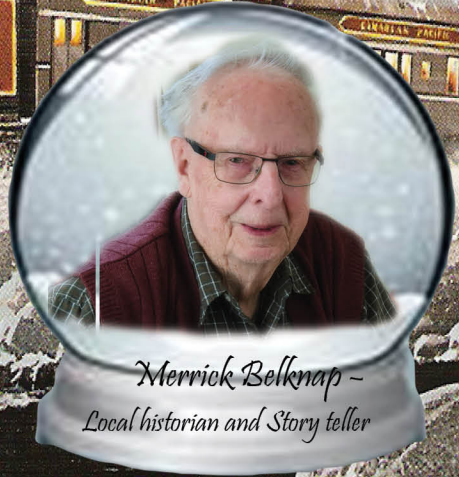
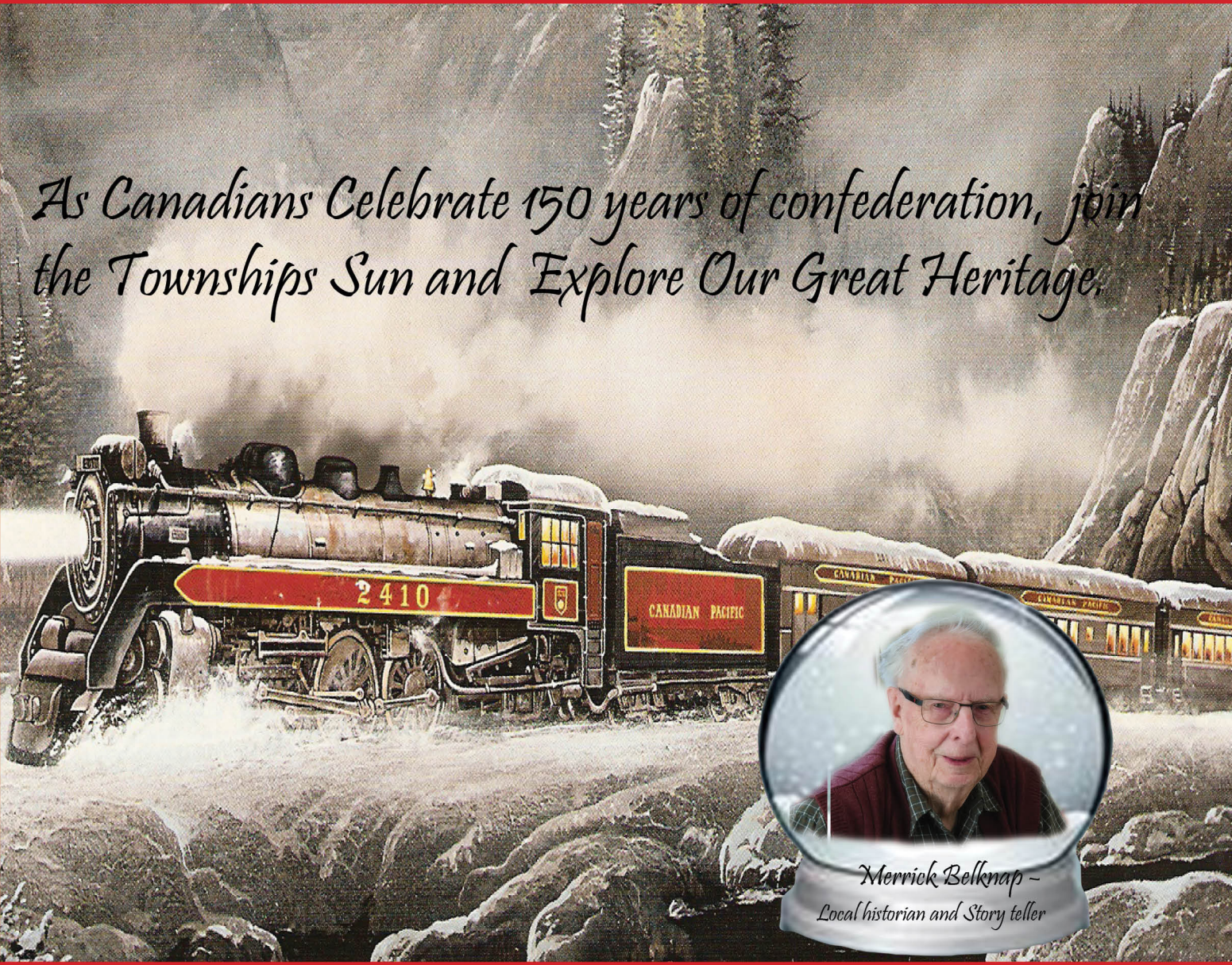




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*Merrick Belknap -
Local historian and Story teller*



Vol. 44, No. 6 January - February 2017

\$2.50

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***Front and back covers designed by Tom Standish**

The projected date for the next publication of *The Townships Sun* is
 March 13th.
 Please send your submissions to Barbara Heath at heathba@b2b2c.ca by
 February 5th.



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Since 1972

The Townships Sun Inc. is a non-profit volunteer organization
 publishing the Townships Sun 9 times a year.

Member of: QCNA (Quebec Community Newspapers Association) and CARD
 (Canadian Advertising Rates & Data). Registered with La Bibliotheque
 Nationale de Québec. Publication Mail Agreement: #2814293.
 Subscriptions \$25, U.S. addresses \$30.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through
 the Canada Periodical Fund (CPF) for our publishing activities and from
 the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications of Quebec in the form
 of Project and Operational Grants, and of the financial support from the
 Townshippers Foundation.

The Sun welcomes manuscripts, letters, photos, and anecdotes. Submissions
 should include the contributor's full name, phone number and address.

The Adventures of Grandal the Seagoing Centipede

By Alex Martel

Grandal the centipede lived on an old Irish ship that had one blue funnel. One day, the big old ship started sinking. Grandal Centipede did not know why. Later he would learn why his ship went down. At that moment, Grandal was saying [in his Scottish accent], "My, oh my, I must find something to float on. With that, he crawled onto a crate of potato flakes and off he floated to sea.

