

# The Townships Sun

*Townships Life and Culture: Past Present and Future*

"A Conversation with Matthew"

Pages 14-15

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—Karen Salmansohn

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Please send submissions to [heathba@b2b2c.ca](mailto:heathba@b2b2c.ca)

# Townships Trivia

## Lake Memphremagog

by Matthew Farfan, QAHN

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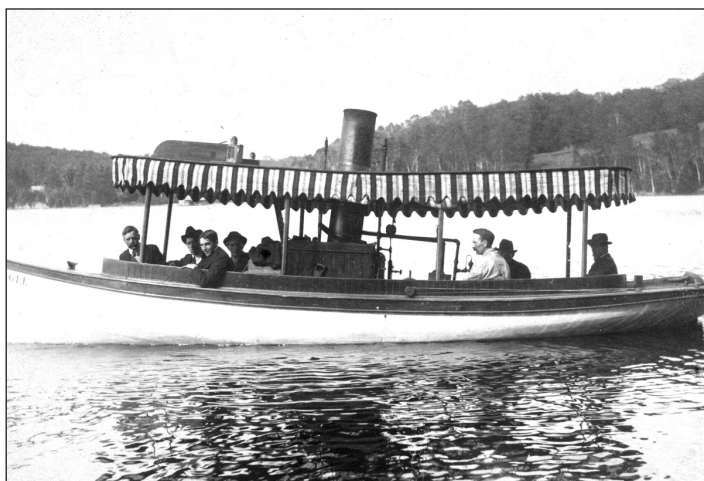
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1 Which of the following municipalities does NOT border Lake Memphremagog?

- a) Ogden
- b) Bolton-Est
- c) Austin
- d) Saint-Benoît-du-Lac
- e) Fitch Bay

2 Captain George Washington Fogg was...

- a) The first captain of the steamer Mountain Maid
- b) A captain of the steamer Lady of the Lake (seen here, c.1870s)
- c) One of the builders of Mountain House, a hotel at the foot of Owl's Head
- d) None of the above
- e) All of the above



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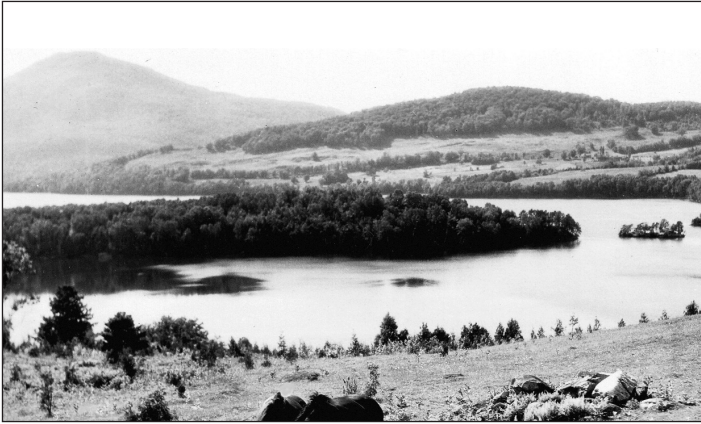
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- 3 What crosses the Fitch Bay Narrows?
- a) A ferry
  - b) A covered bridge
  - c) A suspension bridge
  - d) A footbridge
  - e) A large flock of geese every autumn



- 5 What is the former name of the town of Magog, seen here c.1915?
- a) Magog Crossing
  - b) The Outlet
  - c) Cherry River
  - d) Merry's Corners
  - e) Saint-Patrice-de-Memphré



- 4 The English lyrics to what famous song were composed on the shores of Lake Memphremagog by Robert Stanley Weir, pictured here, c.1900?
- a) God Save the Queen
  - b) Memphremagog the Beautiful
  - c) O Canada
  - d) Stairway to Heaven
  - e) Give Peace a Chance



- 6 What famous landmark, seen in this photo, burned down in 1907?
- a) Elefantis Hotel in Georgeville
  - b) Memphremagog House in Newport, Vermont
  - c) The home of Sir Hugh Allan on Belmere Point
  - d) None of the above
  - e) All of the above



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- 7 What event, seen here c.1925, takes place annually atop Mount Owl's Head?
- a) A hunting party
  - b) An outdoor Masonic lodge meeting
  - c) Monthly meetings of Pottton Town Council
  - d) A surveyors' picnic
  - e) The annual convention of Memphré Sighters Anonymous



- 9 Which of the following does not flow into Lake Memphremagog?
- a) The Magog River
  - b) The Black River
  - c) The Clyde River
  - d) The Barton River
  - e) Castle Brook



- 8 What buildings once lined the lakeshore all the way from Newport, Vermont to Magog, Quebec?
- a) Customs houses (to curb smuggling on the lake)
  - b) Lighthouses (so that the steamships wouldn't crash on the rocks)
  - c) Prisons (so that rumrunners could be locked up)
  - d) Chapels (so that pilgrims could stop to pray)
  - e) All of the above



- 10 Which mountain, pictured here c.1920, overlooks Memphremagog from the north?
- a) Owl's Head
  - b) Orford
  - c) Elephantis
  - d) Sutton
  - e) Everest



*All images courtesy of Matthew Farfan. Reproduced with permission.*

Answers  
 1. e) (Fitch Bay is a village, but not a municipality) 2. e) 3. b) 4. c) (The English version of the national anthem was composed by Judge Weir in Cedarville on Lake Memphremagog) 5. b) 6. b) 7. b) 8. b) 9. a) (The Magog River flows OUT) 10. b)

# Lost in Translation

by John R. LeBaron

If you can recall the Eastern Townships of the 1940s and 50s, you surely remember tales about my chain-smoking Auntie, the farmer in Weedon Québec who raised fighting cows for export to Spain and Portugal. My father euphemistically characterized her as “barrel-chested” but, as kids often do, we ankle biters of her era simply tagged her “Auntie Knockers.”

