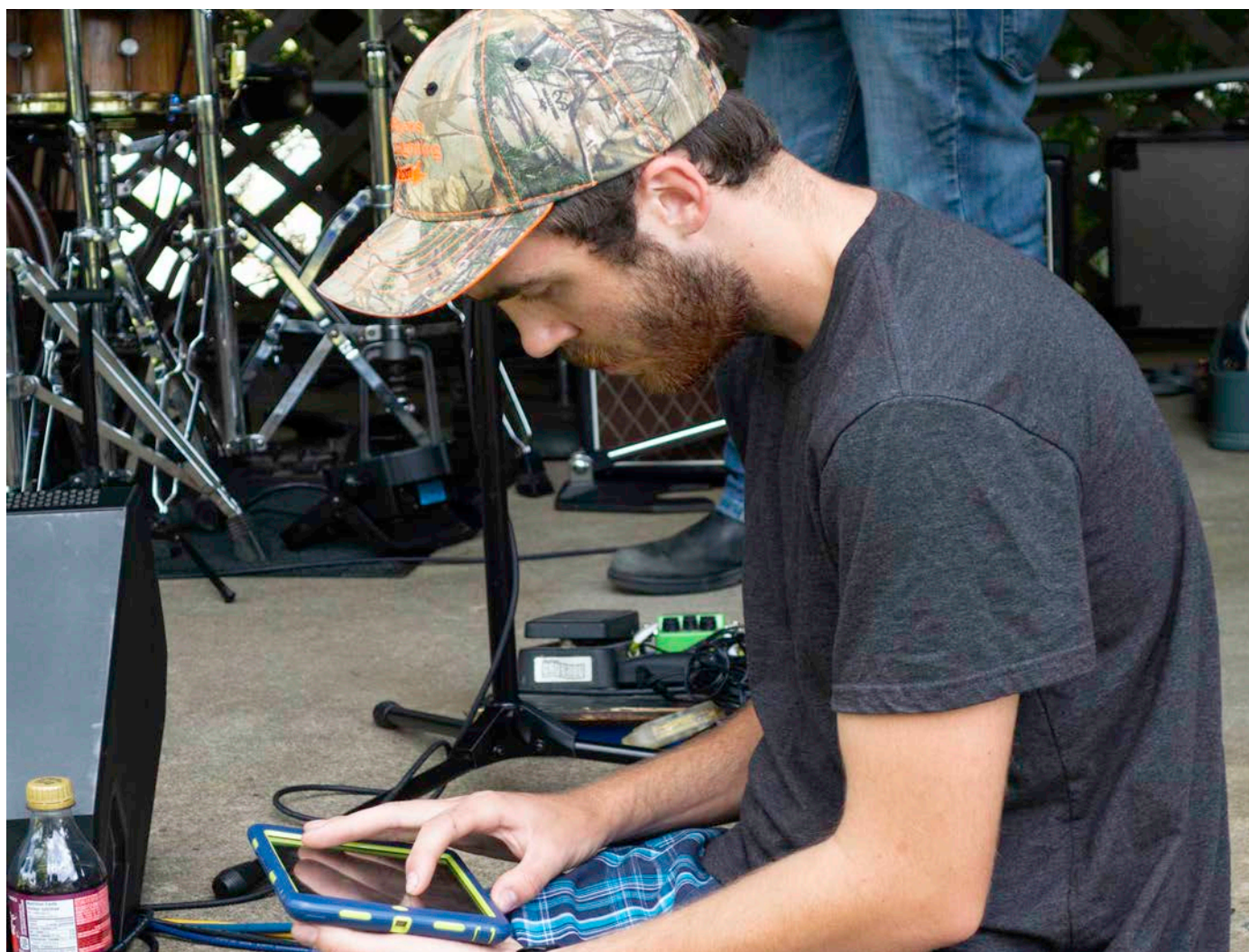


The Massie Messenger

A Biannual Newsletter

Issue N° 25 Fall 2019

Matt Martin, Massie's Sound Guy



Adjusting levels on the iPad - Photograph by Ralph Bergman

When asked to describe Matt Martin, Massie Hall's own sound technician, Trevor Mackenzie ("quite possibly

one of the hottest electric guitar players on the planet", according to the Summerfolk 2017 promotional materials)

had one word: "Awesome!" Trevor and his band played at our hall's first-ever outdoor concert at the end of July. It's



Matt discussing balance with Trevor MacKenzie .Photograph by Ralph Bergman



no small feat to get the sound just right for a smokin', eight-piece band, but Matt handled it like the pro he is. Cool and collected, despite the heat and humidity.

