

Waterfront

Items in this section may cause nostalgia, merriment, disbelief, and in rare cases, dizziness.

We got games!
Two whole pages
of 'em. See p. 20.



21

Why our editor-in-chief is the jigsaw puzzle champion of the world. (She made us say that.)

23

Golly, Nancy Drew! You and your titian hair have entertained readers for 90 years.

25

Snack breakdown: what you should buy at the gas station. It's not the nachos.

The Cottage Life Trivia Game About Games

1 MR. MONOPOLY'S ORIGINAL NAME WAS:

- A** Uncle Moneybags
- B** Milburn Pennybags
- C** Uncle Monocle
- D** Mr. Monocle

2 TRIVIAL PURSUIT WAS INVENTED BY:

- A** Two Canadians who worked in journalism
- B** Two Canadians who worked as grocers
- C** Two Americans who worked in the aviation industry
- D** Two Canadians who owned a winery

4 WHEN PLAYING YAHTZEE, HOW MANY DICE DOES EACH PLAYER ROLL?

- A** 7
- B** 6
- C** 5
- D** 4

5 THE MURDER VICTIM IN THE NORTH AMERICAN VERSION OF CLUE HAS A NAME. IT IS:

- A** Mr. Murdered
- B** Mr. Smith
- C** Mr. Corpse
- D** Mr. Boddy

6 THE PLASTIC "AILMENTS" PLAYERS REMOVE FROM PATIENT SAM IN OPERATION INCLUDE:

- A** Adam's Apple; Frog in the Throat; Breadbasket
- B** Adam's Apple; Frog in the Throat; Funny Bone
- C** Adam's Apple; Spare Ribs; Funny Bone
- D** Spare Ribs; Wish Bone; Achilles Heel

3 IN SCRABBLE, THE LETTER X, ALONG WITH THE LETTER _____ ARE EACH WORTH 8 POINTS:

- A** Y
- B** J
- C** K
- D** Q

7 PARCHEESI IS A WESTERNIZED VERSION OF A GAME THAT ORIGINATED IN:

- A** India
- B** China
- C** Pakistan
- D** Mongolia

PHOTO: LIAM MOGAN. ILLUSTRATION: MATTHEW BILLINGTON

ANSWERS: 1: B, 2: A, 3: B, 4: C, 5: D, 6: C, 7: A



Michelle will one day do the Heinz ketchup puzzle. And she will triumph.

EDITOR'S NOTES

She put it all together

Not a strong puzzler? Well, you will be. Once you follow these tips from our editor-in-chief—and raging “puzzle nerd”—Michelle Kelly,* puzzling is meditative and incredibly satisfying, says Michelle. “You see your progress. There’s a start and there’s a finish.” And you will finish. “You just have to keep going. It’s a life lesson, really.”

1 Pick the right puzzle. One that you want to assemble. “People send me examples of puzzles—round ones, monochromatic ones—and I’m like, ‘No thanks.’” Jigsaw puzzles are supposed to be fun. Not torture.

2 Two thousand pieces? Bring that on. As long as the image contains a variety of graphic elements and lots of different colours.

3 Avoid cheap puzzles; the individual pieces tend to all be the same shape.

4 Ready to puzzle? Use a big table. “There’s nothing worse than not having enough space.” You’ll have to disassemble the puzzle to move it somewhere else. “And then you’re going backwards.”

5 Dump the pieces out of the box, but “resist the urge to start putting the puzzle together without turning them all over first.” Sort as you go, grouping pieces by colour.

6 Assemble the edges first. Once you’ve got your frame, focus on the most noticeable elements. “If you’re building a picture of a red canoe in a lake, start with the canoe, not the sky or the water.”

7 Use the box for reference. It’s not cheating; don’t be a hero.

*Feel free to disregard everything in this article. “This is just my method,” says Michelle. “There’s no wrong way to make a jigsaw puzzle.”

NEED A NEW GAME? HAVE YOU TRIED...

@theway.i.sawit
Pass the Pigs. It’s pretty fun.

