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## Weather



TODAY:  
MIX OF SUN  
AND CLOUD

HIGH OF 27  
LOW OF 18



TUESDAY:  
SHOWERS

HIGH OF 21  
LOW OF 16



WEDNESDAY:  
60 PER CENT  
CHANCE OF  
SHOWERS  
HIGH OF 22  
LOW OF 12



THURSDAY:  
60 PER CENT  
CHANCE OF  
SHOWERS  
HIGH OF 24  
LOW OF 10



FRIDAY:  
MIX OF SUN  
AND CLOUD

HIGH OF 27  
LOW OF 11

# In the Vale



## THE SCOOP MABLE HASTINGS

With additional text submitted by Elizabeth Paulette-Coughlin and Ruth Patterson

Somewhere between where you are now and the place where life began lies the place "in between." For me, that place "in between" was a small hamlet nestled on the shore of Lake Memphremagog at the foot of Owl's Head Mountain called, Vale Perkins.

I resided in a small house that resembled a run down shed on the dirt road that ran past Jewett's Store. This road led to the wharf at Perkins Landing, as well as Girl's Camp Road, where many seasonal residents made their homes away from home.

My love affair with the Vale was bittersweet. The antics and spirited imaginations of me and my siblings as we discovered salamanders in the drinking well, experienced bee stings on necessary visits to the outhouse, and our rich exchanges with neighbours, made for fond memories and the joyous stories, I love to share. The loss of a brother and hardships suffered due to poverty and circumstance made for a lingering melancholy that time does not seem able to erase.

The wharf was a common ground where we mingled with all who passed by. It offered us a valuable lesson; no matter our path in life, nor the road travelled, we were all neighbours in the Vale. The common bond that we all shared was our love of this small place. Through it all, the Vale and its people are embedded in my heart and mind.

Recently two long-time Vale Perkins residents, Elizabeth Paulette-

Coughlin and Ruth Patterson joined forces to facilitate a community-based writing project about life in our small hamlet over the years and generations. They received generous support through the Municipality of Potton, the MRC Memphremagog, Studio Georgeville and the Townshippers' Research & Cultural Foundation. The result of their efforts, In the Vale, has become what might best be described as a collection of love stories documenting the profound effect that Vale Perkins, Quebec, has had in the lives of so many.

In the Vale - An anthology coedited by Elizabeth Paulette-Coughlin and Ruth Patterson

*"We are our stories ... to begin you must be traced into the landscape, your people and your place found"*  
(Niall Williams-History of the Rain)

Over the past two years, Ruth Patterson and I have had the privilege of facilitating a community-based writing project about life in a hamlet drenched in beautiful landscape, social history, and a road that has been walked by generations of families. The Vale, as the place is affectionately known, is Vale Perkins in the Eastern Townships of Quebec. It is a small hamlet nestled between majestic Owl's Head Mountain and mystical Lake Memphremagog.

In the Vale has emerged as an anthology of 88 stories, poems and songs written by people who live - or have lived - in Vale Perkins over the years. Collectively, these stories form a guidebook of sorts. They are the "heart-map" of a place that, like other small places in our province, changed little over the 20th century but are now in danger of vanishing because of development and man-made ecological change.

The idea for this storytelling project began in the summer of 2020. Ruth and I were becoming increasingly aware that development was radically changing the Vale. Would the stories of those who had lived here for over a century be remembered if the landscape was no longer recognizable?

We sent out calls for stories in November 2020 to over 80 past and



COURTESY

present residents of Vale Perkins and invited submissions through posters placed in many community locations. We were astonished by the responses we received from people, 30 to 94, eager to have their family memories and love for Vale Perkins recorded in the collection.

Almost two years later, the anthology now stands as a legacy document for these families. It also serves as a reminder to future generations about the value of small hamlets and rural community life, as well as the importance of protecting natural landscapes.

We believe that our project is especially important now, as the stories of generations that might otherwise be lost are woven into the permanent record of an evolving community within Potton County and the Eastern Townships. They bear witness to a rich and ecological heritage that must be preserved.

To obtain a copy of In the Vale, or for more information about our project, please write to:  
inthevaleproject@gmail.com  
Elizabeth Paulette-Coughlin and Ruth Patterson

## Ben by Daniel Shelton

