



SUMMER 2019

Message from the PRESIDENT

Greetings Clan Members,

The highlight since our last newsletter was our annual Clan MacRae gathering held this year in Nanaimo.

I want to give a special thank you to our hosts, Allen and Gaylle McRae for putting together an excellent event. We were especially pleased that Susan MacRae, wife of our late founder, Robert MacRae, was able to be in attendance and has done a wonderful write up on our weekend activities.

Two families who were in attendance went on to Scotland, Charles and Beth MacRae and Bill and Lynn McRae. Bill has written a great report on the activities in Scotland.

This past Spring, we were especially concerned about our webmaster Sharon, and her husband, Kirk MacRae. Because of flooding and immediate danger of a dam bursting, they were taken from their home by helicopter. We are very pleased to report that they escaped with very little flood damage and their cat was recovered and received special care until their return.

I want to encourage members to submit articles for our newsletter which is published 3 times per year.

Please send articles to macraesocietycanadaweb@gmail.com

Our next annual gathering will be held in Toronto, May 1,2,3, 2020.

SLÀINTE
Owen C. MacRae
President

Summer 2019
Issue 44



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MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY NEEDED FOR CLAN MACRAE

PLEASE CONTACT: OWEN MACRAE (OMACRAE@TELUS.NET)
OR GAIL MACRAE (PIPERMCRAE@SHAW.CA)



BALMORALS OFF!

As we express our thanks to Joanne & Lorne Monahan for generously sponsoring this issue of Kintail.



REMINDER:

Membership Application forms for Clan MacRae Society of Canada Are Available on our website:
<https://www.clanmacraecanada.org/>
If you are not sure when your membership expires contact Gail McRae.

INDIVIDUAL/FAMILY: \$20 per year or \$50 for 3 years (One Household + minor children)

LIFE TIME 70 PLUS: \$100 (Effective 2019 \$150)

MAIL APPLICATION AND PAYMENT TO:

Gail McRae, Membership Secretary,
18028 58th Avenue, Surrey BC V3S 1M1

PLEASE NOTE: Send name, address or e-mail changes to Gail McRae at pipermcrae@shaw.ca.

Clan MacRae Society of Canada

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About: Our objectives are to promote Clan MacRae history, traditions, literature, music and genealogy. To educate and foster members with the Scottish Highland traditions; and, connect with other Clan MacRae Societies throughout the world.

CLAN MACRAE GATHERING, NANAIMO BC. MAY 2 - 5, 2019

ARTICLE|PHOTOS: SUSAN MACRAE, VICTORIA BC

It was a Ceilidh of a weekend in Nanaimo BC that saw the scattered members of Clan MacRae Canada converge in the beautiful harbour city of Nanaimo to affirm their heritage, make stronger connections, and to munch Nanaimo bars with “Fortitudine!”.

Our hosts Gaylle and Allen McRae did a grand job of “ordering our days” together. It all began with a lovely reception in their home which overlooks the Salish Sea just a bit north of Departure Bay. The Caledonian Flag guided us in and a piper (Rene Cusson) welcomed us, down a long lane of beautiful blooming Rhododendrons and into their gracious home. When he is not busy “treasuring” for Clan MacRae Canada, Allen is a keen member of the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society. Gaylle had been cooking up a storm since early morning and the delicious homemade treats did much to round out the welcome. Together with a glass of wine or punch it was the perfect combination. You could just feel the excitement as our members gathered from various parts of Canada, renewed friendships and in some instances put faces together with names for the first time.

Allen had worked hard getting a historical display ready for our event featuring local MacRae’s of note as well as some wonderful old pictures of his own relatives and pictures of his immediate family.

And the view....it took your breath away to gaze out across the Georgia Strait towards the Sunshine Coast, Coastal Mountains, in the evening mist, constantly changing in mood and quality of light. It could immobilize a person for days.