Like my parents (and me), Auntie Knockers struggled inside her narrow Anglo bubble to make her way through the minefields of a Francophone cacophony where, outside the bubble, English was rarely heard and seldom spoken. To navigate as best she could, she followed the tried and true *mode interculturelle* of ... vocalizing ... in ... bad ... English ... very ... slowly ... and **AT PROGRESSIVELY HIGHER VOLUME**, hoping that she might understand and be understood.

Despite her agrarian vocation, smoker’s cough and ample chest, Auntie Knockers was the model of polite Presbyterian femininity. When she wasn’t engaged in muddy farming chores, she would typically wear the white, lacy, rounded-collar linen blouses, earth tone cashmere cardigan sweaters, pleated Scottish plaid skirts and the “Wolverine Invader”™ steel-toe work boots that were so typical of elegant Anglophone ladies during that gracefully innocent epoch of Québec’s history.

Although Auntie Knockers typically kept a rolled-up hankie inside the left cuff of her cardigan as insurance against the aqueous nose condition that ran in her family, “Honk!” she would hoot before neatly returning the hankie into her cuff for the next nasal squall that was sure to come soon.

Auntie Knockers presented a rough outward bearing that belied a shy, self-effacing spirit. She was especially loud when engaging with her Francophone compatriots, a challenge that she had no choice but to tackle from time to time. In addition to her slow, ever lustier verbal delivery, she would discard all prepositions, articles, conjunctions, gender distinctions, and most adjectives and adverbs. All that remained were nouns and verbs. All plural nouns were spoken as singular.

For reasons that remain unexplained, Auntie added “ee” to the end of each uttered verb while inflecting her voice upward, turning every declaration into a question. To the untrained ear, this sounded like someone pretending to be fluent in Mandarin or Cantonese but uncomfortable with the subterfuge.

At Auntie’s farm, I recall a hired workman named Lucien who worked his day job at my Dad’s printing company but who also performed various odd jobs at Auntie’s

place for a few extra dollars. “Few” is the operative word here. I don’t know how much Lucien was paid and I know it is uncouth even to raise the subject. All I knew was that when Dad tasked me to dig out dandelions by the roots from our lawn, he paid me one cent per 100 roots. So I’m wildly guessing that Lucien never financed any exotic sea cruises on the proceeds from his household chores *chez Auntie*.

Listening to Auntie issuing commands to Lucien was excellent entertainment worthy of inviting my urchin pals over to witness. The irony was that Lucien spoke perfectly understandable, grammatically correct English, but Auntie refused to be nudged from her insistence on addressing him in a pidgin corruption of her native English.

The conversation would go something like this. “Lucien, you washee window?” “Why yes Madame Knockers,” Lucien would reply, “and which ones would you like washed?” “Upstair, downstair, front, back?” Auntie would instruct. Lucien would nod and affirm, “Very well, Madame Knockers, all the windows on the house, all four sides, on both floors.”

“OOOwee Lucien, (Auntie’s sole concession to French), you washee all window, two side too up down?” “Yes Madame, I shall wash ALL the windows, both sides of each pane upstairs and downstairs.” And so it went. Eventually, all the windows got washed. Lucien got paid his one cent per 100 panes (two side too up down front back), and everybody exited the exchange spiritually and culturally, if not materially, the richer.

After the completion of his window washing, Lucien would ask. “Is there anything else that Madame Knockers would like me to do?” “OOOwee Lucien,” Auntie would reply, “You mowee lawn?” (To no apparent avail, my Dad would often remind Auntie that Lucien was not Chinese. Of course if he had been, he would have understood perfectly.)

Because, as a kid, I occasionally got inside my mother’s hair netting more than she could tolerate, she would farm me out to Auntie who, in turn, would take me into Sherbrooke to shop and do other errands mainly because she couldn’t figure anything else to do with me. I eagerly anticipated these excursions because they were both educational and amusing.

On one such errand, Auntie took me to her unilingual French seamstress to have her lace-collared blouse altered to accommodate the ever-expanding barrel above her waist. The seamstress needed to know Auntie’s clothing size. Although my French was poor, it surpassed

(CONT’D ON PG. 8)

# For the Love of Curling

by Tammy Hadlock



For many people, when November comes around the dread of waking up to a street full of white stuff is close to mind. For me, however, as the cooler days, the falling leaves, and the frosted-over car windows drift in (pun intended), my thoughts turn to my favorite winter sport, curling.

When I speak to people about this sport the large majority will say that they need to be woken up from a deep sleep when they watch a game. However, I always tell them to at least try the sport once before they voice their judgement. I can almost guarantee that once someone has played a game and put in 100 %, they will change their tune on whether or not curling is a physical sport.

The next day, you will feel muscles that you didn't realize you had, and perhaps you may just want to learn a little bit more about the sport.

My first experience with curling was when I was just a pre-teen. My parents both curled, and it just seemed natural that my brother and I join them at one point. I played for many years, and had many enjoyable moments on the ice. Of course back then, the equipment wasn't as advanced as now, and I remember sweeping with a husk broom.

Later on, as with everything, the broom did advance, as the problem with losing some of the particles on the ice became an issue. Although I did enjoy using this broom, there are advantages with the newer brooms. For example, they are so much lighter in weight now, it makes it easier to make a difference when sweeping.

When you begin to curl, you normally start in the lead or second position; with this, having a good broom makes the game much more enjoyable, as most of the game you will be sweeping.

I also recall making some good friends while curling, as it is very much a team sport. Unlike many other sports, there is a great deal of sportsmanship within curling. And when going out to bonspiels (competitions), you have the opportunity to meet others outside of your community; exchanging club pins makes for an even closer bond. Each year, you look forward to seeing these people and the challenge of yet another intense bonspiel.

