

# Researchers on lookout for afterlife

*Couple part of team travelling around southeastern Ontario to help people find answers*

By Patrick Callbeck

“Your car... the engine needs some work,” Rose McDonald warned as I unlocked the passenger doors for her and her husband outside of the Tim Hortons in Picton, Ontario.

I didn’t know what to say. I had only known this pint-sized woman in wrap-around sunglasses for 15 minutes and she already knew more about my car than I had cared to admit.

“How did you know?” I said, as I cautiously turned the ignition of my grungy Echo, hoping I could prove her wrong. “I could feel it,” she replied.

You wouldn’t know it to see them, they are older, quiet, and unassuming, but Rose and her husband Patrick McDonald have a peculiar hobby. They are the founding members of a non-profit group called the Ontario Paranormal Research Society (OPRS). Together, along with a team of researchers, they travel around southeastern Ontario looking for signs of the afterlife and trying to help people get answers.

As my car squealed awkwardly out of the parking lot, Patrick tried to explain that Rose has always had the ability to see things that others couldn’t, that wherever she goes, she senses things.

“This isn’t the first time she’s felt this way about a car and she’s usually right. You should really get it checked out,” he finished.

Despite feeling unsure about my car all of a sudden, we drove down to the Picton Courthouse anyway. They wanted to show me the gallows where the only two men ever hanged in Prince Edward County met their end.

Patrick explained that the two men were falsely accused of murder and that they were executed before they could have a proper trial. As we peered through the gates into the courtyard where the gallows once stood, Patrick brought out a small plastic device that looked like a garage door opener covered with a rainbow of blinking LED lights. It is one of the tools he uses when they go on investigations.

“It’s called an EMF reader, it senses changes in the electromagnetic field which can be a sign of paranormal activity,” he said.

One of the men who were hanged at the Picton Courthouse was named



Photo by Patrick Callbeck

**“I believe there’s a lot of life in a cemetery. I used to believe that when we die, lights out, that’s it. But I’ve seen so many cases that prove otherwise. Too much evidence that shows that no that’s not the end, something else happens,” says Patrick McDonald, founding member of the OPRS.**

George Lowder.

“With his last breath, he cursed the judges and said no grass would ever grow on his grave,” said Rose, pointing to an odd bare patch of sod in the middle of the courtyard.

“He has since been moved to the Glenwood Cemetery, but the bare patch remains,” she added.

Happy with the EMF readings and the audio recordings he collected at the courthouse, Patrick suggested we go to the Glenwood Cemetery to see if we could locate Lowder’s new home.

They said goodbye to whoever might be there and we got back into my car.

To Rose and Patrick, the paranormal is nothing to fear. They talk about ghosts with as much adoration as they do their

friends and neighbours. One of the reasons Patrick founded OPRS is to help people understand the paranormal activity in their homes so they can get over the fear and move on.

We arrived at Glenwood Cemetery and got out of the car without saying a word. Rolling hills littered with headstones covered the horizon. “If we could see them all, it would look like a crowd gathering for a Queen concert,” said Patrick about the spirits in the graveyard. He’s right about one thing, there are a lot of people buried at Glenwood. There are easily more graves here than there are living people in Picton.

With the skill a bloodhound, Rose and Patrick tracked down Lowder’s grave. The headstone, if you could even call it that,

lay in the middle of the woods, away from the rest of the nicely manicured graves. Far from the judges and lawyers that put him in the ground.

With quiet reverence, Patrick and Rose, said hello and paid their respects to Mr. Lowder. Before they left, they tidied up his grave. The hastily chiseled headstone had obviously been neglected over the years and was in desperate need of some TLC.

The same goes for the number of small stones scattered throughout the woods.

Just as they had done with Mr. Lowder, Patrick and Rose walked through and removed branches from graves, cleaned some headstones, and took interest in the lives of people who had been long since

dead.

I’ve been to a lot of cemeteries, but I’ve never experienced one this way before. As we walked among the headstones of people we’ve never met, Rose and Patrick seem to be hearing something, looking for something, waiting for something to happen.

But, nothing happens, at least so far as I can tell.

Maybe my hearing isn’t as good as I thought, maybe my eyes are too weak, or maybe nothing happened at all.

But at least they are listening and treating these people with the respect they deserve, living or dead.

“Remember, ghosts were people too,” Patrick said. “Cemeteries are very much alive..”



Photo by Jason Prupas

**Capt. Jon Chicoine stands in the bridge of the Ontario Explorer, the Ministry of Natural Resources’ new research vessel, which was docked in Belleville’s Meyers Pier on Oct. 10. The public was invited on-board the ship for a question and answer period regarding the Bay of Quinte’s environmental challenges.**

## Manfred Koechlin honoured with Remedial Action Plan award

*Bay of Quinte group made special presentation for his work in rehabilitation*

By Anica James

It was a cold night for an award ceremony, as a group of local residents gathered at Meyer’s Pier on the back patio of the Pier Restaurant last Wednesday to watch as Manfred Koechlin was honoured with an award by the Bay of Quinte Remedial Action Plan (BQRAP).

