

Everyday Heroes - Canon James and Mary Elizabeth Maxwell

BY GLENDA BENTON
LIMEHOUSE & AREA

Canon James Maxwell, a retired Anglican Priest, and his wife, the former Mary Copeland, live in a quaint log cabin they built on the side of a hill overlooking Norval.

Nestled among the trees and flowers, across the road from Mary's beloved home "Lilac Hill", the Maxwells are enjoying a somewhat quieter life now. No one can say the life of a country parson is quiet. Canon Maxwell and his wife were always available—so much so that it is said their home has a revolving door. Even in retirement this is so.

The Canon, who is 84, is still called up to do weddings and funerals. Mary, who is also 84, smiles as she says people in country parishes never forget and they are often included in family celebrations such as christenings, birthdays and anniversary parties. The country is for us, they agree.

Canon Maxwell was born

in Grimsby and moved around with his family a great deal as a youngster. He attended 20 different schools and even recalls attending school in Tampa, Florida.

He remembers his first ministry as a student in Grand Valley, Ont. He would go by train on Saturday and board there for the weekend, rushing back to Trinity College, Toronto for classes on Monday. He wasn't always on time either due to schedules. He was ordained as a Priest in 1941 and served in Jarvis for 1941-1942. Then he served under a rector at St. Thomas' Church in St. Catharines for 3 years. A new rector was coming and although he was asked to stay he felt city life wasn't for him.

In 1947, he was appointed to the three point charge of Norval, Hornby & Stewarttown and they served this charge until 1960 at which time the parish was divided. St. Paul's Norval

joined with the Glen Williams Anglican Church. A new rectory was built at Hornby beside the little white church there and the Maxwells remained at St. Stephen's, Hornby and St. John's, Stewarttown until his retirement in 1976.

The Canon chuckles as he recalls his first Sunday in 1947. He was to preach at Hornby in the morning, Stewarttown at 3 p.m. and Norval at 7 p.m. Someone told him if no one invites you for supper go to the Copeland's in Norval. Not knowing for sure whether he had been invited or was expected he knocked on the door and was welcomed with a friendly "Hi, come on in! He quickly took a quick count of the many people about and the number of places set at the table and felt more relaxed because there was indeed one extra plate. Thus, Jimmy, as Mary fondly calls him, met Mary Copeland and the couple married in 1949. They had two daughters, Lori and Mary Jean who is known as Mary Honey. When Mary brought her home, Lori, who was two said, "Oh my little sister Mary Honey" and Mary Honey she is to this day. The Maxwells now enjoy two grandchildren. The Canon now laughs as he recalls finding out several years after their marriage that he had not been invited to that first meal. In fact the crowd didn't know who he was when he arrived. When he asked Mary about the extra plate she said, "Oh I often set another plate Sunday night. You never knew who might turn up". Just a personal interjection - when I was four my family lived in Norval and Mary & my late mother became great friends. I have many memories of the wonderful meals

and happy times playing under the lilacs at Lilac Hill in the years that followed.

The Canon chuckles as he thinks of the hurried trips from Stewarttown to Hornby every Sunday morning. Having only 5 to 10 minutes between services, he never received a speeding ticket. Although the boys in blue were often around Ashgrove they seemed to look heavenward as I'm sure the speeding priest did too. The Reverend is noted for his wit. A year ago Mary & I were reminiscing after a funeral and the Canon walked by us several times and finally came and touched Mary on the shoulder. In his usual, quiet manner he said "Mom I think we should leave now so we can let the babysitter go home."

He was made an Honorary member of the Ontario Steam & Antique Preserver's Association. For years he would do his Labour Day weekend service in the basement of the grandstand at the Milton Fairgrounds and encourage his congregation to Worship there at the Annual Steam Era.

When the Maxwells started to build their cabin in 1951 they had \$60 in the bank. They paid Ellwood Carney \$57 to dig the basement. While out driving with friends one day the lady remarked that those people must have run out of money to which Mary quietly replied, "They did." Four years later the roof was on and they spent their summer holidays there every year and with the help of Mary's Dad and brother they finished their cabin. They moved into it when they retired from active ministry in 1976. Since then they have added a spacious room with many windows from which they enjoy their country view.

The room welcomes you with its fireplace, electric organ and chapel table and many chairs for those who enjoy the Maxwell's hospitality.

Mary modestly says she hasn't done much in her life, has had many interests, was never bored a day in her life and enjoyed "just living". One only needs to spend a short time with her to know how much she enjoys her ordinary things, namely gardens, flowers, trees, preserving, crafts and most of all people.

