

# Seniors 2011

*Former Brome  
County archivist  
Marion Phelps  
celebrated her  
103rd birthday  
last week.  
She is one of  
dozens of  
Townships'  
centenarians who  
continues to live a  
vibrant life,  
See inside for more  
super seniors.*

THE  
**RECORD**  
Supplement  
February 2011

ORIN ARNOLD

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# Lennoxville resident continues to be recognized for contributions to the community

Since coming to the Eastern Townships in 1957, Joan Thomson became best-known for welcoming students from the Lower North Shore and elsewhere in Quebec who came to study at Alexander Galt Regional High School.

She was selected an Outstanding Townshippier by Townshippers Association in 2009 and recognized by the regional seniors organization, Table régionale de concertation des aînés de l'Estrie as one of seven outstanding seniors who have contributed to the well-being of their communities through generous voluntary work.

"We were all very happy to have Mrs. Thomson with us," said Ginette Mercier of the seniors' association. "There really is a warmth about her that touches people in a very special way."

Thomson is an active member of the Lennoxville & Ascot Historical Society as well as OPALS (Older Persons with Active Lifestyles.)

A real passion for people and helping those in need," are the 10 words that best sum up Joan Thomson, according to her nomination.

She came to the Townships in 1957, and since then has left her mark on many and diverse community organizations. For years she was parish visitor for St. George's Church in Lennoxville, visiting patients in the Sherbrooke Hospital.


But perhaps she is best known for taking under her wing the many students who came to the Alexander Galt Regional High School from the Lower North Shore and other parts of Quebec and Canada. She found homes for them, assisted them with their new life here, and helped them feel at home — so much so, that many of them settled in the Townships.

Active and vibrant, she continues to raise funds for the Quebec-Labrador Foundation which provides scholarships for students from the Lower North Shore. "Mrs. Thomson has offered so much to the people who have been lucky enough to know her. At the age of 98, she's still not finished contributing to her beloved community," concluded one of her nominators.

Joan Thomson will celebrate her 100th birthday in May.



AL BARBER



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**Cass**




Orn Arnason

Brome Lake historian and archivist Marion Phelps turned 103 in February and continues to be the leading source of historical information in Brome County.

Alert and knowledgeable, Phelps continues to be a leading authority on historical events in the region and her advice is often sought by original families searching their family roots.

Phelps led the charge in preserving the history of Brome some years ago when Quebec's ministry of culture decided museums such as the Brome County Historical Museum were 'too eclectic' to warrant further funding.

Phelps recently moved into a Knowlton seniors' residence after living on her own until she topped 100.



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# Centenarians abound at Wales Home

By Claudia Villemaire  
Richmond

**F**oyer Wales Home stands like a beacon, snuggled into gentle hills just a couple of miles, (less than 5 kms.

from Richmond. Here the welcome is warm, the care heartfelt and a glance at residents' records prove we'll find, comparatively speaking, more residents and patients either nearing their 100th birthday, or well past.

LOOKING FORWARD TO THERAPEUTIC GARDEN



Mildred Goodfellow, 83, with her caregiver Karine Forest, look forward to a special garden for Alzheimers' patients at the Wales Home. See story Page 8



Linda Alsley, 77, with caregiver Karine Forest.

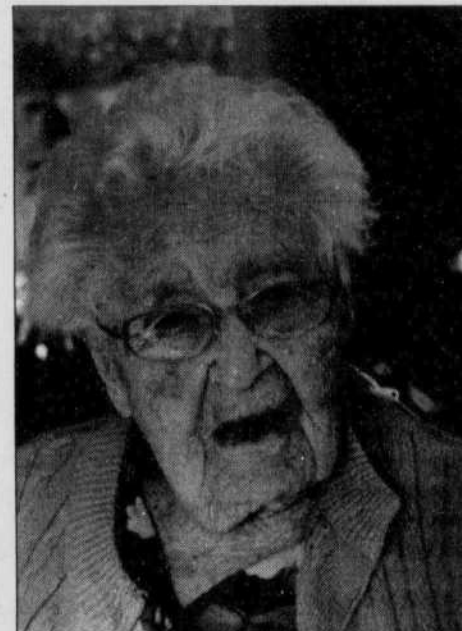
Actually, there are eight residents and patients 100 years old or more, with Marguerite Allen heading up the list at 105. We interviewed this gracious lady just three weeks ago, shortly after a special birthday celebration marking her 105th. In spite of a bit of fatigue left over from the birthday celebrations the day before, sparkling blue eyes were a sure indication questions about long ago years, growing up in Granby still barely larger than a village, looking after parents and working in what would become one of the largest cities in the Eastern Townships. Perhaps details were lacking, but interest and good humor marked our conversation, leaving one with the conviction loving care and attention were major contributors to Allen's surprising condition.

