

# Amherst Island BEACON



Newsstand  
\$2.00

Issue 361

www.amherstisland.on.ca  
aibeacon@topsyfarms.com

April 2008

## Ahoy! Quinte Loyalist!



PHOTO BY TERRY CULBERT

*Looking from the bridge of the Frontenac II, the Quinte Loyalist is waiting her turn to dock at Millhaven.*

*See Article and More photos, Page 13.*

### THIS ISSUE

- Ian Murray, editor

The Goods & Services insert is postponed for a month due to other ongoing commitments by our volunteer – i.e. unpaid staff..

Sue, Sally and I continue to be grateful for articles on past and present events submitted by our readers. I know that there is some concern about Beacon content: “Why did this or that get so much coverage and the things I’m interested in get little or no coverage?” Simple answer is that we print what we get. The Beacon does not, unfortunately, have the resources to send reporters or photographers to cover interesting events. At the most, Sally or I will make a phone call and request someone to write about something in particular.

Eulogies and other remembrances of those Islanders who have died are a prime example of uneven coverage. I am grateful for the articles on Dale, Denis and Ralph. I hope this is a trend that continues.

\*\*\*

Sally and I are pleased that the Beacon box is being used. Lorna Willis told me how great it was to be able buy a Beacon when she came off a 9:30 pm ferry. I hope this convenience translates into increased sales. Beacons are, of course, still available in the store.



### **The Amherst Island Beacon**

Issue 361  
April 2008

*Published monthly, the  
Beacon is wholly  
funded by paid sub-  
scriptions and sales at  
the Amherst Island  
General Store.*

#### **Subscription Rates:**

Canada \$30/yr  
USA \$35/yr  
Overseas: Contact Us!  
E-Mail \$20/yr

April Printing  
275 Copies

#### **Subscription & Editorial**

A.I. Beacon  
14775 Front Road  
Stella, ON  
K0H 2S0

Voice & Fax  
(613) 389-3802  
E-Mail: aibeacon  
@topsyfarms.com

#### **Photo Editor:**

Sue Frizzell c/o  
aibeacon  
@topsyfarms.com

#### **Typesetting:**

Sue Frizzell c/o  
aibeacon  
@topsyfarms.com

#### **Deadline for all sub- missions:**

25th of each Month

#### **Printed By:**

Burke's Printing,  
Napanee

#### **Credits:**

Word 2003  
Microsoft Publisher  
2003  
Pagemaker 7.0  
Acrobat 6.0  
Family Tree Maker  
9.0  
Microsoft Clip Art

## **MORE NEIGHBOURS**

### **GONE**

- Ian Murray

There's not much I can add about Ralph Wemp – the eulogy above and Zander's comments cover the ground pretty well. I do have 2 enduring images of Ralph in my mind. The first is from quite a while ago when I was returning from Alan Kidd's one summer's day. Ralph and a very small Robbie were on the hay wagon loading bales onto a bale elevator. The other is a recurring image of meeting Ralph on the road in his car or pickup truck.. He'd smile and do his casual wave which was sometimes hard to see because he drove sort of slouched over towards the driver's door – hard to see but you knew the wave was there and his gentle smile.

I probably first met Dale playing baseball in the village. He was a good player but I think that he may have been one of the lucky ones for whom the playing was more important than the winning or losing. My son Jacob worked with Dale for a few months roofing on Nick's crew and he said that Dale was shy but a very good guy to work with. Jacob remembers the great mid-morning breakfasts that Dale would cook for the crew.

Bob Turner is someone who I probably waved to a thousand times and never once spoke to; he'd be walking his dog and I'd be driving by on a tractor or an ATV. I know that he helped out at the Caughey farm so I asked Bruce about him. Bruce said Bob was an intelligent man with a lot of manual skills; a well-read man who would help Helen out with her cross-word puzzles. His going will leave a hole in the lives of the Caughey family as it surely will in his own family.



## **NEIGHBOURHOOD**

- Lyn Fleming

Condolences to Bonnie Baker and family following the death of her husband Dale Willard. Sympathy is also extended to Barb and Melinda Laing and Garnett Willard for the loss of their brother/uncle.

Condolences to Anne Turner and family on the recent passing of her husband Bob this past week.

Condolences to the Vaughan McMullen family on the death of Jim "Skip" McMullen. Sympathy is also extended to Skip's Aunt Helen McCormick his first cousin Noel and to other family members and friends.

Condolences to the family of Jim Skillings a long-time resident of Sand Beach.

Get Well this month to Pauline Pepper.

Congratulations to Earl and Donna Willard as they celebrated the birth of their newest granddaughter, born March 8th. Madeleine Lucy is the first child for son Steven and his wife Diana, of Oakville.

Congratulations to Brian and Janet Grace; grandparents again. Their son Andrew and his wife Erica had a baby girl named Charlotte, sister to Abby, born March 27. (See photos page 3).

Ray and Zelma Koenders spent 6 weeks travelling the Canadian and U.S. west coast from B.C. to Mexico and back, visiting many points in between.

Kim and Duncan Ashley and family travelled to Huntsville, Alabama for March Break to spend time with Duncan's parents.

Tom and Rosemary Richmond and family visited Tom's sister in Barbados over the March Break.

Stephanie and I took a 4 day bus trip to Bristol, Tennessee. Being hesitant about a bus trip, we were pleasantly surprised by a relatively comfortable, well planned and guided tour.

Amherst Island Rec Association's Community Euchres continue on Friday evenings at the Community Centre - despite some snowy Fridays!

With March Break and Easter already behind us, we look forward to a Spring that seems especially long in coming this year! This time of year we usually look forward to the ice going out - however this year, the disappearance of the ice means the arrival of the Quinte Loyalist ferry for an extended time, which could take us into summer! Many thanks to the Road Crew for keeping the roads open again this winter. Thanks also for grading when things dry out enough to make it possible, between rains and run-offs!

The roads are worse than they have been in years, but it has been years since we have had a real Island winter! Ten years ago, prior to amalgamation, there were portions of roads that were simply closed due to lack of equipment and manpower during the winter, there were days when the ferry took 12 hours to go one way after a winter storm or sometimes not go at all! Many people living on the Island these days have never seen a real Canadian winter on Amherst Island, nor do they know what things were like here prior to amalgamation.

## New Addition to the Grace Family



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY ERICA GRACE

*Charlotte Grace, Born March 27. Congratulations to proud parents Andrew and Erica, big sister Abigail, and Grandparents Brian and Janet Grace.*

## A Parting Shot—Before Winter Departs



PHOTO BY BRIAN LITTLE

*St. Paul's Presbyterian Church mausoleum was nearly covered by snow this winter.*

**RALPH ARNOLD WEMP***September 24, 1920 – February 25, 2008*

Ralph was predeceased by his wife of 59 years, Beatrice Reid. He will be greatly missed by his five children, Marie Ward (Brian), David Wemp (Betty), Joyce Titley (Grant), Kathy Reed (Stewart) and Maureen Tasker (Andy). He was also very dear to twelve grandchildren and twelve great grandchildren.

Ralph was the third child born to Arnold Edward Wemp and Kathleen Downey (Neilson) Wemp. He is survived by his four siblings John Neilson Wemp, Helen Frances (Miller), Marjorie Kathleen (Tooke) and Jean Muriel (Tugwell).

Ralph grew up on the farm near the Head of the Island where David and Betty live today. He attended No. 4 Public School on the Emerald Forty Foot. He was only able to attend one month of high school before his father died and he had to give up his education to run the family farm.

Ralph was a devoted member of Christ Church Anglican at Emerald and later of St. Alban's, Stella. He served several terms as Warden.

Ralph joined the armed forces in November 1941 and was sent overseas in June, 1942. He trained with his unit, the 12<sup>th</sup> Field Company of Engineers, in England until the fall of 1943 when he was sent to North Africa. His unit worked their way up through Italy until March, 1945 when they were sent to Holland.

Ralph married Beatrice Reid on June 11, 1947. He and Bea owned and ran the Witteveen farm until 1952. He then sold the farm and returned to his family farm at the Head of the Island. He started out with dairy and then changed to a sheep farm and then again changed back to a fairly large dairy farm. Even after he sold the farm to David and Betty he was a very active part of the farm life for many years.

Over the course of his life he was an active member of the community. He served on the School Board and several terms on the Township Council. He and Bea always supported local events. One of their favorite events was the New Year's Eve dance where they were often the first on the dance floor.

When Ralph and Bea sold the farm to David they moved to the village to live with Bea's mother. They often took care of Marie's two children, Steven and Sherry and later Kathy's two children, Chris and Will and, as a result the yard at 5580 Front Road was often filled with young people after school.

Over the past few years Ralph often reminisced about all of those young people and mentioned over and over how he missed seeing the yard full of children.