Not only can curling be a physical activity, it also

challenges your brain. There are many strategies in this game, and learning to "read the ice" can take a new player some time to grasp. Even knowing when to sweep and for what reason takes some understanding. Perhaps one of the most challenging aspects is discovering what weight to throw the stone. Sweepers can help a stone, but the knowledge of having the perfect weight is a game changer.

Many will chuckle when watching a game, as the skips yell at the top of their lungs to the sweepers. You can't be shy as a skip, that's for sure – the game depends on the stone going to the right spot. An experienced skip knows what shot he or she will need to do, several shots ahead. And when a team's membership is well in sync with each other, they are very hard to beat.

My memories of curling are all happy ones, and after taking a break for a few years, I find that the adult league is just as enjoyable as the junior league.

So the next time you think of taking a snooze during a curling match on television, perhaps you should go to your local club and learn to throw a few stones– you just may be surprised.

Until then, hurry hard, and keep your feet on the ice!

(Lost in Translation CONT'D FROM PG. 7)

Auntie's so she leaned on my linguistic skill to get by. I told Auntie that the seamstress wanted to know what size she wore. Everything flushed downward from there.

"Sixteen?" Auntie ventured. Affirming that she understood Auntie's response, the seamstress replied, "Size?" "Sixteen?" Auntie repeated. "Size?" "SIXTEEN?" riposted Auntie in a higher pitch and distinctly edgier voice. "Size?" Still louder, "SIXTEEN??" "Size?" "SIXTEEN???" "Size?" "SIXTEEN???"

And so it went until I tugged at Auntie's sleeve, drawing her aside to inform her that "size" meant "seize" which in turn signified "sixteen," and that the seamstress was merely trying to confirm the blouse size that Auntie had originally specified.

In that frantic confusion of lost translation, poor Auntie Knockers never got around to asking the seamstress, "You fixee blouse?"

# The San Blas Indians of Panama

by *Lionel Emond*

In 2007 I was delighted to accept a Rotary assignment on the islands of the Kuna Indians. From enjoying earlier exposures to their lovely handicrafts when I was in Panama, I would now have the opportunity of visiting these creative people who form one of the most vibrant cultures in Latin America,

The San Blas Islands (Tierra Kuna) are on the eastern Caribbean coast of Panama. Kuna territory is located along the Caribbean slope of the Darien, running along the length of the archipelago, ending at the Colombian border.

Approximately 40,000 people who live in the 'comarca' (district) inhabit just 40 of the islands, none of which are large. Their economy is based on a mixture of hunting, fishing, collecting, farming, trade and migratory work. All crops are grown on the mainland, and the island-dwelling Kuna must travel by dugout canoe or sailboat to their lands. Every village has a chief whose authority depends on persuasion as he participates in communal meetings of the adult males. I attended one such meeting and appreciated the skill of the chief in persuasive communal leadership.

Now back to the project that I was to review. It was a joint effort to address the widespread malnutrition in the area, organized by the Rotary Club of Panama Norte and a Rotary Club in Freising, Germany, with the intention of reducing malnutrition, improving health care and protecting the environmental integrity of the region. The agricultural development of Kuna Yala was targeted. It would provide for eight self-sustaining farms in the region, which would involve the active participation of organized community groups. Also included was the raising of poultry centered in the Comunidad de Ailigandl. This composite program to familiarize the community with animal and agricultural management techniques leading to self-sufficiency, was initiated by Rotarians. Unfortunately, soon after the initiation of the program, the person who essentially inspired the program, and who had adopted the Kuna Indians as her mission and involved the participation of her German friends, was drowned in a sailing accident.

The trip to the site consisted of a float plane from Panama City to the islands, where we transferred onto an open launch. We were three persons in our party, including two female members of the Rotary Club who had assumed responsibility for the project following the sudden demise of the afore-mentioned local German lady, and were to provide ongoing supervision for its success. When we disembarked from the vessel, the island chief welcomed us, and informed the driver to include two additional adults who were travelling downstream. Well, this made for a loaded boat, which caused a lot of splashing onto the passengers. Fortunately, these two new individuals did the bailing of the water. The going was rough and we got drenched. My camera, which was in an inner pocket two layers down, was sufficiently wetted that it shorted the battery once on land! Fortunately, I had a second one which was still operational.



Once on land, we went ashore like wet puppies to be welcomed by our hosts, and soon were able to dry off in our assigned quarters. Later, a quick overview disclosed some of the problems which had developed during the period when project management was lacking, namely:

1) The project had set out the protocol for the use of tools and equipment provided by the project. As each island completed its work, it would pass the equipment over to the next island. This procedure, however, was thwarted by the first island claiming the equipment as their own; they would not relinquish same without some negotiating on our part.

2) The husbandry program of installing a communal poultry yard had been allocated to the responsibility of the islanders to feed and water the birds located in a central chicken coop. However, soon after, the locals complained about the trouble of having to travel to town, etc. to carry out their allocated duties. Instead they suggested that the chickens be divided amongst the inhabitants who would keep and feed them at home. A good idea? No... because when Panamanian National Day of celebration came, all the poultry was killed and eaten. So much for poultry husbandry!

(CONT'D ON PG. 10)

(CONT'D FROM PG. 9)

In any event, things were finally underway, and the islanders where we were located were busily preparing their plots on the mainland to our satisfaction. The natives were most industrious, requiring only the tools and some direction being provided by a temporarily installed local agent appointed to manage affairs. Being an outsider, he was not fully respected.

The Kuna women were noted for their beautiful sewing creations called "Molas", depicting their imaginative interpretations of animal and bird life. This was the original theme, which in later years deviated into depicting phases of the modern world as they saw it. These versions of earlier times, one of which I admired greatly would be a wonderful acquisition! When I saw this lovely version of the old theme sewn onto the apron of a waitress, I admired it. She immediately offered it for sale, and commenced cutting the stitching holding it to her apron! I still have it mounted on the wall of my house in Eastman.

