



Townships Churches

- ▶ Church without Walls, by Carole Martignacco
- ▶ On The Rock and Racism, by Heather Darch
- ▶ Surviving Against the Odds, by Jody Robinson
- ▶ The Church & Counterfeiters, by Angela Leuck



Eastern Townships Life & Culture: Past, Present, Future

Vol. 50 No. 9 June 2023 \$2.50



The Townships Sun, Box 28, Lennoxville Post Office, Sherbrooke, QC J1M 1Z3
 Office located at: 3355 College St. (Lennoxville Borough), Sherbrooke, QC J1M 0B8
 Office 819-566-7424, contact@TownshipsSun.ca
 Editor 819-640-1340, editor@TownshipsSun.ca
 Advertising 819-644-0076, jene_brown@hotmail.com
 Website: TownshipsSun.ca

Publisher David Wright
Editor Rachel Garber
Assistant Editor Marie Moliner
Book Review Editor Angela Leuck
Poetry Editor Steve Luxton
Layout Design Melanie Cutting
Accounting Marion Greenlay
Advertising Jennifer Brown
Copy Editors Janet Angrave
 Melanie Cutting

Board of Directors
 David Wright, *Chair*
 Janet Angrave
 Jennifer Brown
 Melanie Cutting, *Secretary*
 Rachel Garber
 Angela Leuck
 Beverly Taber Smith
 Scott Stevenson

Photo: John Mackley



The Townships Sun Inc. is a non-profit volunteer organization that publishes the Townships Sun nine times a year. Our office is located on the Traditional and Unceded Territory of the Abenaki People. Member of: Quebec Community Newspapers Association (QCNA) and Canadian Advertising Rates & Data (CARD). Registered with La Bibliothèque Nationale du Québec. Publication Mail Agreement: #40016398. Printed by Imprimerie Blanchard Litho Inc. on 100 percent recycled paper made in Quebec. We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada, the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec, and the Ville de Sherbrooke, in the form of project and operations grants.



TownshipsSun.ca
 WEBSITE. Subscribe,
 contribute, learn more.



FACEBOOK page of
 Townships Sun. Daily
 community posts.



[Instagram.com/
 townshipssun.](https://www.instagram.com/townshipssun/)
 See what's new
 in our pages.



[Youtube.com/
 @Townships-Sun](https://www.youtube.com/@Townships-Sun)

Townships Young Voices: See What's Up!



On our website:
[TownshipsSun.ca/
 Townships-Young-Voices/](http://TownshipsSun.ca/Townships-Young-Voices/)



[Instagram.com/
 tyvoices/](https://www.instagram.com/tyvoices/)



[YouTube.com/
 @tyvoices](https://www.youtube.com/@tyvoices/)

Subscriptions, per year:

Print edition: In Canada, \$25. In U.S.A., \$30. (cover in colour; inside pages, black and white).

Electronic edition (PDF, full colour): \$15.
 Special package, both print and electronic versions (Canada or U.S.A.): \$30

(For payment by credit card: visit TownshipsSun.ca), phone 819-566-7424 or email contact@TownshipsSun.ca.

Mail: Send cheque, name, address & phone number to: Townships Sun, Box 28 (Lennoxville Post Office), Sherbrooke, QC J1M 1Z3

Single issues (\$2.50 each) at:

- Cookshire** Cookshire IGA
- Danville** Galerie Perkins
- Georgeville** Studio Georgeville
- Knowlton** Brome Lake Books
CIDI 99.1 FM
- Lennoxville** Black Cat Books
Clarke et fils
Pharmacie Jean Coutu
Familiprix
- Mansonville** Magasin Jewett's
(Vale Perkins)
- North Hatley** J.B. LeBaron
- Richmond** Papeterie 2000
- Sawyerville** Dépanneur C.P.L Lachance
- Stanstead** Boundary Bookstore
(Beebe)

On February 8, 2024, we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Townships Sun.

Our Contribution Guidelines are at TownshipsSun.ca/Submit.

Table of Contents

Editor's Note: Where are the People?
by R.A. Garber..... 5
Empty churches? How did it happen?

ETRC Townships History Quiz, by Jazmine Aldrich... 6
Three historical churches. Do you know them?

Townships Moon: Bambi and Thumper are Cartoons, by John Mackley 7
"Baby animals are cute for a reason."

Against the Odds, by Jody Robinson 8
How catastrophes hit seven Townships churches.

The Quaker Cupboard, by Mark Abley 10
Traces of Nicholas Austin, Quaker settler.

Church Without Walls, by Rev. Carole Martignacco. 11
A church is more than the sum of its parts.

In the Shadow of the Rock, by Heather Darch 12
Philipsburg Methodist, refuge for escaped slaves.

Cemeteries, and the Passing of Churches,
by John Mackley & R.A. Garber..... 14
Cherished memories, stark decisions.

Church, Counterfeiting, and Printmaking,
by Angela Leuck 16
Bernice Sorge and the church on Hudon Street.

La Desserte: Friendly, Feuilleté, by Marissa Tessier,
Dianne Prah, & Beverly Taber Smith..... 18
The taste of a family restaurant in Richmond.

From Church to "Neverwas," by Esther Saanum
(photos by Diana Callaway)..... 19
Choromondo is coming to Neverwas in Beebe.

Lennoxville's Three St. Anthony Churches
by Gérard Côté & Jean-Marie Dubois..... 20
One after another, from 1876 to 2011.

Meet Maurice J.O. Crossfield, Novelist,
by Angela Leuck 21
*From **The Granby Lier** to **Borderline Truths**.*

Stay Connected! by Anita Duwel 22
Community involvement has its rewards.

After Reading Thomas Gray's Great Elegy,
by Steve Luxton (photos by Diana Callaway) 23
Poem: Reflections on the residents in the St. James Anglican Cemetery in Hatley.

CORRECTION: In the May 2023 Table of Contents, we neglected to list "Farm Animals," artwork by Loose Canine (pseudonym of Alan MacIntyre) on page 13. Our apologies! For information, visit LooseCanine.com or Instagram: @loosecanine.

FRONT COVER

Moe's River Community Church. This painting by **Avigaille Court**, age 11, of Compton, Quebec, won honourable mention (Art) in the 2023 Young Townships Voices competition.

"This sweet little white church overlooking Moe's River is a place where families and friends have gathered for over 100 years. Growing up in Moe's River, I have always looked forward to the Strawberry Socials that are held there every summer and the Christmas Services every December. I often go walking with my family down to the river and we always take a moment to take in this historic building. It is a little piece of history that continues to draw people together, even generations later."

(Photo of Avigaille Court between the Awards Emcees Ross Murray and Abby Witcher, by John Mackley.)



Here's How to Subscribe...

Please check your choice of subscription (1 year):

Print..... (Canada, \$25) or (USA, \$30)

Electronic (PDF)..... (anywhere, \$15)

Both Print & PDF... (Canada, \$30) or (USA, \$35)

For renewals, please give your subscriber number.

♦ **To pay by credit card, visit:** TownshipsSun.ca

♦ **By cheque:** send name, address, postal code and payment to:

The Townships Sun
P.O. Box 28, Succ. Lennoxville
Sherbrooke, QC J1M 1Z3

♦ **Info:** 819-566-7424, contact@townshipssun.ca

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

_____ POSTAL CODE _____

EMAIL _____

PHONE NO. _____ PAYMENT \$ _____



KEVIN RUTHERFORD, CPA
General Manager
Directeur Général

www.proparinc.com

65, rue Winder
C.P. 148 Succ. Lennoxville
Sherbrooke QC J1M 1Z4
CANADA

Tel.: 819 566-8211
Cell.: 450 775-5566
Fax: 819 821-2513
krutherford@proparinc.com

ARLIE C. FEARON



(819) 562-3473

(819) 562-6996

1486 Wellington St.
Sherbrooke (QC) J1M 1K9

REFUSE REMOVAL / EXCAVATION / SNOW REMOVAL



Hon. Marie-Claude
Bibeau

DÉPUTÉE COMPTON • STANSTEAD M.P.
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

175 Queen Street Suite 204
Sherbrooke, Quebec J1M 1K1

info@mcbibeau.ca
819-347-2598

www.mcbibeau.ca

[mclauddebibeau](https://www.facebook.com/mclauddebibeau)




ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE DU QUÉBEC

WORKING TO MEET MY COMMITMENTS !