In 1987 Ralph and Bea went to Daytona Beach, Florida for a couple of months. Though they had been there previously for brief visits this was the first year they stayed from January through mid-March. They continued to visit Daytona in the winter from 1987 through 2002 when Bea became too ill to travel. This past January, Ralph requested one more trip to Florida and so, accompanied by his daughters, Joyce and Marie and son-in-law, Brian he made the trip one last time. He stayed very well during the trip and enjoyed a walk on the beach, the greyhound races and several days of just sitting in the sun on his balcony enjoying the hustle and bustle of the beach.

Unfortunately, approximately a month after his return from Florida, Ralph suffered a heart attack, complicated by a blood infection. He passed away at Kingston General Hospital on February 25<sup>th</sup> surrounded by all of his family after giving life everything he had to give!

Ralph's motto was always "Live your life to the fullest"! We can honour his memory by following those words!

**I'VE LOST A FRIEND**

- Zander of DUNN INN

When Nance and I returned, on March 2, from our trip to B.C. to visit with my 97 year-old mother and 95 year-old aunt and to enjoy a cruise along the Mexican Riviera, I was dismayed to hear that Ralph Wemp had died.

I understand Ralph had not been well recently and he was missing his wife, Bea, who had died two years ago, but when I saw Ralph prior to our trip, he looked well and happy. Of course, Ralph always looked happy. He had a smile that broke up his face along wrinkles and creases and which radiated well-being. Whenever Ralph and I met on the road or chatted in his back yard he had a smile which lifted my spirits.

Ralph and I were not close friends although we were certainly friendly. He welcomed me into his home when I visited around Christmas time. He took time to discuss the Second World War with me when we met on Remembrance Day. He always seemed happy to greet me when I walked or drove past his house and waved to him sitting on his porch.

Ralph was not one to talk about himself. Even when I interviewed him and his wife, Bea, for the Beacon, he did not have much to say about himself. He spoke of Amherst Island, of his school mates and of the Canadian Army but he never put himself in the centre of the picture. In fact, he was self-deprecating. When I observed that his son, David, must appreciate the help Ralph gave him on the farm, Ralph opined that he might be more help to his son by staying away from the farm than by going to it.

When I learned of Ralph's death I was shocked and saddened. His death hit me much harder than I imagined it would. He was not one of my parishioners; we did not spend much time together; Ralph was a quiet man who did not go out of his way to reach out to me. So why was I affected so deeply by his death?

Perhaps I grieve because he was a positive force for good in my life. We didn't fight or argue. We didn't go deep on any issue but we shared everything in the context of laughter. Perhaps I miss Ralph because I am reminded of him every time I come down McDonald's Lane and look at his house. I miss his smile and his wave as I head for home.

Perhaps Ralph's death means more to me than I expected it would because he and I were better friends than I realized. Because we never asked anything of each other, we never differed on subjects, we never ignored each other, we never tried to impress each other - perhaps for those reasons I felt free to be myself with Ralph.

Ralph personified the generous welcome Amherst Islanders extend to those who come to share life with them. Ralph's acceptance of me was unconditional. It reminded me of God's love for us. We may not get close to God or feel we need to make friends with God, but God accepts us as we are and loves us with an attitude which is entirely non-judgmental.

Hey, I started talking about Ralph and here I am talking about God. The highest praise I can give Ralph is that he reminds me of God

### Ancestors of Ralph Arnold Wemp

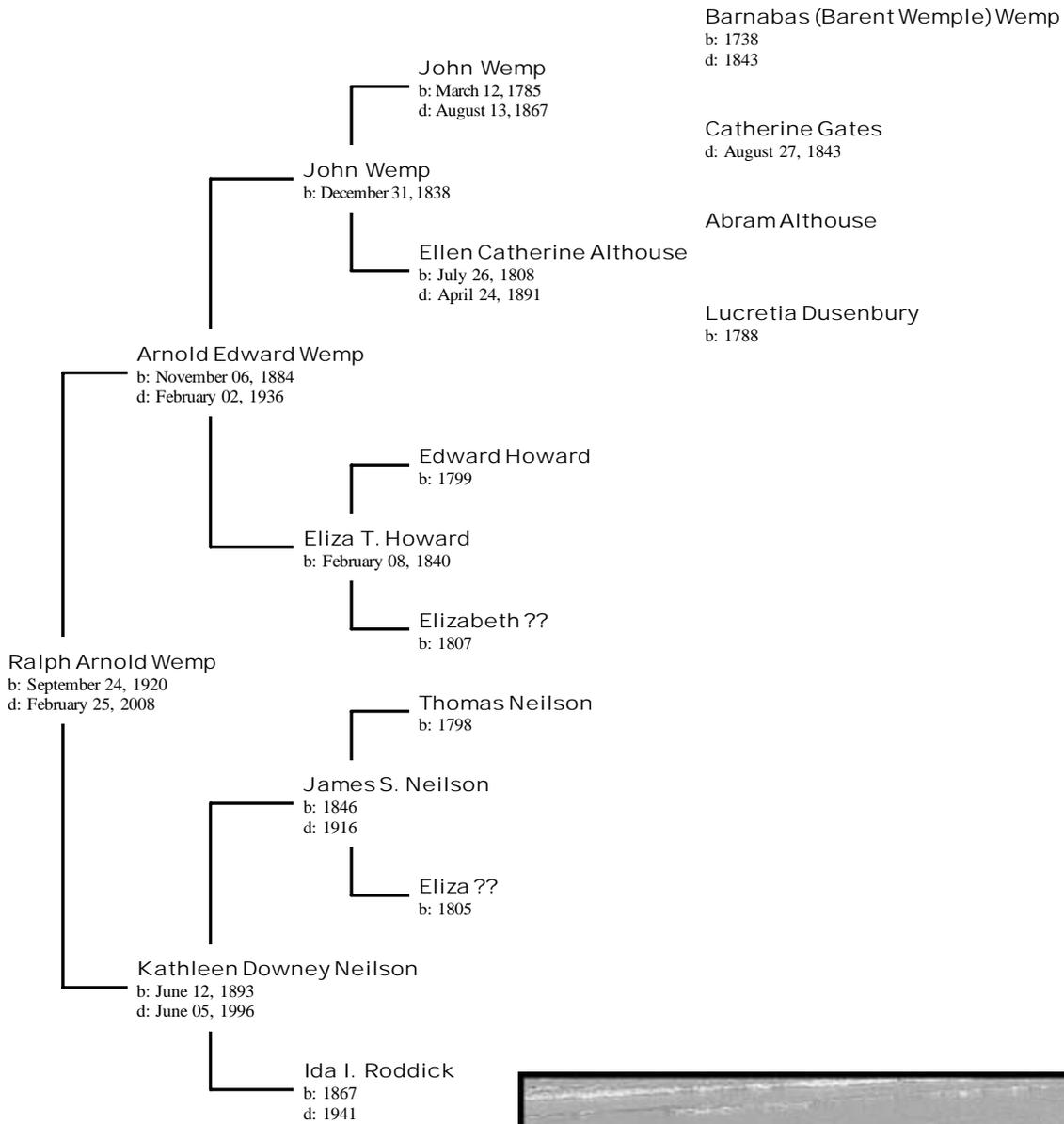


PHOTO PROVIDED BY THE WEMP FAMILY

## DALE WILLARD EULOGY

- Dave Willard

On behalf of the Willard, the Sayeau family and the McGinn family, I thank you all for your company today as we say a final farewell to our good friend Dale.

Having attended several of these gatherings over the past number of years I've come to realize that sad as they are it is nonetheless the right and fitting time to remember the many good things in a person's life . . . and Dale has left each of us with many good memories being the very unique individual he was.

Dale loved growing up on Amherst Island and he loved the way of life it was still possible to lead there with that wonderful sense of beauty and freedom know to all of us who call the Island home. Not once did I ever hear him even consider the idea of moving to the mainland.

Dale was definitely his own person and pretty much lived life by his own rules – revelled in it. He was one of the last Islanders to ever drive a vehicle across the ice on the North Channel. And where else but on Amherst Island could you still cruise around in your truck, listening to country music, an open beer in your hand and a 12 gauge shotgun lying across the seat? Or, wish your Aunt a happy birthday by spray-painting the greeting on the road for all to see. And Dale could get very creative on Halloween nights too, and probably with the help of some of those sitting here today. My favourite was when he removed a wooden gate from a cow pasture, transported it about three miles away and then tied it across the Marshall Forty-foot. That one still makes me smile but of course it wasn't my gate and it wasn't my cows that were on the road next morning.

Dale had very few idle moments because he worked almost constantly including most weekends being the entrepreneur that he was. However there was still some time for family, fishing in the lake and tracking down the occasional deer. But despite all that if you needed him he would be there – he was certainly there for me many times over the years. Simply put Dale was a good guy – he was a really good guy – deeply loved by the little ones in his extended family, nearly always wearing a smile and if he had a single enemy anywhere that is news to me.

A few years ago Dale began expressing an interest in his own family history indicating that he was a much deeper thinker than some would have given him credit for.

After losing his hunting license at one point he actually chose to opt out of the annual deer hunt on the Island. Having known Dale for all of his 46 years I can remember confidently predicting he would simply ignore the law and take part in the deer hunt anyway. But to his credit he proved me wrong.

