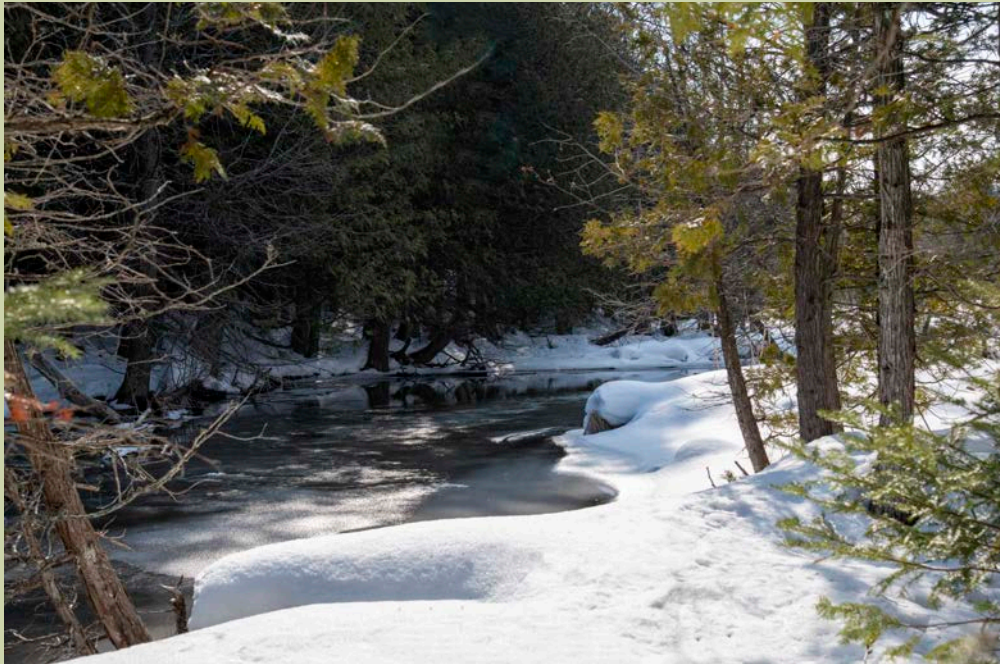


# The Massie Messenger

A Biannual Newsletter

Issue N° 28 Spring 2021

## Ecosystem Restoration



*Our lovely Bighead River photographed by Peter Turk from Carol Mair's property.*

The hamlet of Massie is blessed with beautiful vistas – our tree-lined Bighead River with its spectacular waterfall and pond, our woodlands, wetlands and meadows. We are so lucky to live in the midst of such lovely, health-giving landscapes.

For anyone looking to enhance the wild features and biodiversity on their property this is a great decade to do it. The United Nations declared 2021-2030 the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration. This is an ambitious, global project whose aim is to “massively scale up the restoration of degraded and destroyed ecosystems as a proven measure to fight the climate crisis and enhance food security,

water supply and biodiversity.” The UN Decade, [deca-derestoration.org](https://decaderestoration.org), provides a hub for anyone interested in restoration to find projects, partners, funding and the knowledge they need to make their efforts successful. The types of ecosystems to be protected and restored as part of this initiative, but not excluding other projects, fall into three broad categories: peatlands; shrublands, grasslands and savannas; and urban ecosystems (especially forests).

All that may seem too ambitious for our humble hamlet, but there is much we can do to encourage biodiversity of trees and understorey plants, whether on a 100-acre property or in a small garden.

In Grey County, we have a wealth of resources available to us:

**The Bruce Grey Woodlands Association** (BGWA) is a volunteer-run organization dedicated to promoting healthy forests and ecosystems in Bruce and Grey Counties through education, recreation and sustainable management practices. They advocate for their members on legislation, taxation and regulations as they affect forest property and associated business interests. They also encourage non-typical forest management practices such as farm wind-breaks, orchards, permaculture, riparian restoration, etc. For information or to become a member, visit [bgwa.ca](http://bgwa.ca).