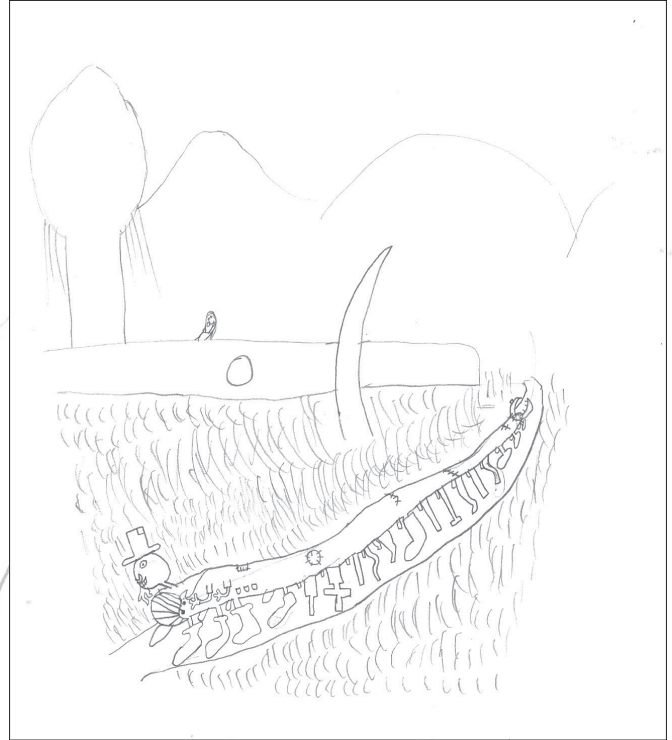
The next day, Grandal was on a rocky shore. He was off his crate, looking into the distance. He could see three tall skyscrapers and two small apartments with signs on them. "This must be the famous city of Liverpool I was told about," Grandal said. He started to walk, but stopped and said to himself, "I think I should only travel for food," but he kept on walking. When he got to the city, there was a lot of noise. First he tried sushi. "How good," he thought to himself. He wrapped some in a piece of paper he found. After walking through the market and looking around, Grandal realized that the tide must be coming in. "OH, NO!" Grandal yelled out, realizing that his crate might float out to sea without him. He rushed frantically around the market and finally found his way back to the beach. He scrambled onto his crate, just as it was floating out to sea.

At sea, it was boring, just floating around all day. He sighed, "I wish I could find something to do." He took out his piece of sushi paper and started writing. This is what he wrote:

Grandal Centipede's Journal

I am starting out on day three, because two days have gone by. My boat sank two days ago. Yesterday, I got lost in Liverpool. It took hours to get back to my crate. The good thing is that I found a gold and silver watch in the market and I know what time it is. Today I am floating in the English Channel.

As he was writing, the crate suddenly crashed ashore. Taken by surprise, Grandal almost fell off. Regaining his balance, Grandal decided to climb down and have a look around. On shore there was



Grandal and the worm who saved his life.

a lot of hubbub going on. "Watch where you are stepping," yells someone. He spied a bird. "Oh no," said Grandal centipede, "not today," and ran to hide. He found some boxes and decided to take a nap while he waiting for the bird to leave. When he woke up, he found himself in a hole. "Glad we found you," said a worm with rosy cheeks, and wearing a white apron. "You were gonna be burned."

"How was I gonna be burned?" asked Grandal.

"The boxes you were in were gonna be burned," replied the worm.

"I need to find my boat," said Grandal.

"Find what boat?" asked the worm. "A boat was not delivered here."

Grandal decided to ignore the question and instead asked,

“Um, by the way when you said ‘we’, what did you mean?”

“There are more of us,” said the worm.

“How many more?” asked Grandal.

“Fifty,” said the worm.

“That is a lot,” said Grandl.

“I know,” said the worm. “I have a really big family.”

“Well, I should go find my boat,” said Grandal.

“O.K. then,” said the worm. Good luck.”

“Bye and thank you,” Grandal said.

Grandal centipede left the worm’s hole, and came to the river. “Hmmm,” said Grandal aloud. Just then a robin spotted him. “I see my supper. Yes I do. Yes I do,” she started to sing over and over. Glancing up nervously, Grandal groaned. Not another bird! He started looking for a place to hide, but saw a small piece of bark. He also found a short piece of wood. “I’ve got a better plan!” he exclaimed. “I have just found a temporary boat.” The robin dove. Grandal pushed his piece of bark into the river and off he went, paddling quickly away. The robin crashed into the sand with a thump, and Grandal cheerfully waved goodbye to it.

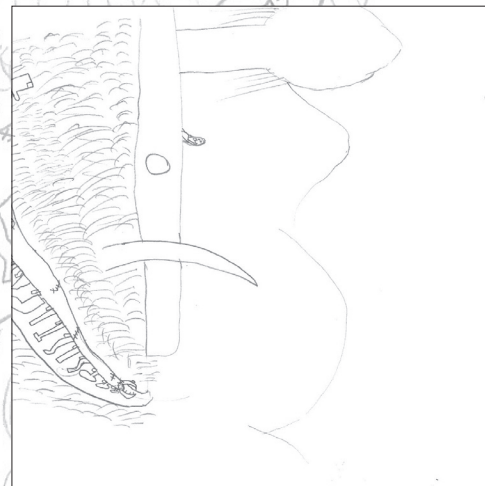
It was afternoon and Grandal was off his piece of bark and walking along a beach. Then all of a sudden he saw his crate. Climbing aboard, he sailed away.

Many days later, he was telling his story to two grasshoppers named Mark and Twain, a worm named Larry, and an owl named Hubert. He told

about his encounter with Jolly and Holly, the sea turtles that almost ate him. He told about the strange red bird, on a buoy in the middle of the ocean, who had asked him who he was. With that, Grandal finished his story.

“That was wonderful, Mate!” cried Mark and Twain. Hubert replied, “I will never forget it.” “Did you hear about the boat that sank off the Irish coast because of an old forgotten mine?” asked Twain. Grandal just smiled.

“We hope you will come back to Portland, Maine again,” squeaked Larry. “Well,” said Grandal, “Maybe one day.” And with that he set sail for New York City, leaving two grasshoppers, a worm, and an owl watching.



10 year-old writer Alex Martel

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Emma Stevens' Career in British Theatre

By Tanya Tkach

Following Emma Stevens' graduation from the UK boarding school, The Royal Commercial Traveler's School, her life changed dramatically. The ten years that she attended the school felt like doing penance to her, so upon graduation she immediately set out for downtown London, where she shared a room with a friend. Emma describes the district where she lived as very "sleazy." It was a district where the "ho's" (prostitutes) worked.

After being cooped up in a boarding school, Emma went wild. When the partying finally wore off, it was time to get serious. She registered at the Chiswick Polytechnic, where she studied animal nursing. "I wasn't smart enough to go to university and I wanted to be a vet, so this was the closest thing," says Emma ruefully. It was her way of being close to animals, which she had loved since childhood. Her studies included a practicum, spending one day a week in a veterinary clinic, assisting in surgery and caring for sick animals. The clinic was located in Belsize Park. Unfortunately, it only lasted a year. "I did try and I loved animals," said Emma, "but my cat allergy was really bad, so the only choice I had was to quit."

Her passion for acting took over. She joined an amateur group (similar to the Knowlton Players) with Trevor Howard's wife, Helen Cherry, at the helm. Here, Emma got her feet wet doing community plays. She was finally doing what she loved. In those days, she was known as Jenny (Jennifer) Stevens. Being young, only 17 at the time, Emma felt insecure and unsure of herself. Her aunt Maria, a well-known actress and poet at the time, encouraged her to register at a theatre school.



Emma Stevens in "Under Milkwood."

Emma is still very proud of her aunt, who worked at the Unity Theater. She was known for being radical, always on the side of the people, and was blacklisted for her left-leaning beliefs. "This incredible woman did movies and looked like Judy Garland. She was a really good actress and an amazing poet. Emma's aunt chummed with people such as Spike Milligan, a famous comedian; Peter Sellers, also a famous comedian; and Harry Secum. Milligan, Sellers, and Secum, were all part of The Goon Show, which was very popular in London at the time.

