The Massie Messie Messenger

A Biannual Newsletter Issue N° 18 Spring 2016

Reminiscences of Life in Massie



Sketch by Lee Ann Neelands

Hugh Neelands, who is now 75 years of age, sums up his childhood with these words: "It's not much wonder we slept good at night. Life was so full."

In the summer, Hugh and the two

brothers closest to him in age, Bill and Bob, went for long walks – five or six miles at a stretch. They walked the Bighead River from County Road 40 all the way to Strathaven. When their neighbour Joyce Downey (née Purvis) came over, the three boys would harness the horse to the stoneboat and go for a ride. This was quite the production. None of them

were tall enough to reach the horse's neck and they had to put a 15-20 pound padded collar on the animal. So they started with the collar upside down. One of the boys shoved it up and turned it over, then someone else buckled it at the bottom. A couple of the guys held the harness (which went over the horse's rump) while the other boy (standing on the manger or some other precarious perch) swung it up over the collar so that they could fasten the harness. Then they attached the stone boat (a type of sledge used for moving heavy objects like big rocks that would slide across soft ground or snow.) The Neelands stone boat had a flat bottom of hardwood planks secured together with a metal headpiece probably made in the Massie blacksmith shop.

All this just so they had something to sit on and have the horse pull them along. And then they'd go and bulldoze ant hills!

When the boys weren't off on one of these mischievous missions, they were kept busy working: cleaning out the stables or the box stalls, putting down straw for the animals, having, picking stones or doing any number of farm chores.

Hugh liked to spend time with his Mom in the kitchen. She always needed help with peeling vegetables or other meal preparation jobs. Hugh's sisters, Maxine, Connie, Pat and Wendy, certainly did their fair share of household chores over the years but with a family of 11, including the parents, there was always work to do. And with a 26-year span between the oldest child and the youngest, some were leaving home while others were still toddlers and not much help yet!

At Massie School, a favourite game was Prisoners' Base (the two world wars had left their mark, even with

the children and their play). The play area was the lawn between the school building and the fence line of tall maples to the north (in winter or when it was muddy the game shifted to the church shed which is now the parking lot). Kids drew straws to decide on the teams. Let's call them Team School and Team Maple. Each team would lay down a board or large stick and that became the safe zone for their team and the base where prisoners were taken. At the start of the game, one brave soul would "lead" from either team or from both teams. Often they'd argue about who lead first. Let's say it was Team School. Then a Team Maple player would try to tag him or her while another player from Team School would venture forth and try to tag the Team Maple player. Whoever got tagged had to go to the opposite team's prison, the prisoners' base. He or she had to keep one foot on the base but they were ready to run at a moment's notice. Let's say it was a Team Maple player who got tagged. Another player from that team would have to touch the prisoner's extended hand to get him or her out of prison. And then both the former prisoner and the rescuer would have to get back to the tree fence line and touch it before they could resume play. As soon as you touched your side, the "transaction" was complete and you were back in the game. Every once in a while someone would take off around the school and an opposing team member would chase them. At the end of recess, the team with the most prisoners won. The game required wits, ingenuity and speed. Massie was proud because no other school in the area played the game (it was unknown in Strathaven and the 10th Line), so they claimed it as their own!

Music has always been a passion

of Hugh's. At any one time, he has 100 songs in his head. He's known in Massie and far beyond as a passionate singer and musician... but not a composer – he says he can't write songs to save his soul. Hugh sometimes sings with Joyce at Christmas concerts now as he did when they were young. They probably started singing together when they were eight or nine years old. Joyce's family very conveniently lived behind the church in what is now the Kivells' home.

What do you remember of life "in the olden days" in Massie? Do your memories coincide with Hugh's or would you like to challenge him on these remembrances? Feel free to contact Hugh or email Renee at editor@massiemessenger.ca. We'd love to hear from you.

