



Bay Seniors NEWSLETTER



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- Remembering a founder of Bay Seniors
- Bay quilter's fame spreads to Turkey
- Living with the ghost of Uncle Lemmie

Adult cats and seniors: a perfect prescription for health and companionship

A black cat is a classic Halloween image. Though often seen as bad luck, sailors throughout history have believed that having a black cat on board their ship brings good luck, and some fishermen's wives would keep black cats to try to ensure the safe return of their husbands.

Lesley Coolen, a long-time volunteer with the cat rescue group Spay Day Nova Scotia, thinks cats - black or otherwise - deserve a loving home, and Thanksgiving is the perfect time to welcome one into your family.

Lesley and her mom, Iris Coolen, are certainly grateful for the role Iris' cat, Ripley, plays in Iris' life (see story, page 2).

Lesley says, "There is lots of documentation about the health benefits to seniors in owning a cat: they can help lower blood pressure, reduce stress and



Lesley Coolen says black cats, like Brynn, adopted from Spay Day Nova Scotia by a Bay Seniors couple, are often the last to be adopted.

help relieve feelings of isolation, to mention just a few." In fact, with many seniors experiencing reduced social contact because of Covid-19, there may never be a better time to consider adopting a cat.

While people are often drawn to kittens' cuteness, Lesley says adult cats are a

better fit for seniors. "Adult cats more readily appreciate the love and kindness of people, while kittens can be busy and destructive. They're also a tripping hazard, which is especially a concern for seniors.

"Yes, kittens are cute, but you don't know what their

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Adults cats and seniors: many health benefits from adoption

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personality will be like when they grow up.”

Lesley encourages seniors to foster or adopt adult and senior cats, who may live happily for many years.

Some older cats with ongoing health issues are available for a long-term or permanent foster and, says Lesley, “We will often provide support for seniors with senior cats by helping with medical expenses, as we know a lot of seniors are on a budget, but can provide a loving home.”

The common concern that only cats with behavioural issues end up in rescues or shelters is also not true, says Lesley.

An Australian study found fewer than five percent of surrendered cats had behavioural issues.

Most ended up homeless because their owners were moving or the cats had strayed. Rescue groups will also work with senior adopters to ensure there is a care plan in place should the adopter be unable to care for their cat in the future.

“There are always cats looking for a loving home,” says Lesley. “And we know seniors are often perfect to provide one.”

For more information on adoptable cats and dogs in our area, visit <https://discoverstmargaretsbay.ca/discoverstmargaretsbay-ca-find-adoptable-pets/>.



Iris Coolen (above) says Ripley, her rescue cat, reduces her stress and keeps her laughing.

How Ripley helped Iris cope with the pressures of Covid-19

By Iris Coolen

I lost my cat just before Christmas last year, and I figured I would wait a while to get another cat. Once Covid hit, I found myself missing the socialization I was getting from my seniors club and my weekly card games.

I am also the primary caregiver for a family member with dementia, so I was really feeling the strain of the situation.

I reached out to Spay Day Nova Scotia, who matched me with Ripley, a 12-year-old ginger kitty who was in need of a new home.

Ripley came to me as a foster cat to see if he was a good fit. It was nice to have the companionship and company of a cat again.

He helps me reduce my stress and keeps me laughing, as I never know where I am going to find him.

Ripley has made himself at home, and I am pretty sure he isn't going anywhere.

Customize one of our hand-made tote bags as a thoughtful Thanksgiving gift

As we continue to live with reduced in-person contact, volunteers and members are having fun thinking of ways a Bay Seniors' tote bag can be filled with something perfect for someone special.

What about an assortment of edibles - and maybe a bottle of cider or wine - to leave on the porch for someone who will be without family for Thanksgiving?

Or a fun bag of Halloween treats for the grandkids?

One of our members recently filled a Bay Seniors bag with books she'd finished reading. She dropped the bag off at the door of a friend, along with a note asking the friend to pass the books on to someone else after she'd enjoyed them.

But she encouraged her friend to keep the tote bag for herself.



Bay quilter's work: on display in Tantallon, admired in Turkey

The beautiful quilts in the rotating art and quilt gallery at the Community Enterprise Centre are always enjoyed by visitors, who often comment



on their beauty. Made by local quilters, they are regularly featured on the Bay Seniors and Community Enterprise Centre social media accounts.

