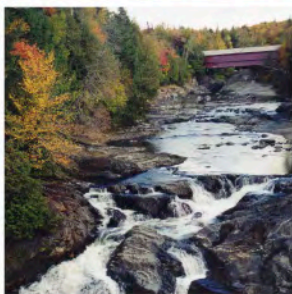


# MEMOIRS

OF THE  
ENGLISH-SPEAKING  
COMMUNITY

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BRIDGING GENERATIONS  
IN QUEBEC CITY  
AND THE CHAUDIÈRE-APPALACHES  
REGION



MEMOIRS  
OF THE  
ENGLISH-SPEAKING  
COMMUNITY



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IN QUEBEC CITY  
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REGION

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Finally, our most heartfelt thanks go to our seniors who shared their wonderful recollections and photos of the past as well as the students who were entrusted with writing their stories for this book.

# INTRODUCTION

Quebec City and the Chaudière-Appalaches region are two very distinct urban and rural areas yet both are home to an English-speaking minority community that represent less than 2% of the overall population. These communities maintain a strong sense of identity due to their cultural heritage and roots that run very deep in the history of Québec.

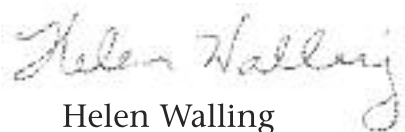
Voice of English-speaking Québec (VEQ) and the Megantic English-speaking Community Development Corporation (MCDC) recognized the importance of bridging these neighbouring communities in an effort to record and share the memories of our seniors.

During the fall of 2012, Secondary IV students from A.S. Johnson High School in Thetford Mines, and from St. Patrick's High School and Quebec High School in Quebec City, met and interviewed over 40 senior members of each community to compile their stories for this publication.

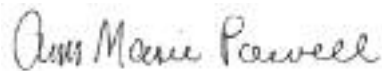
Bringing generations together in this experience aimed to instil a sense of pride and belonging in our youth for their linguistic heritage while fostering an understanding of the role they play in the future of their community.

These memoirs seek to capture and preserve precious personal glimpses into the cultural heritage and history of our English-speaking communities. Furthermore, they seek to ensure our future generations that our collective past and unique legacy will never be forgotten. There is no greater inheritance than knowing who you are and where you come from.

This compilation of personal memories of life in Quebec City and the Chaudière-Appalaches region is for your everlasting enjoyment.



Helen Walling  
President, VEQ



Ann Marie Powell  
President, MCDC

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# A.S. JOHNSON HIGH SCHOOL





# HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

*As told by Alice Jackman Renaud,  
written by Vanessa Leblond-Drolet.*

Alice Renaud was born in Vermont and lived there most of her younger years. She moved to Chibougamau in 1973. Her mother was a community person so she grew up always thinking about others and trying to help as best she could. Her husband Al and herself were both teachers at MacLean Memorial School in Chibougamau from 1973-1990 and then, she became the principal in 1990. Alice and her husband left Chibougamau to be closer to family in Thetford Mines and she became principal at A.S. Johnson High School and St. Patrick's Elementary school from 1999 until 2003 when she retired. She really takes Thanksgiving as well as Christmas to heart because it's a time of family reunion and these are her favourite moments which mean to her: love within the family. Thanksgiving for Alice, is more important, than Christmas. This is her story.



I celebrated Canadian and American Thanksgiving with my mother, father, brothers and sisters, grandparents, sometimes aunts and uncles which was always at grandmother's house.

When family started to arrive, we took out a box and would all write down what we were thankful for. Then my mother would start playing the piano and the kids would sing old

songs from World War II, “Over the River and Through the Woods”, etc. The meal would be turkey, cranberries and mashed potatoes with pumpkin pie as a dessert. The kids would get the box with little pieces of paper and we would read them out loud to everyone during the dessert. After lunch, the men watched the football game while the women would clean up the kitchen.



A family photo celebrating Thanksgiving with all of her family in 1960.

Photo: Jackman Renaud family collection.

My grandmother created a cookbook with all the recipes made during Thanksgiving. I really liked the idea so much that I made a new one for my grandkids therefore, keeping the traditional meals. My daughter also asked for my cookbook so she could create a Thanksgiving meal like Grammys for her friends because they never celebrated Thanksgiving. It was my daughter's first year in CEGEP and we couldn't afford to pay for her trip back and forth for the holidays, so she decided to make one herself for her friends.

At Christmas, we went to the midnight mass and would go around giving dishes or clothing to the less fortunate. When we came back home, we ate meat pies and even though my dad was the reader of the family, my mother would read us a bedtime story. The next morning, we would gather around the piano and sing Christmas songs with our mother like: “I'll be Home for Christmas”, “Rudolf”, and “White Christmas” etc. At dinnertime, we would eat turkey or ham, meat pies or other Christmas meals.

After lunchtime, the whole family would gather in the living room to open the “mystery gifts” that my mother would have

selected all year round and which were all wrapped in newspaper. Then, my mother would take two decks of cards and pass cards to each family member and she kept the other deck of cards for herself. Next, when she would mention the card you had in your hands you would choose a box and open it. The next one up had the choice of stealing your gift or choosing a new box and opening it. Next thing on the list were Santa Claus' gifts to open and the kids would play around with them after everyone was done. Since I was the second child in a family of six children, I had to keep the secret of Santa Claus for a long time. My parents told me around the age of seven and I had to pretend for my younger siblings and then younger relatives so the spirit of Santa never left me.

I really do love the holidays. Although I prefer Thanksgiving to Christmas, those two holidays are very important to me



A recent family photo celebrating Thanksgiving.

Photo: Jackman Renaud family collection.

*I have tried to pass down traditions from generation to generation and hope it will continue that way.*

and I hope my children will keep the tradition alive and with as much passion as I have. I have tried to pass down traditions from generation to generation and hope it will continue that way. It's really interesting and unique to live with traditions and to keep the family gatherings because they are memories that you're going to treasure and anticipate all year and for the rest of your life!



Alice Renaud with student Vanessa Leblond-Drolet.

Photo: courtesy of MCDC.

# SCHOOL DAYS

*As told by Aline Visser,  
written by Xavier Nolet.*

Aline Visser was born in Farnham, Québec in 1936. She studied at Bishop's University to become a teacher. Her first job was at Andrew Stuart Johnson Memorial High School in 1957 in Thetford Mines. She is now retired and still lives in Thetford Mines. Aline and a fellow retired teacher Mrs. Phyllis Robinson, have created a foundation to raise money for school and after this foundation they launched the breakfast program in 1994. She is now retired as a teacher but stays close to the school as a commissioner for the CQSB. Andrew Stuart Johnson Memorial High School was the only school she taught at during her entire career. Mrs. Aline Visser was the recipient of the prestigious Sheila and Victor Goldbloom Award for distinguished community service in 2011. This is her story.



I started teaching here in Thetford Mines in 1957. I taught sciences, mathematics and history at school. At that time can you believe that the schools had 50-60 kids from grade 1 to grade 11? Now, our school has over 200 students. When I began teaching, the classes were made up of many different ethnic backgrounds including Russians, Armenian, Scottish and Jewish origins. Kids and teens these days learn more than the kids and teens in the past because the kids



Old Andrew Stuart Johnson High School circa 1959.

today are more outgoing and want to go in many directions. Kids today are more courageous, curious to ask and to explore.

The school board now known as CQSB looks over 18 small schools and covers 1/3 of the geographic area of Québec. Can you imagine? That's a lot of territory. CQSB has 17 commissioners which I am a part of and

we make sure every school gets what they need and functions well, but back then there was only one commissioner per school board. There has been a significant increase in people taking care of schools throughout the years.



Aline in her office at school in 1978.

Photo: Visser family collection.

At first and even now French schools and English schools were not allowed to mix in school boards. Back then it was Protestant (English) schools on one side and Catholic (French) schools on the other. This is why there are English school boards and French school boards. The government hasn't really wanted to mix both.

The English community was well established in the Thetford Mines region so the people of the region accepted us and French people some-



Aline receiving the Sheila and Victor Goldbloom award for distinguished community service in 2011.

Photo: Visser family collection.

times said that having English speaking people was a benefit for the region. Schools were here from the start and the English partially created the region of Thetford Mines. When asked, I thought that the French were always 'cool' with the idea of the English being around them. Some people in the French community would sometimes ask me to speak in English so they could improve their English skills.

The Thetford Mines area has been my home for many years and the English community has always been very strong

*The English community was well established in the Thetford Mines region so the people of the region accepted us.*



here. The sense of community that this region has, has been made possible in part by the dedication of the students and staff at both Andrew Stuart Johnson High School and St. Patrick's Elementary School.

Her retirement from teaching in 1992 with Phyllis Robinson

Photo: Visser family collection.



Aline Visser with student Xavier Nolet

Photo: courtesy of MCDC.



# ASBESTOS MINING — WHITE GOLD

*As told by Doug Robinson,  
written by Anne-Marie Bouffard.*

**D**oug Robinson was born in 1934 in Hemingford, Québec. In 1939 he and his family moved to Thetford Mines where he started attending Johnson's school in 1940 and graduated in 1951. Five days after his graduation, Doug, at the age of 17, was working in the mines six days a week, eight hours a day. From 1951 to 1964, Doug Robinson worked for Johnson's Mine Company in manual labour. In 1964 the company was handed over to Asbestos Corporation, so Doug worked from the year it started to about the year 1986. Afterwards for the following years he worked as an Inspector in the mines where he inspected sea shipments such as asbestos. He enjoyed this job immensely and the chance to meet nice and interesting people. He also got the opportunity to work in different places around Québec like Trois-Rivières.



Asbestos was discovered in 1876 in Thetford Mines by a man named Thomas Fecteau. Thomas had no idea what to do with it until a man came along and recognized that there was a use for it, so he bought it and sent it to New England to be analyzed. Following this analysis, over 3000 uses for asbestos were found. The use of asbestos has been removed in



Underground picture of locomotive and cars – 700 ft. below - 1968.

Photo: courtesy of Bell Asbestos Mines.



Formal portrait taken while Doug was in the management at the mines - 1980.

Photo: Robinson family collection.

many countries around the world because many people do not realize the dangers or the bad effects from using it, like for example; the workers are not required to wear gas masks. The main use of asbestos is for brake lines for cars. Asbestos looks like a rock, which goes through many crushing systems and in the end asbestos comes out looking like wool.

The mines of Thetford Mines consist of Johnson's Company Mine, Asbestos Corporation's Mines, Bell Mine, Teen Mine, Beaver Mine (part of Asbestos' Corporation Mine) and JM Mine Asbestos. When I first started working in the Mines, most



Aerial view of Bell Asbestos Mines 1968.

Photo: courtesy of Bell Asbestos Mines.

of the tasks were manual labour such as unloading trucks, carrying heavy bags of asbestos and lots of shovelling. I did many tasks such as 'Job Evaluation' where each worker was evaluated for their education and qualities for new and specific jobs; I did this job for 5 years. I was also an industrial engineer and a sales coordinator. The industrial engineering job was divided by 3 different workers over a period of 24 hours, which meant that I sometimes had to work night shifts. In the 1940s, I saw the evolution of technology in the mines and how they went from small trucks to huge ones that could lift significant amounts of weight.

*I saw the evolution of technology  
in the mines*

I really enjoyed my working life in the mines, I had different tasks to do and a lot of working experience. The asbestos mining industry has built this region and you can easily see how important the mines are to our community and how they will always be a part of the heritage and history of the region of Thetford Mines.



Doug Robinson with students Anne-Marie Bouffard and Marianne Chassot. Marianne is an exchange student from Toulouse, France and helped with the interview.

Photo: courtesy of MCDC.

## FROM ACROSS THE POND

*As told by Jan Lowry,  
written by Anne Grenier.*

Jan Lowry was born in 1942 in Great Britain. She immigrated to Canada in 1977 at the age of 35 years old. Jan had a sister, Helen, who worked for the Bank of Montreal back in England. One of the women working with Helen was Canadian and when it came time for her to return to Canada, she asked Helen if she wanted to come with her and Helen agreed. Therefore, when Jan decided to come here, she lived with her sister. The rest of her family, including her two sons lived in England. After a six hour flight, she arrived in our vast country. This is Jan Lowry's story.



One of the aspects of Canada that struck me the most was the country's size. It is a 6 hour flight from England to Canada but it's also a 6 hour flight from here [Québec] to Vancouver. Since England is highly populated for its size, I was impressed with all the open space Canada has. The United Kingdom had rural areas too but less than in Canada.

*I was impressed with all the open space Canada has.*

I also noticed many differences with the way Canadians and British people act. In Canada, the people were less class conscious than in England. In England they have the same social hierarchy as in Canada but people from the low class and



Jan and her sister Helen in England in 1945.

Photo: Lowry family collection.

people from the middle class wouldn't mix. The people in the low class would socialize with the people in the low class; the people in the middle class would mingle with the people in the middle class and the people in the upper class would mix with the people in the upper class. However, in Canada, I noticed that people from the low class would mix with the people in the upper class. I also found that Canadians were more outspoken in comparison to the British. The British are overly polite. If I said to you, "when you're in Thetford come and visit me", you and I would expect you to come and visit me whenever, you would not do that in England. You would be invited. You would say, "would you like to come for tea at

four o'clock?”. Here it’s not like that. Here it’s much more open. In the UK, you have to be really precise when you invite someone over.

Discriminatory conflicts between the French and English were common during the 1970’s. Fortunately I was never a victim of the detestation between the two populations. Everyone was very friendly and welcoming towards me. My husband, who was a bilingual Canadian, introduced me to many people from the French and English community. However, I did struggle with the French language. My husband helped me a lot although I learned most of what I now know through conversation. It was easy for me to speak with people in French when they knew that English was my first language. It was, however, difficult when it came to talk to people who didn’t know I was English such as grocery clerks and doctors. It was a huge adaptation because I was used to speaking English all the time and being understood.



Jan and her sister Helen here in Québec in 2007.

Photo: Lowry family collection.

I was truly struck by the differences between Canada and England such as the size and openness, the way Canadians

acted in comparison to the British, and the instant change of language. Despite the dissimilarities I had to familiarize to, I love Canada and feel very fortunate to live here.



Jan Lowry with student Anne Grenier.

Photo: courtesy of MDCD.



# FAMILY FARM TRADITIONS

*As told by Joy Nugent,  
written by Marie-Eve Bourque.*

Joy Thompson's great grand-parents came from Norham, England in 1836 and her family fortunately received a century family certificate. Joy was born in 1923. She went to school and graduated in Thetford Mines because the school in Kinnear's Mill, where she lived, only went to grade 10. Later on, Joy went to do further studies to become a teacher and got her teaching degree. She has lived for the most of her life in the ancestral house where her parents, grand-parents and great grand-parents lived which is located in Kinnear's Mills. Now she lives there with her son Dale and his family. The changes that occurred on the farm through the years (electricity, technology...) are part of her life and her story.



I had only one brother named Lloyd Thompson. I lived on the farm with my brother, parents and grand-parents; we all did chores on the farm. My father would take care of the hay, which consists of putting the hay in the hay loader with a hay fork and driving the hay wagon, carried by the horses, to the barn. My mother would do housekeeping and both my parents would go milk the cows and take care of other animals. Every Saturday, I would have to go wash the lamps, chimneys and lanterns. I'd rather work outside the house



Joy and her brother Lloyd with their pet sheep. The wooden harness around their necks was meant to stop them from going through fences.

