

Ottawa Hospital moves closer

THE CURRENT
RENFREW

The news, released on October 30, that Renfrew Victoria Hospital (RVH) and The Ottawa Hospital (TOH) have integrated their surgical, urology and gynecology services, is also good news for Valley patients.

Randy Penney, (pictured far left) CEO of both RVH and St. Francis Memorial Hospital (SFMH), told *The Current*, "For our patients in Barry's Bay and area, I'm excited about the possibility of improved access to care. Getting to Renfrew is certainly easier than having to travel to Ottawa."

According to the press release received by *The Current*, Dr. David Carver, (shown third from left) General Surgeon, has been chosen to take on the newly-minted role of Site Chief of Surgical Services at RVH. That role will be part of an integrated surgical program with TOH. Carver will have an office at RVH and will report to RVH as well as having full accountability to the Division of General Surgery at TOH/University of Ottawa. The arrangement is a first in this region.

"With this collaboration, clinical competency, critical mass and patient safety will be monitored by The Ottawa Hospital," notes Penney. This follows upon other collaborations between the two hospitals. Last May, TOH's Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology began providing weekly gynecology services for women in the region as part of the RVH ambulatory care clinics. Their services include consult, office procedures and some minor surgeries. Links between TOH and RVH have already been established in nephrology/dialysis, cancer services, radiology, Telehealth and more.

Speaking about the most recent collaboration, Dr. Jack Kitts CEO of TOH



RVH and TOH staff were on hand for the announcement of the new integrated Renfrew Victoria Hospital/The Ottawa Hospital site chief of surgery. (PHOTO SUBMITTED)

(pictured above fifth from left) said, "Patients tell us that getting the best care closest to home is what's important to them and their loved ones. Today's announcement does just that with surgeons and staff from TOH and RVH working even more closely together to provide quality care and a better patient experience. I would like to recognize the leadership of both hospitals for making this partnership happen."

SFMH patients will next year also benefit from the integrated electronic system for managing patient information (EPIC). This project involves a collaboration involving SFMH, RVH, TOH and several other hospitals, which *The Current* reported on in May.

The Ottawa Hospital, Renfrew Victoria Hospital (2018, Oct.30) Collaboration key to providing medical expertise close to home [Press release].

Flu Clinics

THE CURRENT
MADAWASKA VALLEY

Renfrew County District Health Unit (RCDHU) advises that getting a flu shot is the best way to protect yourself and the people around you from getting the flu. The flu shot also lowers your risk of serious complications, such as pneumonia.

Free flu shots are available for all Ontario residents over six months of age. RCDHU has published its calendar of flu clinics running from Octo-

ber 29 to November 29 throughout the county. Two clinics are scheduled in the area:

- Barry's Bay: Monday, November 26, 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the Royal Canadian Legion, 250 John St.
- Killaloe: Tuesday, November 27, 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the Killaloe Lions Club, 40 Lake St.

For more information, including other clinics scheduled, call 613-735-8666, or visit the Renfrew County District Health Unit website.

Ben Hokum & Son: to the 21st century and beyond

DANIELLE PAUL
KILLALOE

The closure of a mill traditionally makes Valley people very nervous. But the temporary closing of Ben Hokum & Son Limited's small log mill in Killaloe this fall is something to get excited about... very excited, because its reopening brings a technological advance that places Hokums squarely at the forefront of the industry. *The Current* met on site with mill owner Dean Felhaber to learn more.

As the biggest producer of pine in Ontario overall, Hokums already has a significant impact on our region. Although Hokums is considered a medium-sized producer in the province, Felhaber says the bigger mills concentrate on spruce lumber for home building. Hokums' white pine is used more for decorative purposes such as paneling and furniture-making while the red pine goes into pressure treatment, flooring and posts for fences or decks. The Hokums philosophy is not to waste any part of the tree so their products include chips and sawdust.

Hokums sources logs within a radius of about 250km from Killaloe. Some come from Algonquin Park where Hokums is the biggest licence holder in Renfrew County. They also source from other parts of Ontario; for example, plantation red pine, and logs from the Minden area.

There are two sawmills on site. One is a big log (greater than 10 inches in diameter) sawmill that was built in 1974 to replace an earlier mill built by Ben Jr. (Felhaber's grandfather) and his father (also called Ben) in 1956. Ben Jr. built a small log mill in 1993 with conventional equipment similar to all the other mills in the Valley. But in 1997 in order to reduce the costs of processing the small logs, Ben Jr. (then in his 70s) decided to replace that conventional equipment with 2D scanning and optimizing computers, as well as an automatic sorter. That technology installed back in 1998



Felhaber explains how the mill will expand by an additional ten thousand square feet.

helped Hokums to weather the difficult economic times that followed.

Hokums didn't ignore the big log mill either and installed some upgrades. But for many years they did not upgrade their big log mill with scanning technology because achieving payback would have required a substantial increase in production.

Eventually Felhaber came up with the idea of upgrading the more modern equipment already in the small log mill to handle larger logs up to 18 inches in diameter. He decided to replace its 2D scanners with state-of-the-art 3D scanning equipment to achieve even faster processing speeds. As Felhaber says on the company's website, "If there is one thing we have learned in 60 years, it is that standing still is not an option."

Felhaber bought the company from his grandparents, Ben Jr. and Lois, in April 2015. He proudly recounts how his grandfather approved of the plans for this expansion back in 2017:

"Ben always wanted to install scanning things for a long time, seeing how you get more recovery out of every log that way and how there'd be a payback on it.... I told him last summer that we were going to put 3D scanning in and he thought that was pretty good."