Dale Willard was a work in progress and it is heart-breaking to see it all cut short by the events of last Friday's tragedy. He will be missed by all of us here . . . but also by others who simply need a few shingles replaced after the next big wind or perhaps a limb taken off a tree.

And I strongly suspect I speak for many in this room when I say I wish I could have talked to him about his problems and maybe given him a different perspective. As far as I know not even his closest friends knew he was in such a state of mental turmoil.

Dale had survived many ups and downs in life and was one of those guys you just thought would always be there. It is very difficult to imagine Amherst Island without Dale Willard, and we will all miss him dearly.

## DALE WILLARD

- Judith Harrower

This past month three Islanders passed away, including Dale Willard, which was very unexpected. I got to know Dale when he married Bonnie Baker and they moved into their little white house on the Front Road. Dale was exceptionally pleased to have a home, take care of the animals, and be able to plant trees and bushes.

While usually a very quiet person, Dale nevertheless always had a smile or grin whenever he saw you at community functions or passed you on the road. He was always the first to help out his long-term friends, family and those who needed help, usually not asking for any payment. In the years I knew Dale he never displayed anger, resentment, hatred, or ill will towards anyone. Eager to please, Dale would work until the job was done. Month after month Dale was Nick McGinn's alarm clock, always arriving around 5:40 am to get Nick up and on the first trip of the day.

Not possessing the greatest cognitive skills, Dale was always open to suggestions, ideas and to learn. This was evident in the knowledge he acquired looking after the hundreds of birds, the alpacas, miniature goats, and the horses at the house. Work did not daunt Dale, even though many a night after working a twelve hour day, he always had time for the animals.

An annual high light was the Art McGinn Fishing Derby which he relished taking part in and was always one of the first on the lake - well before the sun was up.

Born on the Island, Dale enjoyed walking over the land he knew so well often by himself or while hunting with his friends. Dale asked very little for himself and often it was difficult to know what to get him on special occasions.

With the passing of these three Islanders, all in their own ways very private, reserved and quiet, strands of the Island social fabric becomes a little more faded, worn or less colourful.

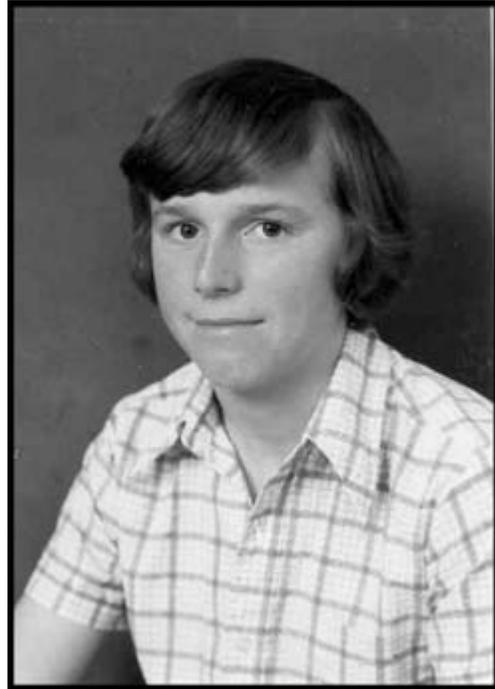


PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVE WILLARD

Sincere condolences go out to Bonnie, but also to Dale's sister, Barbara Laing and his

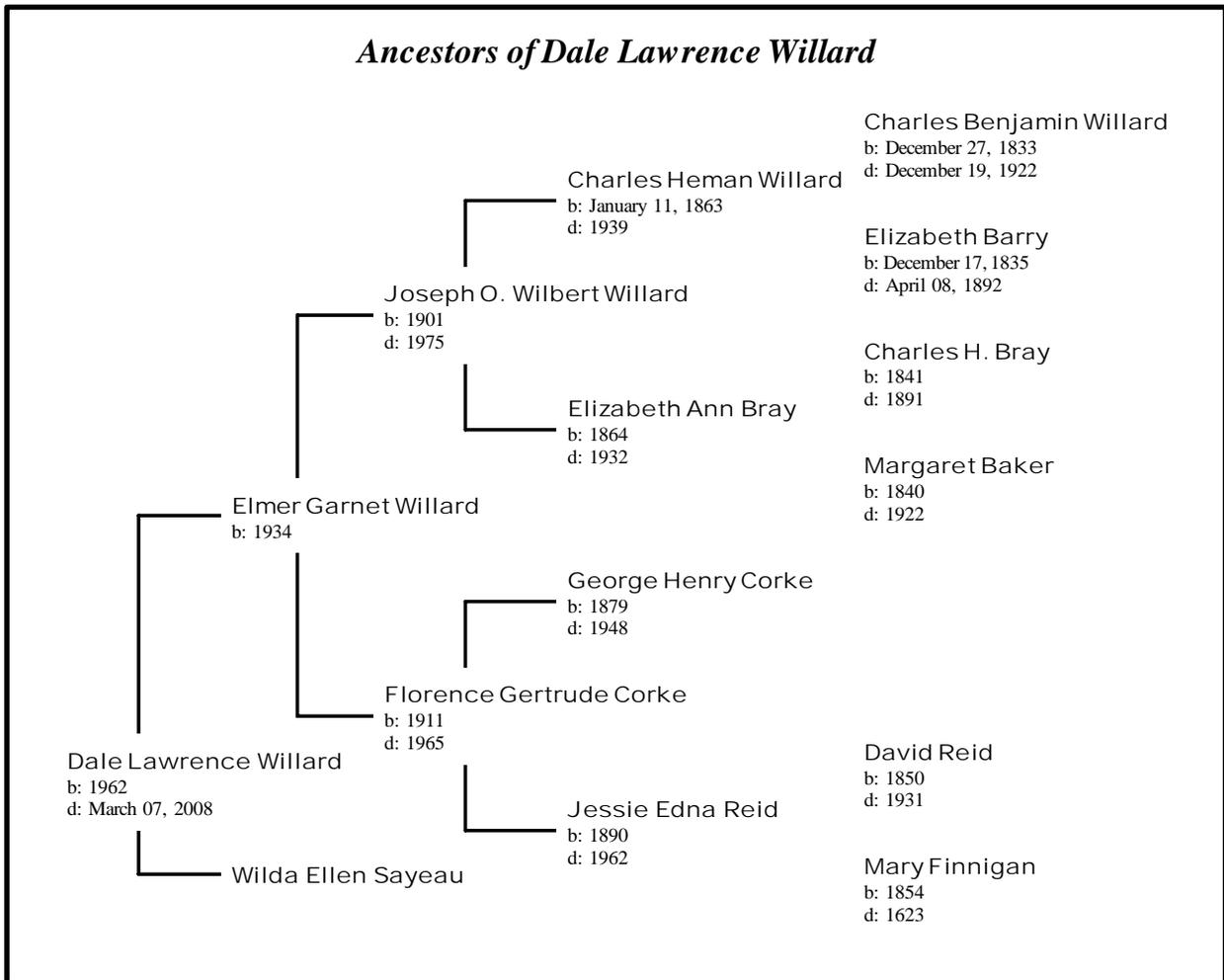


40th Birthday



A.I.P.S

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE WILLARD FAMILY



# POPLAR DELL FARM, NORTH SHORE, AMHERST ISLAND A BRIEF HISTORY

- Susie Caughey

Issac Preston, an Irish stonemason and his wife Sarah Porter left their homeland with 2 small sons and landed in Amsterdam, New York. Over several years, they worked their way to Millhaven, Ontario. Just west of the ferry dock at Millhaven, Issac built a large brick home, which is now covered with blue siding. After their 7th son was born, they came to settle on Amherst Island at a spot the Indians referred to as "Poplar Dell", a name carried on by all occupants through the years.

The west end of the house was built first out of field and shore stone in 1822. Eight years later and 17 feet to the east of the original, a cut limestone Georgian style dwelling was built. It is believed that the limestone was cut in Kingston, possibly by inmates, and that Preston hauled it across the bay on the ice by horse and sleigh. The wooden middle section was constructed in 1847 to join the two stone buildings.

Bill Preston sold the farm to Capt. Hugh Glenn in 1912. In the following years the Capt. & wife Nessie had three sons and also had the help of Tom Glenn & family who lived in the one end of the house and worked on the farm. (Bert Glenn often stopped to show people the upstairs room where he was born. His sister Nessie Welbanks told of falling on the stone threshold and

***...Poplar Dell was raided by Bill Johnston's gang of rebels who arrived at the shore by boat.***

breaking the glass head of her doll.)

The last Glenn to inhabit Poplar Dell was Ruth Marshall Glenn, who was Helen Caughey's sister and the daughter-in-law of Capt. Glenn. In 1969, the farm was purchased by W. Bruce Caughey.

One of the more interesting pieces of history occurred at midnight on June 7, 1838, when Poplar Dell was raided by Bill Johnston's gang of rebels who arrived at the shore by boat. Issac Preston and 2 sons were wounded and the house looted. Sarah Preston's most precious possession was a set of hand-made silver spoons which her mother had given her when she left Ireland.

