

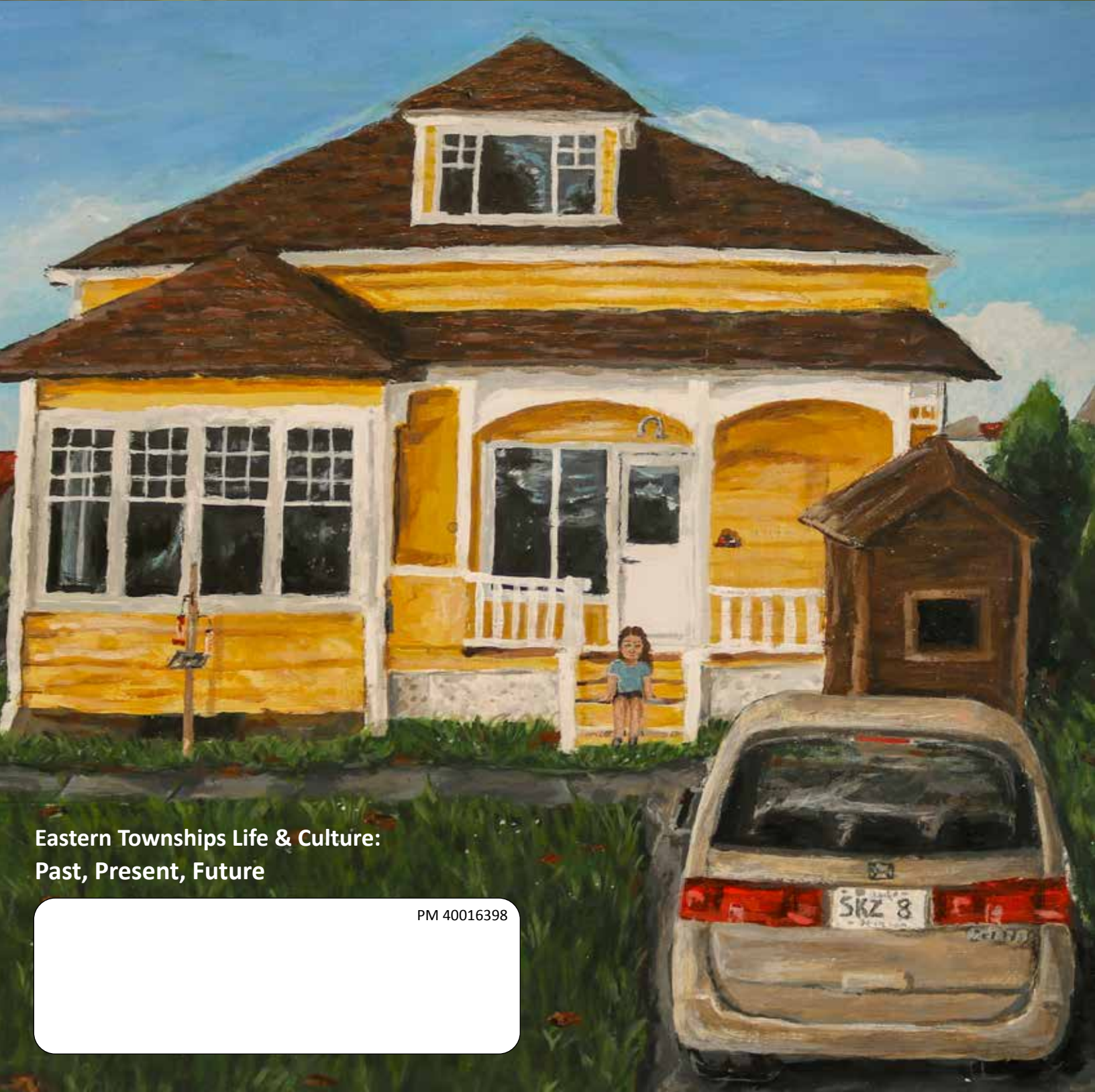
# Townships Sun

\$5

TOWNSHIPS YOUNG VOICES 2025 EDITION

Vol. 53, No. 1, July/August 2025

tyvoices



Eastern Townships Life & Culture:  
Past, Present, Future

PM 40016398



*Townships Sun*. Box 28, Lennoxville Post Office, Sherbrooke, QC J1M 1Z3  
 Office address: 3355 College St. (Lennoxville Borough), Sherbrooke, QC, J1M 0B8  
 Office 819-566-7424 [contact@TownshipsSun.ca](mailto:contact@TownshipsSun.ca)  
 Editor 819-640-1340 [editor@TownshipsSun.ca](mailto:editor@TownshipsSun.ca)  
 Advertising 819-658-2121 [TSunAdvert@gmail.com](mailto:TSunAdvert@gmail.com)

The *Townships Sun* is a magazine created by and for the community of the Eastern Townships, Quebec, Canada.  
 Our office is located on the traditional territory of the Abenaki people (the people of the rising sun).  
 We acknowledge their stewardship and appreciate that we are all guests on Abenaki Territory.

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## Passed memories, Past life

ON THE COVER



by Isabella Cliche



**Isabella Cliche** is 14 years old and lives in a house outside of Sherbrooke with her parents and four siblings. She loves creating art and listening to music, especially Stray Kids and Enhypen. She has two cats named Luna and Leo that she adores. She loves potatoes.

Dimensions: 8 ½" x 11"

Medium: acrylic paint

Year created: 2025

# That's a wrap!

With this issue now in your hands—and available in full colour digitally on our website—the 2025 edition of the Townships Young Voices contest has officially come to a close! None of this would have been possible without our incredible team of volunteers, our generous sponsors, and of course, the brave and creative young participants who shared their works of poetry, art, fiction, nonfiction and photography with us.

I am immensely impressed by the talent that I had the pleasure of including in these pages. You'll discover pieces that contrast sharply—and others that unexpectedly complement each other. Some artworks will feel like home. Some themes will challenge you, spark conversation, and shed light on topics we don't talk about nearly enough. Throughout, you'll hear the strong, honest, and essential voices of young people from all across the Townships.

I hope you enjoy this special edition—but more than that, I hope it inspires you to submit your own work for next year's contest; or maybe to encourage a child, grandchild, student, or young friend to share their voice. TYVoices 2026 will launch in September. Visit our website in July for details.

If you missed the Townships Young Voices Awards Gala, you can read about how we got here—and relive some highlights— by visiting the [Townships Young Voices page](#) of our website.

Thank you for reading, and stay tuned for what's next!



