

# THE CENTRE POST

December 2020, Issue 60

Next issue: March 2021  
Submissions due: March 1, 2021

## ***Introducing Lexi Burgess Misner Councillor District 2***



What an exceptional year it has been. Nova Scotians have been faced with unprecedented adversity amidst a global pandemic. Like true Maritimers, we rise again. It certainly was interesting, campaigning during such a different time than we are accustomed to. I tried my best to get out and around while also respecting the safety of constituents. Despite the climate we were in, I chose to get out as often as I could and to think outside of the box. I believe that we, now more than ever, need to be reminded of our connection with people and feel part of our community. I thank those of you who voted in my favour and chose me as your representative for Centreville and District 2. For those of you who voted the opposite, thank you for exercising your democratic right. I'd love to connect with you, and I hope, in time, I am able to gain your confidence and trust in my ability. This is new to me, but I am dedicated to learning and, as such, have enrolled in Dalhousie University's local government course to build a solid foundation of knowledge. If there is anything that you feel I should know or that would be beneficial for me in my new role, please don't hesitate to reach out. My predecessor, Pauline, has left me a good summary of Centreville and has been a wealth of knowledge and support. She certainly leaves big shoes to fill, but I am up to the challenge.

I am the mom of three girls: Quinn, 7; Cooper, 3; and Kenzie, 2. My family and I live in North Kentville with our two miniature poodles, Rocco and Roxy. I run a home-based childcare business and work casually as a virtual assistant. Professionally, I have worked as both a certified educational assistant and an early childhood educator. After having my first child, I left the human services field to work in food services for the flexibility it provided my family. Within my first year, I was promoted to management and dedicated my time to professional development in that role. Through Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC), I have taken courses on organizational behavior, human resources management, the business environment, management principles, as well as a leadership and mentorship development program. I am as passionate about continuous education as I am about helping people.

The realm of politics is not unknown to me, as I have served on the Nova Scotia Youth Secretariat and West Hants Youth Advisory Committee in my youth. I was also involved in extensive volunteerism and public speaking throughout Nova Scotia about positive youth inclusion. In 2002, I was awarded the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal for my dedication to my community and the Province as a whole. I am enthusiastic about returning to this type of service work.

In my spare time, I enjoy spending time outside. My family and I frequent a lot of the trails, parks, and playgrounds in our area. My other hobbies include camping, writing, reading, yoga, and cooking. I am a zealous advocate for inclusivity, accessibility, diversity, active living, and mental health.

I am a strong believer in the importance of community. I look forward to supporting Centreville as one of our largest growth centres in this county and have enjoyed the opportunity to see some of the great things in the works within your community.

I close with the wishes of a very happy and peaceful holiday season. As we take this time to reflect on the past year and all of the obstacles we have faced, I hope we also take time to identify the opportunities it has presented. Through change, we adapt, learn, and grow. I hope 2021 finds you in health and prosperity.

Merry Christmas from my family to yours.

Lexi Burgess Misner

## The Centre Post

is published four times a year:  
September, December, March and June.

The deadline for news items, etc., is the 1st day of these months, with the newsletter at the outlets by the 21st. It is always good to get your information in before the deadline.

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## Editor's Note

Recently, we said goodbye to two long-time supporters of our community, Mike Sweeney and Pauline Raven. In this issue, we welcome newly-elected District 2 Councillor Lexie Burgess Misner (front page) and Geof Turner, who, among other things, has taken on the responsibility for *Centre Post's* ads (see page 3). Gail, our roving reporter, did a great job interviewing Geof as we welcome him to the fold.

Thanks to those who answered my plea for help in the last issue. So far I haven't needed to call on you, but it's great knowing you're there. At the time, I was particularly overwhelmed by the loss of our ad manager, but Geof has solved the problem. I enjoy composing the paper - it's challenging and fun - and I have no intention of giving up the job anytime soon. My concern is the lack of a backup if, for some reason, I am unable to do it: like many, I know how quickly one's life can change. If there's anyone out there interested in giving compiling the newsletter a try, please get in touch with me.

As always, thanks to our advertisers and the talented contributors who make this newsletter possible - we appreciate your submissions more than you'll ever know!

Anne-Marie Waterbury

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## Join Us in Welcoming Geof Turner to the Centre Post

by Gail Salmon

The *Centre Post* is happy to announce that we have a new person to handle advertising, Geof Turner. This is a very important position. Income from the advertisements, which are seen by hundreds of people each issue, pays for the printing costs of the paper and allows us to offer it to you for free. He is looking forward to the personal part of meeting and working with our clients and getting to know more businesses in the Centreville area.

Geof is very active in the community. He is on the Board of Directors of the Macdonald House fundraising committee and part of the new renovation project. He is a member of the Centreville and District Community Development Association and a member of the Kentville Lions Club.

Geof lives in Steam Mill with his wife and two daughters on a hobby farm with chickens and gardens. He is the seventh generation in his family in Steam Mill and grew up just down the road. He went to Central Kings High School and Acadia University, where he studied business, sociology, and economics. Geof was a postman in Kentville for 20 years, delivering house to house, and now works as a relief employee in the office.