GENEVIÈVE HÉBERT
MNA FOR SAINT-FRANÇOIS
(BROMPTON, FLEURIMONT,
LENNOXVILLE - MRC DE COATICOOK)

819 565-3667
373, rue King Est, bur. 203-B
Sherbrooke, QC J1G 1B4
Genevieve.Hebert.SAFR@assnat.qc.ca



The Grand Lodge of Quebec
Freemasons
Ascot Lodge #30
Fraternity since 1867 in Lennoxville
3002 College, Sherbrooke, Quebec
Membership enquiries:
819-821-4959



Mental Health Estrie

- Peer Support Groups
- Information & Referral
- Lending Library
- Educational Workshops

Non-profit community organization committed to supporting English-Speaking families and individuals in Estrie impacted by mental illness

(819) 565-3777
info@mentalhealthestrie.com
www.mentalhealthestrie.com
3355 College, Sherbrooke (Lennoxville), QC




Where are the People?

by R.A. Garber

“Religious diversity had become a feature of the Eastern Townships,” wrote historian [Françoise Noël Smith](#) about the region’s churches of 1851.

The 1831 census showed churches of England, Scotland, and Rome; Congregationalists, Methodists, and Baptists. Twenty years later, the Townships population of 93,021 also counted Presbyterians, Universalists, Second Adventists, Unitarians and Quakers. Only 2,900 people, about 3 percent, did not belong to any religious group.

No mention was made of Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh, Indigenous, or other spiritual traditions that figure in today’s Townships, although people belonging to Christian groups are still in the majority.

Another difference is that more than a quarter of the Quebec population now claims no religious affiliation. Among those who do claim affiliation, many, especially younger people, said their beliefs were not important to how they lived. This was true of 62 per cent of those in their twenties and thirties ([Statistics Canada](#)).

The second verse of the finger play that Carole Martignacco mentions in her article on page 11 involves clasped hands, with fingers symbolizing people outside an empty church. The chant goes, “Here is the church, here is the steeple. Open the doors. Where are the people?”

Delving into the responses to that question would merit at least a whole issue of the *Townships Sun*. One place to look might be in spiritual communities whose members come together to meditate, chant, or practice yoga or tai chi. Their orientations vary. Some are Buddhist; others follow the Advaita (non-duality) tradition stemming from Hinduism. Yet others are “new age” or eclectic, seeking spiritual growth unfettered by the dogma and structure of organized religion. For some, Nature herself is the Sacred.

Another factor to explore is the exodus from the Catholic Church sparked by the 1960s’ Quiet Revolution in Quebec. Today, some assert that Quebec is [more irreligious than elsewhere in Canada](#). In public policy, it seems our



collective flight into secularism continues into the present: Witness legislation such as Bill 21, which suggests to me that Secularism has its own dogma and structure, or at least rules meant to protect our society’s secular nature.

The sea change away from church extends across Canada. But it may be that Quebec’s touted secularism is but a surface phenomenon: Only 27 per cent of Quebecers said they were “irreligious” in 2021 ([Canada Census](#)). This is lower than any other province besides Nunavut and Newfoundland-Labrador, and is less than half the rate of Yukon respondents (60 per cent).



Elemental Connection by **Emily Callalily** (11 x 14 in., coloured pencils, acrylic paint and oil pastels on paper) won First Prize (Art) in the 2023 Townships Young Voices competition. “This drawing symbolizes the connection we are able to create with the elements, the earth beneath our feet and every being with whom we share this planet,” she wrote.

A new study by [Université de Montréal anthropologists](#) identified a wide plurality of religious groups in various areas of Quebec, including the Eastern Townships. The authors noted that some groups or their members are secretive about their beliefs in order to avoid conflict or discrimination.

In the Sherbrooke area, they counted 116 places of worship, of which 34 were Catholic and 43 were Protestant, including Latin-American Mennonite and Syrian Orthodox churches, and evangelical Christians such as Pentecostals. Other religions accounted for 39 places of worship.

Where are the people? It sounds to me as if they are exploring. People have moved from rural to urban areas, from Quebec to provinces with English-speaking majorities, and from traditional belief-systems into a search for personal meaning.

English speakers in our region now need to find creative responses to a new question: What do we do with our empty churches?



Emily Callalily, age 24, is a self-taught artist from Sherbrooke. Incorporating her love of nature into her day-to-day art practice has brought her closer to eco-friendly art and artisanal creations. She now creates with nature itself, natural pigments, recycled materials and home-made paper.

(Photo: Sylvain Robert)

ETRC Townships History Quiz

by Jazmine Aldrich

Photo credit: p999 Eastern Townships Resource Centre Postcard Collection)



Question 1. This church was built in 1866, first serving the Congregationalists and later, the United Church congregation of a certain Eastern Townships village. Throughout its existence, it also served as a dance hall. The church closed in 1971 but was purchased by the Township in 1988 and renovated to serve as the town hall. Where is this building located?

- A- Georgeville C- Ogden
- B- Fitch Bay D- Stanstead

Question 2. The converted church located at the intersection of Brooks and Aberdeen streets in Sherbrooke – which now houses a rock-climbing gym – formerly served which Christian denomination?

- A- Anglican C- Presbyterian
- B- United D- Catholic

Question 3. The Barnston Baptist Church was built in 1837 and recognized as a heritage building in 2004. Which local family donated the land on which the church was built?

- A- Cushing C- Buckland
- B- Baldwin D- May



Jazmine Aldrich is head archivist at the Eastern Townships Resource Centre. She has also worked with other archival organizations in Quebec and Ontario.

Answers: Page 17

Gripe! Gripe! Gripe!

Do you have a pet peeve or a serious complaint? It might merit a **Townships Moon!** Please email John Mackley at: editor@townshipssun.ca



The only locally produced English-language broadcaster covering the Townships

88.9 FM

Local news, weather and timely interviews plus all the new hits you love: **the Qube is your home on the FM dial!**



- Wholesale & Retail Service • Home Cured Ham
- Home Made Cold Cuts • Smoked Meat
- Meat for Freezer

83 COVEY HILL, HEMMINGFORD, QC J0L 1H0
TEL.: (450) 247-2130 TEL.: (450) 247 - 3561





Bambi and Thumper are Cartoons

by John Mackley

June is a major month for wildlife to procreate. In most areas, long June days are mild and conducive to the survival of newborns, and forage for mothers and offspring is at its most abundant.

Baby animals are cute for a reason. One scientific theory is that some predators may, in certain circumstances, be somewhat less likely to target adorable babies, increasing their chances of surviving the most fragile and vulnerable stage of their lives.

Cute young wildlife—baby bunnies, for example—can present a nearly irresistible temptation to scoop them up and cuddle them. You see a small quivering creature hiding in the grass, and think they must have been abandoned by their mother, or that their mother has been killed by a car or a predator. Baby animal “cuteness” engenders an outpouring of compassion; it’s only natural.

“If you care, leave them there!”

That sounds like a slogan, but abundant truth lies

in it. Nature and wildlife organizations and government experts all speak with one voice when it comes to what concerned citizens should do when they come across a newborn fawn, bunny, fox kit, or other species.

If they are not in immediate harm’s way, such as on a road or in the path of active farm equipment, just leave them be. Their mother is likely not far, just waiting for you to leave. DO NOT pick them up or take them home! Your well intended intervention can easily cause more harm than good, and you or your children could be injured or exposed to diseases such as rabies.

It truly is as simple as that. Let nature take its course.



If, by chance, any animal is injured or in imminent danger of injury or death, contact SOS Poaching—Wildlife Emergency at 1-800-463-2191.

John Mackley lives, loves, laughs, and writes in the Eastern Townships.



Offering a full continuum of care including Assisted Living, Full Nursing Care, and Memory Care (Dementia & Alzheimer’s), as well as Convalescence and Respite Care.



We would love to speak with you about how you can make Grace Village your home.

(819) 569 - 0546 x2120
admissions@masscom.ca

Sherbrooke, QC • www.gracevillage.ca

Against the Odds

by Jody Robinson

1. Centenary United Church (Stanstead, Quebec)

On the afternoon of May 19, 1883, Stanstead Methodist Church was up in flames as the fire brigades from Stanstead, Rock Island, and Derby Line fought to save the beautiful granite building. Thought to have originated from a torch that was being used to complete some repairs, the fire won the battle. The building was nearly a total loss.

The congregation rallied and the church was reconstructed in record time. A reported 800 people attended the reopening service on August 3, 1884. The reconstruction largely followed the specifications of the original building, dating from 1866 when the cornerstone was laid on land donated by Carlos Pierce.

In 1904, Stanstead Methodist Church was renamed Centenary Methodist on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the St. Francis Circuit of the New England Methodist Church. Centenary joined the union of Methodist, Congregational, and Presbyterian Churches in 1925 and subsequently became the Centenary United Church. Although the church was closed in 2018, this striking church is well worth a visit.