Dorothy Lockwood at 102, laughs and giggles like a school-girl as her memory flashes back to school days in the USA where she spent her youth. She might suddenly remember the family's return to the Danville area where she and her husband spent their lives together. Perhaps she'll feel a bit chilly and reach out for your hand, or glancing up from her chair, will laugh and ask if we are new residents here. "Oh, you live in town? Well, you be careful on those roads," she insists, lapsing into memories of her travels on dirt trails and gravel roads, barely comparable to today's highways.

Mary Cross, doesn't remember friends and family now, but, as she approaches her 102nd birthday in May, a hummed tune that tells the story of Nelly Gray or Old Kentucky home, brings smiles of recognition to this once energetic and fun-loving lady. We remind her of afternoons spent playing her harmonica, dancing a jig



Aline Bessette Pearce turns 100 April 18.



Marguerite Allen, 105.

around the kitchen table, and the glimmer of those memories light up her eyes.

Then we meet Aline Pearce. She's not quite 100 years old yet. April 18th is the magic day. But one would be hard put to guess this vivacious lady's age. Today, Monday, was bridge day and that's where we found her with three of her friends, playing a round of bridge, laughing and

PLEASE SEE WALES HOME PAGE 4



Dorothy Lockwood, 102.

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# WALES:

CONT'D FROM PAGE 3

chatting as though there was no tomorrow. "I'm ready to go when the time comes," she says, laughing. "I just hope it's quick. Don't want to lay around too long," she adds.

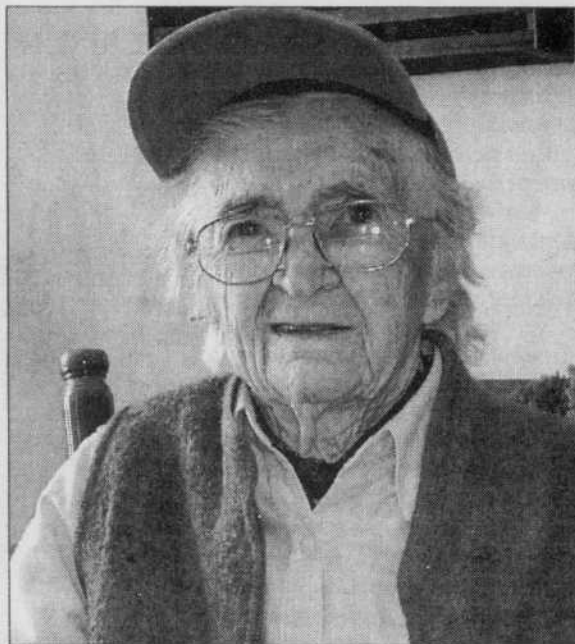
Aline Bessette is a farm girl, born and raised on the family farm near Boynton in the Ayer's Cliff area. "My Dad insisted we learn English and I actually went to school in the 'Cliff,'" she recalls. Memories are stirring on this Valentine's Day and she talks of the good man she married and her life in Rock Island, (called Stanstead today) for 43 years. "I've had a great life and have no regrets," she admits. "I enjoy life here and yes, I'm in pretty good shape," she says, her easy laugh emphasizing her words.

"I don't know if I like the idea of reaching 100, but, so far so good and we'll just make the best of it. You know, it's kind of sad too. We were seven boys and girls and I'm the last of my family. I only have one dear friend left still living in Stanstead, so, making friends in a residence like this helps keep my courage up," she admits.