His grandfather quizzed Felhaber on the details and the answers must have

satisfied him because Ben Jr. approved, "Oh well, then you've thought of everything—that's good."

Felhaber explains that 3D scanning technology will allow Hokums to reduce processing time, but, more importantly, to saw logs based on the dollar value that can be achieved from each log. He says, "It's all about how much money you get per log—not just how much lumber comes out of it."

The Hokums expansion involves four phases over the next five years. This year's project is to get the main line into the small log mill. The next milestone will be the grading facility with a high-tech sorter to vastly improve working conditions for the employees who now sort lumber manually in open sheds in all weather.

The Current asked Felhaber how big the Hokums operation will be after expansion. He says they will produce just over 40 million board feet per year. That equates to about 20 percent more than they produce now.

Usually upgraded technology gets blamed for putting people out of work. Not so at Hokums. Felhaber says, "It will bring us into the 21st century and set us up for the next twenty years at least. We'll be even more competitive. We want to be survivors, compete in the world and make sure that we provide



2D scanners on the line to be upgraded to 3D. "This is where the money is," says Felhaber.

employment for the area. Our family has a long history in Killaloe. We have a hundred and some employees right now but there are a lot of people working in the forests, trucking, contractors. We probably have three hundred families that are living directly off of [our business] plus other smaller spin-offs.

"Automation generally lowers the work force and it will—temporarily. But because of the increased volume we're going to add, by the time we're done our four phases of expansion, our work force will actually increase by about five percent."

The company employs more than mill workers. Hokums services their own equipment. Their on-site North American Sawmills Machinery division is a parts and steel distributor not just for Hokums' own needs but also for local trucking companies, harvesters, other sawmills and farmers. Last year Felhaber purchased Miller BMR hardware and building materials supplier in Eganville. *The Current* asked about labour sources. Felhaber says that Hokums works with Algonquin College on apprentice programs for millwrights and mechanics. He says he'd like to see something for in-demand trades needed in the area like welders and machinists as there are no nearby colleges offering them.

The Current asked about sources of raw timber for a bigger operation. Felhaber says, "Some of the sawmills in the region haven't fully recovered from the downturn and are not using the same

amount as they were before. Some have shut down. We have every confidence that the wood is available out there so we will create jobs that have been lost on the harvesting end."

The 3D scanning is phase one of an expansion that will put Hokums in a strong position. Felhaber, the fourth generation owner of Hokums (It skipped a generation, he says) shared some tales with *The Current* about his grandfather and great-grandfather. Those stories illustrate that business success doesn't just happen. It results from a lot of planning, expertise and just plain hard work. Part II of this article, *Ben Hokum & Son—all roads lead to Killaloe*, will provide some history of the Hokums business, how they expanded internationally to ride out stormy economic times, and the business ethos on which that growth is based.

Felhaber is proud of his family, his community and his business. He says when prospective customers ask him where he's located, "I'll say, 'Do you not know all roads lead to Killaloe?'"

"Yes, all roads lead to Killaloe. A lot of things happened in Killaloe. We have a lot to be proud of in our little town. A lot of history, a lot of innovation. A lot of people left here... and went on to do great things out there, from Killaloe. We've got a lot to be proud of. Some [people] think we have a dying community but... Things have changed and [maybe] business struggles in the small towns because of the big box stores, but we've got a lot to be proud of."

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BARRY'S BAY
Legion
REMEMBRANCE DAY
AND BELLS OF PEACE CEREMONY
11 NOVEMBER 2018
at Royal Canadian Legion
Branch 406, Barry's Bay
10:30 am Remembrance Day
Ceremony followed by a light
lunch of chili and buns
3:00 pm Opeongo Readers Theatre
presents 'Remember Me,' based
on letters received by a local boy
from soldiers during WWII. Cider
and light snacks will be provided.
4:40 pm Sunset ceremony
4:45 pm 100th Anniversary of
the Armistice, Bells of Peace—
Ringing of Church Bells 100
times, through out the region.
*We invite all community members
including children to attend.*

OPINION

Time to get back on The Path

EDITORIAL BOARD

As we luxuriate in the aftermath of another election spared from signage blight it is worth considering what we have learned about what should occupy the new Council's attention. Handover is only a month away.

Before we get to that, *The Current* congratulates all of the successful candidates. Councillors Archer and Maika, who will not be returning, deserve appreciation for their tireless contributions over the past four years.

Looking forward, the issue that dominated campaign rhetoric was economic development. This was apparent from comments and questions on *The*

Current's online Town Hall forum as well as from other public statements by most of the candidates themselves. The need for improving this was most often linked to the subjects of tourism and the Railway Station. As recently noted by Ontario's Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Sport, "tourism accounts for over four percent of the province's GDP, contributing more than agriculture, mining and forestry combined."

When they hear the phrase "economic development" some people focus on the word "development" and immediately think of property development. They erroneously believe that it is a strategy limited to encouraging and facilitating more residential construc-

tion, seasonal or otherwise. An often heard complaint is: "We don't want to become another Muskoka."