In the final analysis of the project, we recognized that the lack of a permanent and reliable site-manager had caused too many problems for the two supervisory ladies appointed by Rotary. They were very capable in their own right; however, the distances to travel for on-site management, as earlier described, plus their own responsibilities at home, made it an impossible chore. Consequently, the project funding was cut off during the latter phase of the work. Needless to say, much had been accomplished, and the Islanders benefited from financial assistance and the experience that they had absorbed, thereby encouraging them to carry on accordingly.

If Panama should be a future destination for your consideration, include visiting the land of the Kuna Indians, which now should be most hospitable and enjoyable!



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# In Memory of Brian McIntyre (1945–1999)

By Clarence Huse (excerpted from his book)



Photo courtesy of Laureen Maclure

From the book *Model A's and Their Owners* by Clarence Huse

When Brian was about eighteen he purchased this 1930 Model "A" for around \$250 dollars. I can remember him driving the car at this time.

A few years later he purchased parts and started to restore the car. After being married his priority became his wife and raising his family. However, He never forgot his love for the Model " A" and continued to buy parts, still planning the restoration of his precious Model " A."

Years later Brian had a grandson named Willow. One night while walking with his wife, Jane, out of the blue he said, " if anything ever happens to me, save the Model " A" for Willow." Within a few days Brian was tragically killed in an industrial accident.

Brian's grandson is now seven years old. Willow looks at the car from time to time and tells his grandmother, "Someday I am going to fix this car for Grampy."



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# Looking Back in The Townships Sun Files with John Viau

John Viau lives in Ormstown and is a regular contributor to The Townships Sun. John has a love of nature, the activities, the natural beauty of the landscape, and the animals that inhabit this beautiful landscape. We would like to share with you some of the photos that have graced the pages of The Townships Sun.



I'll take a little rest



Just out for a stroll



How many geese does it take to stop a truck?



Let's take a sleigh ride



Nothing like a day of skiing

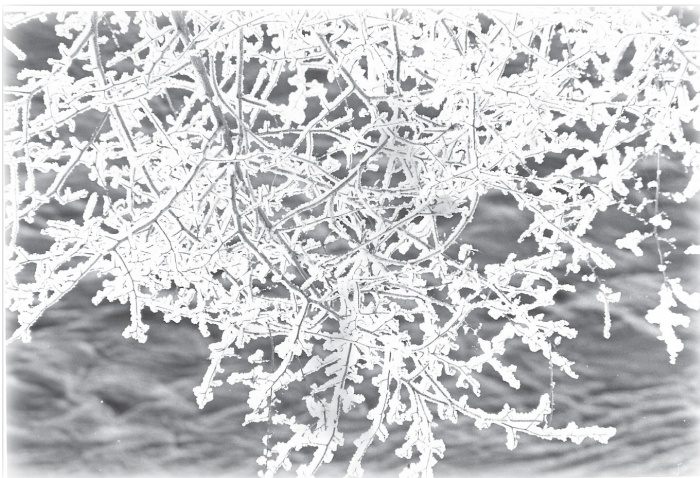
(CONT'D ON PG. 13)



*Gather around the wood stove*



*A little melting in the stream*



*The beauty of the branches adorned with ice*



*Our new friend*



*Maple syrup on the way*

# A Conversation with Matthew

by B. Heath —*The Townships Sun*

The value in a community is a reflection of the person you are. Local people paint a beautiful canvas with vibrant colours. Colours that move, bend, and change throughout the years. Matthew Farfan is an author, historian and leader, a visionary, preserving history and heritage. This three dimensional vision recognizes the value of knowing where we came from and understanding where the path leads us.

This is our local tapestry, rich in history. Matthew is driven by his interest in the local wellbeing and, after a brief conversation, it is clear Matthew accepts nothing less than 100% from himself. In speaking about his dedication to many organizations and projects, Matthew replies, "Do not do it unless you do it well." Having had the privilege of knowing Matthew for many years, I know of this dedication. He served on Stanstead's Town Council for 11 years; on the Haskell Free Library and Opera House board of directors for 9 years out of a maximum 9 year term (3 of the 9 years as President); and presently he serves as president of the Stanstead Historical Society (Colby Curtis Museum) and Director of the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN).

Matthew was born in St. Lambert, Que. His parents purchased a cottage on Lake Memphremagog and this is where Matthew's love of the Townships began. He has traveled much, and yet he tells me that there are, "...few places that compare to the Eastern Townships; the beautiful landscape, friendly people and bilingualism are very attractive. This is my favorite part of the world."

Matthew's position as Director of QAHN connects him with many community networking groups. "The Mission of (QAHN) Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network, founded in 2000, is to promote a greater understanding of the history of Quebec's English-speaking communities by informing, inspiring and connecting people through its activities. Membership is open to anyone regardless of language or cultural affiliation with an interest in history, heritage and culture. QAHN's concern is with the preservation of English speaking community's heritage, not with language."

Matthew has written the following books, as

well as articles that have appeared in numerous publications: *The Vermont-Quebec Border – Life on the Line*; *The Eastern Townships: On Lake and River*; *The Eastern Townships: In Town and Village*. The Townships Sun is privileged to have Matthew's "Townships Trivia" column in each edition of our publication. This 10 photo, 10 question feature on Townships history is a favorite of many of our readers, and utilizes Matthew's collection of between 15,000 and 20,000 old photographs.

It was 22 years ago when Matthew and his wife, Josiane Caillet, purchased the heritage house located on Dufferin St. in Stanstead, next door to the Colby Curtis Museum. The couple opened and operated an art gallery for five years.

Matthew describes it as fun and full of life, especially during events. They held an Annual Eastern Townships Art Competition attracting as many as 250 people for some events. It was so big that the event would spill over from the house into the carriage house. There was a lot of work involved, and it certainly posed a challenge to have that many people in your home. Their weekends were not free to do as they might have wished. The gallery embraced the locals, and in turn they kept the gallery alive. Matthew and Josiane recognized the value to the community.