@_meg_b
The Game of Authors. We have played it at camp as long as I can remember. It’s Go Fish, only with famous authors.

@cormiersandra
Cards Against Humanity. For adults with a morbid, and sometimes risqué, sense of humour. Lots of laughs!

@ferrostudios
Pandemic. It feels good to at least pretend to cure the world.

@north_star_tobermory
Telestrations! We love that all ages can play it together. It’s always so funny.

@judyduffy57
Perquackey. It’s a spelling game, and one that my dad loved to play at the cottage.

@jpkjpk
Forbidden Island. Fun for many ages, collaborative, and always changing.

@jrtse
If you want lots of laughs, try the Game of Things.

@kenogamizo6
From the 1950s, Pit is a crazy, loud card game emulating the grain stock market.

@relicoutfitters
Ghost Blitz. Great, fast game for all ages.

@gilesbree
Throw Throw Burrito. So fun with kids. As long as there’s nothing breakable around.

SOURCE: INSTAGRAM

ONLINE POLL

Cottage Life readers’ top five favourite games, according to Instagram:



Sequence Monopoly Settlers of Catan Risk

Favourite CARD GAME:
Uno
Runner-up:
Cribbage

Favourite DICE GAME:
Yahtzee
Runner-up:
Farkle

Favourite TILE GAME:
Dominoes
Runner-up:
Rummikub





ENVIRONMENT

SLOW YOUR BOATS

First came Slow Food. Then Slow Fashion, Slow Travel, even Slow Gaming (what?). Now Muskoka's Safe Quiet Lakes hopes to make Slow Boating the next hip thing on a busy route near Port Carling, Ont.

"We're not bringing in extra rules, we're just asking people to be more aware of their wake," says Colleen Kennedy, the leader of a project to calm boat wake along a two-plus kilometre stretch of the Indian River and Mirror Lake. "It's about common courtesy and keeping the lakes safe for everyone."

To encourage boaters to ease off the throttle this summer, volunteers with Safe Quiet Lakes will install No Wake signs and buoys along the busy waterway connecting Lakes Rosseau and Muskoka. A radar sign, meanwhile, "will let boaters know how fast they're going," Kennedy adds. The Township of Muskoka Lakes is pitching in with additional 9 km/hr speed signs and highlighting the project on its website. "People look to the municipality for leadership in responsible boating. This is one way we can show support," says Phil Harding, the mayor of Muskoka Lakes.

The project is similar to an effort on nearby Loon and Turtle Lakes, where the local association's volunteer Water Safety Awareness Committee posts signs with tag lines including: Can Two On A Tube Result In A Concussion? Yes! Just Ask Your Doctor! "I think we've made a difference," says Michael Clarke, the committee's chair. Thanks to comments on social media and at the association's annual meeting, "I do know people are reading the signs."

Kennedy will gauge the impact of the Wakes and Speed Pilot Project at the end of the season. Markers of success include lower speeds logged by the radar sign and a thumbs-up from the locals. On the heels of a 2019 survey of area cottagers and residents, "I'll do a follow-up survey this fall to see if we've changed perceptions of boater behaviour." If the view is positive, Kennedy adds, the campaign "will offer tactics that can be used in other areas." —Ray Ford

Penny Caldwell wrote about the once-controversial lure of Nancy Drew in our Sept./Oct. '99 issue.



BRINGIN' IT BACK

Risqué business

I was 10 or so when I first experienced the childhood pleasures of cottage country at a rambling old place my parents rented on Acton Island in Muskoka: endless rounds of kick the can and tag on the cool, shady paths that wound around the cottage; dancing till we dropped as we shouted the chorus to the '60s hits "I'm Henry the VIII, I Am" and "Sweet Pea," over and over; finally falling asleep to the *lap, gurgle, lap* of water in the boathouse over which my sister and I slept. At the cottage I learned that life is simpler, there are fewer rules, and even adults let their hair down once in a while.

