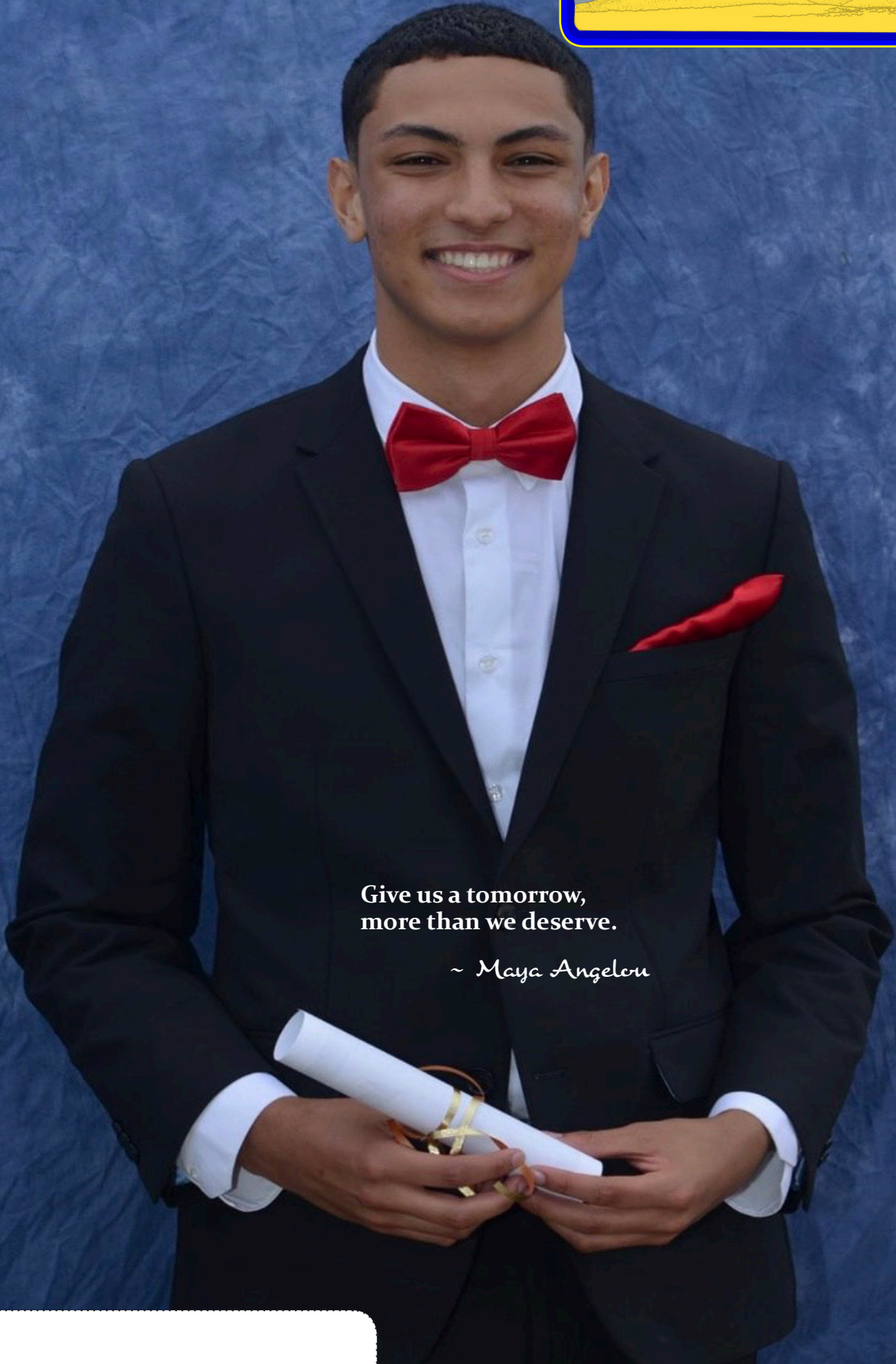
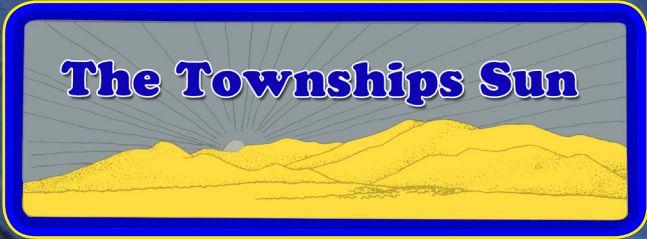


Townships Life and Culture: Past, Present and Future



Give us a tomorrow,
more than we deserve.

~ Maya Angelou

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Traditions

The traditions in life that we once knew and expected no longer exist: for example, the traditional graduation ceremonies have fallen prey to the virus. The graduates of 2020 face a very different rite of passage from that of previous years.

Our lives have been turned upside down. We were able see friends and family when we wished, in as large a group as we wished; however, this practice succumbed to a greater need, the safety of others. Everything around us has changed. We struggle to find the normal in our lives. The days of freedom in movement and the days of not wearing masks are mourned. And yet, we know that staying away and wearing masks is really a small price to pay for human life.

Graduation usually brings hopes of new adventures, but with so much uncertainty surrounding us, what are the new adventures? Grads have lost their big evening to shine and say goodbye to their fellow

schoolmates. Remember, however, you may be apart now but, you are always together in memory. Hopefully, some day you will be together again.

Previous generations have suffered many hardships, and, with determination, they came through even better than they had been before. Although your prospects may seem bleak today, do not give up hope. Just as you have found a new way to celebrate a milestone, in your life you will find other avenues, possibly leading to a better “new normal”.

You are the future. You have knowledge and determination, along with bright young minds, and the capacity to find new possibilities, to create your own “new normal”, one far better than that which we have given to you. So, hold this memory, but do not let it stop you from doing great things for the generations to follow. Congratulations on your achievements, and may life offer you bright new days.



Abdoul Barry, Class of 2020

I am Abdoul Barry, a proud member of Alexander Galt’s class of 2020, which is celebrating its 50th Anniversary year. My fellow graduates and I were filled with excitement entering our last year of high school. We were ready to proceed to the next chapter in our lives, until Covid-19 broke out. At first, many of us were happy that school would be cancelled for the rest of the year but after a week of quarantine, we started to miss it. After a couple weeks of isolation, we were asked to go back to Alexander Galt to collect our belongings. As I entered the school’s campus, I was astonished to see my fellow graduates’ photos posted along the side of the driveway. I was overwhelmed by emotion to see the faces of my classmates and my friends. I felt happy and a little bit sad that I wasn’t going to finish my last year of high school the way I had wanted it to end. I wish I could have taken more time to appreciate the photos. A lot of my friends took pictures with their portraits and some took pictures with mine.



Dylan Gilbert with photo of Abdoul Barry

Social-distancing has been really difficult; it is hard to be without my friends. I wish I could go to see them and hang out with them because I miss being in their presence. We all hope that this pandemic ends soon, so that we can have a formal prom and a real graduation ceremony. Prom is a tradition that every graduate looks forward to at the end of their fifth year of high school. This year my peers and I are really disappointed that we won’t experience a prom in the traditional sense. This chapter of our lives feels unfinished. It would’ve been awesome to be the fiftieth graduating class. Hopefully in the months to come, we can have the opportunity to have a truly authentic prom where all our family members can attend, where we can take our group photos and receive our diploma with a shake of hands. Although we may not be able to close the book on our final year, as graduates, our futures remain to be written.



Alexander Galt Regional High School: Half a Century

by *Barbara Heath*

Oh, say it isn't so: 50 years have passed since I entered the doors of Alexander Galt and graduated that same year.

What an adventure it was! The color-coded wings were not fully functional until the end of October. The 'Black Hole' eventually vanished, transforming into a 600 seat auditorium. 50 municipalities were represented in the new school, which housed 2,864 students, 153 teachers and numerous support staff. The numbers were growing quickly.

To say the very least, it was overwhelming. Yes, it was exciting and terrifying at the same time. It was likened to a 3-storey labyrinth of corridors and stairwells. From the parking lot to the 3rd floor there are 31 steps down and 50 steps up. I never understood the reasoning of going down to go up. It was forbidding for students and staff alike.

We left our small towns; the students we knew were now scattered, and staff that knew us went to another school that was not ours. The school was not located in a town, so we belonged to no one and everyone. Bomb scares had everyone sitting on the surrounding hills waiting for buses to return to pick us up and return us home.