1. Centenary United Church after the fire in 1883 (ETRC, UC011 Centenary United Church fonds)

2. Philipsburg United Church (Philipsburg, Quebec)

As the oldest Methodist church in the Eastern Townships, Philipsburg United Church is a gem in many ways. Constructed in 1819-1821, the church was built using Philipsburg marble. This gives it a distinct appearance, when combined with its simple rectangular structure and a large Palladian window. Tradition holds that the marble was plastered over during the 1837-1838 Rebellions to protect it from damage.

The church underwent extensive renovation in about 1900-1905 but has remained largely unchanged since. The final service was in 2016, but the Philipsburg United Church has stood proud for more than 200 years.



2. Philipsburg United Church, ca. 1910 (ETRC, P058 Herbert Derick collection)

3. Church of Saint John the Divine (Thetford Mines, Quebec)

The Church of Saint John the Divine in Thetford Mines has gone through a few iterations in its 130-year history. The present church building, built in 1955-1956, stands at the corner of Mooney and Alfred streets, but the earlier church was situated on Victoria Street. The prior Saint John the Divine building, pictured here, stood from 1914 to 1956, when it was torn down to make way for the expanding Johnson's open-pit asbestos mine.

While this Anglican Church, along with the United Church, were torn down and rebuilt, the company lifted and moved an impressive number of private homes. In a town where the asbestos mining industry reigned supreme, it is not surprising that some sacrifices had to be made in the name of progress.

4. Sisco Memorial United Church (Coaticook, Quebec)

The present-day building of Sisco Memorial United Church now serves as the *Pavillon des arts et de la culture de Coaticook*. It was constructed in 1923, following a fire that destroyed the second Methodist church building, pictured here, along with a swath of other buildings in Coaticook's town centre. The church was rebuilt and dedicated by the end of 1923.



3. Church of St. John the Divine, with Rector Canon M. Seeley, in Thetford Mines, ca. 1955. (Quebec Diocesan Archives)



4. Second Coaticook Methodist Church, ca. 1885 (ETRC, P020 E.T. Heritage Foundation Collection)

Coaticook Methodist joined the Union in 1925, becoming Coaticook United Church until 1956 when it was renamed in honour of Gordon Sisco, a long-time active member of the congregation. This church no longer serves a religious vocation, but its repurposing permits its history to live on through the Pavillon.

5. St. James' Anglican Church (Saint-Jacques-de-Leeds, Quebec)

Built in 1831, St. James' Anglican Church in Leeds is one of the oldest Anglican churches still standing in Eastern Townships. In the history of the Anglican Diocese of Quebec, which admittedly only covers a portion of the Townships, St. James' of Leeds is second only to another St. James'—the one in Hatley. At the time of its construction, the St. James' Church was the only Protestant church for miles around, and served an important role in the lives of early settlers.



5. St. James' Anglican Church in Leeds (ETRC, P020 E.T. Heritage Foundation Collection)

Canon H. Brazel wrote that local tradition attributed the building's staying power to its construction on sandy soil. Whatever the reason, this scenic church is now a heritage site in Saint-Jacques-de-Leeds.

6. Richmond-Melbourne United Church (Richmond, Quebec)

As those living along the St. Francis River well know, floods are fairly regular events. Seen here is the College Street United Church during a flood on April 7, 1928, when the water was around three feet high alongside the church. It is not, however, the church you will find if you go searching for the Richmond-Melbourne United Church.



6. College Street United Church under water, 1928 (ETRC, P998 ETRC Graphic Materials collection)

The Richmond and Melbourne areas abounded with Protestant churches by the turn of the 20th century. When many became United churches in 1925, it became necessary to work together in new ways. The College Street United Church (originally Methodist), Melbourne United Church (originally Methodist), and, eventually, the Chalmers United Church (originally Presbyterian) amalgamated, becoming the Richmond-Melbourne United Church.

For a time, all three churches maintained their original buildings and rotated the location of their services, but eventually the College Street church was sold. Today, the building at the corner of College and Carpenter streets houses the Royal Canadian Legion and Lions Club. Chalmers United Church on Principale Street remains part of the Richmond-Melbourne Pastoral Charge.

7. St. John's Anglican Church (Gallup Hill, Quebec)



7. St. John's Anglican Church and hall in Gallup Hill, ca 1900 (ETRC, P020 E.T. Heritage Foundation Collection)

St. John's Anglican Church at Gallup Hill, near Melbourne, is no longer standing. Or, at least, the third and final church building is no more. The second church, seen in the photo here along with horse stables and hall, was deconsecrated in 1950 and moved from Gallup Hill, becoming the Lennoxville Pentecostal Church. A heavily altered version of the building can still be seen on Queen Street in Lennoxville. St. John's Cemetery on Coddington Road remains a testament to the old Gallup Hill community.



Jody Robinson is Executive Director of the Eastern Townships Resource Centre. She also works with a number of historical societies across the Townships.

The Quaker Cupboard

by Mark Abley

They didn't have churches; they had meeting houses.

"It was opened in me, that God, who made the world, did not dwell in temples made with hands." So wrote George Fox, the Englishman who founded the Society of Friends (Quakers) in the 17th century.

In the mid-19th century, Quakers were one of the smaller religious groups in the Eastern Townships, and their East Farnham meeting house closed its doors in 1902. But they left a treasure that is now in the Lac-Brome Museum: an old wooden cupboard full of books.

The little library was chosen to be Object No. 17 in the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network's "Identity of English-speaking Quebec in 100 Objects." Mark Abley's article (excerpted by permission) on the 100 Objects website explains its significance:

During the American Revolutionary War, many Quakers refused to bear arms and suffered persecution as a result. Some moved to Upper Canada, and a few journeyed north from Vermont into the newly surveyed lands of the Eastern Townships.

The first Quaker settler in Quebec, Nicholas Austin, homesteaded on the west side of Lake Memphremagog in the 1790s; the municipality of Austin is named after him. A larger number followed Gideon Bull, the descendant of a distinguished Quaker family, who left the United States with his wife and children in 1800.

The group began to coalesce after 1814, when Bull's son Aaron married a Vermont Quaker named Philadelphia Knowles. Of its fourteen founders, seven were women. Unlike most religious denominations, the Quakers accepted women as equal to men in intelligence and equally likely to be "moved by the spirit" and testify or preach in their gatherings.

In 1823, by now recognized as an independent congregation, they built a log cabin at Allen's Corner—or, as it would later be called, East Farnham, about halfway between Granby and the US border. The cabin was their first meeting house. It burned down in 1831 and was replaced by another, slightly larger building on a hill.

Slavery was the momentous debate of the age, and most Quakers were strong abolitionists. The group who settled around East Farnham, like the friends they had

left behind in Vermont, played an active role in the "underground railway" movement that gave escaped slaves the chance to live as free men and women outside the United States (slavery had been abolished throughout the British Empire decades before the US Civil War). The East Farnham congregation sent money to the Quakers' "Negro and Aborigines' Fund," which supported a school for black children in what would become Ontario. One of the meeting house's members, Edward Williams, was himself black.

In East Farnham, members began to create a local Quaker library in 1830. Among its first holdings were the meeting records for Quaker congregations in New York and London. It was an age when rural illiteracy was commonplace, yet the Quebec meeting house had a decidedly literary flavour.

Susannah Norris and Sarah Stevens published their poetry. Drusilla Knowles and her husband left their children in the care of friends and embarked on two years of missionary work, seeking to convert Indians in the southern United States; when they returned, they wrote an account of their travels. Perhaps the most remarkable member of the congregation was Mary Bull Barton, who ran the family farm for her irresponsible husband, raised six children, taught school, earned money by her sewing—and, as if all that weren't enough, bought a small printing press on which she published poems, including some of her own.

Abley's article describes the changes that led to the demolition of the meeting house shortly after the turn of the century, and concludes, "nothing remained in the area but a few small Quaker cemeteries; that, and the legacy of a free-thinking, independent faith, embodied by a cupboard full of books."

Mark Abley was born in England, grew up in western Canada, and has lived in the Montreal area since 1983. A Rhodes Scholar and a Guggenheim Fellow, he has written or edited more than a dozen books of poetry and prose. His most recent book is a travel memoir, **Strange Bewildering Time**.



Abley's complete article, "Quaker Library," and his sources are at 100objects.qahn.org.