Friday was a day of travelling together to see some of the delights of mid-Vancouver Island. Since our numbers were few, we did not need a bus but travelled in two private vehicles. First to Englishman River Falls, where we caught a glimpse of the wild beauty of Vancouver Island and the power of nature. Wildflowers graced our path through the park, fawn lilies and trilliums, and we were glad there were no cougars in evidence. Vancouver Island has the greatest concentration of Cougars of anywhere in the world. Then we were off to Coombs, just a short drive away. Here we saw the legendary goats on the roofs and had time to peruse the most amazing stock of ethnic foods I have ever seen anywhere (underneath the grazing goats!). Further on up Highway 4, towards Port Alberni, we came to Cathedral Grove. It is a legendary 136-hectare provincial park given to the people of BC in 1944 by H.R. MacMillan whose logging company had the timber rights to this land. It is

a rare and endangered remnant of an ancient Douglas Fir ecosystem. The biggest trees in the grove are about 800 years old and measure 75 m (250 ft) in height and 9 m (29 ft) in circumference. Standing among these amazing giants was awe-inspiring. We took a short walk among the trees and reflected on our smallness as humans and the destructive power of our greed in harvesting almost all the old growth trees on Vancouver Island.

But all this sight-seeing made us hungry so back down Highway 4 we came, next stop Milner Gardens in Parksville where lunch was waiting for us in a charming cottage by the sea. We had a beautiful walk through Douglas-Fir forest to a house that has been visited at different times by our Queen, Charles and Diana in the late '80s and very recently William and Kate!

After lunch, on the way back to Nanaimo, we stopped briefly at the Eaglecrest Golf Course where Alexander Duncan McRae had a beautiful log-construction summer home. Unfortunately, that home succumbed to fire but there were pictures of it inside the clubhouse. Alexander Duncan was the builder and owner of Hycroft Manor in the Shaughnessy region of Vancouver where our clan has met in previous years.

We barely had time to powder our noses before we were off again. This time to the Nanaimo Harbour where we boarded a small passenger ferry for Protection Island to have supper together in the Dinghy Dock Pub, the only floating pub in Canada. What an amazing view we had from our floating diner of the city of Nanaimo with Mt. Benson behind it. And again, lots of visiting was accomplished in that very special place. The passenger ferry trip was not without its drama! Charles and Beth MacRae of Toronto had spent the day visiting a relative in Sidney, near Victoria and they just made it back in time for the ferry departure. Beth made a strong case to the captain for delaying departure until Charles had parked their car and both of them got their daily quota of cardio-pulmonary exercise sprinting to the ferry. A cheer went up when Charles stepped onto the deck and the ferry pulled out.

Saturday morning it was “down to business” in the meeting rooms of the Coast Bastion Hotel. First a Board meeting followed by the Annual General Meeting and then lunch in the same room.



MACRAE'S STAND TALL AMONG THE TALL ONES: L TO R. OWEN, TROY, TRACY, GAYLLE, DOREEN, SUSAN AND ALLEN.

The afternoon was free for exploration on our own, but at 6 p.m., we gathered at a church hall for our banquet. Once again Piper Rene played for us as we gathered. This time kilts were the norm for the men and everyone looked smashing in their Highland dress. The banquet was a feast for the eyes as well as the body.

Each table had an abundance of flowers from Gaylle and Allen's garden and the food was delicious. Right after the meal, a troupe of Scottish country dancers joined us and gave an energetic and joyful demonstration of that dance form. Then we were all invited to join in the dance and many of us did (sometimes regretting having eaten quite so much!). The dancers were gracious teachers and a good time was had by all.

Sunday morning a handful of us gathered at St. Paul's Anglican Church (the closest church to the Coast Bastion Hotel) to attend the service together. Who should join us at the door but Elizabeth May, the Federal Green Party Leader. The following day there was to be a by-election in Nanaimo and she had come to lend support to the Green Candidate. She was happy to have her picture taken with the Clan MacRae before we went into the church. And the Green Candidate won that by-election too! Our President Owen was invited to read the Bible in the service and we were all invited to their coffee hour afterwards.

