

Amherst Island BEACON



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THIS ISSUE

- Ian Murray

In the past month, 4 Island men have died: Piet Wittiveen, Carman McKee, Melville Filson and Leslie Wemp. The latter three men were born and raised here and moved off the Island many years ago. They are related by birth to most of the old Island families. Piet immigrated here many years ago and he also leaves family here. I hope, in future issues to print something of these mens' lives, along with family information and photos.

It is never easy to lose family members but it must be particularly difficult during the holiday season.

We at the Beacon appreciate the words of praise for the Beacon in Christmas cards and (especially) in notes with subscription renewals. A special note of thanks to all for the wealth of photographs that continue to grace our pages! Keep it up!

NEIGHBOURHOOD

- Lyn Fleming

Get Well wishes to Audrey Miller, following her recent surgery.

Continued good health wishes to Sally Bowen, Earl Tugwell, Phil Silver, Joyce Morgan and Susie Caughey.

Condolences to Anne-Marie Hitchens and family, following the passing of her mother earlier in December.

Condolences also to Syke Fleming and family following the passing of her father Peter Wittiveen just before Christmas. He was the oldest Islander for many years and continued to live in his own house and go for daily walks right up to his 98th birthday party in May, when he went into KGH and eventually Lenadco.

Island community also mourned the passing of Councillor Kathy Storms in December. Although Kathy represented the Bath ward on Council, she was very inter-



Piet Wittiveen, 1904-2002

ested and supportive of the Island and was often seen at Island events.

Stephanie Fleming spent a week in Orlando just before Christmas visiting her grandmother, Kay Wolfreys, and other family and friends.

Gary and Leslie McDonald and family spent the holidays visiting family and friends in England.

Alan Kidd and Judy Roberts and their daughters spent Christmas in Florida with Judy's family.

It's good to see all of the College and University students home over the holidays.

I didn't get my Christmas cards written and sent again this year, I wish they made New Years cards, as I have time to write those!

Happy and Safe New Years wishes to everyone.

COUNCIL GLEANINGS

- Ian Murray

1) Ferry Name Change. Tom Richmond sent a letter to Council requesting, among other things, that [since the old boat is being scrapped] the ferry's name be changed to the "Amherst Islander". This would be the fourth ferry to bear this name. Tom points out that, as well as heritage and the apparent stability lent to the ferry service by a name change, there are safety concerns involved as there is another ship named the "Frontenac" that also operates in our area.

In his report to Council on this matter, Jim Guest, Transportation and Solid Waste Manager, stated that "it is a very long, arduous and costly process to embark on such a name change.... it is not recommended that any action be taken on this item." One wonders: how long?; how arduous?; and, how costly? [more on page 11.]

2) Holder Sidewalk Plow [for the mainland]. Part of the funding for this \$62-thousand item is to take \$20-thousand from the Amherst Island Shore Roads budget of \$30-thousand.



The first Amherst Islander, a wooden boat (c.1929-31), seen here in Stella Bay. from Vera Hogeboom

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Others as noted.

3) Amendments to Official Plan & Zoning By-laws. Two wetland boundaries on Amherst Island were corrected. Lots being created where shore roads may be relocated will be required to "have an appropriate depth to front on ... realignments."

Also, "a creek on Amherst Island at the Head" which lacked an "EP" symbol now has one.

4) Estimated 2003 Policing Costs. \$1,633,521 of which \$1,505,826 is for salaries and benefits.

5) Letter from Alain Shooner, Plant Manager, Bath Cement Plant. This is a copy of a letter sent to our provincial and federal members of parliament requesting their support in preventing the Kyoto Protocol ratification. Mr. Shooner states that ratification will hurt the competitiveness of the cement industry. The Lafarge Bath Cement Plant exports 75% of its output to the US. (See Lafarge Facts below.)

6) R.I.D.E. This program (Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere) will once again be fully funded by the Ontario government. However, the Township has to front the money until the grant is received. The current program is expected to cost \$5497 [\$760 more than last year].

7) A sand and salt storage site is to be built at the existing works yard on Amherst Island in 2003.

8) The Township's general insurance premium for 2003 is \$110,291 plus taxes. A 33% increase in premiums was expected so the actual 19.5% increase is good news. There was only one quotation received by the closing date. A second quotation was almost 3 hours late arriving and was not accepted.

9) "Moved by Councillor Ashley and seconded by Councillor Lowry that the C.A.O. send a letter to the appropriate staff thanking them for their assistance during the difficult month with the smaller ferry. Motion carried."



The first Amherst Islander being towed out of the ice in Stella Bay by a tugboat from Vera Hogeboom

is to find species instead of trophies. The count has provided researchers with a wide range of data on bird populations and their localities at this time of year and limits the movement factor by having the counts all over North America at the same time. Fourteen hardy Birders took part and a total of 61 species were counted. The most exciting report was an East-

ern Bluebird spotted on Art McGinn's road by the bridge below David Wemp's farm. I've seen a Bluebird in this locality before but never on a Christmas count. A student from Lakehead University at Thunder Bay was our birder on that route, helping out with the count. The temperature was -4 to -2 so not exceedingly cold as some years but not Bluebird weather either! A total of 5 Bald Eagles were reported but one report had a rather interesting story. There were three Bald Eagles off the bar at the East end of the Island, two adults and an immature. They swooped over the bar and scattered some ducks who rapidly flew away but the immature Eagle waded into the frigid water and nabbed an injured duck, unable to fly and carried it out only to have the adults grab it from him and proceed to eat it while he waited dejectedly by, hoping for scraps. Doesn't sound fair, does it? The water was rough in places so our observers were unable to use scopes to spot ducks at distances but 12 different species of ducks were identified so that was good. One observer spotted both a Glaucous and an Iceland Gull at the Longpoint Fishing village and the Birders got 5 species of Gulls in total. Canada Geese were the largest number of a single species recorded and 27 Tundra Swans showed up to be counted. Five species of owls were noted but as we had expected the numbers are lower this

