

Patient praises SFMH Emergency teamwork

DANIELLE PAUL
MADAWASKA VALLEY

Proximity to “quite a nice community hospital” was one of the reasons that prompted former Ottawa residents Ron and Valerie Egan to retire to Blackfish Bay. Little did they expect that a dramatic rollercoaster 24 hours would demonstrate the benefit of living so close to St. Francis Memorial Hospital (SFMH). But on Aug.16 when Valerie lost consciousness and collapsed in the shower, their choice was proved right.

Ron called 9-1-1 when he and her Personal Support Worker were unable to rouse Valerie. Once the paramedics arrived and assessed her condition using a portable electrocardiogram machine (ECG), the driver told Ron their next stop was SFMH and warned, “Don’t try to follow me, I’m going fast.”

Ron described his arrival at the hospital: “Here we are one o’clock in the afternoon. Emergency is packed to the rafters. Nobody is being seen. And everybody in the ER is in the room with Valerie including Dr. Malinowski.”

Dr. Jason Malinowski, Chief of Staff at SFMH, was on ER duty that day, and also happens to be the Egan’s family doctor. She was semi-conscious as the ambulance reached SFMH; Valerie said, “I remember saying ‘Hi Dr. Malinowski.’”

Dr. Malinowski updated Ron briefly: “She presented with a heartbeat of 15 beats per minute and at one point it went to zero. We had to stop what we were doing and do CPR.... We’re trying to stabilize her now.” Knowing that Ron and Valerie’s daughter-in-law, Melanie, is a doctor in Ottawa (who coincidentally once worked at SFMH), Dr. Malinowski told Ron the diagnosis was Stage 3 Heart Block and that Valerie would go by ORNG helicopter to the Ottawa Heart Institute, so Ron went home to pack a bag and notify his son, Kevin,



Ron and Valerie Egan.

that he was on his way.

When Ron called the Heart Institute from Ottawa after 9 p.m. to speak to Julie, the Critical Care Unit charge nurse, she immediately put Valerie on the phone to reassure Ron. Valerie was fitted with a permanent pacemaker the next day and returned home on Wednesday Aug.18.

“I DIDN’T WANT TO BOTHER THE DOCTOR”

Valerie told *The Current*, “I have no memory of the helicopter ride at all. I had symptoms for about a month—chest pain and a slow heartbeat. This is going to sound crazy, but I didn’t want to bother the doctor. Well, I sure bothered him on Monday Aug.16.”

THE SFMH TEAM’S PERSPECTIVE

Dr. Malinowski remembers, “It was a busy summer day. We were keeping up with the waiting room which was filling consistently throughout the day

until this [when] we put everything on hold for maybe an hour. [Then] Marissa looked after her when she was stabilized until the Air Ambulance came. And then I and nursing staff tried to pick up the pieces with the rest of the department.”

He outlined the SFMH critical emergency process: “When we get the call that a critical emergency is inbound, we need to make some instant decisions to prepare.”

Make room in ER and assemble the team, anticipating need for staff from other areas of the hospital.

Prepare ourselves with limited information from despatch and assign roles. (Team lead, IV access, medication administration, airway management, etc.)

Maintain effective and clear communication during the assessment and treatment of a critical patient. “It’s not acceptable to just be standing back and giving orders that may or may not be

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SFMH Team from left: Katlynn Aleck RN, Dr. Marissa Ukos, Dr. Jason Malinowski, CNO Mary-Ellen Harris, Cheryl Pecarskie RN, COO Gregory McLeod

completed. The whole team needs to be on the same page with respect to addressing current [and the next] priority.

Dr. Malinowski praises the team at SFMH, saying they work extremely well together, not only performing specific tasks but coming together for common problem-solving. He can ask, "What are you seeing from your end?" Or "Are we missing anything here?" He said everyone has a chance to contribute – and the insight that their training and experience brings is welcome. He said, "We are blessed to have such a dedicated staff, and also top-notch equipment that the community has provided for us through the St. Francis Valley Healthcare Foundation."

Now in her final year of residency, Marissa Ukos is in a two-month rural residency at SFMH that began the first week of August. Her role was to stay with Valerie until the air ambulance left. As her first critical case here, the contrast with an urban Emergency Department was evident: "I think the biggest thing is patient resources. I did my medical school in Ottawa – bigger facility, more equipment ... multitudes of nurses for more hands on deck ... spare docs that can run the rest of the department or come give a hand if you need someone else to do similar tasks in the room.... So it's definitely a challenge to work in a more resource-limited setting. But

when you have an awesome team — everyone was super great at communicating — that is the key factor that makes it a lot easier. It doesn't matter how many bodies you have if you're not talking."

