

Residents lobby MV Council about Chippawa Shores development

THE CURRENT
MADAWASKA VALLEY

Last March *The Current* reported on the formation of a residents' group opposed to the re-zoning of the Chippawa Shores development because of environmental and safety concerns. At a special council meeting on June 16, Madawaska Valley Township will consider the sale of the Shoreline Road Allowance (SRA) along the Madawaska River associated with the proposed development. FMW have concerns about the sale of the SRA which they expressed in the following letter, copied to local media.

...

Open Letter to MV Council:

Friends of the Madawaska Watershed has learned of the proposed June 16th council meeting to consider disposition of the shore road allowance (SRA) associated with the proposed Chippawa Shores development along the Madawaska River. It is assumed that if this is approved, the SRA along Labrador Lake or Green Lake may also be sold at some future date. We would like to express our opposition to any consideration to the wholesale disposition of the SRA that is currently owned by the municipality.

We feel the SRA under consideration is critical to maintaining water quality, shoreline stability and aesthetic values along the river for adjoining landowners and township residents in general.

It is our opinion that the current draft conditions for development of the proposed subdivision do not adequately address the concerns mentioned above. These same concerns



The Madawaska River upstream from Combermere.

have been expressed numerous times by our group, and by many members of the public during the review process. To date there have been approximately 100 people who have indicated their support for our position. Furthermore, the draft conditions proposed largely ignore the comprehensive SRA management recommendations of the independent peer reviewer hired by the county of Renfrew. As just one example, the independent environmental review recommended twice that the entire SRA be kept with all vegetation intact, except for a small access path at each property. The current draft conditions for development will allow for all vegetation under a diameter of 25 cm to be removed from the entire SRA area. This would enable the complete removal of the shrub layer, and in

some cases most of the trees. The result would be unstable, eroded shorelines, with potential nutrient runoff into the adjacent water-bodies.

We feel that it is inappropriate to consider sale of the SRA before conditions relating to the treatment of these environmentally sensitive lands is addressed. And we worry that going through with this disposition before a legal commitment to environmentally appropriate restrictions would not only be unwise, but also a worrisome precedent for any future developments in the township.

Respectfully,

Friends of the Madawaska Watershed

...

The Current will report on Council's reaction to this letter following the June 16 meeting.

Randy Penney retires: end of era for SFMH

ROGER PAUL
MADAWASKA VALLEY

June 1, 2020, was the first day of retirement for Randy Penney, President and CEO of St. Francis Memorial Hospital (SFMH). He had held the position since 1998 and during that time he has received numerous accolades reflecting the esteem in which he is held by his peers. These included in 2012 the Ontario Hospital Association's Small, Rural and Northern Healthcare Award for SFMH in recognition of innovative leadership in establishing partnerships to expand and improve health services in the Madawaska Valley.

For the five-year period from 2013 to 2018, I was a member of the SFMH Board and therefore had the privilege and pleasure of working with Randy and observing him as he steered us through the numerous minefields that crop up frequently in the life of a rural hospital. I quickly became a fan of his cool, calm and collected demeanour that was part of his crisis management approach.

Yet, before I took up my duties after having been appointed a Director, I remember looking through the orientation binder I had been given and noting with surprise that SFMH only had a part-time CEO. This is because Randy was also CEO of Renfrew Victoria Hospital (RVH) and therefore was working under a sharing agreement. I wondered, whilst recognizing the financial benefit, whether it was in our best interests not to have a full time CEO. I discussed this with the then CFO who reassured me that it was not a problem and that, on the contrary, SFMH was very fortunate to have at the helm someone with his experience and breadth of knowledge in all matters related to healthcare. It only took me one or two Board meetings to confirm for myself that such was the case.

I checked in with Randy a few days ago to find out what the future holds for him and to learn what he considers were some of the high points of his tenure at SFMH. I started by commiserating with him that the "roast" that had been scheduled by RVH to mark his retirement had been postponed because



Randy Penney in front of the memory board at St Francis Memorial Hospital.

of the pandemic. His response was, "that there had been very few positives coming out of COVID, not being roasted publicly falls into that category!"

Concerning achievements at SFMH that he is particularly proud of, he mentioned:

- The expansion of outpatient services, especially initially the introduction of Mammography, Bone Density and expanded ultrasound services.
- After many years of hard work lobbying, the ability to open a six-station dialysis unit in our community of Barry's Bay was a major achievement.
- The building of the Clinic and bringing primary care physicians on-site was a significant gain for our hospital. Prior to this MDs were trying to cover our emergency while off-site in their primary care offices. To have all of our MDs on-site, next door and available to respond to Emergency or Hospital requirements was a true game changer.
- Further integration of other primary care services on our "campus" including Assisted Living.
- The establishment of the first Rural Hospice in the Region and the unique model, funding agreement

ensuring access to hospice, palliative services he says is truly wonderful.

