



*Townships Life and Culture: Past, Present and Future*

*Turn your face towards the sun, and the shadows fall behind you.*

Photo by Marc Théberge (Stanstead)

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 **Front cover photo: Marc Th berge (Stanstead)**



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News Item:

# What's Open!



*Ayer's Cliff Farmers Market*  
Opens June 27th. For information contact Michèle  
819-212-0509 [michele.potvin@gmail.com](mailto:michele.potvin@gmail.com)



*Marché Locavore de Racine*  
Opening June 6 – for more information contact  
Denise Payette 1-450-532-4283

*Opens June 26*  
*Merry House contact information:*  
*infor@masonmerry.ca or call*  
*819-201-0727 ext. 106*



<p>Marché local de <b>Stanstead</b> Farmer's Market</p>	<p><b>SAMEDI</b></p> <p><b>10:00</b> ✨ <b>12:30</b></p> <p><b>SATURDAY</b></p>
<p><b>20 Juin au 10 Octobre 2020</b></p> <p><i>À côté / next to Marché Tradition</i></p>	
<p>Québec  Desjardins  Stanstead  Canada </p>	

*Stanstead Farmer's Market*  
*Open June 20.*



*Musée Armand Bombardier contact information 1-450-532-5300 ext. 52 [e.tessier@fjab.qc.ca](mailto:e.tessier@fjab.qc.ca). Open Now*



Editorial:

## Advice for Seniors: Wanted or Unwanted?

At the *Townships Sun* we have heard from numerous seniors about the advice they are receiving from their children, social workers, coaches, and others working with seniors. While they understand that the intent is well-meaning, they question the depth of anyone's knowledge, unless the person giving the advice is living the situation.

Needs are classified as physical, intellectual, emotional, and social. Needs are common for all individuals; however, as they pass through various stages of life and experience, these needs change. As a senior, do you feel helped or do you have a feeling of being misunderstood? You have lived life to this point and feel you are quite capable of knowing what is best for you, and yet things get in the way, especially medical limitations.

All stages of life offer challenges and getting older is no different. As a senior, keeping as much independence as possible is important. Do you need help? Yes, help is needed, but understanding that not one size fits all is equally important.

So, how do non-seniors bridge this gap? Listening first and possibly trying to place yourself in the same situation. What would you want to have as your support? That is not to say that difficult decisions do not have to be made for the well-being and safety of the senior. As family, the best we might be able to do is encourage and not push until the danger to the person is beyond independence. There are some possibilities that may be explored, such as in-home assistance, alert systems and other options that might be good to inquire about.

But most of all, remember that one day we will all reach the point in the aging process when life changes drastically for us. So, take a moment and put yourself in a senior's shoes. What would we want? The elderly need connection to family and friends. They gave us so much—we owe them love, respect, support, and excellent care.



## News Item: 2020 English- speaking Community Award Winners

Townshippers' Association is pleased and honoured to announce the winners of this year's **Outstanding Townshipper (OT) and Young Townships Leader (YTLA) awards**. These individuals have positively and significantly impacted their communities through their volunteer work, leadership skills, and being all-around positive role models.

This year's well-deserved honours go to **Melanie Cutting (Outstanding Townships Leader, Lennoxville) and Morgan Passmore (Young Townships Leader, Lennoxville)**. These exceptional individuals were announced as part of Townshippers' Association's 40th Annual General Meeting June 5th, 2020 and because, exceptionally this year we cannot honour our recipients with an in-person ceremony, they will be celebrated in different ways throughout the year, beginning with being highlighted through TA's new Webseries, "About Townshippers" over the summer.

**Melanie Cutting**, Layout Supervisor for this magazine, has been associated with almost every kind of volunteer group in the Lennoxville area in some way, shape or form and her contributions to the Townships English-speaking community have benefitted and enriched the lives of both the young and old. An active member of Townshippers' Association's board of directors until 2017, Melanie has also made significant contributions to New Horizons, Uplands, Lennoxville Library, Lennoxville Youth Centre and the SPA; she has also been honoured by the City of Sherbrooke, Borough of Lennoxville with their Volunteer of the Year award.

**Morgan Passmore** is completing her second year of a three-year diploma program in Farm Management and Technology at MacDonald College of McGill and has an impressive track record for giving back to her community for someone who is nineteen years old! Active within the Executive of Richmond's 4H Club since the age of 12, Morgan's dedication and drive have been recognized by her peers with honours including the Spirit Award, given to the 4H member who exemplifies the meaning of 4H (Hands, Head, Heart and Health) during the 2019 Quebec 4H Provincial Rally as well as a Certificate of Recognition for Service Corps Canada. Recently, you may have crossed paths with Morgan as she volunteered locally to deliver meals to senior community members

"These awards celebrate inspiring people doing great things to improve their communities and the lives of those around them," said Townshippers' Executive Director Rachel Hunting. "We are very proud to present these honours to our 2020 recipients and are grateful for their dedication to our community."

# Anita's Aging with Vitality: Let's Go Walking!

by Anita Duwel



**B**eautiful sunny days are here, so let's take advantage of them, get outside and move! And one of the best exercises that people of all ages can do is to walk.

Walking offers many health benefits and can be varied in how you do it.

Even if you are unable to walk at a quick pace, walking on a regular basis at a low intensity will have a positive impact on your overall metabolic health and will have you feeling great!

I know that when I start walking regularly, I feel fantastic and I start to see a difference in my body. I feel stronger, and my stress levels decrease. It also helps me to think more clearly and, at times, I find myself coming up with solutions to problems that I could not figure out beforehand.

And since it is low impact, my knees are happy!

If you find yourself moving less and less, you may be experiencing more aches and pains. And believe it or not, walking can help with this – it is one of the best activities you can do for overall wellbeing.

Now, if you are new to exercise, it would be important to begin slowly and to check in with your doctor before starting something new.

But wait: July and August can get very hot, so can you really be outside exercising?

Yes, you can. You just need to take some precautions:

- Make sure to drink plenty of water throughout the day and not just when exercising. On very hot days, drink something with electrolytes in it.
- Exercise early in the morning or at sunset when it is not as hot.
- If you are someone who is intense when exercising, try and tone it down a bit, especially during those hot, muggy days!
- Wear a hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen at all times.
- Following are some walking tips:
  - You should be standing tall with your stomach (core) muscles slightly contracted.
  - You should be looking about 20 feet in front of you with your chin up.

- Check that your heels hit the ground first and use your toes to push you forward.

- Your arms should move easily with a slight bend in the elbows and your shoulders should be relaxed and move naturally.

- When picking up speed, moving your arms more quickly will help quicken the pace and the intensity of your walk.

- Dress comfortably and wear shoes designed specifically for walking.

- Find a buddy. Walking with others can be fun; invite family and friends along. If you have a dog, you have a companion who would love to join you for a walk.

- Talk with your doctor. Even though walking is a generally safe and low-impact activity, you may want to check with your doctor if you've been sedentary for a while. Your physician can help you set goals that are realistic for you.

