

PINE CLIFF RESORT 1-888-756-3014
www.pinecliff.com Combermere, ON

Fully Equipped Rental Cottages
OFSC Trail E109 Nearby

Indoor Saltwater Pool & Hot Tub
Workout Facility

SUNNY HILL RESORT

Cottage's & Camping on Bark Lake in Barry's Bay ON
Indoor Saltwater Pool and Hot Tub

www.sunnyhillresort.com 613-756-2640

castle building centres

Wood Pellets Now Available!

Keetch's Building Supplies
613-757-2616 | 6 North St, KILLALOE

C.A. Reiche & Sons Ltd.
613-735-4104 | Hwy 41, PEMBROKE

Eganville Country Depot
613-628-2272 | Hwy 41, 60 W. EGANVILLE

The VALLEY GAZETTE

Serving Barry's Bay and Neighbours weekly

Celebrating 10 YEARS

\$2.00 tax included Agreement # 42064023

Wednesday, April 7, 2021 Vol. 12 - Issue 14 LOCAL NEWS, LOCAL PEOPLE. OUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER.



The Valley Gazette takes a look at the history of healthcare in The Valley. See page 13.

Mrs. Zita Glofcheskie, the first President of the St. Francis Memorial Hospital Women's Auxiliary, presents the silver cup donated to the first baby born in St. Francis Memorial Hospital. The new baby is Andrea Mary, daughter of Elizabeth and Dr. Andrew Chapeskie. Receiving the cup and holding the baby is her mother, while Sister Mary Emma, Administrator, and Sister M. Hedwig look on with Mr. Henry J. Chapeskie, President of the Hospital Board and grandfather to the baby.

Photo credit The Barry's Bay Review, December 1, 1960

This Month's... **SPY THE ROBIN**

FIND THE ROBIN AND WIN! GET YOUR BALLOT ON PAGE 13

County discusses vaccine, base traffic, and homelessness

COLIN KERR
Staff Reporter

PEMBROKE – The monthly meeting of the county government of Renfrew began, as it typically does, with an address from its Warden, Debbie Robinson. She addressed a number of the developments in the area over the month. One of the most impressive among these was, of course, the launching of the partnership with Rogers Communications to improve cell service throughout Eastern Ontario.

She added that she “had the opportunity to participate in the confidential technical briefing for the Province’s budget. When I heard about the \$2.8 billion for broadband I was very excited. While the details of the rollout are still not known, I am hopeful that EORN’s [Eastern Ontario Rural Network] Broadband Gig Project, which would bring massive improvements to broadband access for residents of Eastern Ontario, will be the recipient of some of those funds.”

She added that “the County of Renfrew continues to be a proponent of a regional approach to broadband access. Every municipal council representative here wants their residents to have reliable and affordable internet service, including those living in our rural areas. This is critical for the recovery and growth of our local economy as well as the education of our children.”

The warden also discussed the issues of physician recruitment and the one-year anniversary of RC VTAC (Renfrew County Virtual Triage and Assessment) Program.

Robinson also discussed having met with representatives of Garrison Petawawa. “The meeting was initiated following a meeting of our Operations Committee as members wanted to know the status of the Brindle Road access and the traffic circle planned for the entrance onto the Garrison.”

Story continued on page 2.

IN THIS ISSUE

Economy update.....3

Readership survey.....6

Wilno Heritage Museum.....15

Bosco Easter.....16

Barry's Bay / Combermere Office

Margaret
Cathy Pitts Broker 613 602 1514

Haden-Pawlowski
Sales Rep 613 312 9389

Tetyana Moiseyeva
Sales Rep 416 460 6377

office 613 756 6789
toll free 877 818 8802

R/MAX
Country Classics Ltd., Brokerage
Independently owned and operated

\$399,900

Enjoy rural living in this lovely 3 bedroom home surrounded by fields near the Bonnechere River. New 2021 3 car garage to store your boat and park your toys with 100 amp separate panel and storage room attached. 2 garage door openers included. Enjoy this open concept home with 2 decks and rustic features. Beautiful spacious living/dining/kitchen area. #1028

\$279,900

Lot 58 acres on Kamaniskeg Lake road for sale, Highway 62 West of Combermere. With lake front access through crown land and views of Kamaniskeg Lake #5007

\$224,900

KILLALOE
Property has been converted to 3 bedroom 2-bath unit and 3 bedroom 1-bath unit. Use as family with granny suite or live in one and rent the other. #6079

