

The Massie Messenger

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue N° 4 — Winter 2010

A Beau's-Eye View of Massie

Translated by David Wells and Renee Fedun



Photograph by Connie Miller

Hi! My name is Beau. I'm the good-looking black dude in the photo. That's my "sister" Bailey standing behind me and my good buddy Winchester on the right.

If you haven't had the good fortune to meet me yet, here's your lucky chance! I'm a lover not a fighter, a truck chaser, a hunter of all things inanimate (like Renee's blankets), an earth mover, a contractor's helper and a barbecue aficionado. Some people think I'm a

nuisance but I figure I'm just there to brighten their lives.

It's another fabulous day in downtown Massie! What's on the agenda? Whoa! there goes Rocky – gotta chase him up the hill, Bailey. On the way back we can stop at David and Renee's and play with that Great Pyrenees, Luna, who just moved in. She's a wild one, but I must admit I've got a bit of crush on her! She's bigger than me so I don't

mess around – I just lie down and let her boss me as much as she wants.

Connie's out feeding the horses so her English Springer Spaniels will be out too: Winchester and that cute-as-a-button puppy, Maggie! She simply adores me. Must go and visit.

One of my favourite stops is the Kivells. Beagle, a black Lab cross, who used to live with Rocky and Jody, just decided to move over there one day. He and Bailey were the original Massie speed bumps but now I've taken over Beagle's role in that department.

It's winter so I have to wait a few months for the annual family barbecue but I'm sure Cathy and Don will have me and Bailey over again. We had such a great time last summer – eating everybody's food, lying on the picnic table, flaking out in front of the fire... They had to put a glo light around my neck because I'm so black that people kept tripping over me in the dark.

Cathy likes to tell the story of when a contractor came to do some work on her house and I decided to help. I lay down on top of the board he was cutting to make it easier for



Photographs by Cathy Kivell

That's me in the chair teaching Don how to barbecue.

him to make the cuts. Just bein' neighbourly!

I kinda miss Jack, the Kivells' Jack Russell terrier, who died last fall. He didn't really like me – can't understand why. How could anyone not appreciate my joie de vivre and drooling charm?!? We finally came to an agreement: as long as I didn't try to get into the house he'd let me roam the property.



Beau with baseball buddies: Cathy's great-nephew Connor, nephew Kris, son Travis, niece Lori-Beth and her friend Matt.

Across the road are Daisy and Rosie, the ShihTzus. Daisy woke me up early this morning barking from her deck – she just loves to tell the world that this tiny corner of paradise is hers. Rosie is much more

sophisticated. She only barks when I wander onto the Millers' lawn....and if I go to poop she really goes ballistic! But I just ignore her *and* the "No pooping on lawn" sign (everybody says that dogs can't read so I just play dumb – it works for me).

Oh, boy! Look over at the church, B. Marilyn and Ralph just drove up in their SUV. Maybe Marilyn will leave the hatch open and there'll be another cake back there. Was the first one ever good! I guess their Giant Schnauzers Churchy and Diva weren't too happy that I managed to get some cake and they didn't, but as far as I'm concerned "it's a dog-eat-cake world out there!"