If you are looking to add some pep to your step, you can slightly increase your speed or alternate between a fast and a slower walk.

Of course, this, partnered with a healthy whole foods diet, will yield amazing results!

If you have any comments or questions about walking, feel free to reach out to me at [AnitaDuwel@live.com](mailto:AnitaDuwel@live.com).

Here's to walking!



# Poetry Page

## Hell has no fury like nature by Almeda Chute

Moving across the sky  
Heavy, dark, foreboding clouds  
Static air whispers ----  
Of an impending storm.  
Across the vision streaks the lightning  
Turning on the power of a thousand lights  
A drum roll thunders  
Like a herd of buffalo stampeding  
Streaks of lightning bolts  
Thrown by Zeus, the God of Thunder  
Fascination of nature's fury  
Wonderment of its strength  
Homes shudder as the storm nears  
Not a breath of air to spare  
Then like a raging bull  
Torrents of rain plummet to earth  
Striking out in anger  
Punishing all who dare to defy  
Rivers of water flood the streets  
Scraping the earth in changing contrast  
All quietness is in awe  
Destruction not by man  
Not controlled-not understood-not respected  
On and on the forces race  
Till spent at last  
This storm now past.

## My Garden by Verna M. Patterson

I planted a very small garden  
Down at the back of our lot,  
With vegetables and flowers together,  
It makes such a colorful spot!  
  
The monarch butterflies are kissing my flowers,  
The gray squirrels are jumping to and fro,  
While the rabbit is nibbling my lettuce,  
And the chipmunk is waiting to go.  
  
Now I have a very small garden,  
But there's plenty for us all, you see,  
The squirrels and chipmunks and rabbits,  
The man of the house and "Me"!

## Blue Stone

by Jan Draper

It is the blue stone on the table  
that caught her eye.  
The table set in white: linens, dishes all.  
Just as they should be.  
But the stone, the blue of a winter evening  
The blue of love when it is young  
And all you want to see is your lover's eyes  
The blue of morning washed away by the sunrise.  
It is the blue stone on the table  
That she wants. "How can I steal it  
Without being caught?" she thinks.  
"How funny to want something so much  
You think of theft." Her host returns.  
"Oh you saw it." He laughs.  
"I bet you like it. Thought about  
Putting it your pocket already? You can."  
He laughs again, "It is for you."

## During the Coronavirus Quarantine by Verna M. Patterson

The days are long and dreary  
My appetite is slowing down  
There is no one walking in the street  
Industries are all shut down.

I am still so thankful  
Even though I cannot go to town  
I thank the good Lord  
That I can still 'get around'

My heart goes out to all the professionals  
Working day and night  
Risking their lives to save us  
And testing medicines day and night

Oh! It certainly is a dreary time  
But we are to be thankful too  
For the professionals out there  
Risking their lives for me and you

Iris photo by Jan Draper

# 1964: A Summer of Rebellion

by *Linda Knight Seccaspina*

My grandparents once lived on Mercer Island just off the I-90 Seattle floating bridge, in one of the houses pictured in the photo. In September of 1963 my mother died, and in the summer of 1964 Dad sent my sister and me on a five day train ride to Vancouver where my grandparents picked us up.



It was a surreal summer for a 12 year-old going on 13, and my sister who was just 7. I can't even imagine two kids of that age being sent off by themselves across the country now, but Grandpa Crittenden decided my father needed some quiet time.

1964 was a summer of rebellion for me.

My grandparents hoped that their best friend's teen daughter, Sarah, who lived in Eastgate, would keep me out of trouble. When we started plotting a trip to Vancouver, Canada for a Beatles concert, they knew what a mistake it was to mix us together. The Beatles were set to perform August 12th at the Seattle Centre Coliseum and we had not been able to get any tickets. The 14,300 tickets at a cost of five dollar each were sold out in no time and some were even scalped for \$30 later on. Instead of tickets, my step-grandmother came home with a Paul McCartney "Beatle Bobbin' Head" doll. It did not take her long to find out that the little rubber doll was not going to cut it with me. An immediate call to Sarah was placed, and we began plotting our next move.

If my grandmother thought that Sarah was the perfect teenager she was greatly mistaken. In whispers, Sarah suggested we get her brother to haul her parent's boat out on Lake Washington to the harbor. It was nothing

short of a dangerous attempt to get near The Edgewater Inn, where the Beatles were staying. If I was scared to walk 200 feet across the floating bridge, there was little hope I was getting into a boat on Lake Washington.

That I-90 floating bridge just mesmerized me. Once a week I would attempt to go just a little farther on it with the waves sometimes slipping over the edge and the gentle swaying under my feet. I have been petrified of deep, open water all my life. The fear began one hot summer day when I was 6. My mother, Bernice Ethylene Crittenden Knight, warned me over and over not to stare at the water, as she prophesied that I would fall in. While everyone was enjoying their picnic lunch, I immediately returned to the edge of that dock to test her theory. Like a flying duck making a fell swoop into the water, I fell in head first. That was the day I nearly drowned, and "water" and "boating" became fearful enemies.

That summer in Washington State, it wasn't only all about the Beatles and German Chocolate Cake. I also ran away to San Francisco for a week and lived in Buena Vista Park. Sarah and I also managed to see the Beatles in Vancouver, and I touched Paul McCartney's hair at the Edgewater Inn in Seattle. But could I cross that bridge? No, because I was always afraid that bridge would sink with me on it. Word was the bridge had to float on pontoons because the silt at the bottom would not hold anything. So that meant if I went all the way down, I was still going to go down even farther into the abyss and never rise to the top.

Was I without merit in my thoughts? No. In 1990, after a half-century of commutes, Lake Washington's original floating bridge sank. Fierce winds and strong rain during that Thanksgiving weekend broke the bridge apart, and sections tumbled into the water. It finally broke up and sank into the mud on the bottom of Lake Washington.

I never did go back to Seattle. Frankly, I don't think my grandparents cared if I did, as my step-grandmother said she had never seen the likes of someone like me. But she never understood that life is always like crossing bridges. It's always which bridge to cross or which bridge to burn. Frankly, I've always waited until I came to the edge of the bridge and then tried to conquer the fear of the unknown. Some bridges I cross, some I don't, because there will always be troubled water under some of those bridges—and trouble has always been my middle name.