Geof is also a musician and plays in a band with his brother, George. He feels that *Farewell to Nova Scotia* is almost a Nova Scotia anthem but wanted to make the words more positive. He started creating the lyrics while he walked and delivered mail. Working with George, they created the new song *There's No Place Like Nova Scotia*. After the shootings in April, he got in touch with the Red Cross, which had established the Stronger Together Fund. They are raising money to help the families and communities of this devastating disaster, and they are excited to have Geof use his song as a fundraiser. TuneCore has distributed it to several online music platforms, including iTunes and Spotify. The heartbreak affected everyone in Nova Scotia, and Geof thinks people throughout the entire province might want to contribute in support. Anyone interested in listening to the song or donating to the cause can go to iTunes or Spotify and type in Geof Turner: *There's No Place Like Nova Scotia*. Payment will go to Stronger Together.

Geof also mentioned his passion for acting and is a background actor in television shows and movies. He started his acting career with Jack Sheriff in Wolfville in the 1980s. Geof has played bit parts in *Chapel*, *Wait* with Adrian Brody, *Pure*, *Haven*, *The Good House*, and a mini-series of *The Book of Negroes*. He says that it is a way to satisfy the actor in him, it is enjoyable, and he gets to meet famous actors. He also gets paid for having the fun of acting.

We welcome Geof to the Centre Post team and look forward to working with him. If you would like to talk to him concerning advertising your business, call him at 902-300-0947 or email at [geofturner2020@gmail.com](mailto:geofturner2020@gmail.com).



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## Centreville 50-Plus Club

by Darrell Spurr, President

As I write this article in late November, we appear to be surrounded by the second wave of COVID-19. Our area has had few cases, mainly because we follow the suggestions of Public Health. It has been suggested that a small group could hold weekly sessions, but the Community Hall is closed for rentals. Members would need to wear masks, and everything would have to be sanitized. Therefore, we will not be restarting 50-Plus meetings until such times as all COVID-19 guidelines can be followed.

Several members, including myself, have suffered various illnesses. We wish all a speedy and full recovery.

## Centreville Park and Recreation Report

by George Graves

This has been a trying year. The coronavirus swept through the world, and we had to cancel our summer baseball league. This resulted in a loss of revenue to mow our fields and other duties done by our students.

We had planned to set up our fourth baseball field in the first soccer field. We started the new backstop and finished the new infield, and hope we can finish this off next year.

We also started our new road from Saxon Street to the southeast corner and west all the way to Sherman Belcher Road, covered with rolled crusher dust. The road is 8' wide and covered with 6" of crusher dust that was rolled by a Valley Power Product gas-operated roller. This will make it better to walk and bike. Also, if there is ever a fire emergency, the fire department would be able to access the woods and help save the park. We propose to complete this project next summer.

In December of this year, with the help of Hugh Whittie's machine, rotten wood and brush will be cut and piled close to the soccer fields to be burnt in December and buried. This will clear an open field from the ballfield fence to the soccer field.

A special thank you to those who participated in both of our fall cleanups.

Hopefully, 2021 will bring a better year, and we will see an open park with baseball and Centreville Day once again.





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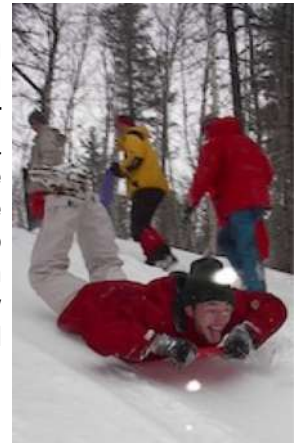
## The Path

by  
**Steve Hopper**  
Pastor,  
**Centreville Baptist Church**

I grew up, as a teenager, just outside of the Moncton, New Brunswick, city limits. I was told the old farmers used to call the area Skunks Hollow. If you went north, you would have to climb a hill named Lutes Mountain. I went to Junior High at the Magnetic Hill Consolidated School, which was on the opposite side of the mountain from where I lived. The road didn't go directly up the side of the mountain as it was too steep, even though that would have been the shortest way to the school. Instead, it skirted most of the mountain except for the part that lay beside the infamous Magnetic Hill. Day after day, I went on a long, round-about journey on the bus, around the mountain to get to school.

I loved sports even back then. If I stayed after school to play on any of the school teams, it meant I had to walk home. I didn't live there long before someone showed me that there was a trail that went down the side of the mountain. It cut miles off the walk home. It was a winding path, but still very steep. There were young fir trees that grew right to the edge of the path so you could grab them on the way down to steady yourself. If you didn't, you would pick up momentum so fast that there was no way that you could keep your balance, and down you would go in a heap.

It was particularly fun in the winter. The snowmobiles made a track on the path, hardening the snow so you could walk on it. It also made it a perfect course for a crazy carpet. You would travel down the hill at breakneck speeds, sliding in and out of corners, going faster and faster as you descended the hill. It was like being in the Olympics on a luge, without a helmet, of course. For extra excitement, every once in a while, you would meet someone walking up the hill. The path was so narrow that the choice for the walker was either to have a sledder take them out at the knees or to jump high enough in the air for the sled to go under them. Yes, I plowed over my share of turtle-reflexed people with a collision between the top of my head and their shins! The ride would end bottoming out in a puff of fluffy snow at the bottom. Few knew about the path because it was well concealed. You really needed someone to show you how to get there the first time.



In the Bible, the Book of Proverbs says,

*"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight."*

This is quite a promise: He won't just show you where the path is, He will guide you as you walk on it.