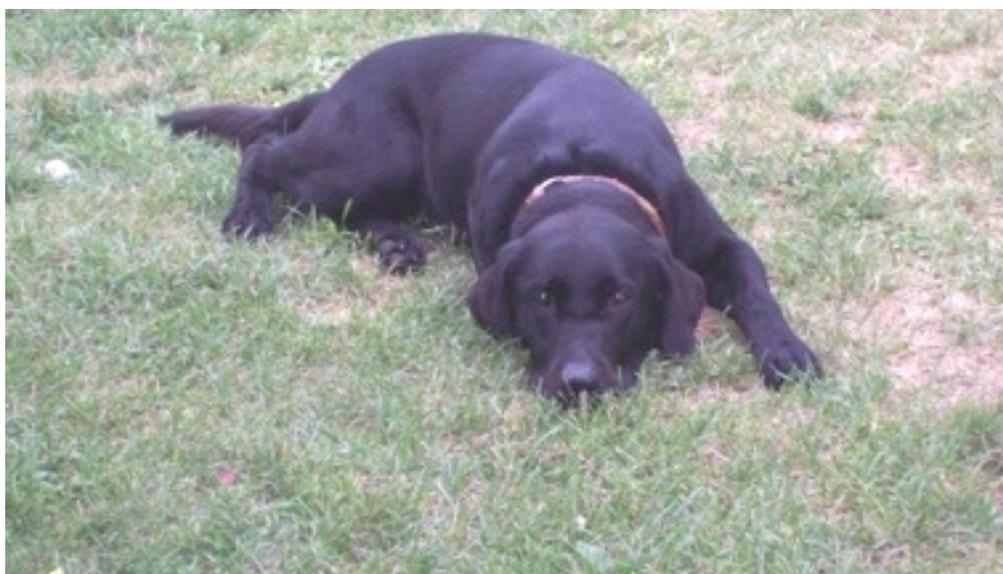
No cake, so let's go sniff around at Connie and Carl's. Bailey, remember the time I stole that toque from Doug's kids and it had a cell phone in it? What a kerfuffle around that! I tried to tell the kids that talking on a cell phone all the time would rot your brains out but they just didn't listen to me. So I had to take action!

I did go looking for the cell phone again in the spring – remember when you and I went into Connie's tulip bed – but she and Carl didn't seem to appreciate my gesture. Of course, nobody told me they'd already found it! And those tulips sure were comfy, weren't they, B.? I don't think we'd better try that stunt again, though. I might become "canine non grata". Wouldn't that be a switch!

We could head on up the road to the Shears. I just roll over for their Scotch Collie named Molly – seems like a good strategy. Haven't actually met the Lab, Fergus, and from what I hear he probably wouldn't appreciate me. Imagine that!

Wow, look what I just found – a deer leg! Jody will be so pleased when I drag it home! Let's go, Bailey. Time for a nap.

Signing off for now, your favourite prankster, Beau.



Photograph by Kennedy Heathers

The Massie Mill

by *Glen Martin*



Upon arriving at the mill, you would often find the miller's five-ton truck backed up to the covered platform. The truck's box would be tipped to a 45-degree angle with corn or western grain from the Owen Sound elevator pouring down a chute under the platform. From there it would be lifted to the second floor of the timber frame structure in a bucket elevator.

My father Harold's bags of home-grown grain – usually oats or barley – were loaded onto a hand truck and wheeled into the mill. After I'd exchanged greetings with the miller, Gordon Lang, and given directions for the processing of my "grist", I would notice the small sign on a grain chute that read: "You don't have to be crazy to work here but it helps". The bags of grain were taken to a dumping pit in one corner of the mill. The opening in the floor was about 2' x 3', with several steel bars across it – just enough to keep an adult from falling in.

Until this time, everything had been operating relatively quietly, with only the sound of wooden drive teeth on the water turbine meshing with a drive pinion, and the clatter of the unloading elevator. As the miller turned a wheel to increase water flow to the turbine, everything started to speed up. Under the mill, large flat

belts began to slap together, and the whole building began to vibrate. The grinder started to whine as its belt was engaged. Its pitch would change again as the grain began to flow between the plates. The miller would open a little door to sample a handful of grain, making sure it was the right texture – fine for pigs, coarse for cattle – and he would adjust the grind if necessary. The "chop" would then be directed to a mixer, a large funnel-shaped vessel with a stirring auger inside, where a protein supplement could be added. If it was corn, a chute would be opened from upstairs storage into a weigh bin on the main floor, then over to the grinder. A roller provided a very coarse feed, usually required for horses. The roller operated similar to the grinder, except for the noise of the large metal rollers rotating against each other. The bags were taken off the mixer in rapid succession and by the time the batch was done, a lot of floor was occupied by freshly filled feed bags.

On one occasion, seeing that I was tying knots to secure the grain bags in a way that was difficult for him to

untie, Gordon showed me how to tie a Miller's Knot. This knot is easy to tie and releases quickly with a tug at one end of the string.