\$239,900

KILLALOE
Commercial building in excellent location across from busy grocery store and variety store. So many opportunities here. Café, Barber Shop, Office Space(s). Easy to convert to your requirements. #6077

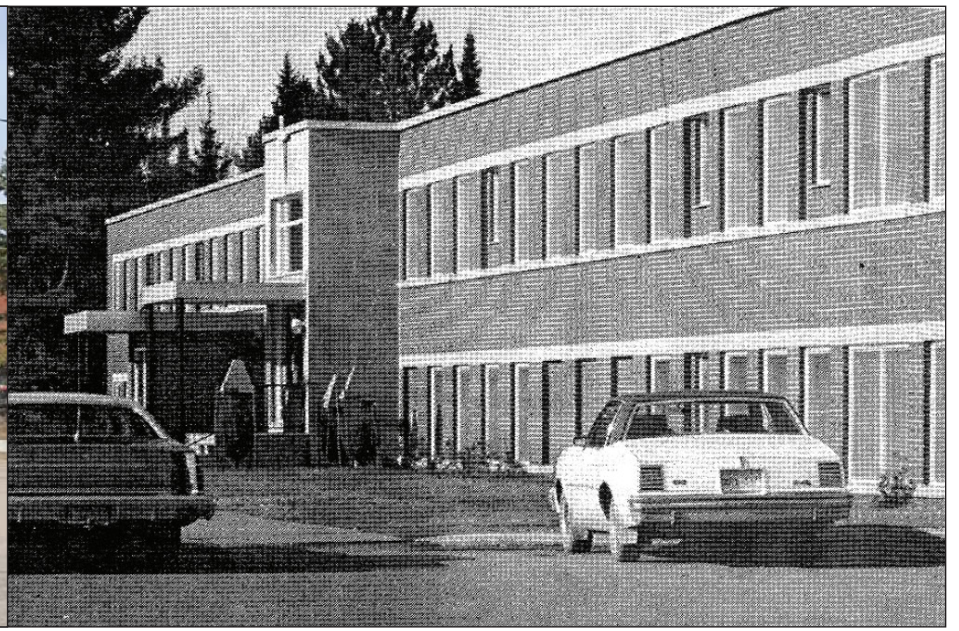
\$499,900

300' waterfront on the Madawaska River. Near Palmer Rapids. 1.6 acres with 4 bedroom, 2 bath . 2 bedroom cottage with income in the summer months. Overlooks the river. Lovely sunsets! A kayak/canoe paradise! No worries of flooding! #6073

\$799,000

BARRY'S BAY
A Piece of Paradise! 37 acres and over 1,040' west facing on Bedard Pond. Total privacy with good swimming. Year round home being renovated with a new 23 x 30 addition under construction. Bunkie and 2 Barns. Minutes to Barry's Bay. #6060

History of Healthcare in the Valley introduction and overview



St. Francis Memorial Hospital now (left) and in 1980 (right).

Photo credit for 1980 photo: *this week* November 26, 1980

KATRINA BOGUSKI
Staff Reporter

BARRY’S BAY – The history of healthcare in the Valley demonstrates the tenacity and vision of local residents. This series of articles will explore various aspects of local healthcare as it developed from the days of early settlement through the establishment of the hospital and up to the present day and our vision for the future.

We have reached out to several local experts for more information on various issues and events that marked the milestones for healthcare in the region, and we are still keen to interview more people to hear their stories.

This initial part in the series lays out some of the topics that will be explored in future instalments. If you have stories

or photos related to one or more of these issues, or if you think of someone who might be good to interview, please contact *The Valley Gazette* to set up a phone or email interview.

Each section begins with a quotation from Hippocrates, the Greek philosopher who is known as the ‘Father of Medicine’. It is from him that ideas and ethics contained in the Hippocratic Oath are thought to originate. While he may not have written the words himself, the oath is derived from the principles on which he based his medicine. His words serve as a way to capture the intentions and accomplishments of the local community at various points in our history.

THE EARLY DAYS

“Prayer indeed is good, but while calling

on the gods a man should himself lend a hand.”

In the days before the arrival of Europeans, and in the early days of settlement medical help came not from professional doctors, but from the family, friends and neighbours who were willing to lend a hand. With limited knowledge of how to help, the best that many could do in a medical emergency was put their two hands together and pray for help.