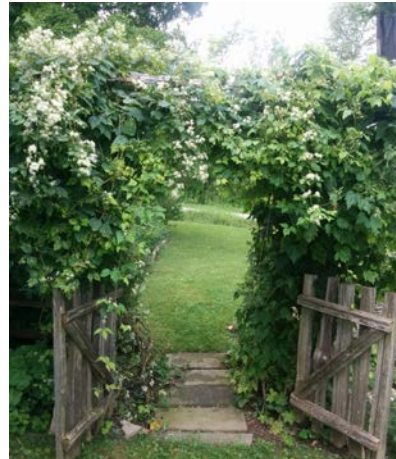
*The Turks' forest*

**Stewardship Grey Bruce** (Bruce Resources Stewardship Network and Grey County Forest Stewardship Network combined) is charged with creating “a healthy, vibrant and sustainable community through empowered citizens, natural resources stewardship and partner collaboration.” At [stewardshipgreybruce.org/resources](http://stewardshipgreybruce.org/resources), they provide links to grants offered to landowners, best management practices (from invasive species removal to agriculture) and contractors. The website highlights successful projects and environmental education initiatives.

**Grey Bruce ALUS (Alternative Land Use Services)** enables farmers to offset their environmental footprint through agricultural stewardship projects. ALUS helps farmers and ranchers produce ecosystem services on their land, including cleaner air, cleaner water, flood mitigation, species-at-risk habitat restoration, carbon sequestration and support for native bees and pollinators.

Visit [alus.ca/alus\\_community/alus-grey-bruce/](http://alus.ca/alus_community/alus-grey-bruce/) for more information and contacts.

**Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority** works with many organizations, offering technical expertise and manpower for everything from riparian tree planting projects to improvement of fish habitat to implementation of best management practices on farms. Visit [svca.on.ca](http://svca.on.ca).



*Virgin's Bower native vine*

**Grey Sauble Conservation Authority (GSCA)** is also a good place to go for advice or help in planting larger stands of forests. Check out [greysauble.on.ca](http://greysauble.on.ca).

**Inglis Falls Arboretum Nursery** is a volunteer-run operation (located beside GSCA) that propagates native trees and shrubs for the arboretum and offers them to the public by donation. Part of their mandate is to encourage and educate home and property owners to plant native trees on their land. They are open on Saturday mornings during the growing season with knowledgeable tree lovers on hand to answer questions and offer advice. Contact the nursery for more info: [nurseryifaa@gmail.com](mailto:nurseryifaa@gmail.com).

**Lands and Forests Consulting** works on restoration and diversification of woodlots and forests, improving the health of existing woodlands by, among other practices, removing invasive species such as the non-native reed phragmites. Free consultations. Contact: [trees@bmts.com](mailto:trees@bmts.com) or 519-364-8733.

**Sideroad Farm** is a family-run organic farm and market store near Walter's Falls where the owners, Amy and Patrick Kitchen, took advantage of the federal Species at Risk Partnerships on Agricultural Lands funding to plant hundreds of native trees and shrubs in a hedgerow in 2016, sowing the seeds of what will soon become a natural wildlife corridor. Email [patrick@sideroadfarm.com](mailto:patrick@sideroadfarm.com)



*Beebalm – loved by hummingbirds*

**The North American Native Plant Society**, which is dedicated to the study, conservation, cultivation and restoration of the continent's native flora, provides details about the cultural requirements of Ontario-native plant species at [nanps.org](http://nanps.org), and other valuable information, including contact info for local organizations and companies that sell native flowering plants, ferns, grasses, vines, shrubs and trees.

Nurseries selling native plants:  
**Lacewing selling out of Grey Heron Nursery** on Hwy 26 east of Meaford, **Fiddlehead Nursery** near Kimberley, and **Grange Hollow Nursery** near Williamsford.

Do you want to create a healthy future for your children or grandchildren? Consider restoring forest cover on either side of a stream or river. Or give up a sliver of your farmland to widen a fencerow by planting a row of trees. Or add colourful native flowering plants to your garden to sustain bees, butterflies and other pollinators. We'll all be the better for it.



# ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

## The Lawn



*John, Chris and kids*



*Carolyn, Peter, Brooklyn*



*Josh, Jordan, Blakely*

In August 2020, Carolyn Marx and John Vlielanders purchased the property of the former blacksmith shop in Massie, across Massie Road from the pond, next to the Kivells.

Carolyn is the second oldest and John the youngest of Cornelius and Fay Vlielanders. Their late father, affectionately called Corny, grew up in Massie and shared many stories with them about the blacksmith shop, the old visible gas pumps at the general store, the baseball field, the schoolhouse and afternoon swims in the mill pond.

In their youth, Carolyn and John rode their bikes to Massie from the family farm on Grey Road 40 to visit their grandparents, Adriana and Jacob Vlielanders, hang out with friends, play a game of baseball or simply skip stones on the pond. Sister and brother have great memories of attending vacation bible school, 4-H and Junior Farmers events held locally.

After their father passed away and the family farm was sold, a real estate listing came up for the tiny

property across from the pond. The siblings instinctively knew that it was meant for them. Their hearts still resided in this beautiful hamlet.

Friends and family have since visited the property, naturally commenting on its size. It quickly became known as The Lawn. With limited options, the siblings plan to create a recreational oasis to enjoy the spectacular view of the mill pond, create and share memories, visit with the locals and simply enjoy the natural beauty of Massie.

Carolyn and her husband Peter live in Owen Sound. Their daughter Brooklyn lives in Guelph. Their son Josh lives in Port Elgin with his fiancée Jordan and daughter Blakely. John, his wife Chris and their children Jacob and Eden live in Calgary and plan on using the recreational retreat to enjoy their summers, reminiscing with the locals and creating new memories.

Friends and neighbours are welcome to stop by The Lawn and say hello. As Corny always said, "See ya around, if we don't see ya square."

# ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

## The New Kids on the Block



*John and Julie on the Bruce Trail near Woodford*

“We’ve always loved rolling hills,” says John Euesden. That’s just one of the many reasons John and Julie Thorne moved to Massie. Last fall, the couple purchased the Marshall property, charmed by the old red brick house, wide-open vistas and vibrant forests. Julie says they felt a strong connection to the land.

John is a project coordinator with JNE Consulting based in Hamilton. Julie is a gynaecologist/obstetrician who works part-time at Owen Sound Hospital and is an assistant professor at the University of Toronto where she does clinical work and research into family planning and global women’s health. Thanks to a partnership between UofT and Moi University in western Kenya (through the AMPATH Consortium—[www.ampathkenya.com](http://www.ampathkenya.com)), Julie was sent as reproductive health team leader to Eldoret for two years. Eldoret may be known to some as the City of Champions; its high altitude location on the Rift Valley makes it an internationally renowned location for marathoners to train. Julie worked clinically in the very busy Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital, taught local medical students and residents in ob/gyn, and worked on research and program development,

especially in adolescent pregnancy care. It was no problem for John to tag along since JNE was supportive of him working remotely.

After this wonderful experience, they knew they wanted to settle in the countryside. This area was a natural choice since John’s family lives in Grey-Bruce.

The couple’s first priority is to do “lots of bare bones repairs to bring the house back to life,” according to John. And plant a vegetable garden (they already have seedlings sprouting). The long-term plan involves renovations to the house and preserving the natural beauty of the land by encouraging biodiversity in their woodlands.

Of course they find time to simply enjoy their new home, going for walks and creating their own ski trails all around the property. Moving to a new neighbourhood in winter during the pandemic has made it hard to get out and meet the neighbours; they are looking forward to meeting everyone now that it is warmer and we can all spend more time outside.



# ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

## In Loving Memory: Lois Keeling



*Schoolteacher Lois*



*Lois with her son-in-law Rick*



*Lois in her Easter bonnet photographed by Laura Martin*

**Lois Keeling**, who passed away at home on Christmas Day last year, was a loving, playful, curious, inventive, thoughtful, persevering, curmudgeonly (but very rarely!), mischievous, blunt, chatty, inquisitive, generous and delightful lady, deeply engaged in her community. Her family and friends share some favourite memories and thoughts about this remarkable woman who is profoundly missed.