Matthew is an articulate, focused leader, dedicated to the Stanstead community as well as the Eastern Townships. We discussed his views on leadership and, to no surprise, his response was, "You have to do what is best, not what is popular. Keeping a town alive takes more than giving money. It is important to contribute to a town's beautification and keep it vibrant." In today's society, true leadership is often missing. I was surprised to hear that Matthew spearheaded the "Architectural Protection Plan" to ensure that historic parts of Stanstead are not being destroyed. The Town of Stanstead was one of the first towns to adopt this policy, with other towns following. This surely reflects his belief in heritage and culture – and can be seen as well as in his publications and community initiatives – so it was no surprise to learn that his Master's Degree thesis was on Townships History.

(CONT'D ON PG. 15)



Matthew's scope is wide and encompassing, engaging people, preserving history and taking ownership of responsibility. Along with his serious no-nonsense working side there is a fun-loving side to Mr. Farfan. Actually, he described himself as "a bit of a clown." Matthew is definitely an outdoor enthusiast. You just might catch sight of him at Owl's Head, skiing down a trail, and if you are really lucky you will come across 'Big Ears.' Big Ears is Matthew's loveable little dog, always tagging along, and no article would be complete without mentioning this wonderful little guy. Just so you know, Big Ears is definitely in charge at QAHN. He can be seen at the QAHN office in Lennoxville as the official mascot, making tours of the building and visiting other organizations. He often stops to visit the ladies in the building, taking the odd nap, and occasionally receiving a treat from Cathy Turner.

There is so much more I can say about Matthew: he does not like the language of politics, negativity, or a community in disrepair. However, one of the best points I can make is that Matthew makes things happen, good things. I once heard you may discover more in one square mile than a thousand miles; I believe that looking at your own community builds who we are, where we have been and the things we need to embrace. It is never easy to encapsulate a person in one article. I sincerely hope that I have done justice to him with this tiny glimpse into the many aspects of Matthew Farfan.

Thank you, Matthew, for taking the time to have this conversation with me, as well as for your contributions to The Townships Sun. You are a great example of organizations and communities working together to promote and preserve all things Townships.





## Pharmacie Leng

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# Irish Month in Richmond

by Bev Taber Smith

The St. Patrick's Society of Richmond & Vicinity has a long history. The founding of the Society in 1877 took place at the same time that the town of Richmond was developing as an important rail center. Peter Southam states in *Irish Settlement and National Identity in the Lower St. Francis Valley* that one reason the society was created was to counteract the sense of isolation felt by newly arrived immigrants, to provide mutual support and to help members establish roots in the community. (p.9) Those roots became firmly established with activities and events such as parades, guest speakers, concerts, Irish dancing classes, banquets, musical events, newsletters, etc. during the month of March.



Townships Sun files


Damian, and Jesse Roberts will demonstrate and exhibit their many creative talents. **(March 9)**

History of the Irish Language in Canada will be presented by author and scholar, Danny Doyle. Mr. Doyle has been actively involved with the teaching and promotion of the Irish language in Canada. **(March 9)**

Totally new this year is a Kitchen Party on Saturday. **March 16**, featuring The Waterboys, The Rutherfords, and Matthew McCully. These multi-talented musicians sing and play many Celtic instruments. Included is an Irish menu of finger foods.

Several thousand people from the Townships and beyond will attend the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade on **March 17** enjoying the ambiance with floats, individuals and groups, and marching bands. Following the parade will Contra dancing with Donald Dubuc.

A play, *The Countess Cathleen O'Shea*, is an Irish folk tale, retold by Julie Miller, as a bilingual play performed by the young actors of "It Takes a Village Theatre" on March 28 and 29.

Richmond is the place to be to celebrate everyone's Irish roots, and those who wish they had them! For details of these and other events and activities please visit <https://www.richmondstpats.org/> 



This March, with sponsorship from Heritage Canada, the St. Patrick's Society celebrates this rich heritage with an Irish Heritage Festival. The program includes cultural events for all ages and involves many local, talented individuals and groups. Many events are free or by donation, and everyone is invited to attend some or all of them.

Some of the highlights this March will be the Spoken Word Event, with local youth invited to present a Celtic-inspired poem, song, or recitation. The same evening, Patti Warnock, master story-teller, will relate "For the Love of the Land", a true story of a large Irish family— typical of so many in rural Canada— and their life on the farm in the years of the Great Depression, *The Derry Girl* video will top off the evening. **(March 8).**

Local artists, Sandra Picken Roberts, Andrea Barrie, Melanie Ann Fallnbigl, Pennie Lynch, and Morgan,

# The Outhouse

by *The Townships Sun*

We have been looking back through our photo files, and as a result of this we have found numerous photos that we would very much like to share with you. Some photos are about life in general, where we worked, where we played and all those who came before us. And yet some are just a little bit humorous.

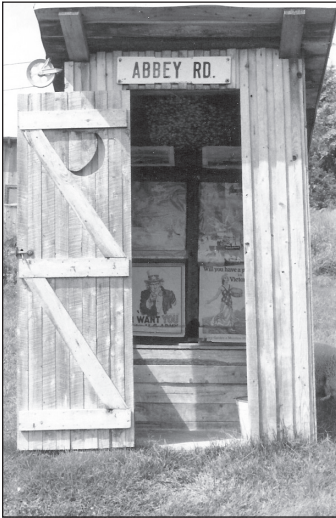


photo by Sue Boyer

We went looking for a little history about the outhouse. Did you know that star cut outs are commonly found on the outhouse door? This allegedly dates back to colonial times when literacy levels were low. Basically, they were for letting in more light; however, they also indicated the male and female facilities. A crescent moon symbolized the female outhouse, while the male outhouse was represented by a star. If there was only one outhouse for the family, it most likely would have a

moon on it.