TANGY CORNMEAL MUFFINS

a gluten-free recipe from Connie Neelands

2 eggs, separated 1 cup (250 mL) yogurt 3 tbsps (45 mL) oil 1 1/2 cups (375 mL) whole cornmeal

1/2 tsp (2 mL) soda 1 tsp (5 mL) baking powder 1 tsp (5 mL) salt

Beat together the egg yolks, yogurt and oil. Stir together cornmeal, baking soda, baking soda and salt, breaking up any lumps. Add to egg mixture. Beat egg whites until stiff and fold lightly into the batter.

Bake in hot greased muffin tins for 20 minutes @ 425 degrees F. Makes 6 large muffins.

"Live @ Massie Hall" Coffeehouse 2016

Jory Nash

Saturday April 30th, 8 pm \$18 (all ages) includes coffee/tea/goodies



Jory Nash is an award-winning singer-songwriter and storyteller who blends elements of folk, jazz, blues, pop & soul. He has recorded 8 critically acclaimed albums, the most recent being his spring 2015 release **The Many Hats of Jory Nash**. *In 2013, his album* **Little Pilgrim** *was nominated for a Canadian Folk Music award.*

Jory is a past artistic director of the Shelter Valley Folk Festival and the co-founder of an annual large-scale, multiartist concert celebrating the music of Gordon Lightfoot. He plays acoustic guitar, piano and banjo. His warm, unique voice urges you to listen to thoughtful lyrics and intricate melodies.

Jory tours regularly across Canada and the United States playing folk festivals, house concerts, folk clubs and soft seating venues. Jory has a hat collection that numbers in the hundreds. He is a long-suffering fan of the Toronto Maple Leafs.

Suzie Vinnick & Rick Fines

Saturday June 11th, 8 pm \$22 (all ages) includes coffee/tea/goodies



It was over 20 years ago that Rick Fines met Suzie Vinnick. "I was so impressed with her bass playing," says Rick, "then she stepped up to the mike to sing!" At the time Fines was a member of the much-lauded Jackson Delta acoustic blues band and Vinnick was the talk of the town in Ottawa, having recently moved from her native Saskatoon. They started playing gigs together and talked about making a recording. Each one played on the other's solo releases and they continued to perform together while building their solo careers.

Now, years later, with over 15 recordings between them, multiple awards and much critical acclaim, they have released Nothing Halfway, a collection of mostly self-penned songs that reflects what fans have loved about Suzie and Rick all along. From the soul sounds of "We Got a Love Like That" and "The Lucky One", the sultry "How'd You Know I Missed You", the guitar-drenched "Callin' Out Your Name" to the rockin' blues of "Love In A Bottle", this album has what fans have been asking for: Rick Fines and Suzie Vinnick at their best!

Contact Pete Miller for tix/info at 519-794-3652 petemkit@xplornet.com

Comings and Goings

Brent and Shelley Torrie, with their three kids Danielle, Cole and Braden and their Golden Retriever Molly, are renting the house where the Van Ecks used to live from Jerry Downey. They may not be here forever because they plan to build a house on the land they bought from Case Vanderham south of County Road 40 (of course, we will still welcome them into the Massie fold!). Brent's parents Bob and Sharon are just around the corner and down the road near the Strathaven Rd intersection.

Kelly and Hubert Halden and their kids Shayla, Jullia and Chase Balice purchased the Wit property last fall. They came from Scarborough and are loving the country life. Of course, their animals keep them busy. In addition to the three Miniature Pinschers (Kelly calls them "minpins"), Mia, Chico and Scooby, and the Blue Heeler Daisy, they now have 12 chickens but plan to expand their flock to 24 in the spring. They'll start selling eggs to the community in April as their output grows. Kelly also wants to have sheep. If you move to the country, why not embrace the lifestyle wholeheartedly!

Marion and Kevin Little moved into the neighbourhood from Shelburne with their German Shepherd Abbey. Semi-retired, they plan to hobby farm. No better place for it!