Photo: Nugent family collection.

with the animals than inside doing the house-keeping. At the farm, we had about ten milking cows, some hens, chickens, sheep and two or three pigs for our own meat. We also had a garden where we cultivated potatoes and other vegetables and last year we cultivated a 99 pound pumpkin in it. In the fields, turnips and corn grew and they would cultivate the corn with a sickle and put it in silos.

Eventually, there were other farms around there with which we had close relations. Down on one side of the road would be the Allan family and on the other side the Dunn family. Each household would celebrate a holiday, the Allan's would have Christmas, the Dunn's would have Thanksgiving and my family would have New Year's Eve. At each holiday there would be about 40 people.



A picture of the family home circa 1928 with their flock of turkeys in front yard.

Photo: Nugent family collection.

My dad and a Dunn family member would play the violin while I would play the piano and others would play the guitar. Dances would take place and joy and fun would rule the atmosphere.

My father would take care as well of our sugar camp every spring and I have very fond memories of visiting him there while he worked. I played with the children who lived on the other farms nearby. We would do scrapbooking and in winter we would go slide down the hill in the back of our farm.

Of course in the years that passed, a few funny things happened. One day, something happened with a dump cart (a wagon opened in the back which is held with a hook to the horse equipment); when I was going up in the field to pick up turnips. I was sitting in the front of the wagon almost full of turnips and somehow, the hook let go! My father, who was not far from me, could see that I was rolling down the hill with the turnips! Luckily I wasn't badly hurt! Another anecdote that happened on our farm was that we had a butter churn in the kitchen (a big bucket with a handle attached to a wheel that you spin and it spins the milk to make butter) while you spin with the handle, you can't forget to pull out a plug to release accumulated gas. Once, my father was spinning the wheel but he did it for too long! He forgot to pull the plug and the next thing you saw was cream all over the walls and ceiling! I guess that it was a lot of work to wash after...

The change which had the most important impact on the farm is the electricity that we got in 1950. Before, we would use oil lamps, horses to pull our wagons and milk the cows with our hands but then, we had electric lamps, milking machines



Joy with her dog Teddy circa 1940.

Photo: Nugent family collection.

*The change which had the most important impact on the farm is the electricity that we got in 1950.*

and tractors that replaced the horses for spreading crops and field work. Unfortunately, before 1950, we didn't have a fridge. We would put the meat in a big box with giant ice cubs all around it to keep the meat fresh.

Finally, living on a farm in those days was fun, the holidays with all the families nearby, the anecdotes that happened on the farm, the evolution through time and even the work we had to do outside at the farm and inside the house. Looking back, the farms today compared to yesterday aren't the same but something is for sure, I wouldn't have missed the experience of growing up the way I did for anything in the world!



Joy Nugent with student Marie-Eve Bourque.

Photo: courtesy of MCDC.

## SWEET SPRING

*As told by Ken Powell,  
written by Xavier Sheink.*

Ken Powell, born in 1952, was raised on his farm, located in a little town named Sainte-Agathe-de-Lotbinière. In the early 1800's his great, great, great grandfather, from Ireland, settled here. Hoping for a better life he thought Canada would be great since it reminded him of his homeland, a lot of hills and stones.

Once arriving here, Canada was not what he had expected. To survive he had to build his own house and cultivate the land. Ken Powell says that he had a good and pleasant childhood. Back then and still now today, working on a farm is one of his favorite activities, plus he has a good group of friends. This is his story.



I am the fifth generation to own the farm in my family. No serious accidents have happened, only rumors going around. Some rumors said that someone might have been killed; others said that there had once been a bear that attacked someone, although none of these events happened for sure.

Since the beginning, in the little village of Sainte-Agathe, there have only been two farms that have been kept by their family name. We also have a sugar shack on our property and everything has changed compared to the days that my ancestors had the farm. Back then they had to wait for the sap



The Powell sugar shack during the maple season.

Photo: Powell family collection.

to come out of trees and that could take days, but now today we have new systems that when it's ready they suck it out of the tree. The working conditions used to be very hard: they would work sometimes 24 hours at the sugar shack and it was



Kenny in the sugar shack circa 1981.

Photo: Powell family collection.

hard at night because they didn't have electricity and they would use oil lamps. Back then since the maple syrup market was not very developed: my family would make some pure sugar for our own use and would give some to close friends or family members. We have 16,000 tapped trees which even with modern conveniences, is still a lot of work.

I work on our farm with my brother and we have worked very hard to make it the success that it is today. It is extremely rewarding to know that we have been able to keep family traditions going for over a century. Modern technology has helped to improve the production of maple syrup but it is important for our children to know about the way it used to be and how we got to where we are today.

*It is extremely rewarding to know that we have been able to keep family traditions going for over a century.*



Kenny loading more wood into the furnace circa 1981.

Photo: Powell family collection.



Kenny Powell with student Xavier Scheink.

Photo: courtesy of MDC.



# MARCHING ON

*As told by Harold N. Young,  
written by Etienne Poirier.*

I was lucky enough to get the chance to interview a pleasant man named Howard N. Young or more commonly known as Ned Young. Ned was born in Victoria, British Columbia in 1920. He has lived in the Thetford Mines region since the 1950's when he moved here, as an engineer, to work in the mining industry. Ned is well known in the English community of Thetford Mines. He maintains MCDC's library and is a fantastic story teller, which has been demonstrated during the Remembrance Day ceremonies at A.S. Johnson High School. I was asked to interview him about his time during World War II. Although, Mr. Young didn't see much action he definitely had quite the experience.



My journey began when I was a very young man. During my teen years I was part of the local militia orchestra band. This was my first experience with the military uniform. As a result of my joining this militia band, when the war broke out, I was one of the many to feel the power of conscription. All militia members were now called to active full-time service. I, at the time, had not wanted to fight, so I had asked to be transferred to a unit in which I could finish my training as a machinist. Through all the chaos I was eventually told to go home. Two years later I received a letter. I had been



Ned in his first military band uniform in 1938.

Photo: Young family collection.

conscripted into the army. This is where my attitude towards fighting changes. From this point on, my confidence grew and I eventually became extremely enthusiastic about going to aid in the war effort.

I have presented many speeches about my time in the war during our local high school's assemblies and during the last one I talked about my time crossing the ocean in ship to get to Europe. I moved around quite a bit during the war. During my training alone I had moved quite a bit; as a short list I went from Winnipeg to Portage la Prairie where I had my basic training. From there I was sent to Hamilton, where I was given the job as an instructor at a trade school.

At the time I was working as a machinist. At this point I wanted to be part of the action in Europe, so I took the first opportunity that came. That opportunity was a railway operating unit, a unit designed to help the Allies secure and maintain the railways on the European continent. In joining this unit I was sent over to England where more moving around was to take place. I was sent to recruitment camps in England until the call came for my group to head over to Germany. When the call came we got up and moved out. Ironically the day we crossed the German border was VE day, or Victory in Europe Day! Since Germany

*Maybe it was luck or maybe it was fate but every time I attempted to confront the enemy, the enemy surrendered.*

had surrendered I was asked if I would like to go to Japan and fight there. I happily agreed still feeling the excitement surrounding actually being part of the fighting. I was given a month's leave in Canada before I had to report to the officials for my assignment in Japan. Once again, the day I went to see the officials, Japan surrendered. Maybe it was luck or maybe it was fate but every time I attempted to confront the enemy, the enemy surrendered. And with one final move to Montreal for my release from the army, I no longer moved for military purposes. I completed my studies at McGill University in engineering and started my life as a civilian once again.

When asked about the general state of living at that time of war and the feelings that I observed from the masses, my answer has two parts. The first part was Canada's general state. There was not a major difference that I could see, at least psychologically. Physical shortages were common and many more uniformed men and women were being seen. Psychologically the only difference was that there was a general knowledge of the war and that it was a common topic of conversation. The second part was about England, as I was there for a good portion of my military service time. The emotions of fear and sadness were a lot more present over in England. With the constant threat of bombings and the black outs (an order to make sure all



Ned, a sergeant, in uniform in 1944.

Photo: Young family collection.

windows and crevices were covered allowing nothing inside) there was a heightened sense of fear. Also, the ever so common loved one at war made it a constant thought for the population of England. This was a large contrast with Canada but with some overlapping parts.

This concludes my article. Although this subject is projected as sad and was one of the most tragic events in human history, Mr. Young had a positive outlook on this event. This may be due to his lack of actual fighting, but I think it's more so due to his unstoppable good humour. As he said the whole experience "made me more self-confident". Perhaps this outlook of finding the positive in this tragedy could be adopted by you the reader and others. After all it's as they say "Every cloud has a silver lining".



Ned Young with student Etienne Poirier.

Photo: courtesy of MCDC.

## A SECRET NO MORE!

*As told by Peter Whitcomb,  
written by Matthew Chretien.*

Peter Whitcomb was born in 1941 in Bedford, located in the Eastern Townships of Québec. After graduating from Bishop's University, he became a teacher and moved to Shawinigan, where he later became the principal. Nine years later, in 1973, he moved to Thetford Mines and became the principal of Andrew Stuart Johnson Memorial High School. He retired in 1998 and started to work for the Megantic English-speaking Community Development Corporation (MCDC) as a coordinator for health and information services. He has raised over one hundred Bloodhounds in the last 25 years. His dogs have been sent to help police forces all around the world, including North America, Europe, and South Africa. He is involved in the community: he sits on the A.S. Johnson High School and St. Patrick's School foundation, is a member of the Masonic Lodge and acts as a volunteer driver for people who need to go to medical appointments. I interviewed him concerning the Masonic Lodge and its role in our community. This is his story.



Freemasonry is a fraternity where men gather for friendship and the exchange of ideas. They use the tools and implements from ancient stonemasons that represent a system of instruction to help build character and moral values. The



The symbol and slogan of the Mason's.

Photo: Whitcomb family collection.

goal behind masonry is to make good men better. I joined the Masonic Lodge in 1974, a year after moving to Thetford Mines. My father had been part of another fraternity and I knew many masons. I respected their principals and what they did in the community. Approximately 20 years later, I became the secretary.

The story of how the masons came to be has been lost over time. Most people believe that Masonry arose in the middle ages where many castles and cathedrals were built by stonemasons. These men joined together to create the very first lodge. In 1717, four of these lodges joined to create the first Grand Lodge in England.

During the 18th century, freemasonry arrived in North America. Many famous people were members such as: the first president of the United States, George Washington, Canada's first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, and Benjamin



The thrones that are used during a Mason's meeting.

Photo: Whitcomb family collection.

Franklin. Today, there are over two million members in America and Masonic Lodges can be found in almost every community.

Thetford Mine's Masonic Lodge was organized in 1921 by a group of men. After their first meeting they decided that they wanted their own building. It was built in 1925 on Victo-

ria Street. Due to the mining industry, the Lodge was moved to Alfred Street in the 50s. The building was later sold in the 70s. After this event, our meetings took place in downtown Thetford Mines and the Anglican Church hall. Presently, we are located in the basement of the United Church.

We organize many activities in order to raise funds to help the community. We donate approximately two million dollars per day to charitable causes all over America. In Thetford Mines, we organize a sugar party in spring. Over 100 people attend the event every year. In fall, we hold a Grey cup party where men come to watch the game. We support the breakfast program at school, the school playground project, and the sports program. Before Christmas, we organize the Christmas baskets to collect food in order to help the needy people of the community. Over 35 baskets are collected every year.

For our meetings, we wear aprons, a collar with an insignia to indicate our position, and gloves. When it is time for the meeting to begin, the Master calls the Lodge to order. We then follow a procedure to start the meeting. The secretary starts the reading of the minutes from the last meeting. We then talk about new business and projects. If new members arrive, we will discuss it and hold a ceremony.

To join the Lodge, you must be a man of at least 21 years of age. You must believe in a supreme being, that we are on this



Special Mason's bulb which is lit at every meeting.

Photo: Whitcomb family collection.

planet to be together and that we must do everything we can to live good lives as good citizens. During the recruits' initiation ceremony, they go on a symbolic journey to discover the truths, beliefs and the importance of being a good person.

*It also represents the values and ideas of the English community*

I think that the Lodge is a part of our English heritage because it is very active in the community and it has been for many years. It also represents the values and



Peter Whitcomb and his bloodhound Taylor.

Photo: Whitcomb family collection.



ideas of the English community, such as being good people and participating in the well-being of the community.

To finish off, here is a joke taken from the Masonic Lodge of Education website:

*“A man is walking through the recreation ground of his local park when he notices a huge fight going on in full fury on the football field he is passing.*

*“What’s going on?” he asks a spectator, watching from the side-lines.*

*The other replies “It’s a match between the Masons and the Knights of Columbus.”*

*“What’s the score?” asks the first man.*

*“I don’t know. It’s a secret.”*

Well it won’t be for you anymore.



Peter Whitcomb with student Matthew Chrétien.

Photo: Whitcomb family collection.



## ALL IN THE FAMILY

*As told by Raymond Dempsey,  
written by David Cox.*

Raymond Dempsey was raised as a child on the small farm in Saint-Jean-de-Brébeuf, Québec. At the time, it consisted of 12 beef cattle and 1,800 tapped maple trees. His father bought the farm in 1946 and it has stayed in their family's possession ever since. At first, Raymond left the farm to go work at a bank in Montreal; however, this only lasted a few years. After his time in Montreal, Raymond returned to his home and bought the farm from his father in 1963. From then on, the farm constantly and rapidly expanded. A great amount of cows and land were bought, barns were built and machinery was purchased. The change throughout the years was so dramatic that the farm today consists of , 12,500 tapped maple trees and around 100 Shorthorn cows. Raymond explained how the farm was able to remain solely managed by family members throughout the years.

This is his story.



To begin with, having a family farm is advantageous since you can fully rely on your relatives; complaining is scarce and the tasks are always well done since the labor is being done for your own family's benefit. There's also a sense of pride

*There's also a sense of pride in being able to take care of a farm that has belonged to your family for generations.*



Raymond at Expo Québec in 1996 with his grand champion short horn.

Photo: Dempsey family collection.

in being able to take care of a farm that has belonged to your family for generations. In my case, I work full time on my farm along with my son, Jimmy. We only hire a part time worker when needed during the maple season and haying. With this said, how has our farm been able to keep growing all while having a small amount of employees? The answer is, without a doubt, technology. We wouldn't be able to run such a big farm without all the advancements both in the cattle and sugar businesses. Today, a countless amount of equipment is used to make hay and take care of the livestock in a more effective manner. Among these are round balers, stable cleaners, artificial inseminators and DNA testers. Furthermore, the maple syrup business has been completely modernized; reversed osmosis machines and tubing and vacuum systems are all used to quicken the maple syrup process. When you look at how our farm has come along since it was bought, it's hard to believe. In the past, simple tasks like plowing and collecting sap were extremely time-consuming. It was done with the help of cows, horses and snowshoes. As technology advanced, so did the our farm. It rapidly

expanded and productivity increased. In addition, all the new machinery helps lower the amount of workers on the farm, which are both expensive and hard to hire part-time. Since demand and the cost of things are continuously increasing, lowering the amount of employees is crucial.

Despite all the good aspects about today's advancements, there is one flaw. Farming is much more stressful these days. You have to constantly rely on machinery that is nowadays used for nearly every farm task. When a simple piece of equipment breaks, the whole procedure is affected. Additionally, adapting to all the technology is another chore which may be challenging for people that are used to the traditional ways. Regardless of these few downsides, technology facilitates everything and has allowed our farm to grow. Without these technological advancements, our farm wouldn't be the size it is today. What we call today a "family farm" is now almost gone. Farms are becoming so immense that you've got to go big, or you get left behind. The demand, prices and productivity are all rapidly increasing. The only way to keep up is by using technology.