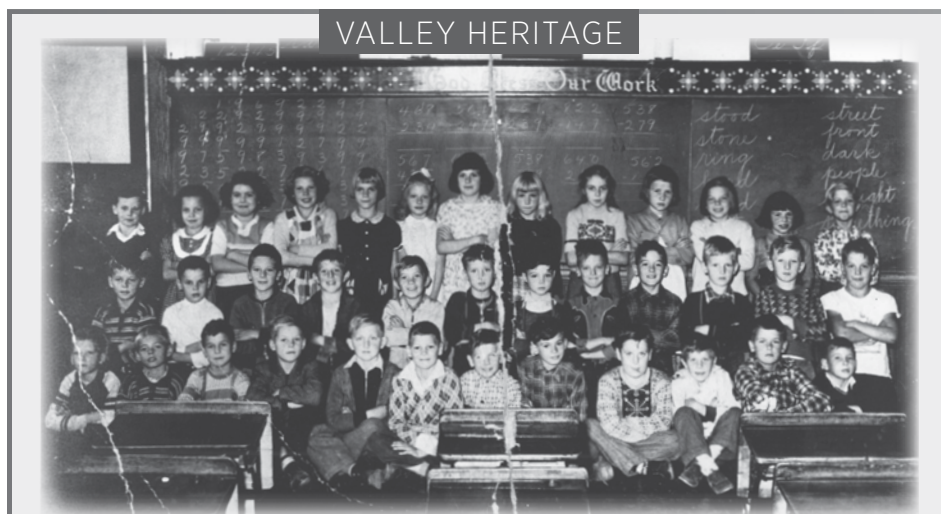
In recent years many municipalities have used their economic development powers, which are limited by legislation, through "branding" policies. These are aimed at promoting and marketing the assets and attractions that would encourage investment, tourism and cultural development. Madawaska Valley itself adopted such a policy in its Economic Development Strategic Plan 2010–2014. The plan included:

- an economic/community profile
- results of stakeholder consultations
- an analysis of its Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT)
- a strategy based on certain guiding principles
- identification of target sectors
- a five-year marketing action plan

This resulted in considerable progress until 2016. By May of that year at a Special Council Meeting the public learned that Railway Station staff who were charged with implementation of priority goals from the Economic Development strategy and the Township's community-led Strategic Plan *The Path Forward* were either working on or had completed 27 out of 64 (42 percent) of the goals identified in the two guiding documents.

Unfortunately after that date Council seems to have focused less, if at all, on this strategy. In fact, it might be said it dropped the ball altogether. Cost-cutting in certain areas—especially ones that have been shown to contribute to development—does not make sense even when justified on the basis of keeping tax increases to a minimum. As the saying goes, you have to spend money to make money, and that surely applies to improving the profile and marketability of the Valley to increase economic development. The ripple effect of making it more attractive to businesses and professionals means that they will have more incentive to move themselves and their families here. This should be a priority. For example, how many orphan patients might there be three years from now?

It is to be hoped that the new Council will soon pick up the ball and rejoin the economic development game.



BOB CORRIGAN
BARRY'S BAY

This is a photo of Sr. Kevin's grade three class at St. Joseph's Separate School in Barry's Bay in 1952–53.

Note the neat subtraction questions and words written on the blackboard behind the students as well as the "God Bless Our Work" phrase at the top of the board, and, of course, the ever-present letters of the alphabet. Please let us know about any corrections especially since one student is unknown and, somehow, we ended up with two Edward Stamplecoskies.

Front row: Patrick Palubieskie; Anthony Norlock; Edward Stamplecoskie; Donald Chermak; Richard Shalla; Jerry Kosnaski; Larry Rumleski; Tony Soike;

Maurice Golka; Lorne Dombroski; Donald Golka; Donald Herron.

Second row: Clarence Blaskavitch; Ronnie Coulas; Richard LaHaie; Bronas Belkwell; Louis Dombroski; Lorne Pelpinski; Joe Cybulski; Clifford Chippior; - - -; Sylvester Yantha; Ronald Coulas; Jim Palubieski.

Third row: Edward Stamplecoskie; Clara Blaskavitch; Mary Etmanski; Stasia Zilney; Marcella Norlock; Beverly Zilney; Dorothy Matasheskie; Ann Gutoskie; Henrika Selemeyer; Bernadette Etmanski; Nora Plebon; Marilyn Glysinski; Jerome Trebinski.

NOTE: If you have a heritage photo for The Madawaska Valley Current, please submit the information to Bob Corrigan c/o The Current, Box 1097, Barry's Bay K0J 1B0 (marked heritage photo. Originals will be returned.)

Cannabis: Legal does not mean safe

The Current has received the following press release from Melissa Botz in her new role as Coordinator, Communications and Emergency Preparedness for Renfrew County District Health Unit.



PHOTO: SHARON MCCUTCHEN ON UNSPLASH.COM

Cannabis was legalized on October 17, 2018. In response to the legalization, Renfrew County and District Health Unit is focused on a prevention and harm reduction strategy.

Legal does not mean safe, no drug is without risk. According to legislation, individuals 19 years of age and older can buy, use, possess and grow non-medical cannabis. However, the health unit advises to avoid cannabis use:

- If under the age of 25 as using at a young age increases the risk of developing health, educational and social issues.
- If there is a personal or family history of mental health problems, as there is increased risk of cannabis-related psychosis and mental health issues.
- If planning a pregnancy, pregnant, or breastfeeding as it may affect the ability to become pregnant and increases risk of harms to baby development.

If you choose to use cannabis, we recommend consulting your health-care provider and following Canada's Lower Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines. Negative health effects may include irritated respiratory system, impacts on thinking and decision making, impaired motor coordination, reaction time, distorted perceptions, drowsiness and anxiety. Cannabis can affect individuals differently.