Emma remembers wonderful parties with Maria's third child, Jackie Kuhn. Jackie was known to live on pot most of the time. An incident at a party turned Emma off drugs forever. "There were tons of drugs going on. A young gorgeous girl took a dose of LSD and jumped off the balcony. The girl thought she was flying."

Emma recalls memories of going to Eel Pie Island to listen and hang out with the Rolling Stones.

Eel Pie Island is an island in the River Thames, at Twickenham in the Borough of Richmond, which can be reached only by a footbridge or boat. In the 60s it attracted a flood of up-and-coming, yet unknown bands, who went on to become some of the biggest names in rock and roll history. Some music legends who graced its shores include Pink Floyd, Black Sabbath, David Bowie, and of course, The Rolling Stones.

After all the unrestrained partying, Emma finally applied to theatre school. "I got turned down at one and accepted at another," Emma went on to say. "I was told that I had to wait a year, because I was too

young." She was told to take a secretarial course, since actors are out of work most of the time. She did not heed their advice and, with determination, Emma forged ahead. She auditioned at another school, which landed her a scholarship with the Guildford Acting School. The school is affiliated with the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre in Guildford. After completing her exams in London, Emma received Bronze, Silver and Gold Medals from LAMDA (The London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art), situated in West London.

"This felt so right, and I knew then that this is what I wanted to do." For Emma, acting is communicating and telling stories, other people's stories, which she loves to do.

Immediately after exams, Emma got a job in North Wales, at the Prince of Wales Theater. There she rehearsed one play on weekdays, and appeared in another play in the evenings. The work was difficult. Actors had to help out with the sets and did not have any weekends off. "Even though there was no letup, I don't regret it for a second, it was the best training I ever had," she explained. At the Prince of Wales Theater she performed in such notable plays as *Blythe Spirit*.



Emma Stevens in
"Come Blow Your Horn."

Since she wasn't making a lot of money at the time, she knew she had to find a fellow with money who could take her out for meals. Otherwise, as she says, "I was going to starve to death." When work was short, Emma took on various jobs, working at a horse stable and dog kennel. She tried her hand as a waitress. This is where she met her future husband Gualderto, who was employed as a cook. She nicknamed him Gilly. In hindsight, she regards all of the jobs as fun, and they paid the rent. The one thing for which she feels a tiny bit of regret is perhaps marrying too young. "I had some really

nice jobs, then I got married, probably too early, and then I got pregnant."



Emma Stevens in
"Charlie's Aunt."

Emma continued to work until she was seven months pregnant. After her first baby, Eugene, was born, she took him on tour with her. While she was performing, Eugene was sleeping backstage in a drawer, or in whatever she could find. The crowning glory, to which all performers aspire, was achieved by Emma in an amazingly short period of time. She was performing in the West End, which is the equivalent of working on Broadway in New York.

"That's the pinnacle of theatre in London, you can't get higher than that unless you're doing Shakespeare at the Royal Vic," gushed Emma. During the 5 years she worked in the West End, she performed in shows that had two year runs. She had never received regular weekly paychecks before this. Emma stated that life was finally good, with two children, a beautiful home, two cars and vacations in Europe. Then one day, her incredible life came to a grinding halt, when her husband came home and announced, "We're emigrating to Canada." Her career and life were to change rapidly.





Mercedes Chenard
Conseillère Indépendant Arbonne
Directrice de Zone
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So What Happened to the Lost Colony of St. Armand?

By Linda Seccaspina

A few years ago, when I wrote about the Underground Railroad, I mentioned a neighbour's name, Hank Avery. I had remembered several of his passionate conversations concerning local black history that took place at my Dad's home on Miltimore Road in Bromont. Hank and his wife Linda were teachers at a local school in Cowansville, Quebec at the time; after my father died I never saw them again.

Years passed, and by this time I was living in Oakland, California, where I was now a minority in an East Bay neighbourhood. In those days I didn't write about history, but mostly about social injustice and daily crime in an area that was 85% black and 15% white. But I often thought of Hank as I wrote my essays because I finally understood what he was talking about.

Recently, I was doing some research on *Sugar Hill, which used to be called Negro Hill, near Knowlton, Quebec. Trying to dig up more facts, I came across Hank Avery's name, and this time it had to do with a historical injustice in a small hamlet in Quebec. In 2002 Avery had been fighting for 9 years to get a Saint-Armand slave cemetery recognized and protected. Unfortunately, the site is privately owned and the owners were not—and are still not—open to any conversations about digging on their property.

"Nigger Rock" is a large outcrop of rock in a farmer's cornfield located on what was once the property of Philip Luke, a Loyalist officer who settled in the area after the American Revolution, and arrived with slaves he inherited from his mother. At its base lies a disturbing reminder of a rural community's past, as black slaves were buried there from 1794 until slavery was abolished in 1833.

This former black community is a sensitive subject to some of the townfolk, and many of Saint-Armand's older residents still recall stories from their parents or from their childhood. There are some that call the black community stories just folklore, and if the

stories are true, well, to them it's all dead and buried now. But what about the farmer who bought the former Luke homestead in the 1950s and discovered human remains when he was plowing the mound at the foot of the rock? Doesn't that count for something?

Of course, with an abandoned "black chapel" and burial ground, there had to be a community somewhere, since the census of 1851 recorded no fewer than 283 black residents in the area. Where did they all live? Where did they go? What happened to them? An account book from the first store in the area lists the names of black men among its customers: "John the Black Man," for example, and there are many others. A 1908 publication belonging to the Brome Missisquoi Historical Society also refers to "the St. Armand Negro Burying Ground."

By 1830 there were about 200 black residents in the area, and there are also many who think that some of the escaped slaves from the United States also found refuge in Saint-Armand in the 1850s via the Underground Railway which had a stop at the old Methodist Church. Other archival records refer to the cemetery as being on the farm, but small-town politics and the strong resistance of the landowner have thwarted Mr. Avery's and others' efforts.

So what happened to this original African American community? No one is certain how many slaves laboured for Colonel Luke or when they died, but estimates are that as many as 30 are buried on the former Luke property. I am positive they formed their own community and became active members in the building and opening up of the Eastern Townships region of Quebec. They worked, lived and celebrated as equals, and some in the local area are likely descended from this former black community. So why is this area and the rock not recognized historically?

Today we are a few days away from 2017 and Don

Phillips is still fighting to get the area formally recognized as a historical site. After days of researching I cannot find out any other mention of Hank Avery, the former elementary school teacher who first visited the burial ground in 1996 and was outraged when he realized there were no markers on it. What happened to Mr. Avery?

One thing is certain- if the new law by the Quebec Toponymy Commission goes through all might have been for naught. The basis of this new law says place names that contain a racial slur must

go. But will changing the names help remove black history from Quebec? As one commentator said: "I think the rivers and sites should be researched and renamed after Underground Railroad families and individuals from the area that helped African-Americans escape to freedom. This will preserve the history and remind us of our noble legacy of doing the right thing, even when the 'right thing' isn't popular at the time".