FACTS: LAFARGE BATH CEMENT PLANT

- Built in 1973
- Plant capacity of 1 million tons of cement per year
- 4 high quality cements
- Market: 25% Canada; 75%, United States
- Areas: Eastern Ontario; Toronto; Western New York (Oswego & Buffalo); Ohio (Cleveland); and, Michigan (Detroit)
- Shipping: boat, 85%; truck, 10%; rail, 5%
- Registered ISO 9002 for quality system
- 104 employees: 36 management staff and 68 hourly employees
- Salary and hourly compensation: \$7.5 million/year
- Contract work and parts: \$13 million/year from over 750 suppliers
- Taxes: \$1.6 million/year
- Capital investment: \$2 to \$3 million/year

JANET'S JOTTINGS

- Janet Scott

Monday, December 30th, 2002 was the date chosen for Amherst Island's annual Christmas Bird Count. The Audubon Bird Counts began 102 years ago as a way of tracking bird populations and replacing the former way of keeping numbers of shot birds during Christmas week. The challenge now

year. Try and get a look at the one that occupies the fields northeast of the Roads Garage because he is an unusually white male. The kind that seems to glow in the sunlight. There were three Snowy Owls, 1 Great Horned (I KNOW THERE ARE MORE ON THE ISLAND), 2 Long-eared Owls, 1 Short-eared Owl and 1 Saw-whet recorded. Only 2 Red-winged Blackbirds were seen in spite of the milder temperatures but no Grackles or Cowbirds were found and neither were any Robins reported. It was windy so any lingering Robins or thrushes would have been hunkered down in thick shrubs and dense bush. Toronto reports a significant drop in their Crow population which is attributed to the West Nile Virus. Our Crows were down too but there's been less corn grown on the Island the last few years, or the Crows are scattered with mild weather or any other number of factors so it's impossible to state disease as the cause. Once more I enjoyed hosting the annual count and am impressed again by the wonderful variety of birds that Amherst Island can provide regardless of the season.

The count:

Common Loon, 1; Double-crested Cormorant, 2; Great Blue Heron, 0; Canada Goose, 3309; Snow Goose, 0; Tundra Swan, 27; Gadwall, 215; American Black Duck, 211; Mallard, 1305; Common Merganser, 265; Red-breasted Merganser, 6; American Wigeon, 2; Redhead, 2; Common Goldeneye, 1069; Bufflehead, 104; Longtailed Duck, 1; Bald Eagle, 5; Northern Harrier, 24; Red-tailed Hawk, 18; Rough-legged Hawk, 29; American Kestrel, 8; Sharp-shinned Hawk, 1; Herring Gull, 114; Greater Black-backed Gull, 31; Ring-billed Gull, 215; Glaucous Gull, 1; Ring-necked Pheasant, 2; Mourning Dove, 109; Rock Dove, 31; Iceland Gull, 1; Snowy Owl, 3; Great Horned Owl, 1; Long-eared Owl, 2; Short-eared Owl, 1; Saw-whet, 1; Northern Flicker, 2; Downy Woodpecker, 6; Hairy Woodpecker, 1; Belted Kingfisher, 1; Blue Jay, 84; American Crow, 18; Horned Lark, 2; Snow Bunting, 1; Black-capped Chickadees, 85; White Breasted Nuthatch, 13; Northern Shrike, 4; Red-winged Blackbird, 2; European Starling, 800; White-throated Sparrow, 1; Am. Tree Sparrow, 92; Swamp Sparrow, 3; Song Sparrow, 10; House Finch, 16; House Sparrow, 204; Car-

dinal, 4; Dark-eyed Junco, 18; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 10; Goldfinch, 6; Cedar Waxwings, 16; Eastern Bluebird, 1; Lesser Scaup, 3; Greater Scaup, 30.

AIMS

- Peter Trueman

David Brady told the December 14 AIMS meeting that information given in his absence at the last meeting to the effect that our grant application had been dropped from this year's Heritage Canada funding list because of incomplete documentation was incorrect. He had met recently with Heritage Canada and supplied them with the only outstanding document that they needed, a photocopy of last summer's incorporation papers. AIMS is maintaining its place on the list, but David had no word on when we might expect a decision. He further reported that the Neilson Store board had received some queries from the Trillium Foundation about the number of visitors that might be expected. The board is designing a flow chart to give the Trillium Foundation a way of measuring the museum and cultural centre's performance.

Marc Raymond reported that the Antique Road Show, intended more as a way of raising Island consciousness about the value of some of the antiques here, and not as a fund-raiser, had nonetheless raised \$575.25 for the Museum fund after \$24.75 in expenses. John Kuti offered to look into the possibility of repeating the road show perhaps in conjunction with other festivities next summer. Last month's evening at Diane Pierce's house in celebration of Peter Trueman's Order of Canada, and Eleanor Trueman's newly established Order of Amherst Island, raised \$560 for the Museum Fund.

Ed Mooney and Marc

Raymond were the December speakers, and because their properties were entangled when they first purchased land on the island in the mid-seventies they decided to speak together. Their properties, at 2350 and 2400 Front Road, were originally part of a parcel owned by Wilbert Willard, who had surveyed and laid out a subdivision. When Council voted not to allow it, Ed and Marc's purchase of lots was void. Council ruled that henceforth, building lots must be a minimum of five acres. To add to the confusion, the steel survey stakes for the subdivision went missing, Ed and Marc formed Moonray Estates, bought a large piece of the property and with some difficulty, divided it. They have been good Island neighbours ever since.

Ed Mooney (whose full name is not Edward but Edgar) was born on a farm at Vankleek Hill, east of Ottawa near the Quebec border. He biked three and a half miles to school, and in the winter was a "basket boarder" with people in town. They were so-called because they took baskets full of food to town to get them through the week. In grade 13 he took nine subjects and got credits in every one, and he did everything he could to get off the farm as soon as possible. But in 1949, he wound up on someone else's farm. Ed and a friend went west that summer in a harvest workers' train made up of old colonist cars with hard seats. They got \$6 a day for stooking wheat and \$7 for threshing, at which they worked from 6:30 a.m. to 9:30 at night. When he got back from the west he figured he had \$20 more than he left with.