THIS PAGE: PHOTO, LIAM MCGAN. ILLUSTRATIONS, MATTHEW BILLINGTON. OPPOSITE: DANIEL EHRENSWORTH

This was amply proven by my most important cottage discovery, which, as it turned out, wasn't even at the cottage but at the Port Carling library where my mother, a voracious reader, would drive us every couple of weeks. In Port Carling in the '60s, the library allowed 10-year-old girls to read about the exploits of that great amateur girl detective, Nancy Drew, the same books that were forbidden them by big-city libraries, that were considered unsuitable for young girls and of insufficient literary quality to merit purchasing.

It doesn't seem like such a big deal to young people now. In fact, it only confirms

the very blackness of the Dark Ages of my youth to my own daughters, now 10 and 8, who, 30-odd years later devour those very same tales: *The Secret of the Old Clock*; *The Clue of the Leaning Chimney*; *The Scarlet Slipper Mystery*... The hardcovers are still instantly recognizable by their yellow spines, and their ageless heroine is still slim, still attractive, still has lovely "titian" hair. Nancy still solves mysteries with her closest friends, sidekicks Bess Marvin and George Fayne. Her ever-patient father, attorney Carson Drew, still bails her out of the occasional jam. And her relationship with Ned Nickerson has progressed little in the 70 or so years since the books were first published. Granted, in modern editions she has befriended those other supersleuths, the Hardy Boys, and all four have been known to surf the Net to catch the bad guys. And these days, Nancy Drew is available everywhere, even in paperback.

When I encountered my summer reading treasures in Port Carling, though, Nancy Drew was as unwelcome in libraries back home as whispering too loudly in the stacks. But we kids didn't mind that she was slightly risqué. We didn't mind that author Carolyn Keene didn't really exist, and that the books were from the same syndicate of literary minds that created the Hardy Boys, Trixie Belden, and the Bobbsey Twins. It was summer. At the cottage, even Nancy Drew was welcome. And we adored her. —Penny Caldwell

UPDATE

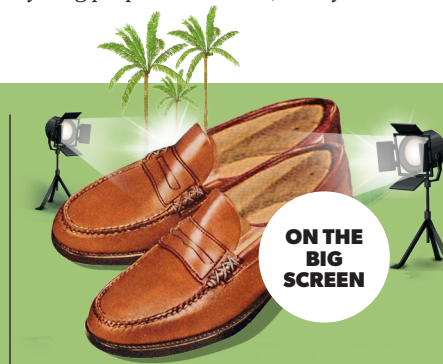
NANCY DREW, WHERE ARE YOU?

The OG series, *Nancy Drew Mystery Stories*, was originally published in 1930. But here's a taste of what our detective's been up to since then:



IN PRINT

Nancy Drew on Campus (1995 to 1998, *Simon & Schuster*) Nancy, at university to study journalism, solves mysteries involving date rape and deadly motorcycle accidents, instead of the ones involving leaning chimneys, crooked bannisters, and crumbling walls.



ON THE BIG SCREEN

Nancy Drew (2007) 16-year-old Nancy (Emma Roberts) and her dad move to Los Angeles, where the other kids make fun of her because she wears penny loafers. But also, she has to solve the murder of a movie star. Bruce Willis has a cameo.



ON TV

Nancy Drew (2019-present) Fresh out of high school, Nancy (Kennedy McMann) waits tables at the local diner along with Bess and frenemy George. In her spare time, she solves supernatural-tinged mysteries. Detective gotta detect!

TRADITIONS

Eight is enough

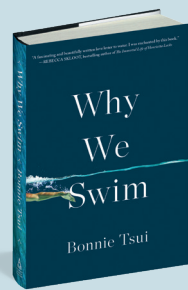
Every year, the day after school let out, my three sons and I would head up to Muskoka to spend the entire summer in bliss. I'd unpack, while the boys would head out to the garage to locate the bin jam-packed with toys from the previous years. The excitement they had when they hauled everything out inevitably turned to whines and complaints when I asked them to put the toys away before bedtime. And this happened every evening, every day of the summer.