Time flies as we chat and supper hour is less than an hour away. "And we still have to finish this round of bridge," she says, "but do come back soon and we'll stir up those old memories of country roads lined with giant hardwood trees, of being courted by my future husband, strolling down those shady lanes - ah yes, there were romantic times back then," Bessette-Pearce recalls. "Just make sure you come back - soon," she insists, turning to her playing cards and restarting the bridge game.

Esther Baldwin, Kathleen Davidson, Mary St Cyr and Edna Gillander complete the list of folks 100-years-old or more. We haven't enquired about residents over 90 who are approaching the century mark but one can surmise, in a residence where patients and residents number less than 200, there are good things happening at this 'home' in sight of the St Francis River where cattle graze nearby.

## MORE INSPIRING SENIORS



BRUCE PATTON

Island Brook native Verna Westgate will celebrate her 102nd birthday in March. Not slowed down by age, Westgate still has her driver's license and is well known for her expansive garden and for the crafts she regularly exhibits at the Cookshire Fair. She is also a welcome and frequent patron of a favourite restaurant in Island Brook where she stops in to grab a burger and fries.



SHARON MCCULLY

Former teacher, author and historian Winona Matthews, 97, of Shefford continues to meet each week with a writing group to discuss words and ideas. Ms. Matthews is another of the remarkable Townships seniors who demonstrate age is just a number.

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## NEW CITADEL AT ST FRANCIS MANOR



AL BARBER

St-Francis Manor in Lennoxville recently completed construction on a new health wing christened The Citadel where services will be available to residents with a loss of autonomy. The new wing will provide graduated services to residences as their needs evolve. Autonomous residents at the manor will continue to enjoy their independence in their own living environment with the assurance that should they need additional care or services, it will be available.

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# Coping with Death

This is a new column that I will be writing every month in order to address many questions and/or concerns people may have related to the funeral business. We have all been faced with the loss of a loved one at some point in our lives, and with that comes grief.

Grief is a normal reaction to an irretrievable loss. It tends to be the most intense when faced with the loss of a loved one, but can also be likened to the loss of a pet, a job, a friendship or even a home.

No one experiences grief the same. It is a process with numerous stages and can be particularly intense in the earlier stages. Grief is very much like a roller coaster. One may feel like they are doing better and then plunge into feelings of sorrow and despair the next day, that same day or even a couple of hours later.

Reactions associated with grief include: denial, anxiety, hopelessness, sadness, anger, shock, depression, and a sense of isolation just to name a few.

There are several strategies to help you deal with grief. These strategies include:

- Acknowledging that the intense feelings you are having are normal.
- Express the emotions you are feeling. Do not try to suppress your feelings.
- Eat well and exercise as much as possible. This will help with any anx-



COPING WITH DEATH

MATHIEU BAKER

ety or depressive thoughts.

- Try to maintain some regularity in your life. Try to do some of the things you did before the loss of a loved one.
  - Talk to someone about what you are feeling.
- If you are not experiencing the grief personally, but are close to someone who is, there are numerous things you can do to try to help this person. These include:
- Being supportive; being there for a friend who needs you
  - Continuously being there for a friend, not just in the early stages of their loss
  - Talk to them about their loss.

Do not make it a taboo subject

- Don't judge them about what they are feeling or how they are coping with the loss.

For more information regarding the grieving process please visit my website at: [www.complexebm.com](http://www.complexebm.com)

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Access to in-house doctors' services	✓	✓	*	*	*
Specialists	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Nutritionist	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lab tests (blood, stool, urine)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Delivery of medication	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Medical supplies (medication, incontinence products, materials needed for regular dressings, catheterizations etc.)	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
CLSC			✓	✓	

✓ = has access to this care  
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 \* = In an emergency

# WALES

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The Résidence Wales Home is committed to respecting the dignity of all seniors by providing them with a clean, safe and secure homelike environment which promotes independence, friendship and comfort for its residents and provides a welcoming atmosphere for their friends and families. The Wales Home accomplishes its mission with a valuable team of skilled employees, volunteers, other healthcare providers and community partners.