After just three days together it was hard to say good-bye but we look forward to visiting Toronto next year for our annual gathering. Four people who attended the AGM this year went directly from Nanaimo to Scotland to attend the International Gathering of the Clan at Dornie and Eilean Donan Castle.



THE CLAN MEETS A FEDERAL LEADER: ELIZABETH MAY IS DELIGHTED TO HAVE HER PICTURE TAKEN WITH US. LEFT TO RIGHT: CHARLES MACRAE, BETH MACRAE, ALLEN MCRAE, GAYLLE MCRAE, OWEN MACRAE, ELIZABETH MAY AND SUSAN MACRAE.



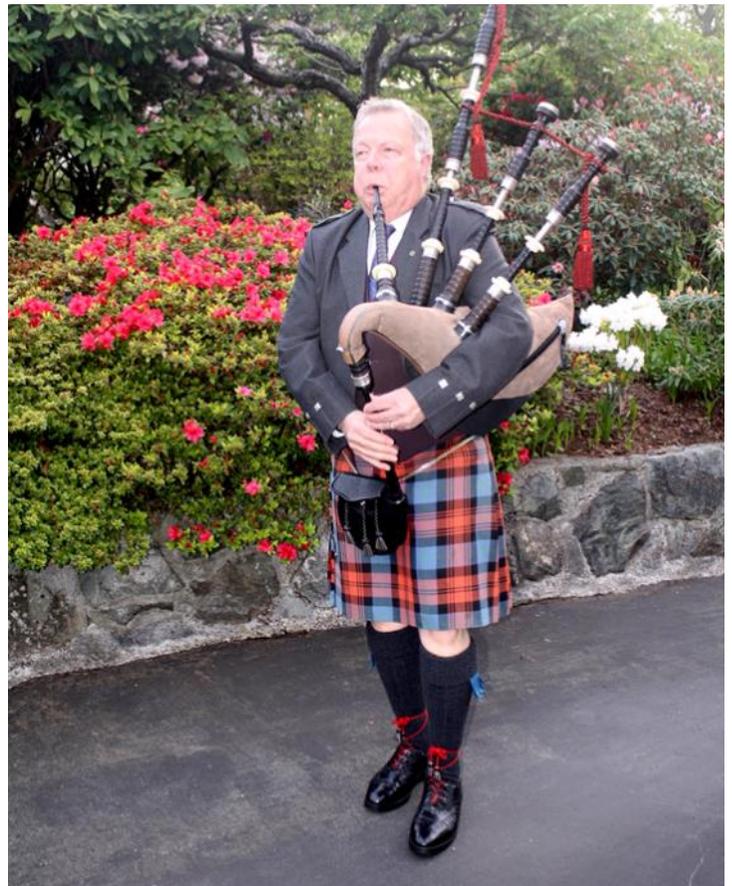
GAYLLE AND ALLEN MCRAE WELCOME US TO THEIR HOME ON OAKRIDGE DRIVE.



ALLEN MCRAE AND DOREEN POWELL LOOK SMALL AMONG THE GIANTS OF CATHEDRAL GROVE.



A NANAIMO CITY PIN THAT EVERYONE RECEIVED IN THEIR "GOODIE" BAG AT THE GATHERING.



PIPER RENE CUSSON DID MUCH TO STIR OUR HEARTS AND GATHER US TOGETHER.



THE CLAN GATHERS IN THE WOODS OF VANCOUVER ISLAND: TROY PEVERLEY, TRACY MATTHEWS, DOREEN POWELL, LINDA MACRAE, ALLEN MCRAE, GAYLLE MCRAE, SUSAN MACRAE AND OWEN MACRAE.



TRACY MATTHEWS AND TROY PEVERLEY AT CATHEDRAL GROVE.