A mere 22 years old, Matt has been listening to music since he was an infant. His parents, Laura and Glen, took him to Summerfolk (Owen Sound's hugely popular folk festival, now in its 44th year) along with his two older brothers, Brent and Andrew, when he

was just three months old. Matt has gone every year since.

Matt has worked under the direction of his boss, Gary Byers, at venues as varied as the Roxy Theatre, Meaford Hall, day-long, multi-band festivals, and hospital galas as far away as Hanover, where they have a huge banquet and a big band. This year he will be at Harbour Nights at the Owen Sound Rail Museum as well. Matt's work is not just about the sound, but involves all manner of stage tech jobs, including unloading trucks, helping with stage set-up and running spotlights, sometimes for large touring acts at the Bayshore Arena. Some of these events have been attended by thousands of people.

Not much seems to faze Matt. Has he ever dealt with a situation where things have gone terribly wrong? He shrugs and says they've come close to disaster a few times. On more than one occasion he has seen smoke come out of a rig. That can be a little unsettling. "You just deal with it," says Matt.

The old system where the sound tech works with dozens of knobs is still in operation in some places. It was used not that long ago at Massie Hall, but our humble community centre, like more and more venues, has gone digital. With a simple WIFI setup, you can run an iPad from anywhere in the venue and have access to many more functions through the iPad than analog. You can be sure Matt knows what he's talking about (even if some of us cranky technophobes don't!).

Massie Hall is one of his easier gigs – a small venue close to home and very close to his parents' hearts (if not his own). Glen and Laura are directors of the hall and wonderful ambassadors for our small community. Their son appears destined to follow in their footsteps.



Matt working at one of the big concerts at the Harry Lumley Bayshore Community Centre in Owen Sound.

Photograph by Dylan Williams

Does he have a preference in music? Maybe rock. "I'll pretty much listen to anything if it's live. There's something about the way music comes across..." Matt says, in that wonderfully cryptic way of his.

Massie is fortunate to have talented young people like Matt Martin in our community. What's the best thing about him? Nick Leifl, the bass guitarist from the Trevor Mackenzie Band, sums it up: "He has a fine beard." That's high praise from a first-class musician!

William (Bill) Neelands 1937-2019



Bill and his great-grandson Winston Ormsby who is the son of Ryan and MacKenzie Ormsby

Bill Neelands was 10 years old when he led a team of horses from the family's farm in Massie to Chatsworth to buy chicks. The trip was essential – the chicks would grow up to supply eggs and meat to a growing family. It was the middle of winter, a terrible storm. The young boy was freezing and he could barely see through the blizzard, so he crawled into the back of the buggy and lay on top of the chicks to keep them and himself as warm as possible. The horses patiently found their way home.

It was Bill's good-natured perseverance in the face of life's hardships that served him in good stead throughout his 82 years. He did what he had to do to help his parents and siblings, and later to support his own family, but he didn't complain, had loads of fun and indulged his passions along the way.

Bill was an expert hunter and trapper, selling the furs of countless minks, coyotes, raccoons, beavers and muskrats. Deer and wild turkeys provided meat for the family. He was involved with a number of hunting organizations – a huge community where there were "no fights, no drama, just loud fun," according to his daughter Heather. It was natural that Bill would begin breeding hunting dogs, specifically Bluetick Hounds (his favourite), Black and Tan Hounds, and Walker Hounds. He also started the Trail Hound supply store.

As a youngster (at the astounding age of 5), he would practise shooting with his father's rifle when his parents were away from home. When his dad John finally decided it was time to let Bill learn how to shoot and gave him access to his gun, he was astounded at what a quick study his oldest son was, a born sharpshooter! In those days, the government had an incentive program whereby they would give anyone who had killed a certain number of groundhogs their own rifle. Bill earned that rifle in his early teens and had that gun most of his life.

