

# The Massie Messenger

A Biannual Newsletter

Issue N° 16 Spring 2015

## Massie Pioneers: Blanche Martin



*Blanche and Dona Norton (on the left) now live at Central Place.*

Ask anyone who grew up in Massie and you'll hear how involved Blanche Martin was in community life. Sure, everybody worked hard on farms and gardens, outside the community and inside the home, but when they got together to celebrate birthdays or weddings, Christmas or the end of harvest or for other formal events or informal gatherings, there would be plenty of good food, food cheer, singing, dancing and assorted hijinks. "We made our own fun," says Blanche. For example, when someone got married there would always be a shivaree. [For those unacquainted with this charming old custom, a shivaree – also spelled chari vari – was a lighthearted trick or noisy

mock serenade performed to celebrate a newly married couple.] One night, a couple of weeks after Blanche and Harold were married, at 2 in the morning, Howard Nuttall opened their bedroom window and poked his head inside. "It scared the wits out of me," says Blanche laughing.

Blanche (née Reid) grew up in Holstein and met her husband through his sister, Marion, a good friend of hers. The girls both volunteered at the Louise Marshall Hospital in Mount Forest. (Blanche wanted to become a teacher but she couldn't take time off for the necessary schooling. Her father needed her at home to help bring up her two younger sisters, Luella and

Earlma. Their mother had died when Blanche was but 11.) For a while after their marriage in 1953, the newlyweds resided in the house Harold grew up on the farm. Harold's parents moved to what might now be termed a "granny flat" next door where Glen, Laura, and Matthew now live. It was built by local handyman Roy Marshall and Harold's uncle W.G. Martin, a brick mason. Blanche's grandson Andrew has settled into the original blue house.

Harold and Blanche farmed raised beef cattle, chickens and pigs, and sold farm-separated cream. At one time, the farm dog was a purebred Border Collie named Mickey. Rounding up cattle, she did the work of two people. She usually produced a litter of puppies every year as well. These pups found homes on local farms. Not sure of their parentage, Harold used to say, "The father was from a good neighbourhood."

Connie Neelands remembers heading over to Blanche's every week to buy brown eggs. Of course, she would invite everyone in for a cup of tea and dessert.

The family (Glen was born in 1954) always maintained a garden, a few apple trees and currant bushes and spent



*From left: Harold's cousin Dave Martin, the groom and bride, and Luella (Reid) Cormack, Blanche's sister, at Harold and Blanche's wedding in 1953 and their 40th anniversary.*

a good deal of time preserving food for the winter. The year before Harold passed away, Blanche recalls, they had a large patch of corn which was cleaned up by raccoons. It's typical of Blanche that she holds no rancour against the animals – they just knew a good thing when they found one.

Peaches for canning came from the Klages from Desboro every fall. Naturally, Blanche sent the word out about the delectable fruit and she was soon taking orders. The delivery of peaches was centralized to their farm with 20 to 30 hampers coming every year. Blanche recalls her neighbours with fondness. Wilfred and Emma Robertson lived on the farm just to the south of the Martins until 1974 when the Gilbert family bought it. Harold Gilbert still lives there, but his wife

Susan passed away a few years ago. The Kings lived two properties north of the Martins and the McKibbons with their large family bought from them. The Kirks lived across the road from the Kings. The Loves were kitty-corner to the Gilberts and the Rices across from them. One large and tight-knit community. They would all help each other cut and thrash grain and bring in the crops. Blanche remembers cooking for 18 men. She would prepare huge lunches and dinners, baking her own bread and pies, like all the farming women in the community.

In the early 1960's, the Georgas family built a ski lodge which included a heated swimming pool on Concession 2 east of Chatsworth. (They also owned the Bay Motor Hotel which is now the Stone Tree Golf and Fitness

Club.) Many local residents took the opportunity for winter employment and Blanche became a member of the kitchen staff helping to feed hungry outdoor enthusiasts. Many of the working ladies from the lodge remained life-long friends.

Blanche's community involvement was extensive. She served on the community centre and church boards, took executive positions with the Massie Women's Institute and the United Church Women, helped create the two Holland Township history books, taught Sunday School, participated in the church choir and even became a 4-H leader. Her group of girls decided to call themselves "the Lovin' Spoonfuls", a pop group of that era.

Ed Neelands speaks for everyone when he says that Blanche is "one of the most thankful and appreciative people I've ever known. No act of kindness, no matter how small, went unacknowledged by Blanche. Often that acknowledgment came in the form of a beautifully written card or letter."

Blanche and many of her friends, including Massie neighbour Dona Norton, are now living at Central Place in Owen Sound and she loves it. "There's lots to do here," says Blanche, "and I've always loved people, I like to be sociable." Visitors from Massie are always welcome – just make sure that you phone first and let her know you're coming. Otherwise, Blanche might miss you – she's so busy!



