



Photo by Andre Lodder

Reaching for spring

Theo and Liam get an early start on the fishing season today. The two were part of a group of friends who spent a foggy morning fishing at South George Park. Balmy weather will continue this week.

Living life close to home

Seventy-eight-year-old hasn't travelled further than 70 kilometres of her home in Marlbank

By Sherry Tompkins

In 78 years, Marguerite McCutcheon has travelled less than 70 kilometres from her home.

In today's fast-paced world, it may be hard to imagine a life without travel. However, some people have mastered being content with where they are and McCutcheon is one of them.

McCutcheon has lived her entire life in Marlbank, a community of less than 300 people, northeast of Belleville.

She was born and raised in a house just up the road from the Marlbank Phoenix Tavern, a local centennial landmark and basically the centre of the town.

"People didn't go to the hospital back then," says McCutcheon. Of course, this was back in the day when doctors still made house calls.

McCutcheon's parents, Clara and Perry Young, both lived and worked in Marlbank as well. Her father worked at the local ironworks and at the Marlbank cement plant. McCutcheon's mother cleaned the local school.

Being born at home seems to have set the boundary for McCutcheon's life. As a young girl, she attended church and school in Marlbank, both a stone's throw from where she now lives.

The high school back then was in Tweed, a slightly larger community located 25 kilometres away, but McCutcheon didn't make it there.

"I never went to high school," said McCutcheon. "When I turned 16, I walked down the road and went to work."

That is when she started working at what is now the Marlbank Phoenix Tavern, then known as Marlbank House. It was a stop for the hydro and telephone trucks that were working in the area.

"I waited on tables. I got a dollar a day."

Marguerite met Roy McCutcheon, a man from Roslin, 23 kilometres away. She was 18 when they were married in Selby, less than 20 kilometres away.

Asked whether she and her husband travelled for their honeymoon, she stops and looks up.

"You just got married and come home."

Home was a small house across from the hotel where she worked. "We had to pay four dollars a month for rent, but we had no hydro and no water." They would have to carry water for whatever needs they had.

The McCutcheons had four children, two boys and two girls. Two of the four, like their mother, were born at home, and two were born in Kingston, which is the farthest point that Marguerite has ever travelled, 68 kilometres away.

All four of her children live within the same 70-km circle of McCutcheon's life.

It's been a life full of friendship and joy. She and her family socialized with nearby friends. Card playing was the popular activity of the time. Euchre parties were held at the local school and at the church hall.

Children were often left to their own imaginations for their entertainment and McCutcheon added, "They'd get in hellery sometimes!"

McCutcheon's son Terry commented, "We had the farm behind us and we always found something to do. We kept fairly busy as kids; we never got too bored. I know I never. I was there until I was 17."

All the necessities of life were right at McCutcheon's fingertips and she ventured farther out only to go to the bank and pay



Photo by Sherry Tompkins

Seventy-seven-year-old Marguerite McCutcheon has lived in Marlbank for her whole life. She has never even travelled outside a 100-kilometre radius from home.

her bills.

"We used to go, when my husband was alive, up to Tweed. Up to the Montreal bank."

Asked why she didn't venture out any farther than Marlbank, McCutcheon simply pointed out that there was no need. She was content where she was.

"My brother Neil back there is the very same way. It's just what they get used to,

so I guess it runs in the family," said Terry.

McCutcheon's children have travelled to various places around the world and returned with photographs and tales of excitement and adventure.

Although she enjoys hearing about their experiences, it has never inspired her to want to go herself.

"I'm not very good at travelling. I like to be around in my home."

Outdoor enthusiasts come to show

By Zachary Greco

Spring was in the air and the arenas were packed with boats and RVs last weekend for the 14th Annual Quinte Sportsman, Boat and RV Show.

From Friday to Sunday, the Quinte Sports and Wellness Centre was filled with everything to do with the outdoors for the biggest sportsman show between Toronto and Ottawa.

The new renovations and expansion of the Quinte Sports and Wellness Centre have allowed for more room for the show. This year's show was the biggest yet, with more than 80 vendors showcasing and selling outdoor goods, giving showgoers a chance to shop around and get the best deals they could find.

"There's pretty much anything you can fit into the place from one end to the other," said show organizer Jeff Cox.

"This year has been the best show ever," said showgoer Steve Hannah. "There's lots of displays, trailers, everything."

"There is something here for everybody and everyone should take it in. It gets you into the spring feeling," he added.

Rifles, shotguns, bows and crossbows were available for hunters along with a plethora of fishing tackle and rods for anglers at the show.

For the non-hunters and anglers, there were enough trailers, RVs, Argos, ATVs and boats to keep people busy looking for hours.

"We started the show so we could have a place of our own to show trailers instead of going to Toronto or Ottawa," said Cox, whose family owns Carl Cox RVs.