- The introduction of the electronic health record, EPIC and formalization of all agreements with RVH, Ottawa Hospital and Ottawa Heart Institute.

He told me that "a very important file for me personally is the redevelopment of our Emergency Department. I have been working on this for many years and I will continue to lobby at the Ministry level and the political level to hopefully one day bring this to a reality."

As for the future, Randy will continue to perform the valuable role of a surveyor with Accreditation Canada which he has done for the past thirty years. Stating, "On a personal level it's wonderful to be finishing a career with absolutely no regrets," he said he looks forward to spending more time with his wife and three children at their home on Hurds Lake and will indulge himself in his favourite past times of reading and woodworking.

I am sure I speak for all past and present members of the SFMH community, stakeholders and residents when I say that his contribution over the past 22 years has been immense and that he carries our best wishes for a long and healthy retirement.

Arts community mourns loss of local carver Joseph Palluq



Joseph Palluq participates in Countdown Public Art Legacy Project. PHOTO: RED DRESS PRODUCTIONS

DANIELLE PAUL
MADAWASKA VALLEY

Joseph (Jaipeth) Illupalik Palluq passed away from drowning in Lake Clear on the night of May 1–2. His body was found by OPP divers on Tuesday, May 5, after an extensive search on land and water.

His neighbours on Lake Clear, fellow Madawaska Valley Studio Tour artists Kathy Haycock and Chris Pelzer, provided some background about Palluq's life.

"Joe was a native of Igloolik, Nunavut. He was born and grew up on the land with his family and learned carving at a young age. He spent time at a residential school but continued with his art when he returned home, learning traditional skills and following the teachings of Elders. He later moved to Ottawa to pursue his art and more recently lived at Lake Clear with his partner, Roberta Della-Picca. He was recognized nationally and internationally as a brilliant carver well-grounded in the rich traditional Inuit life skills and culture which he expressed in his art. He returned north every two or three years to replenish his soapstone, whalebone, walrus tusk and other materials.

He was active locally in art exhibitions, carving a soapstone bust of Olympic runner Melissa Bishop and opening his studio to the public on the Madawaska Valley Studio Tour. He will be remembered as a brilliant traditional Inuit carver, a quiet modest man with a friendly personality and rich generous

character. He is survived by his partner Roberta, and by four daughters from a previous marriage, his mother and sisters and brothers. He was predeceased by six siblings."

Palluq supported and participated in community art projects to promote awareness of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2-Spirit People (MMIWG2S). Because of COVID-19 restrictions, there are no plans as yet for a memorial service. A GoFundMe campaign has been set up to benefit his family members.

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County Legal Clinic now provides workplace sexual harassment advice

ELSER LEE ARCHER
MADAWASKA VALLEY

Late last year the Renfrew County Legal Clinic received funding from the Department of Justice to develop a sexual harassment program. This resulted in the Clinic implementing a program designed to increase public awareness and knowledge around sexual harassment in the workplace, and to provide access to legal information and advice for persons who have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace. The funding allowed the Clinic to hire a part-time sexual harassment lawyer, Marni Munsterman, to fulfill that role. Munsterman previously had many years of experience in criminal law and mental health. One of her first presentations on the subject was to the students at Madawaska Valley District High School.

The availability of free local access to advice and representation on sexual harassment is timely in light of publicity generated because of the #MeToo movement.

LOCAL VS. NATIONAL PICTURE

In February 2017, Greg Rosser, a journalist with Barry's Bay MooseFM, reported that "Nearly a third of all sexual assaults reported in the Bonnechere Valley, Killaloe and the Madawaska Valley never made it to court." Meaning those cases [had] been deemed baseless and unfounded by police. It was part of the findings from a 20-month long investigation by the Globe and Mail which examined the statistics across Canada. The report showed the



Marni Munsterman.

PHOTO: ALAN DEAN PHOTOGRAPHY

national number is 19 percent, with the Upper Ottawa Valley and Renfrew at 35 percent and Bancroft at 33 percent ... The OPP's Provincial Corporate Communications Officer, Peter Leon, told Rosser that it was too early to know if there were any underlying trends with the cases that are called unfounded, whether it was drugs or alcohol playing a factor, or if the victims were primarily young women.

Decades of research and data collection in Canada show that women and girls are at higher risk of certain types of violence, and in many cases, other characteristics intersect with gender to impact the likelihood of experiencing violence. Often, these incidents can be considered gender-based; that is, they are typically committed by men against women, and furthermore, they may have a sexual aspect, may cause physical and/or psychological harm, or may involve a relationship between the victim and the perpetrator that implies an imbalance of power.