Methods of consumption may result in different experiences. For example, when cannabis is inhaled, the effect can

be felt almost instantly and may last up to 4 hours. When cannabis is ingested, the effects can be delayed up to 2 hours and may last up to 10 hours.

People should not operate a motorized vehicle while under the influence of cannabis. Many variables impact the level and duration of impairment. Like with alcohol and other substances, impairment can last, unknowingly for prolonged period of time.

The health unit will be enforcing the

proposed Smoke Free Ontario Act. It will be illegal to vape or smoke cannabis in areas where smoking tobacco is prohibited. We encourage you to be aware of ongoing changes related to legalization.

For more information: cannabis legalization at www.ontario.ca and Renfrew County and District Health Unit website: www.rcdhu.com.

Botz, M. (2018, Oct. 17) Cannabis: Legal does not mean safe [press release]

The Madawaska Valley Current

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If you are responding to an online article in *The Current*, please note that you can comment in the "Reply" box following the article. We monitor all comments to ensure these guidelines are followed. Due to volume, we cannot print every letter or respond to individual letters. Please keep your letter short, preferably 200 words or fewer. Be civil, even if you are writing to disagree with someone. We look forward to hearing your voice.

The Madawaska Valley Current provides balanced and stimulating local coverage of community growth, current affairs and cultural matters in the area. *The Current* is your year-round online community news source, with limited print distribution available monthly in Barry's Bay at Bayberry Design, Madawaska Coffee, Madawaska Valley Public Library, Opeongo Seniors Centre; in Combermere at Heartwood Restaurant, The Old School Café, Laundry & Greenhouses; in Wilno at Wilno Craft Gallery, Wilno Tavern. You can visit www.madvalleycurrent.com and download this month's issue to print copies for your friends and family.

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Castaway Culture



ON MY DESERT ISLAND

RICHARD SHAW
BARRY'S BAY

I must admit that the idea of being cast away with just some books and music seems very appealing. Deciding which to choose, however, is a much more daunting endeavour.

As with the original Desert Island Discs, I take the Bible and Shakespeare for granted. Equally, given the time I have spent with *Bede's Ecclesiastical History* since I changed careers a decade ago, I am going to presume that this also washed ashore with me. My father introduced me to the work when I was nine and it has been part of my life ever since.

So, I have narrowed my literary choices down to five. First: *The Lord of the Rings*. I have always enjoyed books, thanks to my mother faithfully reading me a chapter a night before bed every day as a child. But *The Lord of the Rings* is the novel which more than any other helped me fall in love with reading at that crucial cusp moment between childhood and adolescence. I vividly remember, aged 12, devouring it after lights out at my boarding school, squinting at the pages I could only see by moonlight, so desperate was I to follow the adventures of Frodo and the Fellowship.

Next would be Dante's **Divine Comedy**. Few works in all of world literature can compare to this masterpiece—one of the monuments of Western Civilization and proof that the Medieval period was no 'Dark Age.'

My third choice would be by Barry's Bay author and artist Michael O'Brien. I first encountered his writings when, after two degrees at Oxford, I was a journalist in London; now I work alongside him at Our Lady Seat of Wisdom, the college he helped to found!

Fr Elijah is Michael's best-known book, but I want *Strangers and Sojourners* on my desert retreat. This will become, I believe, an enduring classic of Canadian literature. A sprawling tale of a family wrestling with the wilderness

and the many challenges of life and death, *Strangers and Sojourners* is a testimony to the human struggle. Exciting, engaging and even amusing by turns, it speaks truth on every page.

After journalism I joined the British Foreign Office. There I specialized in Middle Eastern issues and learned Arabic. Living in Jordan for four years, I saw firsthand the places Lawrence of Arabia describes in my fourth book, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, his account of the World War I Arab Revolt against the Ottoman Empire. At its core *Seven Pillars* is an inspirational exploration of a man—and the inner workings of a man—whose vision and courage, despite his intense self-examination and doubt, achieved more than others ever imagined conceivable.

I enjoyed the Foreign Office and especially Amman, where my two eldest children were born, but diplomacy left little time for my primary vocations as father and husband. So, in 2008 we came to Canada, my wife's native land, and I began a doctorate in medieval history. We focussed our lives on our children and on bringing them up as well as we could, with me, as father, very much present and involved in my (now five) children's lives, and with my wife, who received her doctorate (in Archaeology) ten years before me—to go along with her four other degrees—educating the children at home. This explains my last book: *The Well-Trained Mind* by Susan Wise Bauer.

My wife designs her own curriculum, taking what she has collected from the best of a wide range of Canadian and international examples, but *The Well-Trained Mind*, which prioritizes helping children to learn to think creatively and analytically and to come, independently, to well-supported conclusions, remains one of the roots of our approach. The work is a wonderful guide for anyone contemplating 'home-schooling', or even for those who are just interested in understanding it from the outside.

Musical accompaniment for my exile's little library would include Oasis's *Don't Look Back in Anger*—a throwback to my Oxford days. Roxette's *Fading*

Like a Flower, takes me back to being 13 years old when I spent a month at school in Spain. Bruce Springsteen would have to be there: *Born to Run*. Many movie soundtracks could help me happily pass the time: *Pirates of the Caribbean* would seem the most apt. For classical music, Beethoven's *9th Symphony*. And one more song—Adele's *Rolling in the Deep*. This always reminds me of my wife, Christine; if I couldn't have her with me on my lonely island, I would still like to think about her.