Often in the summer the water level in the pond would be low. In preparation, the miller had installed a diesel engine under the mill to provide additional power. This power unit would start when its drive belt engaged with the main drive line of the mill, no starter or battery required. The exhaust system of this engine was basic, so its snappy "pop, pop" sound echoed across the hills.

The mill was also equipped to saw logs into lumber, with the slab wood used as fuel and the sawdust as bedding. A farmer would bring in two or three trees that had been felled by a storm, and those would be added to the pile. When the pile was big enough Gordon would reset his machines for a day and saw logs.

The Massie Mill provided these important services to the community for over a century finally closing in the 1970s.



Margaret Jean McPherson 1913-2010



At an extraordinary 96 years of age, Jean McPherson died peacefully at Central Place in Owen Sound on February 23rd. Jean, who was predeceased by her husband Clarence, leaves behind two loving daughters, Leone Diebel and her husband Paul, and Beth Boyes and her husband Donald, as well as six grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

Jean was born in Keppel Township to William and Eliza Hewitson. Her mother died when she was 13, obliging her to look after her brother and sister. In 1928, Jean's father remarried to Jessie Howey, Gilbert Howey's aunt.

At Owen Sound Collegiate and Vocational Institute, Jean performed in school plays and participated on the debating team. In 1932 she graduated from Stratford Normal School with honours.

Jim Taylor was in the first class taught by the young Jean at Massie Public School, where she was the teacher from 1932 to 1937. In 1937 Jean married Clarence McPherson and moved to a farm on Veterans Road south of the village where they lived until 1983 when her husband's declining health forced them to move into town. In the spring that followed

Clarence's death in October 1985, Jean sold the farm to Richard and Marie Palmer.

Ed Neelands noted that "Jean was a Massie stalwart and proudly maintained her membership in the Massie United Church since joining the church on April 15, 1938."

Jean was a life member of the Massie Women's Institute and actively participated in many other organizations. She recorded the Tweedsmuir History of Massie. Lois Keeling wrote a lovely poem that sums up what the women of the Institute and the entire community felt about Jean.

*As members of Massie Institute
We pause to remember
A gentle lady whose presence graced
our meetings
And friendship blessed our members.*

Ward System Changes

by Marilyn Bergman

The headline in *The Owen Sound Sun Times* read "Election Changes Hit Snag". Yes, the people of Massie were being troublesome again.

At the beginning of November of last year, Council of the Township of Chatsworth decided to abolish the existing ward system of electing councilors, replacing it with an "at large" system whereby all members of Council would be elected by a general vote across the Township. It would appear that Council took this action in response to a presentation in September from a group of eight people calling themselves the East Back Line Committee on Electoral System. It was the opinion of this group that an at-large system would encourage increased electoral involvement in the upcoming municipal election.

However, Council had canvassed the ratepayers on this issue earlier in the year and the majority of those responding to Council's poll favoured the retention of the ward system. Furthermore, the public meeting held by Council in October to discuss the proposal was attended by about 30 people – fewer than one per cent of the voters in the Township. Among them there did not appear to be overwhelming support for a change in the electoral system. Moreover, it did not appear that the new system would necessarily encourage greater participation in the municipal election, given the increased time and expense likely to be incurred by potential candidates campaigning for Council.

Concerned by Council's action, some 30 ratepayers living in and

around Massie retained me to launch an appeal of Council's by-law. Faced with the prospect of an Ontario Municipal Board hearing on the issue, Council revisited the matter and, at a special meeting called at the end of December, arrived at what was felt to be a reasonable compromise. The Mayor and the Deputy-Mayor, who also sit on the County Council, will be elected by an at-large vote; the remaining three Councilors will be elected each from his or her ward. The number of wards was reduced to three and the ward boundaries were redrawn somewhat in an attempt to equalize the number of voters in each ward. Council also repealed the offending by-law.

A big thank you to all of you who supported the appeal!