This response seems to have been quite effective. Not only did enough early settlers survive their bouts with disease and injury to pass their genes on to subsequent generations, their prayers for help were also answered in the arrival of reinforcement from various religious groups who would prove to be essential in medical emergencies.

Was your family part of the early settlement community? Do you have stories of how they survived? Do you know what practices local First Nations communities had to cure or ward off disease?

ROLL OF THE CHURCH IN HEALTHCARE

“Wherever the art of medicine is loved, there is also a love of humanity.”

Since the miracles of Jesus, the Church has been involved in healthcare. Even those who would disagree with or criticize the Church on various points of doctrine will often recognize the significant contribution that the Church has made to health care over the past 2000 years.

The dichotomy that the many see between religion and science is a modern notion. Scientific enquiry grew and developed alongside religion and philosophy, and medicine has always been strongly encouraged by the Church.

In the local area, Catherine Doherty, the founder of Madonna House, and the Sisters of St. Joseph are some of the notable people from the Church who were instrumental in developing local healthcare.

Were you or someone from your family part of one of the religious communities who provided healthcare locally? What motivated these individuals and groups to focus on healthcare? Do you have photos of some of the sisters or other religious workers who helped especially in the days prior to the hospital?

BUILDING OF THE HOSPITAL

“Many admire, few know.”

As the population grew and the need for healthcare increased, the establishment of the hospital was an inevitable next step. While help from family and well-meaning volunteers was important and continued to be part of the overall picture, the need for people who knew modern medicine meant

there needed to be a hospital where they could practice it.

The hospital would also be a place where doctors, nurses, and other healthcare professionals could access the equipment they needed to diagnose and treat disease.

Were you involved in the establishment of the hospital? Do you have a story of how you or your family member was helped by the hospital? Do you have photos of the building of hospital or photos of the people who worked there over the years? Who were the doctors, nurses and healthcare workers who spent their careers caring for local people?

RETURNING TO OUR ROOTS THE AGE OF ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE

“If we could give every individual the right amount of nourishment and exercise, not too little and not too much, we would have found the safest way to health.”

As the practice of modern medicine developed in the area, along with it grew a greater appreciation for some of the traditional methods of healing such as herbal medicine and alternative healthcare.

Today, these natural forms of medicine often focus on prevention of disease and go hand-in-hand with promoting a healthy exercise regime that goes well with living in the beautiful natural setting of the Madawaska Valley.

Do you practice a natural or alternative form of healthcare? Why did you choose to set up your practice in this area? In what ways has the local culture influenced the type of medicine you practice?

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

“Whenever a doctor cannot do good, he must be kept from doing harm.”

As life becomes more complex, our diseases and cures also seem to evolve. The pandemic has demonstrated how medicine in the present day is fraught with consequences that impact not only individuals, but entire communities. The phrase “We’re all in this together” has been bandied about as a slogan to rally support for measures to help contain the virus and “flatten the curve”. While a unified response may be effective at treating some modern medical problems, there are other medical issues such as medically assisted suicide which many locals resist supporting.

What is your vision for local healthcare? What are you doing to preserve the legacy healthcare in our region?

We look forward to hearing your views on these issues as we explore the history of local healthcare. Thank you to everyone who has already come forward with information and photos to help with this series. To send in your contributions please contact michel@thevalleygazette.ca

THIS MONTH’S...

SPY THE ROBIN

The snow has melted, so our sneaky snowman has gone away until winter. Instead, every week for the month of April, we’ll be hiding this robin somewhere in the newspaper. She could be **anywhere**; in a photo, behind an ad etc... Find her and fill out the ballot below each week (there will only be one ballot for the month of April) Get entered for a **CHANCE TO WIN \$100 IN GROCERIES!**

Winners will be announced in the **first newspaper of each month. (So get your ballot in ASAP after the April 28 paper)** Get the kids to help if you want and have some fun. New prizes every month!

SPY THE ROBIN BALLOT

Name _____

Phone Number _____

Location in April 7 _____

Location in April 14 _____

Location in April 21 _____

Location in April 28 _____

Come drop off your ballot at our office or send ballot to:
41 Bay Street, P.O. Box 375 | Barry’s Bay ON, KoJ 1B0

Healthcare in the Valley the early days, part two

KATRINA BOGUSKI
Staff Reporter

COMBERMERE – The decisions of individuals can impact entire communities. In the history of local healthcare, the decisions to advertise for doctors, and the decisions of people to answer those calls eventually led to the building of the St. Francis Memorial Hospital. However, the hospital took some time to develop.