You may feel today like you are walking on a path to nowhere. Just expending energy without ever making any headway. Never arriving at your destination. Your effort is futile. This Christmas, may we be reminded that God came to earth, born as a baby in a manger, grew to be a man, and showed his followers how to walk on the right path. His words were recorded in the gospels to *make our paths straight*.

If you would like to discover more about this Guide, contact me at the church or follow our ministry online. We would love to walk alongside you during this journey.




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**Dear Readers of the Centre Post:**

As I write this, we know that COVID has again come to the Valley, and our high school, Northeast Kings Education Centre (NKEC), was closed briefly. Since so many of us have connections to NKEC, the possibility for virus spread was significant. On the plus side is the fact that our community has done so well implementing COVID-control measures already. We are the envy of the world, and that's thanks to all of you. While there are many uncertainties as to how it will turn out, I am confident that we can overcome this, too.

I wish to congratulate Centreville's new municipal councillor, Lexi Misner, who represents District 2. I met with her recently and was very impressed by her knowledge of local issues and, also, her commitment to the community. Congratulations, also, to Logan Morse and Blake Orman for putting their names on the ballot. Elections during a pandemic are very difficult, and all three of you did great.

A note of thanks to the outgoing municipal councillor, Pauline Raven. Over a number of years of serving this area along with Pauline, I have come to appreciate her determination and commitment to being your councillor. Thank you, Pauline!

With Christmas quickly approaching, the question becomes, what does a COVID Christmas look like? I know that, for many of us, Christmas is both a happy and sad time: Happy to share the joy of giving with friends and family, but also saddened by loved ones who are no longer with us. This year will bring the added difficulty of not being able to connect with many family members and friends due to travel and group-size restrictions. Many of our traditions of Christmas will be curtailed. As I think of the first Christmas, I ask myself, What is Christmas really all about? The birth of Christ in a manger was God's gift to us. Finding the spirit of Christmas during COVID might then be found in new ways to give to others. For some, that might be in putting on a spectacular Christmas light show! For others, it might be a donation to the food bank or the Kinsmen's Christmas Miracle. There are many possibilities, so take a few minutes to think about how you can give something new to your community this Christmas. The heart you will warm the most will likely be your own!

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your MLA.

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## **Christmas' Unwritten Laws**

*by Gail Salmon*

Family traditions start long before we are old enough to understand what they are. We go along with things because we are too little to have a say in the "goings-on" in the family, but we are in awe of Christmas trees, decorations, and presents.

"What, presents and it is not even my birthday?"

We get a little older and learn how our friends spend Christmas day. My best friend was a Jehovah's Witness and her family didn't have a tree or any Christmas decorations. For some reason, Santa Claus didn't go there. Their parents created a "present day" so their eight children would feel like they were not missing out on getting presents like the rest of the kids in the neighbourhood. My other friends woke up early, opened presents and for the rest of the day they played with all their new 'stuff'.

On Christmas morning, in our house, my brother and I would wake up early and find a stocking hanging on our bedroom doorknob. It was actually one of my dad's old work socks: the grey knit ones with the red stripe on the top. The stockings were stuffed with an orange, small metal puzzles that had to be separated, and a book with short stories, colouring pictures, word finds, or mystery pictures that had to be found. This would entertain us long enough to allow our parents to have a little extra sleep.

When they got up, it was our cue to get washed, dressed, and ready for breakfast. After breakfast, we had to do the dishes. Only then would we all go into the living room, sit on the floor, and open our gifts.

The tree was decorated with ornaments. Some were homemade by my brother and me, and others were handed down from my grandparents and great-grandparents. And some were new, a gift from a friend or an impulse purchase. My favourites were two hand-painted glass birds that clipped on the tree to perch. Underneath were our presents, dressed in festive Christmas paper. Some small boxes could have clues wrapped in them, with a rhyme that usually would have us end up in the basement in the potato patch - a cool, dark corner of the basement past my dad's workbench. Sometimes presents had strings attached, meandering around the house, that we followed from room to room. These gifts were exciting because they would be too big to wrap and put under the tree: alpine skis, a guitar, a

toboggan. My dad would always smile as we'd gleam with excitement and become detectives, hot on the trail to solve a mystery.

The morning excitement was rushed as we always went to our grandparents' for turkey dinner. It was about an hour's drive away. Sometimes, the snow would be so bad we couldn't drive. Mom, Dad, Keith and I would bundle up and walk the mile to the train station to catch the only train going from Pointe-Claire to Hudson. It was an adventure because we seldom took trains. We rushed because no one wanted to miss Christmas dinner. Sitting on the train, we watched the snowy world go by, from houses and highways to fields and farms, until we reached our stop. We trudged through the snow, passing the naked apple trees full of billowing white puffs of snow, and down the lane to Grandma and Grandpa's place.

My grandparents lived in an old farmhouse on the shore of Lake of Two Mountains. I loved going there because they had so many interesting things, and they were excited for us to be there. My grandfather would let us listen to his old floor sized tube radio. It looked so grand in the sitting area, with its tall, dark wood, long pillars down the front, and interesting golden knobs. He seemed to be able to get different stations than our radio at home. As he sat in the old Morris chair that he made, he told stories of listening to shows before television. The wood of the chair matched the radio. Its gold-coloured metal bars lay in hooks and could be moved to make a recliner. The cushions were soft and fur-like.