Quaker Cupboard and Library from East Farnham, in the Lac-Brome Museum and on the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network's website, 100objects.qahn.org. (Photo: R.A. Garber)

Church Without Walls

by Rev. Carole Martignacco

What is church? Does the word evoke images of a building or a gathered community? What is “liturgy”—is it meetings and events taking place within its walls, or the work of the people?

In my lifetime I’ve known many churches. Except for a period of religious wandering in the proverbial discernment desert, some form of church has featured in my life since childhood. In our traditional Catholic family, the central event of our week happened on Sunday. Ours was a rural start-up parish; a small number of households gathered and grew into a larger space.

My parents were among the elders who purchased the cement foundation of a failed commercial building project. There was no steeple. The stairs led downward not upward, and needless to say, the basement had no stained glass windows. Driving to church, it was certainly never the building we were going for. Rather, it was for the weekly ritual that kept us centered on the sacred. We children in the backseat often practiced a finger play you might recognize, interlocking fingers and chanting: “Here’s the church. Here’s the steeple. Open the doors. And see all the people.”

My experience of “church” from both sides of the pulpit tells me church is not just the building, the people, and the work, whether ritual or outreach. It’s something beyond all that, a vision that’s a kind of gestalt effect. It’s something more than the sum of its parts: the “spirit” or soul energy generated whenever good people gather. The very sacred thing that drew me into ministry.

After decades serving the church as a volunteer, youth counselor, religious educator, then pastor, what’s interesting to me now in that finger play is how the people never left the church. When the “doors” opened, the fingers representing the people remained. My hope is that the church of the future will move beyond the confines of walls, that the people will disperse among the community to actively engage in doing justice.

That is not to say the building is not important. A community needs a place to gather. One small church I served felt blessed to still have a building to offer as sanctuary when refugees suddenly appeared at their door. Yet it’s not uncommon these days for our churches to struggle. We drive through the countryside and see once beautiful church buildings abandoned, standing alone if not neglected.

Declining church membership is a notable trend all over North America. Many of these buildings are historic treasures, handed down through generations. With changing culture and demographics, dwindling congregations struggle to support their existence. Yet when maintaining a building becomes its core *raison d’être*, the church risks becoming a museum. In order to survive, the people may need to carry their vision out beyond its walls.

In a process similar to personal grief and loss, whenever maintaining a physical building becomes unsustainable, the people of the church may need to reinvent themselves. We may be losing our church buildings, but I cannot believe we’ve somehow outgrown our need for what church, at its most prophetic, can provide.

Ringling like steeple bells in my mind as I write is an old quote from Walter Brueggemann, scholar and teacher: “The prophetic tasks of the church are to tell the truth in a society that lives in illusion, grieve in a society that practices denial, and express hope in a society that lives in despair.”

Illusion; denial; despair: That sounds like our world of today. If church is to fulfill its vocation, it must evolve to meet the needs of our times. Imagine with me a church without walls, with permeable boundaries integral to the surrounding community. Not separate or exclusive, but interdependent, doing the heaving lifting of justice, rubbing shoulders with neighbouring faith traditions. Such a “church” would exist to remind us of our common human goodness, celebrating the sacred dimensions of this miraculous life we share.

My vision of church is a laboratory for justice, the beloved community practicing the peace and justice we long for, bringing it out into the world. We may learn to live without the stained glass and the altars, or the weekly donation boxes reminding us to tangibly support our values. In these chaotic times, I believe we still need some reminders to do the soul work, some way of raising our voices to sing as one together.



*The Reverend Carole Martignacco is a retired Unitarian Universalist minister; author of the award-winning origin myth, **The Everything Seed**; a newspaper columnist; a poet and a teacher.*

In the Shadow of the Rock

by Heather Darch



Le Rocher du repos des Noirs marks the site of a burial ground for Black persons in St-Armand, Quebec. (Photo: Thomas Gasser/Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network)

A large black limestone rock historically known as “N----- Rock” is located on the property first owned by Loyalist Philip Luke (1753-1824) in the former seigneurie of St. Armand, Quebec. The Rock, officially designated *Le Rocher du repos des Noirs* by *La commission de toponymie du Québec* in 2016, has come to represent an important period of Black history in the province.

It was given its first designation in the 19th century and is believed to be the burying ground for “a little company of black men and women who lived and died on Canadian territory” (Struthers, 1908-1909). While the graves have disappeared as a result of natural decomposition and field cultivation, the Rock has remained a natural monument to honour the erstwhile Black community around Missisquoi Bay.

For some time, information surrounding the site was emotionally contested. At the height of the agitation between 1997 and 2004, some believed that Missisquoi County had been home to over 280 enslaved Black people (townshippersheritage.com). Citing the 1852 Canadian Census, which has many data collection inaccuracies, and ignoring the evidence of slavery’s termination in Quebec prior to 1800, plus the “Slavery Abolition Act” of 1834, the theory of this slave population in Missisquoi gained traction. It was speculated that Philip Luke owned a sizable

number of slaves for his potash business. It was purported that up to 300 slaves were buried in the shadow of the stone outcropping ([Claude Marcil, le-kiosquemedia.com](http://ClaudeMarcil.lekiosquemedia.com)).

Those who professed to be uncovering the buried past of Blacks in Missisquoi have, regrettably, invented more than they have discovered. Inventions included stories of St. Armand being founded by Black Loyalists fleeing the American Revolution, and slaves hiding in a cave near the Methodist Church. It has even been suggested ringing the church bells warned citizens of strangers who were “often slave catchers.”

In response to these claims, historians now agree that the Philipsburg Methodist Church (1819), with its abolitionist congregation, was indeed a refuge for escaped slaves on the Underground Railroad. The congregants, however, would have housed any escaped slaves in their own homes, not in a cave. The busy wharf at Philipsburg, where timber and other goods were transported on barges down Lake Champlain, was regularly filled with unknown dealers. Church bells, which did not actually exist in the three churches at the time, would have annoyingly and repeatedly sounded for stranger-danger.

The truth is far more interesting.

Beyond studies devoted to Black history, Blacks are largely absent from Canada's historical literature. As historian Frank Mackey wrote in his book *Done with Slavery: The Black Fact in Montreal 1760-1840*, "It's not that they have been airbrushed out of the grand panorama: they were never included to begin with."

As a Black man, teacher Hank Avery in Bedford, Quebec, understood this reality. His efforts to commemorate the site resulted in a municipal acknowledgement of the Black presence in Missisquoi and raised awareness about the history of slavery in Quebec ([Maurice Crossfield, Quebec Heritage News, May 2002](#)).

Since then, scholarly research of the Black experience has now permitted measured and open discussions about the persistent racism which clouds the past, as well as the narration around the relatively obscure but fascinating history of Missisquoi's small and *free* community of Black people.

The Reverend Charles Caleb Cotton (1775-1848), who had relocated from South Carolina to Missisquoi Bay and had hoped for slaves to build his house, wrote in 1810, "here one but seldom sees a Negro, and the few there are, are free men" (Cotton, Letters 1970-1847). Despite the assertion that Philip Luke inherited enslaved people from his mother's estate and brought them from New York, the only documented reference uncovered to date about an actual slave in the community is from the [Last Will and Testament of Loyalist Jacob Best](#) (1716-1795), who did not give Cato Giles his freedom before he died.

In 1809, an emancipated Cato and his wife Hannah Moul and their daughters stood before the Reverend Charles James Stewart (1775-1837), one of Quebec's leading abolitionists, and were [baptized into his Philipsburg congregation](#).

Quebec's Black history is much richer, more complex than first imagined.

While Luke's involvement in slavery remains undocumented, we know his commanding officer, Sir John Johnson (1741-1830), brought 14 slaves with him to Quebec and helped to transfer 50 others who belonged to his soldiers in the "King's Royal Regiment of New York." He returned them to their owners or sold them in Montreal. Luke's name is not included in the transfers ([T. Watson Smith, in *The Slave in Canada*](#)).

In fact, Black people are seen in his store ledger (1786-1838) as well as in Loyalist Philip Ruiters'

store ledgers (1799-1811), working, bartering, and being paid for their labour (Luke, Philip). Cato and Hannah, Flavia, Lucia, Morris Emery, Hannah Caesar, Salla, Joel, Jack, Ernest, John, and Thomas and Justus Billings are the names of free Black people living and working on their own terms in the seigneurie of St. Armand prior to 1834 (Ruiters, Philip).

We can see that Morris was a musician, Flavia and Lucia were independent field workers, John was a potter, and Justus Billings was a "yeoman proprietor" who served in the local militia and voted in three elections. We also know that Hannah Caesar was married to Morris, had a son named Zephaniah, and wore red leather shoes when she voted in 1820!

