

## RICHMOND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1161 Rte 243, Canton Melbourne, Quebec, J0B 2B0

### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

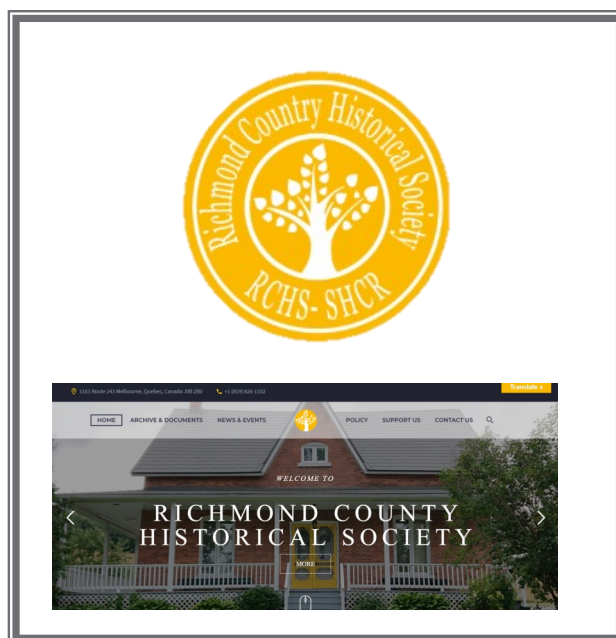
[Norma Husk]

#### *Hello Everyone!!*

I hope you are all keeping well and staying safe in these weird and challenging times. As you probably know by now, our usual summer activities are cancelled for the season due to Covid-19. This is despite the government's giving permission for museums to open. Because we are so dependent on volunteer assistance, we have decided that it is just not feasible to meet health and safety guidelines for our potential visitors. We want everyone to be safe and we are just not there yet!

We do, though, have some news to share with you and we hope that you will celebrate these achievements with us. First, if you have looked for us online, you will have noticed that we have a brand-new website!! This is an achievement that we have been dreaming of and working towards for some time now. You may find us at [www.rchs-shcr.ca](http://www.rchs-shcr.ca) ! We hope that you share our pride in our new look and our new logo. This website was created by Ahmad Hamdan, a Bishop's University Master's student in Computer Science. Ahmad donated much of his time in building this site for us and we are sure that you will enjoy the site as much as we do! At the same time, please take note that our email address has changed. You will find a list of our email addresses in the "Contact Us" section. We now have a "button" (**Support Us**) to donate

through Canada Helps, and a "button" to join/renew memberships. Please know that your memberships and donations are our lifeblood and we are more dependent on these this year since we are unable see you at our usual fundraising events.



Second, our one key activity this year is documenting the Covid-19 experience for future generations! We received a federal government grant to help pay for a student researcher to gather and document this experience for us. This is how YOU can help:

The community is invited to submit letters, photos (people and objects), videos, diaries, poems, drawings, etc. to show the life you are experiencing these days. What does your day look like? Have you developed a new skill such as bread-making or knitting? Have you returned to earlier skills of long ago? What is your child/grandchild feeling about the change in lifestyle? How is your business affected? How are seniors coping both living at home or in a residence? How has your life changed if you are now unemployed? As a health care worker, how are you coping? Contributions from all ages are encouraged and for further information contact Norma at :

president@rchs-shcr.ca or  
norma.husk@gmail.com or  
claudia.research.rchs@gmail.com

We are making history each day; it is important to share our stories to pass on to future generations who will want to know how we coped, what we felt and thought about the radical changes brought about by the health crisis. We would be most ap-

preciative of your contributions. Our student, Claudia Ferland, is in the process of interviewing folks as well, so just let us know at either of the above email addresses and we will pass on your contact information to set up your interview.

We have also had some movement with our Executive Members. We would like to thank Kathleen Lynch, Manon Morin, and Barry Evans as they move on to other, not doubt exciting adventures! We have been very fortunate to have such dedicated souls to work for the good of the Society over the years. We wish them well and urge them not to be strangers!!

In their stead, we welcome with open arms Donna Noel-Hodge, Alle VanderWal, Jennifer Brown, and Nick Fonda to the fold! We are most grateful for your participation, ideas, and laughter! The reader will find a full list of the Executive Members on the new website: [www.rchs-shcr.ca](http://www.rchs-shcr.ca)

Wishing everyone a safe and healthy summer! We miss you!!

All the best,

*Norma Husk*

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EVERYTHING'S  
GONNA BE  
ALRIGHT

RICHMOND, QC, CA.

*Photos taken by Sandra St-Cyr*

*Design by Claudia Ferland*

## DEMOLITION OF ST. MICHAEL'S SCHOOL

**“No more school!”** is a cry that – in years prior to Covid-19 – was loudly heard far and wide in June. This year, of course, the school year was cut short for high school students and elementary schools have had many fewer students rushing out the doors at the end of the month.

That same phrase is true in a very different way for two brick structures that once served Richmond's English-Speaking Catholic community as Notre Dame School and St. Michael's Elementary School. By the end of June there will be only an extensive empty lot on the corner of Gouin and Adam Streets.