Their living room had an old brown couch covered with a soft pile. I would sit and stroked the arm like a cat. An old white-marbled washstand stood in front of the window full of flowering plants, and the scent of burning wood from the fireplace and a wood stove smelled and felt like a hug. An old wooden clock ticked everybody's time and watched over us, like the calming beat of a mother's heart to a kitten. Christmas was wonderful, warm, and fuzzy here.

Keith and I were allowed to go upstairs and investigate the rooms. The stairs creaked, and the floors were old brown-painted pine boards. I am not sure if it was because the house was very old or because it was not built well, but the floors were terribly unlevel. If you played marbles, they would roll in every direction. Rooms had woven baskets, unusual clothes, and a strange assortment of old.

We always brought down the crokinole board and cloth checker bag with the wooden disks to challenge Grandpa after dinner. He was the champ for many years, even with his gnarled fingers that he said were like that because they were caught in some kind of a machine. The board was placed on the old piano stool, covered with a plaid wool blanket, so we moved the board instead of our bodies.

*con't next page*

*Christmas...con't from previous page*

My mother never made a turkey dinner, probably because my grandmother was the best cook in the whole world. She made turkey with all the fixings: homemade pickles, rolls, cranberry, and little chocolates. Everything she mixed or stirred turned into mouth-watering morsels that tantalized every taste bud. Her apple pie for Christmas dessert would challenge any master chef, even today!

She also spent time making decorations for each place setting. Usually, they were little animals or people, made out of chicken wishbones, pipe cleaners, and crepe paper. They had pompoms here or there, and little ribbons tied so neatly one would imagine she had little elves, with little nimble fingers, twisting the little bows. She cut up old Christmas cards with pinking shears, wrote our names on the cards, and glued the figures on them. Each one had their place at the table.

Childhood evolves to adulthood so quickly. I married into a family that celebrated family, love, and Christmas. Harry and Sally, my in-laws, were the first When Harry Met Sally. On Sundays, they watched Lawrence Welk, and Harry would go over to Sally, take her hand, and they would sashay across the living room floor.

Sally invited everyone for Christmas dinner. We played charades and numerous other games. She made Pink Perils and Purple Passions, pink lemonade and gin, and grape juice and gin. She was famous for them. The group was rowdy but fun. The room bustled with family and friends competing in all they did, the noise ever increasing.

It didn't matter how many people, they always seemed to fit around the table. I guess that is what the magic of love can do. We shared turkey and all, stories, and laughter wrapped up with Figgy Pudding and hard sauce. Sitting in front of the television, we'd watch Mary Martins' Peter Pan; we knew it by heart, singing the enchantment of childhood still living in us all.

As parents, our own traditions began. Nathan and Jessica woke up early, but we were so excited about the special day we were the ones who had to wait for them to wake up. They had an activity book, an orange and some chocolates at the end of their beds, and we would rush down to start the coffee and turn on the heat and the Christmas lights. Breakfast was a yuletide bread ring, tourtière, coffee, and juice. Jessica and Nathan sat at the top of the stairs wearing pyjamas, wrapped in their blankets, and waited.

*"Okay, Christmas is ready!"*

They scampered downstairs. Stockings were opened first: gifts, laughter, glee, and food would follow. Morning consisted of playing with toys and gifts, relaxing, and getting ready for the rest of the day.

Grandparents now, a little older, but the excitement hasn't left. The whole crew are asleep as we go downstairs to turn on the Christmas lights; they know the drill. From the stairs, we hear whispers and giggles. Looking up, we see Nathan, his wife Margo, with their children Rowan and Marlee, and Jessica and her partner, Mike, all sitting at the top of the stairs. Mike is a little confused and feeling a bit silly: it's his first time. All are in pyjamas and wrapped in blankets.

*"Okay, Christmas is ready!"*

Stockings are handed out by Rowan with help from Grandpa Santa. Coffee and juice served on the floor, complete with yuletide ring and tourtière. The younger children, caught up in the excitement of opening gifts, the rest of us enjoying the food between presents. The tree lights glowing like our hearts. The early morning sun peeps in the living room window.

Later that day, the dining table is ready: hints of my first Christmas long ago. There are little place settings made of old Christmas cards, branches, buttons, ribbons and whatever else an imagination can make into ornaments. There will be homemade rolls. Our living room displays memories of grandparents and parents, decorations on the tree, the inherited washstand with the antique lamp, and a hope chest now covered with plants in front of a sunny window.



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## Ray Can't Cook

by David Ward

Remember the good old camping days with a tent and Coleman gas stove? They were replaced, first with a soft-top camping trailer but still the Coleman stove; then the hardtop trailers with propane, and then travel trailers and camper vans with stoves and ovens. Regardless of the camping method of travel, all campgrounds have one thing in common - fire pits!



For close to 25 years, most of our camping was done on a lot we had on Lac La Biche and in a travel trailer equipped with a stove and oven. I don't recall ever using the oven. The stovetop was used, but all the major cooking was done over a wood fire in the pit - steaks and roasts with potatoes wrapped in foil - on the coals. While I don't camp any longer, I still cook over coals at this time of year with my wood-burning heater stove. Potatoes and some vegetables are in foil, with the meat of choice in the BBQ basket propped up by the partially-closed door.