# Tom Bozer (1880-1964)

## Lennoxville Foreman, Fire Chief and Police Chief

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



Tom Bozer

(Lennoxville-Ascot Historical and Museum Society, courtesy Ursula Agnes Bozer)

Thomas Dibb Bozer was born August 10, 1880, in Henryville, on the eastern bank of the Richelieu River. He was the son of Sarah Jane Dibb (1850-1895) and farmer Joseph Bozer (1852-1900). In 1885, his family settled in Johnville, where Tom Bozer attended Racey School. He started working as a blacksmith in North Hatley in 1898 and later in Lee (Massachusetts), before opening his smithy in Huntingville. Upon the death of his father in 1901, he likely took over the family farm in Johnville. In June, 1906, at Milby, he married Margaret Edith Machell (1881-1974). They had two children, both born in Johnville

: Ursula Agnes (1910-1995), who never married, and Donald Machell (1916-1941), a sergeant-pilot in the Royal Canadian Air Force who died when his airplane crashed over England upon return from a bomber raid in Germany during World War II. At an unknown date before 1921, Tom Bozer moved to Huntingville where he operated his blacksmith and wheelwright shop until his house was destroyed by fire in 1930. He then went to work for the Town of Lennoxville and moved to 5 Bown Street. His daughter Ursula Agnes, who was a teacher all her life throughout southern Quebec, returned to live at 8 Bown Street in her retirement, between 1975 and 1990. Tom Bozer was hired as public works foreman but he was also fire chief until 1936 (Samuel Gratham succeeded him) and police chief until 1954. He also carried out several community tasks, such as being in charge of sanitation, the municipal pound, and even doing social work. He retired as foreman in 1959. As a blacksmith, he had been able to make different tools:



Tom Bozer's Home in Huntingville before 1930

(Lennoxville-Ascot Historical and Museum Society, Ursula Agnes Bozer fonds)

in 1936, he even built a fire truck from the chassis of a 1930 Chevrolet truck used for public works. Ever since Mayor Cecil Dougherty gave the truck to the Lennoxville Volunteer Firefighters Association around 1985, it has often been used to give rides to children during Lennoxville's annual Friendship Day. Tom Bozer died in Sherbrooke on April 7, 1964. He is buried in the Johnville Anglican cemetery.

On October 29, 1995, Lennoxville Town Council named a building built at 150 Winder Street in 1994, after Tom Bozer, where the City of Sherbrooke's workshops for parks and green spaces are now located. Previously, it was the Lennoxville Public Works Building,



Tom Bozer's blacksmith shop in Huntingville

(Lennoxville-Ascot Historical and Museum Society, Ursula Agnes Bozer fonds)

located in a former gravel pit from around 1965. Behind the building, another one dating from between 1889 and 1992 is now used as a salt depot. The Tom Bozer Building was built prior to the demolition of the garage behind the former Lennoxville Town Hall, to improve the fire station in 1995 (relocated since 2019 to College Street), which then became the Amédée-Beaudoin Building. Both the Tom Bozer Building and Amédée Beaudoin Building were inaugurated in early January, 1996, during the 125th anniversary of Lennoxville.



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# An Ode to Lake Lovering

by Didi Gorman



The first time I went to Lake Lovering was for my son's Scout camp at the Lake Lovering Scout Reserve, in the fall of 2013.

Surrounded by woods, the campsite was completely hidden from the main road. One would have never expected anything else there but forest, let alone a lake. Imagine my reaction then, when the little dirt road leading to the site curved in between the trees, up a slope, and then suddenly opened to a vast lawn boasting a panoramic view of the lake. I was wowed.

And so this born-and-bred city girl found herself gaping at Nature's beauty. Once I recovered from the intense gaping I did the obvious – that is, I reached for my cell phone and went on a photo shooting spree till my phone ran out of battery.



Never mind my son and his friends were trying to set up tents for the night and I might have been in the way, I just walked around, taking in the mesmerizing view: the sky reflecting in the water, the hills on the other side, the occasional loon, a watercraft in the distance sending soft ripples in its path, the trees turning color all around the shores. An artistic soul would have been inspired to eternalize this beauty with a painting or a poem.

And I'm sure those of you who are familiar with the place can relate to my enthusiasm, and are now nodding in agreement.

Since that day I've been to Lake Lovering on many occasions and it's breathtaking every time, regardless of the season or the time of day.

The outcome of my visits is always the same: my cell phone struggles to keep up with the intensity of my clicking on the picture button, usually responding by warning me of

low memory or imminent shutdown or other potential calamities. If I need to upgrade my phone to a stronger model anytime soon, I blame Lake Lovering for that.

One last point, but an important one: let's not forget about the name of the place. The name, the name! It adds a romantic touch, don't you think? Oh, Lovering!



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# Michael T. Wall, the Singing Newfoundlander, Part 2

by Michael T. Wall, with special collaboration from John Viau

John Viau, the Townships Sun's outdoorsman from Ormstown, introduced us to Michael T. Wall in the June issue. As formerly mentioned, John first met Michael while writing for the magazine **Our Canada**. The editor of the magazine suggested that John interview Michael for the magazine. John introduced us to Michael and now he is sharing more of the Michael T. Wall story.

Michael T. Wall is the name, and singing songs about Newfoundland, Labrador and other parts of our beloved Canada is his game. When he left his home province back in 1961, he decided right then and there that he would carry the beautiful province of Newfoundland on his back for the rest of his life. So off to Malarbar Creations in Toronto, where he had his first stage costume designed by owner Michael Schilder and his tailor, Lugi. The jacket and pants were made of gold material with a big Irish green map of Newfoundland on the back of the jacket. It was important to be and look different from other entertainers. The name "The Singing Newfoundlander" caught on quickly, especially with thousands of transplanted Newfoundlanders living in Toronto and throughout the province of Ontario.



John Smee

He got his start at the 300 Club in Toronto, followed by The Caribou Club, The Silver Dollar, The Horseshoe Tavern, Dover Court Tavern, Elmgrove, The Newfoundlander Tavern, The Edison Hotel, El McCombo and the world famous Royal York Hotel. He and his band 'The Downhomers' were booked for over 8 years at the Molly 'N' Me Night Club and Tavern. He was selling Newfoundland to the world with his music,

costumes and by handing out maps of Newfoundland. He believed in what he was doing. Former premier J.R. Smallwood named him the official musical ambassador of the province.

News spread quickly, and newspapers, radio interviews, TV shows, and recordings galore came quickly. He was touring in Canada, U.S.A., overseas, and Australia, with stopovers in Japan, China (Beijing, the Great Wall), Hong



John Smee

Kong, Shanghai, Alaska, and Israel. He has learned so much from his extensive travel and has shared so much of Newfoundland through his music.

His white Fender guitar and stage costume are on display at the Tamworth Country Music

Hall of Fame in Australia. His first guitar and gold lamé costume are in the archives at Memorial University in St. John's, Newfoundland. There is another gold suit in the National Music Centre in Calgary, Alberta. In the words of a song, "I have been everywhere, man," Michael truly has been everywhere, singing at the famous Rock Hill Park Festival in Shelbourne, Ontario, sharing the stage with top Nashville country music stars during the 70s.



John Smee

He still does country shows, records CDs, and promotes Newfoundland. Michael said, "I am not ready for the rocking chair yet. I wear my ring with the map of Newfoundland on it, and can honestly say that, throughout my career, I have sold a truckload of recordings!"

I hope you have enjoyed reading about Michael as much as I have enjoyed having him as a friend.

Note: You can reach Michael at [mr.nfld99@gmail.com](mailto:mr.nfld99@gmail.com)

# Letter to Bama

by Margaret Nina Owens

Dear Nina,

(A wonderful, wrinkled woman, my 90 year old grandmother, was known to me only as Bama. This was how my oldest brother, Owen, had first pronounced Gramma, so it stuck as her name within our family.)