'Live @ Massie Hall' Coffeehouse

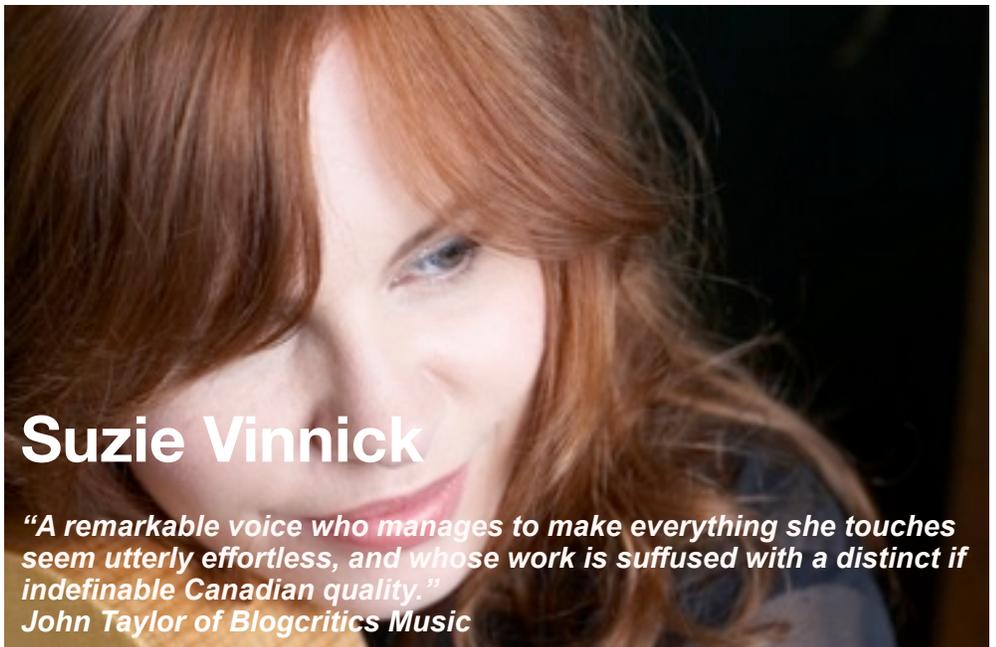
Suzie Vinnick

Saturday April 17th, 8 pm

Doors open at 7:30 pm

\$15 (all ages) includes coffee/tea/goodies

www.suzievinnick.com



We're delighted to kick off the fourth Massie Hall CoffeeHouse season with Canada's top blueswoman. Suzie Vinnick is the 2008 winner of The Maple Blues Award for Canada's Female Blues Vocalist of the Year. She is touring Canada with her new album, *Happy Here*, a brilliantly crafted solo effort. With a voice like an angel, mastery of the blues guitar and a warm personality, Suzie will captivate you from the first note.

Brian MacMillan

Saturday May 29th, 8 pm

Doors open at 7:30 pm

\$15 (all ages) includes coffee/tea/goodies

www.myspace.com/brianmacmillan

www.myspace.com/



The sweet vocals of James Taylor, rhythm of Paul Simon, peppered with a heartfelt message of love – Brian MacMillan is a talented multi-instrumentalist whose genre skirts folk, reggae, world music and pop. He has two critically acclaimed self-produced albums and his third, *Shine*, is eagerly anticipated this spring. His tour schedule includes stops in Nashville, Boston, British Columbia... and Massie!.

Contact Peter Miller at petemkit@xplornet.com or call 794-3652.

Increasing Energy Efficiency at Home

by Renee Fedun

Did you know that until March 31st, 2011 the federal and provincial governments are offering grants to a combined maximum of \$10,000 for energy-efficient retrofits to your home?

We were thinking it was about time to replace the 23-year-old oil furnace in our century home – before it conked out in the middle of a frigid winter. Our contractor told us about the ecoENERGY Retrofit – Homes program. Free publications are available through the Office of Energy Efficiency of Natural Resources Canada by calling 1-800-387-2000 or 613-996-4397 for the hearing-impaired.