**Noëmi Blom** is a 6-foot-1-inch woman with Dutch roots, an avid reader, and a new mom. She studied Creative Writing & Publishing and works at Scholastic Canada as Sales Coordinator.

## ART - THIRD PLACE (TIED)

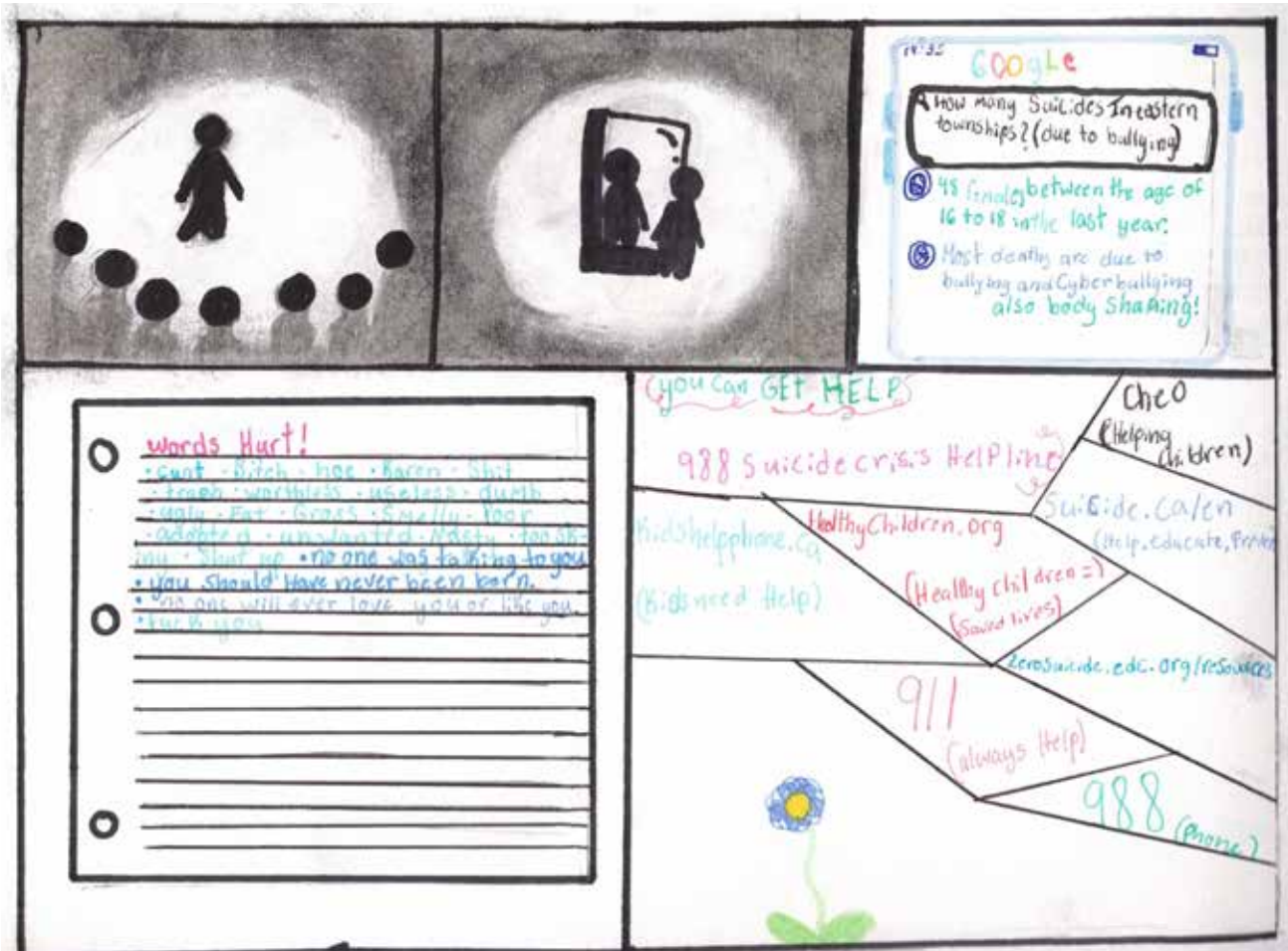
# Words Hurt!

by Rafaele Gosselin

Dimensions: 8 ½" x 11"  
Medium: pencil on paper



**Rafaele "Raf" Gosselin** is 12 years old, a baseball player, and a swimmer. Having been bullied in the past, she raises awareness by turning her experiences into artwork that addresses bullying head-on while offering helpful tips.



# The Sun's AGM, With Benefits



The *Townships Sun's* annual general meeting is the place to be on Saturday, September 27, 2025, from 3 to 5 p.m., at the historical Victoria Hall, 125 Principale West in Cookshire. Guests will get to learn about the *Sun's* trajectory over the past year and in the year to come. Subscribers will be invited to help plan that path by voting for the new board of directors.

But there's more.

Two bonuses will give the occasion added value. First, the *Townships Sun's* Communications Team headed by Noémi Blom will unveil the magazine's brand new

logo and branding package, giving it a new look to rhyme with the new content it had developed over the past few years.

At the same time, we'll have a close-up view of an important touring exhibition, "Where are the Children?" This exhibition by the Legacy of Hope Foundation explores the history and impacts of Canada's Residential School system through Survivor stories, archival photographs, and documents. At the Cookshire-Eaton Art Gallery until October 5, this is its only showing in the Eastern Townships.

That makes this an AGM with benefits!

COME SEE US!

## We're Coming Your Way

Our wonderfully handsome *Townships Sun* table is travelling across the Eastern Townships this summer, maybe to an event near you. Keep an eye on our blogspace at [TownshipsSun.ca](http://TownshipsSun.ca) or our Facebook page to find out where and when to find the smiling faces of our volunteers, pick up free past issues of the *Townships Sun* magazine, or give us feedback.

And sign up for a subscription, which now features 10 issues per year instead of 9, all for the same low price.

Also available is *The Eastern Townships Adventure* by Bernard Epps, an engaging and entertaining two-volume set (\$50 + 2.50 tax). "Get yours while supplies last! We will likely sell out this summer," noted Rachel Garber, editor of the *Townships Sun*.

BEST COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER PROMOTION – QCNA AWARDS

## First Place – Two Years in a Row!

A huge thank you to the [Quebec Community Newspaper Association \(QCNA\)](#) and Judge Ryan McDonald, senior editor at *The Globe and Mail*, for awarding *The Townships Sun* first place in the "Best Community Newspaper Promotion" category. We're especially honoured by the judge's comments:

"The *Townships Sun* has produced an incredible, community-focused, volunteer-driven historical record of five decades of Quebecers in the Eastern Townships. It's a vital and entertaining trip through a controversial period in Quebec history. The publication's goal – to unify English and French speakers – is more needed than ever."