An extremely belated welcome to Sarah Martin and Ken VanWyck, their children Thea, Connor and Keely Van-Wyck-Martin, their two dogs Grover and Snickers, their "extra-fluffy" cat Skittles, the two bunnies Dot and Flik and the horse Diamond Poko Streke who boards in Williamsford. Sarah is originally from the Annan-Leith area and Ken is from Owen Sound. Thea

is completing her vet tech course at Northern College this spring (with her dog Castiel as her companion), Connor is in the army reserves with the Grey-Simcoe Foresters, and Keely loves photography and art. The photos of Grover and Snickers on the next pages are taken by Keely. This will be the family's fourth summer in Massie!

The Perrones are selling their house in Toronto and coming to live full-time in Massie after far too many long commutes. Christy and Paul are kept busy home-schooling their children Joseph, Anna, James, Thomas and Matthew (a.k.a. Georgie) and encouraging their many and varied extra-curricular activities including hockey, piano playing and nature exploration on their farm. Anna recently passed her piano examination with a 94%, First Class Honours with Distinction. That's fabulous, Anna! We look forward to many delightful concerts in the future!

It only took 11 short years for Carol Mair to become a full-time resident of Massie! Well, sorta. Her sweetie Wayne has a house in Oakville so Carol now divides her time between Home 1 (Massie) and Home 2 (you guessed it, Oakville). Carol's retirement was made possible by the sale of her 30-year-old company, Balloon Corporate Events, to Teri-Ann, a young and talented former employee who promises to let Carol have all the balloons and other fun stuff that she may ever need for the wild and crazy celebrations put on in Massie!

Johanna Wit, after selling her beautiful property to the Haldens, moved into a charming little house in Owen Sound on the west side of the river. Her house may be small and cozy but her prop-

erty is expansive with a long hill and a stream. Johanna will happily accept donations of flowering plants as she builds her flower garden!

Lou Weatherall sold her farm to Rocky Neelands who plans to put some outbuildings for his equipment on the land. Lou moved to balmy British Columbia. The Toebes have relocated a couple of concessions over and Gilbert and Sharon van Eck are now in Markdale.

Welcome to everyone who is making Massie their home and best wishes to everyone who has moved away. If we've missed someone please get in touch with Renee at editor@ massiemessenger.ca

A Massie Welcome

Carol Mair was surprised and delighted with the charming ways that her neighbours made her feel welcome when she first moved here in 2005. It was March: there was snow on the ground and in the ditches. Carol was ahead of the moving truck directing him to her house. When they got their van over to the side of the road to let the moving truck into the driveway. What she didn't realize was that the side of the road was a snow-covered ditch – oops! Within the hour, Rocky Neelands had pulled it out of the ditch! That was her first encounter with Massie hospitality.

Within a couple of months, the warmer weather arrived and the snow melted. Suddenly Carol had a huge lawn to mow. As a city slicker and wannabe environmentalist, Carol bought a push mower while Wayne bought a ride-on mower. Both required assembly. Ed Neelands, Desirée van Dijk and the late Bill Misener became the assembly team. They just showed up out of the blue and offered to help. Mighty neighbourly of them!

Please share your stories of how you were welcomed to Massie when you first arrived. Email Renee at editor@ massiemessenger.ca or drop your stories off in her mailbox at 496743 Veterans Road North. Thanks, neighbour!



Any open door is a welcome mat for Beau. Still it's risky making himself at home sleeping on the bathroom floor because 18-year-old Brandy standing guard on the stairs has been known to chase him out of the house and down the driveway. Photograph by Carol Mair

Historical Society Tour



Ed Neelands, the dapper fellow on the right, took the Grey County Historical Society on a tour of Massie last September.



Hugh Neelands, on guitar, sang for the crowd with his sister Maxine Seabrook on piano. 2 photographs by Stephen Norton.



Massie alumni present for the Grey County Historical Society tour: seated from left to right are Pat Campbell, Maxine Seabrook and Leone Diebel, and standing from left to right, Glen Martin, Stephen (Howard) Norton, Beth Boyce, Bert McDougall, Joyce Downey and Ed Neelands. Photograph by Frank Bassingthwaite.