ON THE BRIDGE AT ENGLISHMAN RIVER FALLS, LEFT TO RIGHT: TROY PEVERLEY AND TRACY MATTHEWS, SUSAN MACRAE, ALLEN MCRAE, DOREEN POWELL, GAYLLE MCRAE, LINDA MACRAE AND CATHY RAMSAY (A FRIEND OF DOREEN).



VISITING AT THE OPENING RECEPTION IN THE MCRAE'S LIVING-ROOM: L TO R. GAYLLE, SUSAN, DOREEN POWELL AND LINDA.



WE GATHER ON THURSDAY EVENING AT GAYLLE AND ALLEN'S HOME: L TO R: CHARLES AND BETH MACRAE, SUSAN MACRAE, LINDA MACRAE, LORNA MCCRAE, ALLEN MCRAE, JAMES MCRAE, GAYLLE MCRAE, LANA MCIVOR, OWEN MACRAE, TRACY MATTHEWS AND TROY PEVERLEY.

MILNER GARDENS & WOODLAND

ARTICLE: LINDA MACRAE | PHOTO: OWNE MACRAE

On Friday, May 3rd, we were pleased to have lunch at Milner Gardens & Woodland. This is 70 acres of natural beauty perched on a bluff overlooking the Strait of Georgia. The property is now part of Vancouver Island University and provides resources and inspiration for their horticultural program.

Milner House itself features memorabilia from the Milner family and their many guests, including Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip, and Prince Charles and the late Princess Diana.

The Clan enjoyed a traditional tea at lunchtime in the Camellia Tea Room. There were three offerings of freshly made soup with a herbed scone, accompanied by a variety of teas. From this elegant room, we enjoyed the views of the beautiful gardens. An impressive collection of rhododendrons can be found along the trails with cyclamen, trilliums and much more.

Our lunch concluded with a stop at the gift shop with unique items by local artists.



BOOTS ON THE GROUND

ARTICLE | PHOTOS: OWEN MACRAE

Clan President Owen MacRae recently visited Israel and discovered that the Mcrae's already had "Boots on the ground". The Mcrae Factory in the Mt. Gilead, N. Carolina, manufactures the Israeli combat boot. The "Mcrae IDF Israeli Genuine Commando Tactical Boot" has been supplied to the Israeli Army. In Israel, all citizens over the age of 18 who are Jewish are conscripted into the Israeli Army. The men serve three years and the women two years.

Pictured above is Clan President Owen MacRae with two Israeli soldiers in Jerusalem outside the City of David. For more information about Mcrae footwear go to: www.mcraefootwear.com/about.



TREES IN ISRAEL

ARTICLE | PHOTOS: OWEN MACRAE

While visiting Israel, I witnessed that many trees had been planted in the barren lands throughout the State.

One of the stories I want to share was about William (Willie) MacRae. He served the Seaforth Highlanders in the Second World War and transferred to the Royal Indian Navy where he became Aide-de-camp to Admiral Lord Mountbatten. Following the war, MacRae returned to the University of Glasgow and graduated with a Law Degree.

For the State of Israel, he authored the Maritime Law and was an Emeritus Professor of the University of Haifa. Following his unexplained and mysterious death in Scotland, the State of Israel planted 3000 trees in his memory.

Currently, in Scotland, live theatre is depicting his life and mysterious death and is called "3000 trees - the death of William MacRae".

For more information see www.williemacrae.uk.



CLAN MACRAE ON P.E.I.

ARTICLE | PHOTO: LINDA MACRAE | OWEN MACRAE

On Monday, June 10th, twelve MacRaes from Prince Edward Island, joined President Owen MacRae and Secretary Linda MacRae, for lunch at Papa Joe's Restaurant in Charlottetown. This unofficial gathering took place while Owen was visiting family on the Island. Papa Joe's provided the group with a private room where everyone enjoyed a delicious meal.

There were many joyful conversations as family stories were exchanged and acquaintances renewed. Owen brought the group up to date on Clan Society activities and invited all to join the Clan MacRae at its next Annual General Meeting to be held in Toronto, Ontario the first weekend in May 2020. To use a cliché, "A good time was held by all!".