A special shout-out to everyone who helped bring our 50th Anniversary Legacy Edition to life, and to the dedicated editorial team: Rachel Garber, Xania Keane, John Mackley, Melanie Cutting, and Marie Moliner – for their passion in preserving and celebrating 50 years of English-speaking history in the Eastern Townships.

We also want to recognize our outstanding competition:

- **Second Place:** [The Low Down to Hull and Back](#) – for its youth journalism collaboration with Carleton University, showing how newspapers can not only reflect a community, but help it thrive.

- **Third Place:** [Nunatsiaq News](#) – for its careful planning and meaningful partnerships, essential ingredients for community media success.



Myrthe Langeveld and Marie Moliner receiving award from QCNA's Ilka de Laat (Photo by Savanna O.)

We stand proud in honoring the communities that support us, sharing their stories in ways that truly matter to them.

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## Art

**Marie Moliner** returned to the Eastern Townships after four decades in Toronto, where she worked in the justice and arts sectors, focusing on how to engage youth in building their communities through the arts. She now volunteers for TYVoices, as Arts editor for the *Townships Sun*, and pounds clay into sculptures at the Rozynski Arts Centre in Ways Mills.



## Fiction

**Ross Murray** is a humourist, novelist and playwright living in Stanstead, Quebec. In 2023, he published his second novel, *Smileyville*, and directed his original comedy, *Bride of Memphre*, centred around the legendary creature of Lake Memphremagog. Ross is also the former owner/editor of *The Stanstead Journal* (RIP). By day, he is Director of Communications at Stanstead College.



## Nonfiction

**Rachel Garber** is editor-in-chief of the *Townships Sun*. Curiosity led her to study journalism (B.Sc. in Communications), art (BFA) and art therapy (MA). She has written for various media. “One of the greatest challenges of a community magazine editor,” she says, “is to find nonfiction writing that rises from the page to meet the mind of the reader, with insights relevant to our lives. Kudos to our young Townships writers who have responded to this challenge! Keep on writing! We need to hear your voices.”



## Photography

**John Mackley** received a Kodak Instamatic camera at the age of 12. He found the art, science, and creativity involved in photography fascinating. He had photos published in the school newspaper, sold photos of school activities to other students and produced hand-crafted books and magazines.

John has worked for professional photographers, trained in nature, portrait and wedding photography, darkroom production and special effects. He taught himself computer graphic design, videography and video editing.

John currently volunteers as an archivist for the Bury Historical and Heritage Society, Bury’s *IMAGE* Community Newspaper, and the *Townships Sun* magazine.



## Poetry

**Heather Davis** wrote poetry when she was little on her mother’s typewriter. Later on, she studied creative writing, including poetry, at UBC, and wrote poems with her own kid. Now she teaches poetry writing at Bishop’s University and the Université de Sherbrooke. She also loves picture books, which combine stories, poems, and pictures. She hopes some of her poems become songs.

# The Snowlands

by Micah Anderson Ward

One snowy night, there was a small band of kids playing out in the snow. The kids were all from the same school, one called Drummondville Elementary School, and had met up afterwards to build their snow forts. It was getting kind of late, but the kids' parents had all gone out and weren't back to pick them up. They built themselves a huge castle to protect their main base and constructed a magnificent tower of snow.

The kids were getting tired, but as soon as the time ticked to seven o'clock, the inside of the castle was imbued with a magical light, circulating around a mysterious blue circle that had appeared on the ground. The circle seemed to be decorated with runic writing, much to the childrens' confusion. The appointed "Chief" of their castle, Charlie, stepped forward.

"What is this thing?" he said, approaching the circle.

"I don't know," said the appointed "Chief's Assistant," Miles. "But it looks like some sort of portal."

The children all agreed that it was very mysterious, and they didn't want to go any closer to it. But because stories are never simple, one of the boys had to go and touch it, unacceptably. The only thing the others heard was a soft scream, and when they went to see him, nothing was left of the boy except a discarded winter glove and a renewed vigour in the glow of the circle.

"WHAT HAPPENED?!" the kids said in unison.

"I'm not sure," said one of the new kids to their school, Jade. "But that sure seemed dangerous!"

They all agreed that someone was going to have to go in after the lost child. The "chief tester," Leo, appointed himself as the one to do it. He slowly crouched down in front of the circle and reached one hand tentatively towards it. As soon as his fingertips touched the light, he disappeared with a flash.

The unrestful children waited for the two to come back, and they were rewarded with Leo (who went in purposely) popping out.

"You have to see this!" he exclaimed, diving right back into the circle.

Trusting their associate, the children followed suit and walked into the circle. They gasped in awe as they saw the magnificent world. It was a real-life winter wonderland, with snow everywhere, pillowy soft and perfect for packing.

"Sorry I took so long," Leo said. "It was just too amazing!"

"What do you mean?" said his best friend, the "chief builder," Nico.

"I was gone for hours!" said Leo.

The children were all confused about this time mix-up, but then one kid in the back of the group piped up.

"I know!" he said. He was the "chief miner," Daniel, also the smartest kid there. "It's a time-shift dimension, just like in all the stories! It makes the time different. For us, you were gone for nine seconds, but for you, you were gone for hours!"

He did some quick calculations and he surmised that the time difference was for every one hour there, it was three seconds for us.

The kids ventured into the world, and using the footprints in the snow, found the other kid. He had started building a snow fort, just like they had in their schoolyard. He shared with them that the snow was magical and could make some amazing structures easily.

Charlie set up their main base, and everyone decided to get to work. They soon built a magnificent village out of snow, and everyone lived there in the evenings. Then they went back to their own world. They say every evening the kids of DES gather at the school yard at 7 o'clock to go to their realm of magic.

"What should we call our kingdom?" asked the kids at a village council meeting. "I know what to call it," replied Miles. "This is the village of Snowfort."



**Micah Anderson Ward** is a 12-year-old who enjoys school and playing outside with his friends. He loves to hang out with animals and explore nature and is passionate about basketball, archery, guitar and speed cubing. Originally from Guelph, Ontario, Micah now lives in Drummondville, Quebec.



# Stopping Time

by Bryan Laprise



*Bryan Laprise accepts award at TYV Gala,  
April 6, 2025.*

**Bryan Laprise** was a 2023 Townships Young Voices winner in the nonfiction category and is interested in a wide array of topics. He uses literature and photography to express his thoughts, feelings, and opinions about the world.



