

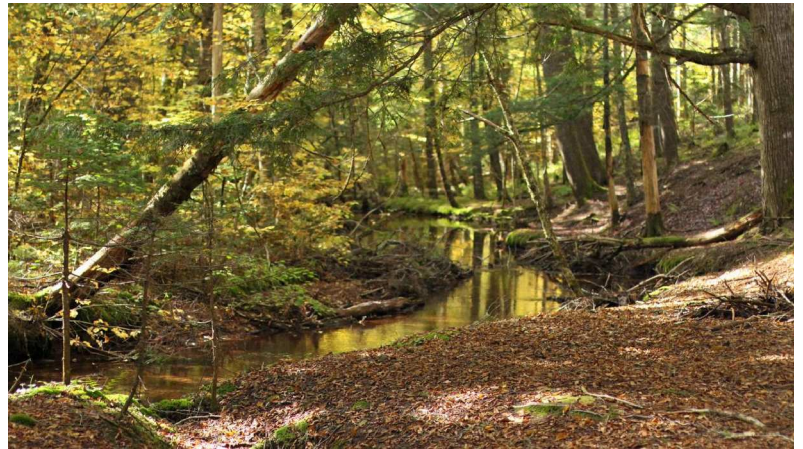
RED DAHLIA PROJECT

NEWSLETTER

May 2023

Happy Picnic Day!

I don't know when the tradition started, but when I was growing up, this was the day when kids who lived in and around Souris packed a little lunch and headed to the woods for "Picnic Day." It was only when I went to university that I discovered that the rest of the country called it Victoria Day.



This happened regardless of weather. I remember picnicking beside snow banks! That didn't bother us. We just wanted to roam the woods and feel free.

In the 1800s, PEI picnics were more formal and staid occasions, usually sponsored by churches as fundraising events. (You can still find a few "parish picnics" during the summer.) The most famous one was memorialized in a folk song, "The Picnic at Groshaut," where the priest in St. Charles inadvertently provided hard cider to the picnickers, and let's just say things "went a bit haywire," as people used to say.

You can listen at: <https://umaine.edu/folklife/what-we-do/programs-and-events/maine-song-and-story-sampler-map/places/groshaut-the-picnic-at-groshaut/>

Patricia

Macphail Woods Project

Check out this worthy project, dedicated to forest stewardship on PEI:
<https://macphailwoods.org/about/overview>

Some weather we're having, eh?

Like a lot of Islanders, I find myself preoccupied with the weather. When I was in my twenties, I spent a summer on the Greek islands. Every morning, I would stop at a store for a yogurt and an orange and try to start conversation with something like, "What a beautiful day." Didn't get much response. My travel companion pointed out to me that, unlike PEI, the weather there is exactly the same - clear, sunny and dry - for six months straight. No need to mention it!

The MacAulay family might have an additional reason for this preoccupation because George MacAulay kept an extra close eye on the weather while serving as a volunteer observer for the Canadian Weather Service from the farm in St. Catherines. Starting in 1967, he faithfully and meticulously recorded temperatures and precipitation levels using equipment stored in a structure like the one pictured here. I remember watching him doing this work, no matter what the conditions.

Richard and Merlin have pulled together a detailed record of his service, and you can read it at:

<https://www.peishanachie.com/have-a-visit/fishing/weather>

PEI Weather-Speak

"There's dirt on the way."

Translation: Something messy (rain, snow, sleet, hail, or a combination of it all) is in the forecast.



The Weatherman

Merlin MacAulay dedicated his professional life to understanding the weather. I remember being enthralled as a kid by the stories about him riding wild ponies on Sable Island while working at a weather station there. Here is Merlin's recollection of that experience: <https://sableislandinstitute.org/merlin-macaulay-1955-1956/>

Planting Seeds ...

You can't underestimate the power of what sparks your imagination as a child. I also found the stories about Merlin's time at a weather station in northern Canada pretty thrilling. (I wonder sometimes if that's what took me to there later in life.)

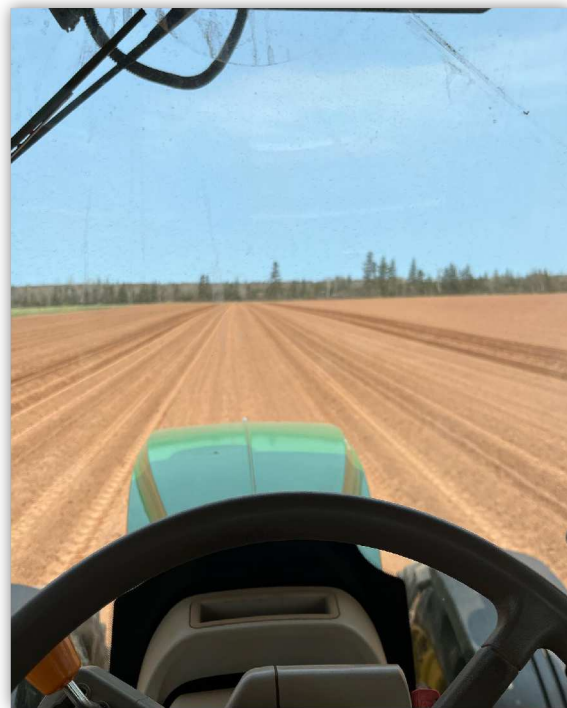
As an adult, I heard a funny story about his time there. People could send him mail and supplies that I assume were flown in at certain times of the year. No alcohol was permitted, but his wily relatives got around that rule by filling up a hot water bottle with some liquor. Merlin acknowledged the gift, and wrote, "Thank you for the hot water bottle. Everyone here wants to borrow it."

I, for one, would love to hear more about Merlin's Arctic adventure.

When you are farming, fishing, gardening, or hanging out clothes, you have to keep a close eye on the weather.

Right now, we are past the risk of frost (we hope), and in the midst of planting season. Danette (MacAulay) Murray, her husband, Kevin, and their children, Max and Lauren, are all part of a potato growing family in Bedeque, PEI.

Kevin shares a lot about his farming experiences on his Facebook page. Search for him there, and you can follow the ups and downs of life as a PEI potato farmer.



PEI Weather-Speak

"We'll pay for this."

Translation: Spoken when experiencing a particularly pleasant day out of season. Meant to indicate that the scales will be balanced by nasty weather somewhere down the line.

Updates

Good news / bad news from the PEI lobster fishery. First, the good news - Lennox Island fishers were able to reach an interim agreement with DFO and proceed peacefully with their fishery, and DFO biologists report that Maritime lobster stocks are so high that they have no conservation concerns. The bad news? Catches are down, likely due to lobsters being thrown to shore during Hurricane Fiona, fishers say, and prices are down compared to other years and regions, due to the lingering economic effects of the pandemic, processors say.

Ernie sent an e-mail with an interesting tidbit about how family members contributed to the fishery while on-shore and even out-of-province.

Ernie recalled that when Gerald left St. Catherines to join the Royal Canadian Air Force, he packed hooks and twine and continued to knit trap heads and send them home by mail from his postings.

Teamwork!

Ernie's story is just one example of the MacAulay dedication to being helpful to others. Many of you send kind words to thank me for my time and effort. That is greatly appreciated. Some have asked about sharing project costs. There are only two annual expenses:

www.ancestry.ca (Power-MacAulay family tree)
www.wix.com (family website)

\$151.73
\$276.00

If you would like to chip in, you can send an emt to my email address. Thanks for asking!!



"Everything is made new in the spring. Springs themselves are always so new, too. No spring is ever just like any other spring. It always has something of its own to be its peculiar sweetness."

Lucy Maud Montgomery