"If the city would like to co-operate, I would like to make it larger next year," said Cox. "There's still more of the building not being used."

A skeptic's visit to Belleville's Psychic Expo

Event gives writer fodder for contemplation and new ideas

By Chloë Ellingson

The Belleville Psychic Expo looks much as I thought it would. Deep blue curtains cover the walls, and draped cloth abounds covered in golden suns and moons, tie dye, and oceanic themes. Booths advertising psychic readings line the perimeter, and large tables of stones and salts for sale fill the centre of the room.

This is my first time at such an event, and the trip is out of character. I don't think much about spirits or auras, and while I do strongly believe in self-reflection, I'm prone to turn toward more quantifiable ways of exploring myself. All of this said, I really don't know enough about psychic fairs to dismiss them. Can such conventions have any value to a skeptic? I went to find out.

As I make my way around the room I'm halted by the bright yellow signs surrounding an "Aura Photos" station. "Come have your photo taken with our amazing aura and chakra capturing system," the brochure reads. Baffled, I strike up conversations with a person manning the booth, Stan Mallow, who starts patiently explaining his work in an unmistakably thick New York accent.

Conversation soon turns to our shared love of New York, especially Brooklyn, where he's from. For the duration of our conversation I feel a bond with this person based on shared interests and experience.

"How did you get into this?" I ask. "He won't tell you!" chimes in his business partner, Ray Faucher, from behind the display. Faucher goes on to tell me about how Mallow used to do public relations work for Elizabeth Taylor and Marlene Dietrich, who Faucher says started coming to Mallow for psychic readings because he gave them really good advice.



Photo by Dan Pearce

"Famous Irish Psychic" Mark Lewis waits for customers at his booth during the Psychic Expo at the Travelodge in Belleville on March 11.

After this experience, in combination with having a heart attack, Mallow says he started thinking about his life differently and changed career paths. "I came in through the back door," he admits with a smile. I wonder what the front door looks like.

Asked about how he deals with skeptics, Mallow's answer is delightfully confident. "Being skeptical is good," he says, "if the person is a true skeptic, but there are people who have tunnel vision. They're not skeptics. You should be a skeptic about everything," he advises. "I would

highly recommend it."

Next stop is the "Electric Psychic" booth at the back of the room. I'm greeted by Linda Fulcher, who organized this expo and, along with her husband, has organized 10 to 15 expos annually around the province for the past 23 years. The couple also runs a publishing business.

From Fulcher I find a way to categorize everything that's going on around me, which was formerly all clumped into one in my mind. Fulcher divided the spiritualists' methods into two categories: modality and tool.

"Modality" refers to how spiritualists perceive. One can be clairvoyant (seeing), clairaudient (hearing), clairsentient (feeling), or clairgustatorial (tasting), which, says Fulcher, is rare. "Tools" are the materials some spiritualists use, such as Tarot cards, crystal balls, or, as I learned, photography. "They amplify energy the same way a mic amplifies sound," she says.

Fulcher voices a need that is obvious throughout the Expo, where tables feature spiritualist coverage in mainstream newspapers: be seen as legitimate.

"We're working to gain credibility," she

says, before suggesting that I Google Russell Targ, a physicist whom she insinuates is a well-regarded academic who studies remote viewing (a psychic ability).

I'm surprised to find that some exhibitors have used their foreign origin in their advertising, as though being a psychic wasn't exotic enough. Sumptuous deep purple material and ornate gold-coloured frames evoke a sense of royalty at the booth of "Maureen Collins, International Psychic." A small British flag stands on her table. Across the room I see a large white sign with green letters reading "Marc Lewis, Famous Irish Psychic."

As I head towards the exit I'm stopped by a man sitting in front of a sign reading "Christena and Peter, Psychic Readings." The man, who I soon learn is Peter Linka, asks me if I've ever had a psychic reading before, and I say that I haven't.

He explains that Christena Linka, the woman with whom he works, who is currently doing a reading behind him, only takes on clients whom she knows she'll be able to read, and that I would certainly be readable. He goes on to say that I am emotional, sensitive, and passionate, and that gets me into trouble. Fair.

After probing a bit further, he tells me I need a saying to live by, something to keep things in perspective. He writes "How important is it?" on a brochure and hands it to me. In spite of myself, after this mini-reading I notice that I've got the same bewildered and bashful smile on my face as so many of the people around me.

Why was I enjoying this? His comments were vague, and could have been describing the person beside me. They're not necessarily proof that he knows who I am, and even if he did, what would that mean?

The only conclusion I can come up with is this: he gave me fodder for contemplation. I leave with a few ideas about myself, be they true or false, significant or irrelevant, which were mine to consider, and to compare to who I think I am, or who I want to be. That, scientific or not, isn't such a bad thing.