

Our Christmas Trees

It is a family that is inclined to take things to extremes, even to reductio ad absurdum.

To start with we had that extremist, my brother Rupert. When we were children, he and I and our father used to go to the woods to get a Christmas tree, pulling a toboggan. I can never remember being so cold in my life (and I have lived in the arctic) as I was on those expeditions when we stood around deliberating for hours over the conical perfection of this fir tree versus that one - while my feet, in rubber boots, turned to little blocks of ice.

Rupert became a grown-up and suddenly there was the year when he was no longer with us. My father and I were so used to his dictatorial ways on our tree hunt that we were at a loss, we really didn't know what to do. We floundered through the snow, looking helplessly from one tree to another. Eventually we came home with 7 Christmas trees and put them all up.

My mother was not very pleased, and announced that we were not to do that again.

Next year we come home with a dead tree. She said that was all right.

After that we always had a dead tree - so much better, really, as we didn't have to kill anything.

Then I myself turned into a grown-up and didn't go on the tree hunt any longer, but would be happy to see the traditional dead tree when I came home.

The dead tree devolved into a dead branch after my father died. Some of our Black River neighbours of old used to be on the look-out for a good dead branch for my mother. Murray Porter's children participated enthusiastically, and one year it was Clyde McInnis who found just the right one.

My mother used to suspend one red ball from the branch, just as a nod to decoration.



Then my mother died and Marten and I and our two children moved to the farm here. The kids were happy with the dead branch for a few seasons, and then we had some asymmetrical living trees. But then they began to express dissatisfaction, especially Charlotte. She felt it was too much somehow. We went to the woods and got a dead tree which was just a bare pole. "We have to have that!" she said.

"But where's your tree?" people would ask, looking around.

Those children of ours grew up, and one year I myself identified the tree. It was a little live fir that Bernard Forsythe had cut down to make way for putting up a duck box, and it was way over the fields and down through the woods by the brook. I was sitting here at home, having a glass of wine, and thinking that I probably wouldn't be able to get that one since it was snowing, when Charlotte came in with a boyfriend. I told them about the tree.

"let's get that!" she said.

"But it's 10:00 p.m.!"

The snow was knee deep. And I had only one flashlight.

We did get it, however. That night.

In more recent years we moved into living trees again; cow pasture trees. They are somewhat like the truffula trees of The Lorax, bare to cow height, and terminating in a tuft at the top that the cows can't get.

Last year, I went to Chicago for Christmas and stayed with Charlotte and her husband in their new house, and they had a perfectly conical real tree, with conventional decorations. I was quite startled, but I suppose it was all they could get. They bought it, obviously.

So now, I wonder what will happen here next. I have some children living with me these days and surely one of them will turn out to be the dictator of the tree. One thing I can predict for sure; we will get it from the woods, not out of a cardboard box.

Susan Haley

NATURE'S PANTRY AND PHARMACY

WILLOW

Willow: a couple of uses

Willow Bark Tea

Willow bark has been used for centuries as a natural pain reliever. It contains salicin, which was later synthesized and is the active ingredient in aspirin. It's reputed to relieve pain without the stomach upset chemical aspirin causes, and it's easier on the liver too. All willow species contain some amount of salicin, so it's easy to find a tree in your area for making natural aspirin.

IDENTIFYING WILLOW

There are more than 300 species of willow, and each one is slightly different. They all contain salicin, in varying amounts, as the family name Salicaceae suggests.

They're easiest to identify in the early spring when they put out tiny fluffy catkins. They pop before leaves enter the landscape, and their glowing white/yellow colour helps pick them out of an otherwise brown landscape pretty easily.

HARVESTING WILLOW BARK

Willow bark is foraged in early spring, just as plants are breaking bud. As the sap rushes up to create new leaves, the inner bark is more pliable, and it's easier to separate the bark from the wood. Luckily, for most willow species, it's not necessary to harvest from a large trunk. Many have scrubby growth habits, and the native willows may look more like bushes than trees. Harvesting bark from small branches is actually easier anyway, and the bark can be stripped away with a pocket knife. The scrapings can be dried and stored for later use or used fresh.