A deck of cards became my catalyst. I turned it into a game to get the kids to not only pick up their toys, but to also encourage them to help out with chores.

The game began at 8 p.m. every night. I assigned a task to the number and face cards, for a total of 13 jobs. Each son would choose three cards. If he'd already completed the jobs on the cards he selected—tidied up his toys, dried the dishes, gathered twigs for the fireplace—he could stay up until his designated bedtime. However, if he hadn't completed the chore, there was a consequence: in bed by 8:30 p.m.

To my surprise, my sons grew to enjoy the "Game at Eight." They cheered for one another and showed concern—nobody wanted anyone to get a losing card. They would remind each other to do their chores throughout the day, and help each other finish in time. Amazingly, I never actually did have to send anyone to bed by 8:30 p.m. No one ever seemed to pick the losing cards. (This isn't to say that the chores on all 13 cards were always done. My boys were just lucky.)

The Game at Eight went on for many summers. My oldest son, now 41, still plays it—with my three grandchildren. Same old card deck, same old list of tasks. Who knew that it would become such a family favourite?—Karla Smith



SHELF LIFE

Dive into it

A compelling new book by Bonnie Tsui, *Why We Swim*, explores the history of swimming and how humans have evolved to a life in water. Did you know that the Bajau sea nomads of Southeast Asia freedive 60 metres underwater to fish for 10 minutes at a time? Have you heard the story of Guolaugur Frioporsen, an Icelandic man whose seal-like physiology allowed him to survive for six hours in the North Atlantic? Tsui even explains why cold-water swimming is good for you. (Well, as a Canadian, that one you probably did know.) —Michelle Kelly

WHY DO COTTAGERS SWIM? See p. 72

REPORTER

The trick to chips, bye-bye, boat motors & flooding fears

KNOW WHEN TO FOLD 'EM

Thank the Lord—another First World problem is solved! This spring, a TikTok video showing how to "properly" close a bag of potato chips broke the internet. If you've been preserving your half-eaten bag of Sour Cream 'n' Onion with a chip clip or a rubber band, you're a fool, according to Heidi Tuley (@shine.on.darlin). The surefire way to seal in that greasy goodness is to fold both sides of the open bag into the centre and roll the fold into itself. (Google for a demo.) Neat trick, Heidi. But we prefer to just eat the entire bag and get on with our lives.

OUTBOARDS, OUT

And the pandemic hits keep on coming. Quebec-based BRP recently announced that it will no longer produce Evinrude E-TEC and E-TEC G2 boat motors. "Our outboard engines business has been greatly impacted by COVID-19," José Boisjoli, the company's president and CEO, said in a press release in May. "This business segment had already been facing some challenges and the impact from the current context has forced our hand." Boisjoli says BRP is turning its attention to next-gen engine products that he expects will "transform the industry"; this includes a secret new boat propulsion technology with the mysterious code name "Project Ghost."

WHAT A BEACH

Read the room, Mother Nature. We really don't need your flooding shenanigans this season. Just in time for opening-up, high water levels from rain, coupled with wicked winds, devastated waterfront properties along the shores of Lac Ste. Anne, Alta. "What we're worried about is the foundations on some of the older cabins. They're not on piles, they're on blocks," Jim Benedict, the mayor of the Village of Alberta Beach, told the CBC in May. "With the erosion, they could start collapsing." About half of the resort community's 100 lakefront properties were at risk, but by press time, the waters had started to recede. Still, it was the worst flooding Alberta Beach had seen since 1974, said Benedict.

Healthy if you squint

Not just for kids



The hunger games

Sometimes hangry cottage-commute desperation drives you to decisions no human should have to make. What do I eat from the gas station?

THAT'S WILD!

IT'S A LONG STORY

Weirdness alert: a woodpecker tongue accounts for about one third of the length of the bird's body. But...how?



The tongue wraps internally under the lower mandible, behind the skull, and past the forehead to attach to either the eye orbit or the nostril. Yowza! That's a lot of tongue.