*Farms are becoming so immense that you've got to go big, or you get left behind.*



The Dempsey sugar shack in 2010.

Photo: Dempsey family collection.



The family farm with short horn cattle.

Photo: Dempsey family collection.

Today, our farm is one of the few Anglophone family farms left in our region. At 71 years of age, I am happy with the size of my farm, and I'm planning on keeping it within my family so that further generations can enjoy the farm life as well.



Raymond Dempsey with student David Cox.

Photo: courtesy of MCDC.

# FROM MERCHANT TO SENATOR

*As told by Raymond Setlakwe,  
written by William McDonald.*

Raymond Setlakwe was born here in Thetford Mines, Québec in 1928. He studied law at Laval University and received his Bachelor's from Bishop's University. His dream was to become a politician. His family owned a very successful department store in Thetford Mines using the family name. After his father left the company, Raymond decided to keep the Setlakwe store instead of taking the chance of becoming a politician since he already had a family of three young children and one more on the way, so he decided to stay here. But in 2000 he had the chance to be senator, so he took it right away and represented the Laurentides for 3 years. This is his story.



My family is originally from Turkey and when my Grandfather left this country amidst much turmoil, he made his way to Canada, which at that time, was receiving a lot of immigrants from Europe. He thought it would be a good place to immigrate to. He decided to stay in Canada because most people like my grandfather were searching for countries where they could be free.

My grandfather's choice to immigrate here was because many immigrants from where he came from in Turkey, as well as



Mr. Setlakwe with his wife Yvette and daughter Louise with former Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent during a campaign stop in Thetford Mines in 1953.

Photo: Setlakwe family collection.

other places in the world, came to immigrate in Canada and more specifically Québec. He wanted to follow them. He did not stop right away here in Thetford Mines. He first stopped in Disraeli, south of Thetford Mines and he then came to Thetford Mines.

In Turkey, my grandfather was one of the leaders of the Armenian community. So the life here was very different to the one from over there since he did not have to do everything he was doing there. When my grandfather was in Turkey his family name used to be Saraphian. The ending of the name in "IAN" meant the "son of". The family name changed at the border because they spoke many languages and the name became Setlakwe.

My grandfather created the company Setlakwe in 1908 but he first started selling his products door to door when he arrived



in Thetford Mines so that he and his family could survive. He imported items from Quebec City and Montreal to try and sell it here. He wasn't selling specific things, it was very diversified. He tried to sell everything that could be sold. When he realised that it was very productive he started developing his ideas for the store. Today Setlakwe has about a dozen shops in the Québec region. Three of them are under the name Setlakwe and the others are called Silhouette Lingerie. We used to have more; however, we have sold some of them.

My interest in politics came from my interest in history when I was at school. I always was interested and involved in politics even when I was young. At school, my favourite subject was history.

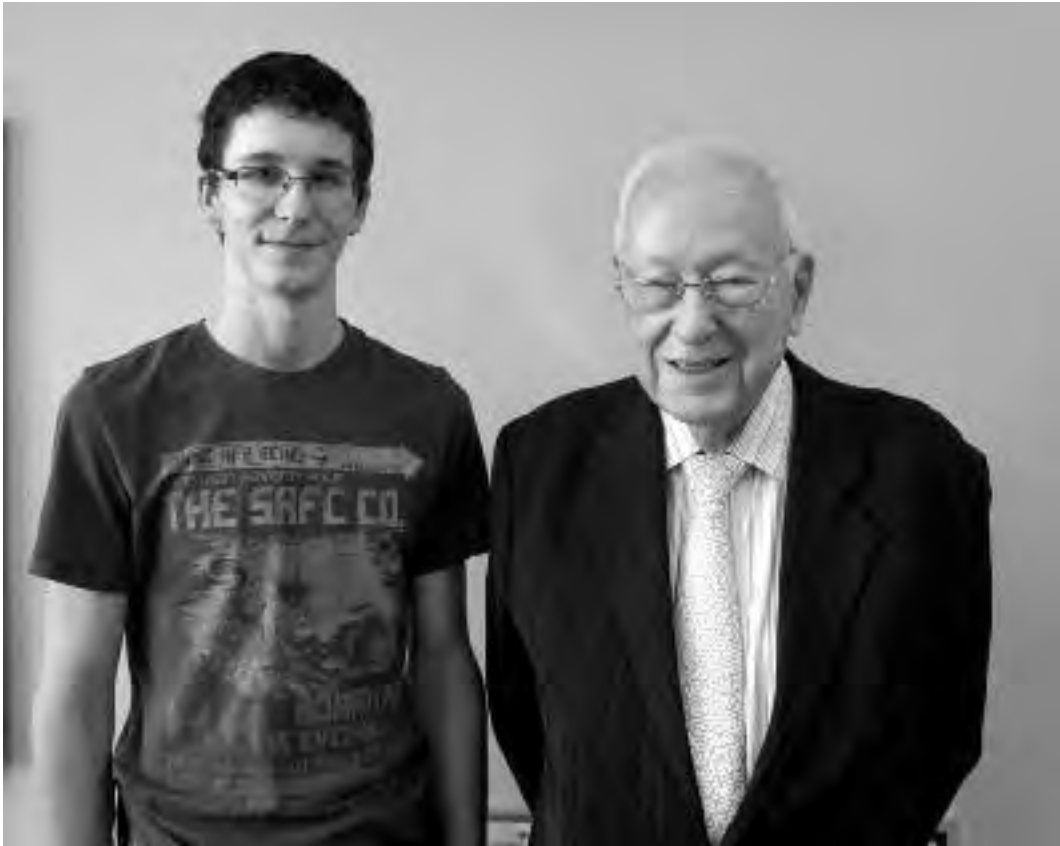
*I always was interested and involved in politics even when I was young.*



Mr. Setlakwe with his wife Yvette, former French Prime Minister Alain Juppé and former Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien.

Photo: Setlakwe family collection.

In 1996, I was made a member of the order of Canada and a life-long dream came true when I was appointed, by Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, to the Senate of Canada in 2000. I served in the Senate until 2003 when I retired. I still maintain an interest in politics as well as the running of our business which is still going strong after almost 105 years. It hasn't always been easy, but my life has been filled with many rich experiences and wonderful memories.



Raymond Setlakwe with student William McDonald.

Photo: courtesy of MCDC.

## SUNDAY MORNINGS

*As told by Reverend Ross Davidson,  
written by Jonathan Fortier-Ouellette.*

Rev. Davidson has been a minister since 1970 when he started with the Presbyterian congregation in Scotstown near Lac Mégantic. Relations between Roman Catholics and Protestants had generally been respectful through-out the Eastern Townships because the two groups had been present together for a long time. His wife's family, however, who were French Protestants in a more distant area of the province, were not always treated too kindly. Rev. Davidson grew up in southern Ontario where there were many Protestant denominations and mutual respect and understanding were the norm. At first he became a elementary school teacher and he enjoyed that work for four years. However the call of God was strongly felt, so he returned to university to prepare for the ministry. He has always served Presbyterian congregations within the province of Québec: Scotstown, Richmond, Quebec City, Aylmer, and Inverness.



I arrived in this area in 1996 when I became the minister of the United Church congregations of Thetford Mines, Kin-near's Mills, and Inverness. This latter also has a Presbyterian part of the congregation, and that made the connection for me. In the early days, all three of these congregations were Presbyterian, but they joined together with some other

*When the congregation began in 1905, most people went to church every Sunday, but today the situation has changed.*

Protestant denominations in 1925 to become the United Church of Canada. The Thetford Mines congregation celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2005. When the congregation began in 1905, most people went to church every Sunday, but today the situation has changed. People have found other interests and are much less interested in religious traditions. In Roman Catholic parishes attendance has gone below 10% of the population. For Protestant church in this area, there are just fewer people who live here now as young people regularly move away to larger cities.



Candelish United Church, Kinnear's Mills, Québec.

Photo: Davidson family collection.

The main difference between Protestant and Catholic churches is basically a question of "authority". Where does authority come from – the Pope or the Bible as the Word of God? For Protestant churches, it is the Bible. It helps us to understand what is right and what is wrong, what is truth and what is error. One interesting example of this is the way in which church buildings are constructed. Protestant buildings usually have a cloakroom to encourage people to be comfortable and talk with their neighbours to create community. Roman Catholic buildings are designed to help people to move in and out quickly to allow the whole parish to attend mass.

The words of the Bible have been copied very accurately over the centuries. It is a very reliable book. The Canadian Bible Society promotes the translation and the sale of the Bible. Sometimes groups have tried to change the words of the Bible for particular purposes, or even keep it away from people so that they would not know about God's Word, but it has not worked. The Bible itself says, "You will know the truth and the truth will set you free."



Ross Davidson, during his time as minister.

Photo: Davidson family collection.



Ross Davidson with student Jonathan Fortier-Ouellet.

Photo: courtesy of MCDC.



## THE CRAIG ROAD

*As told by Steve Cameron,  
written by Amy Tanguay.*

Steve Cameron was raised in downtown Montreal; he lived there until he finished university. He went to Sir George William's University. As a youngster he spent most of his summer in Sainte-Agathe-de-Lotbinière helping his uncle on his farm. It's because of his uncle that Steve became interested in old stories, myths, history and heritage. This is his story.



When I graduated from university I started working and got married to my wife Diane. For over 30 years, I worked all over the country such as in Sept-Îles, Québec, Ottawa, Montreal and Halifax. For most of that period of time I worked in the Transportation Industry, and I eventually became the General Manager of public transit in Quebec City. Now that I'm retired, I'm doing something totally different from what I did when I was younger. I didn't find it too hard to move around a lot because of work but it was harder for my family, and as a couple it was difficult because we had to create new friends all the time, and when we



A portion of the Craig Road newly discovered.

Photo: Cameron family collection.



Lipseys Hill, a famously steep portion of the Craig Road.

Photo: permission from Gwen Barry, Evan's Books.

came back after 3 or 4 years the relationships between our old friends were never the same. I had no idea that I was going to retire here in this area, but we started making friends and we used my uncle's farm as a chalet in the summer and somehow this ended up being our home.

I was extremely interested in local history and after much research, have learned quite a lot about the very early his-

tory and settlement of the south shore of Québec. Particularly interesting is the story of Craig Road that I've investigated the last few years, inspiring me to co-found the Coirneal Ceal-teach Irish historical and heritage group.



Craig Road sign.

Photo: courtesy of CBC radio, Rachele Solomon.



Governor General James Craig decided to build the Craig road with the help of the military; the military contained about 180 to 190 soldiers. They started building it in October 1810, and worked on it until January 1811 it was quickly made. It took them about 3 months with less



Steve Cameron Coirneal Cealteach.

Photo: Cameron family collection.

than 200 hard workers. The workers only worked on that and nothing else. The man who was in charge was a Major Robinson. The Gosford road leaves the Craig road around Saint-Gilles and cuts through Sainte-Agathe, through Inverness and Saint-Ferdinand and joins the Craig road on the other side of the Lake William. The Gosford was built 30 years after the Craig Road.

In the past, 2 murders happened on the Craig road. One in 1855, a bunch of men beat up one man who died two/three days after he was attacked; the crime was called the Corrigan murder. The second murder happened in 1886. There was a man who decided to slice someone in two with a scythe and this happened on the Craig road. The man who was killed by the scythe was buried in Saint-Sylvestre in the village. As for the other man it's a mystery to where he's buried.

I'm proud of the whole area because the stretch of the Craig Road that we saved, all of our ancestors walked on that stretch of road and that's hard for people to understand and that's why it's so symbolic, it's a bit of a treasure, because there are not many things we

*All of our ancestors walked  
on that stretch of road.*

can point to and say 'My ancestors walked on this piece of land'.

I am also very interested in the Irish immigration to Québec. Did you know not all immigrants immigrated here because of the Potato Famine? The Irish had a lot of political problems so most of them decided to move here to Québec on the Craig road, but then the Potato Famine came along and others immigrated here. The immigrants that immigrated from the Potato Famine moved around the Gosford road.

Our heritage and history is very rich indeed. I love sharing my acquired knowledge of the settlement of our beautiful region and am always learning more interesting pieces of information.



Steve Cameron with student Amy Tanguay.

Photo: courtesy of MDCD.

# QUEBEC HIGH SCHOOL



# DISCOVERING QUÉBEC

*As told by Alec K. Roberts,  
written by William Rancour and Julia Pycock-Kassar.*

Alec Roberts is of Scottish descent, born in 1934 in Toronto, Ontario. He first came to Québec as a summer student in 1957 but settled here permanently, with his wife Cynthia in 1960, working for the Federal Government's defence research establishment in Valcartier. These are his memories of his arrival and integration in Quebec City.



When I arrived in 1960, I spoke almost no French despite the fact that I had taken classes throughout my education in Ontario. Fortunately for me, I thought I had found the perfect permanent job for an Anglophone in Quebec City working for the federal government. As it turned out, however, most of the administration was done in French! My colleagues always did their best to communicate with me in English but I insisted that they do so in French in order for me to learn the language. Little by little, I gained more confidence and became more fluently bilingual and more productive.

My wife Cynthia had also studied French in school in Ontario and like me, she struggled to speak the language. It certainly was not easy adapting and integrating into this new environment. We soon made the decision to take private French

*Living in Cap-Rouge, our family tried to balance between the two languages, not an easy task, but I have to say that we did a pretty good job of it!*



Original Morrin College Student Photo circa 1891.

Photo: courtesy of the Morrin Centre.

conversation lessons at a school in the Saint-Sacrement sector of the city. We also decided that if we were to have kids, we would send them to local French schools, which we eventually did. Living in Cap-Rouge, our family tried to balance between the two languages, not an easy task, but I have to say that we did a pretty good job of it! After settling in, we became very involved in Quebec City's vibrant English community. We enjoyed the coffee parties and community craft sales, as well as meeting other Anglophones and participating in all the other community activities. My wife Cynthia became a leader in many respects within the community.

Over time, we became attached to this wonderful city and its people, both English and French. The healthcare system here is a great factor for us. Our eldest son, Kelso, was very asthmatic as a child and at one point, his condition became critical and he needed frequent visits to the CHUL [today the CHUQ] in order to undergo inhalation therapy. We developed a strong relationship with Dr. Roy and the nurses who

cared for our son and, in my opinion, even saved his life. Whenever I went to the hospital, I was known, not by my real name, but as Mr. Kelso. It was a great feeling to be cared for so closely.

Another factor is the history. I love history and this town is full of it! From the Morrin Center, which was the first university in Québec to allow women students, to the Presbyterian Church, there is so much to see and learn.

Discovering Quebec City over the past decades has been very rewarding. If I had a message for today's youth in our city, it would be to get out and explore, history is not learned only from a book!



Alec Roberts recounts his story to captivated students William Rancour and Julia Pycock-Kassar.

Photo: courtesy of VEQ.



# AS FATE WOULD HAVE IT

*As told by Peter and Elizabeth Clibbon,  
written by Robert Côté.*

**P**eter and Beth Clibbon are both proud Canadians. In Peter's early days as a geology student at McGill University, he would come to Quebec City for a couple of weeks as a geologist's assistant. However, Peter's life in Quebec City only really started when he married Elizabeth Jackson. As for Elizabeth, well she moved to Quebec City after she married Peter. They still live at 1355 Pasteur in Sillery and have nine much-loved grandchildren. Both are retired and loving the free life. Their involvement in community events make them icons of the English-speaking community.