This second part in our series on the history of healthcare in the Madawaska Valley looks at the question of how people coped with medical emergencies prior to the establishment of the hospital. While these stories are often recounted within families, they are mostly unknown to newcomers who move to the area and, as generations pass, it is important to capture the stories of the people who formed this area. We benefit daily from their legacies and remembering how much people sacrificed to build up this area is a good way to help preserve what they have built for future generations.

Many times, details of local history are not recorded; they are simply stories that are known. When they are written down, they may be hard to find. Much gratitude is owed to those who do bother to research and record local history and it is also owed to those who help locate that information when it is needed.

The information in this article is prepared thanks to the work of Theresa Prince whose record of early doctors and local buildings filled in many gaps. Her local book, *The Kovalskie (Kowalski) Family of Barry's Bay*, also includes many details about early local schools. Thanks to the staff at the Madawaska Valley Library for recommending this resource. Thanks is also owed to Kathy McVady from the archives of Madonna House Apostolate in Combermere for her help in supplying photos and additional information.

This article is a thumbnail sketch of the history of local healthcare before the hospital, and additional research on this subject would help build on the work of Theresa Prince. If you have additional information on this subject, please share your stories and photos with *The Valley Gazette* to keep the conversation going.

Under the heading, "Early Doctors to Serve the Barry's Bay Area," Prince writes, "In the fall of 1917 council discussed the possibility of advertising for a doctor to come and reside in the village of Barry's Bay. At the January 11, 1918 meeting it was recommended that John Omanique, Charles Murry and John McRae be appointed to deal with the lack of a resident doctor."

The advertising must have worked because eventually several doctors did come in succession to provide for the medical needs in the area. A few details about many of these doctors are supplied in Prince's book. The doctors named there include: Dr. John Chanonhouse, Dr. J.P. Quigley, Dr. J. W. Wheeler, Dr. George Samuel Sadler, Dr. D. A. MacGregor, Dr. P.P. Smyth, Dr. John V. Byrne, Dr. J. Phipps McDermott, Dr. Patrick F. Dooley and Dr. Leo Roy.

It is noted that some of these doctors, including Dr. Chanonhouse, actually lived in Eganville and they served Barry's Bay from there. In the early days without the availability of cars and ambulances, this would have been a considerable distance for doctors to travel especially during an emergency.



Catherine Doherty (front) with nursing class 1948-49.

Photos submitted by Madonna House archives and used with their permission.

According to Prince, "Dr. J.W. Wheeler may have been the first resident doctor of the Village of Barry's Bay. He was an elderly man when he arrived from Cornwall and set up his practise around 1921." Prince notes that his office was originally in the "Doyle House" on Opeongo Line to the west of St. Lawrence O'Toole's church. This building was also apparently home to the first ice-cream parlour in Barry's Bay.

The influence of the local doctors was not limited to offering medical advice. According to Prince, "During the Depression Years of the 1930's, Dr. McGregor requested that the people of Barry's Bay take up a petition for 'work' for the men of the village. As a result the government provided "road work" for 88 cents a day."

Dr. McGregor served the area at the same time as Dr. Smyth and is said to have assisted him with numerous surgeries at the Barry's Bay private hospital on Bay Street. The hospital was set up in a house which had been built by Anthony Maika and Mary Etmanskie around 1908.

Under the section about the private hospital, which had its license approved on March 4, 1935, Prince writes, "Operations were performed on the dining room table assisted by Dr. McGregor, Dr. John V. Birne and Dr. Smyth's wife, a registered nurse." The book also contains a photo of the house where the private hospital was housed.

As we can see from this description, the resources available to local doctors were primitive and often made available through the cooperation of local residents willing to share their resources.



Catherine Doherty shown holding a nursing bag.

We study history because from it we can often glean information that will provide solutions to the problems of the present. From history we can also gain a greater understanding of the effort and investment that went into building the institutions we often rely on heavily when we are in need.

In addition to buildings, locals also lent their individual expertise whenever it was needed. Catherine Doherty, the founder of Madonna House was among those who assisted people when they were in need and a doctor was not available in time.