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# IMPORTANT MESSAGE

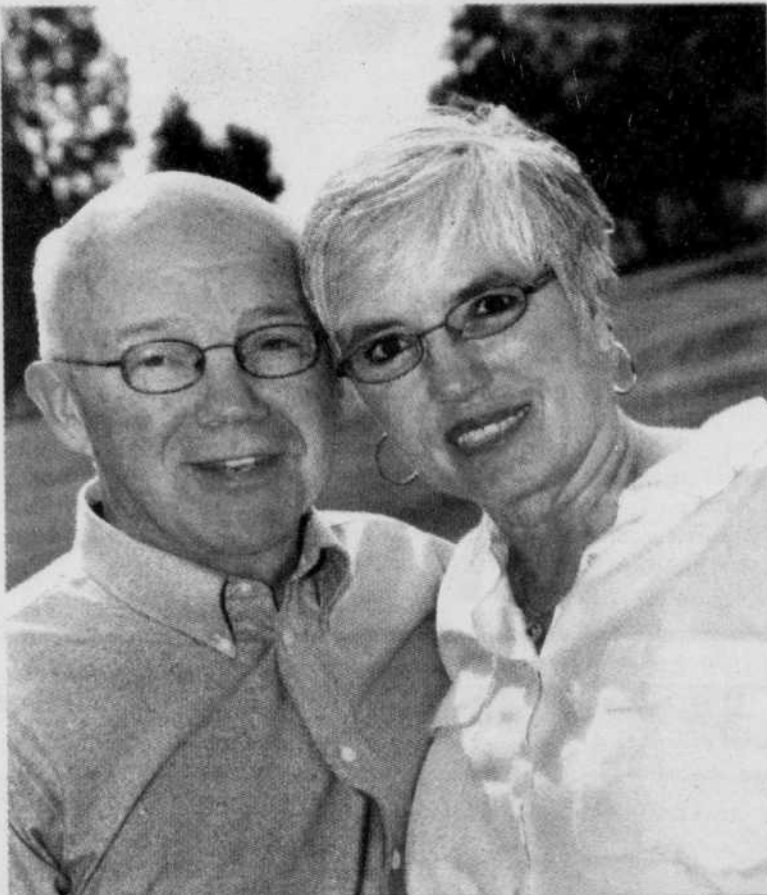
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# Wales Home to get a new therapeutic garden

By Claudia Villemaire

There are smiles everywhere. Even in the administration offices, Brenda Lee Piironen, Director of operations at Foyer Wales Home begins her days lately with smiles that last until her tasks are done each day, tasks which, of late, involve checking out the nearly completed renovations on infirmaries but mostly, talking, planning, dreaming of the therapeutic garden that will take shape on the south corner of this 80-year-old residence for seniors.

"We are so 'up' since the good news we had won nearly \$100,000 from the Aviva fund. The idea of a therapeutic garden, specially designed for Alzheimer patients was a dream. We imagined mature trees, walkways, birds and butterflies, raised flower beds overflowing with blooms and colors - knowing these folks would feel safe and happy in just such an environment."

Sometimes, dreams do come true. Forms and the invitation to vote for the Foyer Wales project were sent to every community, volunteer, families and organizations in the Townships. "The re-



CLAUDIA VILLEMAIRE

Brenda Lee Piironen, Director of Operations

sponse was far beyond our expectations, and as the voting days dwindled down to a final round, we dared to hope there was a slim chance we just might win those funds so graciously offered," Piironen said during an interview last week.

"Probably everyone in the region knows we succeeded by now. Now, we're

happy to describe what we have planned."

The garden, rising on the south face of the Norton wing, will be 50' x 80', surrounded by sturdy wrought iron fencing, hopefully designed and built by a local artist. Raised flower beds will grace a looping pathway, shaped in the figure eight, with shady nooks, benches and mature trees providing shade and a bit of 'cool'. "The patients will be free to either just admire or perhaps pluck a blossom. There'll be times when partic-

ipating in planting or picking will be offered, perhaps a bit of 'live' music by a strolling minstrel on occasion, and, on special occasions, perhaps a friendly dog or cat visiting will be invited in," she explained.