\*\*Current image of Poplar Dell taken from Website. <http://poplardell.com>

***She put the spoons in her bosom and corset, somehow bluffed the sentry at the gate and escaped for help...***

She put the spoons in her bosom and corset, somehow bluffed the sentry at the gate and escaped for help to the Pattersons' (now the Hieatts'), whence the raiders were "decamped" as it is written. (Note; I always thought this was a lovely story but unlikely factual ...until a Preston descendent arrived at our door proclaiming that she had one of the spoons and knew where they all were within the Preston family.)

Prestons from all over the world have dropped in to visit the old homestead, many of them have written family histories, some have written to thank us for taking care of this link to their past.

We have found dozens of clay pipes, hand-made inkwells, notes and names & dates written on granary boards and door frames; mementoes of those who came before us. A handgun - possibly used during the raid - was discovered when we were renovating the lakeside portion of the house in late 1970's. The original section of the

house still has a large Irish bake oven.

The upstairs bedrooms each have a name; "The Fred Room", "The Ward", "The Wheeler Room" etc. which were handed down from the Glenn era. Today a large picture of Issac Preston hangs in the upper west hall at Poplar Dell. Nessie Glenn smiles from her portrait above the fireplace.

As the house looks out over Preston Bay and Griffin Point, we know it has embraced many generations, welcomed many strangers, and will continue to surprise us with it's rich history.

## Poplar Dell, Current



March 19, 2008

**TO THE EDITOR: THE BEACON.**

**BIRDING IN NEW ZEALAND**

Owing to a set of delightful circumstances, (retirement, not being anybody’s grandmother, snow allergies, etc. etc.) Don and I are in New Zealand for a month or two – or at least until the children’s inheritances are properly squandered.

I’ve enjoyed all the Beacons kindly sent on to me, especially the articles on Island birds, and look forward to visiting the Owl Woods when I get back. I have always meant to get involved in the world of birding. I mean, it seems like a lot of fun: gets you out of the house, etc. etc. And my jacket is just the right green. And I like making lists.

So, here in the South Island, to get to the town of Motueka where we do our grocery shopping, the road - more of a “causeway”- crosses a large estuary area, where several rivers converge on their way to the sea and drop their sediment in their beds. It is of course, tidal, that is to say that sometimes the water is in, and sometimes it is out. This constant watering makes for lots of squidgy bits, shore grasses grow thick, and each valley has its own inland track. We sigh: it is all very beautiful.

These marshes are perfect for the right kind of birds, and there are squads: oystercatchers (long red beaks) grey herons (long grey legs) and so on. I’ve been given a book, and there are pages and pages of them: ducks, geese, cormorants – all that stuff.

Don did the driving for the first few times we went shopping. The passenger seat is great to watch birds from. I stare out into the creeks while we fly by on target at 100K.

We were on a rollicking lick to Mot one day, for a pint at The Dodgy Ref, when up the creek I spied a pair of flamingoes! I recognized them instantly as I had seen a whole bunch in Florida in 1995. There they were, up the creek, just standing there with their long legs, and I was wild with excitement because they are not even in the book! They must be very rare in New Zealand. And that’s what birding’s all about - seeing new birds in old places. I yelled to Don, “Quick quick stop the car, Flamingoes!” He was not as excited as I was; I know it’s hard to stop on a dime, find a place to turn around and then go back and find them again, but I insisted. I mean, it was a scientific finding for Ornithology. It took a few minutes because of all the traffic, and I was anxious because I was sure the flamingoes would be gone. Finally, we cut across and stopped under a tree: I begged him not to bang the doors. We tiptoed over to the bank and saw them through the flax bushes - amazing! They were so pink! and up to their knees in the water, obviously fishing. It was an amazing moment. I crept out in front with the camera, ready to click for science and fame.

It took me a minute or two to realize what I was looking at. I can still hardly believe it: my two “flamingoes” turned out to be two bamboo canes stuck in the mud, banded with pink plastic tape tied into several loops, maybe to mark the high tide. I felt so foolish.

I cannot help giving them an angry look when we go into Motueka on Fridays: and it’s just not fair: they look EXACTLY like flamingoes. Everyone agrees with me.

Elizabeth Barry

\*\* Oh and by the way, I have deliberately spelled "ornithology" incorrectly as orthonology in the piece.



A “flamingo” through flax leaves



Two oyster catchers on the beach

PHOTOS BY ELIZABETH BARRY

## THE ICE ROAD

Alan Kidd

These stories on Island history I am writing represent a personal view, as opposed to scholarly research. Therefore I would not be surprised to hear that others have a different view of what went on at the time. In fact, I would encourage those interested to write down their own recollections and send them to the Beacon. The more points of view we have the better, as far as I'm concerned

The winter of 1971/1972 was the first time the ferry operated during the winter. Before then, the only way to get to the island during the winter was over the ice road. I saw a painting by Daniel Fowler which showed a sleigh crossing the ice road in the nineteenth century. The path of the road was marked by a line of

ever-green trees. Things hadn't changed all that much even in the early 1970's, the last days of the official ice road. The

Township then would put out a line of discarded Christmas trees to mark the path of the road. These trees were a vital part of the ice road, for without them it was easy to get lost on the ice in one of the frequent whiteouts that occurred during snow storms.

The paths onto the ice were generally by the Stella and Millhaven docks, though this depended on the presence of ice ridges. Of course the big question was when it was safe to start crossing the ice in the winter, and when it was no longer safe to do so in the spring. Often the first crossing of the season was made in an old car with open doors, which not only provided a quick exit if the car started to go through the ice but also helped to support the car if the wheels did break through the ice.

I traveled the ice road many times during my first winter on the Island which was the last winter that the ferry was shut down. I never had any serious mishaps, but did get stuck a few times. It turns out that an ice road, just like any other unpaved road, will develop pot holes which got rapidly deeper as the traffic passed over the road. As a result there were often a number of vehicles stuck out on the ice. Fortunately Keith Miller came and rescued me with his tractor. In fact many people were in need of being pulled out. On a sunny day after a snow storm the ice road could be a busy place, with vehicles coming and going and tractors hauling cars and trucks out of pot holes.

Over the years I have been on the ice in almost every vehicle you can imagine, from cars to tractors to snow-



mobiles. I have skated and skied on the bay and even landed an airplane on it. Sometimes during snow squalls I have groped my way from tree to tree to avoid being lost on the ice. In all that time I have never had much more trouble than being stuck a few times and having to walk home. However, that is not to say that the ice road is not a hazardous place. The ice can change in the course of a few minutes, so that a return trip across the ice can be a very different experience than on the way over. Ice ridges are a special hazard of this type, as they can push up quickly and block the way. Allan Glenn had a frightening experience of this type back in the sixties. On a shopping trip into town he and Cathy found the Millhaven exit blocked by a newly formed ice ridge, so they parked their car on the ice and walked a couple of hundred feet to the Millhaven dock where they had another vehicle.

After finishing their shopping they were making their way back to their car parked on the ice. Just as they were about to cross the ice ridge, Cathy, who was carrying their infant daughter Shelley in her arms, suddenly dropped through the ice. Allan dropped the groceries he was carrying and managed to grab hold of Cathy's coat and pull her and Shelly to safety.

Another incident of this type through the ice happened in 1971 when James Eves was taking his tractor along the ice when it suddenly broke through a few feet off the shore of Fish point. James' arm was caught as the tractor went into the water. Fortunately his son Lance and brother Royce Eves were nearby and were able to pull James free.

A couple of days later a tripod was erected and some 25 men were able to use chain hoists to get the tractor back onto solid ice.

Not all plunges through the ice ended happily. The worst incident in recent memory happened on the Wolfe island ice road back in the 1980's. A car traveling the ice road at night between Wolfe Island and Kingston broke through the ice. The occupants of that car were able to escape, and started walking along the road warning on-coming vehicles of the danger. Unfortunately a car traveling the other direction ran into the hole and plunged into the water, taking an entire family to their deaths. Since that time virtually no one has driven the ice between either Wolfe or

*(Continued on page 11)*



PHOTOS BY ALAN KIDD

(Continued from page 10)

Amherst Island and the mainland. It would seem that the warmer winters together with the warm water discharges of such industries as the Lennox Generating Station and the Cement Plant have made the ice so unreliable as to be unsafe for transport.

Those travelers who for convenience crossed the ice along different routes than the road the Township laid out did risk getting lost on the ice. Of course it was easy to cross during the daylight in good weather. But a crossing at night during a storm was a completely different experience. I have heard of several people being lost on the ice for hours in whiteout conditions, but everyone did eventually make it to safety.

While the ice road did offer a certain sense of freedom for Islanders, being able to come and go at any time they pleased, that convenience had to be traded against some major risks. On balance I think we can all be grateful for our full time ferry service, and we can leave the ice adventures for recreation, knowing we do not have to risk a crossing in dangerous conditions.