In a letter to *The Valley Gazette*, Madonna House Archivist Kathy McVady wrote, "Although Catherine had gone to Montreal General Nursing School and St. Michael's Nursing School for various lengths of time, she was never a Registered Nurse. Her nursing training was in Russia and she served on the front of WWI until the Revolution. She also served in that capacity in the armed services hospital in Murmansk. And after that she did what might be termed neighbourly care nursing in Toronto and Harlem. Thus, when referring to her medical training, it's probably best to say she was trained in nursing services. Locally, she was used by a couple of the local doctors as their back-up for home delivery cases and during the Asian flu epidemic in the late '40's, early '50's."

Doherty was also instrumental in helping local women receive training in home nursing and she helped to reactivate the local Red Cross. For a time, there was also a dispensary and a Red Cross loan cupboard operated from the house in Combermere where St. Joseph's is today.

Institutions like the local hospital did not emerge overnight. They came after years of hard work and they emerged as a solution to real problems that people faced. Before we complain about how we wish things could be, it is good to pause and remember how far we have come. Surgeries are no longer performed on dining room tables and we have several competent and service-oriented doctors now living in Barry's Bay – and they do not arrive on horseback to medical emergencies. All things considered, life is still pretty good.

To contribute your comments or stories to upcoming editions, please contact michel@thevalleygazette.ca

The third instalment will look at the establishment of the St. Francis Memorial Hospital and contributions the Sisters of St. Joseph made to staffing it.

Spring Sale

**Order by April 30 and
save 5% off new orders
or up to 25% off select stock items**

Beautiful Monuments

in every price range crafted
personally for you... by

Campbell Monument

Canadian Craftsmanship Since 1909

Barry's Bay Representative
Jerome Brotton
Flower Country - The Mayflower
(613) 756-1644

Pembroke
1344 Pembroke St. West
(613) 735-5178 or
1-(800) 567-6228

History of Healthcare in the Valley (Part 3)

St. Francis Memorial Hospital a symbol of unity worth remembering

KATRINA BOGUSKI
Staff Reporter

BARRY'S BAY- The problem of our community dividing into factions has been a growing concern for many people. The story of our local hospital is a good reminder that locals have a long history of coming together to solve collective problems. When everyone is allowed to participate freely in their own way, according to their own means, the cumulative impact of those contributions is tremendous. We have come together in the past; we can come together going forward. Maybe we just need a reminder of how to do it.

When people feel that their contributions have been received with gratitude and respect, they are more than willing to welcome newcomers to join them on their projects. Monseigneur Biernacki's vision for a hospital in Barry's Bay could not have been started and sustained without the support of local families, businesses and governments. Likewise, the support the hospital received from the Sisters of St. Joseph, who were once newcomers to the area, demonstrates the important contributions recent arrivals can make when given the chance to do so. Although they were once the new kids on the block, the sisters took the vision locals had for the hospital and hit the ground running. When they were not running, they were praying. They did not do it alone however, they kept everyone involved and appreciated their contributions.

Many thanks to Sr. Rosenda Brady who did more than her fair share of running for the hospital when she was its administrator until 1975. Sr. Rosenda helped identify some resources available through the Sisters of St. Joseph Archives. A great thanks also goes to Dr. Malinowski, the hospital's current chief of staff, for sending in a document which had been prepared for the 50th anniversary of the hospital. It is a compilation of photos, newspaper clippings and other memorabilia which tell the story of the hospital's history from its opening in 1960 until 2010.

In the years since the booklet was prepared, those involved in the hospital appear to have kept its traditions moving forward in ways that honour those who built it. The future of the hospital and this community depend on everyone continuing to do their part.

What is particularly brilliant about the memorial booklet is the way that it documents just how many people are responsible for the hospital's establishment and its continued



Photos submitted

success. It shows the hospital had buy in from the entire community and it gives credit to a diverse range of people. On every page, it captures the stories of people giving to each other. Among the many, many names listed in the booklet, here in no particular order, are a few you may remember:

Sr. Emma Varney, first Administrator, Sr. Mary Denis, Annie Shulist, Wayne Hoare, Sr. Martha Prince, Dr. Andrew Chapeskie, Dr. Fred Eggert, Dr. Jack Burger, Adele Hildebrandt, Erva Okum, and Margaret Grodzka. Rev. Maika, Evelyn Yantha, Margaret Peplinskie, Margaret Coulas. Theresa Coulas, and Beverly Schimmens. Sr. Imelda, Mary Wingle, Elizabeth Mayhew, Sr. Felicitas, Dianne Schimmens, Rita Kuiack, Annie Golka, Barbara Conway, Winnifrey Burchat, Dorothy Marquardt and many, many more. It remembers not only the doctors, nurses and

medical staff, but also those important people who kept the hospital functioning through housekeeping and plant maintenance. It also notes a few significant moments in the lives of some patients.