# History + Creativity = Engaging Communities

by Laurie Ruel Duranleau

Led by director Cecilia Capocchi, the Société d'histoire de la Haute-Yamaska is fulfilling its potential by putting up free outdoor exhibits all over the city.

## What Society? Where?

Unknown by most, in 2023 the Haute-Yamaska historical society moved into the newly built MRC La Haute-Yamaska building at 143 Dufferin, Granby. It was previously located above Le Palace de Granby.

You can find the society by entering the side door of the building facing Park Victoria. The society actually only occupies a couple of rooms on the first floor because of how small they are. In fact, they only have three permanent employees, including Director Capocchi and an historian working from home.

## Historical Society? For What Use?

Some of you might be surprised by the wide range of services the society offers. Two of their most popular services are genealogy and map consultations. Through the local archives, users can look for various types of documents such as wills and testaments, wedding certificates, family trees, and also maps of their house plot, city, and region.

Because it owns both private and public archives, the historical society is a very interesting place for students and researchers to check out. It is important to note that the private archives are not available to the public and require a consultation request. The public ones are fully available to anybody.

## Active Around Town

The new location of the society has allowed them to improve their visibility, as their goal is to share regional culture and heritage. Working with local artists such as Jessica Ruel, they've been putting up small billboards in various parks, illustrating and sharing the importance of certain places by providing historical context.

Recently they've been commemorating the late Palmer Cox and his little "Brownies" who made it onto the world stage (see *Townships Sun*, Oct./Nov. 2022). Cox was from Granby, and his legacy includes the city's "Brownie Castle."

Last year, the Palmer Cox exhibit was available free to the public at the France Arbour Centre in Granby, celebrating the 100th anniversary of Cox's death.

"Billboards would encourage the local populace to reflect ... and provide an opportunity to raise awareness about local and cultural diversity," Béatrice Daudelin wrote on the *Maison de l'innovation sociale* website, emphasizing how pertinent this kind of work is.

Not only highlighting landmarks but also people and organizations, the society showed that local history is part of our daily lives and should not be forgotten.

## How to Take Part in Sharing Local History?

"Most Canadians trust museums and exhibitions more than books and teachers" (free translation), wrote Joan Sangster in *Histoire du Québec* (Vol. 22, No. 2, 2016). Simply visiting or taking interest in the society can help it grow; it shows people trust and are interested in the work the society is doing. Having the public's confidence helps the historical society grow and learn from the feedback people provide.

If you wish to push your actions further, you can always donate old photos or documents, and the society occasionally accepts objects. Such donations turn into useful primary sources that help make the content of exhibits more nostalgic and historically accurate.

Who knows, you might find your photographs in an exhibit in the historical district one day!



**Laurie Ruel Duranleau** is an entering student in the class of 2025-2028 at McGill University, hoping to earn a BA in Political Science and East Asian Studies. History is an ongoing passion of hers, from the Ancient Greeks to Genghis Khan and Emperor Hirohito; she believes history shapes today's world. Aside from academics, she represents Canada on the global stage as a goalkeeper for Canada's Senior Women's Beach Handball Team.

# Morning Fog

by Cecilia Neville



**Cecilia Neville** is a 15-year-old who loves to write songs, take photos, paint, and read novels.

# Windspeaker

by Sofia Thibault

I have something special. I have a superpower. I. Speak. Wind.

I have the gift of Wind, a language that was passed on from generation to generation, which means I speak the language of the wind. The first Winbell, Eleanor, had Aelfdene as a teacher. In her time, he was the master, but since he was killed by Dreco, he is not anymore. Dreco was the magician who wanted to have all the powers.

"Ingrid! Breakfast!" hollers my mother.

First day of school in the Eastern Townships. Here we go...

I rush down the stairs. I devour my pancakes and go to the garage to prepare my bag. I grab my earbuds and leave the house. I start walking to school while I place my earbuds in my ears and press "start" to my music.

Ten minutes later, I am almost there. I can see the roof of the school in the distance. The wind starts blowing. I can't hear because I have my headphones on.

"YYYY AAAHH!" A hand grabs my shoulder and spins me around.

I take my earbuds out and stuff them in my hoodie pockets quickly.

"*I tried to warn you, Ing!*" whistles the wind.

A lady in a magician's robe says in a harsh voice: "Come with me!"

"No way!" And I turn and start running as fast as my legs can carry me.

I do not get far before the red and purple magic envelops me and pulls me back in a vortex. A fraction of a second later I am in front of my new school. Everyone bows as if an emperor has arrived.

My instincts tell me to get free so I bite the mean lady behind me hard. She shrieks and lets me fall to the ground. I run to the school doors but they are locked.

"Wind, what should I do? Help me!"

"*I can't help you. You speak my language but the power is in you.*"

"Who is she actually? She has powers!"

"*She is Leina, Dreco's wife. She stayed alive with potions, I guess.*"

Oh no, I think. I run around the school to find something that can help me, but I can't. I soon realize I have to speak to Leina.

I walk to her and say, "Leina! What are you doing?"

"What do you think!? Steal powers. Revenge my husband, ya know... Everyday stuff," says the witch.

"Okay, why do you do all this? The school has nothing to do with this, neither do I!"

"Because I like playing with people's minds. But you... you don't know how Dreco died, do you?!"

"He died at the same time as Aelfdene. They battled and both died!"

"That's the baby story. Here is the real one: Eleanor was asked by Aelfdene to kill him and Dreco. Aelfdene was Dreco's brother. But they didn't like each other. Their mom knew they were not going to be friends, so a magic spell was put on them when they were young so they could not kill each other. But if someone killed Dreco, Aelfdene would also die and vice versa."

I'm stunned. My mind spins faster than a Formula 1.

Suddenly I feel a drain of energy. Leina's magic is draining mine!

"*Ingrid, you are powerful. No one knows but me. You are so powerful, you can take my emotions, force and everything and turn it to magic like hers,*" whispers the Wind.

"How... do I... do that?"

"*Feel my energy flow in you.*"

"I ..can't... do... this!"

"*Remember, quitters never win and winners never quit.*"

This gives me a boost of energy. Concentrating on myself, I close my eyes. Then I feel a weird texture in my hands. I open my eyes and see light blue energy dancing in my hands. I put my hands in front of me and imagine my magic going to Leina. I push my energy as hard as I can. My magic hits hers and – boom! – she explodes into a million sparkles.

The whole school starts cheering and clapping. They come to me and lift me in the air. It feels good.

