

# GHS NEWSLETTER

## SPRING/SUMMER 2022



Société d'histoire de Georgeville  
Georgeville Historical Society

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The Launch of :

# "The McGowan Legacy"

A Louise Abbott film



By Keith Wilcox

**W**ithout the support of the Georgeville Historical Society, which made the initial investment, the families of Robert Coallier and Hubert Sagnieres, Heritage Georgeville, the Canton de Stanstead, and the MRC Memphremagog, this film would not have been made. We want to thank you very much for your generosity and the faith you showed in this venture. We can all take pride in the outcome. The heartfelt emotions expressed on the weekend of the launch, are a testimony to that. Samples of those emotions can be found at the end of this article.

What a wonderful two days this was! On the weekend of May 14 and 15, in the dining room of the rebuilt Auberge McGowan, we celebrated the premiere of Louise Abbott's film on the history of the iconic Auberge McGowan, **"The McGowan Legacy."** In the Fall 2020 Newsletter, we first announced that we were working on this video and expressed the hope that it could be shown at the new Auberge. Now, almost two years later, despite all the challenges of filming during a pandemic, the film was ready for its launch.

There was real excitement in the air as people arrived for the launch. Guests were greeted by Henry and Kay McGowan, or at least a niece, Maureen Cameron, and a grandnephew, Stephen Moore, dressed to play the roles. Henry and Kay were the owners during McGowan's heyday, from 1945 to 1978.

In Auberge McGowan's lounge, guests were warmly met by members of the GHS current Board of Directors, Tara Wright, Denise Cyr, Deanne Cyr, and SuzAnne Tremblay. What a happy-looking bunch they were. Soon after, the Auberge brought out wine and cheese. With everyone seated in the naturally lit dining room, we were almost ready for the film. Keith thanked those responsible for this moment and gave a brief overview of the challenges the auberge had faced in the course of its history. Then we began watching.

By the end of the film, there was barely a dry eye in the room. The audience was moved. All of the nervous anxiety had faded. We enjoyed the moment. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with not a single negative comment.

Below are a few examples of the comments we received:

*"Great production... Makes you reflect on the fact that McGowan House has always been "so Georgeville", taken through the years by so many local people. And it continues to be the case. I am so proud to talk about Auberge Georgeville as an icon of my hometown."*

*"This event brings the community together, tying the old folks to the new folks. There has been so much division in the village over Auberge McGowan... for all the wrong reasons. This film brings it all together and demonstrates just how wonderful this monument was saved from a probable demise... Live long and prosper, Auberge McGowan!"*

*« Ce film est un merveilleux moment d'histoire de l'Auberge, de Georgeville et de ses citoyens. Félicitations. »*

*"Oh, what fun... Splendid all the way, starting by being greeted by "Kay and Henry" at the door... What a lovely and well-thought-of touch! Such a superb event. I'm glad to be a member of the GHS."*

*"Wow... thank you for the dedication. Here's to my Dad, "Dick" (Richard Hornby) standing by! He was a strong supporter of the new McGowan project, he was all for that, and he was happy to have contributed to it by being interviewed for the film."*

*"Very well done. Congratulations. I admit it, I was skeptical about the new project. Change is always hard to accept. Now I realize that any change of owners over the years brought its dose of skepticism! Too funny to realize history tends to repeat itself. This event has made me realize this. Thank you for this."*



The old logo...



...and the new!

# THE GEORGEVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY:

## PRESERVING THE ARTIFACTS AND THE PERSONAL STORIES OF AN EASTERN TOWNSHIPS VILLAGE

*Arianne has been spending her summers at her parent's cottage in Georgeville, on Lake Memphremagog, since a very young age. She just finished her second year studying history at Queen's University. Next year she will be attending St Andrews University in Scotland on a one-year exchange. She also won the Robert Tyre Jones Jr. Scholarship which will go towards the exchange. This summer she is doing a seven-week Canada Summer Jobs placement with us. She is our Youth Ambassador, helping us promote an interest in local history with a younger generation. She will also be, among many other things, helping us to organize Georgeville's 225th-anniversary celebrations. This article first appeared as a blog for the internship course at Queen's University she refers to below.*

This summer I had the amazing opportunity of organizing an independent internship position at the Georgeville Historical Society, in the Eastern Townships of Quebec, for my HIST212 course at Queen's University. As I reflect on my experiences this summer, I can confidently say my time at "the loft" was the highlight of my summer. Whether it was working diligently with Tara Wright, who I helped archive donated documents and artifacts, working with Martin Bosch to record the oral histories of many long-term residents of \*Georgeville, or helping Judy Bachelder digitize and re-organize the online archives, my time spent at the Georgeville Historical Society was productive and meaningful.