COUNTY LEGAL CLINIC WORKPLACE SEXUAL HARASSMENT SUPPORT

Last spring \$1 million in funding to 42 sexual assault centres in Ontario was

granted by the Attorney-General of Ontario but it expired in March 2020. The centres expressed alarm, warning that wait times for counselling and other support services could be severely increased. Fortunately, the Ministry for Children and Women's Issues announced that the province would commit an additional \$2 million in annual funding to enhance services for sexual assault survivors across Ontario effective April 2020.

With this background the writer interviewed Munsterman recently to better understand the legal issues surrounding sexual harassment/assault, the role she plays as a sexual harassment lawyer and the free legal services offered to residents without the financial resources needed to fight the important legal battles they face.

She was asked what is the nature of most sexual harassment and replied:

"Frequently a crime takes place between known parties. There continues to be an imbalance of power in relation to position and age differences." Employers have a legal obligation to protect their workers from customers/clients. She said that blaming a woman for causing a charge of sexual assault/harassment is not a defence.

She said that cases were not dealt with in "cookie cutter fashion" but rather each situation is addressed on a case by case basis.

The Clinic, in addition to offering advice and representation to victims also does outreach and educational presentations throughout the community. Munsterman said, "We pride ourselves in responding as quickly as possible with summary advice and providing all possible options or consultation regarding next steps available to the victims including referrals to lawyers who practice in sexual harassment, Human Rights Legal Support Centres and community resources."

Munsterman can be contacted at the Clinic by telephone, 613-432-8146, toll-free at 1-800-267-5871, or through the Clinic website, renfrewlegalclinic.org.

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Kuiack Lake brush fire costs resident dearly

THE CURRENT
MADAWASKA VALLEY

Over the past several weeks residents have lived under a Restricted Fire Zone imposed by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, a Total Fire Ban or a Level One Fire Ban imposed by Madawaska Valley. Conditions and restrictions change quickly. This incident reminds us how vital it is to stay aware of—and observe—local regulations.

On May 14 at 3:36 p.m. the Madawaska Valley Fire Department was dispatched to Kuiack Lake Road for a brush fire. A total of 7 trucks and 14 fire fighters from both stations responded to the call. While fire fighters were en route, the dispatch was updated to state that the fire was in the bush, now burning across the lawn and heading towards cottages.

Arriving at the scene the fire fighter found the driveway blocked by a tree that was on a power line and a parked vehicle. Fire fighters were directed to another way into the property. Upon arrival the fire was still burning in three areas and the land owner was attempt-

ing to contain it with a rake. The fire at one point climbed up 10 feet in the pine and spruce trees before being extinguished. It took the Fire Department 25 minutes to contain and extinguish the brush fire which came within 10 feet of one cottage. Madawaska Valley Fire Chief Corwin Quade described the situation as a near miss, saying: "We were fortunate that the wind was blowing away from the cottage; if it had not been we would have [had] a large structure fire on our hands. This fire burnt three-quarters of an acre. People have

got to be more careful; one of these times someone is going to get hurt."

Improperly extinguishing campfires, setting off fire works, throwing away a lit cigarette or even dumping ashes that flare up and start a fire can be costly. Quade said, "Once again it is extremely dry out there. Ninety-five percent of people listen and they are great. It is the five percent that make it difficult and ruin everyone's fun. If you see someone having a fire during the ban, call 911 and the Fire Department will be dispatched."

The Madawaska Valley
Current

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Check online for COVID-19 related announcements and all the need-to-know information for Valley residents at: madvalleycurrent.com

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Check the Fire Ban Level

He drowned with his money belt on

DONALD V. MACDOUGALL
OTTAWA

Editor's note: If you like local heritage, paddling or just a true life mystery, then this story about a tragedy on the Madawaska River 150 years ago is for you.

On April 26, 1867, which was a Friday, James Smith Bangs and his companion, a man only identified as "Oram," loaded their canoe to travel the Madawaska River from Bangs' trading store at Combermere to his home in Arnprior. About 15 miles downstream they came to the rushing spring water at the Snake Rapids, and their canoe upset. Oram swam to shore; Bangs sunk, never to rise again. He was 41 and left behind his wife and seven children, ranging in age from 1 to 18, one of whom is my great-grandmother.

Bangs was wearing a belt loaded with silver. As a result, there were immediate "suspicions of foul play" about the circumstances of his death and the survival of his travelling companion. Investigators sent to the area found nothing of Bangs or his precious belt.