About the Author: Richard Shaw, has been Chairman of the History Department at Our Lady Seat of Wisdom College since 2013. He lives in Barry's Bay with his family and is also on the Board of Directors at St Francis Memorial Hospital. His first book, *The Gregorian Mission to Kent in Bede's Ecclesiastical History* was published in 2018.

Hallowe'en fun at MV Public Library



Natalie Trebinskie watches Drake Trebinskie adding the purple colouring to use for an "exploding pumpkin," one of several Hallowe'en craft activities at Madawaska Valley Public Library.

PORCH VIEWS

No lederhosen please, we're Prussian — Oktoberfest and Renfrew County Germans



MARK WOERMKE
BARRY'S BAY

My dad and I used to tour Renfrew County visiting German settlements and pioneer cemeteries. Now it's a tradition for me. This year I jokingly referred to it as my "Oktoberfest" tour to make a point. Valley residents may think Oktoberfest is an expression of local German heritage, but the beer festival which began in Munich in 1810 to celebrate a royal wedding is Bavarian, and *dirndls* and *lederhosen* have little to do with most Renfrew County Germans.

According to the 2016 Census, 22 percent of Renfrew County residents reported German ancestry. Closer to home, the percentage was 47 percent in North Algona Wilberforce, 41 percent in Brudenell Lyndoch and Raglan, 25 percent in Killaloe Hagarty and Richards, and 19 percent in Madawaska Valley.

Most of us are descended from emigrants from the provinces of Brandenburg, Pomerania and West Prussia in the Kingdom of Prussia who arrived in Renfrew County between 1858 and 1900.

A LITTLE HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

Until the formation of the German Empire in 1871, "Germany" was a generic term applied to the territory covered by four kingdoms, seven grand duchies, four duchies, seven principalities and three free cities. Two of these kingdoms were Bavaria and Prussia. The Kingdom of Prussia consisted of thirteen provinces stretching from what is now Kaliningrad, Russia in the east to the modern French border in the west.

Prussia's heartland was the Province of Brandenburg, capital Berlin, which was home to a Slavic minority known as the Wends who had their own language and folk culture. Part of the Province of Pomerania was ruled by the Swedes in the 1600s, but it was almost entirely German with Catholic Kashubs near its eastern border with West Prussia.

Yes, West Prussia was east, but it was west of East Prussia, and it had a large Kashub population. In Brandenburg the common language of the German people was variants of *Plattdeutsch* (German of the northern lowlands), but *Hochdeutsch* was the language of government and education. Prussia's state religion was the *Evangelische Kirche* a blend of Lutheranism and Calvinism created by royal edict in 1817.



Wilhelm and Louise Boehme lived in Combermere. Wilhelm was a master tailor from Tauer, Kreis Cottbus, Brandenburg. His wife was born in Canada, but her parents were from Nelep, Kreis Schivelbein, Pomerania. Known as "Tailor Boehme" he drowned in 1912 in the sinking of the Mayflower on Lake Kaministiquia. Photo courtesy Lynne Yantha.

PLACE OF ORIGIN DATABASE

This year I started compiling a place of origin database for German immigrants to Renfrew County between 1858 and 1900. I am drawing on immigration agent William Sinn's list of Prussian settlers from 1860, the "saddlebag" register of births, marriages and deaths compiled by Lutheran missionary Rev. Ludwig Gerndt, and provincial marriage and death registrations. I compare that information with data from Hamburg passenger lists and Brandenburg emigration records. Once I have a specific location, I look it up on the on-

line version of Meyer's Gazetteer which lists every place name in the German Empire circa 1912. The final step is to find the current name for these places because West Prussia was ceded to Poland in 1918 and in 1945 the parts of Brandenburg and Pomerania east of the Oder River were ceded to Poland. At that time German residents who had not been killed or fled ahead of the Red Army were expelled.



Reinhold Hildebrandt's parents lived at Mandelkow, Kreis Friedeberg before emigrating in 1882 and settling in Sebastopol Township. Three of Reinhold's brothers married Kashubs and settled in Barry's Bay. PHOTO: COURTESY BEVERLY GLOFCHESKIE.

I would love to find the *gut* (estate), *dorf* (village) or *stadt* (town), *kreis* (county) and *provinz* for each immigrant, but sometimes I have to settle with only the province or *kreis*.

Currently I have 706 names in my database, and it is far from complete, but some important details are emerging:

- 96 percent of German immigrants to Renfrew County came from the Kingdom of Prussia.
- 43 percent hailed from the Province of Brandenburg with most from the following kreise: Cottbus, Arnsvalde, Friedeberg and Soldin.
- 38 percent originated in Pomerania

but the greatest numbers came from four *kreise*: Neustettin, Saatzig, Schivelbein and Belgard.

- 11 percent were natives of West Prussia especially the *kreise* of Deutsch Krone, Flatow, Berent and Marienwerder.
- 4 percent came from the Prussian provinces of Silesia and Posen.

CHAIN-MIGRATION, RELATIONSHIPS AND MOBILITY

There is clearly a pattern of chain-migration. The earliest immigrants like Brandenburgers Martin Buderich, August Schroeder, J.G. Weber and Wilhelm Luloff must have encouraged family, friends and neighbours to join them. Pomeranians followed in the footsteps of Johann Boldt, Friedrich Schutt, Carl Sommers and Christian Wasmund.