*Brent, Andrew, Laura, Matthew, Glen and Blanche Martin at the McKessock Reunion in 2001. The Martins are a branch of the McKessock family.*



# Massie Hall Presents 2015 Coffeehouse Series

Season Seven will include some acts with local connections and world acclaim. We are delighted to present:

## Samantha Martin & Delta Sugar

Saturday May 30, 8 pm

\$18 (all ages) includes coffee/tea/goodies



*Bubbling up from the cauldron of roots Americana music, Samantha Martin is an artist of extraordinary power, gravitas and deep-seated emotion. On first listen, you are immediately struck by the awesome presence and sheer magnitude of her otherworldly voice. Cigarette-ravaged and whiskey-soaked in the extreme, Martin's pipes are capable of conveying an infinite range of emotions, bringing you to tears and then uplifting your soul with an empowered declaration of hope, faith and desire. As a vocalist, her roots lie squarely within the wellspring of powerful, strong woman's voices embodied by such forbears as Marion Williams, Mavis Staples, Etta James, Tina Turner, Bettye LaVette, Lucinda Williams and, perhaps most closely, Bonnie Bramlett. As a songwriter, she draws on black gospel and southern soul with a hint of roots country and 60's pop while her lyrics suggest an old soul with wisdom beyond her years.*

*While Martin is a powerhouse unto herself, the album **Send the Nightingale** is not the work of a single talent. Along with what she likes to term her "co-vocalists", Sherie Marshall and Stacie Tabb, the vocal blend Delta Sugar produces is unadulterated, neuron-tingling magic where the sum is richer than the soul-melting parts. Add to that guitarist Mikey McCallum's Delta-inspired and mystery-inflected guitar lines and Samantha Martin and Delta Sugar emerge as one of the most powerful new artists I have heard in many years. **Pete Miller***

For tickets contact Peter Miller at [petemkit@xplornet.com](mailto:petemkit@xplornet.com) or call 519-794-3652

# Beau's Eye View 2

As long-time residents, Bailey and I have many roles in the great kingdom of Massie. These include traffic calming, household security patrol, garbage inspection, landscaping and unlicensed wild animal control and dispatch. Over the last three years we've collected and documented the beer cans and bottles distributed along Massie's roadsides.

As a Black Lab, I have many talents. They include slobbering, tail wagging, eating a lot, reading, counting, simple math, Excel spreadsheets and statistical analysis. Unfortunately, while my big paws are helpful with many tasks, they prevent me from finessing the keyboard. I've recruited the Massie Messenger minions to digitize my results.



Photograph by David Wells

Brand Name	Can or Bottle	Veterans Road Findings		Massie Road Findings		Total Massie	% by Brand
		North	South	East	West		
Busch	Can	7	2	7	5	21	43
Busch Light	Can		1		5	6	
Busch	Bottle	1				1	
Budweiser light	Can	7				7	21
Budweiser light	Bottle	1		2		3	
Budweiser	Bottle	2		1		3	
Molson Canadian	Can	1	1	2		4	8
Molson Canadian	Bottle	1				1	
Labatt Blue light	Can	3				3	7
Labatt Blue	Can	1				1	
Carling lager	Can	1			1	2	5
Carling	Bottle	1				1	
Coors Light	Can	3	2		1	6	9
Old Vienna	Can			2	1	3	5
Maclays Pale Ale	Bottle				1	1	2
Old style Pilsner	Can				1	1	2
Michelob	Can			1		1	2
	Total	29	6	15	15	65	100
Percent	location	45	9	23	23	100	

Beau and Bailey's beery observations:

- 85% cans found, 15% bottles.
- 43% of our findings were brewed by Anheuser-Busch distributed almost equally between the north and south sections of Veterans Road North (known to the long-time locals as the 6th Line) and Massie Road east

& west of our downtown intersection. After Busch, Bud weiser accounted for 22% of our findings. Coors, Molson and Labatt each accounted for about 10% and the other brands shared almost equally in the remaining 16% of our collection efforts. We found only one bottle of Maclays Pale Ale, one can of Old-style Pilsner and one can of Michelob.

- We found most of the cans and bottles (45%) along Veterans Road north of the intersection (probably because that's our favourite walking trail – especially when someone of the human persuasion goes with us.) The balance of the portable beer containers was distributed equally between the tw sections of Massie Road. Only 9% of our findings were on Veterans Road south of the bridge.

Who knows what the source of these cans and bottles may be? I figure it's either one of those fitness-minded, dog-lovin' locals (and you know who you are) or it's a driver and that's not cool, especially with Bailey and me at the Massie crossroads controlling traffic day and night! Maybe it's raccoons boozing it up and littering – they get up to all kinds of shenanigans! Next I'll have to put on my animal control hat.

