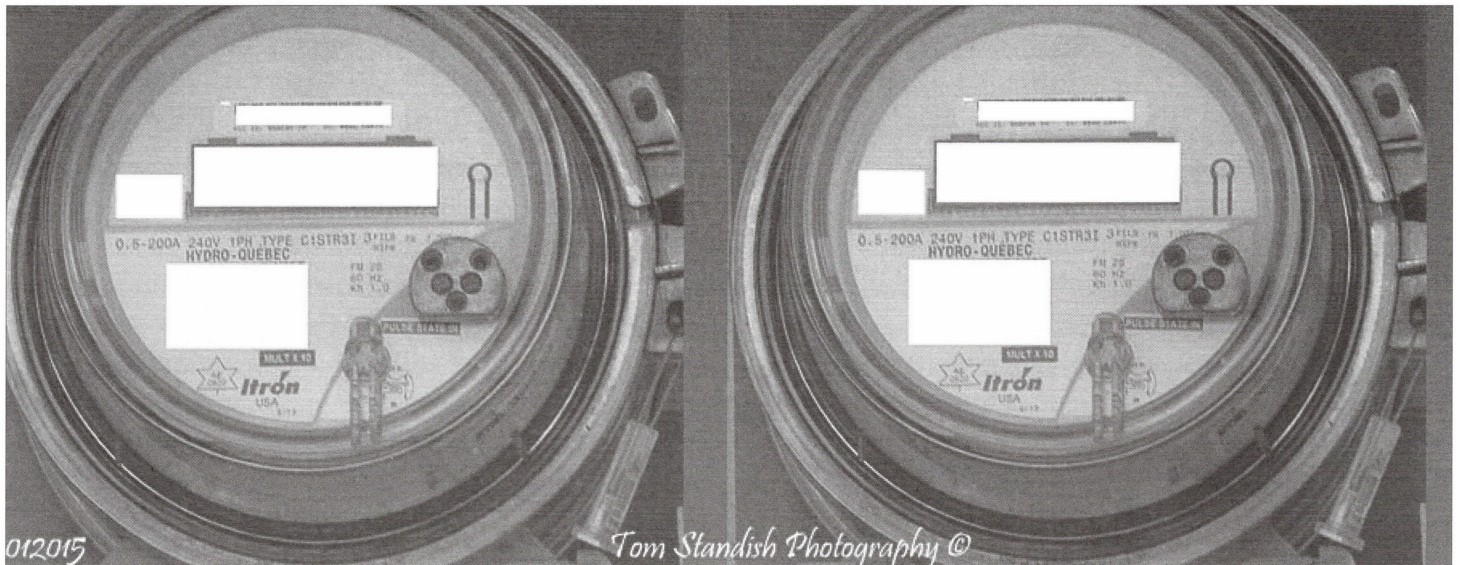
Drifting plumes trail frosty air,
Icing sugar angel hair!
Stark silhouettes when powdered white,
Softly blur and fade from sight.

The wind retreats from gathering dusk,
Icing sugar's fluted crust gleams golden
'Neath the moon's chill beams,
The landscape soothed by icy dreams.

English Canadian Quebecers Rant here

Hydro and the so-called smart meters

By Tom Standish



Smart meters need a closer look

Photo by Tom Standish

Since mid December I have been following a series of complaints made from Hydro Quebec customers.

Three in particular, have attracted my attention as I find that somehow things are not adding up except for the total of their hydro bill.

One customer's bill has jumped 62%, another 55% and almost 70%.

There is one coincidence; they all have a thermo pump, also all have the new smart meters. One customer has plans of letting a small claims court judge decide his fate.

All three also claim to be trying to reduce their consumption and yet see their bills explode in astronomical proportion.

Here are some comments of from members of the English Canadian Quebecers Rant page, a Facebook group I help manage:

I think there is an issue with those meters! Probably not designed to be used in this part of the country due to the

temperatures, glad I don't have one!

Mine is actually lower so far. Wonder why? But not arguing.

This is scary. Prior to Hydro changing our old meters, I asked the Hydro tech if I was forced to. He gave me a dirty look and told me all that news about Smart Meters and it's effects are false...and proceeded to install the new meters. I was so totally against it!

They have us by the throats...glad someone is taking a stand. I tried to fight their \$600 deposit policy with a lawyer...to no avail, then get a bill for three months for \$800 was the coldest winter of my life. Gotta grin and bear it. Or freeze your knickers off.