When I first heard about "the loft", I envisioned a dimly lit, creaky old attic, with cobwebs and dated dusty furniture. Oh boy, was I wrong! Upon arrival on my first day, I was greeted by Judy B. in a warmly lit, organized space free of any spiders. Out of the corner of my eye, I immediately noticed Jacques Valiquette's vintage egg chair hanging from the ceiling in the corner of the room and knew at that moment, that the loft was a special place. I was given a tour of the archives, family trees, mini

exhibits and countless Georgeville artifacts. There were even baskets of chocolates that saved me from hunger during my long-hour shifts. I was particularly drawn in by Roz Smith's old photo albums because I recognized many familiar snapshots of teens who I now know as adults! Saturdays became my favourite day to volunteer because I had the opportunity to meet many of the GHS's members whose individual and unique personalities brought an energetic and exciting vibe into the environment.

I did a handful of projects this summer at the GHS, but I want to highlight my favourites. During July, I worked with Martin Bosch to organize, create, and produce historical interviews that focused on recording the history of long-time residents of Georgeville. Our first interview was with Jason Krpan, a long-standing resident with a unique perspective, who shared his life story of before and after coming to Georgeville. Similarly, I had the opportunity to sit down with Judy and Toby Rochester in the iconic Red Schoolhouse, c.1849, where they shared their story and significant involvement in the village. Near the beginning of August, I also interviewed Russ and Fran Williams whose families have been in the village for many generations. As the topic of change has currently become well discussed in the village, their insight into the village's past was interesting to hear because I have personally only experienced a fraction of the Georgeville that these elders have experienced. I hope to continue working on these interviews so that the legacy of long-time Georgeville residents can be preserved.

Of course, when I was not working on the GHS interviews, I was working alongside Judy Bachelder to help digitize the archival collection at the GHS. With the professional advice from Jody Robinson, an Archivist at the Eastern Townships Resource Center, and with help from Judy and Tara, I was able to record each archived document

*by Arianne Ettehadieh*

by meticulously citing the information into an excel file to allow people to easily search for information. This tedious process required focus, patience, and attention to detail to ensure that the information recorded is accurate. From this experience alone, I must say, I have gained so much respect for Judy because the time and commitment she pours into the Society is extremely inspiring for me to continue keeping the Society active and updated.

Overall, since my placement was independently organized, having initiative was a crucial component in my success at the loft. My goal was to become involved in as many opportunities as possible so I could understand each member's role in the historical society. With this approach, I was able to find my niche at the GHS and discover where I was most needed and what interested me. In an era of advanced technology, my technical skills also frequently came in handy, and on more than one occasion, the group relied heavily on my help. I also enjoyed helping to run the annual GHS speaker series, backing up the archives on the cloud and editing the interviews.

Overall, this experience has been truly special for me because I feel as though I have gained a significant appreciation and understanding of the History of Georgeville, strengthened my belonging in the community and gained specific skills that I know will benefit me in my future career as an historian.

**\*THE VILLAGE OF GEORGEVILLE IS CELEBRATING ITS 225<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY THIS SUMMER.**

*Editor's Note: We are very happy to announce that Arianne was nominated, at our March AGM, to serve on our Board of Directors for 2022-2023.*



## EMILY VANCOUR RECOUNTS MEMORIES OF HER UNCLE, BILL REDIKER, GROWING UP IN FITCH BAY, MAGOON POINT AND GEORGEVILLE IN THE LATTER HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

### Introduction (by Judy Rochester)

I was just a young woman in my twenties when on one of my earliest days in Georgeville, I met my neighbour, Emily Vancour, who lived across the road on Channel Hill. She was a warm and friendly person who invited me over for tea. We had just bought Georgeville's iconic Red Schoolhouse, c.1849. To help us out she gave us a gravy jug and a big turkey size platter. That was some 50-plus years ago. I've lost track of the platter but still enjoy the gravy jug.