# My Book of Stanstead

by Lila Mauduit

“ I wanted to bring together my hometown of Stanstead in the Eastern Townships and my love of reading. I decided to show an open book with all of the things that I think make Stanstead special coming out of it, including important buildings like the schools and the Haskell Library.



Dimensions: 11" x 8.5"

Medium: watercolour and pencil on paper

Year created: 2025



**Sofia Thibault** is a 6<sup>th</sup> grader at the Sherbrooke Elementary School who has three younger siblings, a cat, a dog, and a hermit crab. She has a passion for horseback riding, writing, reading, mountain biking and snowboarding. In the future, she wants to be a teacher.



**Lila Mauduit** is 11 years old and has been living in Stanstead since the age of 6 with her parents and little brother. She loves to create art, especially sketching with pencils. She spends a lot of time reading books and graphic novels, which are a big source of inspiration for her artwork.

by Sofia El Habachi

# LOVE-2024-camera



**Sofia El Habachi** is an 18-year-old from Sherbrooke.

After taking a photography class at Champlain College, she fell in love with the art form. Capturing moments and expressing creativity through photography has become a passion of hers and she is excited to pursue it further.

“ This portrait of this person waiting at a bus stop symbolizes the Eastern Townships’ evolving identity. Sherbrooke has always been a place where different people come together and build a strong community. It represents a future where diversity and tradition mix, making the Townships an even more welcoming place.

# As a Women

by Ada Aiken Beattie

As a women,  
I keep an eye on the man walking behind me on the sidewalk,  
I turn off my music,  
hearing his every step,  
listening when he gets closer,  
I speed up.

As a women,  
I only work out close to other women at the gym  
not because all men are dangerous,  
but because enough are.

As a women,  
I pretend to be on a call,  
when those footsteps get too close,  
being alone,  
feels too vulnerable.

As a women,  
I clutch my keys on late night walks,  
I keep my head up,  
Paying attention to what's around me,  
I need to be prepared.

As a women,  
I smile politely,  
even when I don't want to,  
because "no thanks" makes me feel guilty.

As a women,  
I grow up,  
taught to expect the "what if",  
to always be on guard,  
always be ready,  
not because I want to,  
because "what if" I'm not.



**Ada Aiken Beattie** grew up as the only girl in a house of boys. She observes the world around her, and learns from her experiences. Ada often reflects on how women and girls are seen and treated in today's society. In this poem Ada explores what it really means to be a woman in contrast to a man.

# Lac des Nations

by Agena-Loire Kwizera



**Agena-Loire Kwizera** always tries to enjoy the little moments of daily life that God allows her to have. She truly appreciates His work, such as nature and human beings, which are the two subjects that always inspire her creative work.



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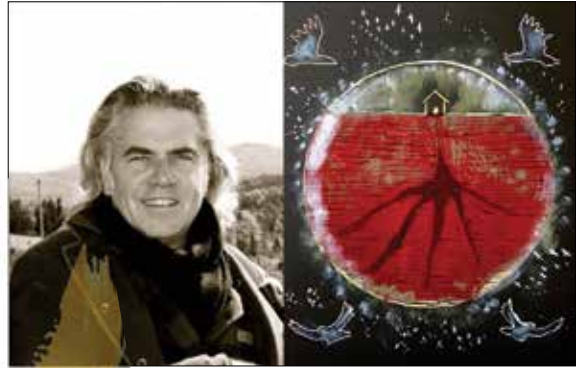
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# Moving Mountains