Gregory McLeod, Chief Operating Officer at SFMH, said, "The University of Ottawa Heart Institute is also using EPIC so they already had everything that was in the chart and [knew] everything that had been done." Cheryl Pecarskie, ER nurse at SFMH for 20 years, was on duty with Katlynn Aleck in ER that day. Pecarskie said, "They can watch what we're doing pretty much real time.... pull up our blood work, our results, our notes, all our stuff, while [the patient is still here]."

SFMH CONDUCTS ONGOING TRAINING

The Egans told *The Current* that Valerie's condition prompted a training exercise a month after her incident. Mary-Ellen Harris, Chief Nursing Officer and Director Patient Care Services, explained that the ER nurses require specialized training, but with limited staff resources, developing multiple skill sets is crucial: "We try to prepare our In-Patient Unit nurses similarly with orientation [in ER], some guidelines to know how to help in a situation... emergency-type things can also happen upstairs."

Manor redevelopment one step closer

DANIELLE PAUL
BARRY'S BAY

Valley Manor residents and staff are one step closer to completion of the ambitious redevelopment project which will see the Manor move from its present location on Mintha Street to St. Francis Memorial Drive in Barry's Bay beside the St. Francis Health centre and St. Francis Memorial Hospital. Once there on the grounds of the former Sherwood Public School, the Manor will be an integral part of a community health hub that has been a long range goal for years. Before that happens, though, the Sherwood PS building has to go. On site earlier this week Valley Manor CEO Trisha DesLaurier received the official demolition permit from Donovan Ott, consultant for jp2g Building Services Division, the demolition project managers.

Valley Manor Board Chair Kathy Marion said being on the site of the former school prompted a lot of memories, recalling that in her days on the Renfrew County District School Board she had participated in the official opening ceremony of the newest wing of Sherwood PS.

When asked about the projected official opening for the new Valley Manor, DesLaurier acknowledged that the pandemic, as well as changes to long term care regulations, had delayed the project but that they were aiming for a 2025 opening. As for the start of construction, she said there would be a gap after demolition until they could break ground on the building. She added that the



DesLaurier (centre left) holds the permit with Ott, watched by Valley Manor Board members Robert Cihelka (far left) and Kathy Marion.

shovel used for ground-breaking ceremony 40 years ago at the Mintha Street location had been saved and she was excited to keep it ready for use to officially begin construction at the new site.

The redevelopment project was, of course, not the only thing delayed by the pandemic. Board Vice-Chair Robert Cihelka remarked that despite having served on the Valley Manor board for nearly a year, because COVID-19 restrictions necessitated remote video meetings, this was the first time he and Marion had been able to meet in person.

The demolition bid was won by Schouten Excavating of Watford (near Sarnia). Ott said that Schouten had already begun hazardous materials abatement on the site, and that actual demolition would follow shortly. DesLaurier said that a public meeting for neighbouring residents was held recently to maintain open communication about the project. The demolition is expected to take a month to complete.

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OPINION

Post-election refresher — Canadian democracy 101

MICHAEL J. MCCLOSKEY
QUADEVILLE

It is the height of understatement to say that no one seems satisfied with the outcome of the recent Federal election. With the re-election of Mrs. Gallant, the electorate of Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke remained divided into two distinct solitudes: those very proud of the re-election of the local candidate but astonished with the national outcome versus those astonished with the re-election of the local candidate but grateful for the national outcome.

GOOD FAITH VERSUS BAD FAITH

I have all the time in the world to speak with people, even those I vehemently disagree with, who are acting in good faith; that is to say, their efforts and aims are sincere and geared to the maintenance of freedom and democracy in Canada. I will engage all day with anyone genuinely interested in healthy debates of public policy: who pays too much tax and who pays too little, what federalism means or should mean, the role of government, the balance of personal freedom and the common good, and a host of others. Sadly, it is overwhelmingly the bad faith comments we are seeing online and hearing in the media and that I think we need to address. Before I get too far into these comments, I should say this: a good person can, on occasion, promulgate or—as is often the case in the internet age—act as unwitting amplifiers for a bad faith arguments made by other individuals or even foreign countries.