Harvey Schutt's parents Christie and Annie ran a general store in the community which bore their surname in Raglan Township. Harvey's great grandfather Friedrich Schutt arrived in Wilberforce Township in the Spring of 1859 from Wackerow, Kreis Greifswald, Pomerania. Harvey's grandmother Wilhelmine Krueger was born in Buessow, Kreis Friedeberg. PHOTO: COURTESY HOWARD SCHUTT

Another thing that is becoming obvious is the kinship between Renfrew County German families. Some family ties predated immigration, others were made

in Canada. For example the Wendish folks from Kreis Cottbus (a *kreis* is an area about the size of a Renfrew County township) likely had had kinship ties before emigration. After they settled in Renfrew County they intermarried with Germans from Prussian and non-Prussian territories. I encourage Renfrew County Germans to complete ancestry DNA tests to discover unknown links especially since many documents in the old country have been destroyed or lost in the wars. I recently found Weiland and Klingbeil relatives that way. They are descended from my great-great grandfather's brother who settled in Wisconsin and of whom we knew nothing.



Eunice, Ron and Clifford Lisk at their farm in Hagarty Township in 1941 or 1942 before Cliff went overseas in World War II. The Lisk family is Wendish and originated in the village of Drachhausen, Kreis Cottbus, Brandenburg. PHOTO COURTESY BRAD LISK

In my research I have also noted that individuals' birth places in the marriage register might not be the same as the place of origin on the passenger list, or that siblings might have different places of birth. This reveals more movement than we might expect of our ancestors, but if he was an *arbeiter* (labourer) or a *landsmann* (tenant farmer) the prospective emigrant may have moved around to find work on estates or farms.

BACK TO OKTOBERFEST

Don't get me wrong, I am not against Oktoberfesting. I enjoy the beer, the food and the music. For many years I celebrated with friends in Kitchener-Waterloo, and this year I spent a very entertaining

evening at the Killaloe Lion's Oktoberfest. But, I am aware that Oktoberfest is not part of my cultural heritage.

But what is my cultural heritage as a descendant of Germans from Brandenburg and Pomerania? While I have a pretty good handle on the history, I don't know much about the culture and I am the second generation in my family unable to speak German. I am not alone.

Most Renfrew County Germans have lost most if not all of their language and culture. My grandfather, who spoke no English until he attended school and was married in a German-language ceremony in 1913 used to say, "Two World Wars took care of that."

Brenda Lee-Whiting noted in *Harvest of Stones* that Oktoberfests for "people of German descent (or those who wish they were)" signalled a change in attitudes. Non-Germans were getting over suspicion and resentment, and Germans themselves were less reluctant to self-identify and promote their heritage. Even if wasn't theirs.

Oktoberfest and the Bavarian care-free attitude may be more palatable than the stereotype of the serious, disciplined Prussian. Nevertheless, it's time for Renfrew County Germans to explore their past, pool their knowledge, establish a cultural centre and discover the language, food and traditions of their ancestors.

Province will launch consultations for a new tourism strategy

THE CURRENT
MADAWASKA VALLEY



Ontario will consult with tourism operators and tourists to build a new tourism strategy to maximize the economic impact of Ontario's \$34 billion tourism industry, and unlock its limitless potential.

Sylvia Jones, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, made the announcement today in Windsor, at the Ontario Tourism Summit hosted by the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (TIAO).

"Tourism is a key economic driver in Ontario. Our government for the people promised Ontario will once again be open for business. That's why we acted quickly to help job-creating businesses by reducing WSIB premiums and addressing minimum wage," said Minister Jones. "With Ontario's new tourism strategy, we'll create a positive business environment where this vital sector can flourish and create good and sustainable jobs. We'll consult tourism operators and tourists to learn how to make Ontario a travel destination of choice and bring visitors back again and again."

Rocco Rossi, President and CEO, Ontario Chamber of Commerce, said, "Tourism is a vital sector for Ontario's economy. That's why we encouraged the new Ontario government to implement a strategic plan for the tourism sector. We're very pleased Minister Jones has announced that the government will be working with tourism stakeholders to create a new tourism strategy that'll lead to an even stronger tourism industry in Ontario."

Consultations will launch in late fall 2018 and seek feedback on issues affecting the industry, ranging from the role of government and industry

to workforce challenges and regulatory burdens.

QUICK FACTS

- Tourism accounts for over four per cent of the province's GDP, contributing more than agriculture, mining and forestry combined.
- The tourism industry supports 390,000 jobs in communities across Ontario.

- The TIAO summit is an annual gathering of tourism delegates representing many of Ontario's small and medium-sized businesses in the tourism sector.

Ontario Ministry of Tourism Culture and Sport, (2018, Oct.23) Ontario's Government for the People Strengthening Tourism Sector [Press release]



MV Recreation Coordinator Stephanie Plebon and volunteers provided hot dogs, treat bags and Hallowe'en fun at the Railway Station.

BOOK REVIEW

All My Puny Sorrows BY MIRIAM TOEWSDOREEN YAKABUSKI
CORNWALL

This book was on my to-read pile for quite a long time. I resisted reading it because of its sad and serious subject matter. Now that I've finally read it, I am not sorry I did. Though emotionally raw at times, it also has wonderful comic moments, and in its examination of suicidal depression and its effects on the family of those afflicted, it is amazing.

The novel focuses on Yolandi (Yoli) and Elfrieda (Elf), two sisters. Yoli is the narrator; her conflict is trying to determine how to help her older sister who has repeatedly attempted suicide. She desperately wants her sister to live though she knows that her sister wants, just as desperately, to die. The book is an examination of the many emotions Yoli experiences: sorrow, confusion, guilt, anger, fear, and frustration.