A crate addressed to "W.A. Kilpatrick, Emerald, Ont. via Ernestown From S.[?] Toronto" on the Neilson Store Dock, c. 1930

detail of a photo from Vera Hogeboom

but he admitted to having had “a good time”. After that, Ed worked in a Goodyear tire plant in Bowmanville and did other jobs. He got married in 1956 and went to Queens. He wound up at the Ottawa Teacher’s College in 1960, where his locker was beside that of a fellow named Allen Caughey. At 28, he was older than most of his classmates, and when he graduated he felt he was lucky to get a job in a school on “the Scotch Line”, just outside Perth. It was a one room school with seven grades. Ed taught there a couple of years and figures he got 15 years worth of experience. He got the job because the teacher before him was a member of the Plymouth Brethren who accepted literally the biblical dictum “thou shall not be equally yoked with unbelievers”, and quit. After the Scotch Line, Ed came to Kingston and taught for another five years. One of his experiences was working with a vice-principal named Dick Dodds. “I could tell you a lot about Dick Dodds”, he told AIMS members, but he didn’t. Suddenly, after 10 years, his wife Margaret was pregnant and had to quit teaching. Ed worked in Ernestown and

Odesa after that and retired in 1989. He became acquainted with Amherst Island in the mid-seventies because a principal at one of his schools had bought an Island property from John Hall, and was building a cottage on it when he died of a heart attack. His widow was embarrassed by the fact that the building was without siding, so Ed agreed to put it on for her, and in the process became acquainted with the Island. When the place next door was suddenly up for sale, he decided to buy and in the process became acquainted with Marc Raymond.

Marc told AIMS members that he was born in Ottawa, in an area called Overbrook on the east side of the Rideau between Cummings and Hurdman’s Bridges, just north of where the RCMP headquarters is today. When Marc was a boy, Overbrook was small rural community within Ottawa’s boundaries. The main thoroughfare was the CNR siding to Eastview. They walked the tracks to

Eastview to shop and go to movies, and walked the tracks in the other direction to go to school. In effect, Overbrook in those days was a little village about the size of Stella. Marc’s grandfather had come from Italy in 1895 and married a Quebecois girl from Quyon. They moved to Ottawa and learned English, and Marc’s family lived with them when he was little. There were cows in the back yard and they could walk to hunting and fishing. Overbrook was full of cousins and there was a Finlay Oval in his grandfather’s kitchen. As Marc remembers it, life was idyllic. They were told never to go into the White Rat bush or the white rat would get them, so of course they did. Once



Last call for glass bottomed boat on the Front Road

Judith Harrower

Marc and a friend named Ray had the whole community looking for them because they took a dare to go into a long, dark culvert with no end in sight. They went in a hundred feet and their flashlight failed. So they sat there until the others went to school, then continued the journey until a half hour later they saw light at the other end. The culvert came out on the banks of the Rideau River just down the street from Ray’s house. After checking out the river ice and an old tannery, they decided they should join the children coming out of school and go home as if nothing had happened. Then one of the older boys asked him if they were going to join the search for the two kids who’d gone through the culvert and had fallen through thin ice on the river. They decided they’d better get home fast, and when his Dad asked him “where were you?” Marc knew he was for it. But his mother started laughing and that was the end of it. “We weren’t poor” Marc said, “because people banged on our door looking for handouts”. His fa-

ther eventually built their own house, which could only be approached by the siding. His father kept cutting the railway’s fence, so they could get to the house, and railroad work crews kept putting it up again. Today, the siding has been replaced by the Vankleek parkway. When Marc was about five, his mother told his father that if he was going to work on Saturdays he’d have to take the boy with him. So Marc started going to the Ottawa Imperial lens factory and learning to make glasses when he was just five years old.

When he was 10, they moved to Pembroke and Marc continued to work part-time in a lens factory, where he learned to overhaul the machines he was working on. He still likes taking things apart and putting them back together again. They lived in Pembroke for 10 years. Marc raised his share of Cain with other young fellows, most of whom are now dead. A joiner, he became an air cadet, cub and scout. They drove to Renfrew and Deep River because “the girls were prettier” and Marc continued to work for his father. There wasn’t enough space for everyone in the local high school, so Marc was schooled

by the Christian Brothers for four years. One of his regrets is that he left hockey enrollment too late and never did manage to play on a team, so he made sure to sign up his own sons early, and now his grandson is an NHL prospect in the making. He went to work full time for Imperial Optical and never did graduate from high school. Since he wanted to become an optician he had to have high school, so when Champlain opened, he and three others - two other boys and a lone girl - signed up for a special technical class that taught drafting, auto mechanics, electricity and electronics. It was a wonderful year, and as Mark put it, he wound up marrying “a quarter of the class”, that is Marny.

After he became an optician, he worked for Shorney’s in Ottawa a couple of years and was reluctantly talked into transferring to Kingston. When Shorney’s was bought out by another firm, Marc, who by this time liked Kingston, set up on his own. He took up boating, joined the Chamber

of Commerce and the Kiwanis and began looking for a recreational property they could afford. One day, while passing the Island in their boat, he spotted a Bowes and Cocks sign on the north shore, took a closer look, picked a 120 foot lot and made an offer. Then they waited while the Island council made its mind up whether to grant a severance. It eventually went to the Ontario Municipal Board. The bad news was that the severance was not just exactly where he wanted it. The good news was that the severed property was quite a bit bigger than the one Marc had had in mind, and that "the guy next door", Ed Mooney, wanted to buy an overlapping piece. It was suggested that perhaps he and Ed could work out an agreement. They got "married", as they put it, formed Moonray Estates, and bought a larger parcel together. Eventually, they managed to divide the property right down the middle, and still appear to be speaking to each other despite a certain amount of on-going confusion about the exact location of the stone fence between them, and the failure of a joint reforestation project. They bought 3,750 seedlings, which they planted in the rain. As soon as they finished planting, the rain stopped, of course, and between the dryness and the voles, only 76 scotch pines, two poplars, one black locust and a cedar survived.

Amid applause, Chair Don Pepper said he'd "never heard anything like that before" and went on to the last item of business.