BAD FAITH FROM BAD ACTORS

Canada is not alone in being the target of foreign government information operations. Those of us who remember the Cold War can recall the clunky propaganda of the Soviet Union. The difference today is that bad international actors are not sending propaganda films to you; instead it comes as a meme from your Aunt Kathy. While they come across as folksy “real talk” they are actually carefully crafted appeals to emotion to hijack legitimate public discussion to insert and amplify false, misleading,



or inflammatory narratives. The short-term goal is to weaken in the population the moral and ethical underpinnings of democracy, to seek to plant concepts such as your vote not mattering, or voting does nothing because all parties are the same. The avowed long-term goal of these operations is to erode the number of citizens participating in our democracy and if you read to the end of this article you will see their effect. While there are many examples online to choose from—let’s just look at two.

“WELL NOTHING CHANGED — WHY BOTHER HAVING AN ELECTION?”

First, let’s address all of the people boring us on Facebook, at the gas pump or the general store with the “well nothing’s changed- why even bother having an election!” nonsense. I don’t ask for much but logical consistency should be the minimum standard. Instead, we get a paradox, and as paradoxes go an obvious one. What these people are saying is that elections should only be held when we somehow know that the results will be different but the only way to determine that the outcome will be different is by having elections!

Now, there certainly are some people at the far ends of our political spectrum who may secretly like the idea that everyone knows the outcome of elections before they occur, as in Russia or Venezuela, and there is no doubt that knowing Putin will win with 99 percent of the vote before the ballots are counted is very efficient, but it is not how we do it here.

CANADIAN DEMOCRACY FUN FACT 1 — SNAP ELECTIONS ARE A THING HERE

This is Canada and in our electoral system, snap elections get called by minority governments. History shows them being called by both major parties. Mr. Harper did it. Mr. Trudeau did it. We can have a fulsome and honest debate about whether tactically it was a good idea, examine the factors that kept the current government from forming a majority, or what the stability of the electorate means, but to denigrate the validity of an election process based on the seat distribution is a red herring and a dead end. Whether we want to use the metaphor of the general public as a ship’s navigator who the government has asked if they are still on course, or we choose the public as the patient in hospital who just got their temperature taken for the second time in two hours, the information we provided in this election will have a direct impact on the determination of national policy and is very valuable.

HAVING COVERED VALUE NOW LET’S LOOK AT COST

“What a waste of money...” We have all heard and seen this one and I will admit that the \$610 million price estimate given by Elections Canada is, at first glance, eye-watering. However, I have learned over the years that when dealing with big numbers context is key and, once we do some simple math, it gets put into context pretty quickly. Each of us expects an election system that is fair, accessible,

efficient, and provides timely results. Across the globe, elections in modern democracies are costly so I was determined to see what the cost of our democracy is.

CANADIAN DEMOCRACY FUN FACT 2 — DEMOCRACY COSTS 3 CENTS/DAY

Elections Canada prepares election materials for every elector and organizes the network of tens of thousands of voting sites across our huge country. For this last election there were 27,366,297 registered electors. Our personal share, as an elector, of that \$610 million is \$22 dollars each. With two years between this election and the last one, democracy in Canada cost you and me the whopping total of: 3 cents a day.

This leads to another paradox, this time a sad one. I have noticed that typi-

cally it is the same people bemoaning the election cost that post jingoistic memes online such as “freedom isn’t free” or “they paid the price for our freedom.” While I can appreciate the sentiments, especially around November 11th, it is a paradox because they venerate those that paid the ultimate price for democratic ideals while simultaneously decrying paying their price of democracy which they seemingly find too rich for their blood.

“FINE, BUT I AM STILL MAD AND UNSATISFIED — WHO CAN I BE MAD AT?”

Find one or two of the 11,231,758 registered electors who didn’t vote and ask them: What was more important that day? Why they didn’t take part and make actual change?

Champion the Truth theme of National Newspaper Week

THE CURRENT
MADAWASKA VALLEY

To celebrate this year’s National Newspaper Week (Oct.3-9) and provide Canadians with a way to show their support for the industry, News Media Canada has partnered with Canadian artist Ola Volo to create the limited-edition, signed print titled “Champions”.

“Champions” was inspired by conversations between Volo and industry stakeholders and celebrates the local news industry as champions of truth in Canada. Volo is known for the strong narrative she brings to life in her work and her ability to spark conversation, bring people together, empower action and shed light on important issues.



Artist Ola Volo with print “Champions.”