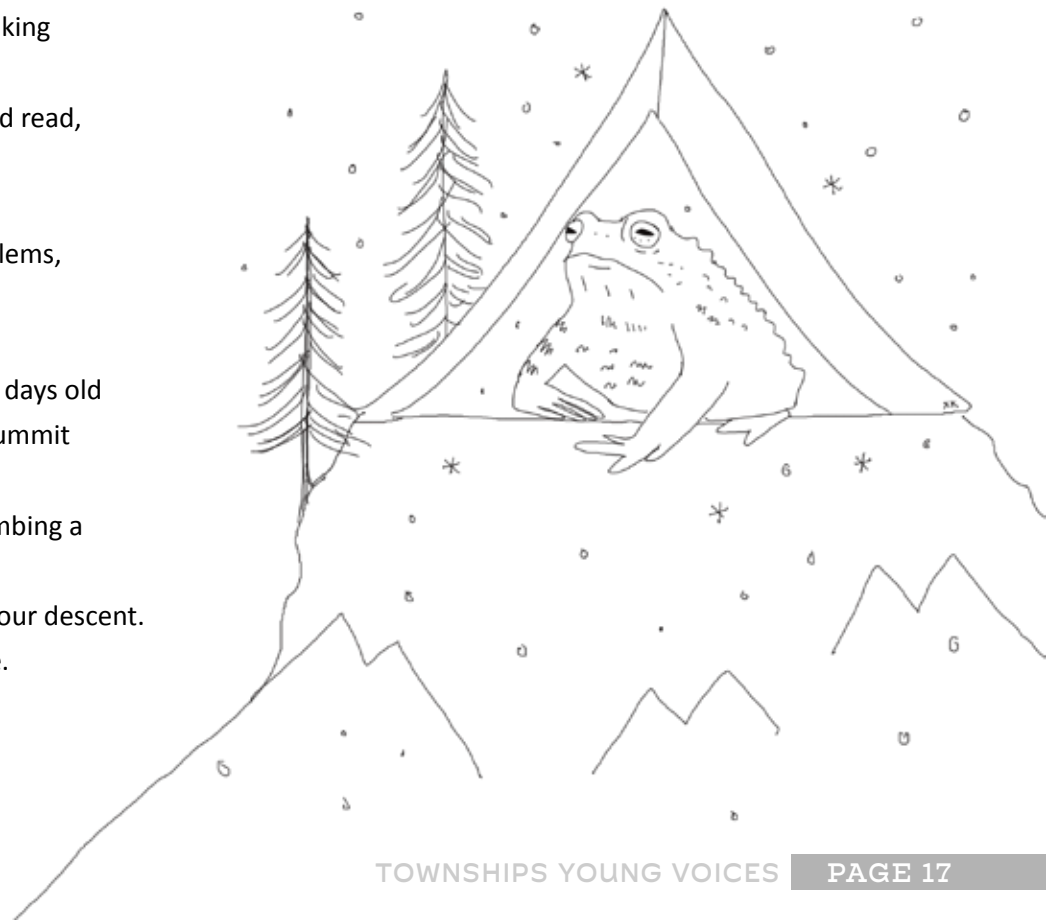
by Beatrice Lambie

Arriving at the mountain  
so huge, compared to my small body.  
I can see my sister and I  
goofing around in the snow  
as our parents get snow shoes  
and the sleds to pull our supplies.  
My endless whining begins as we trudge up the trail.  
I shudder at the memory of that hill,  
so steep and snow covered,  
our cabin feeling impossibly far away.  
sweat trickling down my neck,  
my toes frozen in my snowshoed boots.  
Finally, we make it to our warm shelter,  
my heart is filled with relief and accomplishment.  
I smell the wood stove burning;  
comforting and rustic.  
Over three days, we take turns hosting meals,  
and spend hours playing silly games.  
No matter the weather,  
everyone constantly wants to do more hiking  
and I hate it.  
All I want is to stay in my sleeping bag and read,  
but hiking almost always wins.  
On these treacherous escapades,  
my dad gives me complicated math problems,  
keeping my mind away from the hike  
and my mouth from complaining.  
By the time I calculate exactly how many days old  
everyone is we are usually close to the summit  
and if not, well,  
I can be mercurial when involuntarily climbing a  
mountain.  
We stop and eat lunch before beginning our descent.  
It is, quite literally, all downhill from here.

My family hasn't gone winter camping in a while,  
things come up and everyone is too busy.  
But when I think back and remember,  
I cannot help but smile  
I am so eager for this February.  
When we conquer the mountain once more,  
though the thought of hiking still makes me shudder,  
The memories are worth the climb.



**Beatrice Lambie** has loved reading and writing for as long as she can remember. She enjoys spending time with her family, snuggling on the couch with her cats, as well as watching and performing musical theatre. Beatrice has just graduated elementary school and is planning to attend AGRHS next fall.



# The Letter

by Johnny Beauvais

Dear old friend,

Hey man! It's been a while. I know we haven't talked in years. I don't know if you'll be willing to read this. Hell, I'm not even sure that I have the right address. But I wanted to take this chance to catch up!

How have you been? I stopped boxing some time ago. I was never really good at it anyway. Just needed to get my anger out I guess. I moved too. This city's way too quiet. Nothing like where we used to live. The air's cleaner or something. My neighbours are really friendly, except I think Carla's got some issues. Makes her really dramatic at times. But so do I, so I guess I don't have room to judge.

Writing about my new city's got me thinking, though. I suppose these thoughts are the very thing that compelled me to write this letter in the first place. Everything's so different. In a good way! I like it here, and it's not like I ever think of going back. But sometimes I miss it, y'know? So many bad memories. So many moments that hurt to think back on. Like my chest is closing in on itself. My brain becomes all foggy and if I don't do something to distract myself I start getting all emotional for some reason.

It doesn't make sense, right? I hate that place. I hate those people. Except for you and maybe Niki. Oh and Rob. I still see him from time to time. Maybe I should ask him how he's doing. Whatever, point is that I don't know why I feel like this. Do you ever feel the same? Like you want to go back? That place was awful. Every day was a fight to survive. Remember the jokes we used to make about how we were clearly somehow in hell? I told you if it ever came down to it, then to go on without me. You made a similar joke, I think, and then we laughed until we couldn't breathe.

Do you remember that? It feels weird thinking about it now that I'm out.

I think a piece of me is still there. Do you remember the hole you found me in that one time? The one just past the willow tree at the bottom of the hill? Yeah, I still wake up in there sometimes. I'll just be trying to get some sleep and BOOM. I'm there. Clawing my way out again. Staring up at the empty sky. Unlike the actual time, in my dreams you never end up showing up to help out. Makes me sad.

I shouldn't miss it. It was a terrible time in my life. But I think now, as I write this down, there is something I left behind back there that I want to go back to. All my memories of us together, being friends, standing side by side, back to back, they're all in that place. And it's not just you either, that's the most twisted part. I miss everyone, like, *everyone* everyone. All the memories and laughs. I miss the feeling of us being all together when everyone was still good in our eyes and happy and familiar and alive. The anger and passion of it all. And for all the wonderful things I get to experience now. The nice life I have where every day isn't so much of a struggle, where I don't have to fight anymore, the part of me I left in that place is still missing from it. You're still missing from it. It makes me sick.

Do you ever miss it? Even if it did suck? Even if we'd never go back? Sometimes I think I would, just to see everyone together again. Even if it wouldn't be the same. Then again, it was agonizing, so maybe I can just be glad it happened. Even if it did almost kill me.

Anyway, I hope you're doing good! Please write back if you can! Or don't. It's fine either way. I just needed to get this letter out.

Best wishes,

Your old friend



**Johnny Beauvais** is a 17-year-old writer living in Cowansville. As an artist, songwriter, and novelist, they believe that the stories we tell each other are important. Their work always aims to make the audience reflect and think, all while enjoying a good story.

# Home?!

by Milly Dziallas

I am new here. Never been here before, and never thought I would call it home.

I had seen it online, through pictures and calls, but couldn't quite grasp the idea where I would land. From one country to another, and not one different language, but two. Foreign people everywhere, but for them it was just me, the stranger.

Slowly adapting to this newly won life far away from home. The people I once did not know, now I can call family and hold them dear. How kind humans can be, now I am aware, and how greatly thankful I am.

Catching myself coming back from school and thinking I am home. And I am indeed home. Across the globe I found a lovely place where a part belongs to me. Interacting with cashiers, different teachers and friends. My friends, so warmhearted and nice to be around that I would like to put them in a box and take them home with me.

Home? Yes, the other one, the one on the other side of the ocean, the one with my family.

But do I have a family here? Well, I guess, then I have two. Being loved and appreciated by two families feels special.

One might think you would feel homesick and sad all the time. The answer is no, not all the time, and for me it was my community that granted me immunity to those feelings. I mostly experience joy and laughter.

Last week, it was the first week of snow. I looked out of the window and could see the earth being covered in a white coat. Everything was silent and I could not stop smiling, because of the fact that I was here and what it did to me and will continue to do. Being formed by your environment and contributing to your happiness and to those of others. This realization makes me happy and feels good.

Now I sit here in the park close by the water, watching the children playing tag in the snow, and couples taking a walk. The cold breeze makes my cheeks turn rosy, as I look up into the blue sky. I turn around as I hear my sister shout my name, laughing. I chuckle and think to myself: Here is a good place to be right now.

This will always stay in my mind. My memories are my treasures and even though I have to leave, my heart will stay forever.