**Mary Janet Mustard** recounted “a dirty trick” that Lois played on her one time. They were going to a TOPS meeting and Lois told MJ that everyone was dressing up. Of course, no one but Mary Janet showed up in costume!

**Daughter Peggy from Thunder Bay** – an accomplished prankster in her own right – shares these stories: “My dad always got up for a middle-of-the-night snack, so one night mom left out a piece of plastic cake on the counter. She listened for the cursing, chuckling to herself, when he tried to cut into it!”

“Mom would sometimes wear a wig. On one such occasion, she got the car stuck in a snowbank and called my dad to help her get out. Dad realized she was wearing a wig but the hired hand with him did not. My dad stomped over to the car proclaiming that he was so mad at her he was going to pull her hair out. The hired hand just about fainted when dad grabbed the wig!”

**Carol Mair:** “Click! That’s what happened between

Lois and me. ‘Clicking’ with our Massie Lassie meant sharing our histories and naughty stories about the antics she and her girls got into. Turns out it also meant having to share my drink!”

Carol hosted a Canada Day celebration last year at her sprawling hacienda. Lois was able to attend, but had to watch the fireworks from the car, so Rick drove her right into the yard. Carol greeted Lois and asked if she wanted a piece of Laura’s Canada Day cake. Of course she did! Carol asked Lois to hold onto her Mike’s Hard Lemonade while she went to get the slice of cake. When she returned, Lois took the cake but, having tasted the Mike’s, refused to give it back! As Carol says, “We enjoyed sharing that fella Mike!”

**Daughter Jane** recounts these stories:

Lois and her adult daughters, Peggy, Judy and Jane, would go on shopping trips together, often to Sault Ste. Marie. They would take the Manitoulin Island ferry – which Lois loved. On the boat, Lois would happily talk to anyone she met. Whenever she saw a young male doctor she would ask him if he was married, just because! The “girls” would stay in a hotel in the Sault and after they’d done their shopping each one would display her finds and model them for her adoring audience.

On one trip that Peggy, Jane and Lois took to Louisiana to visit Lois’s sister Pat, they were going through Customs. Lois, who may have been getting on in years by then, couldn’t hear very well. The customs official asked her a question that she might have misheard

and she screeched: “My teeth!? You want my teeth?!?”

**Laura Martin**, who captured the charming photo of Lois in her Easter bonnet:

“Lois and I shared many cards and notes over the years. I always looked forward to opening up mail from her. You never knew what was inside. I remember one of the first birthday cards I sent to her. Glen and I were in a store looking at cards and I found one that was funny and maybe just a touch naughty-ish. Laughing, I told Glen I had found a card for Lois. He took one look and responded: ‘You’re not going to send her that, are you?!?’ I said, ‘Sure I am!’ and I did and Lois laughed and laughed over it. That started our close relationship. I miss her very much and think of her often. Such a beautiful and dear lady. If she was your friend, you knew it!”

**Rick Ribbel**, Lois’s son-in-law, echoes the sentiments of so many people when he says: “I really feel blessed to have had Lois in my life.”

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## CHOKECHERRY WINE



6 quart basket chokecherries

1 gallon boiling water

4 pounds sugar

3 lemons

2 yeast cakes

Cover cherries with boiling water and let stand for 7 days. Strain and add sugar. Next day, add enough boiling water to make all lukewarm. Slice lemons and add yeast cakes. Let stand for 3 or 4 days. Strain and bottle.

Fred Marshall

# ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

## IN MEMORIAM: Fred Marshall 1923 - 2020



*Fred and Shirley Marshall's 40th wedding anniversary in July 1989, with their kids Bill, Carrie and Brenda.*

They first met when 12-year-old Shirley McCracken of Flesherton asked 19-year-old Fred Marshall of Ceylon for a ride on his Harley. Soon after, World War II began and Fred was off to France to serve as a sound ranger. Years later, he remembered the moment the war ended: he was startled, wondering, "what do I do now?" He came back, married Shirley in 1949, and landed the job he was born for, managing wildlife as a conservation officer.