The truth is, you always know what is the right thing to do- the hard part is doing it.



Colloquially known as "Nigger Rock," this large outcrop of rock stands as a disturbing reminder of the slave era.



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ANNOUNCEMENT

The Townships Sun is excited to announce the creation of an extension to our nine-issue print version of the magazine. In 2017 we are launching our mini-magazine, The Sun Rise Café. You will be able access this magazine via the <https://flipboard.com> site, available online and downloadable as an app for Android, Windows 10, and Apple mobile devices. To view the magazine, go to the FlipBoard site and search for The Sun Rise Café. Like The Townships Sun, The Sun Rise Café will bring you pieces from the past – culture, people, places and so much more. We are very pleased to launch this new venture in celebration of Canada's 150th Anniversary of Confederation. It is our sincere hope to bring you more of what you already love. If you have ideas or submissions, please e-mail us your articles and ideas.

During 2017, issues of The Townships Sun will explore and celebrate our great land. We welcome your submissions on those things that make us Canadian, and the people of the beautiful Eastern Townships.

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The Dogcatcher's Lament

Part 2: The End of the Trail

By John A. Viau

My tenure as dogcatcher for the Municipality of Ormstown came to a close at the end of December, 2004. I had handed in my resignation a few weeks earlier and soon I was officially retired. Recently, as I reminisced and looked back at my thirteen years of service, I felt that some of my experiences might prove to be of interest to *Townships Sun* readers.



So, here is a brief selection that I hope you will enjoy.

There was the time a few years ago when I received a complaint that there was a vicious-looking Doberman running loose on the Botreaux Range. I headed out immediately to try and find the dog.

On arrival at the address I was given, there was no dog in sight, so I proceeded to patrol the area for almost an hour. As very often happens, I simply could not find the dog in question so I headed home. When I got back home there was a message on my answering machine from Jackie Marcil, the owner of the Shangri La Animal Rescue in Franklin Center saying that someone had called and said there was a big Doberman in the ditch on the Guerin Side Road. It looked like she was having puppies.

I rushed over to the location and sure enough, there she was in the ditch about five feet off of the road. She had already had three puppies and it appeared as though she wasn't finished yet. She was a huge Doberman who looked like she had been through a tough time of late. She was skinny to the point of emaciation, and when I started to approach her she told me in no uncertain terms that I had better keep my distance or else.

My job description allows me to put down a vicious

dog if it is absolutely necessary but I didn't have the heart to hurt the poor old girl who was just doing her best to protect her offspring. I pondered the situation for a few minutes and decided to rush back home and get some food and see if I could win her confidence and trust, with a little kindness.

When I got back, the newborn puppy count had climbed to five and

it looked like she was through. Now that she was finished giving birth she seemed meaner than ever and instead of just standing her ground and growling ferociously, she now had changed tactics and was making four or five fast charges in my direction as if to attack me.

I retreated to my truck, opened the window and threw her some large dog biscuits. She was so hungry she literally attacked the dog biscuits as if to kill them before they could escape. I kept feeding her dog biscuits until the box was empty. The desperately needed food had quieted her down just a trifle, and now she was watching me guardedly with a slightly different attitude.

I talked to her softly and calmly for about twenty minutes, then I decided to see what she would do if I got out of the truck. I exited the truck in ultra-slow motion, and although she backed up slowly she didn't growl at me anymore. I decided to take the process one step further, and went back to the truck and got a large tin of dog food. I opened the tin, put it in a dog bowl, and placed it at my feet. All the time I was telling her what a great dog she was.

Lo and behold, she started to wag her little stub of a tail and approached my offering slowly. The entire

time she kept a wary eye on me. Finally, I guess she decided that all was well and started to wolf down the food. When she finished she licked the bowl clean and then she gave me the fright of my life.

It seemed as though she had accepted me as a friend who didn't mean to harm her. I was relaxing myself, not expecting any possible danger, when suddenly she leaped up and put her face in mine. Then she started to lick my face like I was her lifelong master that she loved dearly! For a second, my heart was pounding wildly but it soon returned to normal and I was just as happy as poor old Mrs. Doberman.

It took me another half hour of petting and praising to finally load up Mrs. Doberman and all her puppies. I whisked them off to the Shangri La Animal Rescue Center in Franklin Center. Mrs. Marcil had requested that if I could manage to save the Doberman and her puppies that she wanted to take care of them. My boss at the Ormstown Town Hall had said it would be alright with the stipulation that if the dog was claimed by the owner that it would have to be returned. Mrs. Doberman and all the pups were never claimed, and after about three months Mrs. Marcil managed to find good homes for the whole family.

Another episode that stands out in my memory is the story of a small female terrier that was rescued by an animal adoption agency in Montreal from an environment where the poor little thing was being mistreated and neglected. The cute and lovable little one year old female was placed in a foster home in Ormstown, until it could be placed in a new home. It wasn't in the foster home for more than a day when it escaped through a door inadvertently left open. The dog disappeared for over a month.

The animal adoption agency from Montreal posted flyers all over the area offering a reward for information on the dog's whereabouts or its return, but to no avail. Search parties were organized with large groups of volunteers scouring the village of Ormstown as well as the outskirts - but no little doggy.

Then, one cold and blustery October afternoon, I got a call from Mrs. Marcil of Shangri La that a small dog had been sighted in a field just off Route 138, about three kilometres outside of Ormstown on the way to Huntingdon. I called the adoption agency in Montreal. Two of the ladies said they would be out as soon as possible and would meet me at the

site. I headed right up, and on arrival I spotted the dog but couldn't catch it. I decided to wait until my reinforcements arrived and then try to catch it.

They soon were on the scene, but despite our best efforts, all we could do was chase it into a culvert under the farm lane leading off the 138 into a farmer's field. Try as we might, although we could see the poor little thing, there was no way we could coax it out. With the aid of a flashlight, we saw her about four feet into the twelve inch pipe. We coaxed, we pleaded, we cajoled, we threw in dog biscuits, but the poor little girl wouldn't budge.

Finally one of the ladies from Montreal suggested we call the Volunteer Fire Department. We did just that, and in no time at all Fire Chief Gordon Furey was on the scene with two volunteer firemen. We proceeded to stuff a twelve foot steel pole with a brush attached to one end into the culvert and tried to push the dog out. The pole wasn't long enough, though, and although the dog had *almost* come out, it didn't come quite far enough for me to grab it.

Then the fire chief made a new suggestion. He said he would radio for a pumper truck. When the pumper truck arrived he took the fire hose and stuck it in one end of the culvert and turned it on low pressure. In no time at all a wet, bedraggled little terrier poked its head out of the culvert. I finally was able to grab it. The rescue was accomplished. The dog was dried off and whisked away to Shangri La to its new foster home.

The rescue had taken over three hours. It had involved myself, three Ormstown firemen, and the two ladies from Montreal, but all had ended well.

I hope the next Ormstown Dog Catcher who took over my job had a little compassion, and loved animals as much as I did!