The practice of slavery was not uniform in Quebec, nor was the experience of freedom. Unfortunately, we remain anchored in the pervasive fiction that Canada never participated in transatlantic slavery, and we struggle to comprehend the [persistence of systemic anti-Black racism in our history](#). The individuals living at Missisquoi Bay were generally identified by their first names and often by their skin colour, an indication that although free, they were not considered equal to their white neighbours.

We know so little about the Black people of Missisquoi Bay and yet there they were, like Cato, Morris and Hannah with her red shoes. Quebec's Black history is much richer and more complex than first imagined. Today, *Le Rocher du repos des Noirs* is a place of reflection and memory, and a symbol of the important presence of Blacks in Quebec's past.



Heather Darch is a project director for the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network. She is the former curator of the Missisquoi Museum, a heritage consultant and a regular contributor to Quebec Heritage News and the Townships' news magazine, Le Tour.

Sources

Cotton, Reverend Charles Caleb. *Letters 1790-1847*. Missisquoi Historical Society Collections.

Struthers, Irving E. (1908-1909). "St. Armand Negro Burying Ground," in *Fourth Annual Report of the Missisquoi Historical Society*, pp. 62-63.

Luke, Philip. *Ledger 1786-1838*, Missisquoi Historical Society Collections.

Mackey, Frank. *Done with Slavery: The Black Fact in Montreal 1760-1840*, McGill-Queens University Press, 2010.

Ruiters, Philip. *Ledgers 1799-1811*, Private collection. Courtesy: Phyllis Montgomery.

Cemeteries, and the Passing of Churches

by John Mackley & R.A. Garber

From the early days of European settlement, churches and cathedrals have dotted the Eastern Townships landscape with their heavenward yearning spires. Communities congregated around them, and so did cemeteries.

Today, population mobility and the diversity of community and cultural organizations have greatly changed our sense of community. Church attendance has declined sharply across Canada, and many rural churches are now empty shells. In 2019, an [audit published by the National Trust of](#)

[Canada](#) counted 27,601 churches, mosques, synagogues, and other buildings “for worship” in Canada, predicting up to 9,000 of them would be lost within the next decade.

We are in the midst of that decade. Still, Eastern Townships is blessed with charming churches, some of great beauty. [Tourism Eastern Townships](#) is not shy to promote them for “religious tourism.” Historical societies seem to adore their stories. Until 2019, the Bury Historical & Heritage Society (BHHS) organized an annual “Church Heritage Tour” of 13 churches in the Bury, Cookshire-Eaton, and St. Isidore areas. A standing-room-only audience in the Austin Church recently heard Serge Wagner of Austin’s *Comité du Patrimoine* speak about “conflicts between three Protestant denominations until conversion to the Catholic Church. And the architectural jewels of the church.”

What about those who still frequent our churches? Often, they face stark decisions about deteriorating church buildings, filled with community and family histories. Cherished memories. Cemeteries containing the remains of loved ones.

What to do?

Different churches find different solutions, and that is true in the Eaton Valley United Pastoral Charge, a group of churches now pastored by Rev. Tami Spires. Looking back, she counted 11 United churches in the 1940s, with thriving congregations. Today she has two full-time “preaching points,” the Trinity United Church in Cookshire and the United Church Manse in Sawyerville, where the church was destroyed by fire in 2006. Summers, she also leads services in the Grace United Church in Brookbury, and the East Clifton United Church in St-Isidore-de-Clifton.

Last summer, the Grace United Church celebrated its 150th anniversary. Its secret for survival? Facing its closure in 2013, members arranged for the Grace United Cemetery Association to buy the church building. The small group of active volunteers is now working on a plan to stabilize the foundation. It has been sinking, said Allan James, member of the Cemetery Association’s board. But yes, the Association has funds to undertake the repairs.

The Island Brook United Church had a different fate. Built in 1870 as a Methodist church, its doors closed in 2015 and it went up for sale. But because it was built on land owned by the Island Brook United Cemetery, its new owners would have had to move it to



A creative rebirth: The Catholic church in St-Venant-de-Paquette (1877) lives on as a museum, with its original architecture and interior finishings. The tiny village near New Hampshire is famous for its Sentier poétique, a three-kilometre walking trail featuring poetry and sculptures. (Photo: Janet Cowan Weber)

another location. No buyer was found willing to do this, so the building was sold to a recuperation business who dismantled it, said Rev. Spires.

The [Bishopton United Church](#) in Dudswell is currently for sale. It was also initially a Methodist church, built in 1899 to replace the earlier church



In the Sand Hill Cemetery, Gary Dunsmore with the memorial to St. Luke's Church. (Photo: R.A. Garber)

of 1860. One difficulty is that each municipality has different bylaws. "Dudswell's bylaws say the church has to stay looking like a church building on the outside," said Rev. Spires.

In Bury, the United Church was built in 1898, and the McKenzie Chapel (built in Gould Station, 1910) was annexed to it. In 1998, reported BHHS, it was purchased by a group of interested citizens, and became the Bury United Cultural Centre.

Similarly, Christchurch Canterbury, an Anglican Church on the outskirts of Bury, has a new life. It was built in 1896 and had fallen into disrepair. The BHHS bought it in 2015, moved it onto a new foundation, lovingly restored it, and runs it as a cultural centre.

Down the road, the Sawyerville Baptist Church took a different approach, amalgamating with the French-speaking Bury Baptist Church, and offering services in both English and French. Last year, they celebrated their 200th anniversary. The church's Grove Hill Cemetery still lies near the site of the first Baptist church building, built in 1853. (That building was moved to Bulwer in sections, used as a church, then as a school, and finally sold to the government, who used the lumber to build barracks for German prisoners during World War II, said Sharron Rothney.)

Side by side on Route 253, the East Clifton Cemetery and the United Church are separate but friendly. The Cemetery's secretary-treasurer, Donna McConnell, said they both depend on donations from individuals. The municipality of Saint-Isidore-de-Clifton has also helped financially. The church building is to be repainted this summer. "I don't know, it may be the last time." Her voice had a sad tone.

Started in 1837, the Sand Hill Cemetery on Route 108 had a different relationship with its creator, St. Luke's Anglican Church. After the Second World War, the two parted ways. The now non-denominational cemetery is still going strong, with more than 100 graves. Its upkeep is ensured by the Sand Hill Cemetery Association, headed by Gary Dunsmore.

But the St. Luke's Church is no more. By the time funds became available for its restoration in 1997, its disrepair was so serious that it was judged impossible to salvage. It too passed on, 117 years after it was built.

In the Townships, as elsewhere, the hard truth is that not all church buildings can be saved. With enough time, even cemeteries disappear, especially small rural ones. It behooves us to choose early which buildings to preserve, which to repurpose, and which to demolish; and to first document their lives, and the communities they nourished.

LENNOXVILLE
SERVICE G.L. PARADIS INC.



Mécanique générale - Mise au point
Antirouille - Soudure - Survoltagage
Déverrouillage de portes

General Repair - Tune-up
Undercoating - Welding - Car Boosting
Door Unlocking

LOCAL & LONGUE DISTANCE
LOCAL & LONG DISTANCE

REMORQUAGE 24 HEURES
TOWING 24 HOURS

819-562-8272
56 QUEEN, SHERBROOKE

S.W.M
PEINTURE
DEPUIS 1997



819-829-0111
215 rue Queen,
Lennoxville, QC

Industrial - Residential - Commercial Paint & Hardware
Store Hours: Monday to Friday 9 to 5, Saturday 9 to 12

Facebook: swmpeinture215
Email: Info@swmpeinture.com


Benjamin Moore™

Church, Counterfeiting, and Printmaking

by Angela Leuck

In 1987, artist Bernice Sorge bought an abandoned church not far from her home in Dunham, Quebec. It was just a stone's throw away from Farnam's Corner where five roads meet: North Sutton, Childerhouse, Robinson, Paradis, and Hudon. It was on this last lonely road, Hudon, that the unpretentious former United Methodist Church had stood since 1894.

Sorge's dream was to use the main floor as her personal art studio, and also, in the basement, to set up a printmaking coop—the first of its kind in the Eastern Townships. She received grants from the Quebec Ministry of Cultural Affairs to help with renovations

ical prints from her own handmade plates.

Her work began to receive recognition far beyond her small studio. She received the 1993 First Prize of Excellence for the Pan-Canadian Exposition of Printmaking and the 2004 Innovation Prize of the Nova Scotia Print Council. Her one-of-a-kind prints have been exhibited at the Canadian Museum of History and around the world, including in South Carolina, New York City, Tokyo, Damascus, Nice, Strasbourg and Paris.