First, you schedule a visit from a certified energy advisor by calling John MacLennan at 1-877-695-5367. The audit costs \$349 but you get \$150 back from the provincial government. After evaluating your home's heating system, insulation, air sealing and water consumption, using sophisticated technology and plain old common sense, the auditor will suggest how to increase your home's energy efficiency.

Take our house, for example. The original brick structure was built in 1877. Our pre-retrofit energy evaluation showed that our house rates 46 points on the EnerGuide scale (the average for a house of this age is 42). By replacing the old furnace with an Energy Star-qualified oil furnace with an 85% annual fuel utilization efficiency or higher and a brushless DC motor we will improve our rating by one point and receive \$625 back as a federal incentive. (And a matching rebate from the provincial government.)

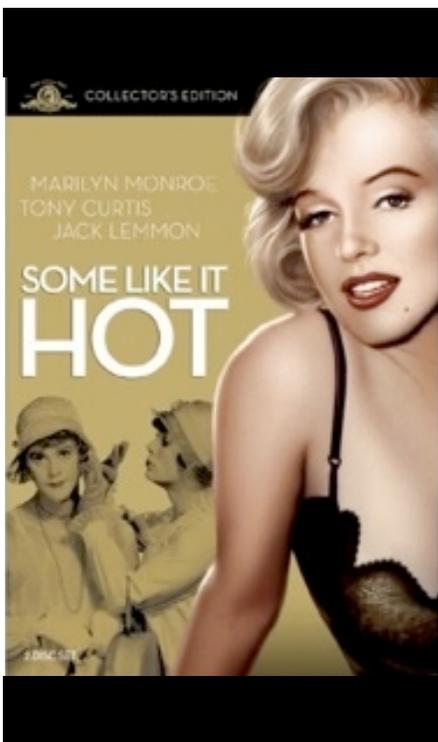
Uninsulated basements usually account for 25-30% of the heat loss in a house. Insulation in our stone basement is minimal – just some pink foam stuffed among the headers. By properly insulating the headers to R20 (spray foam seems like the best bet) and then the exterior walls to R10 we will be eligible for \$576 in federal incentives.

Low-flush toilets and other upgrades (such as insulating attics and walls) can also reduce your home's water and energy consumption – and qualify you for rebates.

Once all the work is complete, the energy auditor will return to check and see that the work is properly done (this costs \$189). If David and I do everything suggested we will increase our home's energy efficiency rating to 53 points. This means we will reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by 2.3 tonnes per year! And then there's the reduction in energy consumption – no small thing, from the perspective of the environment.

So if you've been thinking about replacing leaky windows and doors or upgrading your heating system or insulating your basement, this is the year to do it.

Massie Movie Nights



Another Saturday night on the town – Massie is one happenin' place! Thanks to Doug Fryday and Connie Miller, with able assistance from Ralph Bergman, we've been treated to a Movie Night at the Massie United Church for the past three months. Afterwards there were the usual baked treats.... and POPCORN – prepared and served by Matt Martin. Matt's Mom, Laura Martin, donated a classic movie theatre popcorn machine for community events (and Pete Miller made one repair to it.) Thanks to everyone who has made the movie nights worth waiting for!

The next show will be on **March 27th** at 7:30pm with the classic comedy *Some Like It Hot* starring Marilyn Monroe, Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon. Everyone welcome.



Massie Pioneers: Ruth Hamill



Ruth with the first Christmas tree she and Carman decorated at their new home.

I like the spirit of the community. I like going to church. I'm met there with smiles and good wishes always." That's how Ruth Hamill sums up life in Massie. And she would know. Ruth moved here as a young bride in 1943 when she married J. Carman Hamill. Sadly, Carman passed away four years ago.

During their 62 years together, they farmed the family homestead (a 100-acre property on Veterans Road which has been owned by the Hamills since 1909 – that's 100 years!). They raised horses, cattle, pigs, poultry and

even sheep for a few years. When they finally decided it was time to retire, the land was rented out to neighbours and still is. The land, now planted in hay, grain and corn, also supports wildlife. Ruth's son Stew, a wildlife biologist, spotted Sandhill Cranes in the grainfield and Ruth was able to see the enormous long-legged birds in flight!