So, it was such a pleasure to come across an article by Emily Vancour published in 1987 in The Outlet, that folksy little English journal out of Magog years ago? In the article, she recounted her memories of her uncle Bill's stories about growing up in Georgeville in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Uncle Bill was William Rediker. Emily wrote her notes in the first person as "Bill," recounting them as he had told them to her in her childhood, years before.

Below is a selection that has been taken from the article by Emily Vancour of her Uncle Bill Rediker's memories

"I was born at Fitch Bay in 1865, in the little house this side of Rider's store. For several years, this house was occupied by the Royal Bank. My father was Henry Rediker, and my mother was Louise Wilson. I had three brothers and four sisters.

When I was two years old, we moved to a farm, known as the Johnson farm, on Magoon Point. Here, my father grew and harvested large crops of potatoes, wheat, and corn. He took the grain to Fitch Bay, the only grist mill for miles around. This old mill was near where the bridge is now. It had large power-driven, granite stone grinders four feet in diameter. The miller kept a portion of the flour or cornmeal to pay for the grinding service. During the winter, people from across the lake would haul big loads through Georgeville, saving miles by crossing over the ice.

When I was about seven or eight years old and still living on the farm, my father bought me a pair of red leather boots with brass toe caps. I would run for miles, back and forth from the farm to the road, to be there every time a team went by so that they could see my new red boots.

In the summer, at the age of 10, we moved to Georgeville to the little house [\\*now owned by Howard Bachelder](#). Two years later, when the family of Charlie Burbank moved out of my present house on Channel Hill, my father bought it, and we took possession in 1877.

I remember working for Mrs. Grace Heath's father, (William McGowan Jr. at Cedar Cliffs) carrying in wood, and doing other odd jobs. He would pay me five cents a job. I would go immediately to the store and buy raisins. At that time, I would get a cup full of nice big raisins for five cents.

I went to school until I turned sixteen in 1881. Then I went to work for my father in the blacksmith shop for about three years. During this time, I enlisted at Magog with the Magog Infantry under Captain Donegan. We were to be sent out west to fight in the Northwest Rebellion [to help capture a man named Riel\\*\\*](#), who was leading a large force of Indians and causing trouble. However, before we got there, he was captured, and peace was restored.

I was married for the first time in 1887, at the age of twenty-two, to Ada Wheeler. She only lived about one and a half years. We lived in the old Minnie Parker house. I was still in the butcher business. When my father died in 1892, I was twenty-seven years old. He left me all his property. The following year I paid the school tax, which was \$1.75 a year and the town tax, which was \$2.50.

### Postscript (by Judy Rochester)

There are many more paragraphs in Emily Vancour's memory notes. Uncle Bill described his mail route from Georgeville to Tomifobia, his three marriages (a widower twice), his butcher business, and much history of the various village buildings and their changing owners.

It seems he was both a blacksmith and a butcher. Addie Atkin gave the Georgeville Historical Society a copy of a page of his ledger, as both blacksmith and butcher, 1889-97. In general, Addie notes, the first part of the ledger is for his butcher shop and the last half is for his blacksmithing. However, for some accounts, he mixes the meat with the horseshoes. His blacksmith shop located at the foot of Channel Hill adjacent to his house was destroyed in the Great Georgeville Fire of 1898. He died in 1959 at the age of 94.

[\\*The house he refers to, later became Lem and Judy Bachelder's home. It now is the residence of Stephanie Lord, on the lake side of the Studio on Carré Copp. J.R.](#)

[\\*\\*The Riel referred to here is Louis Riel, father of Confederation, whose efforts to defend the rights of the Métis in Manitoba led to that province joining Canada in 1870. Riel was eventually hanged for his role in leading the 1885 rebellion in what is today, Saskatchewan. KW.](#)



The House pictured above, at 32 Channel Hill, is the one Bill Rediker moved to in 1877 at the age of 12.

## THE MEGANTIC OUTLAW

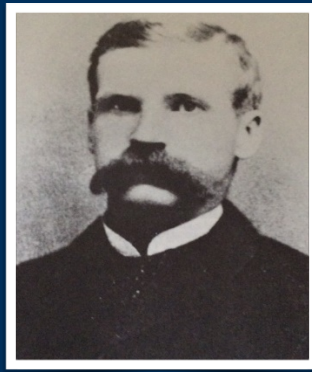
In June 1888, the main street of the town of Lake Megantic was the scene of an old-fashioned gunfight, reminiscent of the Old West. One of the combatants was a disreputable American whiskey smuggler known as Lucius 'Jack' Warren. He had recently been deputized as a special Canadian constable. The other was an idealistic hometown young man by the name of Donald Morrison. He conversely was a well-liked former resident of the community.