One of the things Yoli tries to understand is why Elf cannot be happy since her life is seemingly perfect: she is beautiful, she is beloved by many, she has financial security, and she even has world-wide acclaim because of her talent as a pianist. She asks why Elf suffers from such fathomless sadness (90–91): Did Elf have a terminal illness? Was she cursed genetically from day one to want to die? Was every seemingly happy moment from her past, every smile, every song, every heartfelt hug and laugh and exuberant fist-pump and triumph, just a temporary detour from her innate longing for release and oblivion?

Ironically, it is Yoli whose life is more of a failure (111): "Listen! I want to shout at her. If anyone's gonna kill themselves it should be me. I'm a terrible mother for leaving my kids' father and other father. I'm a terrible wife for sleeping with another man. Men. I'm floundering in a dying non-career."

Yet she continues to muddle through.

What comes across very clearly is the author's unwillingness to pass judgment. Yoli cannot always understand her sister's depression, but she does not blame her for feeling as world weary as she does: "She doesn't need forgiving"

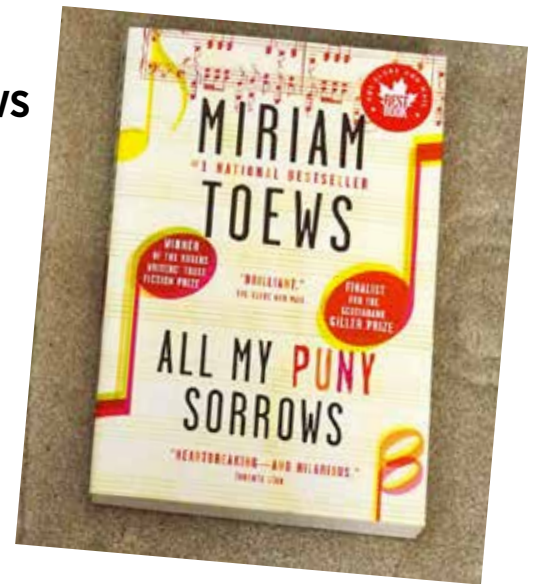
(40). All that the author has is compassion for those suffering with mental illness, a compassion missing from society. Toews knows that mental illness gives one invisibility: "they think I'm insane so they look away which is the same as being invisible" (94).

Toews, however, is less willing to be non-judgmental with mental-health-care providers (176): "Imagine a psychiatrist sitting down with a broken human being saying, I am here for you, I am committed to your care, I want to make you feel better, I want to return your joy to you, I don't know how I will do it but I will find out and then I will apply one hundred percent of my abilities, my training, my compassion and my curiosity to your health—to your well-being, to your joy. I am here for you and I will work very hard to help you. I promise. If I fail it will be my failure, not yours. I am the professional. I am the expert. You are experiencing great pain right now and it is my job and my mission to cure you from your pain. I am absolutely committed to your care... I know you're suffering. I know you are afraid. I love you. I want to cure you and I won't stop trying to help you. You are my patient. I am your doctor. You are my patient."

Likewise, she has no difficulty pointing a finger at the "usual squad of perpetual [Mennonite] disapprovers" (251). She says to the "Mennonite men in church with tight collars and bulging necks" (181): "You can't go around terrorizing people and making them feel small and shitty and then call them evil when they destroy themselves."

Characterization is outstanding. A reader may not have experience with the type of depression from which Elf suffers, but he/she will have no difficulty having compassion for her. Because of the flashbacks to Elf's earlier life, we see her as a real human being. We see the contrast between the defiant and irrepressible free spirit Elf was and the emaciated woman who takes refuge in silence. Her passing can be seen only as a tragedy.

What surprised me in the book is the humour. There are scenes that are



laugh-out-loud funny. During a memorial service, a toddler manages to open the urn and begins putting the ashes of the deceased in his mouth. The toddler's mother just continues with her story, and Yoli concludes (254), "I learned... that just because someone is eating the ashes of your protagonist doesn't mean you stop telling the story."

I loved the style of the book. On the one hand, it is very erudite with its many literary and pop culture allusions, but it is also "playful, good with details and totally knife-in-the-heart devastating" (243).

The book offers no definitive answer to how to live life with its joy and its real and puny sorrows. Perhaps a suggestion can be found in a wonderful analogy included: Yoli is writing a novel about a harbourmaster who ends up "not being able to get off this ship and not being at all prepared for a journey" (190). We all try to navigate through life the best we can even though we are often unprepared for the voyage. Sometimes we may have "to go back and retrace our steps in the dark which I suppose is the meaning of life" (316). Or maybe life "should just move really fast, like pedal to the metal, so it doesn't get boring. . . . You want to go in, get the job done, and get out. Like... septic tank cleaning" (200).

This book won the 2014 Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize and appeared on year-end best-book lists in Canada, the U.S., and England. I do not understand why it didn't win the Scotiabank Giller Prize for which it was shortlisted because it far surpasses the chosen winner.

Bells of Peace to mark Remembrance Day

THE CURRENT
MADAWASKA VALLEY

At sunset this Remembrance Day, Sunday, November 11, church bells in the Valley and beyond will ring one hundred times to honour First World War veterans. The Bells of Peace initiative by the Royal Canadian Legion marks the moment one hundred years ago when church bells across Canada rang out to let Canadians know that an armistice had been signed and the First World War was over. All local churches that have bells have agreed to participate by ringing their bells one hundred times at 4:45 p.m. These churches are in the area served by the Barry's Bay Legion Branch 406 which is bounded by Whitney in the west, Killaloe in the east and Palmer Rapids and Quadeville in the south.