Myrthe Langeveld, Medical Chief, is also looking forward to the beneficial effects this type of therapy brings to Alzheimer patients. "At the onset of this disease, folks distinctly remember their life five, ten or fifteen years in the past. This garden will perhaps be a catalyst for memories of long ago gardens, happy events when flowers and bird-song underlined special days in their lives. Awakening these memories brings good humor and happy souls to what can be a frustrating and rather hopeless condition. It will certainly improve the residents quality of life, something we are always striving for in our day to day care."

The changes at this residence where less than 200 residents are lovingly cared for have been ongoing since last Fall. The Norton wing has undergone major renovations resulting in bright and cheerful rooms where patients can mix and mingle, watch television or work at handicrafts. New facilities include modern replacement of 50-year-old baths, new kitchen equipment and best of all, a re-arrangement of rooms and gathering spaces where windows and new lighting have put a brand new face on what was a rather dark and dingy area. Renovations are almost completed on the second floor and, when all's said and done, with careful planning, there'll be increased accommodation for these patients.'

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# Sculptor still planning future exhibitions

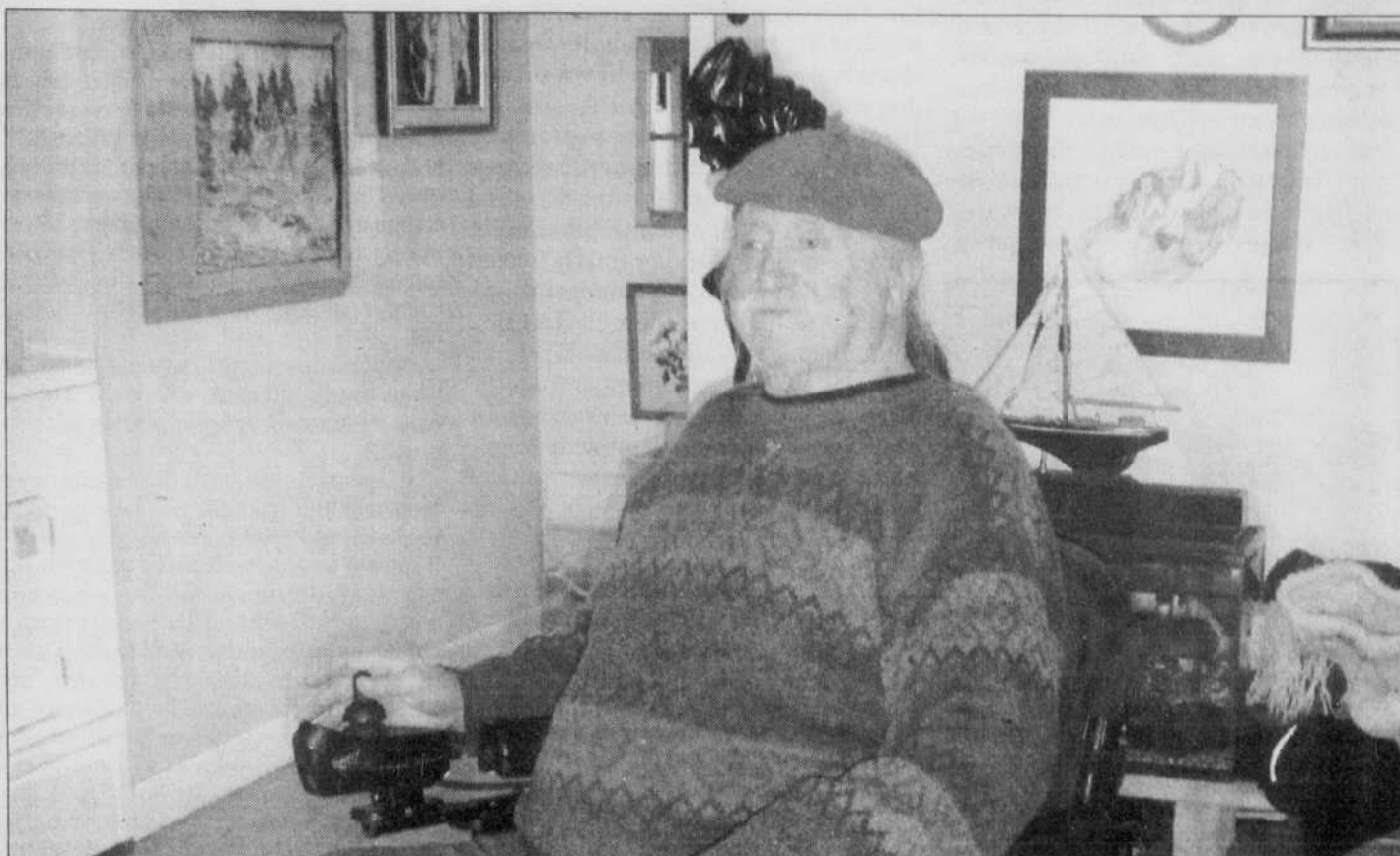
By Manfred Helmuth Starhemberg  
SUTTON

As a journalist, I have had times where it was very hard to get an interview. When I spoke to Leonid Brezhnev in 1979, it took six months to get an interview. Pablo Picasso was easy; he answered the phone and told me just to show up. Nixon took seven months of begging and pleading with the White House press office. Having been a vocal advocate of President Carter, Reagan would never speak to me. And now, after having been friends with Denis Happy for five years, he finally allowed me to speak about him. This is my personal record of having to overcome someone's reluctance to talk to me.

Who is Denis Happy? He is probably one of the finest living sculptors in Canada today. A stroke sidelined him several years ago but every day he is plotting and planning where to place the statues he still owns. He sits in front of me in his wheelchair, his favorite bird perched atop his head and tells me "that all is well in the world."

"They take good care of me" he smiles, and I am still enjoying every day of my life. "When we get the statues erected, they need some polishing which will require a good air compressor and a bunch of buffing pads but I can certainly do that." The man is 77-years-old, needs professionals to come and change his diapers, yet every day he tries to set a new speed record in his electric wheel chair. He shops for himself at the IGA, he can be found entertaining people at "Le Cafetier", he is a chess master and will take on about anyone who wishes to play.