Don Pepper, John Kuti and Zander Dunn volunteered as kitchen crew for the next breakfast meeting on January 11, 2003, and Dave Hieatt agreed to chair. John Munro offered to speak. All Island men are welcome. Breakfasts cost \$5, and annual dues, payable at the next meeting for those who wish to join, are \$20.

HERE & THERE - Ian Murray

Much is made of the dangers of farming today but I believe that farming has never been safer. There are always accidents and there always will be - as there are in any physically demanding work. My understanding is that the virtual elimination of work horses and dairy bulls from farm life has been the biggest factor in increased

farm safety.

An old farmer told me that the most dangerous thing he ever saw was a team of horses - probably one of them stung by a horse fly - bolting for home with a hay mower bouncing behind them. There were people and animals in the barnyard as the horses charged in. Had the mower blade not shattered on a gate post, there would have been real carnage. I suspect that most old farmers have stories of horse related accidents: legs broken, skulls cracked, and necks snapped. My mother's foot was stepped on



Marion Glenn "dishing it up" at the WI Senior's Dinner in December 2002

Judith Harrower

while she was harnessing and she said the worst part was not the snapping bones but that she could not get the horse to move. Her mother ran out of the house and managed to get the horse forward.

There are lots of stories of dairy bulls turning on a dime and goring or crushing the unwary farmer. Jersey bulls had a particularly bad reputation. But Holsteins were dangerous too. It must have been in the early 70s that A. Bruce Caughey was rescued from an angry bull by his son Allen wielding a pitch fork.

The tractor and AI (artificial insemination) have made the farm a lot safer, I think.

For those of you yearning for the good old

days on the farm, I recommend a short story by Alister McLeod: "Second Spring".

This time of year I spend most of the morning on a tractor delivering and unrolling large round bales of hay for our various sheep flocks. Except when it's muddy, I quite enjoy this chore as the cab keeps the wind out and there's no heavy lifting.

One of the perks of this job is that I get to listen to "The Current" each weekday morning on CBC. It is quite refreshing to listen to solid reporting on important issues. Both hosts, Anna Maria Tremonti and Bernard St. Laurent, ask the questions that I would like to ask if I had the opportunity and the intelligence.

This past week the show has been particularly good - especially at a time when the media is loaded with seasonal fluff. "The Current" dealt in depth on: the most under-reported stories of 2002; whistle-blowing (including an interview with Daniel Ellsberg); blood diamonds; and, on Jan. 1, a disturbing article on "The Remnant" series. The brief satirical pieces by a mellow voiced male are often brilliant - particularly the politically correct greeting card on the December 31 program.

Recently there have been several entries into local houses using keys that the owners thought were well hidden. There do not appear to have been any theft or damage done.

Two of our farm gates were driven into and destroyed in the past month or so. We understand that other farmers have also had this problem.

THE ORDER APLAUDED - ANOTHER AWARDED

- Dick Dodds

Over 70 longtime and newly arrived Islanders gathered at the home of Diane Pearce on November 30 to congratulate Peter Trueman on being a recent recipient of the Order of Canada. Peter looked very distinguished and resplendent as he greeted everyone with his stunning Order of Canada medal around his neck for all to see and admire. Those present expressed appreciation to Diane for the opportunity to applaud Peter and for opening her



A manure drawing bee on the Third Concession at Earle Tugwell's
from Jean Tugwell

charming home for the celebration. Along with Michele Le Lay and a very dedicated Committee of Islanders, a wonderful array of food and libation was presented and thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. The evening was not without speeches, entertainment and a surprise.

Duncan Ashley, our local councillor acted as the Master of Ceremonies. Diane, on behalf of Michele and the Committee, welcomed everyone to her home and expressed her personal congratulations to Peter. Reeve McEwen brought greetings from the Township and presented the Trueman's with a number of small gifts. Deborah Kimmett, our local star of stage, entertained those present with a hilarious reading, reminding Peter, with tongue-in-cheek, that she had been nominated for the Order of Canada 17 times but showed no bitterness or resentment that he was chosen.

Peter responded with a brief video of the ceremony in Halifax where the Governor General reached far above her head to place the Order of Canada around Peter's neck. He noted the very pleasant train ride to the east coast and the fact their three children were present for the ceremony. He thanked everyone for attending the evening celebration and, as usual, expressed his love for Amherst Island and how much he and Eleanor enjoy the culture and values of the Island.

The surprise of the evening occurred when longtime Islanders Keith and Shirley Miller, on behalf of everyone, presented Eleanor Trueman with the first-ever Order of Amherst Island! In the presentation ceremony, Keith hung the red and white ribbon with a sterling silver Saw-whet owl pendant, around Eleanor's neck, to thunderous applause from the entire crowd. It was a nice touch and perhaps the beginning of a tradition on the Island.

On behalf of AIMS, Dick Dodds concluded the evening by acknowledging that Peter had requested any donations be given to his cherished project, the Neilson's Store restoration fund. Peter is intent on doing whatever is necessary to celebrate the history of

the Island and the Islanders. Dick thanked Peter for his love of the Island, his dreams for the Island and his thoughtfulness, and noted that \$580.00, indeed, had been donated.

TUNDRA SWANS IN SAND BAY

- Bill Harris

This year the Tundra Swans came to Amherst Island on the 1st of November, according to records kept by Harry Filson. They are found on the eastern tip of Amherst Island: east of Amherst Bar, and inside Sand Bay, south of the Brothers Islands and east of Jeffrey's point. They can most easily be seen from a car at the foot of Front Road,

Last winter the Tundra Swans stayed through most of the winter, often flying over to Wolf Island when our bay froze over. As many as sixty swans were in Sand Bay at one time and this year so far flocks of twenty to thirty have been seen. In previous years when the ice came sooner, the swans flew further south to their normal wintering grounds in Chesapeake Bay.

The Tundra Swan, (called Whistling Swan by Americans) breeds in the ponds of the northern tundra. They are all white except for black legs, feet and bill. On average they have twice the body length and weight of a Canada Goose.