The young Morrison had returned to the Townships from the American West where he trained as a cowboy. His move home was motivated by his desire to assist in the legal and financial troubles of his Scottish-born parents. Having immigrated from the Isle of Lewis, the elder Morrisons soon found themselves in financial troubles attempting to eke out a living on the hardscrabble farmland of eastern Compton County.

What ensued for the Morrisons was an extensive legal battle, which led to the loss of the family homestead and the longest manhunt in Canadian history. The young Morrison lad was accused of driving off the subsequent owners of the family farm and burning the buildings to the ground, in his somewhat substantiated belief that the family had been cheated out of their property. When warrants were drawn up for Donald's arrest, no one was willing to undertake the responsibility save the disassociated American.

After evading the constable for weeks, Morrison unexpectedly met up with him in the heart of the small town on the main thoroughfare, face to face. In advance of the confrontation, Warren had bragged how he intended to outshoot the younger Canadian. By all eyewitness accounts, Donald shot in response to Warren's provocation, outdrawing him and fatally wounding the American in self-defence.

The authorities deemed the encounter quite differently, essentially an act of murder, and initiated a manhunt that lasted many months. Aided by the close-knit Scottish community of the area, Donald Morrison was able to elude capture despite being pursued by



## THE MORRISON CONNECTION

By Stephen Moore

influenced his willingness to join his fellow jurists in their decision to indict the dashing young man from Megantic.

One must wonder, however, if William was to any degree conflicted with his role on the jury. His mother, for example, but four years deceased was herself the offspring of immigrants from Caithness in the northern Highlands of Scotland. Had he known the extent to which the Scottish community of Compton was to coalesce in support of the young Morrison lad, he may have been perhaps a little reluctant to fall in line with the directives of the Sherbrooke crown prosecutor given his own Gaelic heritage. Perhaps, like his fellow jurists, he was influenced by the one-sided account presented by the Crown, ignorant of the more factual events that played out in the far-off distant corner of the Townships.

Regardless, it linked Magoon Point resident William Brevoort to one of the most publicized criminal episodes in Canadian history.

Note: Over the years, the accounts of Donald Morrison, who came to be known as the Megantic Outlaw, have been detailed in various books, movies, and documentaries. The author of the above article discovered the unbeknownst connection while researching the Morrison story on behalf of a Canadian television production company. A rewarding revelation it was, given his direct descent from William. Though it must be said, it was also somewhat disconcerting nevertheless in light of the popularity of Morrison then and now among many Townshippers. Not the least of which, was finding out that one's ancestor was perhaps on the wrong side of history.

Note: Currently, there are three descendants of William Brevoort serving on the GHS Board of Directors. A fourth recently resigned.

Title photo: Donald Morrison, *The Megantic Outlaw*.

Bottom photo: William Henry Brevoort, the postmaster of Magoon's Point, photographed with his wife, Hannah.

hundreds of provincial police officers. His flight from what many considered an unfair justice system became a provincial 'cause celeb' with media coverage in both local and Montreal newspapers. Morrison's ability to move about undetected for such an extended period became a national embarrassment for the premier of Quebec and provincial officials.

At the time, the Canadian judicial system embraced the well-known American grand jury approach to criminal matters. Thus in 1888, a panel of jury members from various parts of the Townships was convened to decide the fate of Morrison in the wake of the Megantic shootout. To this extent, a connection was established between the community of Magoon's Point and the Morrison affair. This is attributable to the fact that one of the jurors on the Morrison grand jury, was local resident William Henry Brevoort, the postmaster of the onetime village to the south of Georgeville.



For Brevoort, his participation in the judicial proceedings, which led to the trial, conviction, and what many would argue as the premature death of Morrison, was a response to his civic duty. The secrecy of the proceedings prevented the general public from knowing how the rural citizen voted. But as a strait-laced, no-nonsense law and order type, Brevoort's conservative-oriented approach no doubt



## THEODORE CLARK SMITH:

*The Hemlocks*

Theodore Clarke Smith (1870-1960) was a professor of American History at Williams College from 1903 to 1938. He wrote, among other things, the official two-volume set of the United States President James Garfield's life and letters. From 1884 to 1889 he was a teenage camper at Camp-By-The-Cliff and later at "Cedar Lodge" (1901-1905), both just north of Georgeville. In 1909, he purchased "The Hemlocks" camp from the Holbrook family after having rented there for several years. The property was acquired by my mother, Sylvia Drew, in 1945 and then by me, Judy Land, in 1994. (Sylvia Drew's grandfather was a cousin of Theodore Clark Smith, which I guess makes me, her daughter, a distant cousin as well).