USES OF WILLOW BARK ASPIRIN

Willow bark can be used for all the same purposes as traditional aspirin. It reduces pain, fever and acts as an anti-inflammatory. White willow bark contains salicylic acid that is also found in aspirin. It is recommended to drink 3-4 cups of this tea to benefit from its use. Although the tea may be slower acting than aspirin, it has longer lasting effects. ... *Start by adding 1-2 teaspoons of white willow bark to 8 oz. water. Allow this to boil for about 5 -10 mins. Once it has boiled, remove from heat and steep 20-30 mins. The herbs drop to the bottom and the tea takes on a beautiful red colour. After steeping, strain the bark out with coffee filter or mesh strainer and compost it. White willow bark has a strong flavour and tastes like the bark of a tree so add a few cinnamon sticks and honey for the drink for flavour. You can also add cinnamon at the boiling stage and steep along with the bark.*

If you have any medical conditions, please consult your doctor prior to trying white willow bark tea. It should be avoided by anyone under two, pregnant, nursing, have flu or chickenpox or on blood thinners. Always be sure to research possible side effects before beginning use. *continued next month.*



Black River

... from the *Wolfville Acadian*

This column was originally printed in the *Wolfville Acadian* and was printed without the wife's name, as was the practice of the time. Where it is known we have included it in brackets.

November 13, 1947

Several from here attended the Sunday School Convention at White Rock on Thursday afternoon and evening.

Ian Long accompanied by Ellery Croft, of Greenfield, recently enjoyed a few days on a hunting trip in Falmouth.

Mrs. Arnel (Helen) Levy and baby girl returned home on Saturday evening from E.K.M. Hospital.

A masquerade party was held on Halloween at the schoolhouse. Most of the community appeared in costume and a good time was reported. Ice cream, cookies and cake were served and much enjoyed.

Our club sale and pie sale will be held on Thursday evening at the schoolhouse, sponsored by the ladies of the community.

February 12, 1948

On account of the roads and weather neither of our teachers was able to go home for the week end.

Councillor L.W. Long attended the regular session held last week at Kentville. He reports a quiet session.

Stanley Levy is not in the woods this season. He feels as others do that the snow is pretty deep. Gordon Young is trying to log at the head of Sunken Lake. He has several men at his camp: Robie Hancock, John Pick and Murray Smith of White Rock. George Melvin, of White Rock, is working for Ora Scott.

Jimmy Long has been playing on the White Rock Junior Hockey Team. They played several games against Gaspereau. Ian Long and Claude Rogers are playing on the Port Williams Hockey team.

Mrs. Ian (Hazel) Long and daughter Linda, spent one day last week with Hazel's mother Mrs. Howard (?) Smith of White Rock.

Ian Long and Claude Rogers were back for a couple of games with their old White Rock team when they met the team from the west end of town.--- *continued next month*

December Events

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
		1	2 Seniors Connect 1-3 pm	3	4	5
6	7	8	9 Seniors Connect 1-3 pm	10	11	12
13	14 Directors Meeting 7:00-8 pm	15	16 Seniors Connect 1-3 pm	17	18	19
20	21 Book Club 7-8 pm	22	23 Seniors Connect 1-3 pm	24	25 Christmas Day	26
27	28	29	30 Seniors Connect 1-3 pm	31	Next Month January 2021 TBA	



COVID 19
Prevention
Guidelines
in Effect



Masks
Must
Be
Worn

Stories from Black River Podcasts

Do you have a fondness for listening to stories? Have a listen to our Stories from Black River. They are a combination of fiction, non-fiction, poetry and music, gleaned from members of the community - past and present and based on our own published and unpublished collections. We offer them, written and voiced by various members of the community, primarily for your entertainment - but with an eye to preserving our heritage and the voice of our community.

Presently we are working on Christmas and winter stories and add more all the time. 'Tis the season for sharing. Click on sites below and go directly to the podcast or to our facebook page or website.

<https://anchor.fm/storiesfromblackriver>

<https://open.spotify.com/show/1zMHYxDMwQ9uUjCNQSmN7U?si=m5N2VSSQQZufzbSNR96dyQ>

Food Drive

We are calling out to our community again this year in assisting us with a food drive for members of our community who could use some assistance this holiday season! We are looking for donations of non perishable food items, gift cards, toiletries, etc. Times are unprecedentedly hard right now, what's more important than supporting our community! Deadline for contributions is December 15. If you are interested in donating please comment or message on facebook@blackrivercommunityhall, or e-mail Victoria at toria.tait@hotmail.com.