An incredibly busy lady, Ruth not only raised six children, taught them all to play piano and sent them all to university, she was involved in a host of community projects. The list is exhausting! Ruth taught Sunday School, played piano at church, acted

as a director for the Holland Township Federation of Agriculture and the Grey County Federation of Ag, lead 4H projects, helped establish the Grey County Historical Archives, served as trustee on the Holland-Chatsworth School Board.....and that's only the tip of the iceberg.

Her work did not go unnoticed by the community. In 2002, Ruth was presented with an Ontario 125 Medal for Volunteer Service. In 2007, she received the Tommy Cooper Award from the Grey County Federation of Agriculture for her contributions to agriculture and rural living.

Ruth was never idle at home either. Handicrafts, sewing, painting, gardening, making music, reading books were all integral to her life and happiness. She also loved curling and lawn bowling, as did Carman.

At 93, Ruth has slowed down a bit, but only a bit. She still does handwork, puzzles over crosswords, bakes, watches birds, attends church and, of course, reads. Her one complaint – even now – is that she never has enough time to read all the books she'd love to read.

Born Ruth Shier on April 26, 1916 at Boat Lake in Amabel Township, she was the fourth child in a family of eight. When she was four, the family moved to a farm near Oxenden (the first land to be expropriated for the Wiarton Federal Airport in 1946). After graduating from Stratford Normal School, she taught for six years at two one-room schools, Zion and Hoath Head, before marrying Carman.

Ruth's fondest memory of her young life was swimming in the bay after chores. "I miss the water," she says simply. But that seems to be her only regret. Otherwise, life in Massie suits her just fine.

“Chute, Tunnel, Target”

by *Connie Miller*



Photograph by Wendy Webb Photography

If you drive north on 3A from the Massie Road, with your window down, you may hear those strange words echoing from the Cover-all building on the west side of the road. Just what’s happening in there? Military manoeuvres?

Hardly. Inside you’ll find people working with and enjoying their dogs, and the dogs having a whale of a time! They’re taking part in the relatively new sport of agility.

This is the home of Capable Canines, a dog training facility owned and operated by Gayle Watson. Gayle began her journey into the world of agility nine years ago when an Australian Shepherd, Periwinkle, came to live with her. Peri is a high-energy dog, requiring mental and physical stimulation to keep her healthy and happy. Gayle found that agility training would fulfill these needs. The two of them travelled to distant places in the province to study with as many top coaches as possible. Gayle’s love of the sport prompted her to build her current facility in 2004.

Agility originated in England in 1979, where there are many energetic Border Collies, and too few sheep to herd. It blends events borrowed from the horse jumping world, Shutzhund (police dog) training and protection dog training. Dogs learn to jump over obstacles that resemble small horse jumps, climb up and down an A frame like a police dog, wiggle at top speed through weave poles resembling a downhill skiing slalom course, scoot through a flattened chute made of light weight material, and fly through tunnels resembling covered Slinkies. The enthusiasm and joy displayed by the dogs is unparalleled. As the sport has evolved, the skills taught to the dogs have become more technical, and agility has become increasingly safe for the dogs.

Both dogs and their handlers derive huge benefit from agility. For the owners, there is improved fitness and self-

awareness. People report increased respect and understanding of their canine companion – they see how hard the dog tries to learn and to please. As each skill is mastered, people are delighted to see how smart and willing the dogs are. We are humbled as well: we learn that our dogs do everything we train them to do, whether we are aware of it or not.

The dogs too become very fit. The mental stimulation of the sport alleviates boredom, and dogs love the interaction with their human. They thrive on the attention. They develop new communication and physical skills, making them better canine citizens and companions.

Gayle offers different types of classes. Dogs can begin with the basic good manners class, move to more advanced training, and then to agility classes. She also offers individual sessions for special needs situations where a group class may not be appropriate.