My name is Peter Clibbon, I was born in 1938 and raised in Montreal. As a child in the 1940's, the war did not affect me in any direct way, but it is true that my mother would not tell me until the war was over that my neighbors on both sides were Italian and German. I would play with their kids every day and I did not know who they were. The reason I think she did this was so that I would not offend their families or culture with my actions or comments.

*It is true that my mother would not tell me until the war was over that my neighbors on both sides were Italian and German.*

In 1962, I received a scholarship to Laval University in physical geography, so my family and I moved to Quebec City. This



was supposed to last for only one year but in 1963, I was offered a job as a physical geography teacher at the university. I guess they really liked the grades I was getting! I ended up taking



Peter Brooke Clibbon, professeur émérite de la Faculté d'aménagement, d'architecture et des arts visuels, Université Laval.

Photo: Division des archives de l'Université Laval, P479/2001-058-17.

the job, so my wife and I rented a moving truck and brought all of our stuff to Québec from Ottawa. We lived in a small apartment on chemin Sainte-Foy with our two children, Robert and Jennifer. In 1965, we bought a house on 1355 Pasteur in Sillery. In the following years, we had three more children, Heather, Peter and Christopher. Now our family was complete.

After thirty-seven years of working at Laval University, I retired in 1999. When I did, I became a Professor Emeritus, which is a very rare award. I am very proud of the award and greatly enjoyed my teaching career. To remind me of the award, my grandchildren bought me a mug that says, "You're the best teacher ever." It is a memento that I really cherish!

\* \* \*

My name is Elizabeth Jackson, but you can call me Beth Clibbon. I was raised all over Canada but was born in Winnipeg. When I was a young girl, I used to babysit kids and I remember well this one night when I asked my friend to babysit for me since I wanted to go out with Peter. Late that night, my friend called me and said, "I just spilled my ink bottle all over the couch! What



Logo of the Literary and Historical Society Québec circa 1800.

Source: courtesy of the Morrin Centre.

should I do?" Obviously, I took the blame, but after that, they never asked me to babysit again!

We moved around a lot when I was growing up, because my father was a banker who was often promoted, requiring him to continually move from branch to branch which was always difficult. My childhood was essentially spent traveling back and forth between cities, but I am happy that we eventually moved to Montreal and lived there for awhile! As fate would have it, Peter and I crossed paths one evening at a party that I went to with my boyfriend at the time. From our first conversation, I decided that I needed to date Peter instead.

*From our first conversation,  
I decided that I needed to date  
Peter instead.*

When my father found out that he had once again been promoted and needed to change bank branches again, I was torn. We had to move to Vancouver where once again I would have had to start over! It was then that I took the plunge of faith and refused to move again. I decided to stay with Peter.

Eventually we were married and had five kids. When we lived in Quebec City, I worked at the Literary and Historical Society library as a librarian. All of this is perfectly fine, but I think my greatest achievements in life are my children.



Peter and Elizabeth Clibbon tell their story to grandson and student Robert Côté.  
Photo: courtesy of VEQ.

# LIFE AND ALL IT HAS TO OFFER

*As told by Beatrice Royle Gaw,  
written by Gabriela Olivari and Benjamin Galbrand.*

**B**orn in 1922, Beatrice Gaw grew up and lived through the Great Depression as well as the Second World War. Although she didn't go overseas to take part in the war, she trained to become a nurse in Montreal. Soon after her training, she started work back in her hometown of Valleyfield, in an industrial clinic that was owned by the cotton mill. She turned 90 this year and lives in Sainte-Foy where she continues to enjoy life and all it has to offer.



I was born in Valleyfield, Montreal in 1922. My parents had come over from England for work and they found it in the local cotton mill. Unlike most families back in the day, I only had one younger sister who was 4 years younger than I was. As a Protestant, I attended Protestant school and again, unlike many, I enjoyed school and was a good student. Compared to schools today, the school that I attended back then didn't have many sports teams. We only had track and field and I wasn't a runner so my leisure activities as a child growing up consisted of family picnics and reading. My favourite book was *Anne of Green Gables*, I felt like Anne in many ways. Back in those days not a lot of people could afford books, so when I had good grades my teacher would give me an *Anne*

of *Green Gables* book from our school library that was the size of a small cupboard.

During the winter, we would go skating on an ice rink close to the outhouse. The cotton mill had built a residential section in the village where nearly all of the immigrant workers from England settled. Practically everything was owned by the mill, including the rink. During the warmer months, we'd play in the streets. We would either play games we had invented or play sports such as baseball and soccer.

My first job was working as a yarn tester in the cotton mill. This job included long hours and hard work. The working conditions were bearable nevertheless. I worked in the cotton mill from 1939 to 1941 when I decided to train to become a nurse.

*Others I knew also went, and I will be quite honest with you, I don't know where they are now or if they even made it back home.*

At this point, the war in Europe had started and many of the boys in my class had enrolled in the army. There wasn't a lot of work in the city because of the Great Depression so many entered the army. I knew this one boy who was in my class,

who went overseas and died very early during the war. Others I knew also went, and I will be quite honest with you, I don't know where they are now or if they even made it back home.

In February 1941, I stopped working in the mill to start my nurse training at the Montreal General Hospital. Some of my classmates went in the army as nurses, in fact one of my classmates died in the early stages of the war. The army took the older graduates instead of the young ones. After 5 years of training, I came back to Valleyfield in 1944, and since the hospitals were short staffed because of the war, I quickly got a job in Valleyfield's industrial clinic. So gladly I was back in my hometown and working as a nurse. We treated patients with colds, stomach aches, and patients that were in general pain. When people had major injuries, we would send them to the hospital. Our job was to treat minor health problems.

I met my husband, John, at my sister's wedding. He was the best man and a teacher. We got married in 1951 in a church in Valleyfield. Our honeymoon was at a Seaway Resort, right on the waters of the St. Lawrence River. Our son, John, named after his father, was born in 1952. Three years later, we moved to the Eastern Townships where our son was raised until the age of eight. In 1963, we moved back to my hometown. I took care of our boy while my husband worked.

In 1971, I took off to Africa and traveled with the YWCA (Young Women Christian Association). Not only was it a conference, but it was also an opportunity for me to visit Africa and discover its culture. It was a beautiful experience and it really had an impact on how I viewed our culture. One of the big differences that I noticed in our society were our needs. It seems that our culture has taught us that we always need the newest things and we rely on a lot more than what we need.



Beatrice shows keepsakes from her trip to Africa with the YWCA.

Photo: courtesy of VEQ.

During my life time I have also traveled to Vancouver, London, France, Northern Italy and Switzerland. I would say that the biggest change I have witnessed was the Second World War. After the war, unions had a big impact on working conditions. The industries run today don't compare to the past, like the cotton mill of my hometown.

One of the industries that has evolved the most I'd say is the medicine industry - well mostly the pharmaceutical industry. Back when I was a nurse, the only medications we had were basic cough medicine or muscular painkillers. Now, you have everything from multi-flavored cough drops to diverse types of nasal sprays. And what impresses me the most is that society is still showing progress. Whether it is the medicine industry or simply society as a whole, everything is constantly evolving.

In 1986, another life became a part of mine; my grandson David was born. He is now 26 and is a music graduate. He plays guitar and is still unsure about what he wants to do. I celebrated my 90th birthday in June 2012 and if there is one thing that I have learned, you can't change anything and you can't go back in time, so make the most of your life now!



Beatrice Gaw shares her wisdom with students Gabriela Olivari and Benjamin Galbrand.

Photo: courtesy of VEQ.

## FAMILY IS KEY!

*As told by Violet Sharp Kirkwood,  
written by Sarah Sweeney.*

Violet Kirkwood was born in May 1923 in Québec City and spent her whole life here. She got married in 1942 and shortly after, in 1943, had her first child. Three others followed. Violet was extremely active as a teenager and basketball was her thing. This is the story of her life growing up. She was all smiles as she told her story.



All three of my brothers went off to war when I was young. They had been in the military and jumped on the opportunity to go. I stayed at home and waited until they came back. When they all returned, I was relieved; two of them were in pretty bad condition though. My family meant everything to me; it was the key. I remember when I was young, we would put on our winter gear when there was snow and play outside together, or play games when it was nice out. Everything we did, we did as a family. Reflecting on all of my childhood, I can only remember the memories I've shared with the people closest to my heart, my family.



Troops marching in Quebec City.  
Photo:Sharp Kirkwood family collection.





Winston Churchill's wife and daughter are brought by caleche through the city to be present for the Quebec Conferences (August 1943, September 1944) to discuss Allied strategy in the war.

Photo: Sharp Kirkwood family collection.

I was 17 years old in my senior year of high school – I remember it clearly - my principal was extremely strict, not like the ones I see nowadays. I lived in a time where children should be seen but not heard. So much has evolved in today's society,

***You wouldn't dare talk to a boy in the hallway; you had to go around the corner of the street!***

but I always say "You've got to go with the flow." I wouldn't say I lived any harder; it was just the way it was back then. In school, boys and girls had to go in through separate entrances of the building. You wouldn't dare talk to a boy in the hallway; you had to go around the corner of the street! I've been to schools recently and it's nothing like it used to be. I see students sitting on the floor eating their lunches in the halls which would not have been accepted at my school, in my time.

My Protestant high school, Quebec High School, always had a rivalry with our neighbours St. Patrick's High School, which was Catholic. My boyfriend at the time, who I ended up marrying, went to St. Pat's. That made for a lot of conflict! Prom



Violet Mable Sharp in Class of 1941 yearbook, the first yearbook of the newly inaugurated school (now a mixed boy-girl school).

Photo: courtesy of VEQ.

was an issue because I wasn't allowed to bring him and he wasn't allowed to bring me, let alone any other dances our schools held! We made up for it on weekends and any days we could spend together. With my love life going well, in school I focused more on sports, especially basketball. Basketball was my sport. I was a guard and a pretty good one, as a matter of fact. What I lacked in height, I made up for in skill. I wore a tunic with black bloomers underneath. The shorter I could get my basketball dress, the better; the boys were always watching us! I loved winning, that's for sure. The rest of my high school years were like any other, I got by in school and kept my family proud of me.

I got my first job right after I graduated at 18. I worked at the Inspection Board of the UK in Canada. My boss was very French; we didn't like him too much. I never really spoke to him; there was a lot of, "Yes sir, no sir." I was very proper,

everyone was. Then we had a new boss, he was English so I liked him! I liked my job, but had to give it up when I had my first child.

I married an amazing man in 1942. I had my first child in 1943, a year later. She came as a surprise, but like many women back then, I gave up my job and stayed home to take care of her. I was still a stay-at-home mom when I had my second child shortly after. It was hard having my first two children because we were newly-wed and didn't have that much money back then. With a poor economy, I kept in

*My eldest still tells them,  
"You're lucky, when you were  
young, you had a full coke,  
we had to share one!"*



Present day photo of Violet next to the cornerstone at Quebec High School.

Photo: courtesy of VEQ.

mind that everything I did, I did it for my children. The other two came a while after; 7 years separated my 3rd and 4th child. They were a little bit spoiled in comparison. My eldest still tells them, "You're lucky, when you were young, you had a full coke, we had to share one!" It wasn't a huge deal but they did have more privileges because society had changed and we had evolved with it.

As I aged over time, I saw everything being built in what people know as Quebec City today. I drove on a dirt road boulevard Laurier and University Laval didn't even exist in my youth! All these tall buildings that are spoiling the sky of Quebec City weren't there either. As I mentioned, you just need to go with it because the world is always changing right before your eyes, sometimes more noticeably than other times. I would never leave Québec, it's my home. I love Québec, myself and my family grew up here and I won't let some construction ever change my mind on that.



Violet smiles as she reads her yearbook.

Photo: courtesy of VEQ.

It was a tragedy when my husband died, but as a family, we managed. Our family was very strong. When I had open heart surgery not too long back, all my children had moved out and were living all across Canada. I get emotional every time I talk about this. When I woke up after my successful surgery, I saw my 4 amazing children at the foot of my bed. Tears instantly filled my eyes. My oldest daughter had organized the whole thing. It was an amazing feeling to know they took time from their own busy lives to visit me when I needed them most. I love my family so much, I always have and I always will!

In all honesty, I wouldn't be where I am today without my family. I have 4 great children who are so good to me. My oldest is now 67 years old and my youngest 50. I've lived a lovely life and there is nothing I truly regret. What has helped me throughout my life is going by the motto, "Honesty is the

best policy,” be honest in all you do no matter what, and that’s what I have done. But most importantly, family is key. I will never say I put anything before my children, and that’s the way it should be.



Violet Kirkwood shows student, Sarah Sweeney a section of her yearbook.

Photo: courtesy of VEQ.

## BETWEEN FRIENDS

*As told by Joan Murray Shea,  
written by Melyna Bernier and Jordan Lacourse.*

Joan Shea was born in Quebec City and raised as an Anglophone. Growing up, she went to an English primary school and then Quebec High School. Oddly enough, this is also where she taught as an adult for much of her life. Joan was very involved with the Anglican Church and still is to this day. She always loves to help out in her community and offer her services to the church in her free time. Joan is the mother of four, three boys and a girl, and married to a man whom she met on a blind date! During our talk, she shared some of her greatest moments growing up in Quebec City.



I am and always have been an original Anglophone from Quebec City. I was born in the old Jeffrey Hale Hospital and grew up right here in the city, on what used to be Maple Avenue. I was educated at St. George's Primary School and continued on to Quebec High School in my teenage years. I still remember the big glass doors that divided the school into the boys' and girls' sections and that embarrassed feeling I had the first time I had to cross over to the boys' side!

Growing up, language was always an important part of my life. As you would expect, French was everywhere but, in our house, we only spoke English. My mother

*My mother was unilingual English and my father spoke what can best be described as "du franglais."*

was unilingual English and my father spoke what can best be described as “du français.” He came to Quebec City from Ontario before I was born to work in the burgeoning paper mill, the “Anglo” [Anglo Canadian Pulp and Paper Mills, known today as Papiers Stadacona], as they needed workers with an expertise in specific machinery. Our neighborhood was almost entirely francophone and this is where I learned some of my French but it took a very special person for me to learn how to speak the language properly.

Life during the Great Depression was very difficult for many in Quebec City. Many citizens lost their jobs and parents often resorted to forcing their children to go from door to door in order to beg for charity so they could eventually meet their needs. Sadly this was essential for their survival during this era. I remember the day a young, frail eleven – year-old French girl named Thérèse Tremblay climbed up the big hill on Maple Avenue, knocked at our door and asked our family



Swimming in the St. Lawrence River in the summer time.

Photo: Murray Shea family collection.



Sliding at the Chateau Frontenac in the winter.

Photo: Murray Shea family collection.

for a donation. “Pour l’amour du Bon Dieu,” she said. She was shocked when my father offered her more than just money; he gave her an opportunity work for us and help out with the household duties that our mother could no longer complete since she was severely ill at the time. He later asked Thérèse, “Do you think your mother would agree?” She ran home and the next day came back to accept the opportunity for two dollars a week.

Thérèse didn’t speak a word of English, but that didn’t change the friendship we quickly developed. She made meals and helped my mom around the house. We became playmates and I strengthened my

*Thérèse didn’t speak a word of English, but that didn’t change the friendship we quickly developed.*



grasp of the French language with her help. In many ways, she became my French teacher. She implored me to speak the language properly, though she never corrected me but instead showed me a different (more correct) way of saying what I had in mind.