You might have used an outhouse with two seats. You may have wondered why it would have two seats. Well the holes were designed for a bigger and smaller bottom, one for adults and one for smaller children.

Did you know there is an outhouse museum in Nova Scotia? It is tucked inside of Liverpool, Nova Scotia. The museum is filled with collectibles such as photos and artifacts—one room actually has an outhouse in it! They have keychains, posters, and coffee mugs plus a full room dedicated to outhouses.

And did you know people actually steal outhouses? Randy Nemirsky made headlines when his new outhouse was stolen from his farm near Edmonton. The outhouse weighed 450 kilograms and would have required as many as six people to move it. Randy told the CBC: “How low can you go to steal a man’s privy?” There are other accounts of outhouses being stolen throughout Canada.

We were amazed to learn that outhouse diggers existed, and what they were digging for. Imagine cashing in on the outhouse holes. In the 1700s, 1800s and early 1900s, the outhouse was often used as a garbage disposal as well as for bathroom purposes. There were people who

actually dug in places where they believed old outhouses were located. They would find really old bottles such as medicine bottles, codeine, and whisky bottles: you name it, they found it.

Toilet paper was not available so people would use the Sears catalogue. You might have even seen a vintage catalogue in an outhouse or framed pictures of them. Apparently, Sears sent out catalogues that were two or three inches thick with black and white grainy paper. It is these pages that were placed in the outhouse to wipe with. Toilet paper was a great invention for sanitation, and especially softer on the back side.

Some outhouses were attached to the side of the house, making a trip to the latrine a little easier by not having to go out into the night where goodness knows what was lurking, or head out on a cold frosty winter’s night. And many remember cottage life: the cottage was a great place to spend the summer but there it was, the outhouse. Who knew what was living inside this little cabin? You might have been comfortable with town life where there was an inside flush, but at the cottage the old outhouse was your only option.



photo by Sue Boyer



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# Elaine Laraway's Family of Georgeville

by *The Townships Sun*

*(The information for this article was supplied by Elaine Laraway of Georgeville.)*

The Laraway family history in the Georgeville area dates back to the 1800s. Charles Edward Laraway and Lizzie Maud Bissell, were among the pioneers who helped build the backbone of Stanstead County. Like many families, they were homesteaders. The Old Laraway farm still stands in Backport on the Oliver Corner Road. Backport is located just outside of Fitch Bay. Elaine's maternal ancestors, the Hughes family, emigrated from England near the turn of the century. The family settled at Ticehurst Corner, near Tomifobia, where they worked and raised two daughters.

It was the late 1920s when Elaine's father, Charles Earl Laraway, and mother, Blanche Louise Hughes bought and settled on a farm just outside Georgeville. They had previously resided in nearby Magog. Their farm was located on Merrill Road, and it was here that they raised their nine children. Elaine's parents operated the farm for over forty years but eventually the house was destroyed by fire. The family then lived in a little schoolhouse near Taylor Brook until the new house was built. Elaine believes that it was while they were living in the schoolhouse that she was born. Her parents taught all the children to work hard and to be proud of their culture and heritage.

Elaine is the youngest daughter. She lived on the farm for the first nineteen years of her life. After living in Montreal for two years she was convinced that anyone else could have the city life but her heart and soul lay in the Townships. She returned to the Townships after completing her teacher training at MacDonald College.

Following her mother's death, the farm no longer had the same appeal to her. She knew it was time for a change. The farm was sold in the late 1960s and Elaine purchased her property in the village. The property belonged to Emily Vancour, who had purchased it from Dorothy Heath. The house was old and run down and needed a lot of repair. Fortunately, it was just what she was looking for as a long term project. At the time, the cost of the house was well within her means, and the location was a convenient distance to her teaching post at Ayer's Cliff and later in Magog. The commute was also good, allowing her to attend Bishop's University, where she earned her B.A. and M. Ed.

Over the years she has renovated using local carpenters and general handymen for minor repairs. Her very first

project was pouring a concrete wall in the basement. Before this there was a log cabin style foundation on two sides. As you can imagine, the first few winters were cool, very cool, giving the house natural air conditioning.

The following year the roof leaked and she was told that it had to be replaced. Just what one wants to hear! So she made an appointment with the bank manager to borrow the money to complete project number two. She arrived at the bank following a water fight with the children at school. She lost, and as she said, she was young and foolish. Well, the manager looked at her for a while and said there was no problem. It was after she left the bank she realized she was still soaking wet from the lost water fight. Elaine said, "He must have thought that I didn't even have a roof, or else it was in very, very bad shape." No collateral was required, and he loaned her the money right away.

By the 1970s she had acquired another lot adjacent to her property, purchased from Charles Atkin and previously belonging to Vaughan Cochrane. It was due to her love of nature, the openness of the country, and the peace and tranquility she desired that she purchased this piece of land; birds, deer, raccoons and squirrels are constant visitors, and the view is spectacular.

Elaine loves her community. She describes the people as supportive, warm, helpful and receptive. She served ten years as a director of the Community Association, as well sitting on numerous committees. Elaine has seen a lot of changes over the years. She looks sadly at the old timers moving out but embraces the newcomers. You will find Elaine at 64 Channel with her beloved cats. Elaine is a highly respected member of the community, and loved and remembered by students whom she taught and for whom she was their biggest supporter. Elaine is a true reflection of the values her family taught her; the love of her family is a constant. All the lives that Elaine has touched are enriched from knowing this intelligent, gentle lady.

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# A Letter from Casey

By Casey Vriesendorp

I really enjoyed reading about the Space Research Center in the October-November 2018 issue of *The Townships Sun*. At one time I was employed at the Research Center. At first they took me on as a replacement security guard working for Steve Bronson, whom I had known before starting work at the Center.