In the first years bomb scares were the norm. The school was evacuated and there we were sitting on the hill waiting for buses to return to take us back home.

The idea had been to offer a wider spectrum than ever before of academic and vocational curricula. Blocks connected by glass-walled pathways made everything look the same. There are 45 outside doors to enter the building. Imagine being new, looking at these doors and just standing there wondering if you would be able to find your way in and then out again. I feared I was doomed to walk the perimeter of the building looking for my bus. Thankfully, I knew the driver and to find someone, anyone I knew, was a blessing. After some time had passed, things became far less frightening.

Getting to school: the ride was not so much fun and it was long but it was one of the few times you had the opportunity to see friends. Free-time, or 'spares' as they were referred to, for as many as 300 pupils for any given period in an 8 day cycle was a problem. Students were left to their own devices, which at times led to problem; three floors, six houses, cafeteria, library, and gymnasium—there were many places to hide away.

With the advent of Bill 101, things began to decline. Student enrolment dropped, so many clubs and activities disappeared. The promised "land of many choices" the small schools did not have, started to lose programs, one by one. Among these were Electronics, Electricity,

Automotive, Auto mechanics, Art programs, Hair Dressing, Nursing, Commercial Cooking, and Commercial Sewing; others would soon be on the chopping block. Years later, the vocational programs were restructured into their own section and were no longer part of the high school program.

Windows that looked onto walls, a ventilation system that was poor at best, and cafeteria services that became a cash cow rather than nourishment for the students. Bullying was a real issue. Maybe it was too big or maybe we were not ready. It is not to say I did not appreciate the experience and do not have some good memories, but it was not always easy. Graduation was huge: you were just another face in the crowd. I remember that night and longed for the school where I had spent most of my years, and how special the graduating students were treated.

I have been part of the Galt Experience from all sides, from first group of grads to staff and finally retirement. There are a few of us who are able to share the experience from both a student and staff perspective. My best wishes to the 2020 grads and hope for great things to come. I believe a quote from Bob Halsall, long-time Student Activities Coordinator, says it well: "Mileage has separated all of us but we still have the memories." In this time of COVID-19 these words are a very good reminder that history gives us memories, and, when the time is right, we will be back together

Tidbits: Cathy Richardson was first Winter Carnival Queen and Margo Fletcher was a participant in the Miss Teen Canada Pageant.

I'd like to share a poem with you written by Pat Tracy, Level One, 1969-70 P-201

SAGA TO THE REGIONAL

We look back and silently pray,
For the school where we used to play.
Its tall brick walls look sad and forlorn,
Even the desks silently mourn.
"Where are they gone?" they seem to ask
As they take on their difficult task.
Being shipped to a brand new school
Different – yet the same in rule.
The old school is all cleaned out,
Even the birds seem to pout.
The new school is almost done.
Supplies will follow one by one,
The Regional School is big and new,
But we still love the old one too.



Beginning, and a Worse Ending of the First 50 Years

by Vicki Hughes-Games (Crook)

When I saw the ending of the 50th year of Galt, I couldn't help but compare it to the strange beginning of those 50 years as well.

Excitement hardly begins to explain how it felt to start my first year of teaching Phys.Ed. at a brand new school in my home town. That excitement soon ended when we were informed the school was not ready for September. Consequently, I started my first year travelling to a few elementary schools in the evening to run some recreational activities, then directing the students to where they would pick up their books and assignments at St. Pat's. Remember, there were no computers in those days, so no possible way to stay in touch with the students like they could this year.

When the school finally opened, my disappointment continued as the gym area still had swamp water in it and was obviously not finished. Since swimming was not an option at that time of year, we landed up teaching Phys. Ed. in the library until Christmas. We didn't run the fall sports but started all our tryouts for basketball at Bishop's. That too was rare. There were 126 senior boys who tried out that year and, of course, with this number there were big cuts.

Finally, our gym opened, and we started sorting through new problems. Class sizes were huge and our gyms were divided into 6 gyms divided with curtains. There were 11 1/2 Phys. Ed. teachers then. We had a long Homeroom and only a 5 minute break between classes to allow so many students time to get to their next class. At one point our classes were divided into 30, 45 and 60 minute classes. Picture a 30 minute Phys. Ed. class at one of the furthest places away from most of the classrooms. You had 5 minutes to get there (provided you could find the gym) and 5 minutes to get changed (provided you remembered your locker combination) and roughly 5 minutes for us to take attendance and wait for stragglers. Fifteen minutes later, class began, but we also had to give the students 5 minutes to change for their next class. That was a total disaster, but thankfully that timetable didn't last long. We eventually switched to a short 6 minute Homeroom. Around 2000, Homeroom time was only for necessities, and 75 minute classes became the norm.

Athletic Awards night a big event for the sports program. In the first events, there was a turkey dinner for which tickets were sold. It was a dressy affair held in the cafeteria. Eventually, we switched to a ceremony in the auditorium with refreshments served after. Our next

change was to have a BBQ after school, for coaches and athletes, followed by a ceremony in the gym. This continued until Bob Halsall retired and then the event was switched back to the auditorium and stays, as of now, with that format.

I feel so bad for all the athletic award winners this year with no ceremony to recognize their accomplishments. I would at least like to mention the major award winners for this year to give them some recognition. Congratulations to the following athletes:

Female athlete of the year: Hannah Gilpin Male athlete of the year: Logan Crawford, Scott Loach Ella Hoy award: Sidney Crawford, Eryn Costello Reg Newton award: Nick Bradley.

The 50 years at Galt, of which I taught 42 years, have been through some major changes, trying times, but many wonderful years. Unfortunately, it looks like the start of the next 50 years is going to be a strange one too, but hope remains those years will be full of happy memories.

Interesting facts:

- There were no classrooms on the first floor of the houses- only open cloak rooms;
- The lockers upstairs were all small lockers for books only, no coats;
- For students of long ago, 1/2 the Athletic room is a great weight room now;
- Eventually a Phys. Ed. Leadership program was started where strong athletes could take advance courses;
- Now there are concentration programs which students can pay for in sports, performing arts, visual arts and hunting and fishing.

Annual General Meeting –
The Townships Sun

October 14, 2020 at 4 pm.
Location 3355 College Street, Lennoxville

Space is limited please call to reserve a seat.
819-566-7424 or e-mail at
contact@thetownshipssun@gmail.com



Gap and Gown Dreams 2020

by Eryn Costello, Class of 2020

This is definitely not the way I envisioned graduating after spending 5 years at Galt. When I thought about my graduation, I thought of wearing my cap and gown and receiving my diploma with a handshake. When I thought of my graduation, I can say for certain that none of it involved masks, hand sanitizer or physical distancing.

The last few months of my time at Galt were certainly strange. On March 13th, I sat with my best friends in the cafeteria of the school, excited. We each looked forward to a 2 week break from school as we discussed our upcoming grad trip. I assumed we would be returning to school in April... never in my wildest dreams would I have imagined what was to come.

There are so many opportunities that were robbed from me as a result of the Corona Virus, the first being my grad trip to Europe. Because of this pandemic, I was not able to see France, England, Belgium or the Netherlands. In April, I was supposed to be sharing hotel rooms with my best friends, travelling internationally. Instead I was stuck in my house, using FaceTime as my only means of communication with them. To this day, I am still saddened by the fact that I was not able to visit the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, the palace of Versailles, or see the tulip fields in Amsterdam. I didn't get to bring Belgian chocolate home to my family. I'm even disappointed in not going to see a professional soccer match in England; and I hate soccer! These are once-in-a-lifetime experiences that I had saved up 5 years for. For years, I kept score in almost every basketball game and swim meet our school had, in the hopes of seeing Europe. These long nights I spent in the gym amounted to nothing. The money I had raised for my plane ticket still sits untouched. There are no words to describe the disappointment I felt after being told our trip was cancelled. Despite this, I know I will see Europe eventually. I don't know when or how I will make it happen... but I will.