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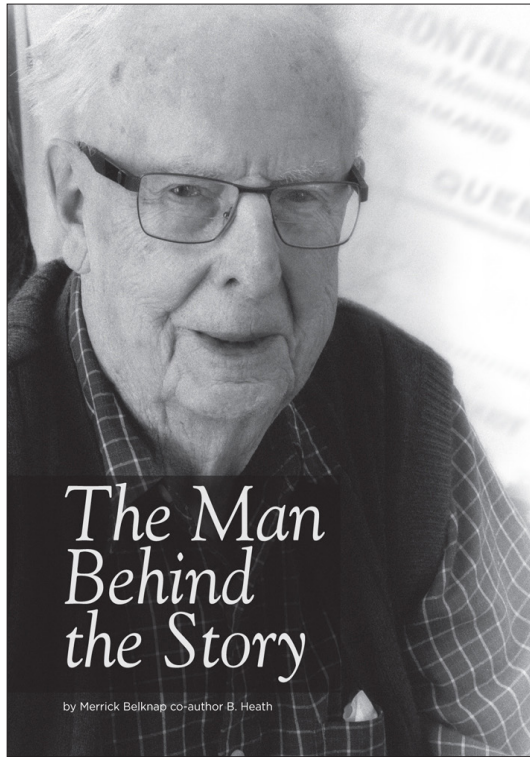
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Merrick Belknap

A Remarkable Story

By B. Heath



Merrick Belknap's first book

He has touched the face of history, felt its breath and heard its heartbeat. Merrick has written about the joys and tragedies of the people and events that have passed before us. His search honors all those who passed this way, from famous people to local residents.

Merrick Jarod Belknap, local historian and author, was born October 1, 1922 in Baldwins' Mills, Quebec. Merrick is the son of Walter Geroge Belknap and Bertha Annis. Ten children were born to this union. Walter George had two children from a previous marriage. Walter's first wife died from diphtheria at a young age.

Merrick is a humble man, with a proud family history. His father Walter George was a well known and sought-after builder. Walter, from 1905 until his death in 1940, managed the Lake Lyster Fish

Hatchery. Bertha cared for the ten children and did all the driving for Walter. Merrick chuckles, as he speaks of his father's driving mishaps; like driving through a forty-eight pain glass window in the garage. Bertha and Walter made deliveries, from the hatchery, to various locations throughout the province as well as in Ontario. Following Walter's death Bertha moved to Rock Island. There, she rented a house, from John Holland, for \$35 per month. She operated a boarding house, accommodating 12 men, who worked at the Butterfields Plant.

Merrick Belknap, during World War II, proudly served Canada as a member of the Frontiersmen. He was stationed at the Dominion Textile Plant, in Magog, Quebec. The Corps of Imperial Frontiersmen were a special branch of the RCMP. He was one of the guardsmen. Stricken with polio at the age of three eliminated any possibility of serving in the Canadian Armed Forces. His assignment put him in close proximity to his brother George, who at the time was manager of the Fish Hatchery located beside the Dominion Textile Plant.

After the war Merrick moved to Rock Island. By this time his mother had left Baldwin's Mills and moved to Rock Island. Margaret Woodman and Merrick Belknap were married on July 10, 1942. Margaret was a very talented seamstress. She was known to make many pieces of clothing for the young relatives. Their married life was spent in the Stanstead area. They spent summers at Baldwin's Mills. After leaving the Frontiersmen, Merrick was employed at the Butterfields Plant until its closing. Margaret passed away on September 4, 2002. She is buried in the Lake Lyster Cemetery in Baldwin's Mills. Their children Lynn Drew and Keith Belknap live in the area; Lynn in Ogden and Keith in Stanstead.

In 2015, at the age of 93, a new adventure appeared on the horizon. Merrick, during his life, has written many articles for newspapers, magazines and the SHS Red Book. He developed and printed over 5,000 negatives, from the J.J. Parker Photo collection.

Merrick has donated numerous articles to the Colby Curtis Museum, each a priceless piece of local history.

So, what is this new adventure? His first book. "The Man Behind the Story." The book offers a collection of his family, friends and events. He tells about his parents' remarkable journey; The Frontiers Men; George Belknap; Cactus Jim; his brother Charles, train engineer of U.S. President FDR's funeral train; The Woodman family; Baldwin's Mills; Stanstead and life in Stanstead as well as Baldwin's Mills.

He also shares some of the many stories he has written: Edwin Hayden, the story of "Money, Mistress and Murder"; Wilbert Coffin, a wrongfully accused man, sentenced to death; Jacques Boisvert; The Stone Carving, that dates back to the Vikings; The Moose; Tribute to Doctor Gilles Bouchard; Stephen Bourroughs; Sherbrooke Street Cars; Lewis Rose Beknap, U.S. Civil War; and Great fires in Stanstead and Rock Island.

With a helping hand, from an interested party, the book became a reality. It is remarkable when a dream comes true, even when he thought it was not possible. His love of people and their history unfold on the pages of his book. Merrick Belknap is a true

story teller. His accounts of the people and their history are vibrant. Each piece is a testimony of his spirit. His life is one of love and a legacy. This is our history, our people and our stories. The book has been a long time coming, in March 1978, Merrick wrote the following.

"After spending several years of my spare time during the winter months gathering information on the Belknap family, I now realize that I must put some of this, under one cover; for it has reached the point where the records, photos, etc. that I have gathered are in bits and pieces, that it would be of little value in its present form. To the best of my knowledge, all material contained herein, is as accurate as can be established; from family bibles, old records from various sources, town records and numerous historical societies."

We pass this way but once. Merrick Belknap views his passage through life as a blessing filled with family and friends that have enriched his life. Making a difference in life is imperative to purpose. He strives to see the pleasure in all that crosses his path. He has preserved the memories and the moments from life. Merrick Belknap is truly a remarkable man, with a remarkable story. This is "The Man Behind The Story."

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The First Snow

By Gabrielle Rolland



Every year it surprised us. Summer was a forgotten dream, autumn dead and gone. Life was a chain gang routine of school in a grey world.

Then one morning we looked out and a thrill went from the tips of our toes to the tops of our heads. We screamed, then scrambled into our clothes. At last, snow boots! A white canvas of soft squishy play-clay lay waiting. What to do first? Something fast, of course. If by chance it was still snowing, catch some flakes on our tongues. Then we would fall into the white fluffy snow and make a few angels—so amazingly easy and beautiful.

Then we set to work rolling snow, leaving green grass trails all across the yard. The first ball was easy, just push to the limit. The next was a little harder. How to get it big and yet able to lift, and place it beside the first? A few failures scattered around would become creatures, or possibly walls later on. The third step was laughably simple. Sticks were easy to find to be used for accessories. It was regrettable that our sensible mother *never* allowed us to waste a good carrot; but our slightly grassy, dirty man was done!

Shovels out, ready for walls, but by now we were starting to tire. Time for a drink: mouthfuls of soft powder that sprinkled tingles as it quenched and cooled us. Rest was just sitting anywhere in an instant soft seat.