Email Victoria (*see email above*) with your request for a "**Letter to Santa Package**" for each of your children. Santa will respond. See our facebook page for details @blackrivercommunityhall ([active link below](#))

NEWSLETTER *The deadline for submissions is the 15th of each month.*

<https://www.facebook.com/blackrivercommunityhall/>

<http://blackrivercommunityhall.weebly.com/>

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Classifieds...

PORCUPINE CREEK PRODUCTIONS - handcrafted by Nellie Schofield -
nellieed.schofield@gmail.com. Tel: 902.542.5134

JESSICA MYRA - NATURAL FIBRE CREATIONS-mothermuse@outlook.com

JACK SPINNEY BRAIDED RUGS - local and handmade, 85 Upper Sunken Lake Road, Sunken Lake B4P 2R2 Tel: 902.542.1552

Looking for **KINDLING** for the winter season? Look no further. **Jack Spinney is offering QUALITY, DRY KINDLING** at the great price of \$5 for a full feed bag. Call Jack at 902 542 1552.

Birthdays

Issac Levy, belated	Oct. 31 (1st)
Sherry Spinney	Dec. 5
Bernie Davies	Dec. 7
Emily Levy Purdy	Dec. 7
Trevor Long	Dec. 8
Debbie England	Dec. 11
Byron Spinney	Dec. 12
Bernard Forsythe	Dec. 12
Greg Long	Dec. 18
Gerald Harper	Dec. 20
Blaine Myles	Dec. 21
Maddie Harris	Dec. 24
Emma Marie Ells	Dec. 25 (3rd)
Gordon Berry	Dec. 26

Congratulations

Congratulations to Shane and Jenna Kaizer on the birth of Dawson Gene born October 23, a brother for big sister Scarlett.

Welcome

Welcome to Leo and Donna Stevenson who have recently moved to Sunken Lake. Welcome to Colin Gertridge/Lacey MacLeod who bought the former Frank Lynch's/ Lynn Earle's house on Corkum Burns Rd. and Drew Pineo who lives on the Corkum Burns after Lian Hettema's.

Seniors Connect

Wednesday Afternoons 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm on a trial basis. Complimentary refreshments, tea & coffee. Cards and Games are available or you may just want to sit and catch up with your friends and neighbours. **No Admission Charge. Masks must be worn. Covid -19 Prevention Guidelines in effect.**

With Appreciation

Thank you to all who participated in the **Halloween - Cemetery Treat Walk.** Thanks especially to **Jessica Myra and all those who assisted her** in a well conceived and carried out *Halloween Treats-Give-Away* for the children, in the cemetery. The word on the street is that the adults enjoyed it as much as the children.

We also appreciate the volunteers who participated in our **Fish Chowder/ Hamburg Soup Take Out.** We have enjoyed great support from the community and beyond its environs in our fundraising attempts. Happy Christmas Wishes are extended to all.

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Sunken Lake and Area Journal of Wildlife Observations recorded by Clara Spinney

Oct. 28 - have not started putting feed out for the birds except the corn I put out for the ducks.

Oct. 31 - noticed several nuthatches checking out where the bird feeders should be. Finding it strange that there hasn't been mergansers on the lake this fall at least to my knowledge.

Nov. 3 - Snowing, so feeders went outside - birds quickly found them - nuthatches, gold finches and the beloved chickadees - Oh, don't forget the blue jays, they are everywhere.

Nov. 4 - Woodpeckers came to the feeders today - have not seen them all summer.

Nov. 9 - few more ducks came today, two look really odd - their plumage is that of female mallards but have the white throat rings of the male.

Nov. 11

- Blaine Myles phoned today to tell me he

has two evening grosbeaks on his lawn.

Nov. 15 - Large flock of geese went over this morning headed south. Sad feeling.

Nov. 16 - Thought I saw a flock of mergansers far out on the lake but not sure. All has been quiet on any bear sightings - with this warmth I can't think they have hibernated yet.

Nov. 21 - Have not seen a duck in days. As the small birds have started coming to the feeders there seems to be a better count of some species than last year.

Telephone Clara 902.542.3180 with any of your wildlife observations and she will add them to her own or email: claraspinnney123@gmail.com