After three years of diligent collection, I figure the cash value on 65 cans/bottles will keep me and Bailey in dog biscuits for a few weeks. Beau and Bailey, as always, at your service.

Editor's note: PLEASE STAY SAFE. DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE.

# Recipe to Usher in Spring

To put this spring's batch of maple syrup to delicious use, make this recipe submitted by Lois Turk.

## Apple Pie French Toast

10 cups cubed egg bread  
3 cups diced apples (about 3 medium apples)  
2 tbsp. packed brown sugar  
1 1/2 tsp cinnamon  
6 eggs  
3 cups milk  
1/3 cup maple syrup  
1 tbsp vanilla

### Method

Lightly grease a 9"x13" baking dish. Spread half the bread in the dish. In a medium bowl, toss together apples, sugar and cinnamon; scatter half over bread. Top with remaining bread and apples. In the same bowl, whisk together eggs, milk, maple syrup and vanilla; pour over bread mixture. Press down gently with spatula to coat in liquid. Let stand for 30 minutes or cover tightly and keep in the fridge overnight. (If refrigerating, let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes before baking.)

Bake in 350 degree oven for 55-60 minutes or until golden brown and egg mixture has set. If using a CrockPot, cook on high for 2 hours, covered. Drizzle with warm maple syrup.

Recipe from foodlandontario.ca.



# Ralph's Award-winning Photograph



Winter Trees

*Ralph Bergman*

3rd Prize Winner  
Blue Mountain Founda-  
tion for the Arts

### Judges' Comments:

*"Sense of motion - looks  
like a fairy tale"*

*"Stark black and white-  
very appealing"*

*"Reverberates - pulls  
you out"*



# Signs of Spring



*Desiree van Dijk knows that flowers will be blooming in her garden soon  
Photograph by Desiree van Dijk.*

From Marie Palmer – Yellow primulas coming up

From Connie Miller – Red-winged Blackbirds around Massie Pond

From Marilyn and Ralph Bergman – Fisher sighted galloping at the roadside

From Johanna Wit – Forsythia: “I thought the branches were dead but I brought them inside and they bloomed beautifully!”



*Pussywillows from Jo Ann and Toomas Sauks' Silverstone Farm. Photograph by Toomas Sauks*



*From Ann and John Benitz: love to all from Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia (their back door and front exit on March 18th).  
Photograph by Ann Benitz*



*Ed Neelands' first calf of the season: Sweetpea.  
Photograph by Ed Neelands*





*Photograph by Connie Miller*



*From Kim, Bethany and Mike Deneau - spring in Saskatchewan*



*Lambs from Anna and James Dykeman's farm: Harmony in the photo by herself. Calico babysitter/playmate/brother Tim is surrounded by Pippa, Calipso, Little Guy 2 and Little Guy 3. Photographs by Anna Dykeman*



*Peek-a-boo  
Photograph by  
Connie Miller*





*Photograph by Pete Miller*

## Massie 2015 Events

- April 25      **Massie Church and Hall cleanup, 9 a.m.** Everyone welcome!
- May 9      **Geranium Tea** -Enjoy a midday cup of tea and treats with old friends, then pick up colourful pots of geraniums to beautify your house and yard!  
Flower orders: call 794-2397 or 794-2085.
- May 30      **Massie Coffeehouse featuring Samantha Martin & Delta Sugar.** 8 p.m. Contact Pete Miller for tickets, [petemkit@xplornet.com](mailto:petemkit@xplornet.com) or 794-3652.
- June 6      **Massie Garage Sale** – call 794-2216 to reserve your space.
- June 28      **Communion Services at Massie United Church, 11:15 a.m.**

**The Massie Messenger** is a community newsletter. What would you like to see in it? Stories from people who have lived here a long time or stories from newcomers? Articles about the houses, churches, barns or other buildings? Recipes? Health tips? Conservation tips? Articles about the natural world in and around Massie? Stories about the artists and craftsmen in our midst? Photographs of people or places or both? Would you like to write an article or a poem or submit your photos or paintings or cartoons? Do you have events you'd like to advertise or stuff you want to sell or rent or lend out? Tell us how you would like The Messenger to unfold and we'll do our best to make it happen. Please don't hesitate to make your ideas known. Call Renie at 794-0865 or Ralph at 794-4109 or e-mail [editor@massiemessenger.ca](mailto:editor@massiemessenger.ca).

## Editorial Board

**Renee Fedun** — Editor  
**Peter Turk** —Website Advisor  
**Ralph Bergman** — Art Director  
**Pete Miller** — Concert Listings Editor