I've always cooked, even the Christmas cake, and at times have felt sorry for men who did not. One was a farmer friend I knew from my years with Alberta Agriculture as a District Agriculturalist, known out there as the DA. Ray Cholowski called my office asking me to stop in at his farm to identify a weed and told me where to find it in a particular field of grain. When I went into the house, Ray was at the kitchen table with a package of cold hot dogs, a loaf of bread, a container of mustard, and a knife. He was spreading mustard on two pieces of bread and slicing hot dogs length-ways, placing them on the bread to make a sandwich. I said to Ray that I just realized something about him. He asked what it was, and I said, "You can't cook!"

## Country Magic

Recipe from Margie Brown



### Gluten-Free Raspberry-Ginger Muffins

(Makes 12)

#### Ingredients:

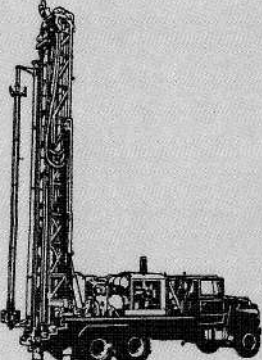
Nonstick vegetable oil spray  
1 1/2 teaspoon baking powder  
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt  
1 1/2 cups plus 1 tablespoon gluten-free all-purpose flour  
1 large egg  
1 cup (packed) light brown sugar  
1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, melted  
1/2 cup whole milk  
1 teaspoon finely-grated peeled ginger  
1 1/2 cups fresh (or frozen, thawed) Vital Berry raspberries

#### Preparation:

Coat muffin pan with nonstick spray. Whisk baking powder, salt, and 1 1/2 cups flour in a medium bowl. Whisk egg, brown sugar, butter, milk, and ginger in a large bowl; mix in dry ingredients. Toss raspberries with remaining 1 tablespoon flour in a small bowl; gently fold into batter.

Divide batter among muffin cups and bake until a tester inserted into center comes out clean, 25–30 minutes. Let cool 5 minutes in pan before serving.

*DO AHEAD: Muffins can be made 1 day ahead. Store airtight at room temperature.*




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# ***Story from the Family Farm***

**by Mack Frail**



Several topics were on my mind to write about. With my thoughts about the festive season and celebrating, I became persuaded to write about Christmas. It is a special time, a time to make an effort to be cheerful. It is difficult to spread Christmas cheer with the terrible epidemic that, worldwide, has claimed well over 1.5 million lives. As I write of my thoughts, feelings, and memories from the past, they may appear as if it is my intention to take away from cheerfulness. It is the way that it was, and I describe it to illustrate that people can be cheerful during difficult times.

A lot of changes have taken place since the 1940s and World War II years. I was about four-and-a-half years old when WW II began on September 1, 1939. I was born during difficult times, a time known as the Dirty Thirties. I have a lot of memories of the six years until WW II ended on September 2, 1945. World War II brought some prosperity to certain areas, but not to rural communities such as Centreville. As a child, to me, the war years are mostly happy memories. Looking back on these years, I think of my parents and others who struggled during those difficult times. I have a feeling of sadness for them and also a feeling of pride. They were able to endure the hardships and provide for themselves and their families. As a child, my parents never made me aware that we were experiencing difficult times, and I never had the feeling of being deprived of anything. We were loved and taken care of. The financial assistance that is available in today's society was not available at that time.

We were poor by today's living standards. Living on the farm, we were better off than most families because the produce from the farm provided most of our food. My mother came to Canada from England in 1921, and I remember her tears and concern for her family during the German bombing of England. With a family of eight children, my father worked very hard to make ends meet. He had served with the Canadian army during World War I. He was wounded twice by German bullets and had struggled with the effects of severe shell shock. I describe my family, and not the other families that were worse off than we were. Families were not able to purchase gifts that they could not afford. We were happy with the simple gifts we received.

I describe these conditions to emphasize that, no matter how difficult times were, my parents and other parents as well always struggled to provide a good Christmas. I remember feeling bad for the neighbours' children because they had less than we had. We helped each other. During the past centuries, we have had good times and bad times. Although we are more content and happiest during the good times, we must endure the bad times. It is important that we do all that is necessary to get through these difficult times. There is light at the end of the tunnel, with a vaccine that is becoming available. We should recall those families from the past that struggled through the difficult times and managed to have a cheerful and happy Christmas. I think back to the times when children of my generation were growing up in Centreville. It was a simple way of life compared to the present time. It didn't require a lot to make us happy.

Most years, there was skating on the lily pond on Christmas Day. My father would cut a hole through the ice and measure the thickness. He would not allow us on if it was less than one foot thick. I often think of the lily pond that was on our farm property and how important it was to us. Generations had skated and played on it before I was born. The lily pond was formed by a glacier that settled there thousands of years ago. It is one of two ponds in Kings County that were created by a glacier. Several rare birds nested there and raised their young. Before it came to its present state, the Acadia University Biology Department students visited the lily pond to study the rare plants. When we operated our garden centre, which is presently Pineo's Pet Spaw, we were particular not to disturb or to harm this natural habitat. The public now has no interest in the lily pond, nor do they know where it is located. The pitcher plants and Venus flytraps were a fascination to us. Also fascinating were the turtles that we would catch and return. Special skill is needed when using the hand to snatch a turtle from the water. A lot of hockey pucks have been lost in the cranberry and Canada holly bushes that grow around the lily pond. After a snowstorm, we worked very hard to clear off the ice. I remember our crudely constructed homemade equipment for snow removal.