BH Photo



AN INTERVIEW WITH KEITH MCGINN



- Zander of DUNN INN

One of Amherst Island's special people is Keith McGinn, retired from Amherst Roofing and Sheet Metal on November 1, 2002 after 48 years of service. A big party, which many Islanders attended was thrown in his honor on November 23 in Kingston.

Keith was born on September 19, 1932, in a house long gone, on the property where Kay and Dorothy McGinn now live, the seventh of the eight children of Edward and Ellen (Gibson) McGinn. Jane Flanagan*, the mid-wife on the Island then, presided at Keith's birth. Whenever a child was to be born the other children in the family were sent to stay with a neighbour until the brother or sister arrived. Of all the children, Keith and his younger brother, Kay, are the only ones left on the Island.

Three of his sisters - Hilda, Edna and Laura live on the mainland but Iona and Nora have died, as has his older brother, Leslie. Keith's was a farming family which provided milk for the cheese factory in Emerald. All the children had plenty of work to do to help the family. Not only were there cows to milk, there were chickens and turkeys to feed and a garden to tend. Keith still likes to raise vegetables for his own table and remembers fondly the bottled fruits and vegetable storage bins in the basement of his home. Before refrigeration the family would preserve, in salt, the pork they killed before winter set in.

From grades one to eight Keith attended No. 4 School which still stands on the Emerald Forty Foot. Usually Keith and his siblings walked to school but sometimes in the winter Harry Westwood, who often drove his daughter, Dreta, to school, picked them up and gave them a ride in the sleigh. Keith did well in that school under the tutelage of Clarence Hogeboom* (whom he remembers as a good teacher and a firm disciplinarian) and Mrs. McMullin* whom he highly regarded. As a good student, Keith managed to do grades seven and eight in one year. When he got to high school, (which was then the brick build-



ing on the main street in Stella and later became Ross and Tina's Coffee shop, which burned down) he won a silver dollar his teacher, Ruth Gibson*, awarded him for excellence - a prize he still treasures.

Although Keith is three years older than his wife, Cora, they knew each other all through their school years. Keith smiles when he recalls he had no time for Cora Gibson then. Later they discovered a love on which to build a marriage and were joined



together by The Rev. Bannister in Chalmers United Church in Kingston on October 31, 1953. It was a small wedding attended only by Keith's sister, Edna, and her husband,

Jim Hunter, and by Keith's good friend, Bob Filson.

For the first four years of their marriage Keith and Cora lived with Keith's parents. Keith had done some truck driving and other odd jobs until he was hired by Bob Harding of Irving and Harding Roofing and Sheet Metal in the first week of October of 1954.

In 1957 Keith and Cora bought their present property (5700 Third Concession) which then constituted an old house on 20 acres of land from Fred Neilson (of Neilson's Store) for \$3,500. They paid \$60 a month until the property was paid for in five years. When Cora personally presented Fred with the last cheque he told her she and Keith had been such good clients he only wished he had something else to sell to them.

Lawrence Sudds, a good friend from Amherst Island, was responsible for getting Keith a job with Bill Irving and Bob Harding of Irving and Harding Roofing which changed to R.E. Harding Roofing in the late 1950's and early 1960's and then to Amherst Roofing in 1981. All three roofing companies have been owned and managed by the Harding family.

Keith has hired many ambitious young men from the Island over the years. Roofing has taken Keith to many towns and cities throughout Ontario such as Bancroft, Cornwall, North Bay, Sault Sainte Marie.

Keith figures he is the Amherst Islander who has commuted to the mainland longer than anybody else in history. For 48 years Keith has walked, driven a car or piloted a snowmobile across the ice between the mainland and the Island. He has many stories to tell about his adventures getting back and forth to the Island.

Keith's car of choice for crossing the ice for many years was a 1930 Model "A" Ford. He and Hans deHaan and Elmer Willard often crossed together as a team. Keith likes to tell about the time they went through dips, holes and ruts so often that Eldon Willard, the captain of The Amherst Islander, figured they were trying to break a

track for the ferry.

On another occasion Keith was traveling in the Model "A" with Ed Gavlas, Hans deHaan and Bob Gibson over ice which looked alright except that it did not reach to the shore. When the car entered the water near the shore it stalled so Keith had to walk out on the fenders, stand on the bumper, reach down and crank her up. The car started and they made it to land safely.

Another time, Hans and Keith approached a sunken section of ice. Keith warned, "The water's going to be deep here." That did not deter Hans who went ahead only to have the water rush in and fill up the back seat of the car.

Once the glare ice and the strong winds presented Keith and his mates with a dangerous combination. When trying to drive across such ice they found the car was being blown around in circles. The men had to don "creepers" (straps to hold spikes on the bottom of their shoes) to enable them to fight the wind and anchor the rear end of the car to keep the vehicle on course.

During the terrible blizzard of 1977, when crossing on snowmobiles, Keith and Hans got lost in the middle of the whiteout half-way across the ice. The snow was so heavy they could not see more than six feet ahead. They feared their machines would get separated and they might fall into the open water of the ferry track. After an hour of groping, they made it across. The snow was so heavy that year almost everything shut down on the Island for a month. Eventually a snow clearing machine was brought in from Trenton to blow out the roads.

Keith and his co-workers appreciated the generous response of all the ferry captains in the 1960s - Eldon Willard, Albert Mulders, Norm Brooks - when he and the others employed by Amherst Roofing requested the ferry make a 6 a.m. run so they could get to work on time. (The first ferry crossing was at 6:50 a.m. in those days.) The captains all agreed and that made life easier for Keith's co-workers. Unfortunately the ferry's last run on weekdays was at 6 p.m. which meant Keith and his Amherst Roofing buddies could not always get home for the night. They usually bunked in with relatives on the mainland.

Keith's association with Amherst Roofing, which he calls an excellent company, has been a happy one. Amherst Roofing does industrial roofing for big organizations like Queen's University, Dupont, Alcan and



Staples.