Still reluctant to go in— perhaps create a snow shower? How did we accomplish this? Just knock the snow from the fir tree and watch the branches spring back. We trudged more paths until sated. We tramped in, stamping boots outside, shedding our hats, removing woolly mitts, caked with snow and placed them on heaters to steam. We called and pulled our parents to marvel at our great work.

Every year, the adult me dreads its coming, remembering ice on windshields, reluctant motors, dangerous roads, and too much cold for far too long. But the first day, when everything is still, soft, white and new, when the iron-grey land has shed its skin and become a dream-world iced with beauty, the child returns to savour the miracle of the first snow.



Information for our Contributors



2017 Projected Publication and Article Submission Dates

Issue	Publication Date	Article Submission
March	March 13	February 5
April – May	May 11	April 5
June	June 13	May 8
July	June 26	May 23
August	August 8	June 17
September	August 25	July 21
October – November	November 6	October 2
December	December 14	November 10

Oh Canada

From the Townships Sun

By the time the First World War began, “O Canada”, originally called “Chant national,” with music composed by Calixa Lavallée and French lyrics by Sir Adolphe-Basile Routhier, had become the national anthem in French Canada. It was popularized in English Canada as “The Maple Leaf Forever” but a consensus had not yet been reached on the English lyrics. In 1920, Liberal MP William Stevens Fielding noted: “In French Canada ‘O Canada!’ is sung everywhere. In the English Provinces the music is heard in our parks and theatres, but seldom are English words sung to it. None of the English translations seem to have taken hold of the popular fancy.” This would soon change. In 1924, the Association of Canadian Clubs declared Judge R. Stanley Weir’s version their official song. In 1927, it was officially published for the Diamond Jubilee of Confederation, and began to be sung regularly in schools and at public functions.

More than a dozen bills were introduced between 1962 and 1980 proposing that “O Canada” be adopted as the official national anthem. A special joint committee of the Senate and House of Commons was struck to consider the official status of “God Save the Queen” and “O Canada.” On January 31, 1966, Prime Minister Pearson moved that the government “...be authorized to take such steps as may be necessary to provide that ‘O Canada’ shall be the National Anthem of Canada while ‘God Save The Queen’ shall be the Royal Anthem of Canada.”

On March 15th, 1967, the special committee unanimously recommended “that the government be authorized to adopt forthwith the music for ‘O Canada’ as the music of the National Anthem of Canada, with the following notation added to the sheet music: With dignity, not too slowly.” The committee also recommended further study of the lyrics. It recommended keeping the original French lyrics, but amending the existing version of Judge Weir’s English lyrics, changing “And stand on guard, O Canada” to “From far and wide, O Canada,” and “O Canada, glorious and free” to “God keep our land, glorious and free.”

The copyright to Weir’s text had passed to Leo Feist Ltd. in 1929 and to Gordon V. Thompson Music in 1932. However, Weir’s heirs did not approve of the change to the lyrics, and though their legal standing was questionable, the government chose to settle the matter amicably. In 1970, both Thompson and Weir’s descendants surrendered their rights to the Canadian government for the symbolic sum of one dollar.

Many bills regarding the status of “O Canada” were introduced; however, they all died on the Order Paper, i.e., did not become law. Finally, on June 18th, 1980, a bill was presented by Secretary of State Francis Fox proposing that “O Canada” be declared Canada’s official national anthem as soon as possible, in recognition of the centenary of its first performance, June 27th, 1880 in Quebec City. So, on June 27th, 1980, the National Anthem Act was passed unanimously by the House of Commons and the Senate. On July 1st, 1980, in a public ceremony, “O Canada” was proclaimed the official national anthem of Canada.



During 2017, issues of The Townships Sun will explore and celebrate our great land. We welcome your submissions on those things that make us Canadian, and the people of the beautiful Eastern Townships.

A Better World

By Kathleen Y. Rattigan

At only 150 years young, we are the new kids on the block of our world's civilizations. A London-based think tank, the Legatum Institute, voted Canada as the new global leader for personal freedom. Abundant, peaceful, and open minded, we Canadians are almost always well received and liked wherever we travel. Are we the beginning of a new and better world? Perhaps this is so. However, there is also good news from all over the world as like-minded citizens connect through the World Wide Web. Prayers for Peace are circling our globe as we the people of our planet demand cease fires, ask for humanitarian aid, and ache for our brothers and sisters as they are harmed simply because they live in these turbulent areas. What can we do besides stand helplessly by and watch this tragedy unfold? I had tears in my eyes when Canada welcomed Syrian families to our country. Please know that this feeling I experienced was humanitarian and outside the realm of politics.

I know the news on TV is full of weather, war and woes currently erupting all over our small planet. I, like most of you, keep abreast of current events though I selectively limit it to small doses. The news is formatted to shock us in order to keep our attention and bad news does indeed succeed, sadly enough. Do we watch the news because we feel thankful all those bad things are not happening to us? Truthfully, I do feel like that at times, and then feel chagrin at these kinds of thoughts because I look at our world as a global village. Underneath the colors of our skin runs the same color of blood. We all have love, hope, family and country. I try to imagine what it must feel like to be in a war zone, yet I cannot. Born in a free and democratic country, there are many times that I breathe a prayer of thankfulness and gratitude for being born and raised in Canada. We are so blessed. Canada is indeed a shining example of "A Better World".

First of all, stop believing everything you hear

and see on the news: governments from all sides choose their words very carefully and we are fed what they wish us to believe, though with today's instant technology it is certainly getting harder to keep secrets! Humanity has been fighting since we lived in caves. In certain parts of the world, women feel honored when their men die in battle. We all have different beliefs and though we are trying very hard to become a peaceful world, we are not there – yet.

All we can do to change the world is to heal it – one mind and heart at a time – starting with our own. As we create an oasis of peace within us, a ripple effect begins. One peaceful person can impact countless people by sharing calmness, courtesy and contentment. If you allow yourself to fall into a cranky mood or a dark pit of despair after watching the news, then you are joining into the same mentality and increasing the consequences of war, which are sadness, animosity and fear. Of course I understand it is impossible not to be influenced when we watch world-wide events such as wars and weather catastrophes. What I have learned though, is that it serves no purpose to experience the negative emotions engendered by these events. I choose to become part of the solution and that is a peaceful mind and heart, linking to world prayer organizations, and conducting healing sessions with those of like mind.