## HERE & THERE

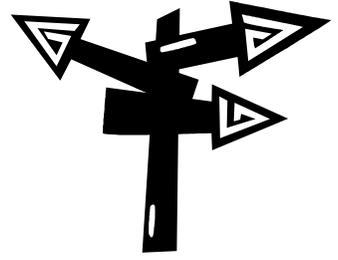
- Ian Murray

One of the disturbing trends on the Island for an ageing man is the number of widows in our community and the scarcity of widowers. Is it something in the water? Too much fresh air?

The number of deaths in the past few years far exceeds births and this is a very disturbing trend.

\*\*\*

As I write this, March 31, the ice is breaking up in front of our house. The rain, more sun and some wind may clear the ice out sooner than we would have thought a few days ago when it was well below freezing.



## THE OLD ICE BOAT

- Sally Bowen and Ralph Morrow

Ralph Morrow has been reading H.C. Burleigh's "Tales of Amherst Island". In the book, Dr. Burleigh wonders what had become of the old ice boat that had been used in winter to haul much-needed supplies to Islanders. He was suggesting it should be in a museum somewhere.

Ralph told me what happened to it.

He was riding on the first Amherst Islander, a 5 car ferry one day in early spring, in about 1945, when the crew noticed that the ice boat was floating down the channel. It had been on shore at Fish Point and had come adrift. The 2 deckhands took a pike pole and a grapple hook, and the captain, Billy Cochrane, brought the ferry alongside the floating boat, with the runaway on the starboard side. It was flat with square ends and about 16 ft long, and had some seats inside. There was a handle on each of the 4 corners that could be used to push and pull the cumbersome craft along the ice on the runners attached on the bottom.

The seas were running about 2 ft high, and both the ferry and the ice boat were rolling and pitching. They only had one chance. The grappling hook didn't catch. The pike pole wasn't adequate to grab and hold on. They missed their chance at grabbing her, and had to proceed back on course.

People watched helplessly as the ice boat tossed its way down the channel, presumably to a watery end.

[Sally: Does anyone have a photo of this ice boat? We have included an ice boat photo from Vera Hogeboom but it is of a different boat.]

*RIGHT: Maurice Hogeboom with his ice boat 1928. This boat made numerous trips across the ice. Once when the ice had barely formed and was not safe Maurice and three of my brothers went across for Dr. Burleigh when my father Sam Miller was seriously ill.*

*Vera Hogeboom*



PHOTO PROVIDED BY VERA HOGEBOOM

## GOODBYE, SWAN'S SLOPE; HELLO, HUNCHBACK: - AMBUSHED BY GRAVITY, GENETICS AND MILK

- Alena Schram [This article first appeared in the National Post and is reprinted with permission.]

It's undeniable. I've got a widow's hump. That gentle neck to shoulder swan's slope that once defined my youth is now something you could quite comfortably hang an umbrella from. In profile, I look like a tortoise on tiptoes.

"When did you get that thing on your back?" my call-a-spade-a hump daughter Katherine asked the other day, lobbing her arm at it as though it were some sort of outcrop that had just shown up as I was vacuuming.

"It looks like one of those gross bumps old ladies get. Can't you do something about it?"

So I spent the afternoon trying to straighten it out of existence. First, I stretched my spine so everything pulled upward. Then I tilted my pelvis a little and pushed my rib cage out. Finally, I tried mightily to pull my neck back and my chin down so everything appeared in better alignment. But all that holding and stretching and pushing made me feel like a pretzel and did nothing to get rid of the hump, except momentarily. How many years had this thing been developing, I wondered, and why hadn't I noticed it before all my bones had hardened -- or softened--into place?

My posture has never been perfect but at least I looked reasonably OK with my clothes on. Or so I thought until my erstwhile Pilates teacher buttonholed my husband one night at a dinner party, and in the most strident voice imaginable announced to all our friends, "I'm amazed your wife looks so relatively straight. Her spine's curved in every possible direction. Front to back, side to side. It's all over the place."

The table went silent. I pulled myself and my hump up, and looked around archly. A moment of clarity settled on my hunched shoulders. Perhaps this was the moment to tell little Miss Zip and Tuck how ridiculous she looked balancing on a stupid exercise ball in that teensy outfit made for someone in primary school.

"Yoga," said one of my friends when I set out forlornly in search of answers. "It's made me two inches taller. Takes about six years, though."

"Rolfing," offered another friend. "Go see Melissa. She'll rolf you up straight. If you can stand the pain."

I checked again in the mirror. Seen from the front, I looked OK. But when I pulled the door with the full-length mirror toward me to get a rear-end view in the vanity, I had to admit it seemed pretty hopeless. In relaxation mode, I resembled a question mark.

Downhearted and confused, I consulted the Internet and discovered there were 185,000 mentions of "widow's hump" or, more cruelly, "dowager's hump." In medical circles, it's apparently called "thoracic kyphosis" and stems from osteoporosis, that nasty bone-leeching condition we're warned about. I, of course, fell right into the group most at risk: over 60, female, Caucasian, with poor calcium intake and a definite lack of exercise. The fact that I neither smoked nor drank in excess, two other formidable risk factors, had no mitigating effect.

Looking at my hump repeatedly in the privacy of my bedroom, I realized there could be no question of a beach vacation ever

again unless I found a bathing suit with a neck ruffle. T-shirts were now similarly off the list of suitable holiday attire. Henceforth, it would be turtlenecks or cowl necks, summer and winter.

Daughter Elizabeth was no more comforting when I confessed my private pain to her. "You look pretty good from the front, Mum, but what really gives you away is your hump. It's so ageing."

If I were ever going to put my head in the gas oven, this was the moment. Years of applying Polyfilla to the wrinkles on my face, of sitting by the hour with my hair smothered in split aloe vera leaves, of smearing body lotions on my limbs and cocoa butter on my feet, and those lashings of liver-spot reducing potions on my hands, had left me no better off. I'd been ambushed by gravity, genetics and milk. It was all so unfair.

I had visions of the Hunchback of Notre Dame, a reference in many of the Internet sites. Suddenly, peering into my crystal ball, I could see myself in the future, leaning heavily on a cane and walking with my thorax at right angles to my legs. How would I sleep, I wondered? Head and shoulders propped against the headboard? Would sales assistants need to crouch beside me to answer my questions? Did they make coffins to fit such structural anomalies or would mine have an unnatural platform on it?

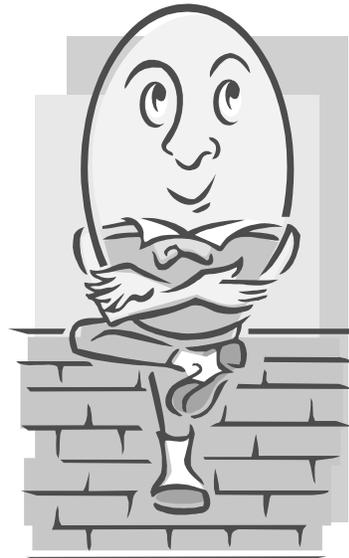
I became obsessed with my profile. I passed mirrors sideways to catch a frightening glimpse; walked slowly in front of shop windows to view the horror; found reasons to pass back and forth in front of those shiny pillars in department stores; even approached public washroom sinks from the side to gain a better view. I began to scrutinize the posture of my friends and to study the backs of perfect strangers in the street. It was becoming quite an unhealthy pastime.

Last weekend, our four-year old grandson, Graydon, spied me peering sideways into the hall closet mirror. He and his sister, Bronwyn, were visiting for the weekend.

"How come you keep looking in the mirror, Grandma?"

"Oh, I think I look a bit funny these days." I sensed he would say something loving and adoringly honest to sweep away my self-doubt.

"Ya, you do, Grandma. Bronwyn and me noticed. It's your fat tummy, isn't it? Bronwyn and me think you look like Humpty-Dumpty."



## FRONTENAC II HEADS TO HAMILTON FOR DRYDOCKING

-Terry Culbert

At 09:00 am, Monday, April 7<sup>th</sup>, the Frontenac II skippered by Captain Jim Reid, pulled away from the Stella Dock. Watching her depart were the Loyalist Township Island Road Crew with their dump trucks and front-end loader at the ready. They were waiting for the arrival of the Quinte Loyalist in order to reconstruct the ramp area for the much smaller ship. The Quinte Loyalist will be our link to the mainland for the next six to eight weeks. Meanwhile, the Frontenac II is dry docked in Hamilton undergoing maintenance inspections and any repairs deemed necessary.

As Captain Reid brought the Frontenac II across the 3-mile North Channel, the Quinte Loyalist was on stand-by just to the west of the Millhaven Dock. The Quinte Loyalist came to us from Glenora, Prince Edward County and was manned with a crew of marine specialists from the Ministry of Transportation, Ontario. Anxiously awaiting the transfer of vehicle ferries was a road's crew from Loyalist Township headquarters in Odessa. As a foot note: If you are leaving Amherst Island in the morning between six and nine, get there early as the Quinte Loyalist only holds 18 vehicles.