As many locals will know, the schools have been standing empty for over a decade. The older of the two buildings, on Gouin Street, was erected in 1928 to replace the school on Main Street that was run by the Brothers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus that had been in operation since 1882. The new school on Gouin Street, like the old one on Main, carried the name of Sacred Heart, and offered a Catholic education to boys in the area.

By the early 1950's, the post war baby boom required the construction of more classrooms and Notre Dame School was built on Adam Street. Notre Dame was notable for a couple of reasons. One, it had a gymnasium, unlike the earlier schools it replaced. The other being that it housed English-speaking Catholic students in one side of the building and French-speaking students on the other. Alumni of the school recall frequent schoolyard scuffles.

Sacred Heart continued as a school for boys run by the teaching brothers for another decade or so, by which time the idea of separate schools for boys and girls had almost entirely given way to co-ed educational schools. After the departure of the clergy, the school was called St. Patrick's and served the French-speaking community. It then became St. Michael's, an elementary school for the English Catholic population.

In the 1980's, the school was taken over by the French school board. At about the same time Notre Dame also reverted to that board and the two buildings became pavilions 1 and 2 of l'École le Tremplin.



PHOTO TAKEN BY SANDRA ST-CYR

A decline in student numbers eventually led to the abandonment of the two schools. The French high school on 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue became Plein Coeur Elementary School and French speaking high school students were bussed to Windsor.

## DEMOLITION OF ST. MICHAEL'S SCHOOL

The old Notre Dame School stood empty, while the old Sacré Coeur has been used occasionally by the SQ for training exercises.

Both buildings belong to the Des Sommets School Board, which has rejected numerous offers from the Town of Richmond to buy the decommissioned schools. Instead, the board hired the firm, Robert et Fils Méteaux to undertake the demolition.



PHOTO TAKEN BY SANDRA ST-CYR

The demolition of the schools has not met with universal approval. At least a few people have approached the Richmond County Historical Society to ask if the buildings could not be saved. The RCHS might well have been interested in saving the building but is without the financial resources to either buy or restore the buildings.

While the decision was entirely out of his hands, the Mayor of Richmond, Bertrand Ménard, is optimistic about the future.

“We hope to be able to buy the land from the school board,” he says, “because we do have a

couple of projects in mind that would be very interesting for the future development of the town.”



PHOTO TAKEN BY SANDRA ST-CYR

In the meantime, anyone who wants a souvenir of the old Sacré Coeur can have one for the asking. When it was built, in 1928, bricks were used both on the façade and in the interior walls. These bricks came from the old brickyard on Spooner Pond Road that belonged to Stanislas Edmond Desmarais (who served simultaneously as Richmond’s mayor and Member of the National Assembly) and the bricks are stamped with the name, Richmond. The contractor has kindly set aside a large pile of bricks for anyone wanting some.

Ironically, while the second Sacré Coeur and Notre Dame are being demolished, the original Sacré Coeur on Main Street is still standing, providing commercial space to a hairdresser, and an esthetician, as well as several residential apartments.

***Nick Fonda, RCHS Chronicler***



## RECIPIENT OF THE C. W. DICKSON PRIZE

The C. W. Dickson History Prize was established many years ago by Richmond County Historical Society to honour the student at Richmond Regional High School who received the highest marks on Quebec's Provincial Grade 10 History examination.

Why the name C.W Dickson History Prize? Mr. Dickson's distinguished career in education ranged from teaching in high schools in Quebec, to principal of John Rennie High School, to Inspector in the Department of Education, to administration of the Richmond Drummond Arthabaska Protestant Central School Board as the supervisor. In his last posting, he served as Quebec's associate Deputy Minister of Education, with responsibilities for the English sector. He retired to Melbourne Township

where he played a very active role on the Board of Directors of Richmond County Historical Society. He died April 17, 1998, in Melbourne. The prize was established and is given in his memory.

This year's recipient of the award is Leeanna Massie, who was also the salutatorian for RRHS's graduating class of 2020. In the fall, Leeanna will be attending Champlain College, in Lennoxville, in the Nursing program. This summer, she will be working full time at the Wales Home. We give our regards to Miss Massie and wish her the best of luck in all her future endeavours.

## CENTURY PROPERTY CERTIFICATES

Century Property Certificates have been given by Richmond County Historical Society over a period of years. These certificates are given to residents whose family has lived on the same property for 100 years or more. As part of the 50th anniversary celebrations in 2012, Richmond County Historical Society granted twenty-two Century Property Certificates, six 150 year certificates, and four for 200

years and more. Since 1967, 135 Century Property Certificates have been granted.

Without doubt, some families were missed. If anyone knows of a family that qualifies, meaning 100 years or more (1920 or earlier) on the same property, please contact Bev Taber Smith at 819-239-8804 or [custodian@rchs-shcr.ca](mailto:custodian@rchs-shcr.ca).

- A SINCERE THANKS TO OUR RCHS COMMUNITY -