The Madawaska River is 230 kilometres long, beginning in Algonquin Park and draining an area of 8,740 km² until it joins the Ottawa River at Arnprior. Its sharp descent of 224 metres gave it a dangerous reputation; even today it is one of the best white-water rivers in Eastern Ontario. Bangs lived in Arnprior, the village on the Ottawa River about 40 miles from Ottawa.

Only two weeks before, Bangs wrote to his wife from his Combermere store complaining that he "cannot get down now until the river opens." A newspaper article noted that it had been an unusually wet season and at least six men had "been consigned to a watery grave" by the Madawaska's "swift and dangerous currents and rapids."

Bangs was an independent fur trader during the mid-1800s, plying the Ottawa, Mississippi and Madawaska rivers. In 1867, he was also operating a trading store about 85 miles up the Madawaska where it narrowed at Combermere. His brother, Chauncey Ward Bangs, was an Ottawa alderman (and later mayor).

James S. Bangs' nephew John Bangs



Snake Rapids on the Madawaska River, April 30, 2012.

PHOTO: COURTESY STEVE MANDERS, WITH PERMISSION

had helped him in the fur business, which also involved trade in canoes and other items with the Indigenous peoples of the area. They supplied various furs from the upper Ottawa River area mostly to the shipping house of Freeman Dodd in New York City and buyer James Coates in London, England.

CONFLICTS WITH THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY

Previously, Bangs had endured several difficulties. In the 1850s Bangs' activities came to the attention of Hudson's Bay Company Governor Sir George Simpson, who wanted him stopped.

During this period, the HBC claim in the Timiskaming district was being eroded by both the government and by independent traders, such as Bangs and his nephew John. One commentator noted: In the autumn of 1857, however, James Bangs of Arnprior and his nephew, John Bangs of Pakenham, took two canoes to Lake Timiskaming to make a direct assault on the Fort's trade and Sir George was forced to give in. Instructing Hector McKenzie [chief factor at Fort William] to assemble a large and well-equipped party at Lac des Alouettes to follow the interlopers, and to go himself to Fort Timiskaming to consult with John Simpson [chief factor at Fort Timiskaming] on measures to defend its trade, the Governor promised to send up a supply of cash, including the gold and silver coins which the Indians preferred. The Company men,

he emphasized, must remain alongside their opponents all winter, watching their every move, keeping them from the Indians as much as possible, buying furs as they were hunted and outbidding all other offers, but on no account were they to resort to physical force and they must avoid any breach of the peace which might bring odium on the Company. The fact that a Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry into the Company's affairs was currently sitting in London no doubt lent urgency to Sir George's strictures but he was also wise enough to realize, as McKenzie apparently was not, that the time for strong-arm methods had long gone.

Bangs' version of the affair is quite different. He wrote to *The Globe* editor (and later Father of Confederation) George Brown complaining about two years of attacks by the HBC against John Bangs, resulting in the destruction of Bangs' packs and the burning of parts of the trading post they had established on Lake Timiskaming by the HBC men. He added bitterly that Chief factor McKenzie and a "strong gang of men" had tyrannized them because they were legally encroaching on the HBC's "monopoly."

The tension between Bangs and the Hudson's Bay Company continued:

It was the Bangses' invasion, too, that first brought Canadian customs officers to Fort Timiskaming. In the spring of 1858 James Bangs informed the Ottawa office that the Company was importing

English goods, by way of Moose, without paying duty, and a party under an officer named John Heaney was immediately dispatched to the Fort. On his arrival, Heaney announced that he intended to confiscate and remove all goods on which no duty had been paid, to which John Simpson spiritedly replied that although he would not resist the seizure of the goods, he would shoot the first man who tried to take any from the store.

...The Bangses continued to maintain several stations in the neighbourhood of Fort Timiskaming during the winter of 1858-59 but by the autumn of 1859 the partnership had split up and the Company had hired the nephew, John Bangs, for Mattawa.

THE COMBERMERE STORE

In 1864, James Smith Bangs had acquired 25,200 square feet of land from "John Dennison the younger" at the Madawaska River and Peterson Road in what is now the village of Combermere in Renfrew County. (In December, 1870, the land was granted to his widow, Agnes Bangs, who also purchased a nearby 199 acres by Crown sale.)

By June 1865, however, Bangs signed himself as "Indian agent," on a concerned letter asking that land be granted to Indians on the Madawaska River in the Township of Lawrence (in present-day Algonquin Park), although it is unclear whether he was an official government agent or interceding personally as a friend on their behalf. At that time, he was the only person listed under "Hatters & Furriers" for Arnprior in a Canadian business directory.