My wife Joyce's son, Ross Leitch, was married to Steve Bronson's daughter, Beverly Bronson. Thus, it was through Ross that I was hired, following a thorough security check. I worked for Steve performing hourly patrols through the Center. Upon the return of the guard I was replacing, I was transferred to what was referred to as the "proto shop". This was the area where some research was carried out and machined parts were made for experimentation before they were taken to the main shop where they produced the big gun and ammunition. At the small shop I worked as sort of a flunky. I did not mind, as I was just an extra helper when someone needed a hand.

I drove an old rusted-out Volkswagen van to take finished parts to the main shop. This old van was still in good running condition; however, one time I had quite an experience. I slipped right over a steep cliff located on the side of the shop. I was fortunate to land in a deep valley filled with freshly fallen snow. The snow provided me with a soft landing. Here I was, in the van, and could not get out. After an hour or so someone finally noticed the van and I were missing, but they had no idea where I had gone.

Someone happened to look down over the cliff and noticed the roof of the van. They arrived with a heavy-duty crane to pull the van— with me in it— out. After the incident everything went back to normal, as though nothing had ever happened. The van was not damaged and I had no injuries.

As the guard I remember making my rounds, and in doing so I had the opportunity of having a good look at the long gun as well as Dr. Bull's residence. I felt like I was in Hollywood. Following problems at the plant, some of the employees went to Butterfield's plant in Stanstead, others went out on their own, opening businesses. A few years later, I heard about or read newspaper reports that Dr. Bull had been murdered, possibly due to illegal undertakings.

While I still have your attention I would like to mention my wife, Joyce Leitch, who passed away in 1999. After 6 years of struggling with Alzheimer's and living in hospice care at the Magog Hospital. Her son Ross and his wife Beverly, as well as Steve and Marie Bronson, have now passed as well; so many memories. As I was looking at some old photo albums I came across this poem she wrote, and I would like to share it with you:

*When you are alone and feeling blue,  
Old memories come back to stay with you.*

*Old ones, new ones, happy and sad ones.*

*I think of the times when I was young  
And the days were happy and a lot of fun.*

*But years go by and yet I can see,  
These beautiful memories a treasure  
Here inside me.*

*Now I am old, time is flying by,  
I have lived my life, I must not cry.*

*I will be ready at ninety seven,  
If God you want me to share your heaven.*

Poem by Joyce Leitch Vriesendorp (1980).  
May she rest in peace. Your husband, Casey.



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# Frank Johnson (1810-1892): New Zealand and Ascot Township Pioneer and Poet

by Gérard Côté (Lennoxville-Ascot Historical and Museum Society) and  
Jean-Marie Dubois (Université de Sherbrooke)

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Photo by C. O. Gustafson Studio.  
Courtesy of Beverley Renaud (née  
Johnson), Pointe-Claire

Frank Johnson was born in London, England, September 2, 1810. He was one of the seven children of Martha Tovey (ca 1785-1856) and of chemist Robert Johnson (ca 1776-1851). They had married in Middlesex County, December 20, 1805. Frank went to preparatory school at Hampstead, then to a classical school in London and eventually to Edinburgh University. He left university to fulfill his wish to be an actor.

His father disagreed and offered him a trip around the world instead. In 1836-1837, he travelled on the ship Achilles from London to the Solomon Islands. This trip was a terrible experience and inspired him to write an epic poem, *Lashed to the Mizzen, A Night Off the Cape*, published in Montreal in 1872. On March 7, 1840, Frank landed in New Zealand. He first cleared 100 acres of land, built a saw mill and sold his wood, which was partly used for early construction in nearby Wellington, the future capital of New Zealand. Frank's lot grew into Johnsonville, named after him, and is a suburb today of North Wellington. On December 24, 1847, Frank married Anne Meaton in Wellington, where their first two sons were born: Edgar Robert and Alfred Wolfe. Alfred wed Mary Burton of Burton Road (now Bowers Road), on June 29, 1872, in Coaticook.

Around 1850, the Johnson family returned to England where Frank worked as a farmer in Pembrokeshire, Wales, where George Franklin was born. In 1851, the family moved to the Eastern Townships, first to Westbury, where their fourth son, Robert T. W., was born. By 1859, the Johnsons were living on Lot 4, Range VI in Ascot Township, and later, on Nichol Road in Earlstown.

In 1884, Frank passed on his 95 acres of land to his elder son, Edgar Robert. On June 8, 1871, Edgar Robert married Jessie Ada Burton in St. George's Anglican Church in Lennoxville. They had five sons, including Henry Edward who, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, was ploughing champion

for 20 years at the Sherbrooke Ploughmans' annual matches. He later became a judge of the matches. Seven of his trophies were donated to the Lennoxville-Ascot Historical and Museum Society where they are now on display.

Frank Johnson authored a book of poetry, *Giles and Janey, the Kindly Gentleman* (1867) in which he wrote of the trials of homesteading in Lower Canada in the 1800s. In Montreal in 1876, he published his 206-page epic verse, *The Village of Merrow: Its Past and Present*. It depicts the typical rural life in the English countryside of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, underscoring the poverty and the struggles of underpaid farm labourers. Frank Johnson died in Ascot Township on February 17, 1892 and was buried in Huntingville Universalist Cemetery. As for the three generations which succeeded him, Henry Edward's son, Edgar (*Eddie*) Henry Darrell Johnson spent his life running the family farm. Edna Johnson's son Glen Allen now owns the family home, making it one of the few lived in by five generations in a row.