In commemorating the opening of the hospital by Premier Frost, and noting the 1,500 people in attendance on opening day, the memorial booklet says "The grand niece of Msgr. Biernacki, seven-year-old Beverly Flynn, assisted Hon. Leslie M. Frost in the official ribbon cutting to open St. Francis Memorial Hospital. She was to have presented the Premier with the scissors to be used in the ceremony, but Mr. Frost – in a grand gesture of respect for her late uncle – insisted that she share the scissors and assist with the ribbon cutting. He gave the little girl a piece of the ribbon as a small keepsake and a gentle kiss on the cheek"

After it opened, there were continual milestones for the hospital which included the acquisition of new equipment and the addition of new services. A news story from 1971 said, "St. Francis Memorial Hospital announced today that it will provide ambulance services commencing Jan. 1st. The supervisor of the department will be Jack Golka. In the past ambulance services were provided by William Goulet. Sr. Rosenda said he is to be commended for his availability and generous service."

Another huge accomplishment for the hospital and for the community which built it, was the hospital's expansion. A news story in the booklet says, "After many hours of planning the final stamp of approval for the expansion of St. Francis Memorial was awarded in September 1983. The new addition provided a 17-bed chronic care wing, a new emergency department, the creation of private patient rooms, the addition of air conditioning

and electric heating as well as other changes involving almost every department in the Hospital. The total cost of the expansion was projected at 2.8 million of which the province provided five-sixths leaving the community to raise \$600,000."

These were, and are large sums of money for a community of our size. Nevertheless, the hospital has a history of outstanding fundraising efforts that bring people together. One of the fundraising efforts noted in the booklet was "The Quarter Mile Project." It is unclear when it took place, but it was a project to raise funds for the new expansion. Maybe you were a part of it along with others like Jody Sernoskie who is listed as being age 4 and Samantha Mitchell who was said to be 10 at the time. A young Geris Serran and his sister Jade also participated.

The town lined up quarters on the street side by side and together they pitched in \$3,500. The project did not care which group people belonged to, what their credentials were, what their political or religious affiliations were or where they came from. It asked for a small contribution of quarters and invited everyone to participate. It is not that amounts people put in were so enormous, it is the fact that people and their quarters were able to line up together in a show of tremendous unity.

The memorial book reminds us "The foresight, determination and vision of Msgr. Biernacki were significant factors in the planning and building of the Hospital. As a humanitarian and advocate for the people, he was strongly aware of the need for a hospital and medical care for a growing community. In the early 1940 's he shared his vision with the members of his parish and launched the dream...Msgr. Biernacki passed away... Dec. 31, 1958. Mr. Henry J. Chapeskie, an experienced businessman, dedicated parishioner, and community minded citizen was involved in establishing the Hospital since inception. In 1947 he donated the land and formulated the plans for the Hospital. He obtained the charter from the province in 1952 and served as treasurer for twelve years on the Hospital Association. In 1959, upon Msgr. Biernacki's death, he continued the dream by accepting the position of Hospital Board President and assumed the responsibility for construction and completion of the Hospital in 1960."

Big dreams galvanize communities; petty factions rip them part. We need more big dreams brought to fruition by small contributions made by many people. No matter how small, or imperfect, a person's contribution may be, the important thing to remember is that they were willing to make it.

A single quarter placed in the quarter mile project would not make or break the hospital budget, but a single person excluded from participating in community projects could break not only the chain of connection between us but also the spirit of community that has built and sustained institutions like St. Francis Memorial Hospital.

This series is meant to be a conversation starter about the history of healthcare in our region, and we continue to welcome contributions from readers in the weeks ahead. Next week we will look at alternative medicine and its contributions to healthcare in the valley. Thank you to everyone who has been reading and contributing to this series.