The event, simply titled State of the Bay, organized by Sarah Midlane-Jones of the BQRAP, was created to draw attention to the environmental problems surrounding the Bay of Quinte, especially regarding pollution, and how volunteers can help to rehabilitate the bay.

Koechlin, who was the third recipient of the Back to the Bay award, was recognized for his continuous help in re-

habilitating the damaged environment, and has been sailing on the local waters for over 40 years.

The Bay of Quinte, which is known for being one of the most polluted bodies of water in Ontario, has been slowly undergoing a “facelift” with the help of volunteers and BQRAP, trying to revoke the “area of concern” status.

The event, which started at 3 p.m. with a tour of the Ministry of Natural Resources scientific exploration vessel Ontario Explorer finished with the award ceremony and information session from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

The captain of the ship, Jon Chicoine, drove the 65-foot steel boat, along with his crew, from Kingston earlier that day to attend the event and to discuss the importance of the scientific research that is conducted in Lake Ontario and its surrounding bodies of water.

The Bay, which was the focus of Koechlin’s award and the event, has experienced significant improvements since it was considered one of the 10 ar-

reas of concern on the Canadian side of the Great Lakes in 1985. With the natural waterfront being damaged by pollutants and misuse, the indigenous species of the region such as fish, birds and insects were showing serious decline.

However, with programs designed to counteract habitat loss through both restoration and rehabilitation, the Bay now has over 800 hectares of wetland protected. This has shown an increase in both fish population and specific species of water bugs, which indicates that water levels and water quality is improving in the Bay, thanks to the hard work of the BQRAP.

The Bay is now in the second stage of the remedial action plan, indicating that serious progress has been made since its inception in 1993, and is nearing the third stage which will have it removed from the list of areas of concern in Ontario, according to the remedial action plan’s website.

For more information visit <http://www.bqrap.ca>

## Location of casino development continues to be a city battle

By Mary Barber

Belleville city council’s planning committee turned down casino development for a potential property at the junction of Millennium Parkway and Highway 62 last week.

A location along Bell Boulevard has been approved and could house the gaming facility.

On June 25, City Council held a vote to approve of a casino in the Belleville area. The original motion was approved by a 7 to 1 vote.

Councillor Jodie Jenkins asked council to add a formal definition of ‘casino’ to the zoning permit that Tuesday evening.

“One of things I wanted to do is put a definition on the word casino, that says if a casino comes to our city it has to have a hotel, it has to have a banquet centre, it has to have a water park,” Jenkins said. “What we don’t want is just a building with slots.”

The zoning approval at Millennium Drive was met with petitions from a local church and local residents in the area, however most were far outside the radius for mandatory notification.

John Halloran, a development representative, plans to approach the Ontario Municipal Board to appeal the ruling.

Despite concerns from local residents, the majority of city council members have confidence towards public acceptance of the casino plan.

“We went through an extensive public process, to allow people to respond,” said Councillor Jack Miller. “There was a public meeting at City Hall. Most were in favour. Surveys were sent in the Quinte West area. We held an online poll through CJBQ (Quinte Broadcasting Company). Everything we have points to public acceptance.”

City council is resilient to cracking under provincial government pressure, Jenkins said.

“We were put under tight timelines to come up with a decision that we wanted a casino in our community. I just didn’t feel that was right.

“The provincial government put us under the hammer to get it done but further than that, I wasn’t buying the economic spin off.”

He added that there are already a number of other gambling facilities in Ontario within 50 to 60 minutes of each other. He said he also thinks a casino could diminish the local economy.

The Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation has not made any decision about where or if a casino will be approved for Belleville or other cities.

## Event helps Lung Association

By Samantha Quinn

About 30 people gathered at a financial office on North Front Street at 8 a.m. on Saturday to participate in the Belleville’s first Amazing Pace charity event to raise money for lung cancer. Previously the event has been organized in London, Stratford and Toronto.

The Amazing Pace was organized by The Ontario Lung Association to engage the community to encourage the Lung Action Plan to the provincial government to help those affected by lung cancer as well as other lung diseases.

Participants joined the competition as seven teams and were given eight Checkpoint Challenges that tested the teams mentally and physically. The tasks needed to be successfully completed before moving to the next one. Challenges included changing a tire, learning to tie several knots, solving a murder mystery and getting cars to “honk if they love lungs” while in a dragon costume. The teams had to cross the finish line on North Front Street in order to complete the race.

Jessica McDonnell, a woman from

Trenton on the waitlist for a double lung transplant for the past 17 months, addressed the crowd through her fiancé Arthur Rosenplot because she was unable to speak for herself. She described each breath she takes is like “breathing through a straw.”

“We like to pretend that we have a normal life. We like to pretend that we are just like everyone else,” read Rosenplot. “Jessica spends a lot of her morning coughing and clearing her lungs and then taking the inhaled antibiotics.”

Participants and volunteers had different reasons for attending the Amazing Pace, some for the community involvement, raising money, the fun of the competition and some because of personal experiences.

“My mother passed away 10 months ago from a severe case of lung cancer so I found this event appropriate to attend,” said Taris Lattanzio, a volunteer of the event.

The Lady Lungs was the winner of the four-person team and Beauty and the Beast was the winner of the two-person team.