In the spring of 1973 the job brought the family of five, including three kids, Brenda, Carrie and Bill, to Massie, where Fred had found his dream property. It even had its own trout stream. They named the place The Yellow Briar. Shirley lived 25 years in Massie, enjoying her creative interests of sewing, knitting, crocheting, cooking (best pie crust in the universe), hooking with Mary Janet Mustard (rugs), pottery, and her flowers indoors and out. She was an avid reader, which was soothing as rheumatoid arthritis gripped her in her fifties. If asked the meaning of life, she might have said it was a walk back to the pond for a summer swim or sharing a cup of tea and a gab with a friend.

When Shirley died in 1998, Fred overheard his friend Bill Cairns asking his own wife how Fred would ever manage. Bill imagined he might live on another 15 years. But Fred carried on for another 20 years gardening, fishing, hunting and trapping, tending the place alone, never losing his keen wit. It's hard work getting old, he said, and no great hell when you get there.

His heart was always in the field, rather than at the desk. He kept several bird feeders going, built and put up countless birdhouses. Fred recorded his first bird sightings each spring, hoping especially for bluebirds. He cut up Shirley's knitting yarns into small pieces so that the birds could add them to their nests. He thought about getting some homing pigeons so that he might race them again, but never quite got around to it.

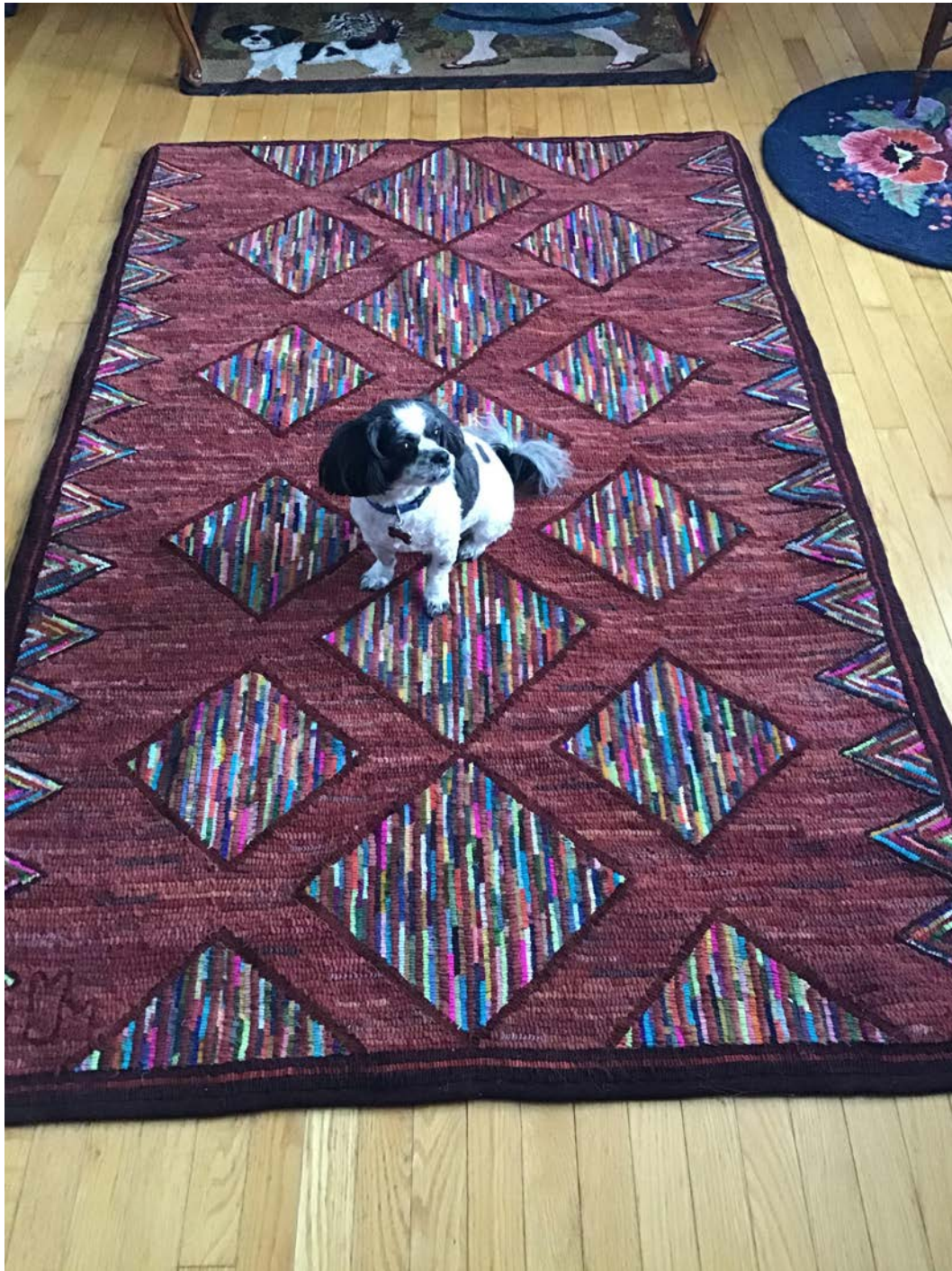
After he died, work colleagues remembered how he had stood up for them back in the day, when they needed support. If asked the meaning of life, he might say reaching for his favourite bird book to identify a new visitor or simply doing things right. And doing the right thing.