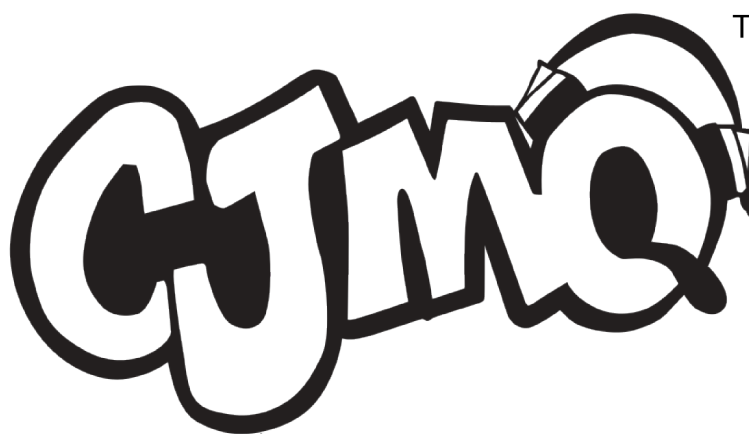
My dear readers: learn to be at peace – even though our planet is full of the opposite. Our world is also full of miracles and mysteries, healings and holiness, peace and beauty. Turn your eyes to these instead and find comfort. It does not serve anyone's highest well-being, including our own, if we walk around in a gloom and doom state of mind. Turn to beautiful music, inspirational books, learn to meditate and do your part to add goodness to our world, one mind and heart at a time. Create your own better world.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

MIRACLES & MYSTERIES

"We humans have existed in our present form for about a hundred thousand years. I believe that if during this time the human mind had been primarily controlled by anger and hatred, our overall population would have decreased. But today, despite all our wars, we find that the human population is greater than ever. This clearly indicates to me that love and compassion predominate in the world. And this is why unpleasant events are "news"; compassionate activities are so much a part of daily life that they are taken for granted and, therefore, largely ignored."

Tenzin Gyatso, 14th Dalai Lama (Born 1934), Tibet



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REFUSE REMOVAL / EXCAVATION / SNOW REMOVAL

Misty Glen Mountain Snow Bunny Hop

By Linda Knight Seccaspina

“Snow Bunny” was once the term applied to a young woman who went to the mountains to wear cute ski clothes, drink hot chocolate, and supposedly hit on the hot ski patrol boys. I was never any good at anything that involved the outdoors, and when I was looking at pictures of Glen Mountain today, my old snow bunny dreams all came back to me. I kept returning to a time when visions of faux fur boots and wearing a Mod Snow Bunny white fur hat with “big balls” was *la pièce de résistance*.

I had visited Glen Mountain a few times in my teenage years, yet today I’m still not sure why I even considered going there. However, I do remember going on a Cowansville High School field trip, and another outing with my friend Debbie Roffey’s family. I had no idea what to expect from Glen Mountain, I really didn’t. There are photographs in the Brome County Historical Society archives that show a few trees and fields of grazing cattle at the foot of the mountain, but none of these photos were the reality of what that mountain actually was.

I was not, nor have I ever been a skier, and that beginner slope was downright scary (unless I was on a toboggan). However, I really tried to learn to snowplough on the bunny hill, but no matter how hard I tried I couldn’t even do that, so I spent most of my time in the chalet looking at that big 1,000 vertical ft. drop staring back at me through the front door windows.

I remember seriously debating taking a journey on one of the two T-bars, one that went up to mid-station and the other from mid to the top. Every hour I stood in line, and when the time came for me to go up I muttered something about needing an item from the ski shop, and went back to the chalet.

Word in the valley was that “a blizzard of action and an avalanche of fun” would be available to anyone who aspired to be a Glen Mountain snow bunny. *Seventeen Magazine* insisted that the best

way to hunt “a keeper” was on skis—although at age 14 I would have been content with a first kiss while some young chap tied up the bindings on my skis.

They say that skis are the ultimate transportation to freedom. I beg to differ, and that was another issue that drove me crazy. Debbie had these spiffy Rossignol skis while mine were a pair my Dad picked up at the Canadian Tire store in Cowansville. I immediately blamed my lack of expertise on those skis, but even when the mountain lights came on at the end of the day I still hadn’t made it up to the top—or even the middle. Each time I glanced out the door of the chalet I had a vision of myself coming down that hill at 100 miles an hour screaming “*Where are the brakes?*” Nothing like healthful outdoor exercise at 10° below when your nose is running and your face is full of fear.

When I got home from those ski trips my friends asked if I had a good time. But when it comes to skiing, there is a difference in what you think it’s going to be like, and what it’s really like, and what you are going to tell your friends. I never did go back to Glen Mountain after the ski trip with the Roffeys. Instead I used those Canadian Tire skis on the slight downhill of Miltimore Road in Bromont.

Each time I would go down the snow covered dirt road I would scream at neighbour Linda Avery that “*Nancy Green has nothing on me!*” I also concocted a story about breaking my leg skiing to anyone who asked me to go on a ski trip with them. For decades I have lied through my teeth and stuck to the story, and today I am finally coming clean.

It was a lie: yes, I admit it was a lie, to keep safety first for Linda. Trust me, I will have no regrets about this tomorrow. The bottom line is that Facebook and Twitter didn’t exist back then so they never found out – at least not until today. Now it just doesn’t matter, as most people can’t decipher whether what I post is for real, or just a cry for help.

Sherbrooke Hospital

The Baby Birthday Club

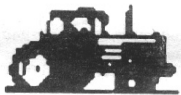
From The Townships Sun

The Eastern Townships Resource Center is the keeper of the treasures from the past. We are pleased to present one of the postings from their files.

In 1951 "The Baby Birthday Club" began. This was one of several committees that were set up by the Sherbrooke Hospital Ladies' Auxiliary (SHLA). This particular club was organized as a fundraising association to make improvements to the maternity ward of the Sherbrooke Hospital. Mothers of newborn babies, for a fee of \$1.00, had an opportunity to join the club. The fee included registration in the "Golden Book," a membership card and a slip entitling them to a free photograph of "the wee one." The club efforts significantly contributed to the maternity ward. The club managed to pay for the ward's own anesthetic machine.

The Baby Birthday Club was just one of many fundraising initiatives taken on by the SHLA. Other efforts included an Annual Tea, Jam Shower, Annual Dance (also known as the Linen Ball) as well as the House and Garden Tour. The events contributed to hospital expenses, other funding initiatives supported by the Auxiliary including the in Memoriam fund, and the Scholarship and Bursary Fund, which helped undergraduate nurses with school expenses.

An article on "The Baby Birthday Club," appeared in "The Sherbrooke Record" 19 July 2012.



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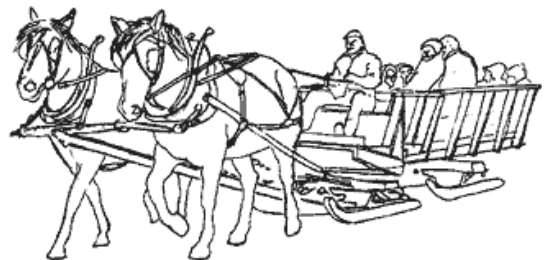
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Valentine's Day

The Poetry of Charles Colby and Emma Cobb Colby

From The Townships Sun

When they donated the Colby home in Stanstead, the family also donated the furnishings and a collection of family archives. Four generations of Colby family members had lived in this beautiful home. When the Stanstead Historical Society took possession in 1992, the Colby Curtis Museum was born.

What came to be known as the Valentine project consisted of the personal papers of Charles William Colby (1867-1955) and his wife Emma Frances Cobb (1866-1945). Friends since childhood, Emma and Charles were married in 1897.