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### *Story from the Family Farm - con't*

I was about age five when I first began to ice skate on the pond. At that time, there was a small shack for changing footwear. I have the ice skates that I learned to skate with, used by siblings before me. When I look at the several pairs of old ice skates, I cannot describe the efforts that we made to hold them together with rivets, twine, and wire. Seeing these old ice skates that we used causes me to realize how it was in those days. I am the youngest of five boys, and the hand-me-down skates were in bad condition when it was my turn to use them. Close to Christmas 1945, my mother quietly handed me a five-dollar bill to purchase a good used pair of skates. I recall my mixed feelings as I excitedly walked further down in Centreville to purchase the skates. At ten years of age, I realized that the \$5.00 she gave me was more than a farmworker's daily wages and, during difficult times, was a generous gift. When the adults played hockey, they would sometimes break a hockey stick and discard it. As children, we would run to be the first to retrieve it and, if successful, were jubilant to have it to repair. We used magazines for shin pads, and our lumbermen's rubbers served as markers for our hockey goalie net. Evening skating on the lily pond with a bonfire was a very special time.

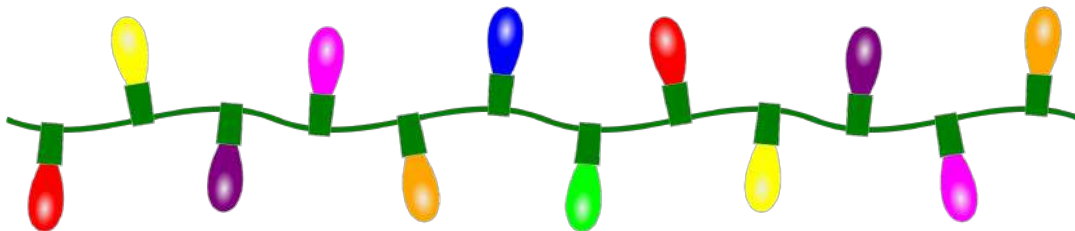
I could continue writing about the good times and the not-so-good times. Since World War II, most of us have been fortunate to experience good times. No matter whether times are good or not so good, Christmas is a special time. It is a time to spread Christmas cheer to others. It is time to celebrate the birth of Christ.

### ***Christmas Tree Lighting***

Due to COVID-19, the CDCDA was unable to host a tree-lighting celebration this year. That didn't stop a group of enthusiastic Centreville residents from ensuring there is a tree for us to enjoy. Special thanks to Doug Brown, Charlie Taylor, and Heather and Leigh Kent for putting up the tree and lights, and to Ken Morse for once again donating the perfect tree.



***Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas***



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## Update from the Marsh

by Gren Jones

NS Senior Provincial Director

Dear Readers:

In recent months, following a particularly dry summer, I have heard from numerous people who enjoy visiting local, public-access wetlands. These include Miner's Marsh in Kentville, Sheffield Mills Marsh and North Brook in Sheffield Mills, Rockland Brook near South Berwick, and the Belleisle Marsh near Annapolis, on Route 1.

I can assure you that the staff at our Eastern Regional Office in Amherst are aware of public concerns regarding such issues as dry conditions and low water levels, exceptional growth of vegetation, public safety, and vandalism. All of Nova Scotia's projects were successfully inspected in the spring, and repairs have been taking place across the province. I was able to be part of the conservation work, and it's always a thrill for me to lend a helping hand. In the fall, all projects with fishway passages must be inspected for blockage — usually created by 'busy beavers' attempting to flood these wetlands. I've included a photo showing the cleaning out of debris at the ladder in the marsh at Armstrong Lake. Closer to home, the fishway passage at Sheffield Mills by Hennigar's warehouse has had repairs, and the water is flowing nicely. We also cleaned out the buildup of biomass in the spillway at North Brook.

For those readers who know the Belleisle Marsh, this is a rather large project with an important agricultural component. It is co-managed by Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) and the Department of Lands and Forestry. We had a meeting there in mid-November to determine the best way to reduce the amount of plant growth on the four large impoundments. Lack of rainfall caused the overgrowth. During the nesting season last spring it was not considered to be a problem but, during the summer, all sorts of plants—including cattails and wild rice—plugged the waterways. To say the least, it was very discouraging. It will probably take up to five years to restore them.

If you are parents or grandparents and would like to encourage children to learn more about and contribute to the well-being of songbirds, bats, and waterfowl, why not consider doing a project in your backyard or at a nearby pond? I highly recommend that you build and monitor nesting boxes. Any scraps of used lumber, not painted or treated, will do. You can find plans online for bat houses, swallow boxes, and wood duck boxes. DUC has a Wetland Heroes Program for youth, and anyone under the age of 25 can be nominated as a Wetland Hero ([www.ducks.ca](http://www.ducks.ca)). I believe that, during the current

pandemic, this would be an ideal time to learn more about science and the environment. Students in the program can do this type of project to complete the environmental component. It's hands-on learning, and it's fun!

In the most recent issue of *Conservator Magazine*, there is an excellent article, *Measuring what Matters*. It's a significant report on what DUC has accomplished across Canada, as well as the economic value of goods and services in the Canadian economy. If you become a supporter of DUC, you will receive the magazine as part of your membership (\$35/year).