Valley hunters: expect the unexpected

GIL GLOFCHESKIE
BARRY'S BAY

Many years have passed since this took place—I would say somewhere in the 'mid-90s. Any pics have long disappeared; only the memory remains, a memory some would like to forget.

It had started snowing in mid-October; by the first week of November deer season was in full swing. The snow made it easier to track the deer, but everything was damp and cold. Five of us were hunting north of Paugh Lake that week and had a long, rough ATV ride into our hunting area. With the snow on the ground, the deer had started to migrate early to their wintering grounds. We just had to sit and wait, though it made for a long, cold day. We would get together for lunch, build a fire and enjoy each other's company. We had a big old metal tomato can for a tea pail. The creek water and ash from the fire made a good brew of hot tea on those cold, damp days. We ate, drank hot tea, and talked hunting tales during lunch break.

I recounted a story from the previous year where a big bear came crashing down from the oak ridge; something had spooked him. This bear was moving very quickly in my direction but, reluctant to shoot him, I raised my rifle, aimed and fired into a rock. The bear turned and disappeared behind a knoll, then reappeared and headed straight at me. I turned the gun and set the crosshairs on his chest. I was about to squeeze the trigger when the crosshairs moved to his left shoulder. He was now 30 yards away and broadside. The crosshairs never left his heart. He stopped, turned his massive head and looked in my direction, sniffed the air and walked away. What a magnificent animal, I was so glad I did not have to shoot him. Besides, I did not have a bear tag that year.

Though it was freezing all day, the hunt was going well: two bucks and a doe so far, only two more tags to fill. Hunting in the cold is a funny thing. If for some reason, you could not make the hunt, you were disappointed. On the other hand, the fierce cold



made you wonder what was keeping you there.

Wednesday morning was disappointing; no one had seen a deer, let alone any fresh tracks. I decided to go scouting while everyone else sat and shivered on their runways; it felt good to move around. Walking down an old logging road, I discovered fresh deer tracks and decided to scent the area using Tinks 69 deer lure – the slogan was “Tinks Stinks,” and it sure did. It was a cover scent and an attractant. I decided to scout a little further then come back for the evening hunt.

As I rounded a corner, I notice a large black bear walking along the top of the ridge. I naturally assumed that once he saw me, he would run away; he didn't. At this point, we were travelling a parallel course with the ridge sloping down to the road. If we both kept on this course, we were going to bump into one another. The crazy thing was this bear was ignoring me; he wouldn't even look at me. Was he deaf or blind? I figured I'd better let him know of my presence, so I gave him a shout.

At the sound of my voice, he turned; the next thing I knew, there was this big black ball of fur charging downhill towards me. He was covering the ground quickly. My thought was, he is bluffing.

This situation felt different. The big bruiser just kept coming, and at 20 yards, I had no choice. The first shot lifted the bear, and just as quickly, he continued his charge. I levered, and the

second shot spun him around. He fell into a depression in the ground where I could barely see him. I dropped out the clip and slammed in a fresh one. The bear tried to push himself up; I fired a third shot. In my mind, time seemed to stand still, but it all happened in the blink of an eye.

Phew, that was too close for comfort. I waited, watched and took several deep breaths. When I was confident the bear was dead, I paced myself off to where the bear had dropped. It was fifteen feet, way too close for comfort; I let out a massive sigh of relief.

As I dressed the bear, I was ever vigilant and my nerves on edge; where there was one, there could be another. With all the shooting, the game would be gone.

I checked the bear to see if there was anything unusual to make him act the way he did. He was a big healthy male, so maybe this was his territory, and he was the dominant bear; perhaps I startled him. Your guess is as good as mine. Instinct had instructed me to purchase a bear tag that year. Lucky for me—if you shoot an animal accidentally, you get a ticket from the MNR. It is like an expensive traffic ticket. It is different from being charged and fined for poaching. They also confiscate the animal and donate the meat to a good cause.

A couple of Polish fellows from Toronto hunted with us; these guys loved bear meat and made sausage or Bi-

gos—a Hunter stew. “It is all yours,” I said. We hung the bear for a day, skinned him, then salted the hide, rolled it up, wrapped it in heavy plastic bags and froze it in the side porch. All was good, or so I thought.

The snow had come early, and I could not drive into the cottage that winter. My Polish buddy Cecil phoned and mentioned he had a friend who owned a business and would love to have that bearskin made into a wall rug for the customers to admire. What harm could come of that?