STARTING FROM LEFT: OWEN MACRAE, BLOYCE MACRAE, EARITH MACRAE, GARTH CAREW, HELEN MACRAE, FRANK MACRAE, JEAN MACRAE, ALLAN MACRAE, LINDA MACRAE, GORDON MACRAE, ARNOLD MACRAE, ENID CARTER, STIRLING MACRAE, MYRNA MACDONALD

OWEN CONGRATULATES EWEN STEWART ON HIS 1,000 BLOOD DONATION



ARTICLE | PHOTO: OWEN MACRAE

Owen and Ewen share the same heritage both are descendants of Farquhar MacRae, who came to P.E.I. in 1816 with his parents John MacRae and Mary Matheson. They settled and raised a family in Ebenezer, 10 miles outside of Charlottetown. On his recent trip to Charlottetown, Owen congratulates Ewan on giving his thousandth blood donation to the Canadian Blood Services. His blood donations have saved and enhanced countless lives for close to 70 years.

Read more here: <https://www.journalpioneer.com/community/stanhope-man-gives-1000-blood-donation-318442/>

See Video here: <https://www.facebook.com/CBCPEI/videos/435733817215313/UzpfSTYwODk0NTQwNjoxMDE1NzQ3MTEwMzE2NTQwNw/>



CLAN MACRAE GATHERING MAY 2019

ARTICLE | PHOTO: BRENDA MACRAE CAVANAGH

Sunday, May 12, 2019, after enjoying a great evening at the Clan Banquet and Ceilidh at Dornie Community Center, we woke to another beautiful sunny day. The weather has been great on our trip, which has made travelling and photographs so amazing.

We gathered at the parking lot at Eilean Donan Castle for the bus ride to the ancient MacRae graveyard (Clachan Duich) for a short church service. The ancient church and graveyard are located in the most beautiful valley, surrounded by the “ 5 Sisters of Kintail “ mountain range. The short service was concluded with Amazing Grace, accompanied by the piper. We had lots of time to wander around the graveyard and look at the many MacRae gravestones, and admire the amazing beauty of this location. I find this place to be so solemn and

wonder if I do have ancestors buried here.

After leaving the graveyard, half of us went to the west side of the Isle of Skye, and the other half went to the east side of the Isle of Skye. I was on the van that went to the west side , and our tour guide, Ann Stewart commented on all the local sites. Another afternoon of remarkable scenery. We drove to the town of Dunvegan, and stopped at the Dunvegan Castle and walked around the beautiful gardens. On the return home, we stopped at an ancient brock and climbed the hill to see the ancient residence, which dates back to 750 BC. So amazing !! The view from the top of this hill was also so beautiful.

We returned back to Dornie, after a full afternoon of touring the majestic Isle of Skye. Our group had supper at the Dornie Hotel, where we were staying. It was a great Mother’s Day !!



ISLE OF SKYE, DUNVEGAN CASTLE AND ANCIENT BROCKETS

PHOTO: BRENDA MACRAE CAVANAGH



OUR FACEBOOK GROUP

GENEALOGY – CLAN MACRAE OF CANADA

ARTICLE | PHOTO: SHARON CLAYTON

If you are a Facebook user, you may already be aware that our **Genealogy – Clan MacRae of Canada** Facebook group has become exceedingly interactive during the past two months.

Clan member [Deb Gemmell](#) created the group late in 2015. By the end of 2017, there were 18 members. Membership grew to 38 in 2018, and by May 1 2019, the number had inched up to 59. On June 21 2019, our Facebook group included 109 people from many places in Canada and the United States.

During the society's annual gathering (May 2 – 5, 2019), our Board of Directors learned that anyone could be invited to join the group by using email addresses, rather than just Facebook profile names.