DUC Trivia: Did you know that Canada loses wetlands at an alarming rate despite the efforts to prevent this? It's about the equivalent of 40 soccer playing fields each day. Many provinces, including the Maritimes and Québec, have a policy known as *No net loss of wetlands*. In Nova Scotia, for example, developers are required to replace each acre lost with funding for three acres in replacement.

In closing, if you are a landowner or farmer in need of water or assistance in managing water, feel free to contact me. If you need help starting a nesting box project, don't hesitate to ask. ([gc\\_jones@yahoo.ca](mailto:gc_jones@yahoo.ca))

Donations of land or money are tax-receptible, as DUC is a registered charity. Legacy gifts are always welcome.



DUC Habitat Manager Rob Fraser and I cleaning debris from a fishway in the marsh at Armstrong Lake in November.

## Macdonald Concrete House Museum

submitted by  
Teresa Drahos\*

\* Excerpt from –

*Life of a Centreville Socialist: The Artful Labours and  
Concrete Thoughts of Charles Macdonald, 1874-1967*  
by Robin Bates, 2002

"I remember those deep blue eyes as if it were yesterday," says Kate Slipp, who first saw them sixty years ago. "He was a magnificent man. People around here felt that Charlie was different." And so he was. Charlie was a small, determined man who in his small way managed to live the life he pleased in spite of the disapproval and incomprehension of many of his neighbors. In Centreville, Nova Scotia, the principal landmark is a yellow house built entirely of concrete. The ninety-year-old home resembles little else in the Annapolis Valley, with its plastic forms, odd building material, and Mediterranean style, and a museum has operated there since 1996. While the house and the life-size concrete animals on its lawn are familiar to people across the Annapolis Valley, their builder Charles William Macdonald (1874-1967) has become a mysterious figure only thirty years after his death.

Charles Macdonald was born in Steam Mill, Nova Scotia, on April 5, 1874, the second of six children. His grandfather, the Presbyterian Reverend John Macdonald, had brought the family from New England to the Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia. Charlie's father Nathaniel took up the characteristic Valley profession of apple-grower. Macdonald took neither religion nor farming as his vocation, however, for art came to him very early in life. When an old man, Charlie told Frank Fillmore, the journalist son of his friend and neighbor Roscoe Fillmore, "I guess it just started when I was young. I remember seeing something I liked to look at and I just drew what I saw and I've kept drawing and painting ever since." Sketching became a life-long passion of Macdonald's and many of his studies of trees, people, and farm animals still survive. Apparently, however, Macdonald's devotion to art made him into a bit of a loner as a child. All of his life, Charlie would be his own man, pursuing his own projects for his own reasons.

In 1976, after Macdonald had been dead for almost a decade, his widow Mabel donated to the Public Archives of Nova Scotia a sketchbook that her husband had kept almost a century before. The "album of watercolours and sketches" is a small thing, no longer than a freshly sharpened pencil and perhaps half as wide. A barely legible inscription on the inside cover reads, "C. McDonald Steam Mill." The sketches inside the book run mostly to life studies and still lifes, and do not have titles so much as they have labels, "oak," "Neddie Brown,"



"Study of Stone," "Study of Rabbit." Several different drawings often crowd onto the same page, probably representing the youthful Macdonald's effort to save paper. A few finished works stand out. Some, like "Steam Mills," are clean and precise. Others, like "spring foliage," are smudged, wild, and impressionistic. All of them present a world that is idealized, idyllic, and bucolic.

Among the pencil sketches, one shows a boy no more than fourteen or fifteen who stares candidly back at the viewer. Added in ballpoint pen (probably in later years, then) is the word "myself." The fifteen year-old Macdonald in the sketch left school in 1889. Charlie went to work in Kentville, the shire town of his native Kings County, first as the apprentice to an undertaker and coffinmaker, then as a helper in the carriage shop of a wheelwright. So passed the next three years, during which he had only three days of holiday. Near the end of his life Macdonald recounted for a journalist, "I was paid the magnificent sum of twenty-five dollars a year and board for the first year, thirty-five dollars for the second, and fifty dollars for the third. Three years of working in Kentville left Macdonald restless, and he spent two years of "fooling around at this and that" before deciding to travel.

In 1895, Macdonald, like so many young Nova Scotians before him, went away to sea. Charlie worked as a ship's carpenter, a somewhat ironic circumstance for a man who would say so much against wooden construction later in life. First Macdonald sailed out of Boston, reversing his grandfather's journey to Nova Scotia. Later Charlie sailed out of New York. In 1898, Macdonald shipped out of New York bound for South America aboard the *Frances S. Hampshire*, one of a heterogeneous crew of Germans, Norwegians, Cockneys, and one Valley boy. The end of the nineteenth century signaled also the end of the Golden Age of Sail when huge windships sailed around the globe. A 1000-ton three-masted wooden barque like the *Francis S. Hampshire* already must have been

*Con't next page*



*Macdonald House - con't*

something of an anachronism in 1898. In an evocative meeting of the future and the past, the Hampshire sailed right underneath the iconic miracle in steel, the Brooklyn Bridge, "the lofty spars just grazing the great arch overhead."