As I sit here in my home in Lennoxville, Quebec, with sunshine overlapping my seat and icicles sparkling outside my living room window, a young man sits in my kitchen reading your earliest diary. This diary is no small-paged booklet but a three-ring binder full of your life events, first as a member of the Pickel family and, as of 1891, the wife of Owen Ernest Owens. This particular saga was written in the 1940s when you combined smaller, older versions to form a historical, novel-like record.

Grandfather Whittall's old chair from Bark Lake creaks intermittently under the researcher's intense weight. Not his body weight – for he is short and stocky – but the intensity of his concentration on your words, written equally intensely so long ago.



Untitled

You once told me, when I was about 8, that someday, "People will appreciate my own and other women's art." Well, that day has come, dear Bama! Your life and art are being studied by a group

of five students from Professor Manore's 'Public History' class at my own Bishop's University here in Lennoxville. The plan is to create two very large posters about "Nina M. Owens (1869-1959)", one showing your "Life as a Woman" and the second showing your "Life as an Artist".

Nina, your reference to "other women" were those you knew from your art classes taken with William Bymner at the Art Association of Montreal from 1910 to 1920. This included outdoor sketching in Knowlton, Quebec, of which you have left several photographs.



Nina May Owens

I say many (you'd say so few) years ago, I graduated with a B. A. in Art History in 1991 and in Art Management in 1994. If I had not gone to Bishop's, I would never have taken Monique Nadeau-Saumier's course in Museology. That set me up for finding all your art works and writings in your home in Rosemere upon Aunt Bill's death in 1988, and doing something with those finds. (Again, baby Owen called her Aunt Bill instead of Aunt Carol as the name for his aunt, your daughter Carolyn.)

I, in the past, have diligently catalogued over 400 of your paintings and each of your multiple sketch books. As part of a writing group led by Janice LaDuke at the 'Black Cat' bookstore each Wednesday evening, I have been writing about you, my Bama. The five member writers have heard about you and your life inside out and roundabout, through my writings there.

Now today, these works of mine and yours from so long ago have been acclaimed by five of Professor Manore's students who opted to study "NINA M. OWENS (1869-1959)", and create a poster story, actually a pair of them: one of you as a woman, wife, mother and grandmother, and the second of you as an artist.

I am currently writing your story, including your art, to be titled "BAMA: By All Means an Artist". Who knows when I will finish it?

Lovingly, your granddaughter,

Margaret Nina Owens

*A stalwart member of the WHWN writing group, Margaret passed away last February, but has left us several charming stories.*

# Colombian Experiences

*by Lionel Emond*

In the early 1960s, along with my wife and daughter, I travelled from Panama, where I was stationed, to Colombia on company business. My employer was in the midst of building the first traditional toilet tissue plant in Colombia, and I was commissioned to finalize the IDB funding agreement.

On the way, we landed in Bogota, and with a short layover, we organized a visit of the quaint capital enjoying the crisp air and spectacular views. My youngest had her eyes riveted onto a comic book and paid no attention to the panoramic views!

Our onward flight into Pereira was white-knuckling, as our vintage DC3 hop-skipped and glided between valley and mountains, with a few stops along the coast before arriving at the destination. During the flight, because of a head cold, which I had caught in Panama, my ears were blocked and I was subject to much discomfort during this hedge-hopping ride in a somewhat under-pressurized aeroplane.

Pereira was a lovely quaint provincial town at that time. Upon entering the lobby of Hotel Soratama, where we were to reside, the first thing that I spotted was a dark object scooting across the threshold, which turned out to be a large beetle. It was an unusual greeter, but when tired, everything was tolerable.

The town was in a phase of tension, especially since early that week someone broke into the factory which made military uniforms. In the act, some uniforms were taken, with the possibility that they would fall into the hands of the local malcontents, who were terrorizing the area. The gangs at that time dealt more in theft and hijacking, as compared to the modern version which got into narcotics, murder, and politics.

Resulting from this possibility, night driving on the highways was discouraged because of the chance of military checkpoint stoppages which may not have been legitimate. Also, the local advice was not to sit behind the driver, lest he be shot head-on, with the bullet travelling onward to hit the passenger behind him. Despite this tension, life carried on, and as visitors, we observed the common precautions when out and about.

The company was a joint venture between my employer, a Canadian pulp & paper company, and a local entrepreneur. Together they were exploiting the lack of any sanitary paper in the country by introducing a new line of soft paper products.

Up until then, the less elegant sanitary products in use were a challenge to use!

The plant was progressing in its erection phase. It was under a Canadian general manager, formerly from St. Sauveur, QC. His construction manager, a Swedish engineer, set a good pace. The local helpers, however, proved challenging at times. For example, once while under a piece of equipment, the Swede called to a helper for a wrench. After a lengthy absence, he extricated himself and went in search of the helper. To his surprise he located the individual having lunch with his fellow workers!

The walls were basically made of bricks hand-formed from the local riverbank clay and sun-dried in forms onshore. For the casting of metal parts, we used a local sugar refinery technician who, using the ancient sand-technique, extruded the parts in the reverse pattern, which were excellent in dimensions and specs. This ancient technique, while still used today in specific applications, has been replaced by computer-driven tool making processes.

As mentioned earlier, tension existed due to backcountry gangs. Our mill was located at the boundary of two political districts. One day, a notorious criminal leader was apprehended by the police in the neighbouring district. Since there was a reward forthcoming for the arrest, our police wanted to take over and collect the reward, so they were exchanging shots with the police next door! The corner of the building bore the marks of bullets exchanged during the standoff. Yes, shades of the Wild West before our eyes!

The rawness of the countryside was interesting, especially a natural steam bath we came across during a Sunday outing. The locals were enjoying this natural resource much to our envy, as we were not prepared to join in. In later years, when re-visiting the area by reading tourist literature, it was noted that this bath had become a large spa, and the area a major tourism destination.

The trip was memorable, and it was an achievement to have contributed to the sanitary upgrading of the country! Also, it is always a pleasure to have visited areas before gentrification occurs.

## NOTE

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# Collective Thoughts

*The following is primarily composed of the point of view of G. L. Brown. However, the text includes a collection of common thoughts from seniors on the topic of aging. During this time of the pandemic, with uncertainties and isolation, seniors are offered many directives on how to deal with life as a senior. (Other contributors: V. Patterson and C. Vriesendorp).*

The biggest concern is, do the people offering the advice know what life is like as a senior in society? The social workers and other professionals are most often people who are still comparatively young and have not experienced the obstacles faced by seniors. Although we recognize the advice is given in good faith with the utmost of caring and education on the subject, we also know that, until you have been there, it is still not personally knowledge-based.

Technology is great except if you do not have the technology or knowledge of its use. Banking for example. How do I get money, deposit my cheques, pay my bills if I do not have the tools to do these tasks and the counters are closed? Easy you say, easy for who? Don't worry, we will always be there to help you. Where are you now?