Keith speaks of the company as a family and has never had a bad word to say about his employers. The admiration is obviously mutual. Keith has never been laid off and was promoted, in his second year, to be a foreman. In 1970 he became supervisor. Keith's family has found a new family within the company. Last year all five of his sons and three of his grandsons were employed at once. The company said they would have hired Keith's only daughter, Yvonne, too, but she already had a demanding job as manager of The Helen Henderson Home. Of the five sons, only Leon, the second youngest, no longer works with Amherst Roofing because of a back injury and is the driver of a school bus in Kingston. Terry, the oldest son, started with the company at 16 and now has 32 years in; Larry has taken his father's



place as supervisor; Eric does estimates for the company and Kelly is a licensed sheet metal worker. The three grandsons, Terry, Ryan and Brent were employed for the summer - and may be back again.

Keith has seen big changes in his work over the years. When he began, everything (including buckets of asphalt) was pulled up onto the roof by hand using pulleys and ropes. Now everything is hoisted by crane trucks and the asphalt is pumped onto the roof. Safety is stressed. Amherst Roofing is one of the best equipped and safest roofing companies in Ontario today.

In spite of the company's good safety record and his own lack of accidents, Keith has seen a couple of men badly burned by hot asphalt. Those accidents were not pretty sights and Keith still finds his memories of them disturbing.

Keith is keen to keep active in his retirement. He enjoys watching the birds gather around his feeders and fly through his trees. He takes pleasure in duck hunting along the shore and the nearby marsh. He finds fishing for bass to be excellent in the bay closeby. He keeps busy raising pheasants and likes to garden.

As for Amherst Island, Keith remembers fondly the dances of his youth in Emerald and in Victoria Hall. He speaks highly of good neighbors, and there were none better than Earl and Jean Tugwell who lived next door and were like parents to his kids.

He continues to enjoy euchre parties. He is most happy when his children gather at the family home for the holidays and for special events.

The changes Keith has seen on the island have all been for the good. We have improved winter travel: we are blessed with good roads; we enjoy excellent ferry service; we have benefitted from the new people who have come to the Island. Keith would not want to live anywhere else. That's a positive note on which to enter retirement.

NOTES:

* Jane Denee Flanagan (1877-1960) was Jane McGinn's great-grandmother and Keith's great-aunt.

* Clarence Hogeboom (1906-?) was an uncle of Kerry Hogeboom's.

* Mary Towns McMullin (1900-1953) was Helen McCormick's mother.

* Ruth Gibson's family lived on the lot where Carol & Rick Morgan's house is now. She was a first cousin once removed of Helen McCormick.

Photos from the McGinn Family

LETTER HOME

- Chris Kennedy

It's been a busy fall on the farm, as always. The second half of the summer was very dry, and the fall rains did not start until the end of September. This meant that the grass did not have much time to grow before the soil turned too cold. We fed the ewes hay for much of September, and part of October, and then turned them out to what pasture we had in November, to get them ready for breeding at the end of the first week of December. It takes us about two days to get the ewes all divided up into their breeding groups, and off to the pastures with the appropriate rams.

Since then the weather has been good for them, without much snow and not too cold, so we hope that breeding has gone well. Of course we will only really know next May, when we expect the first lambs.

We have also been selling lambs for the last six weeks or so. Prices earlier in the fall were somewhat down from previous years, but seem to be picking up now. Because of the drought in the Prairies a lot of ewes and lambs have been sent east to the Toronto market, which depressed the prices. We hope the flood from out west is slowing down now. Anecdotal evidence says that half the breeding sheep in Alberta have been sold. Farmers held on to their best breeding animals, and everything else had to go.

Even with all the modern technology the farmer is very weather dependant. If it doesn't rain there will still be no crop. I was at the Ontario Federation of Agriculture Annual Meeting, and met Wyatt McWilliams, the man who started the Hay West campaign, where eastern farmers with hay to spare sent it out west to help out. He thought he might be able to put together one rail-car of hay, and ended up with something like six hundred, as well as many tractor trailer loads. Reading about the effort it seems the hay was a help, but more important was the idea that someone actually cared enough to try to help. Sometimes, with all the modern high-

tech industries and dot.com companies around the farmer feels that he is almost forgotten. The supermarkets are always full of good, cheap, safe food and we forget that someone has to grow it.

Enough gloom. The lambs have grown very well this fall, prices have picked up a bit, and the ewes are looking in good fettle. There is a New Year to look forward to. Every farmer



Third Concession

Peter Large, SCA

must be at heart an optimist or we would never start another crop. We wish everyone the best in the year to come. *****

SNOW FLAKES, SNOW FLAKES EVERYWHERE

- Grant Filson (1992)

Snow flakes, snow flakes, white and clean.

Snow flakes, snow flakes everywhere.

Snow flakes fluttering, fluffy, light

Filling the early evening light.

Only nature could create

Tiny wisps, like tufts of down

Falling slowly from the sky

Whitening up the frozen ground.

Watch them as they gently fall.

Follow, chase them with delight.

Catch them on your outstretched palms.

Then close your hands, holding tight.

If you think you've got them caught

Open your hands with tender care

But don't be tearful when you find

There'll not be any snow flakes there.



From INVASIVE EXOTIC PLANTS OF CANADA

Alliaria petiolata Brassicaceae

aka Garlic Mustard

- Ian Murray

I first noticed this plant about 25 years ago in the far corner of our yard. I'd never seen it before and looked it up in a plant book. Now it is very common on our home farm wherever the sheep aren't allowed (although the experts believe that sheep won't eat it). Garlic mustard is mainly a problem in our flower and vegetable gardens. It is debatable which species does the most harm to the tree seedlings in the woods: garlic mustard (shading out) or deer (grazing).

This plant was most likely spread by European immigrants who valued it as an edible herb as well as for its medicinal properties: mainly as a poultice on ulcers and cuts. It was first noticed in Kingston in 1898 and in Victoria, BC, in 1948.

The generic name *Alliaria* is based on the scientific name for onions and garlic because of the garlic-like odour of the plant. The adjective *petiolata* refers to the presence of leaf stalks. *Brassicaceae* means that it is a member of the mustard family.