But we had no idea how far away some of the quilts' admirers might be. Recently, a photo of a vibrant quilt by Glenna Earle (left) was posted on the CEC's Instagram.

It won praise from a man in Turkey, who wrote, "This is traditional Turkish Anatolian handcraft, called 40 patches. This one is very beautiful."

Glenna made the quilt through a quilting guild. It's called a mystery quilt, in which quilters provide four pieces of fabric each to other quilters.

The individual block style is provided, but where the fabrics are used and how the blocks are assembled is up to the quilter. Glenna created this on her own, without a pattern.

She says the quilt didn't have a name before, but now she's going to call it The Anatolian.

Reader Round-Up: on the menu for our virtual Thanksgiving Dinner

We asked, “What do you need on the table to make your Thanksgiving Dinner feel like Thanksgiving?” Many people immediately mentioned family. Anne Belliveau summed it up: “Having friends and family at the table is what matters.” We agree. But, as Beverly Carlsen noted, “Thanksgiving is likely to be different for a lot of us this year.” So we’re inviting you to our Bay Seniors Virtual Thanksgiving Dinner.



Here's what's on the menu so far



Michelle McLean: “I make the same traditional Thanksgiving dinner my mother made, with turkey, gravy, mashed potatoes, peas, carrots, pumpkin pie and whipped cream. One change I did make was the stuffing. My mother’s was a mashed potato stuffing, but one year I found a recipe in a book for bread stuffing. My mother took one taste, and she loved it. She always made bread stuffing after that, and so do I.”

Carl Breckenridge:

“Cranberry sauce for the turkey. It has to be made from whole berries, and not too much sugar. You have to keep those berries tart.”

Earl Cassidy: *“I don’t like turkey, so I’ll go with prime rib. And a little red wine with it, too, of course.”*

Donna McInnis: “I come from the prairies, so along with the usual turkey, gravy and cranberries, we always had to have jellied salad. The one we used to eat can be made different ways, and I later found out it’s called Ambrosia. We just called it ‘pass the jellied salad, please’.”

Debbie Perkins: “My grandmother’s dressing. None of this add bacon, mushroom, oyster stuff. It was made with bread cubes, diced onion, lots of summer savoury, milk, butter, salt and pepper. And she packed it into the turkey, so you had to slice it. It’s still my favourite thing ever.”

Betty Dolbel: *“I like to have whole spiced crabapples with our turkey. I didn’t grow up eating them. In fact, I had them first as an adult, but now I enjoy them on the Thanksgiving table.”*

Bob Joyce: *“Our family stopped eating meat several years ago, but butternut squash lasagne, with onion, sage, white wine sauce and gruyere cheese has great Thanksgiving flavours—only better.”*

Beverly Carlsen: “My husband was Danish—my Great Dane, as I called him—and his family didn’t know about Thanksgiving. So instead of turkey, we compromised on roast pork. We always had it with Danish-style red cabbage, which is delicious.”

Ben Costigan: “Pumpkin pie is okay, but my mother-in-law makes a pumpkin cheesecake that’s amazing. She only makes it for Thanksgiving, though. I wish Thanksgiving came around more than once a year.”

Mike Johnson: *“It’s all great, but I always have to save room for at least two big pieces of pumpkin pie. With lots of whipped cream, obviously.”*

Barb Mulrooney: “I came to Canada when I was 17, and from my first year here, I liked everything about Thanksgiving Dinner, and still do.

Of course, we didn’t have pumpkin pie in Britain, and I loved it. But I have it with ice cream, because I don’t like whipped cream.”

Please join us for virtual Thanksgiving Dinner. Email sharon@bayseniors.ca with your must-have Thanksgiving dish, or call 902-820-3334. We’ll post your choices in the mid-month update, which will come out a little early this month. And don’t forget to tell us about your favourite Thanksgiving leftovers.

Member Stories: life with Uncle Lemmie at Willow Cottage

by Linda Mosher

My husband, John, and I live in Willow Cottage, which was built well over 150 years ago by my ancestors.

When Uncle Lemuel, known as Lemmie, was born in the late 1800s, the doctor made a housecall within the first week to examine him. Unfortunately, he used the wrong drops in Lemmie's eyes, which resulted in blindness. Lemmie learned to function very well, though he always stayed close to home. Without sight, he could do chores in the dark, and could often be heard chopping wood in the night. One day, while he was shaving in the kitchen, lightning hit his straight razor, I suppose through the window, and flung the razor across the room, though Lemmie was fortunately not injured.