Waterfront

Items in this section may appear larger, smaller, cheaper, and more Jurassic than they actually are.



Read our exclusive interview with the king of cottage country (p. 20).

21

The all-icon edition of Reporter! The latest on bats, beavers, and beer. Oh my.

22

What will the 90 pages of Bill 132 mean for cottagers? We summed them up for you.

26

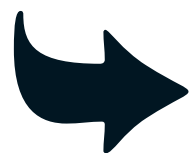
If you're thinking of buying a foam cooler...don't. Buy anything else instead.

COTTAGE LOGIC

Q+A WITH THE ICON

We asked cottage country's most popular bird (the loon, obvi) a few burning questions

As told to Jackie Davis



Why are you nicknamed "the Great Northern Diver"?

I'm an excellent diver. My bones are solid. They're heavy. The extra weight allows me to dive deeper than other waterfowl—most of them have hollow, buoyant bones. Good for flying. Less good for diving.

Why do you yodel late at night?

I'm Austrian. Are you familiar with the von Trapp family? Just kidding. As a male, I yodel to warn away other males. When I move to a new lake, I learn, and mimic, the yodel of any resident male. So I can out-yodel him. Booyah! As an aside, I wouldn't call "after sundown" late. And I've been told that most cottagers find this sound pleasant while lying in bed.

What's the deal with your red eyes?

I know, it makes me look demonic. Kind of *Village of the Damned*. But my eyes are only red during cottage season. They're grey during the cold months. My



winter plumage is also very drab. No white "necklace," no spotted back. I'm unremarkable. But then, it's no longer breeding season. So I can let myself go.

You've been on the one-dollar Canadian coin since the late '80s. Were you affronted when the polar bear got its own coin—worth more than yours—in 1996? No. I think Canadian wildlife deserves more monetary shout-outs. I think we should have a three-dollar coin, for the red squirrel; a four-dollar coin, for the bufflehead duck; and a five-dollar coin, for something in the weasel family.

You realize that would make everyone's wallets incredibly heavy, right? Well, yes. But then they'd probably be much better divers.

Celebrity sighting!



The loon was on our \$20 bill from 1993 to 2004.



The loonie was released in 1987, replacing the \$1 bill.

REPORTER

Beavers, bats, & brewskis

LEAVE IT TO BEAVERS The Brits must be reading Nature Scrapbook! How else would they know that beavers are such awesome wetland engineers? (See "If He Builds It, They Will Come," Mar/Apr '20.) Through a trial program, the U.K. is reintroducing the once-eradicated European beaver (*Castor fiber*), in the hopes that, like its North American counterpart (*Castor canadensis*), the keystone species will increase biodiversity and help mitigate flooding. Landowners can apply for licences to release beavers on their properties, where the rodents will do what they do best: build dams to create ponds that eventually become life-sustaining wetlands. Don't worry, Boris Johnson. Beaver got this.

A POUND OF PREVENTION, AN OUNCE OF CURE

To the refrigerator, Batman! A recent study suggests that some little brown bats—the chubbier ones—may be resistant to white-nose syndrome, an infection that, in North America, has killed millions of the mammals in the last 15 years. White-nose causes fuzzy patches of fungus to grow on the bats' skin and wings, but ultimately kills by disrupting bat hibernation cycles. The bats use up their fat reserves, and die of starvation. Researchers at the University of Michigan compared the genetics of bats that survived the syndrome to the genetics of those that died. The survivors had genes that allowed them to store more body fat for the winter hibernation period.

IT'S IN THE BAG Boxed beer: brilliant, weird, or dangerous? You decide! Because bag-in-box beer may be on the Canadian horizon—in B.C. at least. Primitive Beer, a U.S. brewery, has been selling their uncarbonated lambic-style sour beer in 1.5 litre boxed bags since 2018, and newly opened Jackknife Brewing in Kelowna believes such a product could work in Canada too. "I think, for that style of beer, the wood-aged sour, it is a great way to package," Brad Tomlinson, Jackknife's owner, told *The Growler* earlier this year. "It's in a bladder, so there's no oxygen ingress when you crack it, so you can sip on it over a longer period." This packaging wouldn't work for highly carbonated beers, *Growler* points out: "If you were to put a brut IPA in a bag-in-box, it would promptly explode."