While Sorge was pursuing her art in the present, she had little time to investigate the past of the building and the road on which it stood. Early on, when she

had first begun renovating, neighbours stopped by with anecdotes about life on Hudon Road when the church was still active. They spoke of family weddings and funerals, of horse races every Saturday, and of the child prodigy, Lynwood Farnam, who had played the piano at church services.

Most surprising of all were stories of bags of money buried in the earth around the church. Sorge just laughed it off. That was before she learned that during the early years of the 19th century, Hudon Road, or as it was referred to then, Cogniac Street, had been the centre of the largest counterfeiting ring in the whole of North America!



Bernice Sorge makes prints in her studio.

and to support the printmaking studio's operations for its first six years. She contacted local artists and convinced many to join together to learn more about the art of printmaking, and the group Encreguenille-Inkrage was formed.

Buying the church and setting up the studio gave Sorge a clear direction to her artistic life. Her interest in using leaves and plants had always been a part of her work. She writes: *"I gather things from the woods.... I have always had the desire to create something from nothing.... It is through art that I have explored my roots, my origins. I have plunged deeper and deeper into the very matter of art, by using materials that come directly from the earth, from the woods."*

Printmaking added a whole new dimension to her work with natural materials. Drawing on her background in science and using plants themselves as a matrix, she developed a technique of creating hand-printed botan-

Heather Darch, past curator of the Missisquoi Museum, is an authority on the history of Missisquoi County. Her article, "Living on Easy Street: The Counterfeiters of Missisquoi County" (TownshipsHeritage.com), explains that during the time of the first settlements around Dunham, the inhabitants of northern Vermont largely ignored the artificial border established in 1783 between the United States and Quebec. After the American Revolution, many Americans streamed into the Missisquoi region. French, English and Americans all had political interests in the area. The ease of crossing the border and the growing sense of lawlessness provided rich and abundant soil for the growth of illegal activities such as smuggling and horse theft. As well, the relative closeness to large American cities further enhanced its draw as a prime location for counterfeiting. Soon, three local gangs were competing for a share of the lucrative counterfeit-money market.

In 1819, Reverend Fitch Reed, a Methodist circuit minister from New York, wrote that he had been informed “every family in Cogniac Street was concerned in the production of spurious bank bills.” Further, he wrote, “These bills are purported to be on the banks in the United States; the Canadian authorities troubling

the illegal activities, they were outnumbered and their lives threatened. Then, in the summer of 1833, a coalition of Sheriffs, constables, and magistrates gathered near Cogniac Street. They surrounded the homes of suspected families and made 13 arrests. The men were manacled and marched under guard to Montreal.



Bernice Sorge has transformed the former United Methodist Church at 1626 Hudon Road, Dunham, Quebec, into the Galérie-Studio Sorge. To visit, call 450-295-2567. (Photo: I. Hiscox)

themselves but little about the matter, so long as their own bills were not counterfeited.”

Given the lack of government intervention, throughout the 1820s an extensive and increasingly brazen network of wholesalers and dealers were doing business along Cogniac Road. They had the help of local farmers who found “easy” money hard to resist to supplement their meagre farm revenues.

Was the church ever used as part of the counterfeiting operation? Although there is no evidence, it can’t be discounted. Gangs were in the habit of hiding their presses and metal plates in woods or caves. Where better than on the grounds of a church where authorities were less likely to search!

Not that, in the early years, counterfeitters had much to fear. When a few local bailiffs attempted to combat

The punishments meted out were relatively light—a maximum of two years. Seneca Paige, the kingpin of the largest counterfeiting gang, was never even convicted. Indeed, in just a matter of years, he ended up representing Missisquoi County as a Member of the Legislative Assembly of Canada.

The raid, however, had managed to break the back of the counterfeiting rings and life on Cogniac Street began to settle down. It became just one more quiet, dusty, back road, now named Hudon Road.

Once she got a whiff of her road’s turbulent history, Sorge became fascinated and gathered as much information as she could. The irony of the church’s past, as the venue of printing presses for illegal bills and skilled copperplate engravers, did not escape her. Indeed, in her present-day printing studio, she and other coop members were exploring not only new techniques of printmaking but traditional processes that counterfeitters themselves would have employed.

In January 2017, Sorge came up with an inventive “Dunham Dollars” project to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the village of Dunham. She created five original etchings using photos of people who were important in the early days of Dunham. The etchings were commercially reproduced in a booklet of discount bills that could be used to purchase products around the village. When two counterfeit printing plates from the 1800s surfaced and were on display at the Missisquoi Museum in Stanbridge-East, she was given permission to borrow the plates and make a limited number of hand-printed etchings, which were available for sale.

So, whether it had been so in the past, the church on Hudon finally became an actual venue for printing counterfeit money. Legally, this time, in the name of art and community celebration!

As to those supposed bags of money buried around her church, “well,” said Sorge, “we haven’t found them yet!”



Angela Leuck is a poet and publisher. She is the editor of *Emergence: Contemporary Women Poets of the Eastern Townships of Quebec* (Studio Georgeville, 2021).

Answers to ETRC History Quiz on Page 6:

- Question 3: A
- Question 2: D
- Question 1: B

La Desserte: Friendly, Feuilleté

by Marissa Tessier, Dianne Prah, & Beverly Taber Smith

The CFUW Sherbrooke & District Dining Out group found a warm and friendly atmosphere and accommodating hosts at their recent visit to La Desserte Restaurant at 224 College St. S., Richmond (ladesserte.com).



(Courtesy La Desserte)

The Menu du Jour featured succulent meatballs, a tasty *feuilleté*, an exquisite seafood risotto and a deep-dish salad featuring grilled turkey. The portions were generous and each dish was beau-

tifully presented. A regular menu offered very reasonable prices from which to choose.

The owners have a farm, and from it came lots of fresh vegetables and even a melon cucumber in the salads. With a pastry chef on site, the desserts were delicious and included a panna cotta, lemon triangles, and date and apple squares, along with a yummy cake with creamy frosting. Many types of tea and coffee were available.

Their shop has items such as frozen salmon/Mexican pies, bread, various desserts, jams, jellies, and more.

The restaurant has two patios for warm weather dining. We recommend a visit to La Desserte as it is now one of our favourites.



Marissa Tessier, Dianne Prah, and Bev Taber Smith are part of CFUW Sherbrooke & District

with members in Sherbrooke, Ayer's Cliff, Eastman, Ste. Etienne de Bolton, Richmond, Magog, Mansonville, and North Hatley engaged in the community by promoting education and life-long learning (cfuwsherbrooke@gmail.com). A university degree is not required for membership. The Lampe Foundation supports education of men and women and encourages the continuation of studies (www.lampefoundation.org).

VERMONT'S ONLY INTERNATIONAL CRUISE
SCENIC CRUISES • THEME CRUISES • PRIVATE CHARTERS & EVENTS

Northern Star Cruises
Lake Memphremagog Newport, VT

Enjoy live music/theme nights or an afternoon of historical tales of Lake Memphremagog while gazing at the mountains and pristine waters. On Sundays hop aboard for an idyllic brunch cruise with family and friends, or just bookend a beautiful weekend with someone special.

BOOK ONLINE NOW: WWW.NORTHERNSTARCRUISES.COM

GARAGE JBL INC

CERTIFIE C UL US
POUR AUTOPOMPE ET CITERNES

MAINTIEN DE L'ÉQUIPEMENT DES MUNICIPALITÉS
INSPECTION - RÉPARATION - MODIFICATION

JAMES LAROCHE

103, rue Winder, Sherbrooke, Québec J1M 1L6

Tél: (819) 564-8405
Télé: (819) 564-1539
jameslaroche@garagejblaroche.ca
www.garagejblaroche.ca

From Church to “Neverwas”

by Esther Saanum

A morning spent in the company of Neverwas’s proprietor, Jean Lemieux, reinforced my faith in humanity’s ability to adapt, to raise up a construct of beauty and to celebrate it. The building’s interior, its warmth, charm, and pleasing appearance, reflect its restorer’s character.

The former Église Ste-Thérèse de l’Enfant Jésus at 94 Principale St., Beebe, was constructed in 1929, but fell into disuse for lack of congregants and financial support. In 2016, Mr. Lemieux and a forward-looking acquaintance purchased the Catholic church for \$45,000.

The church’s modest, white clapboard exterior didn’t present such a challenge as the stained and shabby interior. When asked about his first impression on entering the building, Jean replied, “Oh! These ceiling lights are beautiful!” The lighting was the only bright, unsullied feature. The fixtures are still hanging today, aligned at the lower edges of the deep blue arched central ceiling.