I said OK, I will bring it back the next time I’m at the cottage. March came, and I hiked in to retrieve the hide, back-packed it out, and drove back home. I made the call to Cecil and told him I had the bearskin: “Can you get here early tomorrow and pick it up. It’s warm in the city, and I have no space to store it in my freezer. I don’t think my wife would appreciate a bear hide in our freezer anyway. Early tomorrow morning would be the best time to show up. I don’t want it to thaw out.” “We can be there by eleven a.m.” came the answer. “Earlier would be better,” I said.

They did not arrive until 5:00 p.m. the next day. Cecil’s buddy Walter had just picked up his new Mercedes Coupe; that was their reason for being late. The car was a real showpiece; it even had a phone built into the dash. After checking out the car, I gave him the bag with the hide. It should be OK; we had salted it well. I advised him to get it to the taxidermist as quickly as possible or put it in the freezer. He thanked me, gave me a gift and off they went.

Now you would think that would be the end of the story. Oh no.

Two weeks later, I got a call. “You will never believe what happened to my friend.” What now? When Walter got home and parked the car in his heated garage, his car phone rang: he had a problem to deal with at his shop. The next morning he drove to the shop, parked the car so everyone could admire his beautiful Mercedes. Of course, Walter got busy and forgot about the hide. When he finally remembered, he drove right to the taxidermist. As Walter drove, he noticed a mouse on the passenger seat, and thought, “What is going on?” He arrived at the taxidermist and opened the trunk, and had to jump

back. Mice were running in every direction; he was shocked at what he saw. He peered into the bag.

There were more mice in the bag. How did the mice get there? Cecil could hardly keep from laughing; suddenly, he went silent. I asked, “Hello, are you there?” That is when he burst out laughing, “You know that’s the craziest story I ever heard. The mice had chewed the skin from the inside out, and it was not suitable for tanning.” I swallowed my laughter and tried to sound sympathetic. “I am sorry to hear that; I wonder how the mice got into the bag. I guess he will want his gift back.” “No,” was the reply, “he is too embarrassed to tell anyone. He made me promise to be quiet

about this story. So don’t ever tell anyone I told you.” I promised not to tell his tale of woe to anyone even though I thought it deserved to be shared.

Then Cecil asked me if I wanted to buy a slightly used Mercedes with a built-in phone for an excellent price. Walter had told him that every time he drove the car, all he could smell was the mice stink or bear odour.

To this day, I don’t know if that bear was bluffing, but from where I stood, I did not think so and found out the hard way. Whenever you out enjoying nature, you never know what it will throw at you, a crveball or a fastball; you always want to be on your toes.

Expect the Unexpected!



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OPINION

A Cup of Jo: Sticking It

JODIE PRIMEAU
DEEP RIVER

It has been an incredibly hard year and a half. And it looks like we have at least another nine months of this... maybe more.

There have been several vaccines—two of which were in the making for thirty years: Pfizer and Moderna—both mRNA vaccines. Thirty years ago, scientists began creating mRNA vaccines. The mRNA vaccines work like a basic pancake recipe: once you have the foundation, you simply add an ingredient to get the type you want. So they developed the mRNA vaccine over decades. By 2020, what was left was to insert the mRNA sequence for COVID-19.

As a new mom and a single parent, I knew two things. FIRST: that it was extremely dangerous for myself or for my newborn daughter to get COVID-19. I knew this because my family doctor, my midwife, my surgeon—every one of them and their colleagues—were clear that this was the case. I watched in horror as the body counts went up in anti-mask areas of the United States and in poorer nations that could not protect themselves from the virus. I needed protection. Penelope needed protection. SECOND: that all of those doctors recommended that I get vaccinated and that being vaccinated made it significantly less dangerous for my daughter and me to go out into the world.

MAKING AN INFORMED DECISION

I am an analytical thinker. It's part of my job. So, when people were hesitant about the vaccines, and when people from my town and county posted links advocating against masks and then against vaccines, I opened them and read them with an open mind. But I didn't stop there. I looked further to the source of the information: not just what they told me, but especially what they didn't tell me. I researched their background: Had they been removed from their professional organization in the past? Were they associated with hate groups? What did other professionals in their field say about their work? Where had they been *recently* (in at least the last ten years) published, and did those publications pass muster?

This is it. This is where I made my decisions.