Meeting Thérèse and having had the opportunity to share so much of my childhood with her was very important to me growing up. She taught me French, and I was very thankful for that but more importantly she inspired me to find my calling in life. As she helped me to unlock French, I wanted to help others who struggled with English. She is one of the main reasons why I became an English teacher and taught at Quebec High for much of my life. Like Thérèse, rather than just correcting my students, I always tried to teach my students how to say things differently.



Joan Shea shares her story with students, Melyna Bernier and Jordan Lacourse.

Photo: courtesy of VEQ.

# HISTORY: A PASSION FOR KNOWING WHERE YOU'RE FROM AND WHO YOU ARE

*As told by Jacques MacKay,  
written by Camille Morin.*

Jacques MacKay has served as a 78th Fraser Highlander in St. Andrew's (Quebec City) Garrison for many years. Historically this regiment of the British alliance originated from Scotland and so was composed of Scotsmen who were present in the Battle of the Plains of Abraham. Jacques presented himself in full regalia for the interview.



Did you know one of the original Scottish settlements of the Quebec City region was a seigneurie that led to the Malbaie just north of the city? Governor Murray, in 1761, divided the Malbaie seigneuries into two separate lots. I discovered, and am proudly to say, that the Scots were the biggest regiment during the battle of the Plains of Abraham. After the war, some of the soldiers from the regiment remained in Quebec City where they were granted some seigneurial lands because of their military service.

I was born and raised in Québec, and am very proud to present myself as a Scottish-Canadian. I became



Crest of 78th Fraser Highlanders.

Photo: courtesy of the 78th Fraser Highlanders.

aware of the fact that there is more to a name than you think, there is a culture. I learnt a lot through a long search for fellow Scots living in Quebec City. By studying my ancestry, I can now guess almost everyone's origin just by looking at their facial features!

Finding out all about my descendants helped me to know who I truly was. Knowledge is a good thing, and if you know where you're from, you will know what to do in the future, because you've got your back assured. No one can destroy you, because you know who you are.

I have learnt so many things about how the Scottish roots took hold and evolved over time leading to the Great Migra-



Jacques MacKay presents himself in full regalia next to fellow Canadian-Scotsman, Edward Gunn.

Photo: courtesy of VEQ.



Jacques Mackay laughs and smiles as he illustrates a colourful portrait of Québec to student Camille Morin.

Photo: courtesy of VEQ.

tion when thousands risked their lives coming to Canada on the timber boats during the mid 19th century. There are many ties to the foundation of the Canadian Parliamentary system. This is our past. History is the key to understanding the roots of our world of today. I will never know everything but I keep researching to this day.



# LIFE AND ITS HARDSHIPS, PICTURE BY PICTURE

*As told by Lorraine M. Dinan,  
written by Samantha Nellis.*

Lorraine M. Dinan was born in 1929 in Amesbury, Massachusetts. Her family moved to Quebec City in 1930 and has lived here ever since. She grew up in the Paroisse Sacré-Cœur in Saint-Sauveur, which is, in her opinion, the prettiest of all the parts of Saint-Sauveur.

Through the years she has gathered pictures and newspaper articles commemorating events in her family's life which she was happy to share with us.



My family and I lived in a house with four rooms. We had one washroom but we didn't have a bath, after all most rental homes did not have a bath at this time. Our uncle, Arthur Drolet, who we were quite close to, was quite wealthy in comparison and had many luxuries that most could not afford at the time. He was the town's alderman and he was also a horseman. He had a large multi-story house with stables in the middle of the city and received horses from the west in order to train them to work and ride in town. He used to take large metal sleighs, attach them to the wild horses and ride all around town. It was an amazing site to see.

During our family vacations, we would often go to New Brunswick to my grandparents' place. Their house had even fewer luxuries. The old outhouse was situated next to the

chicken coop which was the only washroom. We also had a pot under the bed just in case we had to go during the night. We had a pump in the kitchen and we would wash ourselves with that water. Unfortunately for us, it was always as cold as ice. Our parents would lift us, put us in the sink and start pumping the water to wash us.

In 1936, our family got our first second-hand radio. After a hard day at work, my father would always turn the channel to hockey with Michel Descarreaux commentating. He had such a lonely boring voice! Whenever we would ask if father could change the channel, my mother's answer would always

*"Your father works very hard and hockey time is hockey time, so he's going to listen to his hockey."*

be the same, "No, your father works very hard and hockey time is hockey time, so he's going to listen to his hockey." My father worked at l'Exposition Provinciale until he was at least 66 years of age.



Lorraine shows students a picture of Jack Dinan standing in front of his house, in his Air Force uniform, next to his mother who is holding his little sister born in 1944.

Photo: courtesy of VEQ.



Lorraine describes a picture of Michael (Mike) sitting in a wheel chair, a blanket covering his legs, after his accident, with a big smile on his face.

Photo: courtesy of VEQ.

I remember what my mother used to do for our winter coats. She would go to this store where they would sell clothes for fifty cents. At that time, that was a lot of money for most people, and she would choose the coats. Then when she got back home we would help her unsew everything. After, we she would wash and press everything, and turn it all inside out. She would then make us new coats out of the material!

My husband Jack was in the Canadian Air Force from 1943 to 1946. He was 19 years old when he went home all dressed up in the air force uniform and rang the bell. During his time in the air force, my husband gave half of his salary to his family.

Michael, my brother-in-law, had an accident when he was 8 years old. He was hit by a CNR (Canadian National Railway) truck. The company was quick to react and sent over some



lawyers who had his father sign a paper saying that the child was ok, since he was treated in the hospital. People would visit him every day in the hospital. When Mike started to grow, his legs didn't grow along with him. There wasn't one cent in compensation since his father had signed the paper saying he was fine.

I am happy that I created this scrapbook, because memories might fade after a long period of time, but with this, all the happy or sad memories that we had and went through together will last forever. My grandkids and next generations will be able to see all of these memories and share them with others. Life certainly wasn't easy growing up and I think it is important for future generations to learn about the luxuries they have in life today that they should be grateful for.



Lorraine M. Dinan enjoys showing her photo album to student Samantha Nellis.

Photo: courtesy of VEQ.

# LIFE IS ALL ABOUT BALANCE!

*As told by David Everett Blinco,  
written by Roseanne Christman.*

David E. Blinco was born in 1931 in Grand-Mère, Québec. The community of Grand-Mère was an English community that was mainly run by the Laurentide Industries. He then went to Springfield College in the United States and later to Western University in London, Ontario where he graduated with his teaching degree. In 1954, he moved to Quebec City to teach physical education and biology at Quebec High School where he met his wife. David was clearly fond of his experiences here which I noticed during our lively discussion.



I was born and raised in the St. Lawrence valley, which was the central area for the paper industry at that time. My father and grandfather moved here in 1898 and helped construct the paper mill in Grand-Mère, Québec. For forty-two years, my father worked at the paper mill he helped build. Due to this, it was always clear for him that I should become a forestry engineer. When I was younger, I remember that we used to trek up into the woods to what they used to call logging camps and they'd show us how to do all the logging. My dad would surely have wanted me to do that kind of thing, but I was very much involved in sports which was my passion.

When I was in high school, I played hockey for the school as well as for the Grand-Mère civil team, and I played basketball: basically I played everything I could! Because sports were such a big part of my life, my grades weren't all that great and I think that's why I went into teaching physical education. I went to school in the United States at Springfield College for four years where I graduated in 1953. In order to complete my teaching degree and be qualified in Canada, I attended one year at Western University in London, Ontario.

While at Western, I received a call from an English school board in Quebec City telling me there would be a job opening

at Quebec High School. I knew QHS, because when I was in high school, I used to play against them. And so I went. It's funny looking back, because my plan was to start at Quebec High School and then move around to see the rest of Canada. But I taught at Quebec High School for 20 years. This school became one of the most important parts of my life; I even met my wife there! She was the secretary at that time and I found her quite beautiful. So we started dating, and two years later, in 1956, we married.

When I look back at Quebec High, it was fantastic. We had a very high academic standing, we were one of the top schools in the province of Québec and it was almost like a private school. The teaching was fantastic! The school board, being within the school, helped us a great deal, and the parents were also very much involved. It was a much closer community. I think back



Montreal Gazette April 21, 1956 wedding announcement for Mr. David E. Blinco and Miss Marion E. Coleman.

Photo: courtesy of the Montreal Gazette.

to these days and I think I was very fortunate to work at Quebec High School at that time. We used to have a hockey rink out in the back during the winter. I remember coming in with some of the other teachers from 8:00 p.m. at night until 8:00 a.m. in the morning just to hose down the ice. We'd take turns and sleep up on the stage. That is an example of some of little things that have changed.

QHS was such a big part of my life and I was so involved with the students that, half of the time, I'd forget about things like my paycheck. I spent an awful lot of time at school. I was even there most Friday nights and Saturdays since I was often coaching various football or basketball teams. In many ways I believe I was such a workaholic that I'd forget about some of the other very important things in life. Looking back, that is something that I would've changed- but I know it would have been difficult because I loved it so much, it was almost like a religion.

The only day of the week that I really spent at home was Sunday. I think that even today, Sunday should be a day of rest. With both parents working in today's society this whole concept has changed but there should still be a day when you can just relax. I give a lot of credit to my wife because she is the one person in my life who has kept me in line. When we had our first child, she stopped working at the school. She stayed at home and raised our 3 children. I think that's one of the things that is sad about today- both parents often need



QHS Senior hockey team,  
1950 Yearbook.

Photo: courtesy of VEQ.

*This school became one of the most important parts of my life.*

to work five days a week and this does not make prioritizing easy. I have become aware that it is important to keep a balanced life. If you can balance your mind, spirit, and body, you will be happy. It's something everybody should strive for.



David Blinco enthusiastically recounts his story to student Roseanne Christman.

Photo: courtesy of VEQ.

*The David E. Blinco Award is presented annually at Quebec High School to a secondary five student demonstrating qualities of honesty, good sportsmanship, dedication to works undertaken, and a concern for the well-being of fellow students.*

# NEVER GIVE UP: A STORY OF LOVE, WAR AND CELEBRATION

*As told by Michael Ayre,  
written by Sarah Jane Gurel.*

**M**ichael Ayre was born on September 19, 1938, almost one year before the war was declared, in a rural part of Cuffley. Cuffley is located in Hertfordshire, England and was greatly affected by the war. Brought up in Cuffley during World War II, Michael then moved to Newcastle-upon-Tyne where he went to university and met his lovely wife, Gill. This is his story.



I was born a year before the war, in a rural valley situated 30 miles north of London. The war was a very big part of my childhood. I remember looking up at the sky and seeing it filled with Spitfires, Hurricanes and Messerschmitts. Our village, being on the path of German Messerschmitts to Holland, was often bombed by enemy planes. Entire houses were flattened, and many people were forced to evacuate, but our village never lost its spirit and really came together during these tough times. I remember that my baby brother, mother, father and I had to sleep in our hallway, under an oak dining table at night, just in case there was a raid. That way we would not be crushed by a fallen roof. We used to sleep in our cellar, but after my mother dropped me down the stairway one frantic night, our family decided to sleep under our

table. Nights were scary and very uncomfortable as you can imagine.

I can recall one evening when my mother opened a window to our home so the light could stream across the garden, where two hedgehogs were playing. I ran outside to watch while the playful creatures had fun. I was stunned to see, as I peered out at the distant horizon, a glimmer burning crim-

*There in the dark, we could clearly see the raging fires of London.*

son red. There in the dark, we could clearly see the raging fires of London. It was a scary sight, something you can never forget.

Each weekday morning, I would run fearfully through the fields to school, never knowing when an enemy raid would hit. Some mornings, I wouldn't go to school at all because the town's civil defense siren had warned us of approaching enemy planes. At school, when the siren rang, our entire school would run out to this humungous trench which had a protective metal roof over it. We would stay in this shelter until we knew for certain it was safe. Sometimes, we'd stay for hours, sitting on the cold damp ground, singing songs to calm us down and drown out the "BANG! BANG!" of falling bombs. Those were very tense times!

By 1944, our family was ordered out because it had become too dangerous to stay in Cuffley. We stayed in Newcastle-upon-Tyne until the war ended. When we moved back, after the war, our entire village had a humongous Victory Day celebration. We all came out and lined the streets with our tables and had a feast with music and dancing. It was great!

I remained in Cuffley and attended boarding school until I was 18. After which, I went back to Newcastle to attend university at King's College, part of the University of Daren. It is there, that I met my lovely wife, Gill, on January 31, 1959. It was definitely love at first sight, well it was for me, and I hope this is true for her too. She was a heart throb!

My wife and I moved to Quebec City in 1967. I still remember our first Saint-Jean Baptiste Day; it was very much like the V-Day celebration after the war. Everyone has always been so kind and accepting here and I have always really appreciated their warm welcome.

*I still remember our first Saint-Jean Baptiste Day; it was very much like the V-Day celebration after the war.*



Davie's Shipyard circa 1965.

Photo: BAnQ Pistard Collection.

I am now retired, after having worked many years as senior vice president at Davie Shipyard, in Levis. If there is one thing that life has taught me, it's to work hard and never take things for granted. My father who would work all day then come home only to head back out to patrol the railways at night (in case Germans parachuted down during a raid), coupled with my strict mother who had been raised in a Victorian manner, taught me that hard work pays off. In life you can't just expect things; you've got to work hard for them. You also have to be grateful for what you have. The war





Davie's Shipyard circa 1965.

Photo: BAnQ Pistard Collection.

taught me that. After all, I didn't see my first orange until I was 8! You can't take things for granted; you have to be thankful for what you have, work hard for what you don't. Don't hide behind work, because life is more than that, so enjoy it, but do put effort into everything you do, and never give up!



Michael Ayre makes his student smile, Sarah Jane Gurel.

Photo: courtesy of VEQ.

# SCHOOL, THE MILL AND ANCESTRY

*As told by Edward Gunn,  
written by Lori Ménard.*

Edward Gunn, also known as Ted, has pure Scottish blood but was born in Quebec City in 1933 at the former Jeffrey Hale Hospital in front of the Grande Theatre. His parents had two sons, Edward and his brother John Alex Wilson. They were one of the rare families who had only two children. Ted's Scottish heritage inspired him to join the Historical Regiment of the 78th Fraser Highlanders and he has been an officer for several years. He shares his story of how it's never too late to turn your life around.



My parents met in Scotland, since they both originated from there. My father immigrated to Quebec City in 1912 and sponsored my mother to take a ship to join him. Back then a single woman could not come to Canada without being sponsored by someone already living here. Thankfully, my father had already moved here. In 1916, my father went overseas to fight in the First World War. While there, he was gassed by the Germans (with German mustard gas). This had a definite effect on his life and probably contributed to shortening it. When he came home, he married my mother and my brother and I were born.

My father became a banker after the war and in 1938 we moved to Ontario for his work, where we stayed for 10 years.

When we moved back to Quebec City, I didn't know a word of French and in order to graduate from high school, I needed to pass my French course. Pretty nice challenge for an Anglophone!

As a teenager, I became very interested in sports and my favourite was definitely basketball. Being 6' tall, I was quite good at this sport and played for most of my teenage years between the school and the YMCA's association of Leaders' Corps. I was even covered in the local paper as the Y's "Mr. BASKETBALL." But that's not the only thing I would do for fun, I would usually go to the Friday night dances and, like any other male, I would look at the girls. Living a normal teenage life like all my peers, I survived high school. I hated school so much as a teenager, I could not understand how my brother could study and enjoy it as much as he did. Luckily, I graduated from Quebec High School in 1952 and went on with my life, searching for work.