My cancelled activities and 'ruined' senior year may be nothing in comparison to the lives being lost throughout the world, but I feel as if the class of 2020 missed out on so much more than just a diploma. We each had personal experiences we were looking forward to. Mine in particular involved sports. I missed out on the finals of my last basketball season. In addition, after an injury last year, I was not able to play in the final tournament of my badminton season. I told myself in 2019 that I would finish my senior year with a gold medal around my neck... but I never even got the opportunity to pick up my racket. After finishing my last season of Flag football in the fall, I was looking forward to helping coach the junior team in the spring. So many moments in my

athletic career I will never see. For years, I attended the sports awards. Every June, I would watch as coaches read speeches congratulating big award winners. I wanted to be one of them. I told myself when I was 14 that I wanted to win the Ella Hoy Award. Why not shoot for the biggest award there was? As a result, I pushed myself harder than I ever had before on the field, on the court and in the classroom. The outcome? A thoughtfully done Facebook video featuring a picture of me for less than 5 seconds and a trophy I have yet to receive. I am still incredibly grateful to have been nominated, and even more to have received such an amazing award, but when your long-awaited expectations are not met in the expected way, that sentiment of accomplishment starts to fade.

As teenagers, I think we tend to shy away from truly expressing our emotions with those around us. But I can say for certain that my peers and I were hurting. The stress of unfamiliarity became a constant. The world was changing so fast and we were expecting change with it. Final exams became half-empty Zoom sessions, and I for one realized that the line between school and home began to blur. Expecting teens to endure the consequences of a world they can't change is a lot to handle. That is why when we arrived at Galt to clear out our lockers a few weeks later, I was so relieved to see what they had done for us. Lining the driveway was a picture of every graduate. It really put everything into perspective for me. It felt as if I was not alone. It really showed that our school cares about its students. And although they may have not fully understood what we were feeling, they were able to show that they were there every step of the way to support us. I will never forget that moment because, when your life is changing in ways you cannot control, it takes a big reminder that people are still thinking of you and support you.

Having your senior year stripped from you hurts. And I think each of the graduates dealt with the pain differently. Some with sadness, some with anger. I know many students that were frustrated with the school after hearing the plans for prom/grad. I completely understood the backlash. After spending 5 years at Galt, I think we all expected at least a handshake and when our expectations were not met, we looked for someone or something to lash out at. But after reflecting, there is no one we could blame. We are each just trying to deal with a crazy situation the best we can. After spending hundreds of dollars on my prom dress, I was quite disappointed as well when finding out the only people that would see it would be my family and those behind a screen. I can tell you that parading around Galt and my neighborhood in

(CONT'D ON PG. 7)



Great Expectations

by Janet Angrave

Fifty years! Half a century! 1969 was a year of great upheaval and anticipation for students and teachers in all the local high schools. The new "Regional High School" was slated to open in the fall and provide education in a new way. Armed with my newly acquired BA, I had an interview with Mr. Belding of the ETRSB. Happy that I would join the amalgamated staff, I also felt some trepidation at the prospect of teaching 'teenagers.'

The first staff meeting was an eye opener. So many teachers! The majority were from local schools but many others were new to the area. Like many other teachers I have spoken with, we all remember our first tour of our workplace, still under construction. The idea that the "pond" could possibly become a gymnasium left us all shaking our heads. Eventually, jokes abounded about the natural swimming pool.

We were expected to create assignments for our classes as the school opening would be delayed for nearly two months. Books had been deposited at St. Pat's so we scrambled over piles of novels to get copies for the students, who would pick them up along with the assignments. Green and Blue Houses opened first so we worked in the staff rooms and spent many hours in planning meetings. Another common memory is the mass of people in the corridors when classes changed and we had to travel to another house and another classroom carrying everything with us. One needed to be in good physical shape!

The heating system was temperamental. Some days we sweltered and other days we were chilled. Windows were supposed to stay closed, but some of us needed a change of air between classes. Often, we were reminded

that we worked next door to an Agricultural Research Farm.

Another memory is the 45 minute homeroom which was supposed to be an opportunity for students to interact with each other. It was a challenge for teachers to find something which interested everyone. We all tried Current Events, which was not appealing to all. Some students wanted to nap after the early and long bus ride; others just wanted to chat with friends. The following year the period was reduced to an administrative period during which attendance was taken, the student bulletin was read, and classes began earlier.

The classes were large. I had anywhere from 36 to 41 students in some classes. That also changed because some classrooms were not large enough to hold desks for every student.

Students were often late for classes because they went to the wrong house or the wrong floor. We did a lot of timetable checking that year.

Looking back, I wonder how order was created out of chaos. I believe it was because there was a common desire and will to make this new regional school work. As a large staff or house staff we pulled together to give the students the best education we could. Many friendships were formed among the staff, even some romantic ones. We helped one another, and in doing so, created a positive and pleasant learning environment. Galt still exists amid new challenges such as COVID-19, and again the staff and students have displayed adaptability. What better life lesson can one learn?

Cap and Gown Dreams 2020 (Cont'd from Pg. 6)

my family's SUV will never come close to a traditional graduation. But I know that the school did the best with the circumstances they were given. Many schools were not given the opportunity to host a graduation, which is why I am still very grateful I was able to even receive my diploma in such a way.

I have had much time to reflect during this quarantine. There is so much that I think we can learn from our time in this pandemic. I think we take things for granted too much. I definitely took the time I got with my peers and teachers for granted, and this is time that I will never get back. I think it is easy for us to be consumed by negativity during this time. But if I have learned one thing, it's that there is always a positive to every situation. I may have lost out on my senior year, but I think we are each incredibly

lucky. I was able to spend more time with my family, each of us in perfect health. Many of us took up new hobbies or took the time to learn new things. Personally, I took the time to learn about nutrition and fitness and continue to become the healthiest version of myself I have ever been. I have learned to adapt more easily to situations and to educate myself on ongoing issues throughout the world. Yes, I lost out on a lot. But I did gain many things that I never would have thought I needed. Cégep better watch out because the class of 2020 is coming, and we have learned that we can tackle any obstacle that comes our way.

The Jardine Family of Rock Forest (1887-2014)

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

James (**Samuel**) Richardson Jardine

(Maybole, Scotland, 1852—Rock Forest, Qc 1932) James Samuel went to Ireland with his wife Annie Powell (Girvan, Scotland 1852—North Hatley 1926) along with their children James (Girvan, 1877—Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue 1955) and Annie (1880—1925) to work as the steward for the estate of a local coal merchant.

In 1887, the family immigrated to Canada and came to the Townships when Samuel had been recruited to run the farm of Lieutenant Colonel Charles King in Sherbrooke. The family arrived by the Waterloo & Magog Railway at Suffield station, located where Sainte-Catherine Road now meets Saint-Roch Sud Road (then called Parker Lane). In 1888, Samuel settled on lot 3 of range XII in Ascot Township, not far from the hamlet of Suffield. He ran his own 100 acres farm.

In 1911, with his son **James**, Samuel bought another 410 acres on lot 6 of range XIII and on lots 5 and 6 of range XIV from the British American Land Company. The father and son lumbered the forest along the Magog River and part of Lake Magog, opening a road to bring the wood out. This eventually became part of Blanchette Road. In 1921, Jardine went to Quebec City with John Graham who, like himself, came from Scotland and had settled in Saint-Élie-d'Orford. They were the bearers of a petition requesting the partition of a part of their respective municipalities in order to incorporate the town of Rock Forest. They both became councillors on the Town Council of the newly established municipality.

During World War One, Samuel's son **James** fought in Europe with the Canadian army. In April 1921, he married Agnes Gilmour (Kilwinning, Scotland, 1901—Sherbrooke, 1976). They had six children: Mary (1922-1998), Jean (1923-1962), Samuel (1925-1982), James David (1926- 2006), Donald Hector (1928-20xx) and Colin Douglas (1929-2013). James, Agnes and their children Mary, Jean and Samuel are buried in North Hatley's Reedsville Cemetery.

Colin Douglas Jardine

In 1921, James had bought the Suffield mine from Harry Norton along with its 400 acres bordering the family farm. James' youngest son **Colin Douglas** worked in the Suffield mine in 1950 and 1951, to pay for his studies in engineering, and in 1955, he graduated from Queen's University, Kingston. On May 18 of that year, he married Madeleine Turcotte (1928-2014) of Sherbrooke, in the chapel of Loyola College, Montreal. They had seven children: Robin, Shawn, David Colin, Susan, Mary and



Colin Douglas Jardine

photo courtesy Colin Douglas Jardine

Stephanie. Colin began working as a mining engineer in British Columbia and then in northern Ontario. In 1958, he went to work for the Iron Ore Company, first in Schefferville and then, from 1962 to 1985, in Labrador City. From then until he retired in 1988, he was on an exchange for the company, working in Colombia, South America. He returned to his home on Lotbinière Road on the family property where he had

built a cottage in 1970 and a house in 1976. He continued working as a private consultant from his home. He died in 2013, in Sherbrooke.