As you can see, the decision wasn't made lightly. My safety and the safety of my daughter were at stake. Yet, in weighing the known deaths and immune system long-term effects of COVID-19 against the known protections and very rare complications of the vaccines, I decided that it was in both mine and Penelope's best interests that I get vaccinated as soon as possible. And so, I did. It was quick, I felt a little hungover after the second shot, and then I felt a sense of relief: the end of the pandemic for Penelope and me was in sight. But Penelope was still at risk of others not taking the vaccination.

VACCINE PASSPORTS

The vaccine passports could have been a very successful measure to create safe spaces for those who could not be vaccinated yet. However, the Ontario vaccine passport is another example of politics getting in the way of science.

Don't get me wrong, I fully support the implementation of limiting those who are most likely to spread and catch the virus by confirming vaccination status. But the list of places in Ontario is politically driven with some places being left out and others being included without an explanation of any clear health reasoning behind it. It doesn't inspire confidence and it puts the onus on the service industry to enforce rules which seem arbitrary. That said, these are the measures they put in place and, like a lot of things in the last few years, it is what we are stuck with.

So the question remains: should people get vaccinated because they believe that the vaccine can protect them? If they don't or they are unsure, should they be in open spaces where they could spread to others or get infected themselves?

People are still weighing this decision carefully. Some vaccine-hesitant people are friends of mine. I understand the concern. Putting anything in our bodies is concerning. And politics has made it worse. The government at both the provincial and federal level have been inconsistent in messaging, they have repeatedly chosen politics over science when making policies, and it is really hard to trust right now. So I understand the need for each person to check for themselves.

NOT CHECKING BLOCKS THE PATH TO SAFETY

Where I take issue is here: people who aren't checking.

Imagine we are all in a burning building. The smoke is filling the air and we all need to get out. So we all run toward the walls—to the windows and to the doors. Many of us get to the windows and crack them open, allowing us some relief. But the main way out is through the doors and there are people blocking them because they are worried about what could be outside.

Being scared of something is understandable, but we need everyone to do their full homework and really look outside. We need to do the homework now, so we can get out of this pandemic. This means going beyond re-posting and re-sharing scary memes and watching YouTube videos. We need people who are hesitant to do a full critical analysis of the information they are receiving and arrive at a full answer. And then, once they have that answer, to check with a doctor they can meet *in person* who they have trusted before—whether it be with their father's end-of-life care or with the surgery that was performed on their wife or child. Check your homework, and then decide about vaccines.

Meanwhile, those of us who are protected can go outside the door now. We know that the way through is with vaccinations. While those who are understandably vaccine-hesitant complete their due diligence, those of us who have checked and obtained the vaccine will be able to do some things people who have not been vaccinated cannot.

TO THE VACCINE-HESITANT

Speaking for the 70 percent of Canadians who are vaccinated and 'outside the burning building.' We love you and we want you to come with us. We don't want you inside the burning building; we want all of us to be outside, breathing clean air and enjoying our lives outside of crisis. We want this pandemic to be over as much if not more than you do. We end the pandemic with vaccinations.

So, please, complete the research that you need to do to ensure your own safety. In the meantime, please bear with the Ontario protocols.

Then, when you feel safe, grab your vaccine and let's enjoy life together on the other side of the pandemic.

Farewell Peter Benner

JAMES DI FIORE
KILLALOE

"Have you ever had a nice baked cod, Peter?"

"Yes! In fact, I was treated to a fine homemade meal once, featuring baked cod. The host was from Newfoundland and talked about how the cod industry was decimated by overfishing."

"Yeah, that hurt a lot of people."

"It sure did, James. They say the issue really challenged the SCALES of justice."

Oh, Peter. You never thought of a pun that didn't escape your mouth. And each time it did escape, all of us either laughed or rolled our eyes and laughed. The point is, we always laughed, not because the puns were always stellar, but because they came from a man who always had his immediate company in mind.

You died a few days ago, Peter. I heard the news via a Facebook post from one of many people who were positively impacted by you and your endless trough of generosity. I felt that way about you from the day I met you. It was roughly four years ago and I walked in to CHCR with my eight-month-old daughter in tow.

I knocked on the door to what would become Garth's Kitchen and you answered, your eyes all slit in that signature Peter grin you always had on. I asked if you were the guy to talk to about possibly getting a radio show, and you spoke with me for a half hour. By the time I left I had a radio show-in-waiting and you, a man who would become a good friend.

I would soon realize you would be my favourite kind of good friend; a fluid conversationalist who appreciated virtually any type of humour, including my sometimes over-the-top, gallows humour. I like to push the envelope, and you were happy to oblige. You never took any offence, seeing the humour before even contemplating if the joke went too far. We did not tell racist or sexist or any other kind of cheap jokes, but we knew each other enough to trust the source of the material, as he put it to me a few weeks ago.