Neverwas, formerly Église Ste-Thérèse de l’Enfant Jésus (Photo: Diana Callaway)

Mr. Lemieux, known as Johnny Neverwas in his rock ‘n’ roll days, opened the building to the public in 2018 and renamed it Neverwas. The pews are no more. Instead, tables and chairs are staggered about a spacious hardwood floor, most retrieved from discarded lots. Previously, they were part of an idea to open a restaurant. The interior space measures a generous forty by seventy feet. A well-equipped kitchenette hides along the south wall next to a bright lavatory housing healthy plants. Above the entry, along

the west wall runs a private loft where one may look out over an event. To the right of the stage along the east wall, a wood-burning stove cozily heats the well insulated building. A fully-restored basement runs beneath the structure. Jean’s private apartment is located at the back of this building that he considers his home to which people, on occasion, are invited.



Inside Neverwas (Photo: Diana Callaway)

We admire the tongue-and-groove boards that enhance the walls of the seating area. Their rich tones and clarity of grain are remarkable. Jean recounts the tale of how the lumber was acquired: a former church member cut and donated 100 logs. A portable sawmill arrived in the churchyard with an operator who expertly planed the logs.

Jean remarks that very little sanding was required before mounting the material onto the walls. “Trembling Aspen. An ancient species. Clones. They’re dependent on each other.”

A benevolence of spirit resides in this structure, which has hosted many weddings, christenings, funerals, and family gatherings. Musicians who have performed in concert include: Bia, HB5 JA22, Karen Young, Stick and Bows (performing classical music with a marimba instrument), Kongero, and local women’s world music choir Choromondo.

Église Neverwas Church welcomes the public to Choromondo’s Comeback Concert, its first post-pandemic, on Sunday, June 11, at 3 p.m., under the direction of founder Allyna Harris.



Esther Saanum, born a Townshipper, lives and writes in good company in Hatley Township, Quebec. (Photo: Diana Callaway)

Diana Callaway, Stanstead, grew up in the Eastern Townships and is studying photography at Concordia University. She is a Townships Young Voices award recipient.

Lennoxville's Three St. Anthony Churches

by Gérard Côté & Jean-Marie Dubois

The first Roman Catholic church of St. Anthony in Lennoxville was built in 1876 at the northwest corner of Church and Park streets (Park was renamed Uplands in 2005).

The church was blessed on December 31st of that year by His Grace Antoine Racine, Bishop of the Diocese of Sherbrooke. As was often the case in giving a name at that time in Québec, it was because of Bishop Racine's surname, Antoine, that the church was placed under the patronage of Saint Anthony of Padua.

At first, masses were said every second Sunday for 38 French-speaking families and 18 Irish families. In 1878, Father Téléphore Allard was appointed as the first priest to reside in this mission, which was raised to the status of a parish on July 3, 1890, with Father François-Napoléon Séguin as pastor.

The parish also served Ascot Township and the hamlet of Capelton, and had 164 families, of which 56 were Irish. The church was renovated and enlarged in 1895. It burnt down on January 27, 1917. Fortunately, the parish registers were saved.

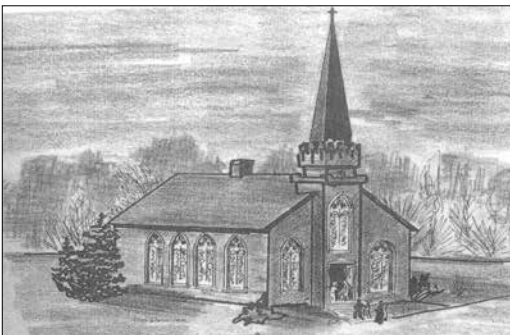
The *fabrique* (the parish trustees) then bought the College House Hotel and turned it into a church, located at the corner of College and Main streets (Main was renamed Queen in 1953).

Demolished in 1953, the second church was replaced by a third one that closed on January 1st, 2011, after the last mass was celebrated on December 24, 2010. The building was then sold to Hope Community Church. The former parishioners of St. Antony's then became members of the Bienheureuse-Marie-Léonie-Paradis Parish.

Church Street was opened in 1876 to give access to the original St. Anthony church. It was completed and came under municipal ownership in 1877. The name was made official by the *Commission de toponymie du Québec* on April 24, 1992.



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



First St. Antoine church, sketch by Tom Donovan (Courtesy Lennoxville-Ascot Museum and Historical Society P 1057 HOU).



Second St. Antoine church (Courtesy Lennoxville-Ascot Museum and Historical Society P 972)



Third St. Antoine church (Courtesy Denis Beaulieu, Sherbrooke)

Boundary Bookstore
Librairie de la Frontière

- Wide variety of used books, French & English
- 4 Principale, Stanstead (Beebe). 819-571-7949
- Open 9 a.m.-noon, 1st & 3rd Saturday of month
- We accept donated books, games, puzzles & DVDs. For large donations, call for possible pick-up. (We **do not** accept magazines, VHS tapes, cassette tapes, records, encyclopedias, textbooks.)
- Please bring your own bags.

Pièces de tracteur
RON MACKAY
Tractor parts

New - Used - Rebuilt
Neuf - Usagé - Reconstruit

Tel.: (819) 845-3186 Fax: (819) 845-3456

357, chemin de la Rivière
St-François-Xavier-de-Brompton,
Quebec, J0B 2V0

We buy burnt, accidented or old tractors for parts

Meet Maurice J.O. Crossfield, Novelist

by Angela Leuck

Mystery writer Louise Penny has become world famous through writing about her bucolic fictional town of Three Pines set here in our beautiful Eastern Townships. But another, real-life part of the Townships is at the heart of West Brome author Maurice J.O. Crossfield's own series of crime novels—the Missisquoi region with its well-documented early history of lawlessness.

Crossfield, a journalist and native of the Townships, admires the former broadcaster's work, but feels that Penny's books fail to capture the true grit of the hard-scrabble, small-town life that characterized much of the Townships when he was growing up in the 1970s. Country life then "was a lot less glossy, and a lot more dirt under the fingernails," he said. "There wasn't much to be had in the Townships in terms of fine dining and elegant evenings. It was more bowling leagues and bars than bistros and backgammon."

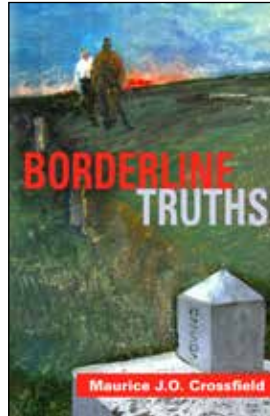
While Penny successfully combines the classic English small-town "cozy" with the big-city police procedural, Crossfield writes in the hard-boiled, *noir* tradition. He lists the late Philip Kerr and Dashiell Hammett as his major influences. He also admires Hemingway's skill at saying a lot with very few words.

I asked Crossfield about his reporter-protagonist, Dave Rogers, the antithesis of the American tough-guy investigator and a far-cry from Penny's beloved Inspector Gamache. "Dave is a bit like me in that he got into journalism as a way to make a living as a writer. He wants to be a storyteller but ends up over his head and is forced to dig to figure out why certain things are happening to him.... I think he's like a lot of Canadian guys, who just want to make a living doing a job they like and have someone to go home to at the end of the day. And a dog. There always needs to be a dog."

Unlike Penny's books, which are set in the present day, Crossfield's *The Granby Liar*, published in 2017, and *Borderline Truths* in 2022, are set in the mid-1970s. For Crossfield, his books provide an opportunity to revisit a time in his life when he was just starting to become aware of the world.

"I was a farm kid, and things were pretty idyllic," he said, but he also acknowledged that things weren't as rosy as his memories would dictate. "It was a rough, violent time. Misogyny, racism, homophobia, were all endemic."

Crossfield credits his love of storytelling with having grown up among locals telling tales of smugglers, deer jackers and hooligans. During his years covering police and court stories, he became aware of the region's un-



derground economy. Digging into old newspapers only added to that understanding. "My overactive imagination did the rest," said Crossfield, who drew on this trove of material to create his fast-paced, page-turner novels.

One element of the traditional hard-boiled detective genre is the presence of the femme fatale, but none are to be found in Crossfield's books. "As a man, I find genuine female characters difficult to write," said the author. "When you go the femme fatale route it's too easy for the woman to become a caricature and for the weak man to inevitably fall prey to his hormonal urges. Whatever his flaws, Dave loves his wife, and he's terrified of losing her." Dave will have some challenges ahead on that front, Crossfield hinted.