Training methods have evolved over the years. There has been a paradigm shift towards reward training – reward the behaviour you want and block behaviours you don’t want. Reward training began when people started training marine and exotic mammals. They had to find a way to teach a desired behaviour without the use of punishment or force. You can imagine it would be impossible to punish a killer whale for inappropriate behaviour – he would just as soon have you for lunch!



Photograph by Connie Miller

Progressive trainers use reward training because it works, and it works quickly. Animals are more enthusiastic and willing when trained with this method. To experience and learn this training method with Gayle’s guidance

opens new doors of understanding and accomplishment for you and your dog.

Gayle's students are becoming successful competitors. There were 15 dog/handler teams representing Capable Canines at a large competition held at the Muskoka Agility Facility in Huntsville last summer. Five students achieved Agility Dog of Canada, of which three have received the top award, Agility Trial Champion of Canada. Two of these dogs are at the Masters level. A commendable record, indeed.

Each year at Christmas, Capable



Canines hosts a Dog Christmas Party. Dogs and handlers gather for a fun afternoon of games, prizes and challenges. Wonderful snacks are served. This entertaining day is open to the public, who are welcome to visit and enjoy the antics and treats. Dates will be announced on the website.

For further information, contact Gayle at (519) 794-3175, email dogworks@bmts.com or visit her website at www.whatgooddogs.com.

Photograph by Connie Miller

Haiti Penny Drive



Photograph by Ralph Bergman

Kids (and parents) participating in the Penny Drive include (from left to right) Celeste Hargest, Joshua Currie, Cayle and Chloe Hargest, Steve Currie with Durwin Neelands' baby Ambrin Freeling in his arms, Mackenzie Currie, Reynah Neelands and Dad Durwin. Matt Martin and Wade Mustard are missing from the photo.

In their concern for the victims of Haiti's massive earthquake, Massie's young people decided to start a Penny Drive (that will also take nickels, dimes, quarters, loonies, toonies and even bills!). To date they have raised an impressive **\$157.50**. Donations gratefully accepted through March and April after church on Sundays or given to a Massie United Church board member.

Fitness in Massie

Starting May 6th
Massie Hall Now Offers!

Fitness Classes

By Lisa Downey FES PTS

1 hr. fitness classes,
every thursday evening
@ 7:30 p.m.

A donation of a toonie for each session would be appreciated
and all donations will be given to the hall

All ages from 10 and up welcome, and all fitness levels.
Phone Lisa at 519-370-2050 with questions.
Please bring water and a mat or blanket...and a smile!



Photograph by Connie Miller

Massie 2010 Events

- April 17th** - 8:00 p.m. - **Live @ Massie Hall** - Suzie Vinnick
- MAY 1st** - **Spring Cleanup** at Massie United Church and Massie Hall – starts at 9:30a.m. – all welcome – please bring gardening tools if you have them – lunch served
- May 8th** - **Geranium Tea** – 1pm to 4pm – Geranium Orders @ 519-794-0168 or ed_neelands@hotmail.com
- May 21st** - Massie Church - **Shoreline Chorus Choral Music Concert** – “Canadian Charm”
- May 29th** - 8:00 p.m. - **Live @ Massie Hall** - **Brian MacMillan**
- June 12th** - 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Massie Hall Grounds - **Massie Massive Yard Sale**
- July 11th** - **Outdoor Church Service** at Mary-Janet & Jim Mustard’s cabin – Potluck Lunch
- July 25th** - Massie Hall - **Annual Fish Fry**, 5-7pm – Music on outdoor stage starting at 2:30pm. Bring your own lawn chairs.
- August 22nd** – 11:15am – **Waterside Church Service** at Wendy Neelands – Potluck Lunch

Editorial Board

Irene Fedun — Editor

Peter Turk — Website Advisor

Ralph Bergman — Art Director

Pete Miller — Concert Listings Editor

We welcome articles, announcements, advertisements, photographs, illustrations, cartoons.... Anything about the hamlet of Massie, its residents and former residents. E-mail editor@massiemessenger.ca