NUMBER CRUNCH

Most iconic, according to *Cottage Life* covers, 1988–2020





ENVIRONMENT

A new law changes a lot

Ontario's Better for People, Smarter for Business Act 2019 (previously Bill 132) passed into law in December. A sprawling, 90-page omnibus bill, it reduced red tape around a slew of regulations, including allowing landowners to build docks and one-storey boathouses on Crown land (i.e., the lakebed) without a permit.

Terry Rees, the executive director of the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations, says this rule has technically been in place for the last 20 years under the Crown Land Use Policy. "The direction given in that policy was if it's just a dock, we don't need a permit," he says, "because it's modest." Landowners could "construct or place structures that are in physical contact with 15 square meters or less of the shore lands fronting [their] property (e.g. docks, single-storey boathouses)." Bill 132 changed this guideline into law, providing "additional legislative clarity and certainty to these waterfront landowners," according to Ian Allen, the director of communications for the Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction.

While this particular amendment may be great news for cottagers, the bill also made sweeping changes to a number of other regulations affecting various industries, including 14 environmental laws, such as: looser restrictions on the use of pesticides, such as neonicotinoids, which are toxic to honey bees and other pollinators; logging companies no longer have to

give the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry their work plans, which previously informed the ministry as to what kind of impact was being made on forests and at-risk species; and municipalities no longer have the authority to prevent aggregate operations from drilling below the water table, potentially contaminating groundwater supplies (often used for drinking water).

"It read like an industry wish list," says Kelsey Scarfone, the water program manager for the advocacy group Environmental Defence, "granting wishes to different industries on what red tape they wanted reduced, no matter the consequences to the environment."

Bill 132 had many detractors, including the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the Georgian Bay Association, but its amendments were difficult to dispute because of the bill's sprawling nature and how it was rushed through the legislative assembly. "With the sheer number of changes that are made within that law," Scarfone says, "each one can take a lot of time to research from a legal standpoint."

This is the third omnibus bill pushed through by the current Ontario government. Previous bills weakened laws around climate policy and the Endangered Species Act. Says Scarfone: "I can almost guarantee this will not be the last omnibus bill that has effects on the environment." —Andrew Cruickshank

IN SHORT

He's got good bones

Our friend from the Badlands has watched over our Eagle Lake, Ont., cottage shoreline since July 2019. He's eight feet tall, has burning red eyes, and roars at anyone who passes by. Initially, my wife, Barbara, and I thought that T-Rexy (he's from a store's Halloween display) would just be fun for our grandchildren, but he quickly became a lake celebrity. Now cottagers — hundreds of them — visit by motorboat, sailboat, canoe, kayak, pedal boat, Sea-Doo, and even by float plane for a look-see...and a selfie. —Bill Campbell



That's right! T-Rexy has launched a clothing line.



Binge watch this
Tune in to the Landscape Artist of the Year Canada marathon when it airs on April 30, 5 p.m. ET/7 p.m. PT.

Love to

PAINT?

Then you'll love *Landscape Artist of the Year Canada*, airing Thursdays this Spring on the Cottage Life channel.

Inspired by cottage-country locations — different in every episode — competing professional and amateur artists have four hours to each paint a masterpiece; the winning artwork is (spoiler alert) now on display at the McMichael art gallery in Kleinburg, Ont. And it's certainly in good company: the gallery is also featuring a special exhibit on the Group of Seven, which celebrates its 100th anniversary this year. A century of windswept pines — iconic!

CUISINE

It's grilling season again. Thus, we bring you 11 ways to build a better burger

We asked on Instagram: what's your favourite oddball burger topping?