You had just returned to Killaloe after the death of your father. You were tirelessly going back and forth from Madawaska Valley to Port Colborne to spend

as much time as possible with him before he passed away. The day after your return you ventured over to my place to pick me up. I stepped into your vehicle, gave you a long hug, and with a gravelly tone I whispered in your ear, "I guess I'm your Daddy now, Peter."

I know, that doesn't read well on paper, but you received it as it was intended. You thought it was hysterical, the way I made light of your father's death by informing you that I will now be in charge of your life since a spot just opened up. That is one big reason why so many of us respected you. You saw the good in everything, especially people who were down on their luck, or had mental health issues, or needed a place to crash, or wanted to learn about herbs, or radio towers, or the environment, or how Killaloe desperately needs to step up on public housing, or Indigenous writers and artists people should know about.

You were my ride to work a few times a week for the past year and a half, and we recently found ourselves talking about death due to your father's passing. You asked me a couple weeks ago, as we were driving by St. Mary's Church in Wilno, what I thought happened after we died. I told you that I thought nothing happened. You replied with that broadcast-quality voice of yours, telling me that maybe there is something more. I was reminded of how envious I was of true believers who had the good fortune to imagine their loved ones in heaven, and how I could see that being extremely helpful when people are in mourning.

So, for the past week, I have imagined Peter in heaven, coming up with holy puns and picking up discarded halos to do his part.



I miss you Peter Benner. And if we meet again I will not only tell you how wrong I was about life after death, but I will even allow you to say something like "The afterlife is potent, James. Some would even say OMNI-potent."

Farewell, Peter.

BARRY'S BAY
Legion

AT THE LEGION

CLUB ROOM OPEN

Monday to Thursday, Saturday from
2 pm to 6 pm. Friday from 2 pm to 8 pm.

PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Sunday October 17, 8 am to 12 pm

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Poppy Campaign begins Friday
October 29, 2021. Volunteers
will deliver Poppy Boxes to local
businesses in our catchment areas
and will canvass for Remembrance
Day Wreaths. To purchase a wreath
in memory of a loved one, please
contact the Legion at 613-756-3018.
The prices remain the same this year.



Watch for upcoming events in local
media and on our FB page



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Hours: Tues/Wed/Friday: 10 am to 12 pm, and 1 pm to 5 pm
Thursday: 1 pm to 4 pm, and 5 pm to 8 pm
Saturday: 10 am to 3 pm (closed Mon./Canada Day)

Place a hold for an item online by logging into your account
at www.madawaskavalleylibrary.ca, or by phone/email.
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Fall flowers at Opeongo Seniors Centre

SUBMITTED
MADAWASKA VALLEY

These photos are from the Fall Flowers Workshop held at in Barry's Bay on October 2. The workshop was organized by Jenna Stamplicoski (Flowers for Seniors Project). Flowers were courtesy of Church Street Flowers and the event was funded by Madawaska Valley Township.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT OPEONGO SENIORS CENTRE:

- October 24, 4:30 pm for 5:30 pm, Celebrating Fall Dinner, music by Landry & Madill, \$20 members/\$22 non-members.
- October 31, 5 pm, Hallowe'en Trick or Treating event, outdoors behind the centre. For details please contact Leah, 613-756-4087.

October is membership renewal month for the Centre and all paid-up members may participate in activities and events. Members can still bring guests to the dinners. Please keep in mind that all plans are conditional upon Covid-19 guidelines which can change with little notice.



Mouthguard season

MARCIA RUTLEDGE
BARRY'S BAY

Fall is in the air. It's sunny but cool—time for long pants and sweaters, pumpkin spice and leaves changing colour. It's time to tidy up after summer and prepare for winter. That means it's mouthguard season!

There's no real mouthguard season, but fall always seems to be the busiest time of the year when it comes to fabricating custom mouthguards. That's because so many fall and winter sports and activities are safer with a mouthguard. Activities like hockey, horseback riding, ski racing, snowboarding, football, rugby, soccer, skating, and field hockey are all activities for which dental professionals recommend considering the use of a mouthguard.

A mouthguard is a piece of rubber formed in a U shape to cover one arch (usually the upper) to act like a shock absorber and shield to help prevent concussions, to protect the teeth, tongue and lips from possible damage.