In 1984 his sculpture of the Immacu-



MANFRIED HELMUTH STARHEMBERG

late Conception was presented to Pope John Paul II at St. Paul's Basilica in Toronto. He has awards from all over the world, his work is in private collections from Newfoundland to the British Empire. "I could still do it," he tells me. "It is just a bit awkward to handle the heavy tools when you are a paraplegic."

However, he takes care of one of his sons who lives with him, another one

died this year in a tragic accident in Cowansville. This man is not about to join the local Bingo society. He is still planning his next exhibition and tells me that he may take to writing about sculpture or related fields of the visual arts. He is also completely computer literate and has taught me some computer tricks I did not know. He also, some time in the past, invited me and my wife Nancy to his home for an ex-

cellent home cooked meal.

This is not a senior citizen, he is an inspiration to all that have the great privilege to meet him.

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## Garden:

CONT'D FROM PAGE 8

We have chosen light colors throughout, re-arranged closet space, and reduced bedrooms to three beds where there were four previously,' Langeveld described on our tour. Access to the 'garden' will be from Norton I, and, with only one exit to the garden from this floor, no access beyond the fencing, caregivers will be reassured their 'charges' are safe and sound in-



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## WALES

FONDATION - FOUNDATION

The Résidence Wales Home in Quebec's lovely Eastern Township's region has received very positive accolades in recent times and today ranks as one of the most highly rated facilities for the housing and care of "golden-agers".

Members of the community have stepped up to both oversee and finance the "Wales" in a more proactive way. The results are clearly visible as a visit to the home will attest to. Current residents will speak proudly of how wonderful their lives are in this setting. Predominantly bilingual staff are happy to serve all comers, whether to visit or stay, and newly renovated facilities give the spaces an aura of wholesomeness and brightness.

Horace Pettes Wales, whose generosity and foresight started things going here around 1920, would be very pleased today to witness this continuing legacy, and members of the community who have contributed to its revival in the recent past deserve special recognition.