- pickled beets
- pineapple
- chili
- pickled onions
- sauerkraut
- peanut butter
- fried egg
- Marmite

Use a pork-beef combo for a more economical patty if you're feeding a large crowd.

Try something new. We put ketchup chips on our burger for added crunch. But also... because chips.

Don't crush patties with the flipper as you grill; that will squeeze out all the good burger juices.

Add cheese only a couple of minutes before the burger is done; allow it to melt slightly.

Rest your burger for five minutes (tented with foil) before serving.

Make the patty large enough to reach the edge of the bun. You want to avoid an unbalanced meat-to-bun ratio.

Experiment with buns. Try brioche, pretzel, or potato rolls.

Use one of our CL tested mash-up condiments: mayomole (mayo + guacamole) or mayosabi (mayo + wasabi).

To avoid pickle and onion slippage, chop them up and mix them in with your sauces.

Put the tomato below the lettuce. This shields the greens from the heat, and keeps them from wilting.

Spread one condiment on the bottom bun, and one on the top.



LIAM MOGAN



David Zimmer originally ranted about the screeching, squeaking, cheeping foam cooler in our July/Aug. 1998 issue.

BRINGIN' IT BACK

Extremely loud and incredibly annoying

It was on the drive to the cottage that I first developed my dislike for foam coolers. I come from a large family, and the only way we could fit into our station wagon was if one of the kids rode in the cargo area. As the youngest and smallest, it was my pleasure to sprawl out in that carpeted domain, where I could snooze or pass out white bread and processed-cheese slices for the creation of in-flight sandwiches. But my real job was to wrangle our collection of foam coolers in a constant battle to stop their incessant, unbearable squeaking. No sooner would I massage these coolers into silence than a bump in the road or a slam on the brakes (welcome to Hwy. 69!) would set them jiggling again—chirping, squeaking, and cheeping like steamer trunks full of giggling chipmunks. On really annoying trips, I got orders to “make those damn coolers shut up!” I tried mightily, but they never clammed up for long; for the duration of the trip I was their ear-jangled prisoner.

There are cottagers who would say foam coolers aren't that bad. After all, they're inexpensive, they do keep things cool, and they're very light. But at the risk of offending their fans—and the powerful foam-cooler industry—I must

declare that these devices exist on this earth only to drive cottagers insane.

In addition to their insurmountable squeaking problem, these coolers have a poor track record when it comes to being dropped on hard surfaces, such as the Precambrian Shield. One slip and there's sand in the beef and onions rolling in the lake. And slip they do, because the narrow purchases passing themselves off as handles could defeat an ace rock climber; you have to dig your nails into the cooler and hold on tight. Grip too lightly and the cooler smashes to the ground; grip too hard and the handles snap off and the cooler smashes to the ground.

When foam coolers aren't snapping or smashing, their lids are flying off. And without the structural support of its lid, a foam cooler is egglike in its frailty; when the lid blows off, your death grip snaps the foam and the cooler smashes to the ground. I firmly believe that some of the most cutting-edge aeronautical design ever undertaken is being carried out on the drafting tables of the foam-cooler industry. Those lids are born to fly.

They have been banned from our cottage for years now, but broken bits of the historic coolers that screeched at me in the back of the car can still be found around our property, fouling the underbrush, cluttering the shed, and—with the mocking laughter of malicious spirits—squeaking, squeaking, squeaking. —David Zimmer

IN OUR OPINION

Should you buy it?

Cottage Life Simulation
Test time! We put a foam cooler, circa 2020, through its paces

CARRYING CAPACITY

☆☆☆ DECENT

A 40 qt. cooler could fit three 12-packs of beer; or four 6 lb bags of apples. But we're not sure we'd trust the bottom to hold very long.

LID SECURITY

☆☆☆☆ POOR

The cooler's top blew off in a gentle breeze. Or if a butterfly flapped its wings. Or if we looked at it sideways.

ABILITY TO STAY SILENT

☆☆☆☆ TERRIBLE

Gah, Zim was right! The cooler squeaked non-stop in the back of the car. Sorry, Uber driver.