Mouthguards can be a one-size-fits-all appliance, a Do-It-Yourself boil-and-bite appliance, or can be custom made. A professionally made custom mouthguard stays in place easily, and can make it much easier to speak and breathe while wearing the guard to enjoy your favourite activities.

To have a custom mouthguard made an appointment with your dental professional is necessary. A quick impression of your teeth will be taken to allow your dental professional to make an exact model of your jaw. The mouthguard material is then melted over the model, cut, dremeled, smoothed and melted again until it is one piece of shiny, comfortable protection. After being disinfected and put in a case it's ready to be tried in your mouth and used.

Cleaning your mouthguard is simple: just use a toothbrush and your favourite mouthwash or a denture cleaning foam to kill and remove bacteria and fungus that live in your mouth naturally. To help prevent discolouring and bad taste and smell, you should do this after each time the mouthguard is placed in your mouth.



Multi-coloured mouthguards.

PHOTO COURTESY BARBDHC

Many may remember that at Barry's Bay Dental Hygiene Clinic (BBDHC) we used to run a fall mouthguard clinic that offered a drop-in day for impressions. Although we enjoyed those clinics and looked forward to making a bunch of mouthguards, the number of people taking advantage of the mouthguard clinic plummeted. This can be attributed to minor hockey making the decision that mouthguards were no longer required for players wearing a full face cage and proper helmet. Although I understand their position and ruling, I see preventable injuries each year that make me hope for change. I've seen kids with missing pieces of tongue, big scars on their lips, chipped and broken teeth. It will be interesting to see if anyone is studying these effects. Over time I predict these somewhat minor damages will lead to thousands of dollars spent to maintain or fix over the lifetime of the person who had the injury. A \$40 boil-and-bite mouthguard is worth the investment if that is the case.

Although there won't be a specific date for a mouthguard clinic this year, custom mouthguards can be made anytime. Evening appointments are available for those who need to come after school or work. There are many colours and colour combinations to choose from. An impression can be taken and the mouthguard ready to be picked up the next day in most cases. If you would like more information about having a custom mouthguard made at BBDHC please feel free to contact us by email info@bbdhc.ca, or phone 613-75MOUTH (756-6884).

So dig out those warm clothes, shoes and boots. Prepare your yard and home for the cooler days ahead, and don't forget to book your impression appointment for that shiny new mouthguard you require for your fall and winter activities.

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Legion banners honour Valley veterans

DANIELLE PAUL
BARRY'S BAY

Fifty-nine banners honouring the service of Valley veterans were the results of the first Honour Our Veterans banner program run by the Royal Canadian Legion Barry's Bay Branch 406. Veterans, their family members and community banner sponsors admired the display at a reception at the Legion on September 25.

Branch 406 President Heather Poliquin welcomed those who came to view the banners, saying, "We were pleasantly surprised to have such great support for the project." She said MV Councillors Mark Willmer and Ernie Peplinski had dropped in earlier to view the banners. She said the banners would be installed in the next few days, and she thanked MV Township staff for placing the banners on the brackets located throughout the Madawaska Valley and the Barry's Bay BIA for allowing the use of the brackets to hang the banners. She said, "More importantly I want to thank all of you for purchasing banners honouring the veterans in your life."

Poliquin credited past MV Recreation & Community Development Coordinator Stephanie Plebon for bringing the program to her attention. She also thanked Sue Lauren of the Perth Legion for helping her start the Barry's Bay program.

In her address Poliquin said: "The program is not unique to our region but has been gaining popularity over the past five years or so.... The program will be an ongoing legacy project. Through displaying the banners, we hope to engage the community in honouring and remembering veterans in order to ensure continued recognition and respect by future generations. We want the younger generations to understand that there are people within their town and neighbourhood that lost their lives during war, served in combat or served in the armed forces. Their contribution and sacrifice provided the life that we live. The program will continue next year so if you missed sponsoring a veteran or an active service person, you can do so next year. Details will be in lo-

cal media and on our Facebook page."

Branch 406 Veterans Service Officer Dave Eagles devised a system to hang each banner so that veterans and their families could have their photo taken

beside it. Attendees patiently lined up for their photo opp and Eagles was busy not only hanging the banners but juggling phones and cameras for the veterans, their friends and families.



Photos top to bottom: Joseph Baxter with family members Rose, Catherine, Mary beside the banner honouring his and his wife's service during WWII. Dave Eagles takes a photo as families wait their turn. Banners on display in Legion Hall.