GOING HOME FROM COMBERMERE

Bangs' daughter Zebba, who was 18 at the time of her father's death, still remembered years later at age 79 that when her father was leaving Arnprior to go up to Combermere, "passing through the room where I was he said he never felt so disinclined to go. [I] wonder if it was a premonition, for he never came home again." She added that he was "an expert swimmer and had saved several lives. Father said he never feared drowning, but one of his horses kicked him in the leg in the spring of this year, so perhaps that was the cause, probably caused cramp in his leg."

Two years after the drowning, in May

1869, men driving timber at the Snake Rapids for lumber manufacturer Samuel Dickson discovered some skeletal remains. They were identified as James Smith Bangs by his familiar necktie and boots, which clung to the bones. A Coroner's Inquest was said to be necessary before his life insurance monies would be released.

There was no money belt.

Bangs is remembered on two tombstones, one with his wife in Cumberland, Ontario and another where his remains are buried with the Bangs family in Ottawa.

Researchers at Toronto's Royal Ontario Museum have recently rejuvenated a project involving archaeological finds

of preserved underwater objects from canoe accidents during the fur trade. They are material reminders of the powerful and sometimes deadly roles of rivers driving Ontario's fur trade. Perhaps Bangs' belt will someday be found and added to that history.

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About the author: Don Macdougall is a retired lawyer in Ottawa and can be reached at donvmac@gmail.com. This article originally appeared in Families, November 2019.

Free face masks at Bay Coin Laundromat

DANIELLE PAUL
BARRY'S BAY

As an essential service, Bay Coin Laundromat has remained open to serve customers throughout the pandemic restrictions, so we recently followed up with owners Robylin Bautista and Alia Bayat about our report dated January 12.

Because Madawaska Valley Council had refused their request made last year for a temporary reduction in water rates, Bautista and Bayat have been collecting supporters' signatures on a petition in the laundromat. Two hundred people have now signed, many from outside of the township. Bayat pointed out that laundromat customers often shop for other goods and services when they come to do laundry in Barry's Bay, saying in this way the economic spin-off from Bay Coin Laundromat benefits many other Madawaska Valley businesses.

The Current has analyzed the signatures on the petition and we found 24 communities represented, in addition to Barry's Bay. Significantly in terms of Bayat's statement, we noted that more than half the signatures were from customers who reside outside of Barry's Bay. The laundry owners continue to hope that MV Council will change its mind because their business benefits not just the laundromat customers but also other members of the local business community.

While interviewing the couple, we



noticed two open boxes packed with hand-sewn, non-medical masks. Bayat explained that when the call first came out for volunteers to help local health-care facilities, his wife put her seamstress skills to work and began sewing cloth masks. Initially she donated around 150 (to Valley Manor and to the Madawaska Valley Association for Community Living), then she started giving away masks to anyone who came into the laundromat, saying, "It's for the community."

Soon people began requesting child-sized masks, so she now keeps a second box of smaller ones. She says many residents and customers have donated fabric for her to use, so she's been kept busy making hundreds of masks. The masks are available to anyone, free for the asking. Bay Coin Laundromat is open daily 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. (6 p.m. on Sundays).

Preparing for moving day in the garden

PETER DOLAN
BARRY'S BAY

Editor's Note: The Madawaska Valley Gardening Club is encouraging everyone in the Valley to grow their own vegetables this season. To help you out, we're giving you a series of articles on how to get started. And as a bonus, if you submit any gardening questions to The Current at Box 1097, Barry's Bay K0J 1B0 or call them in to MooseFM at 613.756.1881, MV Gardening Club members will answer them online or on-air. So step out onto your porch and read on...

SPRING HAS SPRUNG!

All your wonderfully labeled little pots (or store-bought transplants — that's not cheating!) are overflowing with miniature green bounty. It's time to move them out of the house and into your garden. Before we get there, we need to prepare a few things to ensure maximum success.

Your germinated seeds are a source of wonder and inspiration, you can't wait to get them into the ground. But wait! There are a few items to plan for first that will make all the difference.

CHECK THE WEATHER

Check weather forecast for the last typical frost date in your area. Usually this is the last day of May, but check first; that 4" of snow just before Mother's Day was a shock for me! You'll need about a week or more to prepare for that date.

GET THE SEEDLINGS READY

If the seedlings are not already in individual pots (maybe you have started them in a tray) then now is the time to move them. Consider disinfecting the pots with a bit of chlorinated water. This gets rid of any nasties that may be dormant. You may even drop your tools too into the same water.

RINSE WELL!

Take gentle care of roots when moving to pots. Handle them by leaves and not the delicate stem. If tomatoes are leggy, bury a bit more stem; tomatoes respond well to this trick as their stem will produce roots. Try to do this at least a week ahead so that they recover before going into garden and to allow some time outside in the pot to harden up.