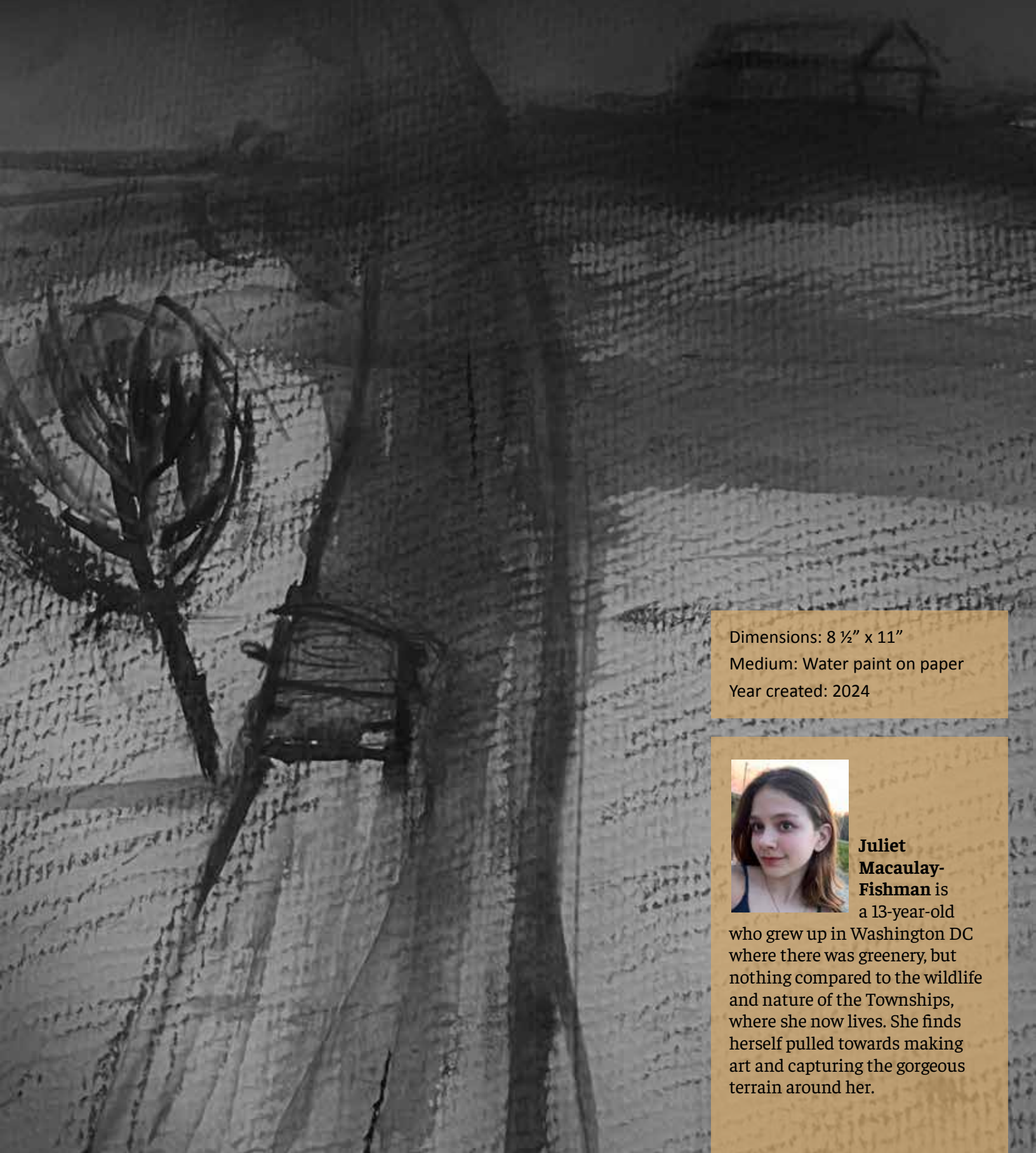
**Milly Dziallas** of Magog has just finished Secondary 4 as an international student from Germany at the Alexander Galt Regional High School. She has a strong interest in languages and language arts, and loves to read and write. She wrote "Home!?" in response to a writing prompt to "write about a time when you felt you really belonged in your community."



The winners of the 2025 edition of the Townships Young Voices contest.

# A Winter Night

by Juliet Macaulay-Fishman



Dimensions: 8 ½" x 11"

Medium: Water paint on paper

Year created: 2024



**Juliet  
Macaulay-  
Fishman** is  
a 13-year-old

who grew up in Washington DC where there was greenery, but nothing compared to the wildlife and nature of the Townships, where she now lives. She finds herself pulled towards making art and capturing the gorgeous terrain around her.

# The Summer Storm

by Avigaelle Court

Drip, drip, drip.  
Rain trickles gently down my umbrella.  
Splat, splat, splat.  
My rain boots splash through muddy puddles.  
Wriggle, inch, rest—  
Worms emerge, releasing the scent of damp earth.  
Plink, plink, plink, plink—  
Rain shatters with the sudden force of hitting the tin roofs,

Now past polite introductions.  
Rumble, pause, flash!  
Thunder crashes, and my heart quickens with the noise.  
Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh!  
The wind howls, tearing leaves from their home.  
Drip, splat, plop—rumble, whoosh, flash—  
The summer storm surges, and my feet move faster.  
Splash, splash, splash!  
My umbrella bends, useless against the dripping deluge and raging wind.

Slam! The door shuts behind me.  
Step, step, step—  
Silence.  
The storm rages outside, but I am warm, safe, and sheltered from the downpour.

Blow, rustle, sip.  
I cradle my mug, snuggle into my favorite book,  
and let the storm rage outside,  
A wild and beautiful world beyond my window.

Step, step, step, click,  
I stand on my porch.  
The storm leaves as it comes  
Drip, drip, drip.



**Avigaelle Court** lives in beautiful Moe's River with her parents and five sisters. She loves spending time looking after her many pigeons, cooking up new recipes for her family, reading, writing stories, knitting, and crocheting.





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# My Eastern Townships

 (Artwork on page 22)

by Sabrina Castonguay

*Any other place that I could have been born and raised in, and I would not have met the other two women in the piece. I never would have learnt to adore my home so much. I would not have laughed so hard. I can't imagine being anywhere else.*

Dimensions: 14" x 11"

Medium: Acrylic Paint

Year Created: 2024

**Sabrina Castonguay** is a 17-year-old who loves art of all forms. Painting is her favourite. When she paints, she stops thinking and feels fully relaxed.

# The Youngest Sibling

by Eleanor Dubeau

A world where I've been left out most of my life,  
Brothers always with their friends, partying or gaming.  
Getting yelled at when trying to hang out.  
Although through all the good and bad,  
I will forever have more incredible memories  
than horrible ones.