I applied for a job at the paper mill; all I wanted was to get a

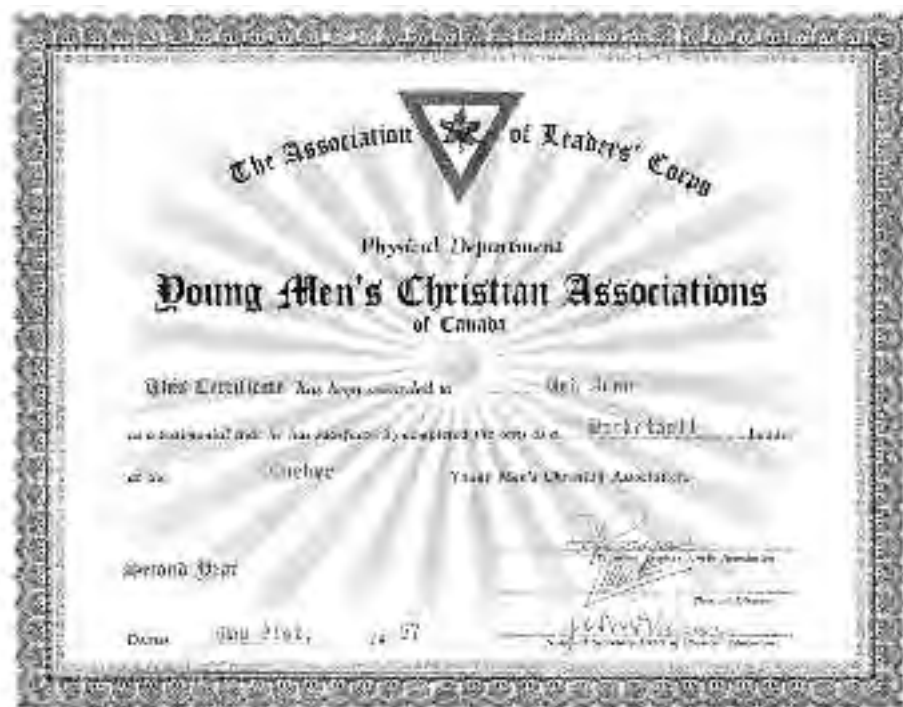


Ted Gunn as "Mr Basketball" covered in the Quebec Chronicle Telegraph.

Source: Gunn family collection.

job. I had had enough with school at that point. Unfortunately, there was no opening at the mill so I went to work at the Château Frontenac as an office clerk. I only worked there for a month and then got a messenger job at the mill. Back then, the messenger's job was to carry money, by bicycle, to the bank and to pay the workers too. Imagine carrying enormous amounts of money by bike, today! Life has definitely changed through the years. I worked at the mill seasonally from July to November for 40 years and moved up the ranks changing occupations. I translated many of the official forms that they still use today from English to bilingual.

*I hated school so much as a teenager, I could not understand how my brother could study and enjoy it as much as he did.*



Certificate of YMCA'S Leader's Corp.

Source: Gunn family collection.

I used to travel for the company and be away for a month at a time. When I came home from one of these trips in 1965, I saw a new secretary and asked around, "Hey, who is the new

chick?” I soon figured out who she was by talking to her in the photocopy room. She was the person I would marry.

When I was in my early thirties, I wanted to work in management but unfortunately I had to go back to school, which is probably one of the biggest regrets that I have. Through this, I learned a very valuable life lesson; get your education as soon as you can. When you have to go back many years after already being done, you don't feel like going back, well at least I didn't.

Today I am still married to that attractive secretary, Louise Bernier, and we have a beautiful son, Kenneth Edward Gunn, who recently got married as well. I am retired from the paper mill which has been in great financial trouble for a while now, and I've discovered a new passion for history. I even have a website called 'The Clan Gunn Society of North America', which was established to keep an up-to-date site on the facts



Ted Gunn recounts his good times at the YMCA with student Lori Ménard.

Photo: courtesy of VEQ.

surrounding the origin of our family name, since, it can be difficult dealing with information from history and ancestry archives.

*In all honesty, I love history and learning about my origins.*

Thankfully, there's some information that was kept about the Gunns. In all honesty, I love history and learning about my origins. I am happy I can still study it today but, I wish I would have realized my passion for history earlier. I would like today's youth to know how important it is to get an education.



He also brings along his collection of authentic antique ceremonial Scottish swords.

Photo: courtesy of VEQ.

Everybody looks back at their lives and are glad about the things they have accomplished but also regretful of the things that they didn't. Some lucky people figure out their regrets earlier than others and do the things they never did but always wanted to. Then, they can look back and are proud of their choices.



# THE ENGLISH COMMUNITY AND I

*As told by Mary Ellen Reisner,  
written by Jessica Tanguay.*

Mary Ellen Reisner, better known as Meb, was born September 11, 1939. Having grown up during the peak of World War II, her childhood consisted of strict curfews, food rations and war bonds as Christmas presents. Daughter of a yachtsman, sailing was a big part of her life from a young age. She attended school governed by a school board where antifeminist ideologies were reflected throughout the educational system. As a result, she had to overcome this restrictive societal view and did so by pursuing higher learning at university and obtaining a teaching degree. She taught for one year after before deciding to obtain another degree. Her focus on Literature and History ultimately led her to write three novels. At age twenty-five, she married a professor who had just been offered a job at Laval University. So, she picked up her life and moved from Montreal to Quebec City. Here's her story.



It was in 1964 that I started a new life. I was recently married and had just moved to a new city where I knew nobody and had no idea Quebec City had an Anglophone population. It wasn't until I heard an advertisement on the radio for the University Women's Club that I got involved with the



English community. From there, I attended a meeting that led me to make some lifelong friends and get involved with activities. From then on, my involvement with the English community has only grown and is still going strong.

Through the University Women's Club, I was invited to be part of the Canadian Consumer's Association panel. This opportunity allowed me to travel to Montreal on a monthly basis. Over the course of my life, I have aspired to be an academic. In fact, when I graduated from McGill University, I thought I was done with my studies and I would work from then on but when I attended a summer school program at Oxford University in London, my eyes were opened and my life changed forever. It was fantastic to be in one of these old, classical Universities filled with wonderful books in a country filled with architectural marvels and having the chance to meet people who had written novels as well as political figures and poets. After this experience, I thought to myself, "I want to be a part of the university world. I want to be an academic."

I believe that one cannot live in Quebec City without mentioning its churches. I, for one, have been a part of the Anglican community for years and was even asked to write a book in celebration of the 200th anniversary. The book is called *Strangers and Pilgrims: a History of the Anglican Diocese of Québec, 1793-1993* which was published in 1996.

The English community has played an important role in my life from the time I became involved in it. What I particularly admire about it is that Quebec City's English community is

*What I particularly admire about it is that Quebec City's English community is like a village but Québec is a city.*

like a village but Québec is a city. So, you have the advantage of having a kind of a small town familiarity within a large number of people and yet, have the amenities of a city as well. When people ask me if I think the English community

will survive in Québec, I say that I do have faith. However, I think the community will have to realize it's a minority and

act like one. The community has to show others what it has to offer.

Over the course of my life, I have been inspired by my experiences to pursue my passions. It is when the English community became a part of my life that I saw a growth in myself as a person. It has given me tremendous opportunities and has broadened my understanding and love for Québec. I have been a part of VEQ (Voice of English-speaking Québec) since its creation and I owe a lot to the English community in general and hope to remain involved in the years to come. In fact, I am planning on launching a project about women organizations in Quebec City which I am very excited about! If there is one piece of advice I want to share, it would be to just go for things because unexpected opportunities can change your life forever and I say this from experience!



Meb Reisner smiles during her interview with student Jessica Tanguay.

Photo: courtesy of VEQ.



# MARRIED TO QUÉBEC

*As told by Bill Cox,  
written by Sasha Robichaud.*

**B**ill Cox is a Jack-of-all-trades born in 1933 in St. John, New Brunswick. Bill has had the chance to live a very fulfilling life. With all the moving around he has done, he said that if he had to give his life a title “To and Fro” would be his first choice! With a wonderful wife and 5 children, few regrets stain his conscience.



My flirtations with Québec began at the ripe old age of 6 months when my parents first moved from St. John to Quebec City. Now, that didn't last too long because just a few months later my father found a job in Montreal. From Montreal was Lachine, from there, Schefferville and after, Sept-Îles. I moved around often in my life and never feared the unknown. I enjoyed challenges and this is why a buddy and I even tried to enlist in the army at the age of fourteen! That didn't go as planned because they turned us around rather quickly.

I first left home when I was 18 and from then on pursued many careers. As a banker, I worked for the Imperial Bank of Canada and was transferred seasonally from Schefferville to Sept-Îles. It was at the Sept-Îles branch where I met a pretty young lady from Quebec City who worked there. I guess you could say we met “rolling in money, the bank's money.” She

was a very brave and talented woman. Among other qualities, she was an excellent skater and played hockey for Quebec City's first all girls hockey team. Three years later, we were married.



Bill shows student a picture of his lovely wife in her all girls hockey team.

Photo: courtesy of VEQ.

Along with being a banker, I've had my share of careers. I have also worked as an insurance broker, a real estate agent, a custom's officer, a superintendent, a chief of operations and I was even a criminal investigator for the federal government which legally I cannot talk about too much! In 1999, I finally moved to Quebec City. I guess you could say my flirtations with the city finally turned into a marriage. I then became an active retiree and still work today as an English teacher for adults. Along with all these careers I've been writing as a hobby and I have had the chance to get much of my work published both in the Quebec Chronicle Telegraph as well as

CHRONICLE - TELEGRAPH

## A hair-raising trip on a flying boat

By BILL COX

**W**hen I worked for the Imperial Bank in the early 1950s, I had to travel from Knob Lake to the Seven Islands branch regularly for cash. The two other employees were deathly

the cockpit are functioning. You can come up front if you want to." I decided to stay where I was for the moment. I could sense the tension in the crew's conversation over the intercom.

"Well Norm," the captain told the co-pilot, "You re-

radio. The clouds grow denser as we neared where the airport should have been.

I started to feel anxious and was wondering if I would be OK and if I would see my girl friend, family and friends again, when the pilot announced that they should

Extract of article by Bill Cox, regular contributor for the Quebec Chronicle Telegraph.

Source: courtesy of the Quebec Chronicle Telegraph.

The Sherbrooke Record. I even wrote a weekly column in The Record called, "Hour Man Thursdays" for 5 years.

If I could give anyone a piece of advice, I would say, "Go for it!" Don't fear the unknown, pursue it because you never know what it will bring you. I gained a lot of experience from all of the opportunities I undertook but most importantly I met my wife through the excursion which led to my most defining moment, the birth of my first child and subsequently, my family. I remember the morning after I held my newborn son in my arms and watched the sun rise with him, I told him, "Clifford, today you see your first sunrise." I spent a wonderful moment just talking to my newborn son.

*Don't fear the unknown, pursue it because you never know what it will bring you.*



# ST. PATRICK'S HIGH SCHOOL







# A LIFETIME FULL OF LOVE AND GOSSIP

*As told by Olive Jewell,*

*written by Jordan Comeau and Michèle Atkins-Sauvageau.*

Olive Jewell was born on July 16, 1928 to a large family and remains today still very young at heart. For more than forty years, she worked in the heart of Quebec City at the Château Frontenac and has seen her fair share of celebrities come and go. She is one of the few lucky people able to say they babysat the children of some of the world's most popular movie stars. With eighty-two years of gossip and stories engraved in her mind, Mrs. Jewell seemed quite emotional retelling the stories of her past.



We were a family of 10 children. Being the youngest child in my family during hard economic times in Canada, I was separated from my brothers and sisters and we were put into orphanages until we could either find work or find a house of our own. Having lived for a time on a farm with my parents before leaving for the orphanage, I recall being the best in my family at transporting water.

When I was younger, we had no electricity, not many doctors and a very poor education since many abandoned their studies to get jobs to help support their family. So in a way I would say your generation is advantaged.



Bishop Mountain Hall on Grande-Allée, an all girls orphanage.

Photo: Jewell family collection, extract from Quebec Chronicle Telegraph, 1935.



Montgomery Cliff and Ann Baxter stand front deck on the Louis Jolliet with the splendid Chateau Frontenac in the distance.

Photo: Original motion picture Alfred Hitchcock's *I Confess*, 1953.

Growing up, I had many little jobs but the one that marked me the most was when I became a file clerk at the Chateau Frontenac. Having gotten the job because of contacts, I was eager to learn the ropes. Eventually I worked in accounting. With the years I became one of the most respected ladies of the building, both by the staff and the celebrities who stayed at the magnificent hotel. I met Montgomery Cliff, Allan Ladd and Ann Baxter one time, all here in Quebec City for a casting of an Alfred Hitchcock movie. I also spent

some time being a nanny to Joe Clark's child, the 16th Prime Minister of Canada.

I had a beautiful son named Michael who later on became a helicopter pilot; I take much pride in that. Though both my husbands have died and I've had multiple surgeries over the years, I'm still a very happy person who likes to laugh, play bingo and help prepare Christmas crafts for the people who live with me at McGreevy Manor.



Olive Jewell shares her story with students Jordan Comeau and Michèle Atkins-Sauvageau.

Photo: courtesy of VEQ.



# LANGUAGE IS A TRUE TREASURE

*As told by Marcia Theriault,  
written by Andrew Blier-Wong and Angéline Busset.*

**M**arcia Theriault was born on January 15, 1956 in Madison, Wisconsin. She had a tough and poor childhood but survived it. As a teenager, she was already working and helping the army by making care packages for the forces. As a young adult she was so interested in reading and writing that she went into publishing. She has written seven books of poetry and she speaks four languages. She is still learning two more. She considers language a true treasure in her life.



Though I've had a life filled with rich experiences, I had a hard childhood because my parents were very poor. At the age of eleven, I started my own part-time nursery, babysitting for the families in my small community. I kept them for two weeks at a time, making around a dollar a day. As a young girl, I was very enthusiastic about the idea of having a job, but my parents were not very supportive. A few years later, I started to work for a photographer and learned many interesting things. When I turned fourteen, I worked for Saint Mary's Hospital. I gave private language lessons and taught full classes as well, first in my home town college and later on in France. I attended the Houde College, which was a small girl's school at the time. My father had been hired at



A youthful Marcia.

Photo: Theriault family collection.



A photograph of her father.

Photo: Theriault family collection.

Dartmouth College, New Hampshire, by a man who also happened to be the president of Houde College. So lucky for me, I obtained a full grant to travel to France to teach for one year. The government also granted me a French teaching internship. Finally I stayed in France for five years to teach French and found it quite difficult. The young men I taught were in the same age group as I was, and they had never had a female teacher before, so they gave me a hard time. They said things like: “La miss, la miss, elle porte des chaussettes rouges mais qu’est que c’est ça?” We ended up however having many enjoyable French conversations. When I came back to North America, I taught French classes for adults, working at the Charlesbourg High School. I also worked in the National Assembly in the government as a communications editor and translator.

In my opinion, one of the main differences in today’s society and before is that it is a lot harder to decide what we want to

do later on. Back then, you could start teaching at a university just with a bachelor's degree. I believe it to be more complicated today. I also do not like the new mentality society has of thinking the government should pay for everything. The government is highly in debt and needs to lower the deficit.

I believe people do not help each other as much as they used to, which is unfortunate. Today, I'm hoping to participate more actively in the English-speaking community by helping out at the Jeffrey Hale Hospital.