Bill treasured his memories of working as a sailor on freighters on the Great Lakes – one of his first jobs away from home. He also farmed and worked in construction, starting a business with his brother Hugh which survives to this day, under the direction of Hugh's son Dennis. It's a family affair with Dennis's brother Durwin, Hugh's and Bill's nephew Tom, Bill's son Todd, Bill's grandson Ryan and Hugh's grandson Kurtis working for the company.

Bill's jobs were always hard and he'd come home filthy and tired, but he'd still be joking. After a wash and a shave, he'd be transformed into a handsome guy again, dancing a little jig for the family, happy and light. With his wife Lola (who predeceased him in 2015), Bill would attend community dances. "It was legendary how beautifully they danced together," says Heather.

Like most of his siblings, Bill was musical. He loved to sing, but not as a performer. When family and friends got together, Lola would play the piano and her beaming husband would get out the spoons.

Country boys learn a host of skills and Bill was no exception. He learned carpentry and masonry, building fieldstone walls and fireplaces and homes for his kids. He would even get requests from friends, but he'd usually decline.

A generous man, Bill was quick with bear hugs and compliments (especially for delicious cooking... and everyone's cooking was delicious!). Bill spoke only with devotion and gratitude towards his parents, never looking back on the hard days of his youth with resentment.

Heather remembers what a loving nature her father had. "He would do this beautiful thing, even after Mom had passed, where he would end each phone call with 'We love you.' He never forgot and it was always a gift to the heart."

Bill is deeply missed by his five children and their families, and the multitudes of friends he gathered over his lifetime.



Bill and Lola

Ruth Hamill 1916 - 2019



Ruth with her 1929 Chev

Ruth Hamill (née Shier) lived a rich, fulfilling life, passing away one day short of her 103rd birthday. As anyone who read her story in an earlier edition of the Massie Messenger will remember, she was a busy, highly accomplished lady!

She raised six children with her husband of 62 years, Carman, taught Sunday School, was strongly involved with Massie United Church, lead 4H projects, helped establish the Grey County Historical Archives, was a member of the Massie Women's Institute and performed a host of other community functions. Her hobbies included – but were not limited to – sewing, gardening, painting, birdwatching, writing, playing the accordion and doing crossword puzzles!

Ruth was born at Boat Lake in Amabel Township in 1916. Four years later her family moved to a farm near Oxenden. In 1937, she graduated from Stratford Normal School and went on to teach, at the one-room schoolhouses in Zion and then Hoath Head. She loved teaching. It was in 1941, while she was at the Hoath Head school, that Carman came calling on her. In those days, women teachers had to retire when they got married so she kept putting him off! A fiercely independent woman, Ruth even had her own car in the late 1930's, a highly unusual accomplishment for a woman in that era.

Ruth's mother, Margaret Taylor, was raised on the farm (now owned by another Margaret Taylor, Jim's widow!) across the road from the ancestral Hamill property. Ruth would attend Sunday School in Massie when visiting her cousins.

When she turned 100, the family compiled an album of fondest memories of Ruth. Everyone remembered her baking, especially the buns! Youngest son Ted remembered being tucked in at night when he was little as Ruth sang wartime songs to him and his siblings. Katie and Megan remembered their grandmother's kind and gentle nature. No doubt that's how we will all remember Ruth. May she rest in peace.

Live at Massie Hall 2019

Drew McIvor

Saturday September 14, 8 pm

Drew's concert last year was so popular, he's back for more with his trusty six-string. You're sure to enjoy this playful, chatty, charismatic crooner who performs with masterful simplicity.



The Trio

Saturday October 5, 8 pm

Back by popular demand: the powerful vocals of Chris Scerri, the electrifying violin of Victoria Yeh and the masterful guitar and vocal stylings of Jon Zaslow. Together, these exceptional artists re-invent the songs of musicians that influenced generations, from the Beatles to Bruce Cockburn.



Shawna Caspi

Saturday October 19, 8 pm

Toronto-based singer-songwriter Shawna Caspi performs solo, but there's a whole band under her fingertips. Her lyrical fingerpicking guitar work captures audiences with its grace and intimacy.