Community Garden Projects 2021

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

Consideration will be only given under the following conditions:

- Only applications from non-profit, charitable or government organizations are eligible for consideration of funding.
- The applicant assures that physical distancing is enforced.
- Participants must follow Covid safety protocols as per RCD Health Unit.
- Application is submitted by **Friday, May 14, 2021.**

FOR DETAILS VISIT THE COVID-19 INFORMATION PAGE AT: www.countyofrenfrew.on.ca

Healthcare in the Valley, Part 4 - Natural and traditional medicines have many streams converging in the Valley

KATRINA BOGUSKI
Staff Reporter

MADAWASKA VALLEY – What we think of as “modern medicine” began sometime in the 18th century in conjunction with the Industrial Revolution. As people saw the advantages machinery could bring to their lives, in the western world at least, various fields of medicine quickly became focused on the use of technology and measurement to cure illness and disease. Sometimes, the holistic needs of the patient were lost in the rapid pursuit of chemical and technological advancement.

Fortunately, many ancient forms of medicine which maintain a natural and human-centred approach to healing managed to survive; sometimes that survival took place under extreme conditions and at a great cost to those who practiced ancient forms of healing. At various times governments, corporations and even ecclesiastical authorities restricted people’s ability to practice natural medicine.

We are fortunate that here in the Madawaska Valley, there is a strong culture which appreciates the contributions traditional practices can bring the lives of many. Local practitioners are often well trained and adept at applying practices from multiple branches of natural or traditional medicine; these practitioners and the many individuals and companies who grow herbs or produce other products intended to improve the wellbeing of people are an important part of the history of local healthcare.

The *Valley Gazette* reached out to several people who have been instrumental in promoting healthy living in the Valley; there are many other people who also have contributed to the history of natural healthcare and we welcome their contributions to keep the conversation about the history of local healthcare going.

In an email and telephone exchange with author Robbie Anderman, *The Valley Gazette* asked “Who are the people or groups who come to mind when you think of the history of natural medicine in the Valley?” Anderman’s response demonstrates the rich and varied streams which have influenced natural medicine in the region.

Anderman noted that, the people of the Algonquin Nation, including Ethel LaValley, kept the traditions alive and well. As did Eleanor Commanda of Pikwakanagan, and many others.

He also said, “Catherine Doherty of Madonna House... collected an extensive herbal library over the years, based on her education in Russia when growing up there. Sandra Woods was the herbalist when I was there in ’71 and I used their library to research for my *Healing Trees* book in the late 70s for several days.”

He recounted a personal experience from his own time staying at Madonna House saying, “When I was living at Madonna House in ’71, I had a case of jaundice... and they put me in isolation, a cabin by the river, and brought me dandelion tea several times a day.” He added “...as I followed the instructions in “Back to Eden” by Jethro Kloss... and had a vegetarian diet... and my blood tests showed great improvement in one week... and in three weeks was better than most... so I went back to their farm and got back to work.”

There were other influences too that helped to establish a healthy attitude in the area toward natural remedies. Anderman said, “In 1971, the people of the Canadian Whole Earth Almanac came to the Killaloe area and did the research and eventual publication of their “Healing Almanac”. This had many local “back to the land” people doing research (especially Bob Schrei of Morninglory, now in New Mexico) and writing articles for this. It covered about 100 natural healing topics with basic reviews and “links” to where to seek more information about them.”

According to Anderman, “Many local people bought and kept copies of this edition... opening minds and hearts to natural healing modalities.”

There was also a long list of people past and present who contributed to the natural healthcare in the Valley. Among those mentioned was “Dr. Bruce Harris who practiced a mix of natural and conventional modalities in his medical practice.”

Anderman said, “Betty Anne Daviss came up from Burnstown and then Ottawa to help with home birthing, including three in our family starting in 1984, as a full time practicing midwife... and she still is practicing in the Ottawa region.” He noted her work inspired several in the area to help with home births and that now there is a full-time midwifery practice in Renfrew County, as well as several doulas.



Dr. Sandy Musclow is a naturopathic doctor who is also trained in Chinese Medicine (acupuncture) and anthroposophic medicine. She practices in Barry’s Bay
Photo submitted

He noted that Mrs. John Burchat was a local midwife back in the 1920s and 1930s and that Catherine Doherty of Madonna House assisted in home births in the Combermere area during her time.

There is a wide range of practices that have contributed to helping people improve and restore their health through natural means. These run the gamut from massage, herbal therapy, acupuncture, Chinese medicine, meditation and many more. Anderman said, “My wife, Christina, began a massage therapy clinic on Lake Street in Killaloe in 1982 as a Registered Massage Therapist. Several others followed her example since then.”