*This loving tribute was written by Fred's daughter Brenda.*



# Coping with COVID

Folks in Massie are a busy bunch and creative too! Here are five projects that kept people occupied over the challenging colder months.



Mary Janet Mustard hooked this lovely rug for her daughter Cathie, and named it Buzza (her mother's maiden name). But the rug may end up gracing MJ's dining room since it doesn't work with Cathie's colours. Murphy looks like he wouldn't mind!





*Pictured under grow lamps are red, green and orange peppers; cherry, Roma and beefsteak tomatoes; basil, parsley and cilantro; and impatiens and zinnias.*



*Marie Palmer's begonias waiting to go out into a warmer garden!*

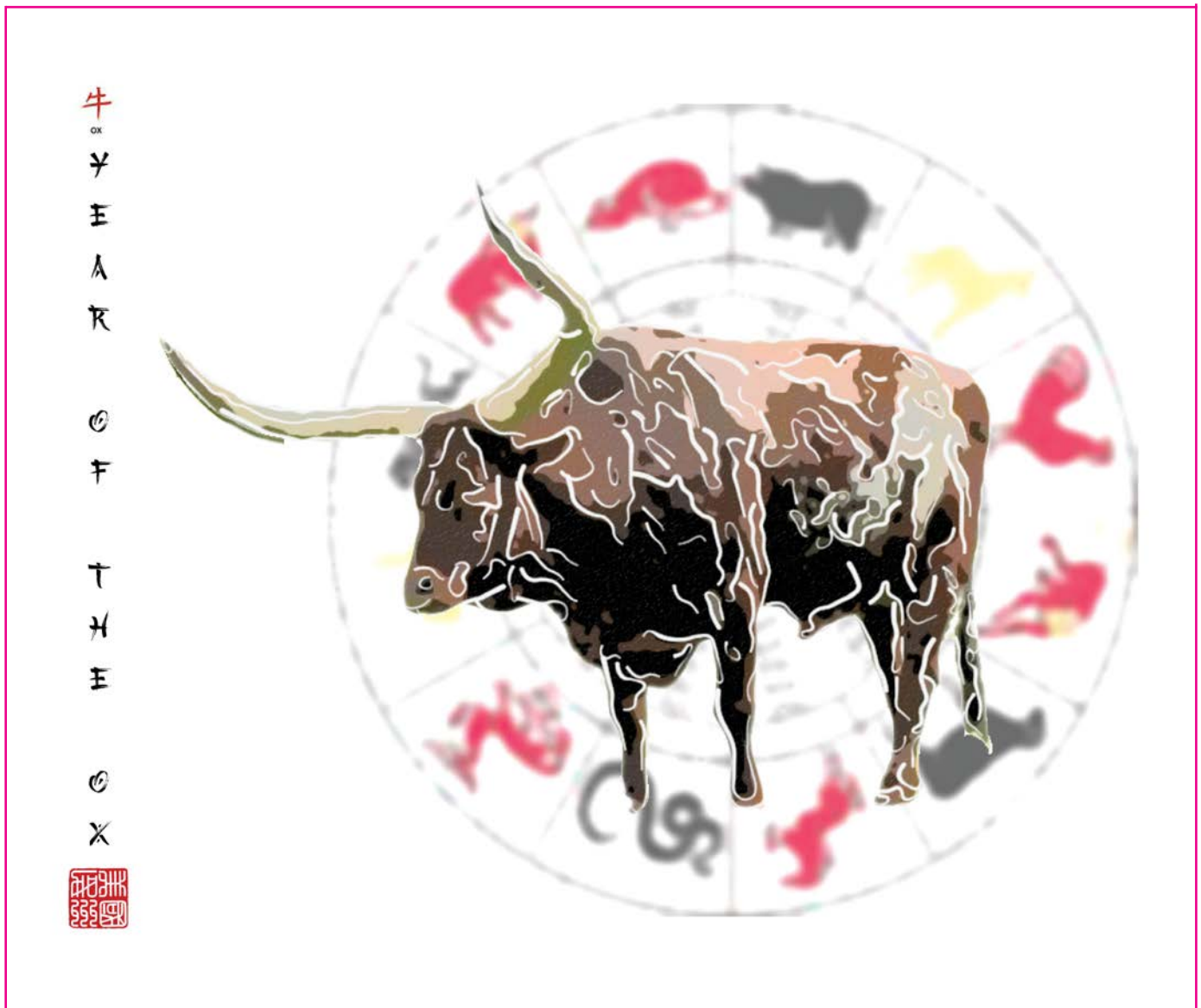
Every year, Marie Palmer finds herself itching to get her garden started. Looking forward to her beautiful and productive garden this year as always!