The group has been growing like topsy since that happy weekend. Many new and old members have been contributing to group discussions, sharing their family trees and exchanging information about their DNA results.

The Facebook group's current administrators are [Deb Gemmell](#), [Joanne Monahan](#) (both in Ontario) and [Sharon Clayton](#) in British Columbia. None of us has enough time or appropriate computer skills to add DNA matching to Clan MacRae of Canada's Genealogy Facebook group, but perhaps someone reading this article might be interested in taking on such a stimulating project.

This web link - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/IsleofTireeDNA/> illustrates how a busy Facebook group can easily facilitate the sharing of ancestral names and locations by using the Facebook names and/or email addresses of its members. Two dedicated administrators of this group (one in British Columbia and one in Oregon) use Gedmatch's DNA matching tools (gedmatch.com) to share their *Isle of Tiree* family lore and ancestral photos, and to collaborate on their DNA research.

Clan MacRae of Canada could have a similar Facebook group, either by incorporating the subject of DNA into our current group, or by creating a linked Genetic Genealogy (DNA) group that would be dedicated solely to Clan MacRae DNA cousins.



If you are interested in introducing shared MacRae DNA to our society's online presence, please join the Facebook group and share your opinions by making comments on the discussion timeline. The group is closed, which means an administrator must accept requests to join, and only group members can read other members' comments.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/genealogyCMC/>

I suspect that I am not the only member of the **Genealogy – Clan MacRae of Canada** Facebook group that is looking forward to meeting up with you online.



DAM SCARED

ARTICLE | PHOTO: SHARON GRAVES-MAC RAE

Yes, I am making a joke about the May 2019 Bell Falls dam threat now – but as a resident who lives downstream from the dam, the scare and ensuing evacuation were terrifying at the time.

I wanted to start off by giving some history of the MacRaes who live along the Rouge River, before I relate the whirlwind drama of our forced evacuation adventure.

My husband Kirk and I live in the Rouge River Valley along a Class-3 whitewater rafting river. Kirk was born and raised on the family farm, which is more than 100 years old. There is no farm here anymore and we are the last of the MacRaes from his family to live on this side of the river. We own about nine acres of the original property and our home is built on filled-in land that used to be the cow pasture back in the day. Never has there been a thought or a word about the Bell Falls Dam breaking.

Kirk and I moved back here from Ottawa and bought our home from Kirk's parents more than 27 years ago. It was a great place to raise our four children. They had lots of open space to explore nature and enjoy childhood far from the city. They thought it was great when they were small, but thought we

lived too far from civilization when they were teens. Now grown, they love to come home from the city as young adults, enjoying weekends with campfires surrounded by the beauty of the river. It is a very rural landscape with a dirt road, in a valley along a winding road with no cell service: cottage country.

In 1998, the fifth year we lived here, I was certain I had made the biggest mistake of my life moving here. That spring, river flooding took out the roads in both directions. The water never came near the house, but the water did flow over the driveway and lawn. Kirk had gone to work in the morning in Ottawa but was now unable to get home to me, a very young wife and mother, with three very small children. My Scottish hero did not let that stop him. He walked up through the bush and down through spring ice-cold water, his legs red and cold, to get through the closed roads to us that day. He showed me his "Fortitude" that day and I fell in love with him all over again. I tell you: You cannot keep a MacRae away from his family, they will literal walk-through ice-cold water to get to their families. Each year after that, we prepared for the road to flood over a bit. It might on a rare year mean a day or two of staying put at home or driving through water over the roads in areas but it became the new normal. It's just life on the Rouge!



You made sure to have supplies, a generator and be ready to stay put. We didn't stress about it. The situation had been like this for more than 100 years and life goes on.

Then April 25, 2019 happened. The day that our false sense of security disappeared. There was a lot of snow that winter and that translated into spring water melting and the roads had flooded over slowly all week until it was time to settle in until the water started to go down. Kirk and I were both able to work from our computers at home, had lots of supplies ready and were happy just waiting out the normal spring water rush. I was typing away an email to my boss when the phone rang.