Lemuel married late in life. He must have been a character, because he always went about blowing out the oil lamps as soon as his wife lit them. He didn't want to spend money on lighting that was of no use to him.

Uncle Lemmie (right, with Sophia) died decades ago, and over the years since, many relatives of mine lived in this house until 1968, when John and I married and moved in.

We soon started renovating, and that's when we began to hear strange noises. We heard someone running up and down stairs, doors slamming, marbles being rolled down the stairs, and lights and electronics coming on and shutting off by themselves. It creeped us out at first, but we got used to it.

But friends and relatives usually didn't stay overnight more than once if they heard 'Uncle Lemmie' prowling around in the dark. When our daughter was young, she awoke one night and called to me. She pointed to the end of her bed, and said she couldn't sleep because 'that man' kept talking to her.

Another time, relatives were staying with us. While we were playing cards, my husband was telling them all about Uncle Lemmie. Suddenly, the dining room lights went out. Our relatives started screaming, and we had to laugh. When it was time to go to bed, the light in their bedroom, which had been Lemmie's room, would not turn on.

The next day, before I left work, I called home to see if our visitors needed anything. They yelled, "Yes, tell Uncle Lemmie to turn the lights back on." And then I heard them scream again, this time because the lights came back on at that exact moment.

Back in the early 70s, a friend working for CBC television wanted to bring Helen Creighton, the folklorist, to our home, but we refused. We didn't want any public attention that would label us as 'the kooks who believe in ghosts', because we don't believe in ghosts.

But we still ask Uncle Lemmie to leave our electronics alone, and to stop disturbing our sleep.



Members' Marketplace

Flu shot reminder: Don't forget to get your flu shot. Check with your pharmacy or doctor's office to book your appointment.

Fall face masks: Bay Seniors fabric face masks are now also available in autumn colours and Halloween prints, at the Community Enterprise Centre, 5229 St. Margaret's Bay Road, 9 am – 4 pm weekdays.

Member Survey: We want to hear your views. Please complete the member survey and return it by email (or regular mail if your newsletter is mailed to you) by October 8.

Volunteer opportunities: Do you enjoy meeting people, learning new skills or using old skills, and helping your community?

Bay Seniors has volunteer opportunities available. Some tasks can be done from home. Contact info@bayseniors.ca or call 902-820-3334.

Remembering Peggy Bignell, one of the founders of Bay Seniors Association

Margaret 'Peggy' Bignell, a founding member of the Bay Seniors Association, passed away on September 5. She was 93.

Peggy was creative and talented, enjoying painting, knitting, crocheting, quilting and rug-hooking. She will also be remembered for her wonderfully enthusiastic and positive support of Bay Seniors and its activities.

Beverly Carlsen remembers Peggy's love of music, singing and dancing at the annual barbecue, and says "she always made egg sandwiches for the monthly meetings, and really loved to pitch in and help in the kitchen."

Fred Dolbel says "When we were discussing a nursing home project in the association's very early years, Peggy sketched up a practical design, with a hub and spoke layout. The hub was the common area for serving meals and for holding a variety of social activities. The three or four spokes would be a row of client rooms, with each spoke designed with



**Margaret Rachael 'Peggy'
Bignell
1927 - 2020**

consideration for the level of care needed and amenities to be offered in that wing."

Like Beverly, Fred appreciated Peggy's genuinely positive attitude. "When we had the winter movie nights, sitting in hard chairs with half a can of pop and some popcorn, Peggy came to every one.

"She came out to enjoy anything and everything the association did, always smiling, always vital, always engaged."

Established in 2009, the Seniors Association of St. Margaret's Bay (Bay Seniors) is a not-for-profit registered society whose purpose is to promote and participate in the development of wellness living for seniors; to research and represent the interests of seniors living in the greater St. Margaret's Bay area; and to provide housing and accommodation options for seniors. For more information about any of the topics in this newsletter, visit our website www.bayseniors.ca or contact the Seniors Information Centre: email centre@bayseniors.ca telephone 902-820-3334. The centre is located at Unit 1 – 5229 St. Margaret's Bay Road, Upper Tantallon, NS, B3Z 4R5. It's open 10 - 1 on Tuesdays and Thursdays.