I'm presently waiting for my health conditions to get better before getting back to help them to do fantastic things. This is important to me.

Due to all the people I've met with such different ethnic backgrounds, languages, nationalities and characters, I feel I have had a rich life and have a lot of advice to give. The first thing is: keep reading! Languages and books are a real treasure and you can learn so much only by picking up a good book. Second, try to learn something new every day and enjoy all the things you can learn. If you are naturally bilingual or not, I think it is terribly important to know more than both French and English because whether you stay in Québec or elsewhere in Canada or elsewhere in the world, you are going to need other languages. I was



Marcia volunteering.

Photo: Theriault family collection.

*I feel that you should always feel proud of what you do and do well.*



privileged to have been taught to read and write practically at the age of two. I feel that you should always feel proud of what you do and do well. I feel people nowadays have lost their pride in themselves and in what they do. If you know what you are doing is done well than you should be proud of yourself. Lastly I'd say simply be happy. Find happiness in the little things in life. Never give up and always follow your dreams!



Marcia Theriault entrances her students Andrew Blier-Wong and Angéline Busset.

Photo: courtesy of VEQ.

# FROM BOARDING SCHOOL TO MOTORCYCLES

*As told by Timothy McGrath,  
written by Alyson Marois, Kimberly Devlin-Lepage  
and Rubria Mendoza-Hayward.*

**T**imothy McGrath was born on July 21, 1946 in Frampton, Québec. He is of Irish descent and presently lives in Quebec City with his wonderful wife. He worked as a translator and loved it. He has an even greater passion for motor cycling.



I grew up in Frampton with my parents, brothers and sisters who today are mostly separated and living in different provinces. I was the eldest of 6 children and I was away from my family a lot because of school. I went to St. Lawrence College (today's CEGEP Champlain – St. Lawrence), when I was a teenager and it was a boarding school for boys. I visited my family once a month the first year I went there. It wasn't a lot and I missed my family. But the second year, the school let us visit our families more than once a month.

I didn't get to date a lot in my teenage years because first, I went to a school that was only for boys, and second, boys asked girls out at that time, and since I didn't really know any girls, I didn't get to date a lot. Also, apparently, I wasn't the popular kind of guy in school.

*Apparently, I wasn't the popular kind of guy in school.*



Timothy McGrath's The Laurentian Yearbook picture 1963.

Photo: courtesy of VEQ.



Tim and his motorcycle circa 1970.

Photo: courtesy of VEQ.

After school, I learned to motorcycle. I travelled a lot when I got my first motorcycle. I went to a lot of places with it, a lot of road trips with friends and did some road trips alone. The trip that I loved the most was the one to Mexico and Guatemala. It was a memorable trip where I met a lot of friends who today are close friends. We did amazing motorcycle rides. I love motorcycling! It's my passion and I still do some today.

I travelled a lot. I went to many, many places in the world. On one trip, I married my amazing wife. I met her at a club, a Spanish club called Nosotros, where you could learn Spanish. A couple of years ago, we went on a cruise to the other side of the world and to be romantic, I asked the captain of the boat to marry us. Today, we are happily married.

It's surprising that almost everything today has changed. Dating, clothes, technology and of course, prices have changed a lot in the past years. And if there's one thing I have learned in life, it is: don't underestimate yourself and continue even in hard times because in the end, it's all worth it.

*Don't underestimate yourself and continue even in hard times because in the end, it's all worth it.*



Timothy McGrath speaks to captivated students, Alyson Marois, Kimberly Devlin-Lepage and Rubria Mendoza-Hayward.

Photo: courtesy of VEQ.



## THRILLING EXPERIENCES

*As told by Clive Meredith,  
written by Mahir Kazi, Léonie Schicketanz  
and Sophie Robitaille-Meyer.*

**C**live Meredith was born in Quebec City, Québec in 1932. He studied in Ontario for four years before attending university on the path to becoming a translator. From being a small child going to school to meeting the Queen, Clive Meredith has experienced thrilling moments and these are some of his childhood stories.



When I lived on Moncton Avenue, my cousin and I were dedicated “toboggers”. We would toboggan the hills on the plains and there was this specific morning when it had been raining all the days before so the whole place was coated with slippery ice. We made our way up to the top of this particular hill and decided we were going to sail down it. On the way down, we ran a bump and my cousin bounced off and I was thrown backwards. All I could see were these branches flying past as I was going down the hill and I thought, “Well, are we going to stop?” Then I whammed into this bush, and flew off the toboggan. There was nothing to the left of me, nothing to the right of me, a bush that I had landed in and on the other side were the cliffs of Québec. I can still remember the

*Yes, I met the Queen. As warden of the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, I had the chance to meet her during her Majesty’s 1987 Royal visit to Quebec City. Our encounter: She: “Mr. Meredith”, I “Your Majesty”. And that was it.*

*There was nothing to the left of me, nothing to the right of me, a bush that I had landed in and on the other side were the cliffs of Québec.*

way my legs were shaking when that sunk in.

During a summer party at my aunt's and uncle's house I found a bow and arrow in a shed behind the house. It wasn't a bow and arrow you would buy for a child. You could kill a deer with it! I had to show it immediately to my cousin and two other friends. Something exciting like this, we had to try! So we went to the golf course, right across the street. And there was a tree, where we tried our bow and arrow. We all had at least a try but only one of us didn't miss. He was very pleased with himself. So one of my friends suddenly pulled the bow back. He was going to do something else, he said! I knew that what he planned was crazy, but I couldn't stop him. He let go of the arrow, and it shot straight up in the sky. And me? I took off, as fast as I could! Around two meters away. I didn't want to be there if this thing came back! As I figured I was



Clive Meredith provoking smiles all around while entrancing his students Mahir Kazi, Léonie Schicketanz and Sophie Robitaille-Meyer.

Photo: courtesy of VEQ.



Clive Meredith and students Mahir Kazi, Léonie Schicketanz and Sophie Robitaille-Meyer.  
Photo: courtesy of VEQ.

safe, I started teasing them. The arrow wouldn't hit me! Suddenly the noise of the arrow landing right next to me shut me up. It had landed not even a foot away! My legs shook for the rest of the evening. I will never forget how much it took us after to pull out the arrow out of the ground.

My father was a fisherman. So this one time, my aunt and father were heading their way back to land, a distance of about a mile and a half. How it works is that one person rows and another steers, so my father was doing the rowing and his sister was doing the steering. Somehow inexplicably one of them went to change places and the gun that was lying on the floor of the boat somehow went off. It caught my father right in the shoulder. Then, as my father described it, my aunt paddled like a woman possessed. They got to shore and my father collapsed on the sand. My aunt wanted to go get help but my father said, "don't bother; I will be dead in 15 minutes." Just at that moment, my grandparents came along.



Of course, I am talking about a few decades ago, so they came around in a horse and buggy. They managed to find a house around the shore, kept him there for a while before moving him closer to home. He lay there for weeks between life and death. Fortunately, at the time, they had the cash to bring out the doctors to treat him and such, so he did get better. Though, for as long as he lived his arm would be incredibly sensitive to touch. That being said, he was a guy who could make the best of any bad situation. He lived to be eighty years old, which is what I turned about a week ago.

# THE WAY OF THINGS NOW AND THEN

*As told by Joseph Lonergan,  
written by Marc-Olivier Plante and Alexandre Bibeau.*

**J**oseph Lonergan was born in 1947 in Quebec City. He is an Irish Catholic. He had four children with his wife. He worked at St. Patrick's High School and also at Irish Heritage Quebec. He shared about how things were when he was growing up and how they've changed.



My neighborhood has greatly changed during the past years. Before, there were a lot of vacant lots. I remember, in front of Saint-Sacrement Hospital, there was a field with trees and a horse. Beyond Belvédère Street began the countryside.

I am from an Irish background. I know everything about my family's history and I think that it's so important to know where you're coming from. Back when, people didn't move frequently. For instance, my family never moved. But people are more mobile now.

When I was young, my family and I lived close to the Plains of Abraham and we played outside a lot. I remember one game we played called "mono," that the French kids showed us. We played using two stones, one long stick and one small stick. I remember a popular expression to my generation at one point was "right on man!" We would say it all the time.



Joe (looking down) and the boys in Grade Six on the stairs of the back door at St. Patrick's School.

Photo: Lonergan family collection.

I celebrated pretty much the same holidays as today, except Epiphany. We don't really celebrate the feast of Epiphany anymore. We called this celebration "Little Christmas" because we received one gift. We received two to three gifts for Christmas and one gift for Little Christmas to mark the traditional end of the Christmas season.

When I was young in school, the atmosphere and the teachers were very strict. Teachers were allowed to hit the students; it was considered normal. Some teachers were more violent than others. In grade 3-4 the teacher would ask the students to stand in front of the class and spell words. If the kids got them wrong, the teacher could hit us using a pointer, a ruler or even a strap.

I met my spouse in college and to date we would go to the restaurant and the theater. The roles of men and women have changed for sure. See, my wife stayed home and raised our four kids. Now both parents are working. I believe sociologists will know the impacts of this in five to ten years, for better or worse.

But yes, modern inventions have changed the way I live in a good way! I think that modern inventions are great! When I was young, around eight or nine years old, I didn't have a phone. Later on, my family and I got a "party line" that we shared with the neighbors. Finally, we got a private line. Now, I own a cell phone and a computer. I don't really use my cell phone, my wife does. I don't send text messages, I use my computer more. During the last 5 to 10 years of my teaching career at St. Patrick's High School, I made and used programs on the computer and the students really liked it.

I feel that communication is faster today but I feel sometimes that people communicate for "silly reasons." As an example, people on Facebook describe every little thing they do. Things we don't want or need to know.

I have learned from other people in my life to speak the truth and to listen to people. Listen to people who have different points of view and try to understand why they disagree with you. Sometimes, when we're young, we judge more because we think that what we see is the only reality. So my advice is: listen to other perspectives and other points of view.

*I have learned from other people in my life to speak the truth and to listen to people.*

The things that make me feel proud of my life are being able to support myself, keeping a job for all these years, being married and having four children. If I could repeat one experience, it would be my life all over again.



Joseph Lonergan sits with students Marc-Olivier Plante and Alexandre Bibeau.

Photo: courtesy of VEQ.

# YOU ONLY GO THROUGH THIS WAY ONCE

*As told by Diana Stavert,  
written by Samuel Guévin Thibault, Mathieu Veilleux  
and Émilie Lévesque.*

**D**iana Stavert was born in 1948 at the old Jeffrey Hale Hospital across from the Grand Théâtre. She grew up by the Chaudière basin on the South Shore. She was born to 'older' parents, as her father was 55 when he got married and then had 3 children. She was the middle child of three girls. Her parents worked for the war effort early on in Québec, and this is her story.



I grew up on a gentleman's farm because my father was a gentleman farmer. He became a gentleman farmer after retiring from being a forest engineer before and during the war effort. My farm was right across the Québec Bridge so we had a more or less easy access to Quebec City. On our farm we had chickens and lots of other animals but the chickens were the only producing animals. We also had this huge market garden which we marketed ourselves. For my education, my sisters and I went to a Charny school then to Sainte-Foy Elementary School until grade eight and then on to Quebec High School. My whole family spoke English. We only spoke in English, at my house and at school. To play with kids next door, I learnt to speak French. I came to speak both English and French more fluently when I went to high school and dated French boys!

We went to school by city bus it felt like I spent a year of my life on the Québec Bridge in traffic coming and going to school. During the summer time, I rode my bike instead. For

*We went to school by city bus it felt like I spent a year of my life on the Québec Bridge in traffic coming and going to school.*

my higher education, I went to Driscoll College here in Québec on Maple Avenue, which was a secretarial school. After I graduated, I worked in an office for about four years, which did not work for me, so I decided to go into nursing. I went to

Toronto to study nursing and I worked there for a couple of years. Then, I went to work on the Lower North Shore till 1980. In the middle of that, in 1976, I returned to Dalhousie University to study post-nursing, public health and midwifery. So I am a trained Canadian midwife!

Nursing on the Lower North Shore was a lot of fun: it was Hatch, Match and Dispatch! Seeing babies into the world, women pregnant and people passing while understanding the dignity of human life. Nursing was very basic back then, we would be a resource for protecting and maintaining health in the community, this included a lot of different experiences.

My ancestors came primarily from Scotland. I am a fifth generation Québécois. My great, great grandfather came to Québec from Scotland as a Presbyterian minister who settled in Lévis. He passed on to our family a roll-top desk built in 1840. We still have it and my husband uses it all the time. It is extremely heavy, it must weigh a ton! It also has buttons on the side of it that can be connected to a sort of wiring system so that you can call for the maid if you want something.

Talking about holidays, we were very traditional and Christmas was a beautiful time. We also all believed in Santa Claus forever because we were taught that if we did not believe in him, he would not come. As for Easter... well while at church the Easter bunny would come and Easter eggs would be hidden all over the house and we would have to find them. New years was always a big party at our house. The average age of

those present was somewhere around 80 and they would party hard, more than I have ever partied in my life. We would chase the old year out, all the old ladies rushing out the back door. It was great fun! These traditions carried on and I think they will carry on forever in our family.

Something that I would like to repeat if I could is to go back to nursing on the Lower North Shore. Time has passed and a lot of stuff seems to have changed throughout the years with technology and I would love to relive this experience. Going back on the world experience... a lot of the bad stuff you will live will disappear and won't seem as bad as they actually were. You actually remember more the good times where you had the

*A lot of the bad stuff you will live will disappear and won't seem as bad as they actually were. You actually remember more the good times where you had the greatest moments of your life.*



Diana Stavert captivates her three students , Samuel Guévin Thibault, Mathieu Veilleux and Émilie Lévesque.

Photo: courtesy of VEQ.



greatest moments of your life. For me those were the birth of my children: 2 daughters, 1 son.

What I would like to pass on to people and further generations is that: You only go through this way once, this is the only life you have so be sure to make your decisions carefully. You must also think before you act and love to the best of your abilities.

## A VOLUNTEER FOR LIFE

*As told by Veronica Laverdière,  
written by Rosalie Breton and Cedrick Drouin.*

Veronica Laverdière, now in her 90's, was born on November 12, 1920 in Limoilou, Québec. She attended Saint Marc Convent because there was no English school in Limoilou. When they moved up town, she went to St. Mary's Academy and then Leonard High School [now St. Patrick's High School]. The mother of seven, she has dedicated a lot of her life to other people through volunteering.



The day before my sixteenth birthday, I spoke to my husband for the first time in my life. He was a French Canadian but he hung out with the English people. I went out with him on the day after my birthday, which I remember was Friday the 13th. My parents welcomed him but his parents did not like the fact that their son was going out with an English girl, it was not accepted. Francophones then had 'les bons soirs' on Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday where they were allowed to visit their girlfriends. But he came to my house every night and stayed the whole weekend on Saturdays and Sundays.



Professional photograph of a young Veronica, which at the time cost her 75¢.

Photo: Laverdière family collection.

At the age of 17, I wanted to get married but my parents did not allow it. They wanted me to wait until I was 21. By the age of 20, I was ready to get married and he was going overseas. We had the apartment rented and we were engaged, so

*I recall that the birth of each of my children was one of the most special moments of my life.*

we got married. At the time, the legal age in Québec was 21 therefore when I got married; I needed to have my father's permission. My husband and I were later parents to seven children. I recall that the birth of each of my children was one of

the most special moments of my life. With seven children, I did not go into the workforce throughout my life; instead I put a lot of effort and time into my family life. I used to cook desserts for my children's lunches but as soon as they came home from school, they would eat it all, forcing me to start over. Sometimes, I would have to stay up really late to bake! On the 13th of November 2012 [the very day of this interview], my husband and I would have been together for 77 years.