While at "Cedar Lodge" Theodore Clark Smith wrote the following in his summer memoirs: *"By 1902 and 1903, I was absorbed in an attempt to analyze the nature of bird songs and I developed a system of notation for thrush singing, by which I came to conclusions that I published in 1904 in the Atlantic Monthly. Most of my hermit thrush notations were taken at "Cedar Lodge" close to camp".*

I have included the link to an article that he had submitted to the Ohio Naturalist in 1903, Volume 3 pages 371-373, entitled **"A Hermit Thrush Song"**. He also has been cited by Canadian Composer and zoomusicologist, Emily Doolittle, in her writing "Hearken to the Hermit Thrush: A Case Study in Interdisciplinary Listening." She noted that T.C. Smith (1903) concluded that *"the key of the Hermit Thrush song forms part of the scale of A Flat major."*

Enjoy this trip back in nature, from nearly 120 years ago, along the shores of Lake Memphremagog, just north of Georgeville.

\*To access this article, click on the link below:

[avibirds.com/wp-content/uploads/pdf/heremietlijster5.pdf](http://avibirds.com/wp-content/uploads/pdf/heremietlijster5.pdf)

## REPORT: OLIVER CORNER CEMETERY CLEAN UP

By Tara Wright

This year's Oliver Corner Cemetery clean-up was a great success. The group met on Saturday, May 7th at around 9 am and thankfully, we had a lovely morning to work.

Board members: Deanne and Denise Cyr, Judy Bachelder and I were joined by volunteers Richard Dezan and Catherine Isely. Richard was once again the clean-up king, bringing his leaf blowers, wire cutters and pickup truck to take away the leaves and branches. Catherine gave tours of her beautiful home and the summer house and was kind enough to let us use her facilities.

Winter damage was not as bad as last year: no trees came down although there were a lot of branches to pick up. The tombstones were pretty much in the same condition as last year.

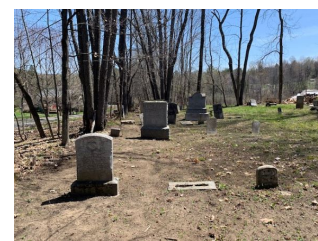
The group discussed possible improvements that the GHS might be interested in taking on. Once again, a sign was proposed, so that the cemetery could be identified by people driving by. A small garden was also proposed, and Judy Bachelder visited the cemetery with Martine Drysdale, a gardening expert, to view the site. She suggested a spot for the garden as well as plants that might work. Martine also proposed creating two parking spots so that visitors could safely explore the cemetery.

I have been doing some research into the "restoration" of some of the tombstones. After reading Matthew Farfan's "Cemetery Heritage in Quebec - A Handbook", the GHS should proceed with caution as sometimes the restoration does as much or more

damage to the tombstones as time and weather. We should preserve the information on the tombstones, but any work should be done carefully and with the advice of a stone expert as each type of stone could require different care. The one thing that can be done is to right the stones that have fallen. As well, we can also gently use a metal pole to prod for stones that might have been buried over time.

I firmly agree with Matthew Farfan - that these ancient cemeteries need to be documented to record a history that is disappearing. They are an important piece of our heritage. As this site is an old family plot, with no official "owner", the GHS can set up a group to care for the cemetery, hopefully in perpetuity.

I propose the GHS should seriously consider this cemetery as an ongoing upkeep and preservation project and should devote a certain amount of money per year for this.



# A TRIBUTE TO DR. MARTIN BOSCH

By Keith Wilcox

Dr. Bosch has decided to step down from the GHS Board after serving for more than ten years. Martin, I will miss you. Your interest in local history, whether here in Georgeville, or in Guelph, where you have spent most of your adult life, has been an invaluable asset to our board.