*Above: A Loyalist Township heavy machine operator digs out the gravel base, lowering the ramp area for the much smaller Quinte Loyalist.*

*Below Left: Chief Engineer Garry Hitchins and First Mate Darell Miller watch Captain Jim Reid bring the Frontenac II into the Millhaven Dock at 09:20 on Monday morning, the 7<sup>th</sup> of April.*

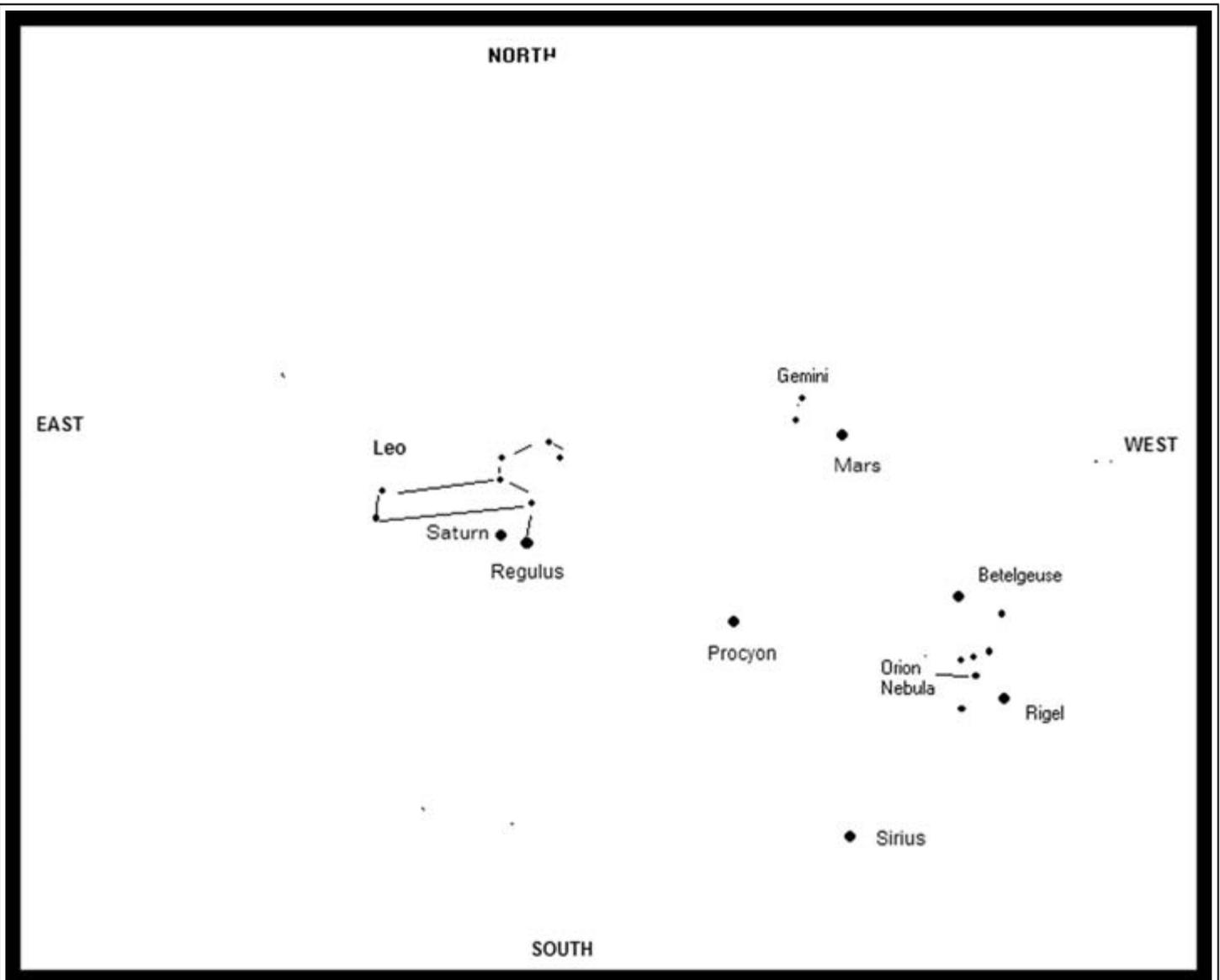
*Bottom Left: Captain Jim Reid, Deckhand Michael Joll and Engineer Don Jones in the bridge of the Quinte Loyalist on Monday, April 7<sup>th</sup>.*

*Bottom Right: Looking out from the bridge over the deck of the much smaller Quinte Loyalist enroute to Amherst Island. Three vehicle spaces are lost with the addition of a Johnny-on-the-Spot and a small crew and passenger trailer.*



ALL PHOTOS BY TERRY CULBERT





## SKIES

- Alan Kidd

We are on daylight savings time this month, and that, in addition to the lengthening days, means our observing times will be getting later. The chart will be for a time around 10 PM, at mid-month.

This month, the constellation that is almost directly overhead during the first part of the night is Leo, the Lion. The first star that draws your eye in this part of the sky is Regulus, which is the brightest Star in the Constellation of Leo. Regulus forms the front paw of the Lion. Coming up from Regulus is a group of stars, which make up the Lion's mane and face. This group (together with Regulus) is commonly known as the sickle. Another way of looking at this sub-constellation is as a backward question mark with Regulus as the dot.

Saturn now is very close to Regulus, so the question mark seems to have two bright dots. Saturn, at magnitude 0.5, is noticeably brighter than Regulus at magnitude 1.4. Saturn has



been retrograding since January and will only be two degrees away from Regulus at the end of April, as close as it will get. Retrograding is an astronomical term for the apparent backwards drift of a planet, seen when the Earth catches up and overtakes that planet. All planets orbit the sun in the same direction, and so would always appear to move in an easterly direction against the fixed background of the stars if the Earth was not moving. However, since the earth is orbiting the sun as well, it will overtake the planets further from the sun than itself on roughly a yearly basis. When this happens the planet appears to move in a westwards direction for a time.

This retrograde motion caused the ancient astronomers no end of headaches, since they were working from the assumption that the Earth was a fixed object. As a result they had to patch up their fixed Earth theory with the assumption that the planets were not moving in a circle around the Earth, but actually were moving in smaller circles on the bigger circle of their orbit about

*(Continued on page 15)*

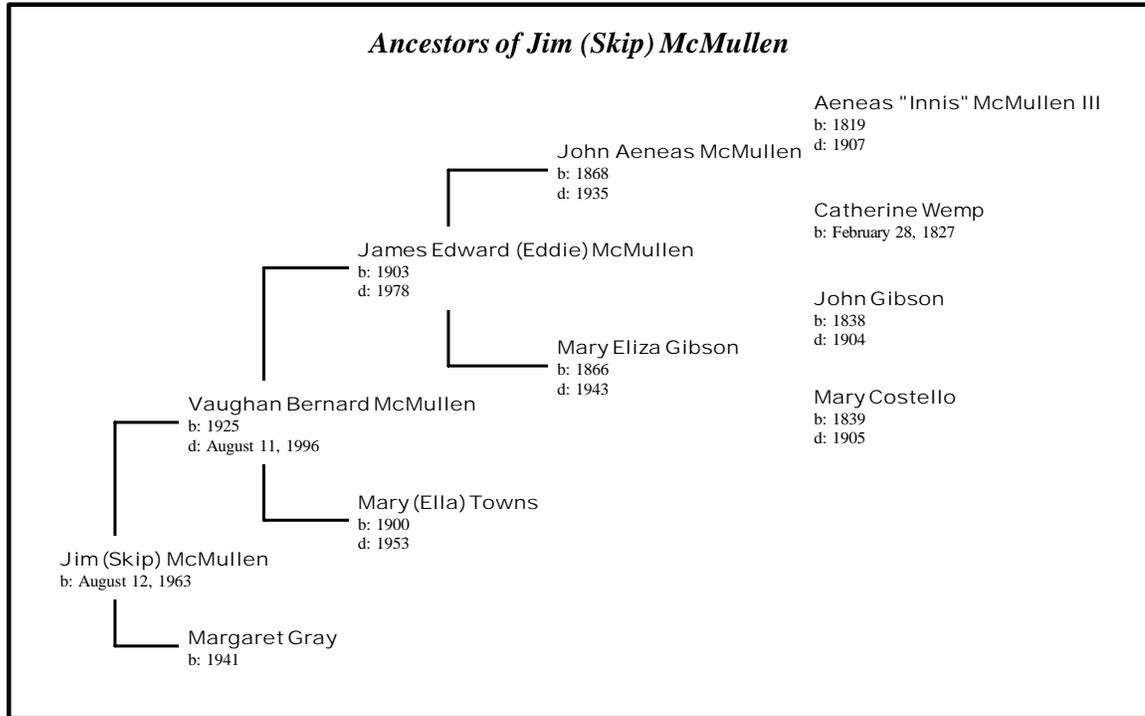
## JAMES 'SKIP' VINCENT MCMULLEN

Passed away suddenly at his home on March 31 in his 45<sup>th</sup> year. Predeceased by his parents Vaughan (1996) and Margaret (2007). Survived by his siblings Debbie, John, Anne Marie and Frank. Skip was a nephew of Helen McCormick's and a first cousin of Noel's.