How many times have we heard our parents and grandparents say "Wait until you get there." Growing old is not necessarily a bad event, if your health is not a deterrent. Traveling is still desirable. Retaining memory may be difficult, while souvenirs of long ago come in like bright lights.

Activities can be fun if you slept well the night before or if your digestive system is working well, otherwise you might want to be horizontal. Watching a two hour movie becomes more difficult unless you have

the ability to record it. Of course, there are those endless commercials and whizzing by them is a good exercise, it checks reflexes; when the remote is put on fast forward, stopping it at the right spot is a sport in itself!

Travel is often an elderly person's most wanted activity—to see new things, talk with people. But the heart decides if you are able to drive a car or ride a bike; blood pressure can drop, leaving you in an unconscious state. In this scenario you may not be the only victim, you are endangering others as well. Medication may not give you much of a solution, therefore you are vulnerable.

We are glad you care and are doing your best to help us, but wisdom and knowledge on some subjects only come with age. A "one size" advice package does not fit all. Youth is wonderful, and at one time we were in your position and felt we had all the solutions. Being one of the elderly population, I look at life differently now. No unrealistic expectations, no rose colored glasses; I just get up and deal with each day the best I am able and receive the help from others that give quality to my life.

Some elderly wisdom to a youthful world.





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## Announcements

**Move** - *The Townships Sun* office has moved to 3355 College St, Sherbrooke (Lennoxville) The mailing address stays the same.

**Changes coming to the Sun** - Starting in July of 2020 the **July and August** issues will become one double issue. This is primarily due to the shutdown of printers and others who take holidays during this time. Conversely, in 2021, April and May will be separate issues. Therefore, the double issues will be as follows: January-February; July-August and October-November.

**Cover Photos** - If you have a photo that you feel represents the Eastern Townships, please submit it for possible use on the cover of the magazine. Photos must be sent in JPG format.



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# Making a Difference in a Difficult Time

by Kathleen Y. Rattigan

*"Kind words can be short and easy to speak but their echoes are truly endless." Mother Teresa*

We are living in a time that will be written into history, and, as in all historical turning points, it is profound and life changing. We do not know the ending because it is still being written. So let's get personal about it and see if we can make a difference in a difficult world. What are you feeling? Are you frightened as you watch the news, because honestly, how do we feel safe like we used to? Is there a way to "live in a bubble" and go about day to day life? We are living a time where the bottom of life as we knew it has dropped away. Each one of us is recreating our new life day to day and while yes, it can be daunting – it is bringing out the best and the worst of us. Let's be Canadians and focus on bringing out the best in each other!

I was at my local I.G.A. recently and because I have always shopped there the staff and I know each other and frequently exchange pleasantries. They have shared stories of the awful behavior of some clients which had me shaking my head in disbelief and shock. These stupid people (excuse my bluntness) refused to wash their hands, yelled and fought with the staff over the guidelines and were rude, belligerent, and caused strife for both staff and other clients in the store. Troubling isn't it?

Thankfully the majority of our local people are the opposite; in fact, the staff at the I.G.A. said that these ignorant ones had travelled to our village from the bigger cities because the "wait time" to get into their own local stores was too long so they decided to travel to us and bring their bad manners and germs into the deep country. And yet, the staff remained courteous yet very firm with the end result that the rude ones grudgingly complied or left. Unwelcome visitors indeed!

These quiet, behind-the-scenes front line workers are the ones who are "making a difference." They are often unaware of just how special and needed they really are, perhaps even more so than those who shine so brightly in the spotlight. Perhaps you are one of them and never realized it. Are you the one who quietly goes to someone's house with food or flowers to comfort them in a difficult time in their life? Is it you that will smile kindly and speak gently with a person in the public workforce who is obviously stressed and overworked? Do you respond courteously to those poor telemarketers, who indeed have one of the most unpleasant jobs in the world? If you can say yes to any of the above – then know YOU ARE making a difference. You leave the world a better place

just by being who you are. Each gentle word and kind act causes a ripple effect that in turn will have a positive effect on the lives of many, many, people.

We so often underestimate the significance of the roles we play in daily life. It is the small, but oh-so-important acts of compassion, courtesy, kindness and generosity that make such a monumental difference in the lives of those we touch.

Think for a moment, and I am sure you can remember when an unexpected act of kindness touched your life. Perhaps today will be the day that you can make a difference in someone's life? Go out of your way to be a bright light in the world. Be kind, be courteous, and be generous with your goodness. In spiritual circles, it is known that our every act returns to us threefold, and I personally believe that it can be often up to at least tenfold. Therefore, be mindful of this unwritten law in your daily round of life, and make sure that only goodness will be in the ripples that come back to you. Make a difference!

## **MIRACLES & MYSTERIES**

### **Prophecies**

*Prophecy*—written by Sylvia Browne, copyright 2004.

I have had this book for many years. It contains the following passage: "By 2020 we'll see more people than ever wearing surgical masks and rubber gloves in public, inspired by an outbreak of a severe pneumonia-like illness that attacks both the lungs and the bronchial tubes and is ruthlessly resistant to treatment."

Prophecies in the ancient Turkish calendar used by Turks over 2,000 years ago could be coming true. Locust infestations, fires, earthquakes and epidemics have been among the calendar's prophecies for the year of the rat in 2020. Oğuzhan Türk, a history researcher from eastern Turkey's Erzurum province, studied the prophecies of the calendar, used by both ancient Turks and other civilizations. Türk said the prophecies in the calendar are striking, indicating that many of the predictions for the year 2020 have come true, with locust swarms in Iran, great fires in Australia, devastating earthquakes in Elazığ and the corona virus pandemic." New Age spiritual beliefs are saying that Gaia (Mother Earth) is ascending from the 3<sup>rd</sup> dimension upwards into the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> dimensions which means a cleaner Earth and a wiser humanity with higher values. Blessings on your journey – be wise – be safe.



Book Review by  
Janice Laduke

# *Before We Sleep*

by Jeffrey Lent

Vermont writer Jeffrey Lent first came to my attention some years ago with his novel, *Lost Nation*. Historical fiction, the novel is based on the story of the Indian Stream Republic, that period in the 19th century when the northern tip of New Hampshire belonged neither to Britain nor the United States, the boundary not yet having been decided upon, yet both nations “legislated” the region.

*Lost Nation* is a grim story of a harsh land and the few who struggled to cut hardscrabble farms and livelihoods from it. The place, as told in the novel, is cold, rocky, swampy, and bug-infested. There is little sunshine and even less joy in the book, but it is fascinating reading because one can well believe that is the way it was, and although the area is now easily accessible by the no.5 highway wending its way through, it is still peopled chiefly by hunters, fishermen, hardscrabble farmers, hikers, and the annoyingly relentless four-wheelers and snowmobilers. The area is easily accessible to those of us who live in the Eastern Townships, of course, being a mere one to two hours away, depending on where exactly you start from. You can drive down there and see Back Lake, and those hills, lakes, and forests that people Lent’s novel. They are still there.