There also were many small-scale producers of herbal products which have grown out of the area; some of these have grown to be thriving companies. Algonquin Herbal Teas, which are now found across North America and St. Francis Herb Farm which is in the midst of launching yet another expansion are among the most well-known.

Locals had access to products made by these companies and others through many places like the Killaloe Craft and Community Fair which began in 1976 as well as through places like Grandma’s Pantry, Stephano’s, The Rose Garden in Eganville and other family-owned retail businesses.

To help educate people on the use of herbs available locally, Morninglory farm hosted an Ottawa Valley Herbalist Gathering several years ago where people attended and presented workshops.

Anderman said, “If it was not for natural healthcare, we wouldn’t all be here. The drug pharmaceutical industry began 120 plus-or-minus years ago... only recently in human history... Our ancestors had to rely on what was here and what simple remedies they could create or learn from the people who were here before us. This pharmaceutical path is new... and just a blip that seems to be passing as more and more people lose trust in it...”

The Valley’s openness to natural medicine is also influencing a new generation to settle in or return to the area after completing their studies. Dr. Sandy Musclow said, “I grew up here in a farming family, so the connection to my community has brought me back here. It is a gift to bring my experiences and knowledge back to the Valley to share with folks here where healthcare options are stretched and limited, particularly in the adjunctive care.”

When asked about the types of medicine she practices, Dr. Musclow replied, “I am a board-certified, licenced (in the US and Canada) naturopathic doctor.” She also holds a Masters degree in Chinese Medicine (acupuncture). She

added, “I [also] practice anthroposophic medicine, which biodynamic gardeners, and Waldorf school affiliates would recognize as an extension of Western biomedical healthcare that considers factors beyond disruptions in biochemistry and physiology as indicators for disease and illness.”

Musclow practices in Barry’s Bay at the Natural Health Centre founded by Dr. Colette Szalay. When asked why she chose to open the Health Centre in this area, Dr. Szalay replied, “Barry’s Bay was the area we chose to settle in after visiting it many times over the years when my father settled on Papineau Lake, after moving from Toronto years before. I fell in love with this area and my husband and I knew it would be a great place to raise our son, who was just an infant when we made the big move (at the time from the Ottawa area). When I started practicing, at first it was just to build up a practice slowly while tending to a young child, and didn’t have any original intention to ‘go big’ until this building came up for sale before our son turned 1 years old.”

Szalay noted, “Small towns seem to be the places where practitioners of all types of healthcare are starting to flock to because of the simpler lifestyle and beauty offered. There are still those ambitious city-folk who wouldn’t dream of setting up practices anywhere rural, but more and more new graduates are looking for small-town living and places to raise their families. Rural settings such as ours, are also the hub of cottagers, and summer and winter activity-enthusiasts flock to this area. Added to this are the locals and long-term residents, and the Centre is kept busy year-round.”

She added, “The incredibly fortunate aspect of Barry’s Bay is that a town of this size has a hospital and the services provided by dedicated medical doctors, as well as our local lab-testing facility. Residents have the security of an emergency department, and having a hospital is a huge attraction to people considering this area as a place to move to, whether young families or retirees. To me, the inception of this hospital in 1960 for a town of this size is a significant milestone.”

Szalay went on to say, “...The Natural Health Centre provides many services under one roof, completing the full picture of healthcare in this area. I like to think of myself as the one who saw a vision of a ‘one-stop-shopping’ centre, where we have services like: physiotherapy, naturopathic medicine, chiropractic, acupuncture, massage therapy, bioenergy medicine, orthotics/foot care, counselling, psychotherapy, social work, mediation, to name a few. We also house offices for not-for-profit community services like developmental services, pastoral care, and a training and learning centre. As we expanded and modernized the building over the years (including both floors fully wheelchair accessible), slowly we attracted more practitioners and were able to expand the scope of services provided. We now have 10 offices with up to 12 different people working at various times.” More information on the services offer can be found at NaturalHealthBB.com

One final note from Robbie Anderman, whose wisdom and patience have contributed much to many aspects of living in the valley. He reminded us that “Poverty and starvation caused more ill health than diseases...” And that, “Diet, exercise, thinking positive thoughts... organic food, the way our ancestors grew food...” all help contribute to a healthy life.



Barry’s Bay Natural Health Care Centre Houses many natural health practitioners under one roof. Photo submitted