"Get the hell out of the house and head to the hills!!!", my neighbour yelled at me, "The Bell Falls Dam is breaking, get out of the house." Followed by the click of the phone.

I was stunned; I turned to Kirk and repeated what I was told then grabbed a bag next to my desk, shoved my purse and cell phone into it and put on my boots and coat. Kirk turned off the oven, with a fully cooked roast chicken in it and grabbed his backpack and boots, too. We scrambled about a bit, it seemed like forever and all I could think of was that we were taking too long in our panicked state and would die in the rush of water coming to destroy everything in its path, including us. I could hear the water and my heart beating so hard I thought it would burst. Kirk rushed around trying to decide what prized possessions he should grab. Calm is out the window and panic has taken over as we cross over the creek and head up to the hills above the neighbour's house to a flat spot.

The neighbour and his wife were there too. All of us were in a state of utter disbelief as to what was happening. We stood there waiting, listening, waiting some more. We would hear the rush of water before it reaches here, wouldn't we? We were hopelessly looking at our homes, thinking that soon they would be washed away in a big tidal wave of water. Trying with our minds to sort out what was happening and feeling helpless in the wake of the unknown. We waited for what seemed like a lifetime and then we saw a helicopter and waved our arms like crazy people -- hoping they saw us, hoping they had answers as to what was happening. It was a TV helicopter, not a rescue one. We all joked about that a while, how media coverage got to us faster than help could, even funnier as I work for a newspaper so it kinda was true. I tried to send out cell messages with my half-bar of reception when I put my hand up in the air and stood exactly on one spot on the hill. That made for more panic and I could not reply to inquiries from family and friends desperately needing assurance that we were okay as TV, radio and newspapers posted updates upon updates about the impending doom.

About an hour passed or more...time meant nothing ...the security helicopter came to take us out but we didn't understand why, as the dam had not broken yet. There was some resistance to going. We thought of grabbing camping gear and staying up on the hill. We are told that our cat Jasper had to stay and we had to go. This was a forced evacuation and it was not a choice. We had made sure Jasper was outside the house figuring he could get to the hills himself if needed but if left inside he would surely die if water hit the house. This was so hard to do, leaving him there; he is our baby now that the children are grown. My biggest regret is not being feistier and refusing to leave without him.

Then we are secured into a helicopter and flown miles away and dropped in an empty field somewhere and we felt quite disoriented and wondered where we were. There was no greeting party to meet us and we were stressed as we started to make contact with our children to let them know we are okay. Then we looked at each other and said, "Now what?"



Getting a car seemed like the priority, with a car we could go somewhere, sit in it, just have something other than our two small bags in our hands containing random things grabbed at the last minute. By the way, I forgot my glasses and I was sockless. Sockless and homeless and lost was the feeling at that moment. A half hour and another drop of people from the helicopter later and still: no one here to give us directions or help.

We were lucky that James, a colleague from work, came along wondering why helicopters were landing near his home. We were so happy to see a familiar face and someone who was nice enough to drive us to a friend's house. It was just about then that the two men, one tall and round and one small and slimmer with bright orange and yellow

vests came around. I went up to them to talk and ask some questions. I told them we were trying to get to a friend across the bridge not 10 minutes away. The tall man started to tell me I had one hour to decide what side of the bridge, (this is a medium size bridge), I wanted to be on as they would be closing it in case the dam at Bell Falls breaks.

What? That is over 30 minutes away by car and a lot of miles away from the little Bell Falls Dam. This is not a big active dam, by the way – it's a very small dam that has not been active for more than 20 years. It couldn't possibly affect this bridge, how it is possible? More panic on top of the panic we already had going. So, the rush to get across the bridge started and we made it to my friend Tara's house for the night. We were like children on sugar, stress-wired and burning ourselves out. I didn't sleep much that night. Kirk did some snoozing so he got a bit of rest.