Lent’s subsequent novels have not disappointed, and though none of them are picnics or idylls of Vermont country life, they are not as harsh as *Lost Nation*. Still, his characters are, for the most part, rugged individuals, flawed maybe but brutally honest. His most recent novel, *Before We Sleep*, is no exception.

This is the story of Katie, a teenager just graduating from high school, heading to university, but with some things to sort out first. It is as much the story of her parents, Ruth and Oliver. Oliver is a World War II veteran, damaged but doing his best. Both he and his wife grew up in the small town where they now live, she a school teacher and he working in his family business, general mercantile. His parents and his wife know that he is struggling, and not quite cutting it, but they are able to cut him some slack, find ways to give him the time and space he needs to work things out without ever confronting him with anything. They understand that he has been in a tough place, and through a tough time.

Oliver picks up a fiddle, something he’d played at as a child. His father played, as had his grandfather. Now it is something he can do, and he discovers also that he has a knack for repairing old fiddles and develops something of a name for himself in that way. He will carry his scars, but he can build a life for himself beyond what fate has dealt him.

Ruth and Oliver have a daughter, Katie, and the bond between Oliver and this child is intense from the very beginning. They are a tightly knit family until, in Katie’s teenage years, the dynamics change. It is the 60s now, and Ruth is afraid of what is happening in the world, afraid for what Katie will encounter out there. In her fear, she turns hard and demanding, to the point that Katie turns away from her, and Oliver simply does not understand. He is hurt and angry, as they all are. It is then revealed that Katie’s parents are other than they seem.

Katie starts trying to piece things together, but neither Oliver nor Ruth are giving her what she needs, so one night she slips away in her father’s pick-up truck. Her ensuing road trip is quite beautiful, almost dreamlike. She travels east, discovers the ocean, encounters an old woman who brings her into her home for a night, and a shopkeeper – both of these characters have things to offer Katie, not so much wisdom as a different way of looking at things.

There is conflict in this story, and there is an unrelenting edge to these people who have been so unkindly treated by life. They are not so much hard as steadfast. Life is not easy nor sweet, and yet... And yet there is beauty, and there is tenderness. These people are not consumed with bitterness for the way that life has treated them. There are plenty of kindnesses, and there is compassion. The wife, Ruth, for her scarred husband. The husband, Oliver, for his wife who works hard to keep their life comfortable, reasonable, and who understands his shortcomings, never blames him. Katie struggles against her mother’s hard line, but in fact she pities her mother as someone who “settled” for a life she didn’t particularly want, or, at least, that is how Katie sees it.

The only character who shows no compassion is the young 60s idealist/revolutionary that Katie meets up with in her travels. Taking from Katie what he can, he is hard and selfish. Katie, hurt, scared, and scarred by this encounter, immediately finds comfort in another young woman. She is shown kindness and compassion, and she can carry on.

Katie’s road trip is successful, and she returns home with a measure of confidence, and forgiveness.

Forgiveness. Respect. Kindness. Compassion. We can all do with a measure of these, and these are what this novel is all about. It is done with a fine hand, and it is a beautiful read.



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# A Terror of T. Rex in Maple Leaf, Part 2

by R.A. Garber



Calling all hens: Roo Chiva has a tidbit to share! R. A. Garber

It was dusk. The three new Partridge Chantecler hens, Albertans all, couldn't really see their way around the chicken coop. They found

perches for the night by standing on the edge of the food dishes.

Up on the highest roost, the two white hens and rooster, the Quebec-bred Chanteclers, kept their silence.

In the morning, the combat began. The Albertans had come from a crowded coop with a culture of conflict, as evidenced by their tattered tails. Now they'd been beamed down into a foreign territory, and they frantically attacked the Quebecers. All the chickens were about the same age, although the Quebec whites were larger and accustomed to having more space. But the ferocious Partridge posse dominated.

We opened the door, and the Quebecers fled into the yard. The Albertans were confused by the coop's picture windows. They charged the glass again and again, before finally discovering the door. Then the two cliques circled the yard, wary of one another.

The rest of the day was filled with skirmish after skirmish. When the Quebecers entered the coop, the Albertans soon followed, and the Quebecers quickly fled outside.

In the evening, after delicate strategizing, the Quebec Chanteclers huddled at one end of the highest roost. The Albertan Chanteclers laid claim to the lower roost, squeezed as distant as possible from the whites.

For two days, the altercations continued, but the angry cries and panicked squawks gradually dwindled. By the third night, all six chickens settled in together on the highest roost. The war was over.

To our eyes, the rooster had no role in bringing order into the flock. He was young. But now we saw him take on the role of protector. He always positioned himself between any potential danger and the hens. He always slept closest to the door.

A month later, on November 15, our new roo first crowed. He began with a tentative "cock-a-doo." After a few weeks of practice, he exclaimed a full "cock-a-doodle-doo!" Our cock had come into his own, vaunting his gleaming white tail, saddle plumes, and fluffy neck ruff. We named him Chiva.

Why do roosters crow? It's their song. Like many other birds, they sing at dawn. *Scientific American* reports chickens have a circadian cycle, and their bodily functions are regulated in response to light. A rooster's song is driven by testosterone, so they also crow at other times



The strong Malay head of Chantecler hen Chanti. She has her eye on you, her left eye, the one she uses to find prey. She thinks you have food for her, or are food.

John Mackley

of day. They're warning any other roosters off their territory.

In the weeks that followed Chiva's first sun salute, we began to hear a distinctive and loud "buck-buck-buck-buckcaw!" from the hens. We knew it meant "I'm going to lay an egg!" or "I just laid an egg!" We would run to check the

sheltered laying box in the back of the coop. Two weeks later, we finally found the first egg.

It was November 27; the hens were about four months old. The second egg appeared on November 29. Then more. Soon we gratefully received four or five eggs a day, buff eggs from the Quebec whites, brown eggs from the Albertan partridge hens. A few avocado stones found their way into the coop, along with other kitchen scraps. The hens carefully rolled them into the nest, too.

And yes, the egg-laying events were heralded by buck-buck-buck-buckcaws from the hen, from her fellow hens, and even from the rooster.

Chickens have a language, and a few humans are beginning to learn it. Ferris Jabr in *Scientificamerican.com* reported on an ongoing analysis of chicken speech by artificial

(CONT'D ON PG.19)



*Parvati is busy laying an egg. Her right eye sees you as a predator.* John Mackley

intelligence. They have a vocabulary of at least 24 calls.

Chickens are both predators and prey, and their vocabulary shows it. Researchers have found

poultry are capable of complex cognitive behaviours. With their right eye, they look out for predators. With their left, they look for food. This includes prey such as insects, worms and mice. Compared to humans, they see movement that is twice as fast. The more we watched them, the smarter they seemed.

Now, we'd been inspired to have backyard chickens by an Italian who returned chickens to the wild in his chestnut forest. We'd been learning about chicken intelligence. So, soon after we began letting them roam freely in our yard and

orchard, we let our guard down. We were inside for lunch and weren't listening to our chickens.