When I look at things today, I'm not satisfied with what the present generation is like. I believe that my generation is better than the generation today because we were satisfied with what we had. Today, they want everything and they want everything right away. We saved up for what we wanted. It is too bad that the generation today has so much debt. When I was younger, the cost of living was very different. My first car was bought at the price of fifty dollars and I later sold it for seventy-five dollars. I remember that when we built our eight-room house on a large piece of land in Sainte-Foy, the house cost us \$15,000. We lived on Jean-Brilliant Street and we were the only house that had a garage attached to it. The land that I lived on was eventually bought by the government for the veterans. When my husband and I bought the piece of land in 1954, it cost \$604 and the same piece of land now is evaluated at over \$89,000.

Although I was never part of the workforce, I have done a lot of volunteer work over the course of my life. In 1956-57 when we had the first English-speaking school, Sainte-Foy Elementary, I was on the PTA board of the neighboring St. Vincent Elementary School for fourteen years. We were cofounders of the skating rink too. I also volunteered for the Red Cross and Cancer Society for twenty-two years. I participated in the March of Dimes, which does not exist anymore, every year for ten years. I would go door to door collecting money for them. The money



Veronica doing her volunteer work.

Photo: Laverdière family collection.

would go to people with polio, a disease at the time that could kill or handicap you for life. For five years, every Monday to Friday, I would go to Saint Brigid's Home to help feed people who were not able to feed themselves. At the age of 87, my doctor asked me to quit the volunteer work and I was disappointed. It was a very rewarding and important part of my life.

One piece of advice I'd like to pass on to future generations is the same my mother and father told me when I got married:

when you go to sleep, kiss the one you love goodnight. Even when you've had a bad day, always kiss each other goodnight.



Veronica Laverdière smiles on with two students, Rosalie Breton and Cedrick Drouin.  
Photo: courtesy of VEQ.

# EXPO 67 AND THEN THE WORLD

*As told by Bonnie Coutts,  
written by Lawrence Lavoie and Rachel Gaboury.*

**B**orn in 1947 as part of the Baby Boomer generation, Bonnie Coutts grew up in her hometown of Quebec City. She was baptised both Catholic and Protestant, though she is not practicing today. She participated in the 1967 International and Universal Exposition or “Expo 67” as a young adult. With a passion for travelling, learning about various cultures and a feel for artwork and education, Bonnie went into teaching. Also an artist at heart, her painting hobby has become a passion. Today she has a studio where she spends her time preparing for an eventual showing.



I always had a real passion for traveling. I first visited Mexico with my parents at a young age and from then on, I’ve visited a dozen countries across the globe. I taught English in Italy for a year at the elementary level and I adored this experience. This trip gave me the opportunity to learn fluent Italian and integrate to their culture. I have also taught in many other countries such as Vietnam and Thailand. I’ve visited most of Europe! I never get enough of the constructive moments where I get to bring something good to the numerous children I’ve had the opportunity to teach, while at the same time fulfilling my own curiosity, passion and interest

about the different ways of living and cultural diversity. I hope my next destination will involve discovering Canada for strangely enough, I haven't had the opportunity yet. I guess it's still to come. I'm trilingual, speaking fluently French, English and Italian as the result of my numerous travels.

I started my Bachelor of Arts degree from St. Lawrence College (back when it was a high school and university program). I interrupted my B.A. to go to Expo 67 in Montreal. This was a very influential part of my life. My experience at Expo 67, also known as the World Fair, started in Florida where I was sent to promote it. This fair regrouped about 60 or so countries from around the world in order for the public to learn about differ-



Expo 67 poster and collage of Expo hostess uniforms © Government of Canada. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada (2013).

Source: Library and Archives Canada.

ent countries, cultures and ways of life. I was an official hostess at Expo 67 at only 19 years old! I was the youngest hostess because the legal age was 21 years old but when I applied to work there, they still employed me.

*I was an official hostess at Expo 67 at only 19 years old!*

I would tour many types of people around the site. Once, I was touring the Ambassador of Ireland and we were in the Russian tent when the Ambassador started asking hard questions (not too diplomatic), and we ended up getting kicked out of the Russian tent. I loved being a part of Expo 67 and I would repeat the experience anytime if I could. I think it was one of the best parts of my life.

After Expo, I went to Milan, Italy where I started my career teaching English part-time in two elementary schools, at IBM as well as doing private tutoring. Upon my return, I completed my degree, and applied at Laval University in translation



Bonnie Coutts teaches students a thing or two as she tells her story.

Photo: courtesy of VEQ.



“Licence ès Lettres”. I had to get a “Certificat en enseignement collegial” in order to teach at the cegep level. While studying at Laval, I taught French part-time at St. Patrick’s High School, cegep de Limoilou and Collège Mérici. Upon graduation, I started my full-time teaching career at the Petit Séminaire de Québec (College de Francois de Laval) to finish career at Cégep François-Xavier-Garneau. Immediately after retiring, I went to Kho Samui, Thailand, where again I found myself teaching English part-time in two elementary schools.

If I would give some lasting advice: believe that you are never safe enough [when you travel], everyone should do as they wish, live the experiences that you will live fully and after decide whether they were worth it or not. Given the experience I’ve gained throughout the years, especially by participating in Expo 67 and traveling around the world, remember that with a smile, you can go anywhere in life!



Bonnie Coutts recounts her story to students with a smile, Lawrence Lavoie and Rachel Gaboury.

Photo: courtesy of VEQ.

## A MEMORABLE LIFE

*As told by Kay Bergeron,  
written by Anne-Sophie Chabot, Jeffrey Morin and Alex Dubé.*

**K**ay Bergeron (maiden name Catherine Hodgson) was born on the 22nd of July 1930, in Québec where she would live throughout her childhood. She is of British origins, her mother being from Liverpool, England and her father of Irish decent. During the war, her family actually lived in Liverpool where her father worked as dock labourer. Living in an English neighbourhood, she would have to walk a long walk, rain or shine, to get to school. Responsible for helping to support her family, she worked hard for her younger siblings and achieved her goals. Kay looks back on her life with pride, no regrets, only memories to be kept and cherished.



As a little girl, I had the chance to go to school. My favourite subjects were History and Geography. Even if I had to walk a long time and go up many stairs to go to school, it didn't bother me since I liked school. At school, every child got along, whether we were French, English or from somewhere else. There were no conflicts between us. I had a great childhood and enjoyed school in this positive environment. This might have influenced why I became a teacher.

*At school, every child got along, whether we were French, English or from somewhere else. There were no conflicts between us.*



St. Patrick's Church 1950, on Grande Allée.

Photo: Irish Heritage Quebec.

Unfortunately, my father was injured during the war so at the age of fourteen, I stopped school and started working to help my family pay for different needs. I began to work at a shoe factory where in time, I became the manager. At one point, I changed jobs and worked at the United Cigar Store as a man-



St. Patrick's Church 1958, on Grande Allée.

Photo: W. B. Edwards collection.



St. Patrick's church when it was situated in the school basement.

Photo: Irish Heritage Quebec

ager as well. Today, I continue to do what I like by teaching History and Geography and also by giving French lessons.

My values all come from an important aspect of my life which is religion. During my childhood, the Church was very important in society as it took care of institutions such as schools. As a Catholic, I practiced my religion by going to church every Sunday and celebrating Catholic holidays. My mother got married at the age of twenty-seven and at twenty-two years old in 1952, it was my turn to get married and have two children. The Quiet Revolution's impact on religion at the time seemed to affect the French community more than the English one in Quebec City. I still go to my parish, St. Patrick's Church, as usual. My faith and values remain a strong part of me to this day.



Kay Bergeron listens carefully to students, Anne-Sophie Chabot, Jeffrey Morin and Alex Dubé.

Photo: courtesy of VEQ.



## COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE

*As told by Patricia Conabree,  
written by Alex Nolan and Jessy Audet.*

Patricia Conabree was born June 10, 1939 in Shawinigan, QC and is of English origin. She is from a family of five children and has one sister and three brothers. Her first job was as a telephone operator where she earned \$21.50 a week. Her favorite hobbies are reading and doing puzzles. The biggest life lesson she shared with us was: don't judge.



Marriages were very different from today. A man had to ask for the father's permission to marry his daughter and marriages were usually small celebrations held between family members. Back then, there was also no sex before marriage and our boyfriends never slept over, or if ever they did, they never slept in the same bed. We would rarely go out to our boyfriend's house and would only move in once we were married. We would also marry young.

*We would rarely go out to our boyfriend's house and would only move in once we were married. We would also marry young.*

My father was a travelling salesman and my best childhood memories are about the surprise trips we would take and the home parties we held in Alma with music and dancing (no booze, just great fun). Back then you waited for a guy to call and ask you on a date. I remember one time, this guy phoned me up to go to the movies and he wanted to know what I was

wearing, I said “why?!” He explained he wanted to wear a suit to match my dress! Dating was fine back then. There wasn’t much sex in that time; it was more about romance and having fun. I left a guy because he couldn’t dance! I loved to dance.

I married at the age of 18 and by the age of 25, I was the mother of six kids. My husband worked in construction and was unemployed for the winter; we would get only \$10 a week to feed our family of eight. Everything had to be planned. The birth of each of my children was the most thrilling moment of my life. When they were born, it was a joy. It was a miracle that two people could make this.

I worked for different telephone companies (Québec telephone, Saguenay telephone, Bell and BC Telephone) for a period, in all maybe 18 years. And in private telephone companies, who answered for lawyers, doctors etc. I was the first telephone operator to work the switchboard in Manicouagan, the Côte-Nord region of Québec.

My most difficult life experience was my first marriage, it traumatized my whole family and my children still have to deal with it today. But, like my mother-in-law once said, back then you would stay for your children. Back then we didn’t have safe houses. If a man were to be caught being violent towards a woman, he would be put to jail for the night and he would be released the next day. Men had a lot of power in those days. For instance, even though women obtained the right to vote, they had to vote for whom their husband voted for or else they would cancel their husband’s vote. I divorced in 1971. I was one of the first and the few to divorce, mostly because you weren’t supposed to divorce, marriage was supposed to be for life.

I finally remarried another man in the army. We lived in Ontario for seven years where I worked for the Federal Government in National Defence as a typist and then CR3 (clerk) in Aeronautic School and then for a translation office. When we



Examples of early Telephone switchboard operators 1957.

Photo: Joe Drazan and the Bygone Walla Walla project.

moved to Vancouver Island I found work as Quality Control Inspector for the military, moving from one base to another. We stayed there for a period of two years. Then, we moved to Germany and stayed there for four years. When I came back from Germany we were posted in Greenwood, Nova Scotia. I came to Quebec City a year later (June 1988) and have been here since. Here in Quebec City I worked for 10 years as an administrative assistant before I retired.





Patricia Conabree smiles as she tells her tale to two students Alex Nolan and Jessy Audet.

Photo: courtesy of VEQ.

# FULL OF EXPERIENCE, FULL OF LIFE

*As told by Jeanine Lefebvre,  
written by Suzy Racine and Natalia Melancon.*

Jeanine Lefebvre was born in Ferme-Neuve, Québec in 1942. At six months of age, her family moved to Toronto and shifted around for a while from Mimico, New Toronto, and St. Maria before settling down in Dunbarton, (about 30 minutes away from Toronto). There were several children and Jeanine was the eldest. Living in an anglophone community since early childhood, neither she nor her siblings learned French directly from their parents who spoke it.



My father was a travelling salesman selling equipment to logging companies all over Québec and New Brunswick, that's how he met my mom. My siblings were all born in different places. After my birth, my dad settled down in Toronto.

When I was 12 years old, my father passed away. He was only 46. My mother received no widow's pension. This resulted in my family moving back to Ferme Neuve, Québec where we had relatives. This was especially difficult for me since not only had I lost a parent, I had also left behind my home and friends. The cultural change was a shock as I was suddenly put into a francophone community but I spoke only English. People here were much more religious (Catholic) and I was used

to big-city diversity. My mother remarried a lumberjack a short while after and started a new family with her husband.

There were several differences between Toronto and Québec that I noticed around the 1950s. There was the obvious change of languages: English to French. School was also quite different. The year before I moved to Québec, I attended a mixed school where my teacher, Mr. Parkinson, was male. This was pretty rare. When I moved to Québec, I went to an all-girls school, with nuns as teachers. Québec was much more religious than Toronto at the time. There was a lot of religion in class; I had to learn the petit catéchisme by heart. You could have learned a lot of things there but one fourth of class time was spent on religion.

Discipline was also quite different: in Toronto, teachers used the strap, while in Québec it was not needed as no one would dare disobey the nuns. The interaction was easier for me all the same because I was sociable. I took extra classes after school offered free of charge by the nuns to learn French. And today, even though my first language is English – vocabulary wise – I’m actually better in French, thanks to all the time I spent in a French school!

*I also felt like a star since all the parents wanted me to be around their kids to teach them English and all the kids wanted to be around me so they could teach me French.*

The biggest shock was still moving to a new area. I was used to the big city, and I now lived in a small rural area. But this wasn’t necessarily a negative experience though it felt like I had moved to a new country! I also felt like a star since all the parents wanted me to be around their kids to teach them English and all the

kids wanted to be around me so they could teach me French. I was a quick learner and as a result obtained my high school diploma by the age of 16. After that I was on my own. I had no problem getting jobs since I was bilingual. I was very independent and had started working at a hospital in the kitchens. I eventually moved up to being in charge of the

nursery. I no longer resided with my family and went on to become a switchboard operator for airline companies in Montreal.

In 1962, I applied to become an airline stewardess for Eastern Airlines, which at the time was considered a glamorous job. After interviewing over 200 applicants at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel downtown, the airline hired only two people, myself and another lady. I went through a 6 week training program at their headquarters in Miami, Florida on first aid, evacuations, emergency landings and other subjects required to become a flight attendant. Finally, I was transferred to Washington, D.C, a very busy commercial and business airport, and worked aboard on some of the first DC-8-61 jets. I was constantly traveling but never commuted to Montreal where my boyfriend was. He was disappointed and I was getting lonesome. So, after eight months, I quit my job to get married. It was actually stipulated in the contract that anyone who got married would be automatically fired.

In 1963, we moved to Quebec City and had two children, a daughter and a son. We had a sailboat and belonged to the yacht-club with a big ancient club house with only a few members but it was like a family.

When my two kids got the measles, I called the doctor and he came to our house. He sent me the bill a month later and it cost only \$5.00. To think that now I would have to bring them to the emergency with a fever and wait for hours!



Eastern Air Lines – Tried and Proven Over Billions of Passenger Miles (1948).

Photo: Vintage Ad Browser website.



Transcontinental & Western Air's Air Hostess Employment Ad (1945).

Photo: Vintage Ad Browser website.

At age 30, I returned to school and became a teacher. I went on to teach for 20 years. My husband and I have now been together for nearly 50 years! He has been living at Saint Brigid's Home for 6 years. Even though his memory is bad and he doesn't remember all of our past life together, I visit him every day and feel the love we have. We are still very much in love. Our two children have grown up, and we now have five grandchildren.

All I can say to those who are starting in life is to take advantage of all the opportunities that life grants you. Don't be afraid to do it because the more experiences you accumulate, the richer a person you are.



Jeanine Lefebvre recounts her stories to students, Suzy Racine and Natalia Melancon.

Photo: courtesy of VEQ.



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