Garlic mustard is a biennial that develops a rosette of leaves from a slender tap root during the first year. The evergreen leaves persist over winter and the plant produces an unbranched flowering stalk early in May. Seed production has been recorded to exceed 6000 seeds per square foot in excellent growing conditions.

THANK YOU NOTES

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Witteveen family, I would like at this time to thank the Amherst Island Emergency Response Team for their quick response and the professional manner in which they treated our father prior to transport by ambulance to KGH last May 5th.

Dad spent three weeks on Davies 3 while being treated for a liver infection, he then moved to Connell 4 where he was to spend

the next six months. Dad did pretty well for a while, but it soon became apparent that his legs would not let him do the walking that had been such a big part of his life. Dad never lost his will to go on and he looked forward to his meals most days. He made many friends at KGH and loved sitting at the big windows in the sunroom where he watched all the activities going on below and the traffic on Lake Ontario all the while enjoying the warmth of the sun. During one of those many days sitting in front of the window we watched a boat larger than the usual sailboats and tour boats sail past. Dad took a good look and commented that "it looks like our old Amherst Islander", it turned out she was on her way for a tour of duty at Pelee Island. He watched daily as the big beautiful maple trees along King Street turned from green to yellow and brilliant red. When we would have to leave Dad each time to come home, his usual comment was "when will you be back" and with a wave of the hand he would watch us go.

By the end of summer Dad was no longer doing so well and on November 21st he was moved to Lenadco long-term care facility in Napanee. He was never able to realize the excellent and compassionate care he received there.

Dad passed away peacefully on December 21st at the age of 98.

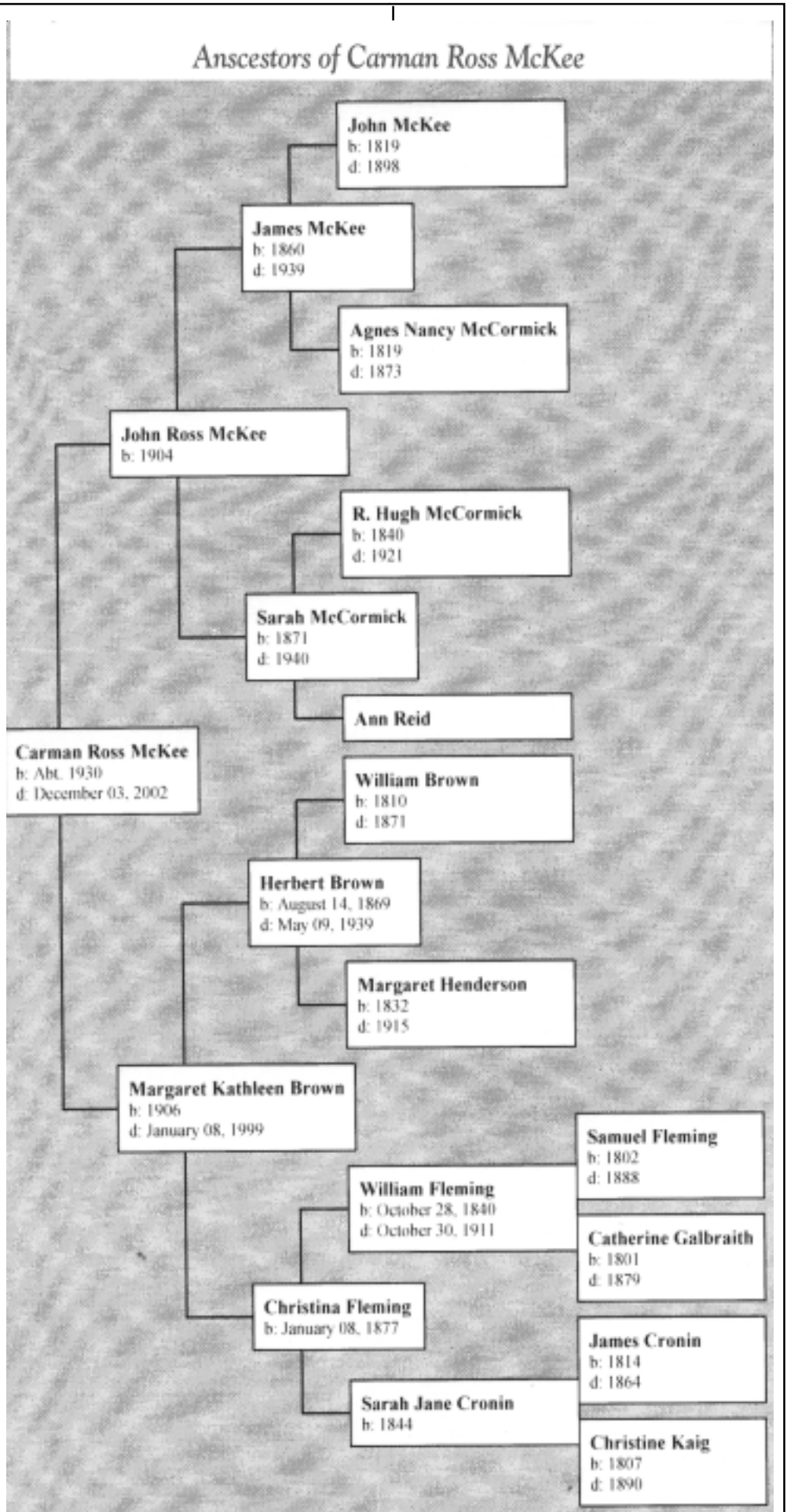
We will miss you Dad, but we know you are with mother in a better place.

Syke Fleming & Family

At this time I would like to thank my family, friends and neighbours for the time they spent visiting my father in hospital and later at Lenadco and for the many beautiful messages of sympathy and contributions made in Dad's memory. It is all very much appreciated. May I wish you all a happy, safe and above all a blessed new year.