*Our too-friendly neighbourhood fox, in broad daylight, in our lane.* John Mackley

That's when the predator struck. When we came outside, the three Albertan hens were at the back of the house. White feathers were scattered over two large areas in the grass. We found the Quebecers in front of the house. Clara was cowering on the ground. Her sister Chanti and roo Chiva hovered protectively around her.

Clara had lost patches of feathers from her underside. She seemed dazed. She laid a trauma-troubled egg with a soft skin instead of a shell. We put her in palliative care in the bathroom. Sadly, three days later, she died in the tub that had sheltered her as a chick.

We wondered who the predator was. It couldn't have been the little skunk who had tunnelled into the chicken run, pried his way into the chicken house, and devoured the day's eggs. Was it the feral cat we'd seen under the

birdfeeder? We became much more watchful.

A few days later, in broad daylight, a fox sauntered past the side veranda, headed north. John ran after her, but she disappeared. This scenario was replayed four days in a row. The fifth day, John outfoxed her: when the fox ambled past, going north as usual, John ran south, toward the backyard chicken run. There she was, prowling the chain-link fence. It seems she had been craftily misleading him!

I referred again to the article about the Italian and his fowl in the chestnut forest. What did he do about predators? Quite a bit. His two-acre forest had a double fence around it. Inside, two trained Maremma sheepdogs protected the chickens.

Maremmas are strong and intelligent wolf-slayers. They bond with their flock of chickens and make excellent guardians. But we didn't have a sheepdog. If we wanted our chickens to range wild and free, we ourselves would have to be their guardians.

The idea of letting chickens fend for themselves in the wilds of our four-acre *fermette* had suddenly become quite complicated. In the context of his lifetime in Paris, Henri Rousseau's utopian dreams of jungles and their fauna, of returning to nature, were simply romantic fiction. So too was my idea of returning chickens to the forest.

We became alert for daytime marauders, principally the fox and eagles. As a deterrent, John set up an outdoor sound system that belts out an eclectic mix of music: Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture*, Queen, André Gagnon, and Pink Floyd. We let the chickens out of their run only when we are outside, too.



*At first we thought it was all about eggs. Then we discovered an avocado stone.*

John Mackley

That has given us a chance to observe their group dynamics and to learn their language.

Chanti has an independent streak. One day, she takes off by herself to the front of the house. Roo Chiva leads the trio of Partridge hens to join her. Petite Rose, active and independent, finds a choice foraging

location under some bushes. Parvati and Tridge hang out together.

But all three of them come running when Chiva gives an inviting clucking call, "Come hither, my Lovelies." They stretch their heads together to share a choice tidbit. Chiva moves away and again clucks softly. Parvati and Tridge come running again, but Rose runs off to find her own snack.

Then all three hens exit stage left toward the orchard. Chiva yells a shrill "buuuuuuuuack!" and runs after them.

Oops. Where is Chanti? We easily spot the white hen near the road. She's obviously found a sweet spot at the foot of an oak tree and is scratching and gobbling goodies as fast as she can. Chanti is not one to invite others over to dinner.

John goes to shoo her away from the ditch, and she suddenly becomes aware she's alone. She runs toward her flock, shrieking "Buuuuuuuack!" That distinctive call again: it has to mean, "Where the hell are you going? Wait for me!"

Our cat is fascinated by the chickens, and sometimes hides in the weeds or even feints a playful attack. Hens and rooster alike bark a quiet but sharp warning of a terrestrial predator to the others: "Cluck, cluck, cluck, cluck."

But hawks or eagles elicit the most dramatic response: a high-pitched alarm call, almost like a scream. One day four eagles soar overhead, circling the house. Chiva sees

them first and warns the hens. In a trice, the ones close by retreat with him under the veranda. The evererrant Rose is further away. "Buuuuuuuack!" she cries in panic as she half flies, half runs, to join them.

Chickens are loquacious, but they speak circumspectly. For example, Jabr reported on a study that showed a rooster will only sound the alarm for overhead predators when hens are nearby. If he's alone, he will stay quiet and take cover.

The adventure continues. The hens provide us with our daily eggs. The rooster protects, nurtures and fools around with his hens. They bathe in the dust together, share goodies, and keep cool under the veranda. Under the leadership of Chiva, we all keep a sharp eye out for predators.

We hope the hens will become broody, set on their eggs, and hatch baby chicks. We keep on enjoying our exceptionally tasty eggs and caring for our little terror of feathered Tyrannosauri Rex.

And we think about this: When chicken forebears were predators the size of a city bus, our mammal forebears were morganucodontids, tiny mouse-sized creatures who lived in the shadow of the dinosaurs. Looking at our chickens, we dream of terrors of 10-ton T. Rex with sharp eyes and smart brains, covered in fluffy feathers, scarfing us down like mice.

Today's world hosts about 24 billion chickens, compared to 8 billion people. In tomorrow's world, who knows, but the T. Rex may reign again.

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# Green, Black, Brown: An obsessive-compulsive garbage sorter gone radical

by Elisabeth Maegerlein

Used tissue paper, is that for the green or the black bin? How about the wine cork, is that recyclable or compostable? Since when has sorting garbage become so complex and been the subject of so many heart-felt family discussions?

Somewhere from conscientious citizen, I have become the family garbage police. Reorganizing the waste of my poor misguided family, I ensure that used tissue paper goes in the compost; and while I am at the compost bin, I have been known to dig out the wine corks because no matter how natural, they are not compostable.

I recall my environmentally conscious daughter telling me, "Mom, I would support you, but I just don't understand your system." "Well," I remember answering back, "it is really not that complicated. The green bin is for recyclables—paper, glass, metal and plastic. Not all plastic, mind you, check the number inside the triangle symbol. If it says 6, that plastic must be put into the black bin which is for non-compostable and non-recyclable refuse. Also, the stretchy plastic, such as plastic wrap or bread bags, are placed in a clear plastic bag until you have enough. Then, it is knotted and placed in the recycling bin."

I should have stopped there, but I figured I would inform her about some of the particularities of our household composting system. "You see that bucket on the counter?" I said as I pointed to a repurposed cookie jar. "That is for our household kitchen scraps. I buy quality food, and I am not going to waste that in a city compost where it mixes with all kinds of cheap litter. Instead, your father built me a backyard compost bin where I compost our food waste, except for the meat, bones and fat of course—those I keep in a brown bag in the freezer." "You freeze your meat scraps?" "Sure, if you put the meat in the city compost bin early, not only does the bin start to smell, but it is really disgusting rolling the brown bin down the driveway to the curb as maggots bounce each time you hit a bump." "That seems a bit wasteful, getting the city truck to stop for a small bag or two of bones. Oh, there are all kinds of things you can still put in the city's brown bin such as pizza boxes, soiled tissue papers, garden weeds and kitty litter. But not wine bottle corks, don't put them in there—they go in the black bin. That bin is really for that which you can't recycle or compost except for Styrofoam, paint, aerosol cans, batteries, ink cartridges and light bulbs. These items are kept separately in the garage and every so often, we dispose of them at the Écocentre."