Don Campbell: Self-Taught Artist

Photographs by Peter Turk & Ralph Bergman



Don Campbell found his muse later in life. After retirement, he saw a picture that appealed to him and thought, "I wonder if I could do that." Don's brother now owns his first painting, a mountainous landscape with sheep and a lake, but it has a serious claim to fame: it first appeared as the centre spread in *Star Weekly*. Since then, Don has painted numerous landscapes, designed and built furniture, carved exotic, local and mythical animals (from wildebeest to pileated woodpecker to unicorn) as well as old classic cars and tractors, and produced line drawings – Massie United Church among them.

Don was born on a farm south of Chatsworth, but spent much of his working life in northern Ontario and out west. He met his wife Elizabeth at a family wedding (Elizabeth's son from her first marriage married Don's cousin's daughter in Chatsworth). Then they danced through a memorable New Year's Eve at a party in Walter's Falls. Don is a distant relation of the Neelands going back three generations. Elizabeth came from her native Northern Ireland to join her sister and brother-in-law, Ann and Hugh Clarke, in Montreal in 1960 and after four years they all moved to Toronto. One of the country properties where they spent weekends was the house now owned by Carol Mair. As a result, both Don and Elizabeth know pretty well everyone and feel right at home in our lovely hamlet!

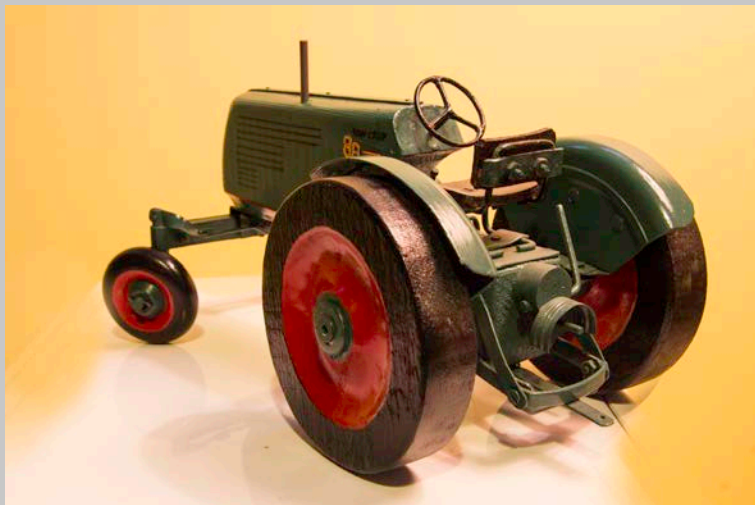


Massie United Church beautifully rendered by Don Campbell





Don is particularly fond of carving Cockshutt tractors.





Photograph by Ralph Bergman

Massie Fall 2019 Events

- Saturday, September 7 **Magnificent Mums at Massie Hall sale, 11 am – 3pm.** Order your mums from Marilyn at 519-270-2443.
- Saturday, September 14 **Live at Massie Hall concert featuring Drew McIvor.** Back by popular demand! Show starts at 8. Tickets \$22. Visit massiehall.com for tickets or contact Ralph at 226-909-5667. Popcorn and Laura's fabulous chocolate chip cookies will be served!
- Sunday, September 29 **Massie United Church Anniversary Service, 11:15 a.m.**
- Saturday, October 5 **Live at Massie Hall. The Trio:** Chris Scerri, Victoria Yeh and Jon Zaslow. 8 p.m. Tickets \$22..
- Wednesday, October 9 **Massie United Church Ham & Scalloped Potato Dinner, 6 p.m.**
- Saturday, October 19 **Live at Massie Hall. Shawna Caspi (replacing Deanne Hallman).** 8 p.m. Tickets \$22.
- Saturday, November 2 **Snowflake Tea & Bazaar,** Soup/Chili Lunch, 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.
- Friday, November 8 **Annual Fall Shoreline Chorus Concert at Massie Church, 7:30 p.m.** Tickets \$15.

The Massie Messenger is a community newsletter. We would love to hear from you, members of the Massie community, whether you live close by or have moved far away! Send us your stories, photographs or artwork that have anything to do with Massie! Email Renee at editor@massiemessenger.ca or call 519-794-0865.