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### ***A message from The Townships Sun***

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# John Nichol (1867-1932): Prominent Farmer and Businessman

by Gérard Côté (Lennoxville-Ascot Historical and Museum Society) and  
Jean-Marie Dubois (Université de Sherbrooke)

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John Nichol was born in Walton, Cumberland County, England, on May 2, 1867. He was the son of Sarah Hetherington and Robert Nichol, farmer. They had been married in the parish of Walton on February 26, 1863. John came from England in 1894 and began working on a farm near Milby. He later became owner of the Bustard farm in the same area. He married Katherine Jennie (1883-1965), daughter of Mary Baker and of Benjamin Trussler, in Lennoxville, on February 7, 1900. They had 7 children: Iris Isabelle (1900), Gladys Irene (1902-1902), Wesley W. Irwin (1903-1985), Roberta Marguerite (1904), Howard Henry (1907-1991), Lyndon Elvert (1914) and Olive May. In 1918, John Nichol opened a meat business in Lennoxville. His butcher shop had to be moved several times, having suffered fires in 1938, 1954 and 1965. In 1919, John bought the Fitzgerald farm, which he sold in 1921 for \$17,000. In the same year, he built a house in the back of the present Royal Bank building on Main Street (Queen Street since 1953). He sold it a year later, in 1922, and put up a cold storage at a cost of \$5,500, and installed an ice machine plant at the cost of \$6,000. He had a stall at Lansdowne Market in Sherbrooke. His income tax return for 1921 indicates liquid assets of \$12,845 and \$14,775 for 1922.

On March 27, 1928, before Notary Public E. B. Worthington, he bought *Le Marché Alexandre* from Lawrence W. Dickson, at 76-78 Alexander Street in Sherbrooke, including the machinery, the equipment and good-will of the business at the price of \$6,500. In the same year, he bought the Green Hills farm (lot 3 on Range VI of Ascot Township) on the original road from Ascot Township to Compton. This route would later become Nichol Road. In the late 20s or early 30s, he built a business block at 135 Main Street in Lennoxville, and on the ground floor established a modern meat shop, later run by his sons Wesley (1903-1985) and Howard (1907-1991) and assisted by Wesley's sons, John Jr. and Robert (1937-1989). John's daughter Cindy also worked for there about 15 years in the butcher shop: she was the fourth generation to do so. The Nichols were particularly well known for their choice of beef and double smoked hams. They did wholesale business across Canada in ham and bacon they cured themselves. They supplied the lamb served to Queen Elizabeth at her dinner at the Ritz Carlton in Montreal in the 1950s.

In 1919-1920, John Nichol Sr. was Mayor of Ascot Township and Town Councillor in 1916-1918 and in 1921. In 1926-1928, he was a Lennoxville Town Councillor. He was named the first President of the Lennoxville Farmers' Club and was a Director of the Eastern Townships Agricultural Association. A conservative in



Photo credit: John Nichol Jr., Waterville.

politics and an Anglican in religion, he was an officer on St. George's Church Board. John Nichol, Sr. died on May 14, 1932 and is buried in Malvern Cemetery.

Wesley Nichol was Ascot Township Town Councillor from 1947 to 1953 and Mayor from 1953 to 1957. John Nichol Jr., John Nichol's grandson, was President of the Lennoxville Curling Club in 1929-1930 and was on the Lennoxville Fire Brigade from 1962 to 2002. He became Fire Chief in 1967.



# My View from Down Under

by Linda Knight Seccaspina

I always wanted to be tall. Since my mother and both grandfathers were tall, I could never understand why I was short. There have always been benefits to being tall, even as far back as 1899: I noticed that the first words in classified ads required servants and parlour maids to be tall, have good character and go to church. I had some of the character, and certainly went to church, but my neck always needed to stretch in order for me to see over the pews.

They say being short isn't a huge problem, but it limits you from engaging in certain occupations, such as becoming a basketball player. That's not always true, as I did win a basketball contest in Grade 7 at Cowansville High School. It wasn't that I was of the perfect height to beat even the boys in that class— it was called having good aim. Even Mr. Busted the gym teacher could not believe what I had done, but I think he was just being *short-sighted*.



My grandmother used to measure me on the wall of the shed, but my

parents used another method called "*the Blue Spruce Tree*" in the front yard. My father bought this tree because he had always wanted a Blue Spruce tree. Why? I will never know, and he never said anything about it. But he took good care of that wee thing, and each year I was placed in front of it to see who was beating whom in the height category. Needless to say, that tree won year after year, and when I found it on Google Earth— well, never mind, it had beaten me, lock, stock, and barrel. In fact, many of the trees in my yard grew faster than I did. Did you ever have a feeling that you were born short because everyone wanted it that way?

Sometimes, even today, I sit on chairs and my feet don't touch the floor, and not being able to reach things on the top shelves of grocery stores is just infuriating. I always sit on the aisle seat as I never get short folks to sit in front of me; instead, I get someone the size of Lurch from the Addams Family blocking my view.

My view of the Giants' pennant winning parade that I covered in San Francisco for the local Bay area media in 2010 was strictly the tops of the floats.

I'm short, but I always say most of my body consists of legs, and while we are on the subject of body parts, once upon a time my thighs were deemed too skinny by most of my friends. I remember sitting next to a few of them, pushing my thighs into the swimming pool bench to try to make them appear larger. In crowds, I'm completely lost, and people could step all over me and never notice what was happening to me. In fact, this exact scenario transpired when I met Paul McCartney at the Edgewater Inn in Seattle in the 60s. I was "short changed" by the female crowd, and local police had to rescue me. I think high school was the worst, though; you would get a pain in your neck dancing with someone over 6 ft. tall. I just didn't want to be introduced to their belly buttons, so the only solution was to sit down or stand on a chair. Needless to say, I remained mostly seated.



I cheated through life wearing high heels and platform shoes, and now I look at my feet with their hammer toes, ingrown toenails, corns, and bunions, and wonder if I just tried too hard to not be abbreviated.

Somewhere between the age of 40 and 50 I lost 1.5 inches, so I am now a compacted 5 foot 4 and a half inches. So please, if you see the missing 1.5 inches wandering about, tell them to come back to their Lilliputian home!

***As Erma Bombeck once said, "Being short is just like the common cold. They will never find a cure for it".***



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“ I had rather be on my farm than be the emperor of the world ”  
George Washington