Executive Director, Brendalee Piironen of Cleveland, Quebec has spearheaded and channeled the energy that so many others have given liberally, whether as employees or volunteers in a demonstration that "Together We Can - Together We Will" is not just idle talk. At "The Wales Home" it has been the action phrase that has injected huge amounts of enthusiasm into one successful initiative after another.

As the annual fund raising campaign for 2010-11 closes on March 18th, I extend a "double-barreled" invitation to all Townshippers. Please consider a donation to The Wales Home Foundation, and please feel welcome to attend the evening ceremony at the Home when I expect a record \$500,000 result will be announced!!

Nils Bodtker,  
Annual Campaign Chairman

side or out."

There's no doubt, the Foyer Wales Home is catching up with the times. Secure bathing and showering facilities, electric beds, modern lifting apparatus, improved lighting, air conditioning and air filtration, completely new electrical wiring, a new elevator and many more improvements are all slated for a public viewing in March or April. In the meantime, there are trees and flowering plants to choose, raised flower beds to design and plan, quiet corners, lampposts and butterfly houses to select. "It's absolutely wonderful, seeing all the improvements," said Piironen. "But the most important fact in all of this is the renewed support from the community at large where generous hearts and hands have prevailed. As a result, I am pretty sure we have one of the best seniors' residence in the region if not the whole province," Piironen said proudly.

## George Constantin always has a paint brush in his hand

By M. H. Starhemberg  
SUTTON

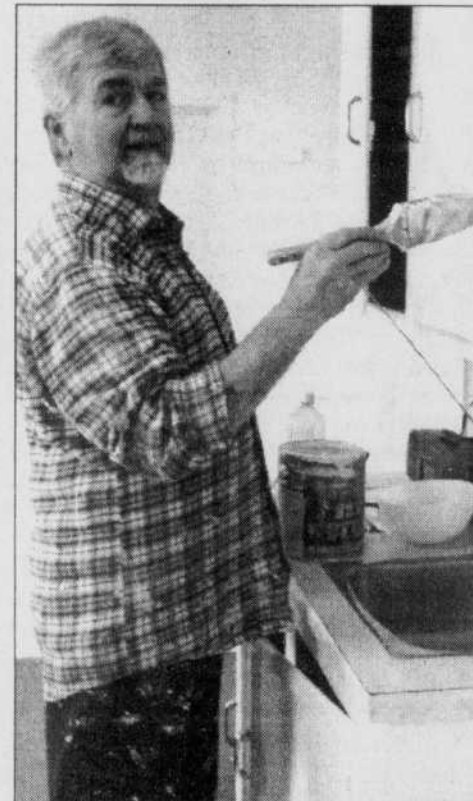
As Sutton constant, George Constantin a highly regarded local painter believed that at age 70, it would be no problem for him to establish a new larger gallery as the body of his work had outgrown his previous place. On Tuesday he was hard at work putting the finishing touches on the interior of his new place at 4-A Pine Street. Of course, he paints it all himself because, outside of his artistic work, he has also painted houses since he was 12-years-old.

"My mother would have me do the antique multi-paneled windows. That is where I learned to be so precise with my brush."

Constantin was born on the plateau in Montreal and studied the Classics including Latin and Science at the College Laval. "I started to draw and paint at 12-years-of-age but unfortunately, I also discovered where my affluent father had his stash of champagne," he muses. And there began a problem with alcohol that cost him houses, a marriage and created huge setbacks in his artistic career. "I quit for good in 1987," he tells me. "But I have always been a 'functional alcoholic' and kept working and now after all these years, my two daughters and my five grandchildren still love me. I have never lost that, at least".

His psychiatrists, of which he had a myriad, all agreed that what kept him sane was that through those dark years he kept drawing, often expressing his despair or hope through his work. This is probably the reason that eventually, the drawings stopped and he began to create beautifully lustrous works of watercolor or acrylic. George recovered, and his new zest for life can be seen in his rich landscapes, his portrayal of fish and flowers, his ever-changing nuances of shading and underpainting.