The McMullen family lived on the Third until Vaughan's death in 1996. While on the Island, Skip worked for Amherst Roofing. Later he worked at Queen's University and was a parking attendant at Queen's underground parking lot until his death.

Aunt Helen says that the church was crowded with his many friends for Skip's visitation and funeral service.

The funeral service was held on April 5 at St. Paul's.



*(Continued from page 14)*

the Earth. These smaller circles were called epicycles and had to be constantly adjusted as more accurate observations were made. The epicycles were finally discarded when the theories of Copernicus and Kepler were accepted. These models worked from the assumption that all the planets, including the Earth, went around the sun in an elliptical orbit, and finally the motion of the planets could be satisfactorily explained. The old theories then were seen as an overly complex patchwork. We moderns shouldn't feel too smug, however. Many, if not most, physicists regard our current models used to explain the universe as an overly complex patchwork also. We are still waiting for a Kepler to come along and clean things up.

Saturn is the most noticeable planet during the first part of the night, and is a great sight in a small telescope. If the atmosphere is really clear, you might even see the shadow of the planet on the rings.

Mars is high in the southwest as the sky gets dark. Mars and the Earth are quickly moving apart now, so Mars is growing steadily dimmer, and is only at magnitude 1.2 by the end of the month. Mars has now finished its retrograde motion and is mov-

ing steadily eastwards through Gemini. At the end of April, Mars will be close to Pollux and at about the same brightness as the star.

Also at the end of the month, Mercury should just be visible, about 15 degrees above the west-northwest horizon.

Jupiter rises around 3 AM at the beginning of April and two hours earlier at the end of the month. It is also brightest of the planets now, since Venus disappears during April. On the 1st of April Venus rises only 30 minutes ahead of the sun. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of the month you might be able to see the waning crescent moon just 5 degrees above and to the right of Venus.

The Lyrid meteor show occurs during the predawn hours of April 22nd. However with the Moon nearly full, this year's April shower will not be much of a display.

I've attached a chart to show the positions of Saturn relative to the constellation of Leo.

## WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

- Joyce Reid

The March 19<sup>th</sup> meeting was held at the home of Leslie Gavalas, opening with The Ode, Collect and O' Canada.

Linda Joll very kindly agreed to be our guest speaker at the last moment. She brought with her a lovely black & white Springer Spaniel named "Harry". Linda and Mike Joll are members of the English Springer Rescue Association of Canada – which meant they take unwanted dogs and care for them until an appropriate home can be found. Springers first came to Canada during 1913-14 from England. They originated in Spain in the 1700s. The Jolls also work with Golden Retrievers in trials. Liz Harrison thanked Linda for coming. We all enjoyed refreshments served by Joyce Haines and Diane Hieatt.

A brief business meeting followed with monthly reports. A letter from Mr. Adams, Loyalist Township, was read, indicating the new recycling services on the Island for cardboard and paper should be ready to use in late May or early June. We have been turned down by the Greater Kingston Foundation for financial help on the stone fences.

May 16 is our first Bake Sale in Stella – volunteers sign up at next meeting for these sales held on Fridays of long weekends and the Saturday morning coffee wagon.

Three cheers were raised for our retiring president, Jackie Sylvester – her third time in office. The new position is to be filled jointly by Kirsten Bennick and Claire Jenney.

Meeting closed with singing God Save the Queen.



## GARDENING AS EXERCISE

[www.dougreensgarden.com](http://www.dougreensgarden.com)

- Doug Green (from his web site, with permission)

Research has shown that a half hour of gardening a day with all its stretching, bending and lifting is an excellent workout and that it equals the time spent in more fashionable (and expensive) fitness centers. I'll also remind you that there are numerous studies showing regular physical exercise reduces your risk of premature death, heart disease, obesity, high blood pressure, adult-onset diabetes, osteoporosis, stroke, depression, colon cancer and a range of other diseases that seem to come along.

## COUNCIL GLEANINGS

- Ian Murray

Each month, as Beacon editor, I look through the Township's agenda documents for what I think might interest our readers. This used to be tiresome: first with paper and then going through the pdf files to make sure I didn't miss anything of Island interest.



The new system on the Loyalist web site makes this job SO MUCH easier. I can find what I want quickly and print what I think is relevant.

\*\*\*

At the March 10<sup>th</sup> Council meeting a motion was passed "that a letter be sent under the Reeve's signature, to the Road's Department staff, congratulating them on a job well done under adverse conditions."

Those of us at the Beacon and Topsy Farms hereby express our appreciation to the Amherst Island road and ferry crews for helping us get through the winter with a minimum of disruption.

\*\*\*

Council members money for 2007: Reeve McEwen, \$25,921.78 remuneration, \$92.16 benefits (the same for each Council member), and \$10,780.01 expenses; Deputy Reeve Lowry, \$17,846.36 remuneration; Councillors, \$14012.04 remuneration, expenses ranging from \$4766 to \$7787.

\*\*\*

The building permit revenue for 2007 was budgeted at \$276,000 but was actually only \$172,944. This appears to be the main reason for a deficit of \$91,590 in the Building Department.

\*\*\*

I was unable to attend the Official Plan meeting on the evening of April 1. Don and Chris went and they said that the Hydro outage made seeing things a challenge.

The most controversial of the proposed amendments is probably the limitation of residential severances to 2 per year. Also of interest to many Islanders would be the recommendation to "add policies regulating wind farms . . ."

Of some personal interest is the proposed removal of the Front Road by-pass from the Official Plan. I remain sceptical that the road west of Emerald can be improved or even maintained indefinitely in its present unsafe condition in its present location.

## JAMES RUSSELL SKILLINGS (1918-2008)

Jim died peacefully at home on March 30 after enjoying some old cheddar and sherry.

He is survived by his wife Alice, his brother Budd and his sister Rose. Remembered with love by his children Elna, Jamey, Wendy, Dane, and Amber.

The Skillings have had a cottage on Sand Beach for many years.

**JANET'S JOTTINGS**

- Janet Scott

Oh to be on Amherst, now that April's here!

As I write this article it is the end of March and there are cold winds blowing. There's a forecast for snow tonight and last night it was cold enough to plug the bus in BUT we are a people of hope and I know Spring is here. The calendar tells me that last Thursday the spring equinox actually arrived, the sun at noon is warm on my upturned face and the birds are back.

With all these eloquent clues crying out that it really is Spring. how can I ignore the facts? I am still wearing a winter coat, mittens, touque and scarf but yes it is Spring. I grew up in the Ottawa Valley and remember one Victoria weekend waking up to snow so I'm hoping that that will not happen this year.

I trust that by the time you read this column you too will be seeing signs of Spring and have become a believer too. The birds have no doubts. I have come to the conclusion that light

not temperature must play the major role in migration. By mid March the Robins, Song Sparrows, Grackles, Killdeer

***By October the blackbirds will gather together again in large flocks. Flocks of as many as 5000-10,000 have been recorded on Amherst and Wolfe Islands...***

and our harbinger of Spring in this area the Red-winged Blackbird have returned to the Island. Snow covers most of the fields still but local Canada Geese, Horned Larks and Great Horned Owls are nesting. The drive to return to their traditional nesting grounds has brought our familiar birds back to the Island for another cycle of life. It is amazing that they fly so far and then turn their lives completely over to the rearing of young.

When the Redwings first returned, Sally commented on how quiet and subdued they were. The first few days were non-competitive and they rested from their return flight as they fed busily at the feeders and along roadsides and weed patches. By now they are showing their red epaulettes and singing OKA-REE as they establish territories and wait for the females to return in early April. All through May many migrants will continue to arrive but these later birds will be immature and not in the same great hurry to get here for the mating season. Their nests are cup-shaped and woven of sedges and grasses. The female does all the sitting on eggs but they hatch in only 14 days. Then both parents feed, protect and care for the young. Red-winged Blackbirds are very territorial and will fight each other for choice nesting areas. Males may have more than one female on territory but DNA testing shows us that females are not above doing a little sneaking around too, as nestlings are not always the same father. Red-winged Blackbirds are the number one nesting bird in the Kingston area. They prefer cattail marshes for nesting and we have the right habitat here with our Big Marsh and all the small cattail patches in fields and

along roadsides. By October the blackbirds will gather together again in large flocks. Flocks of as many as 5000-10,000 have been recorded on Amherst and Wolfe Islands as they move south again feeding on agricultural fields on their way to the wintering

***I have come to the conclusion that light not temperature must play the major role in migration.***

lands as far south as Florida and the Gulf of Mexico.

The dates have come as well to send our Snow Buntings on their long flight north to the nesting

areas in the high Arctic. They appear every October with the first snow squalls and have been seen in the Kingston area for over 130 years. They remind you of snowflakes as they flutter in to feed at a favourite spot and then in a flash the whole flock seems to disappear. Hence their Canadian name of Snowbirds as used in Anne Murray's song and also to mean people who travel south for the winter.