Will forever remember the time we jumped off the bridge into the pond, our screams echoing to the neighbors.

Will forever remember going four-wheeling and skidooing together.

Will forever remember going to the ocean and jumping the waves together.

Will forever remember going to the fairs.

Will forever remember throwing frogs at you all, seeing your faces ever so startled.

Will forever remember everything you have taught me.

I don't know who I would be without every one of you.

You who are the stars in the dark, who guide me  
through my passage into young adulthood.



**Eleanor Dubeau** is a 14-year-old student at Alexander Galt in the sports concentration program. She enjoys writing poetry because it allows her to express herself when she feels that she cannot do it out loud. She likes to share her writing with her friends and to give poems as gifts to the people she loves.



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# My Grandpa's Mill

by Stella Dubois

Near the St. Francis River, on the edge of town,  
Stands my grandpa's feed mill, the best around.  
The hum of machines, making the grain,  
To feed all sorts of animals, in sun or in rain.

The mill is old, it whispers and moans,  
It's the heart of our family, the place we call home.  
Familiar smiles greet me inside,  
My grandpa says, sweetie want to go for a ride?

We climb into the truck and rumble down the road,  
From farm to farm, lightening the load.  
We stop and chat and say hello,  
And soon pack up, more deliveries to go.

The truck is empty now, it's very nearly night,  
Down country roads, the mill is back in sight.  
We pull into the yard, a job well done,  
It's time we head home, like the setting sun.



**Stella Dubois** is a 13-year-old who lives in Richmond. She attends Richmond Regional High School, and her favourite things to do are playing soccer, flag football, reading, cooking, and spending time with her friends and family.



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# Healthcare Apartheid

Unmasking the inequities facing Indigenous communities in Quebec

by Gabrielle Bouchard

The inequities regarding Indigenous peoples are rooted in a history of colonialism leading to systemic racism.

The pervasive social and economic marginalization of these communities helps limit their access to healthcare, contribute to culturally insensitive care, and lead to poorer health outcomes compared to the privileged population. They are, indeed, exposed to high rates of health issues which create barriers built by a lack of staff and a lack of trust towards the medical system.

## Unhealthy Segregation

Indigenous peoples in Quebec have a life expectancy that is significantly lower than the non-Indigenous population. They also have higher rates of suicide among youth, cardiovascular diseases, and diabetes.

Why them, and why aren't they getting the treatments they need to live longer and healthier?

Does the name Joyce Echaquan ring a bell? She was an Atikamekw woman who experienced racism while getting care in a Quebec hospital. She never got out alive. The prejudices against Indigenous people were fatal for her and too many others.

"Unfortunately, many members of racialized communities have been victims of assumptions and racism and have been racialized in clinics, hospitals and even health professionals' education and training programs," wrote the College of Family Physicians of Canada in a statement following Echaquan's death.

Imagine, even young trainees, the future of medicine, are advocating disparities in the treatment they offer to our community, making the segregated ones question the liability of our system. How is it possible for them to get treated if, even in safe spaces such as hospitals, where lives are saved, theirs get taken away?

This is why they may be hesitant to go to facilities to get medical care and why they cannot trust the professionals. Hopefully, "since 2012, the College of Family Physicians of Canada and Indigenous Health Committee (IHC), has been actively exploring ways to address inequities in Indigenous health and social issues."

## A Promising Roadmap

To reduce the gap between the care provided to Indigenous persons and the rest of the population, some systemic changes have been made. To improve the accessibility of front-line services, "a first familial health clinic adapted to the needs of the Indigenous community has officially opened in Montreal," reported CTV News in April 2024.

This project will offer a chance to reverse the negative impacts experienced by generations. The general director of *Native Montreal*, Philippe Meilleur, told CTV News that "the negligence allowed horrible situations such as Joyce Echaquan's last minutes. These collective and intergenerational traumas dug a gap of doubt driving too often our people to dismiss the traditional structures of care."

The use of telehealth is also a solution to improve the accessibility of medical care and compensate for the lack of medical staff in northern regions, according to the McGill Newsroom.

In conclusion, as Quebecois, we need to keep the Indigenous peoples' misery in mind as motivation to start taking action as a nation to help the ones who taught us everything when we first landed here.

As Quebec's motto says, "I remember."



**Gabrielle Bouchard** is in her third year at the Cégep de Granby. She is a Health Sciences Student who is aspiring to become a doctor.

# tw'voices

## **Congratulations to all the winners**

Dustin – Ada Aiken Beattie – Micah Anderson Ward – Johnny Beauvais  
Gabrielle Bouchard – Sabrina Castonguay – Isabella Cliche – Avigaille Court  
Alicia Diaz-Pappas – Eleanor Dubeau – Stella Dubois – Milly Dziallas – Sofia El Habachi  
Rafaele Gosselin – Alais Heau – Agena-Loire Kwizera – Beatrice Lambie  
Bryan Laprise – Juliet Macaulay-Fishman – Lila Mauduit – Cecilia Neville  
Laurie Ruel Duranleau – Sofia Thibault

**18 Participating Schools**



Parkview Elementary School (Granby)	St-Francis Elementary School
Bishop's College School (Sherbrooke)	CEGEP de Granby
ETSB homeschooled students	Bishop's University
Sherbrooke Elementary School	Massey Vanier High School
Drummondville Elementary	Jardins des Frontières
Alexander Galt High School	La Ruche (Orford)
École secondaire Montessori Orford	Pond School, Sherbrooke CEGEP
Richmond Regional High School	Université de Sherbrooke
Champlain College	École de la Passerelle (Waterville)

## **Special thanks to the Townships Young Voices 2025 team**

Léa Côté, Xania Keane, Ana Martinez, & Marie Moliner

## **And all the pillars supporting them**

Noémi Blom, Robert Donachie, Dan Kirchin, Rachel Garber, John Mackley, Ross Murray,  
and the *Townships Sun* board of directors and volunteers!

# THANK YOU!



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ART - HONOURABLE MENTION

# View from my Hammock

by Alicia Diaz-Pappas



**Alicia Diaz-Pappas** is a 27-year-old gardener, seamstress, artist, and nature enthusiast who recently settled in the Eastern Townships. Having fallen in love with the region during family visits, she now draws inspiration from its vibrant landscapes. Alicia's art reflects her deep connection to nature, sustainability, and the joy of creating. You can follow her on Instagram by following [@lilis\\_art\\_gallery](https://www.instagram.com/lilis_art_gallery).

Dimensions: 5" x 6 ½"  
Medium: Acrylic on cardstock  
Year created: 2025