As my daughter's eyes glazed over, I stopped. I couldn't bring myself to mention that I save elastic bands and twist ties in jars under the sink; that I have a bag for used

clothing on the floor of my closet, and that I even hoard plastic bread-bag tags because at one time a charity collected them to trade the tags in for a wheelchair (not sure how that works). Am I the only one who fixates on my trash?

The more I obsess -- the more I wonder: is this effort even making a significant difference? Or, are we just pretending? Recently, I have learned that collecting all our recycling in one bin hinders its usability. Our



*Our bins dutifully lined up and waiting to receive my maniacally sorted household waste*

province's one-bin collection of recyclables soils the end-product. The sad irony is that it is not just China that is not interested in our poorly collected goods; even our local businesses are snubbing our refuse. For instance, Quebec paper recyclers import 60% of their salvaged paper from out of province since our soiled paper blocks their machines. (Brunette 22) Likewise, Quebec's main glass manufacturer, Owens-Illinois, imports 70,000 tons of recycled glass from either New Brunswick or Ontario because our collection method contaminates the glass rendering it useless to them. Shamefully, two-thirds of Quebec's recycle-bin glass can be found in our province's landfills. That represents 57,000 tons of glass. (Robillard)

Do we continue to carefully sort and pretend that the mixed content of our green bins is being recycled? I remember being taught as a schoolgirl that recycle was not just the last but the least of the three R's which are Refuse (at the very least Reduce), Reuse and Recycle. Today, we have the possibility to implement the first two R's by buying our food, cleaning and beauty products in bulk in stores such as the SILO, the Bulk Barn and L'écolo Boutique. Furthermore, some municipalities are working on the third R of recycling. For instance, Cowansville and Saint-Denis-de Brompton are providing citizens with drop-off stations dedicated to glass, so that the recyclables do not become contaminated and end up in the dump. Here in Sherbrooke, the motivated people at the Marché de solidarité régionale des Amies de la Terre de l'Estrie on King Street will take our glass jars for free.

(CONT'D ON PG. 22)

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They will also take wine bottles, but they charge a nickel per receptacle to help them get the bottles to where they can be recycled. We have a population willing to do the right thing, but our municipality seems to be just going through the motions. We good citizens and concerned voters must not only reduce our trash, but also pressure our city council to improve curbside recycling, so that our recyclable waste can truly be recycled.

Brunette, Alison. "This is what a recycling crisis in Quebec looks like." *CBC News*, June 16, 2018. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/recycling-crisis-1.4708586>.

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Author bio: In 1984, Halifax-born Elisabeth Angelica Maegerlein arrived in the Townships at 23 years old. Part of the back-to-the-land movement, she lived with her husband in a self-constructed cabin in the woods outside of La Patrie, Quebec. Four years and two children later, the young family of four moved to the neighboring village of Notre-Dame-des-Bois to a small house possessing electricity, running water and a much-prized washing machine. Empty nesters, the couple now live in Lennoxville, Quebec, and Elisabeth works at the Cégep de Sherbrooke as an English teacher. In 2018-19 she participated in the WHWN writing program.



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# A Cat's Life

*by Lucie Roy and Heather Lewis*

In 2004 my parents were still living in their house but Mom, who had serious health problems, became unable to prepare meals. So, my parents were on the lookout for a woman who would be willing to come to their house to cook weekday lunches.

That is how Manon Perron entered into our lives. The mother of two adult children, Manon was in her forties at the time. She had been earning her living working freelance in the homes of many seniors, providing services that were beyond their abilities. Very quickly, my parents became attached to Manon and vice versa. (At the time I was living in Ottawa and was still in the workforce.) Manon started calling my parents Papi et Mami, aka grandma and grandpa. She really treated them as if they were her grandparents.

In 2008 my mother died. My father was bereft, and Manon's role transformed itself. She became the housekeeper, the cook, the gardener, and Dad's companion. In French I called her 'la dame de compagnie.' She brought him comfort and joie de vivre.

Papa started telling Manon that he'd like to adopt a cat. So, she brought him to the SPA but it broke his heart hearing all these cats meowing, hoping to be adopted. Dad was unable to choose and they had to leave.

Manon lives in the country. One of her neighbour's two kids wanted a cat but they were both allergic. So, the Dad had set up an outdoor dwelling for their cat under the porch. It was even heated in winter. The cat had a litter of 5 kittens. The mother, being free to roam, went out one day followed by 3 kittens. A fox happened by and made quite a meal of those kittens. When the neighbour discovered that, he brought the two remaining kittens into the house and started calling around, hoping to find them homes. When he called Manon, she thought of Dad. She crossed the road and chose Gypsy. Then she gathered all that would be needed for her care and drove to Dad's.

This was a Friday, and I was visiting Dad from Ottawa. When Manon arrived with Gypsy, Dad got to hold her for a few seconds. Then, of course, the cat ran and hid under a sofa in the basement. Dad seemed to lose all interest. I kept trying to explain that he needed to be patient because it was entirely normal that she would be skittish at first. I was getting discouraged thinking Manon would have to come and take her back.

Then, on Saturday evening, I went down to the basement and heard Gypsy meowing. So I meowed back. We had quite the conversation for several minutes. I had a hunch that the cat wanted to communicate, to have company. And so it was that she came out on Sunday afternoon, willingly playing with the toys that Manon had brought for her, and letting us stroke her.

That was the start of a love affair that only ended the day Dad died in 2014.

Manon had promised Dad that she would adopt Gypsy. When I called Heather to tell her that Dad had died I had a brainwave. Would Heather have any interest in adopting Gypsy? She most certainly was. Then came the delicate task of asking Manon if she would relinquish Gypsy. This was a big sacrifice for Manon. But since she already had two cats and one dog, she realized that Gypsy, who was not used to being around other animals, would be better off with Heather.

When she and I brought Gypsy to Heather, Manon was holding back the tears. When we drove off she had a good cry.

As you know this became another love affair between Gypsy and Heather.

Manon's pets, one by one, died in the interim. One day when Heather and I

both knew she was very vulnerable, I asked her what she would think of Manon adopting Gypsy if she became unable to look after her. She agreed that this would be a fine idea. The task ahead of me was much less delicate, and Manon greeted the idea willingly. Some months passed.

Then, at the beginning of last week, Heather called and said she wanted to discuss something with me. The time for Gypsy to be adopted, again, had come. So, with the help of Heather's neighbour Charlene (who had been feeding Gypsy since Heather went into the hospital) Manon and I once again drove to Heather's, this time to pick Gypsy up. That was a much better day for Manon, although she was sorry for all of Heather's friends who we were going to lose her.

I am happy to report that Gypsy adapted to being in Manon's house very quickly. Heather is convinced that Gypsy remembers Manon. With all that Heather is going through, she is letting go of much very gracefully. Rather than be upset at having to give Gypsy away, she is happy to know that Gypsy has gone to such a good home.





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