HARDENING OFF

This is a critical step to success! Seedlings need to adjust before moving to the garden environment. To harden up the seedlings, consider taking them outside for an hour or two on warm days in the week ahead of moving them into the garden. Place the pots in dappled light and protect from wind. Watch carefully so that they do not dry out, moving them in to sunnier and sunnier locations each day. This will harden the plants and make their moving day into the garden much easier.

IN THE MEANTIME PREPARE THE GARDEN

While the plants are hardening, it will be a good time to prepare the garden and check out the watering system.

Get the garden soil ready by clearing out any weeds or debris and make improvements to the soil. And add fresh soil if needed that will aid water retention. This is the perfect time to add rotted compost, worm castings, and any ameliorations that improve the soil and water retention. Dig it in down to 10 or 12 inches. The plants will love you for this as their roots reach down into that goodness and the aeration will mitigate any soil compaction that took place over winter.

Get your watering system ready. In our garden we have both well water and lake water, but lake water is the preference. It is not nearly as cold as well water so it keeps any possible shock down. Check hoses, nozzles, make sure the water is turned on to the outside faucets. Watering cans ready!

MOVING DAY!

Pick a warm overcast day to transplant,

say, starting in morning. Ensure the ground has warmed up.

Prepare a hole suitable to the seedling. Carefully remove the plant from the pot by squeezing the pot only slightly to loosen the soil along the sides and pushing gently from the bottom to release the plant. Every effort should be given to maintain the root ball intact and as undisturbed as possible. Slip it into the prepared hole and fill the remaining space with the soil. Once firmly in place water well, taking care not to flush away the soil.

TRANSPLANTING IS A DELICATE PROCESS

Once in, protect if the weather turns chilly; e.g. cover in horticultural fabric or a cardboard box. Keep an eye out for transplant shock such as wilting or yellowing of leaves. This may occur if the delicate roots or stem are damaged in the transplanting. If the roots are damaged, the plant will lose nutrients and go into shock.

And keep notes on when you started to germinate and when you transplanted, it will help you in the following years!

Stay tuned for a future article with more details on maintenance during the growing season. If you have any gardening questions, don't forget that you can call them in to MooseFM at 613-756-1881 or just post them in the Comments section online. Our horticultural members will be most happy to answer them.

Now just sit back and enjoy the miracles of nature growing your food for you! (And if you find you have a bumper crop, then consider sharing that additional bounty with the MV Food Bank).

MV Council makes 2020 budget official and responds to auditors' concerns

DANIELLE PAUL
MADAWASKA VALLEY

Council for the Township of Madawaska Valley formally approved its 2020 budget, along with the 2019 audited financial statements of the municipality, at a Special Council Meeting on May 19th conducted via livestream video on YouTube. All members of Council were present apart from Councillor Ernie Peplinski who sent his regrets.

Viewers joined the real time broadcast as Council returned from a closed session. One item they had discussed in private was identified as "Letter from the Treasurer—Management's Responsibility for the Consolidated Financial Statements." Mayor Kim Love reported on the closed session saying, "Council was educated on the financial statements and had an opportunity to review those with Mr. Healey."

Jason Healey of MacKillican & Associates, auditors for Madawaska Valley, then presented the 2019 audited Financial Statements. Healey's management letter stated, "During the course of our audit, we identified a number of deficiencies that met the definition of a significant deficiency." MV Treasurer Amanda Hudder then responded to the auditors' letter and gave highlights of the 2020 budget.

AUDITORS' RECOMMENDATIONS ADDRESSED

Treasurer Amanda Hudder presented a report speaking to the auditor's concerns which he identified as significant (some had been noted in previous financial years) around bank reconciliations, tax and general ledger reconciliations, accounting software and training, record keeping procedures for grants and special projects.

Hudder explained the processes and plans MV Finance Department has already implemented to address the concerns saying she welcomed opportunities to improve their processes.

BUDGET SUMMARY

Hudder also presented the highlights of the 2020 budget. Her summary revealed an expected tax revenue of \$3.9

million and the budget allows for a levy increase of 2.2 percent.

Taking into account the weighted Current Value Assessment change of 1.89 percent, the residential tax increase is 0.32 percent. Tax collected includes support for education, which has decreased. Hudder explained that the overall tax rate for the 2020 fiscal year is decreasing by 0.41 percent compared to 2019. She said this means that for every \$100,000 worth of assessment, the Overall Total 2020 tax rate will equate to \$1,034.88 of taxes compared to the 2019 tax rate which would equal \$1,039.12

During the discussion that ensued, it was pointed out that MPAC has confirmed that it will not do an assessment revaluation in 2020, so MV property owners can expect to receive a notice from MPAC in June 2021.

