

LOCAL NEWS

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Memories of Mayholm

By Matthew McCully

“If we don’t put our history out there, it’s not going to be there in any way, shape or form,” commented Lydia May, as she flipped through the long and detailed history of Mayholm Farm, compiled so her children and grandchildren would remember the family’s connection to the property.

These days, there aren’t many homes still standing or properties held by the same family for over 100 years.

Mayholm Farm in Lake Lyster is one of the few.

According to May, history can quickly slip through the cracks if people don’t take the time to think about who came before them on the shores of Townships lakes, or which families worked the land, now subdivided, or built up with shiny new housing developments.

To illustrate her point, May explained that the original name for Lake Lyster was actually Lester.

In the early 1900s a surveyor with the name Lyster came through the area. Whether it was done by accident or deliberately is unknown, but after the surveyor’s visit, all documentation

described the town as Lyster.

“Things happen, I guess. We’re human,” May said, adding that in those days, people were too busy trying to earn a living and keep clothes on their backs to worry about a typo.

“In this day and age, so many don’t have the mind to remember,” May said. At the request of her children, May pieced together the life and times of Mayholm.

The May family, of Irish, Scottish and English descent, emigrated from Europe, and made their way to the area, coming up through Maine.

Wilber May and his wife, Mildred Jane Martin, bought the property now known as Mayholm, from John Fox in 1903.

“Wilber and Mildred were entrepreneurs,” May said.

At that time, the train had a big impact on the economy of local towns.

Barnston was a hub at the time, May said. Wilber and Mildred ran a dairy operation, selling cream and butter as well as eggs, vegetables, and maple syrup at a local market.

In the 1920s, the farm was passed on to Wilber and Mildred’s son Cecil May, who married Loretta Markwell in 1926.

According to May, one of the favoured pastimes of the day was skating from the northeast to the northwest side of the lake in winter.

Cecil and Loretta had three children; Wilson, Esther and Cecil Jr.

While Wilson, the eldest, chose a career as a fish culturist, he maintained a close connection to the farm. In 1951 he married Lydia (the storyteller).

Wilson and Lydia May built themselves a house in the village near the farm. Wilson would work at the fish hatchery during the day, and help on the farm in the evenings.

In 1988, Wilson and Lydia took over the farm in order to keep it in the family, although they rented out the land to a neighbour for his dairy operation. With a market garden at the village house, maintaining two households was too great a task, May explained.

“We are so much like our ancestors, like it or not,” May said, explaining the importance of understanding what they endured daily.

Today, Mayholm, totalling around 200 acres, has been passed on to May’s two children, Gregory and Gillian.

While the furniture and decor have

changed over the years, May said efforts were made during renovations to preserve original structures on the property whenever possible.

When her children and grandchildren come to visit Mayholm, May is ready to share all the stories she has collected about the four generations of Mays that have called the farm home.



Lydia May has kept a detailed account of the history of Mayholm Farm, which has been in the family for over 100 years.

ET blue-green algae levels at ‘end of season’ levels

Record Staff
SHERBROOKE

The intense heat wave that blanketed the Eastern Townships in early July has stimulated proliferation of cyanobacteria, also known as blue-green algae, to levels usually not seen until late in the summer season. The rapid change

in water temperature affects these algae and they are now noticeable everywhere in Lake Memphremagog.

According to Memphremagog Conservation, “The algae was still not noticeable on the surface even two weeks ago, but they were visible to divers.”

The beach on the east side of Baie-de-Magog had to be closed from July 1 to 4,

due to the presence of cyanobacteria and Stukely Lake Beach was also closed at Mont-Orford Park on July 4 and 5 because of bacteriological contamination.

Campers at the Stukely site were advised to use Fraser Lake instead.

A major study that began last May, is trying to identify nutrients that would help fuel cyanobacteria in collaboration

with the Memphremagog Watershed Association of Vermont, mandated by the International Joint Commission. The preliminary results of the study will be available online for public consultation early in 2019. This project will then lead to recommendations to reduce the proliferation of aquatic plants and cyanobacteria.

Potton Public Market

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Gwynne “Tomato Princess” Basen, the market is receiving support from local organizations and friends in a variety of ways. On Friday, July 13 volunteers Russell and June Peacock and Missisquoi North Volunteer Centre (CABMN) summer student Alexandria Charby as well as Debra Harding, Assistant to the Di-

rector presented Gwynne with a donated sign made by the small group to celebrate the Market and its wonderful food producers and volunteers. The sign will be placed at the entrance to the Market where its bright colors are sure to attract visitors.

This week, Gwynne and Alexandria (the CABMN summer student) got together to give the existing welcome dis-

play a facelift and some paint in the hopes of attracting local folk as well as visitors including the abundant number of cyclists who pass each week.

The Market is open on Saturdays from 9am to 1pm and includes a Market Café where coffee and treats can be purchased and where a chat with friends and neighbours is encouraged. The market is located within walking distance of

the Flea Market across the road in the Catholic Church basement where there are bargains galore. Just north of the market is the Reilly House and a variety of other eateries...

For more information about the Market’s upcoming Family Day, visit the Potton website at www.potton.ca or the Market’s facebook page.