Charles was the very first History Chair at McGill University. Described as a fine poet, he wrote beautiful poems for Emma throughout their marriage. The couple had two children, Charles Carroll II and Mary Pierce. Emma herself was a talented artist, a talent she displayed in paintings of her children.

After Emma's death in 1945, Charles wrote: "We became engaged on October 27th, 1895, beneath a yellow birch tree for which we never ceased to have a romantic affection. When the wind blew it over a few years later, I had the trunk cut into logs and shipped to Montreal. There, George converted these into a desk and chair which are the most highly prized pieces in the drawing room at 1240." (Pine Avenue in Montreal).

This poem, "Ode for Saint Valentine's Day, 1905" is dedicated to Emma Frances Colby, it makes reference to the birch: "Silky yellow bark is dearer to thee than the ruby's hue."

There are saints for every season.....

But my saint is masculine

and his name is Valentine

Their letters and poems would warm the coldest of hearts.



Emma Frances Cobb



Charles William Colby

Our Covers

The front cover of this issue kicks off a year of recognition and celebration of the 150th Anniversary of Canadian Confederation. We will take a look at culture, artists, historians, and so much more that makes us truly Canadian: our uniqueness in the world, our accomplishments and our victories, as well as our hardships. We will celebrate along with all the people who have made this great nation, culminating in “The True North Strong and Free.”

The painting “Alberta Bound” is by Ted Blaylock. Ted’s depiction of the ruggedness and beauty of the Rockies is truly breathtaking. The romance of traveling the country by train has long captured our imaginations. If you have paintings or stories that showcase Canada or the Eastern Townships we welcome you sharing them with *The Townships Sun*.

Mr. Merrick Belknap is a local historian who, at 94 years of age, has published his first book, *The Man Behind the Story*. In this issue you will read about Merrick in the article “A Remarkable Story.” There are many truly great people among us. Help us pay tribute to all those who have contributed so much, whether past or present: each one is part of our patchwork quilt.

Your legacy is not the stuff you leave behind: it is the memories that are woven into the minds and lives of others.

Back Cover

We are truly proud to present the front covers of our 2016 issues; these are great images that so many of you have contributed to *The Townships Sun*. Tom Standish has done a great job of putting these images together in the cover designs, each of which tells a visual story.

We sincerely hope you are enjoying the magazine- we strive to give you great memories with each issue.

Happy New Year everyone!

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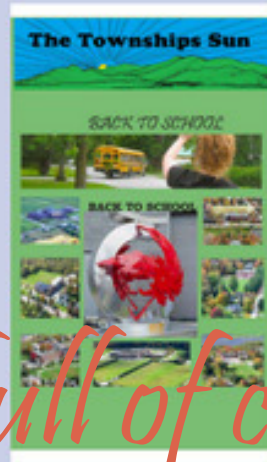
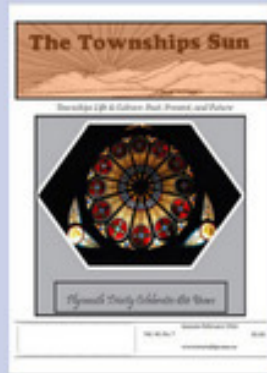
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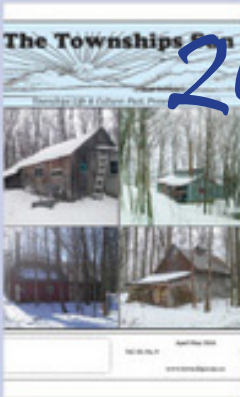
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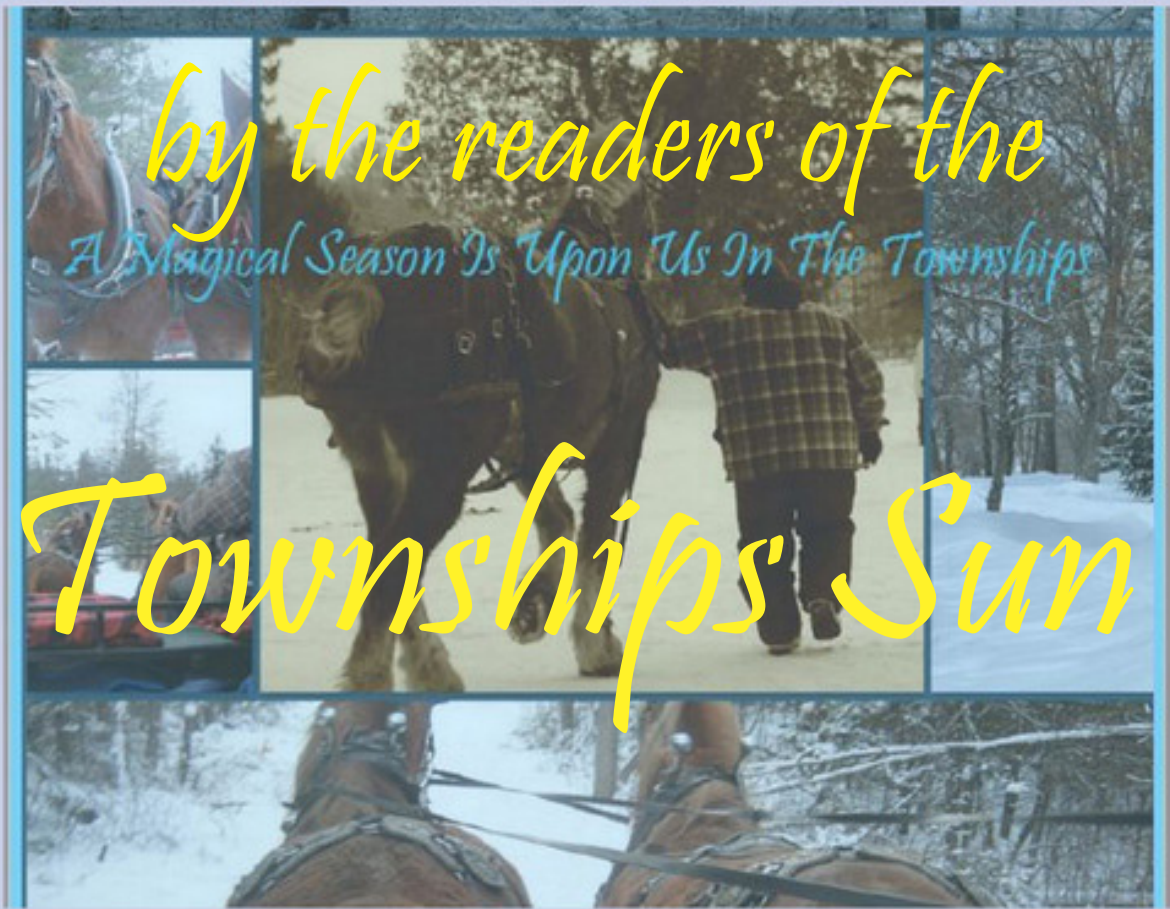




A cover full of covers



2016 in review as seen



*by the readers of the
A Magical Season Is Upon Us In The Townships*

Townships Sun