OMG \$600 deposit!

That's crazy, it's costing some people double now and they couldn't afford it before. A class action is the only way to go.

For more info please join our Facebook group: "English Canadian Quebecers Rant here."

Mountain Lions in the Townships

By John Viau

Over the last 13 years or so, there have been multiple confirmed sightings of mountain lions in the state of New York and the southwestern sector of the province of Quebec. Following, in chronological order, is a list of several sightings dating back to the year 2000.

Nov. 5, 2000 – It was the second day of the Whitetail Deer hunting season in southwestern Quebec. Eddy Westlake and his partner were out hunting on Covey Hill which runs parallel to the state of New York international border. They had planned on swapping places sometime after breakfast so around 9:30 a.m. Eddy set off from his deer stand, at the bottom of the farm, and slowly made his way uphill towards his partner's stand. He reached the crest of the hill and continued to stalk along the international border. Suddenly something large dashed out from behind a clump of small cedar trees and stopped dead in the middle of the trail. Startled, Eddy couldn't believe his eyes! He studied the motionless animal for a minute or two and yes sree, the tawny hide, long tail and baleful stare confirmed that what he was looking at was indeed one enormous mountain lion! Eddy quickly hoisted his seven-millimeter Browning semi-automatic rifle to his shoulder, aimed and stood ready to fire if necessary. But the big cat was just as surprised as Eddy and after pausing momentarily, it bounded off in two big leaps and soundlessly disappeared into the thick brush on the New York side of the border.

To this day Eddy loves to retell the story about his close encounter with the ever elusive mountain lion and swears that what he saw was indeed the real deal!

Feb. 5, 2001 7:45 a.m. – Tony Evangelisto, an accomplished hunter, woodsman and U.S. Customs Inspector based in Churbusco, New York, was on his way to work at the Churbusco customs office which is located in close proximity to Franklin Centre, in

southwestern Quebec. He was travelling along a rural road when suddenly, a large mountain lion jumped out in front of him and stopped in the middle of the road. Tony slammed on the brakes and came to a stop about 50 feet away from the surprised animal. They stared at each other for a minute or two before the big cat ran off into a snow-covered hayfield where it stopped to look back at Tony. Tony grabbed his binoculars, which he keeps on the seat beside him, and quickly honed in on the big cat. The mountain lion stood motionless for quite some time and then bounded off toward the nearby bush. It stopped one last time, to take a final look back at Tony, and then vanished into the depths of the dense forest.

Tony swears on his life that the animal he observed, first at close range with his very own eyes and then at a few hundred feet away through binoculars, was a very large and mature mountain lion. And you can't convince him otherwise!

Feb. 9, 2003 – 5:10 p.m. I had just finished running a trap-line on my friend's farm on Covey Hill in southwestern Quebec and I was pretty tuckered from walking in the deep snow which was over my knees in some places.

The sun was just starting to set when I heard a pack of coyotes howling from somewhere close-by. I quickly decided that, since I had been lugging my 12 gauge pump around all day, I might as well see if I could call myself in a hungry coyote. I clambered up into my favorite deer stand (the one that produced a fat deer for me for the last three years in a row) brushed the snow off my old lawn chair and made myself comfy. I shoved five loads of buckshot into the 12-gauge and started calling on my Olts T20 coyote call, which imitates the squealing of a mortally wounded snowshoe rabbit. After three series of pitiful screams I decided to give up and head home as darkness was rapidly falling and I was starting to get a chill.

Suddenly heard a slight sound from below me, and sure that it was a coyote responding to my calls, I slowly and quietly turned around in my chair. I had just started to shoulder the 12 gauge when I nearly fell out of my tree stand (not a good idea since I was 20 feet off the ground). A large mountain lion was peering up into my tree! Staring intently and perfectly immobile, except for his long twitching tail, he seemed to be studying me and perhaps pondering whether or not to attack. We locked eyes for a couple of minutes and there was no doubt about it. I was looking at a mountain lion and a really, really big one at that! It had a tawny reddish brown coat and I guess it weighed about 150 to 180 pounds and measured approximately six feet in length. And it never made a sound! I clicked off the safety (ready to defend myself if necessary) and at the sound of the safety releasing; it took off in huge eight foot bounds into the scrub brush on the New York side of the border. Shaking my head in amazement at what I had just seen, I stood there for a couple of minutes before heading back to my pickup.