The next day was filled with paperwork at the Red Cross, insurance brokers, and checking in with the Town Hall to see about getting our Jasper out. Jasper had to stay; we were not allowed to go back to our home to get him. Anyone going back would be arrested. A few people's dogs were found and brought out but the cat was deemed more resourceful and too much a risk to go in and get. I was not a very happy fur baby owner. Jasper is my family and although I understood human life comes first, I was pretty clear that by the end of the week I would risk it all to get to him. Funny how no earthly possessions mattered to us: only him, our fluffy pampered kitty.

Day after day, we headed to Town Hall for answers and attended a few meetings that got loud and provided no answers as to how long this evacuation would last. On day three, we moved and went to stay with my sister. On day four, I went back to work so as to not lose more and finally, a week later on May 2 at about midnight, we were back at home. We were exhausted and happy to be home!

It was the longest week ever. We had lots of great friends and family who offered us help and a place to stay and our home is still here, unlike so many in flood zones who suffered losses this year. We were lucky!

We lost a few things: food in the fridge, the fridge itself died, there were expenses like car rentals, food, filling of prescriptions, clothes, shoe replacement, glasses and more that we did not expect.

Jasper took a few weeks to feel safe again. He was definitely traumatized by us abandoning him for a week. He would not let us close a door and was right next to our feet all the time.

I am still having nightmares about the dam breaking, I need closure and something official from Hydro Quebec saying this won't ever happen again because either they are going to dismantle the dam or maintain it. But there is no sign. I hope to get this in the near future.

I learned a lot that week. First: how much I don't believe in the system as it stands. Our communities need to get ahead of things before they become a crisis and to put the citizens ahead of big business, making them accountable. My township tried to do what it could with the tools it had and I thank them for that. Everyone: police, firefighters, councillors, and the mayor were stressed and trying hard. Now is the time to build a better plan and take preventative actions. I think that transparency and inclusion are the keys to building faith and trust in leadership. Get input from people, be open and welcoming to suggestions from the citizens who lived through the crisis. People need immediate action, answers and comfort when they are displaced. Second: I never knew I had so many neighbours; we live in the bush so we are hidden by the trees. Our neighbours became a very important network, they supported each other, and helped to keep communications flowing. Us Rouge River folk are a hearty bunch with lots of personality (can you hear my chuckle?) myself included. In the end, they were the ones who were there on the ground with me and we helped support each other. That feeling of community saved my sanity!

Most of all, I learned to be grateful for my life, my husband's life and to enjoy home – no matter how humble, there is no place quite like it!



KARA MACRAE

ARTICLE : OWEN MACRAE | PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY KARA'S FAMILY

A very special girl is very much apart of our Clan MacRae family. Her grandfather, Arnold MacRae, and great-aunt, Helen (MacRae) MacEwen, are long time members of the Society. Her uncle, David MacRae and several other cousins are members of the society. She was a recipient of the Children's Wish Foundation along with her mother, Violet Robison and her father, Donnie MacRae. Kara's desire was to see her favor-

ite hockey team, the Toronto Maple Leafs, She was extremely excited to go to Toronto along with her mother and father to meet many of the players and to watch a game. We are pleased to report that after several months of treatment, Kara is in full remission. Her mother Violet also discovered that she acquired cancer and told Kara, God didn't want her to go through chemo alone, so we are doing the treatments together. When they are all over, we will have a great party. Kara is a very positive and upbeat girl and is always smiling and laughing. We wish them all the best in the future.

Read more about Kara in this article link below written by The Guardian, titled, "Orwell girl still on cloud nine after wish foundation helps her meet Toronto Maple Leafs."

<https://www.theguardian.pe.ca/news/local/orwell-girl-still-on-cloud-nine-after-wish-foundation-helps-her-meet-toronto-maple->



Photo left to right: Don Cherry, Kara MacRae, Donnie MacRae, Violet Robinson, and Ron MacLean



Photos of Kara MacRae and her family