The Snowbird has a long flight ahead. The males arrive on their breeding grounds by early April and three weeks later the females will arrive. The best nesting sites are nooks and crannies in the rock where predators like Peregrine Falcons and Snowy Owls can't get them. Their pairing is monogamous and she is completely dependent on him for feeding as she cannot leave the nest. These nooks and crannies may be safer sites but they are also colder being below the surface and the eggs and young would not survive if the mother left the nest. It is probably wise if she picks her mate not by looks only, she needs a good provider.

Riely Lambert reports Killdeer down his way at the west end of the Island. Gordie Forbes reports lots of Scaup on the South Shore and Ida Gavlas has seen a Great Blue Heron already. These birds have all appeared right on time even if the weather seems miserable. Ida also saw a Turkey Vulture on the mainland and that's also a bird due back this week. The Osprey are due back the first week of April so let's keep our eyes open and hopefully our Lord Amherst of the Community Centre will have found a new lady to keep his castle.

Good Birding everyone.



## NEILSON STORE MUSEUM

### BACKROOM SERIES

- Alan Kidd

The Island was fortunate to have three concerts during the first half of March. On Saturday, the 1<sup>st</sup> of March, the Lodge hosted Nathan Rogers, the son of the famous Canadian folksinger Stan Rogers. The following Wednesday Old Man Luedecke appeared at the Neilson Store Museum backroom. And on Thursday March 13<sup>th</sup> Chris Murphy appeared at the community centre along with the Killarney Dancers for a pre St. Patrick's Day Irish Night. I managed to get to the first two concerts but wasn't able to get to see Jon and Chris at the community centre.

Dave Martin was the warm up act at the Lodge on Saturday Night. He was from Snow Road Station, somewhat north of highway seven, but his people came from around the Georgian Bay and he sang a couple of songs from that area. Nathan Rogers put on a great show at the Lodge. He played a number of his own songs, as well as a couple of Stan's. Many of the songs were on his CD "True Stories" but he also played some new material that will appear on a new CD. One of these new songs was a sequel to his earlier song, "Mary's Child" a look back at relations between the Huron Indians and the French Jesuits. Nathan promised that a third part to the story would eventually appear. Nathan, like his father, is interested in singing about Canada's history, but has much wider interests as well. One of the most striking of these is throat singing. Nathan was interested in throat singing among the Inuit but also in other cultures, including that of the Mongolians. It was the influence of this culture that Nathan used to create his own example of throat singing. This is one of those times you have to use the expression "You had to be there". The audience was truly transfixed by the exhibition.

Nathan finished up with a performance of Stan's "Northwest Passage" a song that many have thought should be an alternate national anthem for Canada. His encore performance was a song called "Garnet's Homemade Beer" a parody of Stan's "Barret's Privateers" which described the unfortunate effects of drinking Stan's brother's Garnet's homemade beer at a party.

On Wednesday, March 5<sup>th</sup> the 2008 series of Backroom talks continued with a special music evening featuring Old Man Luedecke playing his songs on the banjo. Old Man Luedecke, who the Whig Standard has described as "young in years, but old in spirit", is Chris Luedecke who lives in Nova Scotia. The night of the performance was in fact his 32<sup>nd</sup> birthday. Chris has been on the Island a couple of times before, but this was his first public performance here. Chris brought along a couple of friends, Mary Beth Carty and Gabriel Ouellette who came down from Quebec City. They perform as the group Bette & Wallet and sang a couple of traditional Maritime and Quebecois songs prior to Chris starting his set.

Chris was an immediate hit with the audience in the Back Room. He played several of his own compositions, both from his previous CDs as well as material that will be appearing on a new CD that is just coming out. Chris and his wife live in Nova Scotia and some of the songs, such as Salute to the Gold River, were inspired by that locale. However, most of the songs were just taken from life experiences, such as Joy of Cooking, which tells of finding inspiration in that well known cookbook and declaring that "the answer is bacon". It was a treat to hear an unamplified performance and the Backroom and Old Man Luedecke seemed to fit together well.

For those of you that were not able to be at these concerts. They have both been recorded for play back on CJAI, so hopefully you will have another chance to catch these great performers.

[Editor: I have heard from people who were at the Chris Murphy & the Killarney Dancers concert that it was a fun time for the 100 or so in the audience. Jon McLurg was ill and unable to play.]



The family of the late Ralph Wemp wish to express their sincere thanks to relatives, friends and neighbours for the cards, donations, phone calls and many items of food dropped at the house during the recent loss of our Dad. A special thank you to Rev. Margaret Johnston-Jones for visiting us and for performing the warm, caring service which truly painted a wonderfully accurate picture of our Dad.

Thank you to Beth Forester for being our organist and to St. Paul's Presbyterian Church for allowing us to hold the service there.

Many thanks to Barb Miller who has braved snow, ice and potholes to deliver our newspaper every day. We really appreciate her efforts.

John and Liz Harrison.

**AIMS MEETING, MARCH 8TH**

- Dale Gowan

Breakfast was prepared for AIMS membership by AIPS Senior Class – and it was delicious.

Meeting attendance was lighter than usual due to the inclement weather. The speaker, Dr. Tim Moermond, and Rick Thompson, a new member, were introduced.

Since his retirement from teaching at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, Tim has been involved with a number of international projects in conservation and sustainable development. His current activities include:

- Farm community development in Ecuador and Bolivia.
- Conducting workshops in China teaching adaptive wildlife management to staff in the Sichuan Panda reserve in Sichuan.
- Siberian crane conservation project in Siberia, Kazakhstan and China.
- Working with the Ferry Bluff Eagle Council in Sauk Prairie, Wisconsin to preserve the winter bald eagle areas as a valuable community and ecological resource for the community and surrounding areas. <http://ferrybluffeaglecouncil.org>

The Ferry Bluff Eagle Council group has been working for 20 years to protect and develop the winter roosting areas for the bald eagle along the Wisconsin River between Sauk Prairie and Lone Rock. This group provides leadership in protecting, maintaining and enhancing these winter breeding areas through education, advocacy, habitat management and research activities.

Research activities on wintering eagles and their habitat needs feeds into informed conservation and land use practices.

Support for sound community development planning, conservation and land use to protect critical eagle habitat.

Education and outreach to enhance local awareness and appreciation of eagles.

Co-sponsoring 'Eagle Days' to provide special opportunities to see and learn about eagles and contribute to community development and pride.

The group has been doing winter roost counts for 20 years, the longest running systematic survey of its kind. This has established that winter bird populations vary widely from one year to another. This research has also helped understanding as to how the eagles respond to local environmental variables like the amount of ice cover on the rivers to help understand the complicated interplay between habitat quality, location and weather changes. Radio tracking has been used to help understand the relationships between different habitats – day foraging and night roost locations. [Tim passed around maps and pictures of the eagle areas – many taken from the groups' web site.] This provides a much better understanding of how human communities like Sauk Prairie may affect the probability of eagles persisting in large numbers; a question of great ecological and economic interest.

Tim cited a number of examples where economic factors, upon deeper examination, were not what they appeared to be on the surface. The question of 'money/jobs vs wild-life' is more a question of 'who's money?' and 'who benefits?' rather than an absolute tradeoff. In Sauk Prairie, a number of developments had been targeted at the sensitive areas along the river. Through the work of the Eagle Council, some of this development was changed to reduce its impact and provide areas of public access. Ecotourism centering on the eagles has brought \$1.4million in new revenues into area businesses.

The Eagle Council is not an academic group but local citizens and businessmen who became interested in their local ecological resource - the wintering bald eagles - and wanted to develop it for the benefit of the community. They are an example of what community groups can achieve through persistent effort.



~ CLASSIFIEDS ~

**NOTICES**

**HERITAGE FAIR PROJECTS**

The students of Amherst Island Public School invite the community to visit The Backroom at the Neilson Store Museum and Cultural Centre on Friday, April 25th from 7 – 9 pm. Their Heritage projects will be on display.

All welcome.

There is no charge but donations to the museum are always welcomed.

Light refreshments will be served .

**WANTED TO PURCHASE**

A top quality, "Gently Used" **double bed mattress**—box spring, too, if possible. Call Sally 613-389-3802

**FOR SALE**

**PAUL CUYLER, BLACKSMITHING AND PLASMA CUTTING...**

5680 Front Rd, Stella, 613-634-0628.

**ELECTRIC GUITAR.**

Comes with a hard case.

Yamaha Pacifica, \$120.

Call Tammy Fleming at 352-1075

**SET OF 4 MICHELIN HARMONY ALL SEASON RADIALS**

size P215/70 R 15. Driven approx.8,000 km. Cost over \$700 new. Offered at \$200 the set. Call Linda or Michael at 613 634 8213

## Poplar Dell, 1920



PHOTO PROVIDED BY SUSIE CAUGHEY

*Poplar Dell about 1920. At one time the veranda stretched the entire length of the house. By the time of the photo, the east veranda had been torn off.*

The



Foot