I have since told several of my friends about my mountain lion adventure. Two of them believe me and one said he was sure that I'd seen a large fisher. Let me tell you, I have trapped and caught fisher for some 30 years and can say with certainty that what I saw was no dog-gone fisher.

While visiting the local conservation office in Valleyfield sometime later, I was asked to remind everyone that mountain lions are a protected species in Quebec and that under no circumstance whatsoever may they be killed. I totally agree but perhaps with this exception. If a mountain lion decided to have me or a loved one for dinner I might just object rather strongly.



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Ice

By Rose Fowler

Small brooks, backyard rinks, municipal park rinks, local arenas and frozen over ponds all host a common passion, the love of skating. Ice skating is an activity that is more of a privilege than many of us realize.

Perhaps for some people, the idea of skating on a frozen over brook in a hay field isn't viewed as a privilege, but for me as a child, it was. The long wait for the brook to freeze over thick enough for skating was an early experience with anticipation in its simplest form. There was nothing that could be done except wait and hope. With weekly inspections, one of my siblings or myself would cross the brook itself instead of crossing where there was a culvert and a small farm road. Wearing our now antique snowshoes, one of us would traverse the narrowest part of the brook hoping to not find water. The combination of those huge snowshoes, snow and water made for a heavy hike back home, as each step accumulated more packed snow underfoot. At least we managed to keep our feet dry – the length of the snowshoe prevented us from sinking our boots into the icy cold water, most of the time. The milder winter month of December would pass and sometime during a cold snap famous to January, we would discover a solid, rippled surface cutting across the vast white field. Ice!

It was a fifteen minute walk from my parents' house to this skating spot. Which meant we had to put on our skates while sitting in the snow along the bank of the brook. We had cold feet before we even got started, but that didn't stop us. From my grandparents' house, we could get there in under ten minutes and on occasion their driveway would freeze over and we could skate most of the way out to the brook. Taking a few steps in the snow banks along the side of the driveway, our skates cut through the snow like a hot knife through butter. We were glad to not have to put our skates on at the brook. All that effort for a few bumpy, teeth chattering glides up and down the length of the brook. The ripples and bumps were part of the fun that we called skating. I am

fairly certain my grandfather is the reason behind some of the smoother skating surfaces on the brook and this is why it was a privilege.

My enthusiasm for skating grew along with me and in no time at all I was pleading alongside my siblings for a backyard rink. The bumpy brook gliding became a thing of the past. The ability to step only a few feet out our basement door onto a rink, carefully maintained by our dad, became our new privilege. Skating under the stars until bedtime, with only a small porch light to push away the darkness. We were hockey players, we were speed skaters, we were the best skaters our imaginations permitted.

I always had boys' hockey skates, having an older brother decided this for me, with the exception of one winter. That one year, I had grown into a pair of hand me down girls' skates. They were beautiful white skates with pointy tips at the toes. Finally I had girls' skates to fit my narrow feet. I was so excited until I discovered the downside to those pointy tips! I often caught those tips on the ice, sending myself crashing onto the hard surface. I secretly wished I hadn't outgrown my black and white skates and I knew without a doubt that figure skating would never be a talent of mine.

I have never been great at skating. One 4H skating party at the rink up Fortier road in Melbourne made me realise there was a huge difference between gliding and skating. The ice surface was so hard and smooth – it was made for hockey – and the rink was nothing like our little backyard rink. I left that day with an appreciation for sideboards and hot chocolate, along with more than one blue bruise forming from all the falling I did.

I can't remember very many other opportunities for skating during my teen years, and it wasn't until years later that I took up skating again. My abilities are still limited. My husband can skate circles around me and he can skate faster backwards than I can skate forwards,

but I still love to be on the ice. It is something we enjoy doing together, we have many fun memories at several different rinks. Family mini hockey games at Atto Beaver park in Lennoxville. Date nights at the municipal park in North Hatley, where there was an ice path that started from the free skate rink, followed part of the river and the perimeter of the park itself, circling back to the rink. The Bishop's College School (BCS) rink where he played Sunday evening hockey, and I watched from the bleachers cheering, chattering my teeth and shivering the game away, with my trusty thermos of hot chocolate tucked to my side. We have skated on the Rideau Canal with my sister and her family. The experience was made complete with a few famous Beaver Tails and a horribly priced parking ticket. Future Rideau Canal visitors, I advise you to pay close attention to those parking rules. We have skated on the Kingsbury Pond with our boys, while my parents watched and took pictures. There was an organised hockey tournament on the pond that day. Several areas were shovelled off making enough rink spaces for such a tournament. The organisers intended to host the tournament annually, bringing back the fun of outdoor pond hockey.