Photo Album: Massie Dogs



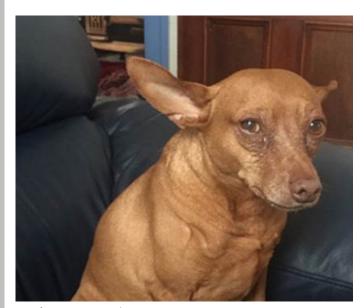
Grover Van Wyck - Martin



Sadie Palmer



Snickers Van Wyck - Martin



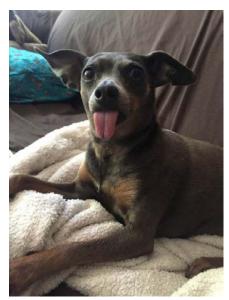
Chico Halden



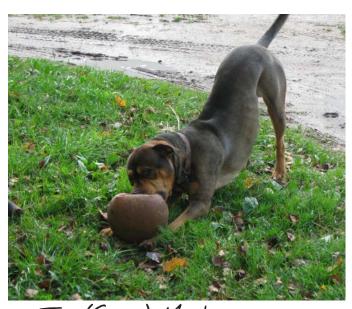
Tucker Elizabeth Downey



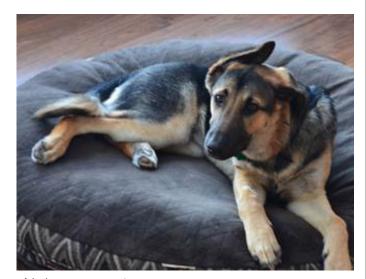
Lexi Currie



Mia Halden



Tex (Gump) Martin



Abbey Little



Bailey Neelands



Tucker Elizabeth Downey



Sasha Martin



Molly Torrie



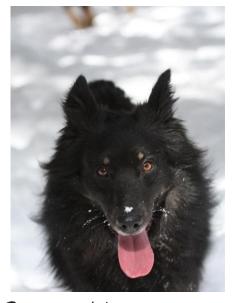
Daisy, Bob the cat, and Rosie Miller



Kestrel, Tsuli and Peregrin Watson



Bear Neelands



Raven Watson



Sprig Miller



Diva and Churchy Bergman



Virgil Perrone



Magpie Miller



Lulu Bergman



Tsuli Watson



Photograph by Ralph Bergman

Massie 2016 Events

Sunday, March 27 Massie Church Easter Service - 11:15 a.m. All welcome

Saturday, April 30 Massie Church and Hall cleanup. Please come at 9 a.m. with shovels, rakes,

cleaning supplies. Lunch will be provided. All welcome!

Saturday, April 30 Massie Hall Coffeehouse #1 – Jory Nash

Saturday, May 7 Geranium Tea – 1 p.m. – 4 p.m. Flower Orders: 794-2397 or 794-2085

Friday, May 20 Shoreline Chorus – 7:30 p.m

Saturday, June 11 Massie Hall Coffeehouse #2 – Rick Fines and Suzie Vinnick

Sunday, July 10 Massie Car and Motorcycle Show – 1 p.m. – 4 p.m. Cars and motorcycles will be

in the athletic field, \$5 per entry. Trophies awarded by popular choice. Burgers

and hot dogs for sale in the hall.

Sunday, August 7 Massie Fish Fry - Live music starts at 3:00 p.m., Rainbow trout dinner from 5:00-

7:00 p.m. Bring your lawn chair. For tickets call Glen at 519-794-3841 or Marilyn at

519-794-4109.

PARTY AT MASSIE HALL!



Have you got a special event coming up and you need a great local place to hold it? Could be a birthday, anniversary, wedding, shower, family reunion, holiday meal, business meeting or any other group gathering. Wouldn't it be fun to say that you're having your event at Massie Hall? Okay, so it's not *that* Massey Hall but it still makes for a memorable event. Contact Glen Martin at 519-794-3841 or email lauraglenmartin@gmail.com for details.

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