The Bells of Peace initiative is one of two additions to Remembrance Day events in 2018 in the Valley. Legion Branch 406 invites all members of the community including children to go to their participating local church for the Ringing of the Bells or to attend any of the following events at the Barry's Bay Legion, 250 John Street.

THE REMEMBRANCE DAY SCHEDULE IS AS FOLLOWS:

10:30 a.m. Remembrance Day Ceremony followed by a light lunch of chili and buns.

3:00 p.m. Remember Me presented by Opeongo Readers Theatre. This performance is based on letters received by a local man from soldiers during World War II. Cider and light snacks will be provided.

4:40 p.m. Sunset Ceremony

4:45 p.m. Bells of Peace will be rung to celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of the Armistice.

Members of the public can also attend Remember Me performed by the Opeongo Readers Theatre at the Madawaska Valley Public Library at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday November 10.

Poliquin, H. (2018, Oct.25) Remembrance Day 2018: Bells of Peace Ceremony at Royal Canadian Legion Branch 406 Barry's Bay [Media advisory]



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**Workshop: Managing and
Displaying Your Personal Art**
November 3 • 2-4 pm • \$15
Learn to organize and display your
personal art collection in your home.

**Remember Me – Opeongo
Readers Theatre**
November 10 • 2-4 pm
Letters from locals who served in WWII.

**LinkedIn: The Basics, by TRO
Social Media**
November 14 • 7-9 pm • \$15
Learn how to expand your
professional network.

Christmas Crafts for Kids
Saturdays, November 3-24 • 10-11 am
Free, but please register in advance.

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November 2018 from Queen's Park

MPP JOHN YAKABUSKI
QUEEN'S PARK

It's been some time since I've written a column for you, the good people of Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke. In fact, this is my first column since the election of June 7. And I apologize for taking so long.

Let me start by thanking you for once again supporting my candidacy for re-election in such a tremendous fashion.

It was humbling and exhilarating at the same time. To be given the mandate to represent you once again for the fifth time is a responsibility I accept with the deepest gratitude.

I was honoured in another way when Premier Doug Ford offered me the transportation portfolio in his new cabinet. After having spent 15 years in opposition, to finally go into government and also become a member of the executive council is something I'm still getting used to. Taking on the additional responsibility of a cabinet post has certainly increased my workload but I must say it is an increase that I am more than happy to bear.

As with any new job, it's overwhelming at first but through time the new demands on your time become normalized.

One of the things I do find challenging when it comes to the issue of time is that I'm getting to spend less of it at home in the riding. I am grateful to the tremendous staff I have in the constituency office where it's left to them to manage the issues on a daily basis.

Since being elected we have been a very active government.

One of our first items of business was to end the strike at York University so that students could get back to class.

We cancelled 758 contracts for renewable energy that the province didn't need, saving the taxpayers \$790-million.

We passed legislation cancelling the punitive, ineffective cap-and-trade legislation that took money out of the people's pockets but did nothing to reduce CO2 emissions.

We've introduced legislation called the Making Ontario Open for Business Act that will, if passed, allow the job cre-

ators in our province to do what they do best by reducing the red tape and regulatory burden that stifles economic activity. By reversing legislation that was punitive on business and costing workers their jobs, we've sent a clear signal that Ontario is open for business once again.

There's a lot of work to be done and it won't be easy, but your new government is up to the task.

As a son of a Second World War veteran, let me also talk about something that has always been important to me.

On November 11, we will take time to commemorate Remembrance Day in a very special way. It will be 100 years since the armistice was signed, putting an end to the First World War. At the time, it was called 'The Great War,' and by others the 'war to end all wars.' We know now a century later that peace still eludes us. But we also recognize that the price of peace is eternal vigilance.

While the debt owed to our bravest and best is one that we can never repay, to the 117,000 Canadians who paid the ultimate sacrifice our undying gratitude

is the least we can extend. And to all those who returned, many of them who have left us, but also those with us today—we should never miss an opportunity to thank them for their service to our country and their willingness to put themselves in harm's way, to defend the democracy and freedoms that we enjoy today. It is easy to take them for granted but that is something we shouldn't do.

I hope that each and every one of us can take the time to attend a Remembrance Day service in our communities. And if that's not possible, have that moment of silence letting them all know, past and present, that they are not forgotten.

Find your moment of silence at a Remembrance Day ceremony in Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke. Learn more at ontario.ca/RemembranceDay.

Since receiving this column from MPP Yakabuski's constituency office, the Ontario government announced a cabinet re-shuffle on Nov. 5 which moves Yakabuski from Transportation to the portfolio for Natural Resources and Forestry.

The Dark Times Choir welcomes all

The Dark Times Choir will meet at CRC's North Street Community Centre in Killaloe on Monday evenings (7:00 to 8:30) from October 22, 2018 to March 25, 2019. It's open to anyone, from the age of 10 years to 101. No previous singing experience or advance registration is required to sing through the dark months of winter. There is a donation box for free-will offerings to help cover costs. The choir is a project of the Ottawa Valley Creative Arts Open Studio (OV-CAOS) with support from Killaloe's Community Resource Centre (CRC).