Our boys learned how to skate at Bishop's University. The Sunday afternoon free skate has been a family activity for several years now. Often including grandparents, cousins and the kids who almost always run into friends. We'll start our daughter on the ice there this season, with family and friends to help cheer her along and of course a little hot chocolate for after skating. We also enjoy the Waterville free skate rink, especially in the evenings. They have a hockey rink as well and I know some day my boys will be bringing their sticks and switching over to the other ice for a game with friends. I will likely be on the sidelines with cheers, chills, chattering teeth and a thermos of hot chocolate tucked to my side.

Fond memories made over something as simple as ice. Yet, if you were to ask any of the people who maintain these surfaces, they would tell you there is nothing simple about ice. And, if you ever attempt to make a backyard rink, as my husband and I have done in the past, you would whole heartedly understand why I believe ice skating is a privilege given to us, by those who dedicate their time and passion to the ice.

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Bannock

An easy outdoor campfire treat

By Nancy Beattie



A couple of happy snowshoers, Ada and Everett, stopped for a fireside bannock snack in the woods on a beautiful January day.

Photo by Nancy Beattie

One of my treasured childhood memories is of roasting bannock bread over a campfire. Whether at Girl Guide camp in the summer or on a cross-country ski trek in our woods, bannock was a favourite outdoor snack. While traditional bannock made by Aboriginal peoples of North America is made of ingredients native to their environment, my preferred recipe is simply wheat flour, butter, baking powder, a little sugar and salt. (Read on for a history of bannock).

With children of my own now enjoying outdoor adventures, bannock has become a favourite of theirs as well. They are capable of mixing the ingredients before we leave home and very happy to roast their own balls or “worms” of dough wrapped around a green stick over the fire. A fire with a lot of hot coals is ideal for bannock. Our preference has been for balls of dough about 1 1/2” in diameter as these will cook in about five minutes. “Worms” (thick strands of dough) are also very tasty, ideal for accompanying a camp meal, but usually take closer to 20 minutes to cook which is more patience than my children can muster at times, particularly as the scent of hot bread wafts past their noses!

Bannock is delicious on its own hot off the fire, but for a treat, a little container of butter and another of cinnamon and sugar to roll the final product in also delectable.

As a word of caution, bannock can be baked in an oven or over the barbecue, but it will never be quite as good as outside over a good campfire.

Enjoy!

Bannock Recipe

2 cups flour

4 tsp baking powder

4 tbsp butter

2 tsp white sugar

1/2 tsp salt

1/2 cups cold water

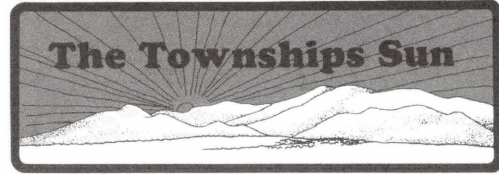
Mix the first five ingredients until the mixture is crumbly. Add water and mix until dough forms (if outside in the summer, this can be done entirely in a zip lock bag, adding the water only just before cooking it.)

Shape dough into balls or snake like strands. Place on stick and roast.

The History of Bannock

The Aboriginal staff of life, bannock is common to the diet of virtually all North America's First Peoples. The European version of bannock originated in Scotland and was made traditionally of oatmeal. The bannock of Aboriginal people was made of corn and nut meal, and flour made from ground plant bulbs. There were many regional variations of bannock that included different types of flour, and the addition of dried or fresh fruit. Traditionally, First Nation groups cooked their bannock by various methods. Some rolled the dough in sand then pit-cooked it. When it was done, they brushed the sand off and ate the bread. Some groups baked the bannock in clay or rock ovens. Other groups wrapped the dough around a green, hardwood stick and toasted it over an open fire. Pioneers may have introduced leavened breads to the Aboriginal people. The use of leavened breads spread and adapted from there. Pioneers also introduced cast-iron frying pans that made cooking bannock quicker and easier. Today, bannock is most often deep-fried, pan-fried and oven-baked. Bannock is one of the most popular and widespread native foods served at pow wows, Indian cowboy rodeos, festivals, and family gatherings.