Because of major capital projects (e.g. Paugh Lake Road \$3 million), the township's 2020 total expenditures have increased significantly, much of it offset by grant funding. 2019 actual expenditures were \$7.9 million while 2020 expenditures are projected at \$10.6 million. A quick glance at the departmental breakdown of expenditures shows 5.9 million invested in roads.

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A bearable morning with Bobby

GIL GLOFCHESKIE
BARRY'S BAY

It was a beautiful sunny day on June 16, 2016, and I had decided to drive into Barry's Bay. The time was 10:30 a.m.; Alex and Vicki were having a coffee on the deck overlooking the lake. I retrieved my truck keys, checked for my wallet and walked out the back door heading to my vehicle. As I looked up I spotted a big black bear sitting on my lawn not 20 steps away. He was sitting on his haunches and scooping up bunches of clover like he was enjoying a salad. He raised his head and looked at me. I swear he was thinking, "Hi Gib, hope you don't mind if I help myself to some of your delicious clover." The weird thing is I felt I knew this bear; somewhere in the past we had met and now here we were, saying hello again. The bear was not the least bit perturbed that I was standing so close to him, but I was uneasy.

At this point I turned and retreated into the house thinking I had to get some pics. I found the camera and ran to the window. He was up and moving. I had a pretty good idea where he was headed.

Running through the house, I exited through the basement door. I looked up at Vicki and Alex, exclaiming, "Big bear on the road," and as I looked towards the road, the big fellow was entering a bush trail by our 911 location number. I eased closer to the bear, hoping to get a better photo as he proceeded down the trail.

The whole time I was letting him know I was following him. I repeatedly said, "I know what you're up to, you're looking guilty. I know what you're up to, you're feeling guilty." The bear would not look at me; he knew he was guilty and I knew why.

We were about a third of the way to the point when the big lad stopped and slowly turned; he would not look at me. At this point I forgot about getting a good pic and was more intent on making a quick safe exit. So I repeated the words, "I know you're guilty," and retreated back to the road, towards the safety of our cottage. The bear followed and slowly walked back out to the road.

As he exited the bush by the 911 sign



Above, Bobby the bear. Below, doe and two fawns. PHOTOS: GIL GLOFCHESKIE

I tried to get a picture, he was magnificent! Unfortunately he was not cooperative and turned away from me.

What do I do? At this point I just shouted, "BOBBY!"

This Big Beautiful Bear stopped and slowly turned his head in my direction. He had a serious look on his face and seemed to be posing for me. Remembering to say, "Thank You," I snapped some shots. He slowly turned back away from me and, in the blink of an eye, disappeared in the bush. I looked, I watched, I waited, I listened, but could catch no sign of him. I have always called the black bears "Black Ghosts."

The sad part is I never saw him again. When I show the pics, I joke about doing the Bear Dance, I do believe "he led."

Wow! Could that day get any better? Not too much later Alex said, "Dad, look on the point."

There, playing in the water, were two fawns with their Mama standing close by. I again ran for my camera and took some great pics. What a wonderful day to share nature with family.



Just so you know, when I was talking to Bobby the Bear, I knew what he was up to. Mature bears follow the game trails looking for a easy meal in the spring. They know when the fawns are born and a smart old bear has made many a meal out of the fawns. The mother likes to hide her fawns close to water wherever possible.

I joke that I interrupted Bobby's lunch and that leads to another story for another day.

Ahhh, the many absolute wonders of living with nature.

Barry's Bay Farmers' Market adapts to new rules, new site



DANIELLE PAUL
BARRY'S BAY

The first Barry's Bay Farmers' Market of the 2020 season was held on Friday May 22—a first in many ways, including its new location. The Market was held behind the Madawaska Valley Township offices in the vacant lot at 236 John Street (Hwy 62) in Barry's Bay (the site of the former Shell service station).

While vendors were inconvenienced by a lot less shade cover than at the Railway Station, there was more than enough parking thanks to the generosity of the Barry's Bay Legion Branch 406 who allowed patrons to use their parking lot during market hours. And in these COVID-19 days, shoppers were not encouraged to hang around and chat—there was no live music, no take-out lunches or picnic tables, no washroom facilities on the site, and everywhere physical distancing between vendors/products/public was required.

Another first was the lack of craft vendors since the market is allowed to operate only as an "essential service" supplying food products. While this meant fewer vendors, and customers need to order hand-crafted products direct from the vendors, visitors to the market were still greeted by familiar faces.

Other obvious changes at the market include a "one-way system" and physical distancing measures at each vendor's stand. Many vendors used a double-width table display to minimize contact with customers and, like some shoppers, some vendors wore non-medical face masks. Shoppers accustomed to bringing their own reusable bags learned that (as in supermarkets) market vendors may not pack their products into such bags. To minimize handling of

cash, many vendors are happy to take advance orders with online payment and can even set a pick-up time so that you don't have to hang around. You can find more information on the Barry's Bay Farmers' Market Facebook page.