What adds to the drama of the first two books and lends them a complexity above the usual good-versus-evil, comes in the person of bad guy Stubby Booker. "I didn't really plan on Stubby becoming a sympathetic villain, he just kind of evolved that way," Crossfield explained. "He was inspired by a few people I met while working as a crime reporter. People accused of crimes, but with whom you could visit in the courthouse hallways. And I love exploring that tension between the two men, as Dave tries to learn more about his own past."

For those anxious to read the concluding novel of Crossfield's trilogy, it's currently in the planning stages. Hopefully we won't have long to wait!

In the meantime, the first two books in the series are available at Black Cat Books in Lennoxville and Lac Brome Books in Lac Brome.



Angela Leuck is a poet and publisher. She is the editor of *Emergence: Contemporary Women Poets of the Eastern Townships of Quebec* (Studio Georville, 2021).

Stay Connected!

by Anita Duwel

As you get older, you may find yourself in a situation where you are alone and maybe a bit disconnected from the world. If you find yourself in that position, it would be splendid to take part in a community group or association.

Why? Because being part of a community has a huge impact on your health and well-being. It provides a wide range of benefits that can greatly improve your quality of life, especially your mental well-being.

It's a great way to connect with others who share similar interests or experiences, and it can help you feel valued and appreciated. I would say community is just as important as nutrition and exercise.

Here are five benefits that come from community involvement.

Many Social Opportunities. When you're part of a community, you have more chances to socialize with new people, make new friends, and have some fun. Organized events such as potlucks, lunches, picnics, dances, game nights, or workshops can help reduce loneliness and isolation.

Endless Activities. Being part of a community gives you endless activities to keep yourself busy and entertained. Whether you enjoy dancing, arts and crafts, sports, games, music, book clubs, gardening, or anything else, find something fun to do. You could join a seniors' centre or retirement community where you can participate in walking groups, fitness classes, art classes, and social events.

Or, you could join a local club or organization that focuses on your hobbies and interests. This could be a bird-watching group, a hiking club, or a quilting bee, for example. I'm sure you can find something somewhere that interests you!

Learning Opportunities. You can always learn something new, and being a part of a community opens those doors to you. You could learn new skills and expand your knowledge, or maybe you could attend lectures, workshops, or classes on a wide range of topics. Who knows—you may be the next great artist or chef, or find that you have a knack for languages! When learning, you are keeping your brain engaged. This is so important for cognitive health, especially as we get older.

Support Network. Another wonderful benefit of community involvement is the support network that

comes with it. When you are part of a community, you have people you can turn to for help and support with things such as transportation, home chores, or errands. Having a support network can help you feel safe and give you peace of mind, knowing that you have people you can turn to when you need help.

Live Longer. Research has shown that being part of a community can help you live longer (hsph.harvard.edu/news/hsph-in-the-news/active-social-life-longevity/). The social connections, physical activity, support, and sense of purpose that come from community involvement contribute to a longer and healthier life. Did you know it can help reduce the risk of chronic diseases and improve mental health?

Here are a few of the many different types of communities.

- Local community groups and senior or retirement centres may offer a variety of activities.
- Religious communities such as a church, synagogue, mosque or other religious institution can provide you with a sense of purpose, belonging, and spiritual fulfillment.
- Many online support groups, forums, and social media groups let you connect with others who have similar interests and experiences.
- Intergenerational communities are amazing; you can experience the wonder of youth and, in turn, you can make a positive impact on future generations.
- Or you can do some research and find out what people in your community are interested in. Then with the help of others, you can start something up.

Community plays a fundamental role in helping us stay connected and engaged as we age, and is important for our overall health and well-being.

What communities are you a part of?



Anita Duwel is owner of Love the Life You Live/Aging with Vitality. She is a Certified Holistic Nutrition and Health coach, Workplace Wellness Consultant and helps people who struggle with weight and low energy to feel healthy and vibrant so that they can live a life of quality and vitality. Learn more at www.AnitaDuwel.com or email Anita at AnitaDuwel@live.com

After Reading Thomas Gray's Great Elegy

by Steve Luxton

Last glimmering light draws back, following the sun behind
the hairline horizon, and the day dims.
At the village's end, on the high look-out bench,
I sip coffee from a mug and take in the the view.
Off southwest, a crown of blue mountains darkens to profile.
On the stretch of intervening plateau, the lights of
farm homes flare up and wobble. Much nearer, in
a neighbour's pasture, a steer and then another bellow shrilly,
maybe edgy at, skulking in the wood-line, coyotes.
On the two-lane hardtop winding uphill my way, a manure spreader, with
the holding tank monstrous in the vehicle's floodlights, roars
home, trailing stink, before leaving the world to darkness and to me.

The noise is mostly crickets' stitch.—And free, now
that it's Fall, of the small motor whine of converging mosquitoes.
Behind on my left, from the village cemetery, with its huge,
spreading maples, comes a soft snort.
I spot a deer's slim legged and round bellied silhouette
bending to the grass beside some villager's grave.
Whose? In that now shadowy portion, there's a cluster
of markers, both older and recent.—A few festooned with solar
candles and plastic flowers, others plainer, of farmers and
their wives, of craftsmen and tradesmen, and
youths sadly cut off.

Is the plot new, fresh-turned?
Maybe Old Man Drew's?—He was paid by
the village to cut the grass fronting the church,
and, also, in the graveyard behind it.
He'd done the job for years. Maybe, past eighty, he wasn't
thinking so clear or because he'd just lost his wife, he
neglected to trim a slope with his usual care, and
his ride-on mower rolled!—A not so quaint
end for the longest, oldest villager here.
One with a Life and experience as valid as any,
who, after work, went home evenings to his wife and
a warm woodstove, where, when still young, his kids
ignoring t.v. a moment, chattered happily round him.
Though, later, on a freezing, October night, like
one soon to come, his eldest son, speeding back
from town with some beer-drinking buddies, hit
an iced-up curve, lost it, and plunged into
a roadside pond and drowned.
...A fully lived Life for humble Lester, and also grief-swept!
Born in loftier circumstances, might Old Man Drew have
been a Pierre Trudeau, or a freedom-loving Nelson Mandela?
Or, even—for once, give thanks to social inequity—
a would-be tyrant checked by his humble origin?
Hard to tell.... For Lester, did being destined to dwell
outside the city's hubbub and dog-eat-dog
in the more laid-back country—or, as a
city kid boarding at our place, glumly phrased it:
"Among the goddamned cows!"—balance out
the lack of recognition and choice?



Photos by Diana Callaway show the St. James Anglican Church and Cemetery in Hatley, Quebec, that helped inspire Steve Luxton's poem.

On the other hand, the stone might be Maude Pellerin's who, back in the 1930's, taught school here in Hatley. Her grave is over there, too, under the big, dark maple where the deer is chewing grass.—It's getting long since Lester's gone and there's been no new hire. In this small pond of a place, Maude was a lively spirit and superior schoolmarm. Also, she wrote.—Tourist brochures and newspaper articles on local historical subjects. And maybe even—who knows?—some poetry. Though her stone's verse is not hers, but just funerary boilerplate.



We all end up here at what a poet-friend of mine termed: "Everybody's final address," whether we're Great or small, or, regarding this particular burying ground, small or smaller.—Dust, equally left mute!—Though, we're inclined hopefully to leave something, a plot to secure our bones, a stone scratched with a few words to move some passer-by to muse on our quicksilver, slender tale.

—A weak grab at permanence to win a delay of Time's sure sentence....
 So, what's the "take-home" of all this?
 —The sins of hierarchy?
 —The pleasure of solo regret and melancholy?
 —The pen is mightier than the tomb?
 —Tour your local graveyard?

Well, it's getting brisk out here.
 Best I head back.
 —There goes that buck, over the graveyard wall.
 He better stay near the village 'cause it's soon the season.
 It's even darker since those clouds moved in.
 I recall a hole in this pasture I'm crossing:
 the farmer backhoed out a boulder, then,
 for some reason, only half-filled the pit.
 Several times, I've nearly fallen in.



Steve Luxton of Coaticook is author of seven books of poetry, most recently *Lift off the Roof: Harmonica Blues Poems*. As writer-in-residence at the Lennoxville Library, he is the subject of a series of four videos, *Literary Rambles*, about historical Townships poets. Watch a video (by John Mackley) of Steve discussing Thomas Gray's famous *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* and reading his own poem in the St. James Cemetery which inspired him to write it: [YouTube/@Townships-Sun](https://www.youtube.com/@Townships-Sun).



Diana Callaway, Stanstead, grew up in the Eastern Townships and is studying photography at Concordia University. She is a 2023 Townships Young Voices award recipient.