Mary was always jotting down bits and pieces here and there and had a great collection of this and that. She had a dream of someday writing a book and so at the age of 80 she decided it was time to put it together and did so in the next two years. Using her husband's old Remington 41 she typed most of her own manuscript and "To Walk A Country Mile" was printed in 1997, a wonderful book about reflections of a life in rural Canada. What a great accomplishment for a lady who says she hasn't done much and to think she did it in her eighties. For those with rural roots and those interested in early life in the country this book is a must.

Presently Mary has pen to paper writing "The Other Side of the Stained Glass Window - A Country Priest Looks Back". All I will say is we look forward to seeing this in print as it tells of many wonderful, interesting and humorous happenings over the years.


The world is a much better place because the Maxwells have been here. They have shown us what love, caring and sharing is all about. Those who have had the opportunity to cross their path have indeed had their lives enriched.



PHOTO BY GLENDA BENTON

THE MAXWELLS AT THEIR LOG CABIN OVER LOOKING NORVAL

Ron Kindt



*Wildlife,
Nature and
Landscapes*

R.R.# 2
Campbellville, Ont.

Photography

905-659-0067

SCREENHOUSES UNLIMITED
Affordable Screen House Kits



Have a **BUG FREE** Summer
Many sizes & shapes to fit your deck
Demo kits available
at reduced pricing
Free Delivery

1-800-922-4760
WWW.SCREEN-HOUSE.COM



Timmerman
Landscaping

Grounds Maintenance

General Landscape Construction

Residential & Industrial

- Free Consultations -

Peter Timmerman
519-856-1316
R.R.# 2
Rockwood, Ont.

MILTON COUNCIL NOTES BY CINDY LUNAU

Spring Clean-up - The Brookville Works Yard will be open for disposal of large items from May 23 to May 31, excluding Sunday. Hours will be weekdays from 7:30 am to 4 pm and Saturday from 8 am to 4 pm.

Awards and recognition: Antero Games was recognized for his service on the board of the Downtown Business Improvement Area. Joyce Johnson received the 20 year pin for her service in the Public Works department with the Town of Milton. William Stokes and Lyle Stokes were each recognized for 20 years of service as part-time firefighters and received 20 year Exemplary Service medals from the federal government.

Halton Urban Structure Plan Update - In the Technical Review, the East/Southeast Option was ranked first, with the East/West Option ranked second. Public and Land Owner meetings have been held. The last day for written comments is April 24th. It is expected that Milton Council will receive the report on May 4th.

Heritage Properties: By-Laws have been passed proclaiming the following properties as being of architectural and historical value: Elliott House, 8445 Third Line (formerly Esquesing) and Christie-Henderson Lime Kilns, Lot 4, Conc. 6, (formerly Nassagaweya).

Taxes: Your taxes (excluding school taxes) are based on three factors: 1) local town budget 2) regional services budget 3) assessment rolls. Milton Council approved the Town's Operating Budget with a 1% decrease in taxes. However, the Region is currently setting their budget and the Who Does What downloaded responsibilities make an increase in this budget inevitable, currently projected at 5%. Assessment rolls are still being determined by the Province, and will likely not be finalized until June. Hence the drama continues, but the anticipated tax rate is currently 1.3% of your assessed property value.

Emergency Numbers: The Rural Signs project will be completed this Spring with signs being erected in the Campbellville area, similar to the other areas of Nassagaweya. However, the Fire Department will consult with each owner in the Campbellville village to find the most appropriate posting. These emergency numbers are vital for the safety of residents and the success of the Enhanced-911 program.

Road Closures: Two road closures for reconstruction: 20 Sideroad between Fifth Line and Sixth Line Nassagaweya has been closed for the past week, although the road reconstruction is not yet finished, it should be passable later this week. 25 Sideroad between Second Line Nassagaweya and the Nassagaweya/Puslinch Town Line will be closed from April 20 to May 8. It will be open evenings as work permits.

File closures: Two Subdivision applications within Nassagaweya have been closed: Cedar Acres Estates (Steeles Avenue west of Guelph Line) and Moffatshire Developments (First Line Nassagaweya, south of 15 Sideroad). Originally put forward in 1989 and 1990, these developments will not proceed.

Your representatives: Your questions, comments, and concerns are important. **Please call us.** Lieven Gevaert (519) 856-4529; Barry Lee (519) 824-0679 or (519) 853-5790; Cindy Lunau (519) 853-3772.