As always the Farmers' Market is a great place to shop local and support Valley producers.



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Bernadette McCann House



COMMUNITY GARDEN PROJECTS

The County of Renfrew in cooperation with the Province of Ontario will be considering requests for grant funding for community garden projects that focus on supporting people to grow fresh produce to increase food security.

Consideration will be only given under the following conditions:

- The applicant assures that physical distancing is enforced.
- Participants do not gather in groups of more than five people.
- Application is submitted by Tuesday, June 30, 2020

FOR DETAILS VISIT THE COVID-19 INFORMATION PAGE AT:

www.CountyofRenfrew.on.ca

Icing on the cake for 102-year-old Anastasia Whalen

DANIELLE PAUL
ROUND LAKE CENTRE

Round Lake Centre resident Anastasia (Tessie) Whalen celebrated her 102nd birthday at home with a few friends on May 8. Due to the pandemic travel restrictions, for the first time ever her son, David, and daughter, Celestine, who both live in Southern Ontario were not there for her birthday and Mother's Day. And the restrictions on gatherings of more than five people meant she saw far fewer friends and relatives than the crowds who attended a special Mass and filled the parish hall for a celebration meal at St. Casimir's Church two years ago for her 100th birthday on May 8, 2018.

But it was already a special week for Mrs. Whalen. Although she is in good health and is well able to live on her own, doing much of the housekeeping and yardwork, Jenny Yakabuskie, her PSW, visits to help her out with certain tasks. Her son, David, says, "Her eyesight is bad now, but she wants to live at home alone." When she wanted to go to the bank that week, Jenny agreed to drive her. At the last minute, Jenny discovered trouble with her car.

Enter Bennie Yakabuskie, Jenny's father. Bennie "collects old cars," says his daughter. Replace "old" with "classic" and you'd be nearer the mark. When they pulled up in a gleaming 1955 Ford Fairlane to take Mrs. Whalen to the bank, she was delighted. Bennie said she enjoyed the outing in a stylish car that was in production 65 years ago when she was just 37, and told Tessie the trip was a birthday gift.

Tessie (Theresia) Mask, the second youngest of seven children of Frank Mask and Victoria Chapeski, was born at the family farm near Round Lake Centre on May 8, 1918. Her siblings have now all passed away. After attending SS #4 Hagarty & Richards school, she helped her parents on the family farm. In 1942 she married Lawrence Whalen and they moved to the Whalen family farm on Buck Hill Road where they lived for 20 years before moving to Round Lake Centre. The couple had two children, David (Jean) of Oshawa and Celestine (Syl) Mask of Whitby.



Anastasia Whalen (right) with Jenny Yakabuskie pose in front of Bennie Yakabuskie's classic car. PHOTO: BENNIE YAKABUSKIE

Mrs. Whalen has two grandsons, Darryl and Kelvin Mask, and four great-grandchildren, Misha, Sarah, Jordan and Kyle Mask. Her husband passed away in 1985. As with many Valley residents, Mrs. Whalen has had a life of hard work which has likely contributed to her longevity and good health. Apart from cataract surgery and knee replacements, she remains in good physical condi-

tion. David said that when people ask his mother to what she attributes her long life, she tells them, "All my life I ate salty pork and sauerkraut."

Mrs. Whalen retains not just all her faculties but demonstrates a keen wit. Bennie Yakabuski teased her about her birthday, saying, "You know it's going to snow?" Her reply: "Well, that's just the icing on my cake!"

Virtual health care service expands to South Algonquin residents

THE CURRENT
WHITNEY

South Algonquin residents without a family doctor can now use Renfrew County Virtual Triage and Assessment Centre. You can also call RC VTAC to pre-book a COVID-19 test.

South Algonquin residents now have easy access to a new 24/7 health care service that is strengthening primary care for more people during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Renfrew County Virtual Triage and Assessment Centre (RC VTAC) is available for South Algonquin residents who have a non-urgent health issue and do not have a family physician/nurse

practitioner or cannot reach their family physician/nurse practitioner.

"We have many individuals in South Algonquin who do not have a family physician or nurse practitioner," said Jane Dumas, Mayor, South Algonquin Township. "I like the way the VTAC model is laid out and I know there is truly need in our community."

The approximately 1,100 permanent residents in South Algonquin typically access emergency care at St. Francis Memorial Hospital in Barry's Bay – a RC VTAC partner hospital.

RC VTAC is covered by OHIP and can be accessed 24/7 by calling 1-844-727-6404.