Presently, Charlie's Concrete House is in great disrepair and will be lost forever if not restored in the next few years. The volunteer board and members are working hard to try to save this heritage property. If you would like to help, become a member [www.concretehouse.ca](http://www.concretehouse.ca).

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If you're looking to sharpen your current skill set or complete training to advance your career, we offer assistance with those skills, too. In-person classes have returned for first aid training, and some online alternatives are available as well. If there is a certificate you need, contact us to find the best course for you. We also offer free virtual workshops on a number of topics, so be sure to check our Facebook page for more information or to register (search @CommunityIncKentville).

The best ways to contact Nova Scotia Works – Community Inc are by phone or e-mail. Our phone number is 902-679-7469, and our e-mail address is [irs@communityinc.ca](mailto:irs@communityinc.ca). We look forward to hearing from you!





## NO PRESSURE

*Sylvia Gard*

For years now, I have been writing pages upon pages every morning. Then, one day, I calculate how many of these disposable pens are going to the landfill annually. It is a staggering number in terms of a whole population. I decide it is time for a change in my personal habits.

A few yesterdays ago  
I acquire a fountain pen.  
It is purple, plump, rounded.  
I carry it home, swaddled in its carrier.  
The name on the carrier is Pilot.  
I feed it brilliant black ink.  
It never blots or leaks. Often hungry.  
My indulgence with this newness is boundless.  
I spend hours with this new Pilot admiring the fluid lines it creates on the white paper.



One day, the inevitable occurs.  
Irritation comes for a visit.  
My mouth and jaw tighten, the eyebrows lower, the eyes squint through the glare.  
"Begone!" I cry with an ungentle voice.  
It lingers, as irritations often do.  
Picking up Pilot and paper, I think to let irritation have its say.  
Maybe then the unwanted guest will leave.  
I grip Pilot and press the nib to paper.  
"Stop! You're pressing too hard!"  
I freeze, surprised by this commanding voice.  
"Pffft! All right then, I'll use a ball-point pen."  
I turn away from Pilot. I turn toward a box of disposable InkJoy pens.  
Ignoring the cries of "Not me! Not me!" I pull one out of the box.  
Scrawling words sprawl across the page. Energy seethes through the deeply crossed t's, the ignored and undotted i's. Racing down the page, one flip and onto the next page. And so it goes.  
Eventually, irritation is tired out. Simultaneously, InkJoy runs out of ink.  
I toss InkJoy aside.  
Another one for the landfill.

For some time after this set-to with irritation, I continue to use the disposable InkJoy pens. However, discomfort grows every time I dispose of a pen, another betrayal of a value I have long touted openly. So, what's going on here, I ask. Just as Pilot said, 'You're pressing too hard!'. Let's experiment with writing, -- I mean the physical act of writing, of putting marks on paper. Let's pretend I hold a watercolour brush instead of a fountain pen. Oh, it takes getting used to, this mark making, this softer presentation of words, both the easy words and the hard words.

I glance out the window, watching a blue jay alight on a tree limb and fly off without fully landing. Touch and go. No pressure. Words can be like that.

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# Community Groups

**Centreville Hall Rental is not available at this time. Most meetings are cancelled until further notice. Contacts are provided for several groups and organizations and may be able to provide additional information.**

## Pins and Needles

Anyone is welcome to join us at the Community Hall on **Thursdays**. Bring along a craft you are currently working on and a paper bag lunch, and stay for the day. Tea and coffee are available. For further information call Ann Steadman at 902-678-4472.

## Comfort Quilts

Quilters meet at the hall on the **first Tuesday of the month** to work on 'comfort quilts'. These are made from donated fabric and are sewn and tied, then given to organizations to provide comfort to those in need.

## TOPS

TOPS meets at the Centreville Baptist Church, Murray Drive, on **Monday afternoons at 2:00**. We are open to new members at the cost of **\$48.00 yearly**, which includes a magazine from headquarters with "Eating Sensibly" ideas and recipes. You can drop by for one free meeting. For more information contact Sheila Frail at 902-679-5274 or Madeline Sheffield at 902-678-7584.

## Al-Anon

Are you affected by someone else's addictions? If so, Al-Anon is for you. Al-Anon is a support group for families and friends whose lives have been affected by someone else's drinking, drugs, etc. Our meetings are held **every Tuesday at 10:00 am** at the Baptist Church here in Centreville. For more information, please contact Sue at 902-681-6446.

## Good Neighbour Club

The Good Neighbour Club meets at the Centreville Hall at 7:00 pm on the **third Thursday of the month** (except June, July, August, and December). All Centreville women are welcome to attend and join the club.

## Centreville District Community Development Association (CDCDA) Board of Directors' Meetings

**Where:** Zoom

**When:** **Fourth Wednesday** of the month

**Time:** 7:00 pm

**Exceptions:** June, July, August and December by notification

All meetings are open to the public —  
Contact Anne-Marie Waterbury at 902-678-5700  
for the link to the meeting.

## Cancer Support Group

For women with or recovering from any type of cancer. Meetings are held the **second Thursday of each month** at 1:00 pm at alternating locations.

### Info:

Dorothy 902-538-3374 [msalsman@xcountry.tv](mailto:msalsman@xcountry.tv)

Pat 902-678-9100 [patmutch@hotmail.com](mailto:patmutch@hotmail.com)

Margot 902-542-1466 [margotwithat@hotmail.com](mailto:margotwithat@hotmail.com)



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