Constantin moved to Sutton in 1996 and established his first studio, ironically in the house next to where his newest gallery will emerge in the coming weeks. He had two other studios in between, each larger in scale than the last. "Part of why we divorced was that my wife did not want to live in the country," he tells me. "So I gave her the house and started all over."



There is a second side to George: he is one of the best house painters in the greater Sutton area and a home owner is lucky to get him to paint between his busy schedule of exhibitions and painting art. He can be seen on 30-foot ladders doing the eaves of historic homes or the trim of most local business establishments. George is a fully licensed contractor, thus he can outsource some painting to assistants but he will always supervise, check and if needed, make corrections because he is a perfectionist. "Painting a house is also a work of art as it will be viewed by many. My paintings may hang in a living room, but a beautiful facade can be seen by thousands every day".

George had his first one-man show in 1958 at the Hotel Algonquin in New Brunswick and there have been hundreds of shows since. Through CAPSQ Laval his paintings are in permanent exhibitions of Canadian painters throughout the world.

What does the future hold? "I am just going to keep painting art and houses for as long as I am able to do so, chuckles George". And right now he is planning his first exhibition in his beautiful new studio.

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# Remembering dear old dad

By Manfred H. Starhemberg  
SUTTON



Dear old dad would have celebrated his 100th birthday this year, but unfortunately he died at age 83.

Never important enough to warrant a line in Google today, his passing is of no historical significance. But it made me think of the year of his birth, 1911. Into

which world was he born? Who else shared this time on our planet with him?

Dad was born in the family's summer "lodge" in Marburg, a southern city of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, to an imperial railroad architect and his aristocratic wife and professor of linguistics, Ahna.

On the other side of the world, Ronald Reagan was born in an apartment over a bank building in Tampico, Illinois. Reagan was six weeks my father's senior.

My dad's parents were subjects of Kaiser "Franz," while the Reagan elders had voted for William Howard Taft. Taft and the Kaiser had one thing in common: both sported facial hair.

Taft ratified the 16th amendment which allowed the Senate of the U.S. to levy income taxes pretty indiscriminately, while Dad's Kaiser gave us World War One when his crown prince got assassinated in Sarajevo.

The Kaiser died, as did Taft. My dad ran a big steel company until his death, and Ronald Reagan became an actor who eventually emerged as "The Great Communicator" and American President.

In 1911 Canada, the 1910-11 NHA



season was the second season of the now defunct National Hockey Association. Five teams played 16 games each, starting on December 31, 1910, and ending on March 10, 1911. The Ottawa Hockey Club won the league championship and took over the Stanley Cup from the Montreal Wanderers.

The first issue of "Boys Life" was published in 1911, and the "Camp Fire Girls" were founded in Vermont. More importantly, a few weeks after my Dad, Ginger Rogers was born Virginia Katherine McMath in Independence, Missouri, and starred in 73 films until her death in 1995.

Dad never liked Reagonomics but he was a great Ginger Rogers fan, as was Ronald Reagan. Now we have at least one small thing in common in this timeline.

In England King George V dies and is succeeded by Edward VIII. In Canada, Robert Borden's Conservatives win a decisive victory over Wilfried Laurier's Liberals. Henri Elezar Taschereau, 4th chief justice of Canada, dies.

In the 1911 World Series, the Philadelphia Athletics beat the New York Giants four games to two. Philadelphia third baseman Frank "Home Run" Baker earned his nickname during this Series.

Mahalia Jackson, the "Queen of Gospel Song," was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, on October 26, 1911. Jackson grew up singing gospel music at the Plymouth Rock Baptist Church where her father preached.

At age sixteen she migrated to Chicago, where she supported herself by doing housekeeping and odd jobs. To this day many consider her the very best artist of her genre.

The year my father died, Reagan announced that he suffered from Alzheimer's disease. He lived on another ten years, albeit removed from all but his most intimate friends and family.

My dad died of a stroke in his office after ordering coffee. At least he had his faculties to the end.

In remembering these things I am becoming aware of my own 63 years, and it affords me an opportunity to enjoy every day with a new sense of awareness of our limited time to do the things we wish to do, repair what we have done wrong, and try to do well in the time remaining.

Ginger Rogers in "Stage Door," 1937



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