From www.for.gov.bc.ca/rsi/fnb/fnb.htm



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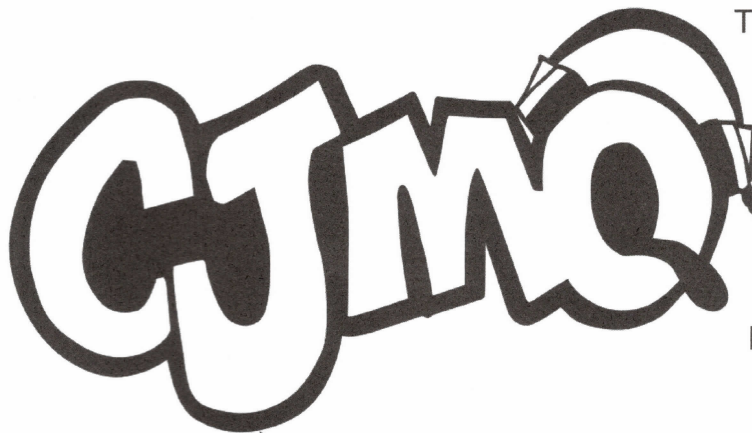
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A Return to Self-Government

By Bill Pardy

I began to write this article about the growing void between politics and democracy as we face elections in Newfoundland and Labrador and in Canada in 2015. It transformed as it unfolded.

We will be soon inundated with American political rhetoric as the stampede begins to replace Obama in the United States. Politics is much the topic of international news with wars and conflicts everywhere as people vie for power.

But, much of this is to disguise the real problems affecting the world and the people who inhabit it. The challenges of environmental destruction, polarization of wealth and assets and the growing threat of those disenfranchised through terrorist actions are but a few of the global concerns.

Resolutions to these dilemmas appear lacking and leadership mostly inept.

No country is exempt from these issues and their impacts and no leader or political system powerful enough to alter the destructive trajectory that the world appears to have taken. The potential for societal destruction and human demise is much more evident than at any time in the history of humanity.

Democratic political systems, especially in North America, but almost everywhere appear to be controlled by the few not the many. Lost is the concept of “government for and by the people”.

Yet, as we see in the US, Canada and in Newfoundland, politics is no longer about issues and policies, but about personalities, power and ego. It's about how politicians can manipulate and control the people so that their power can be retained.

In Canada, many such manipulative tactics are evident. One only has to consider the fact that the 2015 budget is being delayed, and speculation is being floated on the timing of the election; even though there is now a law dictating its date.

In Newfoundland we have a government deciding to change the whole electoral boundary landscape in the hope it can retain power.

It appears that many of these political strategies are designed to create apathy and dissuade people from voting, because of the perceived advantage to the party in power.

People are asking what is the answer and what can I do. Most feel that there is no answer and there is nothing to be done. They perhaps surmise that another great war, world depression or environmental disaster is inevitable. Some even postulate that we are facing the end of time.

Nowhere evident

Policies and potential solutions to the ills of the country and this province are nowhere evident. Yet, people feel economically vulnerable, politically disenfranchised and many are without hope.

There is an alternative resolution that is evident throughout the world in places facing the greatest human challenges and where destitution is knocking on their doors.

This solution involves individual initiative and collective action. It means taking a stand for beliefs and what is important. It is not right nor left, religious nor political; even though some would argue that all actions are political.

It is spiritual, as it emanates from each person's inner most desire and will to live and be free. It starts from one's genuine beliefs, their circumstance, where they live and begins in their homes, on their street and in their neighbourhood.

It doesn't require great knowledge, although some would suggest such activities should be left to professionals or those with credentials. Neither does it need large amounts of capital, despite perceived funding shortages; nor does it call for sophisticated systems and programs, albeit that is the focus of most current local development activities.

It does though require thoughtfulness, care, consideration and compassion for all who share the world, especially those closest. Most of all it requires dialogue, communications and tolerance.

It is neither immediate nor easy and takes time, action and perseverance.

This approach was evident in local development throughout Canada (and in many other countries) during the Great Depression and also in the 1960s and 1970s when similar local development movements appeared; many with the support and direction of governments.

It is a process which became known as community development.

The concept is based on individual and local power and communal action. It is not new, it is not unique and is not complex; despite all the jargon and sophisticated language that now surrounds it by the institutions that try to manage and control it.

It has been proven throughout history that when enough people get together to deal with an issue or desire that their actions can be transformative. There are many examples to cite over the past number of years. Most vivid were those movements which toppled abusive leaders and corrupt governments through the collective action of people.


Such a movement was evident recently in Paris when so many people and world leaders came together with a common belief and a necessity to act.