Your stimulating talk on the world's first Thomas Merton Centre, located near Georgeville, was one of our highlights last summer. We learned that our Merton Centre never met with the approval of the folks at head office, thereby cementing Georgeville's reputation for independent thinking. That same summer you convinced our Board to do video interviews of Georgeville's notables before it was too late. You taught our newest and youngest board member, Arianne Ettehadieh, how to do those interviews. She even did a few on her own. She wants to do more this summer.

You always encouraged us to be generous in our expression of appreciation for those who were our guest speakers. I particularly appreciated your skills as a do-it-yourselfer, not having those skills myself. I will never forget your boat ramp that made our Molson Island trip possible for many, or your willingness to pitch in whenever physical labour was required.

Finally, Arianne thanks you, because when you thought it was time to leave the board, you wanted to ensure that she was going to replace you. Youthful renewal meant a lot to you.

*Thank you, Martin, for being there for us. Your work has been much appreciated.*

## GEORGEVILLE'S 225<sup>th</sup>



LET'S CELEBRATE!

*Dear Friends,*


*The 225<sup>th</sup> Committee is pleased to announce the schedule of events\* for the 225<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Georgeville! We are looking for volunteers, so if you are available to help out, kindly e-mail Judy Macarthur at [jamacarthur2@gmail.com](mailto:jamacarthur2@gmail.com)*

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO CELEBRATING WITH YOU!**

	TIME	ACTIVITY	LOCATION
Friday, July 22	19h00-21h00	Lecture: Mobility and the History of the Abenaki in the Eastern Townships  Jean L. Manore Professor, Department of History Bishop's University	St. Matthias Church/Hall (Fitch Bay)
Saturday, July 23	11h00-15h00	Le Faim Renard Food Truck	Village Green
	12h00-13h00	Indigenous Blessing & Community Photo	Municipal Dock
	13h00-16h00	Traditional Games: All kids welcome! "The McGowan Legacy" Film Showings	Village Green Murray Memorial Centre
	18h00-0h00	225 <sup>th</sup> Dinner & Dance: tickets required 18h00: Welcome Reception 19h00: Dinner 21h00: Dance	Murray Memorial Centre
Sunday, July 24	13h00	Workshop: "The Abenakis presence in the Townships: Before and After Settlement"  <u>* Bring your artifacts for identification!</u>  by Geneviève Treyvaud, David Bernard, and Louis-Vincent Laperrière-Désorcy (Odanak)	Murray Memorial Centre 4680 chemin Chanel

*\*Schedule is subject to change*

7/GHS Newsletter,  
Spring/Summer 2022

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## HOW BEST TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP &/OR DONATE TO THE GHS

### MEMBERSHIPS:

\$15 a year for an individual or \$20 for a family membership. *Kindly provide your full name (or names if for a couple/family).*

- Interac e-transfer:  
The payee's name is **Georgeville Historical Society**. The email address is [gville.hist.soc20@gmail.com](mailto:gville.hist.soc20@gmail.com)
- Write a cheque payable to the **Georgeville Historical Society** addressed to:  
Judy Bachelder  
4600 Chemin de Georgeville  
Georgeville, Québec  
J0B 1T0

### DONATIONS:

Tax receipts are issued for donation amounts over \$20 and cannot be issued for membership fees.

- Interac e-transfer:  
The payee's name is **Georgeville Historical Society**. The email address is [gville.hist.soc20@gmail.com](mailto:gville.hist.soc20@gmail.com).

*If you decide to use this option, kindly provide your full name and indicate if the donation includes a family or individual membership.*

- Canada Helps: <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/societe-dhistoire-de-georgevillegeorgeville-historical-soc/>
- Write a cheque payable to the **Georgeville Historical Society** addressed to:  
Judy Bachelder  
4600 Chemin de Georgeville  
Georgeville, Québec  
J0B 1T0

*Kindly indicate if the cheque is meant to include a family or individual annual membership component as well as a donation, and if so, provide your full name (names if for a couple/family).*

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS: Stephen Moore, Keith Wilcox, Judy Rochester, Judy Land, Ariane Ettehadieh, Deanne Cyr, and the late Emily Vancour  
PHOTOS: Stephen Moore, Judy Rochester, Tara Wright  
GHS ARCHIVES: Judy Bachelder  
TRANSLATIONS: DeepL Program; validation Francine Caron

EDITOR: Keith Wilcox  
PROOF-READER: John Atkin  
EDITOR-AT-LARGE: Sylvia Miller  
LAYOUT AND DESIGN: Linda Bachelder