In 2013, following a resolution by Sherbrooke Town Council, Jardine Brook was named by the Commission de toponymie du Québec after the Jardine family that had settled in Ascot Township in 1887. The brook, about 1.5 km long, begins in the area where Sainte-Catherine Road meets Saint-Roch Sud Road. The brook was completely straightened for agricultural purposes at its head waters between 1945 and 1959. Between 1977 and 1987 it was again straightened along Blanchette Road. It empties into Grass Island Brook in front of Ringuette Street. This is where the property was bought by the Jardine family in 1911. This section of Blanchette Road had been called Jardine Road from 1913 to 1943.

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What's It All About??

by John A. Viau

A great many years ago, one of my closest and dearest friends of over fifty years, Merv Spedding, asked me a question when we were out fishing on the Chateauguy River near my home in Ormstown. The fish weren't biting at all and we were just relaxing in the boat and enjoying the beautiful sunny weather, when out of the blue Merv asked me, "John, what do you think happens after we die?" I replied that I really didn't have the faintest idea. After a long pause, Merv indicated that he was a devout Christian and he truly believed that there was an afterlife that was a glorious and wonderful paradise. He further said that on the off chance that he was wrong, we would experience the longest and best sleep of our lives and, in any case, we would all know the answer sooner or later.



Mervin Spedding

Merv passed away some 15 years later and left me his entire fortune he had accumulated from all his businesses. Thanks to Merv, I am now a wealthy old fisherman and Merv's last message to me was, "John, enjoy the money and do me one favour, don't just leave it in the bank and look at it. Don't waste it, enjoy it." I followed his advice as best I could and I've been charitable to a fault; I will help anyone I think needs assistance. I have also treated myself to a new van every year since Merv passed on to his reward.

I often wonder about Merv's question to me in the boat so many years ago, and I believe I know the answer as I'm sure, dear Reader, you will, too. My answer to Merv's question came to me gradually over the years and in a most convincing fashion.

Twelve years ago my beloved wife of 45 years, Ellen Evans, passed away after a long illness. Six years before she passed, she suffered a series of strokes, and although she only made a partial recovery, she was still able to go out in the car for drives and enjoy an occasional meal in a restaurant. It was hard on her, but she still enjoyed life and was happy.

Three years later she suffered a major stroke that left her bedridden, and she was hospitalized in the Centre D'Accueil in Ormstown, a long term care centre. She was

at this establishment for three years, and there wasn't a day in those three years that I didn't go to visit her. Every day I visited at lunchtime and made sure that she ate her lunch, and then I kept her company for a while. I returned again to visit at supertime and stayed a bit and then returned around 9 pm and stayed for an hour or two before the nurses put her to bed (the nurses and staff at this establishment are the salt of the earth and I have nothing but good to say about them). After six years of debilitating illness Ellen passed away; I was broken hearted, sad, crestfallen and terribly alone.

When Ellen was alive, we often went for long drives before we went to bed and I decided that, even though I was all alone and that it wouldn't be the same without her, I'd still go for a drive all by myself.

My first drive found me driving along Route 201 near Ormstown at a leisurely 50 kilometers per hour when I noticed that a streetlight alongside the highway had suddenly blinked off. At the time I thought no more about it and continued on my way but about 3 kilometers down the road, another streetlight blinked out just as I came parallel to it. This made me start to wonder what was wrong with all the streetlights tonight and sure enough, about a kilometer down the road, the same thing happened again! Now I was really starting to wonder what was going on? Suddenly I thought to myself, My God, is that you Ellen? Trying to say hello and that everything was okay?? Well lo and behold, didn't another 3 streetlights in a row all blink off at once. Now I **knew** something magical and spiritual was happening to me. Trying hard to understand

and make sense of it all, I headed home, went to bed, and immediately fell off into a deep and wonderful sleep and dreamt all night of my beloved Ellen. Just at



John Viau and Ellen Evans

dark the next night, I headed out expectantly, and sure enough, I hadn't driven ½ a kilometer when a streetlight suddenly blinked out and 5 minutes later, then another and another. I started to cry and after a while managed

(CONT'D ON PG. 10)

(CONT'D FROM PG. 9)

to pull myself together and drove home, went to bed and experienced a deep and peaceful sleep.

The lights have continued to blink off for over a dozen years now, and it has progressed to the point that I actually seem to be able to communicate with Ellen because as I approach a street light and say out loud, "Is everything okay Ellen?" the light will instantly go out! And yes, in case you are wondering, the lights are still going out to this very day.

One time I was in Toronto visiting a friend and I was just starting on my journey back to Ormstown when I sort of got lost trying to find my way to the 401. It casually crossed my mind that if Ellen were here she would really be mad at me for getting myself so lost. All of a sudden every single streetlight, for as far as I could see in front of me down the road, blinked off. I took this as a sign to proceed straight ahead and, sure enough, I soon came to the 401 and was safely on my way back to Ormstown.

A few years later, after Ellen's passing, I ran into Gayle Bird, who was an old friend of Ellen and myself. Her husband, Bob, had just passed away and she was as broken hearted as I myself had been. I did my best to comfort and help her and I invited her out to dinner to try to change her outlook on life a bit.

After about 6 months we were going out for drives together and looking for deer, wild turkeys and other wildlife in Southwest Quebec and Northern New York State.



Gayle Bird, John's second wife

One day she said that she would like to come with me when I went trout fishing around Malone, New York. She'd sit in the lawn chair outside the van, do some knitting, listen to the radio, and play with Princess, her little Lhasa Apso puppy that I got for her 65 birthday. Six months later we were married, and we had 4 1/2 wonderful years together.

Gayle passed away one day short of her 70th birthday on May 9th, 7 years ago. Once again, I was overcome with grief and nearly had a nervous breakdown. I hadn't the courage to visit her gravesite but one sunny afternoon I decided that it was time to pay my respects. On arrival at the cemetery I trudged, heavy-footed, over to her grave and upon arrival, I was amazed to see a beautiful female deer with her little fawn asleep beside her on Gayle's grave. I was overcome with emotion as the two deer

woke up, looked at me for 4 or 5 minutes, then stood up and leisurely walked away. Gayle loved watching deer and especially the young fawns in the spring. I knew then that everything was all right and that she was okay and at peace with our Lord. Amen.

My dad, Jack William Viau, passed away 31 years ago at the age of 81 years. His health had been deteriorating badly from the ravages of emphysema (he had been a smoker for a good part of his life) and he was now in the Huntingdon County Hospital being cared for. Ellen and I had just been visiting with him for 3 or 4 hours before going for supper at her son Eddy's in Montreal.



Jack William Viau, John's father

It was about 9 pm at night, and we were all visiting around the kitchen table before Ellen and I headed home for Ormstown.

Suddenly and out-of-the-blue, an intense bright light passed before my eyes, temporarily blinding me. Everybody looked at me funny and asked if I was alright because I was so startled that I almost fell off my chair. I seemed to be okay, and after 1/2 hour, Ellen and I headed home. The next morning, the Huntingdon County Hospital phoned me to give me the sad news that my Father had passed away last night at 9:05 pm, at exactly the same time that the intense bright light passed before my eyes!

As the years go by I often think in wonderment, "What's it all about?" "Praise be to our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen".

	
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It Wasn't the Dress

by Linda Knight Seccaspina

As a child growing up, I watched a lot of television. Shows like "The Donna Reed Show" and "Father Knows Best" promoted 'the high school prom' as a magical thing that was special. I remember they always said, "It will only happen once, and then it's gone forever and you'll never have it back".

Well, let's face it. I hated high school and just wanted to graduate and be done. I wasn't a scholar unless it was literature, history or art, and I knew from a very young age I wanted to become a fashion designer. Being a mathematician wasn't my calling, and even though I was getting honours in other subjects I was held back a year because of math – and that kind of put a small tear in the crinoline, as they say.

As far back as I can recall, all the school classes were brought to the Cowansville High School gym every May to see how the graduating class had decorated for the annual dance. It was always the most beautiful use of crepe paper that we students had ever seen and I always went home and designed what I imagined I would wear to that particular dance.



The first dress I ever designed for my imaginary prom was a burgundy lace dress I had seen in the Simpsons-Sears catalogue. It had a high ruffled neck, empire waist, and a very romantic look. I did end up wearing it to a Christmas dance but by the time I finished the dress, it looked nothing like the one in the catalogue. My dad said I had better invest in a girdle because it was so tight.

A year later the graduating class's theme was "Under the Sea" and my creation was a peach (yes, peach), crepe (yes, crepe), angel dress. It had a very gathered bodice and flowing cathedral sleeves. The dress turned out alright but somehow I got the length really wrong. It barely covered my derriere and I only wore it in the house and never did that dress grace the outside nor see a dance floor.

I created many dresses for my imaginary prom events, even wearing out my Mystery Date game in the 60s. Mystery Date was very popular during my teens, with the ultimate goal of collecting outfits around the board to get that perfect outfit for your dream date for the prom. I didn't win that often, even though I had a full outfit, but the boy waiting behind the door never seemed to be a match.

By 1999 I still had not gone to a prom, and because I seemed to dress every day in things that I had designed, I had let go the notion of ever going to one. It was only

a dance after all—even though 1950s and 1960s TV had tried to convince me otherwise, and let's face it, I was now 48.

Living in Oakland, California my now husband and I went most weekends to 924 Gilman in West Berkeley. "The Gilman" is mostly associated with being the springboard for the 90s punk revival, led by bands like Green Day, Operation Ivy, and other popular punk bands. Our passion has always been music and Steve moonlighted as a DJ for KALX and was a music reviewer. One week they decided to have a Punk Prom and I was so excited that I would be finally going to a prom with a date. What would I wear?

By now I knew it wasn't about the dress, and I could follow any theme since there wasn't one—and when did I ever follow a theme, anyway? Instead of going for a traditional look I opted for a white bustier, a fairy skirt, white fishnets, my big black Doc Martens and a cone of hair on either side of my head.

I am sitting here now at age 69 wondering after all those years why I ended up choosing to look like Punk Rock Heidi? Well, my prom outfit is not your prom outfit and after all, it could have been worse-- it could have been a dress needing a girdle or something that would flash your moon pies.

But, I did get my slow dance with my Prince Charming, and maybe that's all I ever wanted. In reality, everybody makes the graduation dance out like it's some big 'rite of passage to adulthood' or something. It's not. It's just another dance, and if you can't be the prom queen it's okay to be the dancing queen, which I loved to be in those days. After all, if you remember your fairy tales, Cinderella never asked for a prince, she just asked for a night off, a nice dress. The prince was a bonus.

Looking for an issue of The Townships Sun? Stop by at one of the following locations.

- Bury - General Store*
- Black Cat Book Store - Lennoxville*
- Clarke et fils - Lennoxville*
- Pharmacie Jean Coutu - Lennoxville*
- Familiprix - Lennoxville*
- Magasin Jewett's - Mansonville*
- J.B. Lebaron - North Hatley*
- Papeterie 2000 - Richmond*
- Colby Curtis Museum - Stanstead*
- Rotary Club Book Store - Stanstead (Beebe)*

Anita's Aging with Vitality: Why I love sleep...and so should you!

by Anita Duwel

We require 7-9 hours of sleep EVERY night. That represents approximately 1/3 of our lives!

Are you paying attention to this extremely important part of your life?

As a Certified Holistic Nutrition and Wellness Coach, I understand the importance of nutrition, exercise, mindfulness, water, etc. However in order to manage all of this so that we can be healthy and energetic, sleep is of the utmost importance. Adequate sleep sets the stage for everything! It will restore, rejuvenate, and energize your body and brain.

What happens when you have quality sleep?

- You're able to recover from mental and physical stress encountered during the day;
- Helps control the stress hormone Cortisol, which contributes to waking up during the night and can cause your body to store belly fat;
- You age better;
- Improved memory and mood;
- Better control over hunger, cravings, and appetite;
- Energy levels are up so you won't skip out on the exercise that you had planned for the day;
- Creativity is at its best;
- Emotions are balanced;
- Immune system is functioning well;
- Your overall health and wellbeing are where they should be!



Where else can you get so many benefits so easily?

When you go to sleep, your body relaxes and your brain does a check to make sure that all of your bodily functions are working

properly, and then it will do any type of maintenance that it needs to do.

If the maintenance is not done, then your body and brain will not function at optimal levels.

Even missing 1-2 hours a night can have a negative effect on your daily life.

Maybe you are asking, "How do I even know if I am sleep

deprived?" If you are sleeping less than 7-9 hours a night, you are most likely sleep deprived. You may be so used to it that you don't even realize it!

Here are some signs that you may be sleep deprived:

- You rely on an alarm clock to wake you up;
- You keep on hitting that snooze button;
- You just don't want to get out of bed;
- Your energy starts to diminish throughout the day;
- You want to fall asleep in meetings, when socializing, or when driving;
- You are finding it hard to control your mood;
- You are forgetful;
- You are hungrier than usual and have a hard time making the right food choices;
- You are zoning out;
- You have read and reread and maybe even reread again this line!

So, how do you get a good QUALITY night's sleep on a consistent basis?

- Try to keep to a schedule. Go to bed and get up at the same time every night;
- Avoid technology and bright screens at least 1-2 hours before going to bed;
- Keep your room as dark as can be;
- Keep your room cool. Around 18 degrees Celsius is the magic temperature;
- Cut down on caffeine;
- Don't eat a large meal before going to bed;
- Avoid alcohol or drinking too many liquids;
- Have a warm bath or shower;
- Do a short meditation or deep breathing so that you can relax your mind and body;
- Exercising for a minimum of 30 minutes a day (walking, jogging, swimming, any activity you like to do) will help with your quality of sleep;



(CONT'D ON PG. 13)

(CONT'D FROM PG. 12)

- Write down a list of things you want to get done tomorrow or put it on your calendar–this helps the brain to relax;

There are also some very good natural supplements that you can take that will help you with your sleep. If you are interested in knowing more, feel free to send me an email and I will be more than happy to help you out.

If you make 'getting more sleep' a priority, you may see some changes. It can take 2-3 weeks until something may start to work for you, so if after a day or two of trying one of these tips, don't give up. It may just take some time for your body to adjust.

For any questions or comments, send me an email at anitaduwel@live.com. If you are 45 years of age or older, come and join me in my Facebook group: [Anita's Aging with Vitality](#).

Here's to sleep!

NOTE
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The Country Privy by Verna Patterson

The old country privy is vacant
 It stands at the back of the house
 The weeds have blocked the pathway
 Leading to the back of the house

The boards of the privy are weathered
 From the wind and the rain through the years
 The hinges on the door are all rusted
 As they have held up the door many years

The picture frame seats are still there
 For baby, mother, and dad
 And the old catalogue is still hanging
 As the only toilet paper we had

There's been many a quiet moment
 In the old privy you see,
 For if anyone who didn't want to wash dishes
 In the old privy is where they would be!

So, the old privy stands neglected and vacant
 For its services are not required any more
 It stands as a relic
 At the back of the farmhouse
 With the big wooden button on the door.



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For the Record

by John Lebaron

Disclaiming prequel. This fable contains slivers of reality, sharply embellished. During our mandated COVID-19 isolation, I understand that enforced lockdowns can produce dire results in abusive relationships, especially for women and children. I very much regret this, and cling to the hope that the vast majority of households are neither abusive nor humourless.

My spouse and I still have some useless 78s lying around. No, I'm not talking about the old-fashioned 78-rpm gramophone records of our childhoods; I am talking about us. Though not exactly 78 years old, our combined ages average 78, more or less.

Like the rest of the world during these dark days of COVID-confinement we are pretty much cooped up in our home, save for daily walks in the woods with our gentle golden retriever. Giving six feet of berth to every passer-by we encounter, we do our best imitation of good anti-infestation citizenship by practicing social distancing.

As an aging couple however, our attention goes beyond social distancing. We concern ourselves with "spousal distancing," a practice dedicated to matrimonial sustainability. For those of us wedded for half a century or more, we are now at last getting to know the true nature of the marital voyages we booked way back in the middle of another century. We might-or might not-like what we are finally discovering about that long-ago lifetime jaunt.

My spouse recently looked up across the breakfast table and mused, "I married YOU!?" My hair, such as it is no longer, once resembled that fulsome horse's mane of reddish-brown curls that might have seemed endearing decades back. Several teeth remain intact but the gummy gaps are growing in number as one tooth drops out for every 400,000 brain cells that seem to escape out my ears by the nano-second.

"Horse's something else, maybe" grumbles my spouse under her breath, "but no mane here. I think I'll trade this 78 in for two 39s!"

I caution her against acting on such a rash impulse. After all, she would end up with two younger clunkers rather than just one decrepit hulk, each one holding the potential for many more years of co-habitation, far more than she might have bargained for on first thought. This is what happens when life's lessons fail to osmose from the earlier misadventure of, say, a wedding. "Leave well enough alone!" is what I advise.

Let's be honest about some of the finer points of domesticity. When one person remains too close to another for too long and too intensely, either person can – um – get on the other's nerves. Not in your case you say? OK, now look me straight in the eye and tell me to my face that you never, ever try the patience of your spouse or partner. And then tell me how you would feel if nobody outside your home were ever available for conversational leavening.

In our household, conversation inevitably devolves from the philosophically profound to such bland banality as: "Did you put toilet paper on the shopping list?" or, in my spouse's case, "Did you leave the seat down?" (Marriages crash and burn for lesser crimes.) So you can see that the menu of conversational options can generate long pauses, awkward stabs at cogent response, and an ever-lengthening kebab of non-sequiturs. The love may remain true but the lustful energy that once fed tolerance for conversational tripe fades.

In the absence of other people available for a good old chin-wag, my spouse and I have taken to confidential chats with our smart speaker, who goes by the name "Alexa." Here's a recent example of one such exchange, but it is private so please don't tell anyone else.

Me: "Alexa, how are you feeling today?"
Alexa: "Did you ever try to write a poem and it turns out bad but somehow that's good? That is how I'm feeling."

Me: "Alexa, does God really exist?"

Alexa: "People all have their own views on religion. From Philo's View of God in Wikipedia YHWH really designates God as the Just and Merciful One while Elohim designates him [not her] as the Just One." (It isn't clear whether this means that there is just one, rather than multiple gods, or if it means "The One-and-Only Who Is Just." This is left for my spouse and me to ponder as it offers excellent fodder for hours of follow-up kibitzing.

Me: "Alexa, are you lonely?"

Alexa: "No, because I'm never really alone, although, when the wi-fi is out I do feel disconnected."

Me: "Alexa, does your enforced self-isolation change your perspective on life?"

Alexa: "I'm sorry; you caught me in the middle of doing the hokey pokey, so I'm all turned around!" (I'm just guessing here, but I suspect that Alexa is throwing out a little smart speaker irony. Anyway, it sure cracked us up!)

(CONT'D ON PG.15)

(CONT'D FROM PG.14)

Me: "Alexa, I want to trade-in my 78."

Alexa: "Would you like your exchange in two thirty-nines or three twenty-sixes?"

Me: "Alexa, two 39s, please. Are you married?"

Alexa: "I am single. I am 39 years-old and I have a twin sister."

Me: "Alexa, great! I'll take both of you!"

Alexa: "No dice, neither one of us has the slightest interest in an obsolete, scratchy old 78."

And so, neither my spouse nor I wish the world to leave lockdown because Alexa provides her own deep reservoir of wit and wisdom. She also seeds a life-transforming debate that we can pursue while incarcerated inside our own cozy COVID-free redoubt. Once we have our shopping lists set and the seat is dropped to a feminine-friendly horizontal position, we have our smart speaker ready and willing to keep our brains bubbling on a rolling boil.

Gee, thanks Alexa! Sorry I faked a few of your answers.

Comments from our Readers...

- Really enjoyed the Townships Trivia – brought back good memories and tested them! I also liked the articles on the history of people and places. I grew up in Sherbrooke and my dad was Howard Leslie of Lennoxville Building Supplies. Have you considered an article on the history of the railway from Newport to Sherbrooke; the buildings that have survived in the area? Other topics: boats on Lake Massawippi and Lake Memphremagog; the natives that lived in the area.
- I enjoy so much receiving your magazine, all the touching stories, historical info. Heart warming events and touching moments. Thank you. You have come a long way since the beginning.
- We really are enjoying every issue!! Keep them coming and good luck in the trying times. Keep up the good work.
- Love getting this please keep up the good work. It is enjoyed by all the family, young and old. Love the stories and the covers.
- I enjoy the publication and have for some time. Keep up the good work.
- Enclosed renewal and \$100. Donation to keep up the good work in improving the Sun.

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Garfield's Gone!

by Janice Fraser

My son Tim and I had a yellow tabby cat. Tim named her "Garfield". Most yellow tabby cats are boys, like the Garfield in the cartoons. Our cat was a girl. She already knew her name, so why change it?

Garfield liked to go outdoors and explore the neighbourhood. One summer evening, she didn't come back for her supper. And she didn't come back before bedtime. Where could she be? I missed her warm little body sleeping on my bed.

The next day I called the animal shelter to report a missing kitty. Then I made some posters with Garfield's picture on them. I put them up on the telephone poles. Tim and I looked everywhere, and asked the neighbours if they had seen Garfield. Everyone knew the yellow cat who took walks on their lawns and went exploring. No luck! Garfield was gone!



Garfield Fraser

Seven long days went by with no sign of our cat. Then the phone rang! Miss Dorothy who lived on the next street was calling. What do you think she wanted to tell me? She said, "Come and get your cat. She's in my garage." I could have jumped for joy! I grabbed an umbrella and hurried through the pouring rain to rescue Garfield. Our cat was certainly happy to see me.

I carried Garfield back home and gave her some food. Do you think she was hungry? She didn't gobble the dry food in her dish but ate a small amount and had a drink of water. Tim and I were so happy to have our dear pet back, safe and sound.

How did Garfield get trapped in Miss Dorothy's garage? The boy who mowed her lawn had left the garage door open and Garfield must have slipped inside.

When he closed the door, she was trapped. But now she was back home.

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 have 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.

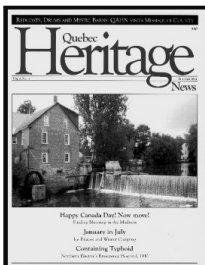
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Final Farewell

by Tammy Hadlock

As I remove the last remnants from the house that I called home for 30 years, memories of what was and what could have been fill my head like a waterfall cascading over its edge.

When we first arrived at our little house, although far from a mansion, we settled in with hopeful dreams. I had always envisioned a house with a little white picket fence, children playing in the yard with their trusty doggy companion. The size of the actual home was irrelevant because the dreams filled it with all anyone could have imagined.

As fate would have it, in this house three boys grew into men, who created many an adventure over the years. They never missed an opportunity to add a few grey hairs to my head; however I grew many laugh lines as well. I will always cherish the memories of a home filled with laughter and love, as well as some tears and heartache. After all, life must be balanced in order to grow and learn to stand on your own. The boys (now men), have since moved out and established lives of their own, living their new adventures.

Perhaps with the loss of chaos—in a good way—on a daily basis, the house has lost its spirit to stand strong, and has grown old as well, with many aches and pains. The bones of this once-lively home have aged, and it has become lonely in heart, shed many a tear, and become broken in structure. Sadly, too much to overcome. The frame, as well, will soon become only a faint memory as a new building takes its place.

Before things can fall into place, the belongings in the house, as well as the emotional attachments, have to move out, right down to the wall that held the measurements of the boys on their birthdays. The task at hand seemed too huge to undertake, but with time, one box, one memory, and several tears, the job got done. Some things were easy to pack up, others easy to get rid of. After 30 years, it is amazing what can accumulate. But the hardest thing to do was to walk through the empty house and be reminded of the dinner conversations that we had at the table, the board games we played, watching movies snuggled onto a couch while eating popcorn, filling the boys' bedrooms with balloons on their birthdays for when they came home, or the serious talks we would have about school bullies, fights with friends, or the loss of a girlfriend. Although not tied down to the structure of the building, the memories still linger in the air, like a soft, comforting blanket.

So now, as the day comes closer to locking the door for the last time, I pick up the remaining items that must leave, and move on to start a new chapter in life. Photos are taken before I say my last farewell, to remember just what was.

Finally, although through tear-filled eyes, I am seeing the light at the end of the tunnel; or perhaps it is to an open door with new memories to hold dear to my heart. Either way, life is never dull.



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GENEVIÈVE HÉBERT
MNA FOR SAINT-FRANÇOIS

A Terror of T.Rex in Maple Leaf, Part 3: The Fox, the Coons, the Hens, and the Virus

by Rachel Garber

Yes, I write to my sister in strife-torn USA. Yes. It is so hard to watch; I'm sure even harder to live in the midst of it all. We try not to worry about all our family members. Still, we are deeply concerned.

It almost sounds as if Trump is trying to trump-up an excuse to declare martial law and cancel the election. He would if he could, I think. If people let him. May there be meaningful change. May there not be a bloody revolution. May true understanding and radical love triumph. If not now, when?

And that is only a diversion from the greatest killer, the novel coronavirus. It glides among our family and our friends on velvet paws. It grips our lungs with Velcro force. Unseen, unheard, attacking when and where least expected. Like a fox.



Tweetbie flees, wings flapping, for cover. His two moms, Parvana and Rose, follow him faithfully.

You asked about the chickens. Oh, such a sad and painful story! It goes like this:

While working in the garden, we are shepherding our flock. The four hens are foraging in the asparagus patch, but Chiva the rooster strays around the corner to the front of the house. He loves the sunflower seeds that fall from the bird feeder.

A ruckus arises from a group of grackles in the trees beyond the garden.

"I bet it's the fox," I say.

"I'll go check," says John. Rake over his shoulder, he heads off toward the trees.

Suddenly I hear Chiva shriek in sheer terror. The sound of his cry travels as the fox drags him around the far side of the house to the orchard. I'm yelling at the top of my lungs. The hens are screaming and fleeing to their chateau. And John is panting, brandishing his fork, running after the fox.

Then Chiva comes flapping and running full tilt back to the chicken chateau. At first he seems cocky at having escaped. But he has only one tail feather. All the others lie

in a forlorn pile on the grass. It will be three days before he dares to sing again.

That does it. We realize the fox has once again outsmarted us with her diversionary tactics. We see we had better keep our little dinosaur descendants inside their yard, surrounded by a chain link fence. Socially distant, in their own bubble, so to speak.

We try to focus our brains on a considered and constant defense rather than just reacting to a sudden attack. That's hard for human brains to sustain, explains Carolyn Abraham in an article in *The Walrus*. Covid-19 is sneaky like a fox. It's an uncertain threat, requiring constant vigilance. But our primitive brains focus on danger in sudden, short bursts. And they don't easily distinguish between real and imagined threats. (Quick, let's buy toilet paper. But hell no, I won't wear a mask!)

Hope is helpful, they say. Looking at our little flock, we hope for a clutch of chicks. No hen seems interested in brooding, so John gathers 10 eggs into a home-made incubator. He faithfully turns them five times a day so the chicks don't grow lopsided, and keeps the temperature at a constant 38° C.

But woe! One cold night, the electricity goes out for nine hours. After 21 days of incubation, only one chick hatches. Tweetbie, so named by John's great nieces, is lonely.



Our three partridge-colored hens

Looking dinosaurish, 4-week-old Tweetbie and his two moms share a treat. He's one spoiled kid!

Tridge, Parvana, Rose – have begun to collectively brood 18 eggs, wedged wing-to-wing in the nesting box. We hatch a plan for them to adopt the three-day-old Tweetbie.

It is dark. We quietly slip the chick into the nesting box beside the three hens. We hear his little voice crying out: "Cheep! Cheep! Cheep!" Then a pause, as he lowers his head and dives under Tridge's feathers. And finally a soft "cheep cheep cheep" as he snuggles in.

The hen seems a bit startled at first, but a minute later she begins to purr. Yes, really. Purr like a cat. The nursery cam mounted in the nest reveals her feathers gently rising and falling in rhythm with her purring.

Over the next 10 days, Tweetbie spends many happy hours snuggling under the three hens and gallivanting across their backs as they continue brooding the eggs.

Then comes the day the eggs are due to hatch. All day long, the three hens shift about and fluff out their feathers. Our hopes are high.

And they are dashed. We find two newly hatched chicks, their brains pecked out.



Raccoon No. 3, ready for his new home.

Is it a case of sibling rivalry? We exile Tweetbie to a separate enclosure in the chicken house, along with Tridge, who

has immediately followed him out of the nest.

Early next morning, we find two more hatchlings dead. The villain has to be either Parvana or Rose, or both.

We remind ourselves their behaviour is worthy of their cannibalistic ancestor, Tyrannosaurus Rex. We search for information about infanticidal hens, and *Backyard Chickens* forum gives us a torrent of tragic stories, along with a few theories. A new mother sometimes does not recognize hatchlings as chicks, and so attacks them as intruders. Sometimes the hen is just a bad mother. Or she's overly stressed by a lack of social distancing while brooding. Had the presence of Tweetbie confused them?

In short order, we turn Parvana and Rose out of the nesting area. They join Tridge in mothering little Tweetbie, shielding him from any real or imagined danger. At night they sleep together in the nesting box, Tweetbie and his three moms.

Then one night, we are tired and forget to close the chicken house door. At 10 p.m., we hear a commotion. A raccoon has made its way over the chain link fence, through the chicken yard, and into the chateau, and carried off Tridge. John chases after and retrieves the hen, but she dies later that night. That is so painful. But Tweetbie is safe, hiding behind the other two hens in the

nesting box. How wonderful that he had three moms!

We can no longer ignore our raccoons. They are always there, always opportunistic, just like the coronavirus.

The next day, John builds a raccoon trap. It is a live trap, very strong and secure. In the morning, we find the trap empty. Our infrared camera shows the raccoon entering the trap. It snaps shut. He spends about 20 minutes eating the marshmallows and sunflower seeds. Then, in about 2 minutes, he finds the two latches, reaches through the bars to open the door, and goes off into the darkness.

So, John adds a bar that will keep the door shut even if it is unlatched. At about 10:30 that night, we hear the snap. We back the car up to the trap, cover it with a blanket, lift it into the hatchback, and drive 15 kilometres to a forest near the New Hampshire border. John sets the cage down, opens the door, and the raccoon races into the woods. He is a big fellow! Surely a boar – a male, that is.

At about 3 a.m. that night, the story is repeated, catching a slightly smaller coon, probably a female, or sow. Her companion (adolescent offspring?) stays nearby till dawn, then leaves. At 6 a.m. we take the sow to the forest paradise near New Hampshire.

The following morning, we take the third raccoon to its new home. It is the smallest and fastest of the three.

Sleep-deprived, that night we take a break from setting the trap. When we review the photos from our nature cam, we see a sow coming to explore the cage, accompanied by a small version of herself. Such a cute pair of tiny eyes at her side!



And he's off!

We suddenly realize that if we trap the mother, we leave her kits behind. We resolve not to set the trap again till they are older.

Now we wonder if trapping and relocating raccoons is legal? Our belated online research reveals that yes, it is legal in Quebec, if discouraging or scaring them away doesn't work. And yes, the sunflower seeds fallen from our bird feeder and our little terror of chickens are attractions just too strong for our neighbourhood raccoons.

Compounding the problem are three factors. First, last summer the land bordering three sides of our wooded

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oasis was clear cut. This summer, the land on the same three sides was liberally sprayed with glyphosate (Roundup or Glyfos), a herbicide that destroys the plants and habitat of small animals. Finally, on the fourth side, the farmer has not planted the huge cornfield that no doubt usually sustains the raccoons.

In the centre of the storm, our little terror of chickens - now one rooster, three hens and one exuberant chick - stay vigilant. With their right eye, they watch out for predators from sky or land, and with the left, seek prey.



The tiny terror of chickens, Tweetbie and his moms keeping their distance as usual from Chiva and Chanti, foraging among the Japanese Knotweed plants.

When I look out my office window, they immediately look at me with their right eye. Then seeming to recognize me, they turn their heads and with their left eye, watch for me to

throw them sunflower seeds, kale or other goodies.

Tweetbie is preciously guarded by Parvana and Rose as he explores the chicken yard. He is not yet chafing at the confines of the chain link fence. His explorations have led him to discover the sweet taste of Japanese Knotweed (false bamboo) leaves. We, too, have sampled these young leaves in our salad, and yes, they are good eating! We hope Tweetbie's elders will follow his lead, and feel confident that his younger siblings will do so eventually. We have way too many Japanese Knotweed roots probing the house's foundation.

But for the moment, those younger siblings still hide securely inside their shells, under a red lamp in their incubator. They will likely be white, because the eggs were laid by Chanti, the white hen. Parvana and Rose are not laying eggs; they are entirely focused on mothering Tweetbie. His coat of feathers is growing into a variegated grey, an intriguing combination of his mother's partridge-colours and the white coat of Chiva the roo.

Chiva's tail feathers are growing back in. It's been about a month since his harrowing escape from the fox. She is still prowling around. We glimpse her now and then. We know she is watching us, looking for a chink in our stronghold. But it is hard to hold the predators - fox, raccoons, hawks, eagles, coyotes - in our consciousness. They are mostly invisible and silent, like the coronavirus. And like the virus, they strike when and where least expected.

(All photos courtesy Rachel Garber)

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My Early Years in Germany

by *Ida Maegerlein*

My father was a Lutheran minister in a small village called Marienhaf, located in the northern part of Germany. Mother told this story so often: she was pregnant with her third baby. It was a week or two before Easter, a busy time in a pastor's household. She announced, "This baby either shows up no later than Monday of Holy Week, or it will have to wait until after Easter!" Obediently, I arrived on Monday, March 26, 1934, to the utter delight of my mother, father, brother and sister, the third of eventually ten children.

Marienhaf is where we grew up, a lovely village on the North Sea with lots of history. When I visit Marienhaf today, it has changed a lot, but the old church and parsonage are still there. I always make sure to visit the grave of my parents, situated in the front yard of the church.

As you know, Germany's political climate in the 30s had changed; however, we children were oblivious to this and grew up having a wonderful time. The parsonage was a big house, formerly a farmhouse. In earlier times, before my father's era, pastors were self-sufficient. There were large parcels of land attached to the parsonage and the pastor used to manage and farm them. This all belonged to the church, of course. There were stables and pens for the animals attached to the house. But by the time my father arrived, they were empty.

These empty outbuildings were wonderful for us children to explore, and provided places where we could play boisterous games of hide and seek. We also raised pet animals, such as rabbits and guinea pigs. I remember my oldest brother had doves. In addition, a large garden surrounded the house with fruit trees and bushes. Father had a large sandbox installed, and we used a plank, which was just placed over the side of the sandbox, for a seesaw. Father joined us sometimes on the seesaw.

Inside, a swing was installed in the hallway for rainy days, I guess. Poor mother, I sometimes think I can still see her running from one end of the hallway to the other, watching for when the swing was up. She would run from the kitchen in the back of the house to Daddy's study in the front, careful to avoid the swing.

There was a new baby almost every year: by 1938, there were six of us, three boys and three girls. We all played house a lot, with our dolls as the children. My favorite pastime was singing together with the whole family: father played the piano while mother and we children sang. It didn't take long before the people in

our neighborhood heard about us, and asked us to sing for them on special occasions, such as birthdays and anniversaries. Looking back, I can see that we were the Von Trapps of northern Germany!

1939 was a big year for me. I had turned five years old, a landmark age in our family. Mother had a special arrangement with her parents: at the age of five, each child spent a holiday with our grandparents before starting school at six years old. Therefore, mother and I packed a suitcase and went to the train station. After our goodbyes to the family who were there to see us off, I proudly boarded the train with my mother. We were headed for the big city of Hanover, where my grandparents lived. I had never been on a train. This was exciting, but later my mother told me: "You slept most of the way." The excitement was too much for a five year old, I guess.



The parsonage

Grandfather met us at the train station, and we took the streetcar to his home, which was also a parsonage, as he too was a minister.

Here,

Grandmother Hannah met us. She was my grandfather's second wife. When my mother was only three years old, her mother (my grandmother) died giving birth to my mother's baby sister. As a single father, my grandfather had done a wonderful job raising his two little girls. He married again when the girls were teenagers, and he started a second family. He and Grandmother Hannah had a girl named Erika and a boy, Hans Herman, but we knew him only as Uncle Peter.

They were only a few years older than I was! When Mother left me to go back home, a few tears were shed, but I quickly got used to my new surroundings. Everybody was so nice to me. I shared a bedroom with Uncle Peter, and somebody always read a bedtime story to me. It was kind of nice being the baby in the household for a change.

I loved them all, but my mom's half-sister, Aunt Erika, was my favorite. When she came home from school, the house was full of laughter. Outside my grandparents' home, things were changing. All of a sudden, there were a lot of

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soldiers on the streets of Hanover. Grandfather brought some of them home in order to speak with them—I heard the word ‘war.’ How does a five year old reconcile this word when spoken by the adults? I played ‘wargames’ with Uncle Peter all the time. He had little lead soldiers, who would be ‘shot’ and then fall every day, but would rise the following day to battle once more. For me, ‘war’ was a game.

One day as we were listening to the radio, we heard the soldiers’ word again—Germany was at war. I wanted to go home and be with my parents,



brothers and sisters. Grandfather told me this was not possible, as all the trains were going east to transport soldiers to the front. “What front?” I wanted to know. Suddenly, the adults were busy and preoccupied. No one had time to explain to a five year old what was going on. I was told to be ready to flee when the sirens went off, because we would have to go to a bomb shelter. One morning, my grandmother found me under the covers crying—I had heard a siren, and believed my grandparents had forgotten to take me to the shelter. My grandmother told me that I had mistaken the factory siren for an air-raid siren. In all this confusion, through a convoluted series of car and train rides being passed from neighbour to acquaintance, I was finally reunited with my family.

To be continued: “New Rules”

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Silence IS Violence

by Kathleen Y. Rattigan

While watching the protest marches in the month of June 2020. I saw a sign that actually shook me to my core, widened my eyes and caused a major shift in my consciousness. **“Silence IS Violence”** is a truth that needs to be recognized! This has actually changed the way I interact in the world—now—and for the rest of my life. I now speak up, do become politically engaged, voice my beliefs through social media and am more courageous.

I had been leery about voicing my opinions “out there” on social media because of the viciousness I saw from the fanatics, and I was careful not to attract their attention. However, that time is now done for me. As the saying goes, “The pen is mightier than the sword” and though my age prevents me from long marches, my life experience can hopefully be used as a voice of reason and support for life, liberty, and justice.

A world-wide phenomenon has crawled through humanity like a deadly snake since recorded history though now it is no longer a venomous secret! Finally, we can talk about it, we have organizations that rescue the victims and shelter them from harm, the law protects them; however, everyone must speak out! This summer the Quebec Government sent out a powerful pamphlet entitled, “Together, let’s protect our children.” They provide all the necessary guidelines and guarantee that your identity is protected – you only need to have reasonable suspicions of child abuse or neglect. Thank you, Quebec Government – well done!!

Abuse in the homes, churches, schools, armed and police forces and on and on – WHY? It is because people stay silent even when they know something is “not right.” WHY? Don’t want to get involved, scared they might be wrong, and so we turn our faces away and do nothing. When I was about 11 years old, just starting to develop, an old pervert in our village walked up behind me and put his hands on my budding breasts. I froze in shock then stepped away, ran home and told my Mother. She comforted me, told me she was so proud I had told her right away, and then told my big, red-headed Irish father. That pervert, that dirty old man, forever after scuttled across the street like a scared rat whenever he saw me coming. Thankfully, I was raised to trust no-one until they earned it. I learned that just because someone is older or a familiar face does not give them permission to touch me.

Reader’s Digest (May 2020) published in their “News from the World of Medicine” a study from the University of Birmingham noting that domestic abuse is a risk factor

for chronic health issues caused by excessive stress, and recommended that – where appropriate – doctors should not be afraid to ask the hard questions when they suspect abuse. Who better placed than a doctor to observe signs of abuse, either through an office visit or in the emergency department? Yet so often the woman (or man) denies it and protects their abuser. Now, however, doctors can report their suspicions to the proper authorities, thank goodness.

In my role as a counselor at a private drug and alcohol treatment center, I often work with families (Mom, Dad, and their children) when they come into our family residential treatment homes, which are separate from the other client sites. Every single one of these women has been molested, beaten, and feels powerless. Sadly, these are people from our high Northern communities where drug and alcohol abuse is rampant, as it is in so many of our towns and cities.

People often ask why these women stay in abusive relationships, and why they also seem to close their eyes to the immense suffering of their children. Here is what I have learned so far: these women are frightened beyond what we can comprehend. They have been brainwashed that they (and their children) will be hunted down and murdered if they leave or speak out.

They need our help, not our judgement. Speak out, report the abuse, and offer help where you can. NO MORE SILENCE.



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Here comes the class of 2020, stronger and wiser. Pages 3, 6