If this people approach were emulated on a local level in many countries in the world consider the transformation that could happen in a global context. It then could be truly said that we have people power.

Most importantly, political leaders would perhaps come to realize that the world is not about them. They might understand that it is about the collective "us" and how we interact with each other and our now so fragile environment.


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Bill Pardy lives part of the time in Corner Brook. He is a member of The Western Star's Community Editorial Board.



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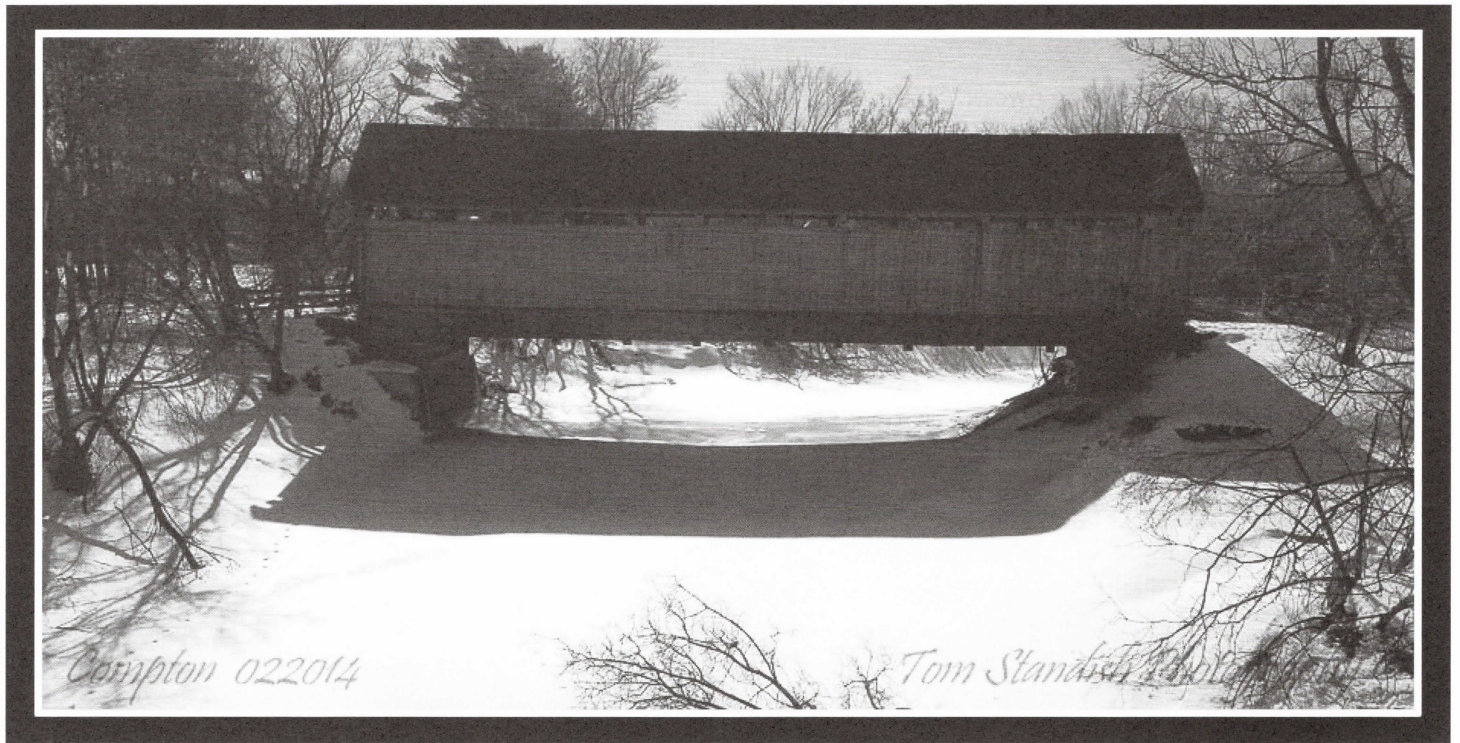


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Covered Bridges in The Eastern Townships

By Tom Standish, photos and text



Waterville/Compton

1 of 88 covered bridges in the province Located between Waterville and Compton this bridge was constructed in 1889 at a cost of \$ 908.50, by Daniel Saultry:

The Coaticook Gorge

Built in 1998 this covered bridge replaces the original of 1887. That was demolished in 1979, because of age and wear and tear:

