

The Massie Messenger

A Biannual Newsletter

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Doug Smith's Fond Remembrances of Massie



Doug Smith has wonderful memories of Massie from when he taught in our one-room schoolhouse (now Massie Hall) from September 1953 to June 1955. "I have always said my two years in Massie were my two most enjoyable and profitable years in educating myself by learning new teaching skills," says Doug.

When Doug transferred to Massie from Lily Oak in the fall of 1953, he inherited 39 students in all eight grades with 25 of them in Grades 1-4. Classes were combined in subjects like social studies, science and health, among others – no small challenge for a young teacher! But Doug was up to the task. And the experience left such a strong imprint on him that he remembers to this day many of the students he taught. In his own words, "the Neelands (Bob in Grade 8, Hugh in Grade 7 and Pat in Grade 3), Jim and Doreen Hamill, three Websters, the McPhersons, the Kirk girls, the Purvis kids, the McDougall

boys, the Kingston boys, the Norton boys..." Doug remembers them as a wonderful group of young people.

Leone Diebel (née McPherson), who had six teachers in her eight years at Massie School, remembers Mr. Smith as "a good teacher but very strict. But the Massie kids needed that!" Although he was a strong disciplinarian in the classroom, Leone is quick to mention that Doug was a lot of fun out in the yard at recess!

Doug lists many of his happy memories: winning first prize at the Chatsworth Fair for Massie School's vegetable collection built as a pyramid on a crokinole board; taking part in a reforestation project; identifying trees by leaf and bark; Monday night Farm Forum radio programs and euchre games; skating and hockey on the mill pond; softball games against Strathaven; church services and dinners; a concert involving all the schools in Holland Township with the massed choir led by George Newell; and the school Christmas concerts and many plays held at the Orange Hall (which is no longer standing – it used to be where the Carl Seeley's workshed is now located).

There are two moments that stand out for Doug. "When Massie school was closed and sold to the community, they held a homecoming. I remember standing beside Doreen Hamill and looking at a report card I had written for her. All A's except for one B. The B was in writing of all things. It was legible, very neat but slightly backhanded which

was a No! No! If I'd had more experience, common sense would have prevailed and she would have had a perfect report card – all A's. Lesson learned – use common sense."

Doug also remembers Ruth McKessock, who had been in his Grade 1 class, coming up to him and saying, "Golly, Mr. Smith, I used to think you were so tall!" At 5'6", he must have seemed like a giant to a Grade 1 student.

During his teaching stint at Massie School, Doug lived with Stan and Cassie Norton at the top of the hill above the school. Doug claims he gained 20 pounds thanks to Cassie's cooking! "They were just like parents or grandparents to me," says Doug fondly.

"In retrospect, I strongly believe those two years in Massie were the two most influential years in a 36-year teaching career," concludes Doug.



An excerpt from The Hugh Neelands Story in which Doug Smith tells a story to a concert audience:

"I was a young teacher, new to the area of Massie, and I was saddled with the job of putting together a Christmas concert with young children that I had not yet gotten to know, in a community with which I was not yet familiar. I was wide open for suggestions, so when a young girl came to me and asked if she and Hughie Neelands could sing a song together, I readily agreed. I was accepting any volunteer performances I could get. I remember the emotion that overwhelmed me when I heard them singing that song, 'Star of the East.' I was literally blown away. I had to wipe a tear or two from my eyes as I listened."

The Hugh Neelands Story



On a glorious spring day at the end of May, family and friends gathered to celebrate Hugh Neelands' 83rd birthday and the launch of his book, *The Hugh Neelands Story*. With bumblebees buzzing around his wife Carol's lovely garden, Hugh's younger brother Ed

read excerpts from the book, delighting everyone with funny stories and sharing how life once was in Massie. Hugh talked about how important and supportive this community is to him. His words echoed the quote on the back cover of the book: "I wondered who would want to hear my story? I never read a

book myself until I was thirty and yet – I always knew there was something about my life that needed to be told." He was right. *The Hugh Neelands Story* appeared on Amazon's Hot New Releases in biographies of people with disabilities! (The book is also available through Carol.)



As co-author of the book, Carol wrote the synopsis on the back cover: "*The Hugh Neelands Story* is about a gentle boy who grows up with dyslexia and the inhibitions that accompanied it in an era before dyslexia was recognized. It is the story of a survivor, a man

who gradually learns to turn his differences into strengths and to recognize the source of those strengths."

The warm, soul-baring memoir from a sweet, creative boy with a sensitive and poetic nature that set him apart from his rough-and-tumble older brothers is an inspiration to Hugh's entire community. His great

love and well-known talent for music "stabilized his life." His loving wives, Rosemary and Carol, and their devotion to God, as well as his family, friends, teachers, mentors and colleagues all helped him through the rough patches and gave meaning and purpose to his existence. We all wish him great joy and long life.

How to Use an Automated External Defibrillator



Carl Seeley has installed a defibrillator on the front of this work shed should anyone ever need to use it in an emergency. The following are instructions taken from the Red Cross website on how to use it: "These AED steps should be used when caring for a non-breathing child aged 8 or older who weighs more than 55 pounds or an adult.

After checking the scene and ensuring that the person needs help, you should ask a bystander to call 911 for help, then:

1. Complete the CHECK and CALL steps
2. As soon as an AED is available, turn it on and follow the voice prompts
3. Remove clothing and attach pads correctly
 - Remove all clothing covering the chest. If necessary, wipe the chest dry
 - Place one pad on the upper right side of the chest
 - Place the other pad on the lower left side of the chest, a few inches below the left armpit
 - Note: If the pads may touch, place one pad in the middle of the chest and the other pad on the back, between the shoulder blades
4. Plug the pad connector cable into the AED, if necessary
5. Prepare to let the AED analyze the heart's rhythm
 - Make sure no one is touching the person
 - Say "CLEAR!" in a loud, commanding voice
6. Deliver a shock, if the AED determines one is needed
 - Make sure no one is touching the person
 - Say "CLEAR!" in a loud, commanding voice
 - Push the "shock" button to deliver the shock
7. After the AED delivers the shock, or if no shock is advised, immediately start CPR, beginning with compressions."

Dogs of Massie



Einstein Miller



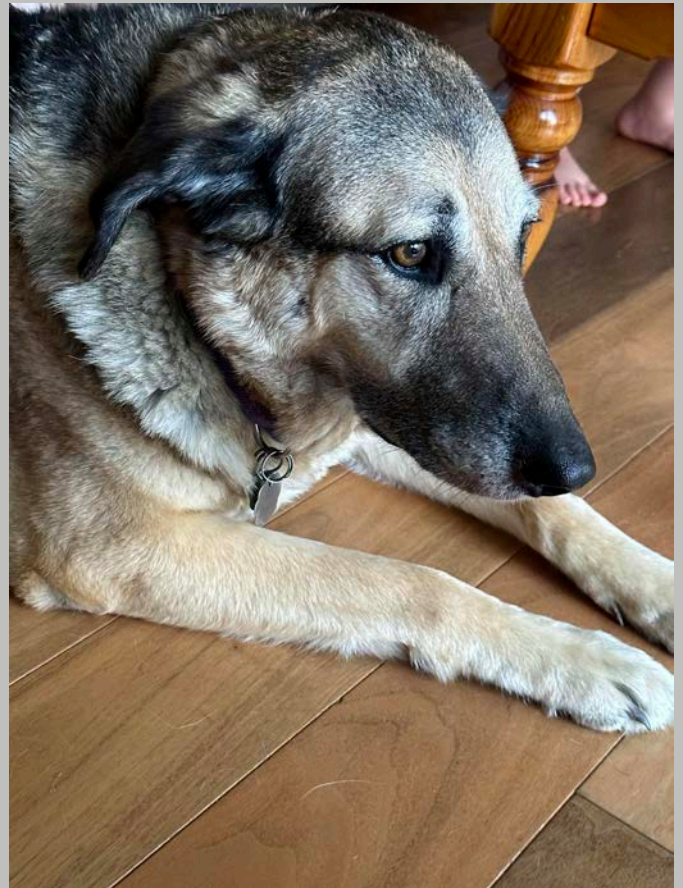
Remi and Levi



Buddy Tottenham



Tucker Elizabeth and Tyrone Charles Downey



Abby Little

Live at Massie Hall

Scott Almond

Sunday July 16, 2 pm

On the outdoor stage, if weather permits

Bring your lawn chairs

Tickets \$18.00 massiehall.com

Meaford's country star Scott Almond, a vocalist and rhythm guitarist, has delighted audiences locally for over two decades. His 2004 CD, *This Hard Land*, is a compilation of covers and originals that keep his fans asking for more. He hopes to record again and go on tour (he's popular in the Netherlands!), but his day job keeps him playing "in the neighbourhood." Lucky for us, he is performing at Massie Hall in 2023.



MASSIE FISH FRY

Back by popular demand!

Sunday, July 23, 5 - 6 p.m.

\$24 per person

Massie Hall

Takeout only, but you're welcome to stay at the hall and eat on the picnic tables. Tasty rainbow trout, prepared once again by Blue Mountain Catering, roasted red potatoes, summer coleslaw, roll and our fabulous homemade desserts – your choice of delectable date square or yummy brownie.

For more information or to get tickets contact Susan at 519-477-3019, Laura at 519-794-3841 or info@massiehall.com.



Thank you from Donna and Case Vanderham to the ladies from Massie and surrounding area who spent their day at our farm doing a fantastic job of cleaning up the flowerbeds!

Mum Sale

September 9 10am to noon

Advance Sales Only \$10 per 10" pot

A variety of colours - \$10 a pot. Order by emailing info@massiehall.com or call Laura at 519-794-3841 or Susan at 519-477-3019.



Mark Cassius & David Sereda

Sunday September 10, 2 pm

Tickets \$22.00 massiehall.com

Mark Cassius, who has performed as a singer, dancer, actor and musician around the globe, is best known as one of the Nylons, the a capella group wildly popular at the turn of the century. The man with the gorgeous voice penned some of the group's songs!

Musician, singer, actor, playwright, pianist and composer David Sereda is one of our own, having lived in Grey County for many years now, but his music and theatre productions explore universal themes to universal acclaim!

For the first time ever, Massie Hall brings together two hugely talented performers in this singer/songwriter concert. Join us to hear what magic they will create!



The Millpond Project

An Afternoon with Mr. Zimmerman:
The Songs and Stories of Bob Dylan

Sunday October 15, 2 p.m.

Tickets \$18.00 massiehall.com

Massie's homegrown quartet celebrates iconic American wordsmith Bob Dylan, who has written over 500 songs recorded by more than 2,000 musicians around the world!



Image by Saul Bass

2023 Massie Events

Massie United Church
Summer worship on
Sunday, July 9 and
Sunday, August 13 at
10 a.m. Call Laura at
519-794-3841.



Massie Church Summer Sunday services at 11:30 a.m. held at different outdoor venues. Call Marie at 519-794-3571.

Autumn Leaf Bazaar Saturday, September 23. Crafts, garden produce, yard sale items and maple syrup. Tickets for a draw to snag a hooked rug! Lunch booth. \$10 to rent space to sell your own stuff (must bring own table). Contact Mary Janet at 519-794-2216 or mjmrughkr@gmail.com.



*Workers at the Massie Church 2023 Geranium Sale.
Seated: Lisa Downey, Marie Palmer, Jane Ribbel.
Standing: Ed Neelands, Rick Ribbel, Dinger Graham,
Ava Timar, Paige Buckton, Conlan Couch, Wyatt Mustard.*



*Lisa Downey, Lorrie Ferguson and Ed Neelands,
the organizers of the 2023 Geranium Sale.*

Editorial Board

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