Yours Sincerely, Syke Fleming

FOR SALE: Minolta X700 manual / semi-auto 35MM SLR camera, one of the most popular cameras of it's type made. Includes flash, 50mm 1:1.7 lens & a set of micro- lenses for enlarging small subjects (pictures out of books, plant closeups, etc). One owner- was new in 1987, is in good condition. Excellent choice for first time or advanced 35MM users. Come and see it! \$125 OBO 634-1855



**Excerpts from a
letter to Council
Re: the MV *Amherst Islander*
T. Richmond 23 Nov. 2002**

...**First**, and most time critical, is regarding the status of the *MV Amherst Islander*, most recently assigned by the MTO to Pelee Island Ferry Service. This ship, the last vessel constructed in the Kingston Shipyards, provided long and faithful service to the residents of this tiny community beginning in 1955. Now, forty-seven years later and a little worse for wear, I have heard that it has been scheduled for decommissioning and scrapping (indeed, this may have already occurred) in Port Colborne.

I understand that the Council contacted MTO some time ago, indicating a desire to save certain artifacts from the *MV Amherst Islander*. I do not know if this has been followed up on; If not, then now is the time to do so. **Of particular interest are the ship's logbooks, dating back from today to 1955, which were kept in the captain's quarters.** These must be kept with the ship until it has been scrapped, but would presumably be worthless to any scrap dealer. They would, however, be an invaluable resource for Islanders, giving information on weather, ice conditions, special events, traffic, repairs, crews, supplies, etc., etc. The logbooks of previous ships bearing the name *Amherst Islander* are apparently lost to time: If possible, please try to save these valuable artifacts.

Second, I ask that the council request the current ship on Amherst Island service, the *Frontenac II*, be officially renamed the *Amherst Islander*. There are a number of reasons for this change:

1) **Tradition.** There have been three ships named Amherst Islander. The first, "the wooden boat" began service in the 1930's. The second arrived in 1947, and was a converted WWII landing craft. The third is the one being scrapped now, dating from 1955. Changing the name would continue what has been an Island tradition for seven decades. The use of the term II or III or IV would be redundant and unnecessary, as the old name can be reused once the name of the previous ship is removed from use.

2) **Permanence and stability.** Uncertainty stifles growth, affects real estate prices, and hurts the economy of any region. Appearances are extremely important in maintaining a positive outlook in any situation. Most residents who have lived through the various Amherst Island "ferry crises" over the years would be relieved by the permanence that would be lent in the renaming of the *Frontenac II* as the *Amherst Islander*.

3) **Safety.** There is another ship, the *Frontenac*, which also works this area. It regularly takes on cargo throughout the warm months at a local cement plant, and is often heard on the marine radio channels in use on the ferry. Changing the name of the *Frontenac II* to *Amherst Islander* could avoid any confusion from these two similarly named ships operating within line-of-sight distance of each other, and enhance maritime safety...

**Excerpts from a response by
Township staff: 19Dec 2002
Jim Guest, T&SW Mgr
David Thompson, Dir. Eng Svcs.**

...A recent letter received... outlined several issues concerning the Amherst Island Ferry Service. Staff have reviewed this let-

ter and offer the following.

1. The status of the Amherst Islander - As Council is well aware, the Amherst Islander is for sale and the Township has been in contact with MTO to ensure that any artifacts are removed and given to the Township for archiving purposes. This includes log books, bells, wheels, name plates, etc.. Of particular interest is that the current ship's wheel can be given to the Township if a replacement wheel is found. The writer is currently investigating this matter to find a wheel that matches the spline on the shaft that the wheel turns. Every effort will be made to locate such a wheel.

2. The changing of the name of the Frontenac II to the Amherst Islander - Where Mr. Richmond makes a very valid point, it is a very long, arduous and costly process to embark on such a name change. Therefore, this has been discussed with the ship's owner, MTO, and Transport Canada. At this time, it is not recommended that any action be taken on this item...

"The time that gives support to a work of art does not give definition either to its principle or to its specific form."
Henri Focillon



**Unloading the mail behind the Neilson Store, 23 Feb 1932 :
Francis McKee at stern; Dick O'Connor; Max Moutray; Henry Mustin; Syl McDonald.
[we dont know who person #6 is.]
from Vera Hogeboom**

NEWS FROM THE GENERAL STORE

Its hard to believe it's January already and the hustle and bustle of the Christmas season is over

These are the latest video rentals we have in right now:

Men With Brooms - Leslie Neilson, Paul Gross

Spiderman - Tobey Maguire, Kirsten Dunst

Mr. Deeds - Adam Sandler

The Sweetest thing - Cameron Diaz

Replicant - Jean Claude Van Damme

Changing Lanes - Ben Affleck, Samuel Jackson

Star Wars II

Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood - Sandra Bullock, Ashley Judd

Panic Room - Jodie Foster

High Crimes - Morgan Freeman, Ashely Judd

From all of us at The Store, we wish everyone good health, happiness, and prosperity in 2003!

Have a great holiday!

What's Happening at Victoria Hall?

Crafts are selling well, come in and browse. By popular demand, Tea Room **Gift Certificates** are available for 'anyone who has everything else!'

Drop by for Island Videos @ \$16.95
...or just to say 'Hello'

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Restricted and special diets can be accommodated. For more information, please contact: Freda Youell at 384-4135 for menus, meal descriptions and prices.

Godden's whole-hog sausage

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or Lori at 705-653-5984.

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I am collecting used stamps- any kind for the guide dogs, clean used clothing and books for the "Cat's Meow." Used towels, cleaning products, A&P tapes and 12" x 12" knitted squares may be left in my front porch or call for a pick-up. The animals really need our help. Freda Youell 384-4135

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- Red Cross Babysitting Certificate

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and weekends 389-0512



Babysitter

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certified - available after school,
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The natural tendency of the body is to heal itself; unfortunately sometimes restrictions arise, preventing the totally free motion that is the essence of Health. Using a subtle and very gentle approach, my focus and intention is to locate the root of the problem, help release the restrictions and treat the health of the whole person.

I am a Registered Polarity Practitioner and have been training with the Canadian College of Osteopathy for five years. In addition to working on the mainland, I have set up a treatment space in my home on the Island, so please give me a call. Receipts may be obtained for tax purposes and applicable to some insurance policies.

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**"Orpheus is dead, the song is gone,
but the accompaniment goes on."**

- Igor Stravinsky

"The song remains the same"

-Led Zeppelin