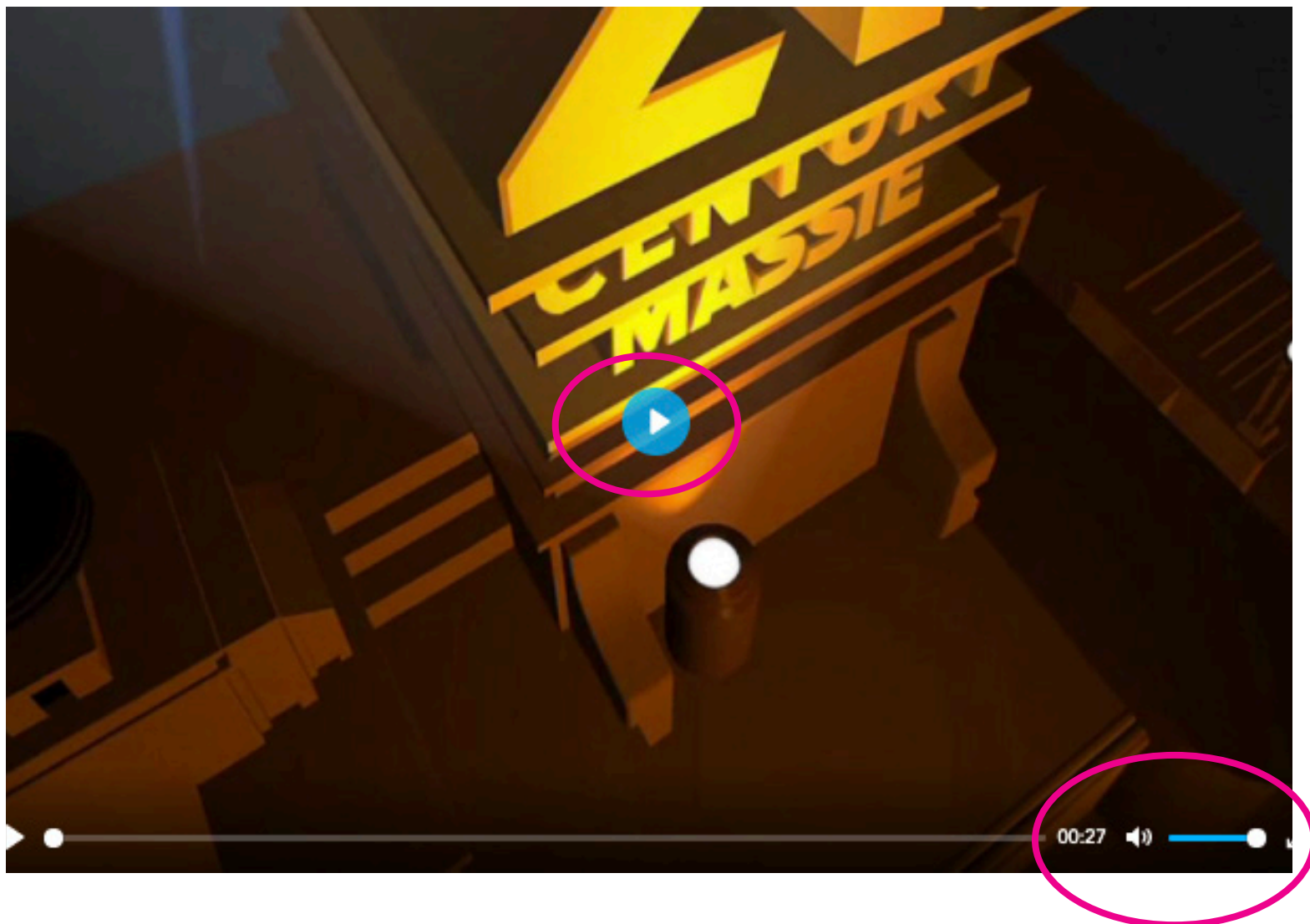


Peter Turk, who had always been interested in origami, decided the pandemic lockdown was an ideal time to fold 1,000 origami cranes. An ancient Japanese legend promises that anyone who does this will be granted a wish by the gods. The cranes are presented as 25 strings, each with 40 birds. After folding a few cranes to learn how, Peter started doing 40 each day. Each evening, he would set out the paper for the next day's birds, making sure to have a balance of colours. He divided the sequence of folds into three steps and did each step on all the birds at once. His wife Lois threaded the birds. She used a multi-twist thread, attached a metal washer to one end to give it a bit of weight and pierced each bird with a large sewing needle. The way a bird is folded there is an opening in the bottom, but the needle has to make a hole on top. The 1,000 birds are displayed on the Turks' front porch along with extras and miscellaneous origami models in a box. Visitors are welcome to come by and take a couple of extras from the box.





Ralph Bergman created this lovely image for a Year of the Ox storefront exhibition put on by the Grey Bruce Chinese Heritage & Culture Association in Owen Sound. It's a manipulated photograph superimposed on a Chinese zodiac which has been blurred. The chop (signature stamp) at the lower left has been altered so that it actually has no meaning.



Ralph also created the 21st Century Massie animation which you can see if you go to the Massie Hall website at <http://massiehall.com/> Make sure you have the audio on as shown above at the bottom right hand corner and then click on the white arrow on the blue disk right in the centre.

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The Massie Messenger is a community e-newsletter. If you live in Massie or have ever lived here, we welcome your submissions of ideas, articles, poems, recipes, photos, illustrations and cartoons. Send them to Renee at [ifedun@explornet.com](mailto:ifedun@explornet.com).

#### **Editorial Board**

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