DURABILITY

☆☆☆ DECENT...ISH

The cooler survived being thrown off a balcony and kicked down a flight of stairs. But it failed completely when we asked it to double as an extra seat. RIP, foam cooler.

CONCLUSION

No. You should not buy it.



LIAM MORGAN (COOLER)

Waterfront

Items in this section may appear larger, smaller, tastier, and more on fire than they actually are.



that's
wild!

Cabin owners are seeing red — fall brings vibrant colours to the Northern landscape.

21

We just had to know: can you light strike-anywhere matches literally anywhere?

22

Forget cooking an entire Thanksgiving dinner! Serve only snack food instead.

24

Why the B.C. wolf cull was the wrong way to save Canada's dwindling caribou.

THAT'S WILD!

Bearberry

(ARCTOUS GENUS)



Arctous alpina shot near Kugluktuk, Nun., in September.

We have photographic proof that the fall colours are spectacular no matter where you have a cottage or cabin: a shot from Kevin McNeil, taken at Aylmer Lake, N.W.T. (p. 19). The glorious pops of colour are thanks to bearberry, in particular, the *Arctous* genus, says Paul Sokoloff, a senior research assistant in botany at the Canadian Museum of Nature. "It's very typical vegetation for this part of the Northwest Territories." Bearberry is a dwarf shrub adapted to Arctic conditions; the *Arctous* genus has two species, *alpina* and *rubra*. They're green in the summer, says Sokoloff, but "it's common for both of them to turn bright red in the fall." Doppelgänger alert! The two species are easy to confuse. You can only tell them apart by their berries, says Sokoloff. "If the berries are red, the plant is *Arctous rubra*; if they're black, then it's *Arctous alpina*." —Jackie Davis



OVERHEARD

"I've gotten over squirrels stealing the birds' food. I've come to realize that all they know is that it's food. No idea that it's not intended for them. It's just food. Thanks human, for feeding me."

—@GEORGEKFAUST, ON INSTAGRAM



THIS PAGE: ILLUSTRATION, ALENA SKARINA. PHOTO, LIAM MOGAN. OPPOSITE: PHOTO, PAUL SOKOLOFF/© CANADIAN MUSEUM OF NATURE. ILLUSTRATIONS: BEARBERRY, ALAMY; SQUIRRELS, SHUTTERSTOCK



Mark Schatzker wrote about the ever-useful Redbird strike-anywhere matches in our Nov/Dec '03 issue.

BRINGIN' IT BACK

Anywhere goes

When you think about it, it's downright miraculous. Take a tiny piece of wood, shorter than your pinkie and as thin as twine, drag it along some abrasive surface—a rock, a clay painting pot, the exposed head of a nail—and suddenly you have fire. That great giver of warmth and light comes in packages of 250. It's called the Redbird strike-anywhere match.

Now anyone knows what a match is. But only cottagers have developed the nuanced appreciation of the strike-anywhere. Why? Because they have to strike them anywhere. And anywhere at the cottage means everywhere except the side of the box. When you arrive, strike a Redbird on the inside of the propane oven door and light the pilot light. At dinner, strike one on the underbelly of the barbecue, because the electric igniter hasn't worked for years. Later that night, strike one on a smooth flank of granite and light the campfire.

With appreciation comes skill. The mother who lights the 12 candles on a summertime birthday cake attempts this using a single match, an unconscious foreshadowing of the child's attempt to blow everything out with one gust. Cutting nylon rope? Use a Redbird to melt the ends, so it doesn't unwind into an unruly mess. And for some reason, all cottagers keep their Redbirds in Mason jars or ancient faded tins (the tops sometimes pelted with holes in the mistaken belief that matches need to be ventilated).

Since the turn of the last century, we've relied on the red-and-white bull's-eye tip of the Redbird for fire on demand. The spark-inclined tip is phosphorus sesquisulfide, and the ring, which is what gets everything off to a roaring start, is potassium chlorate and sulphur. The sulphur gives them their sweet, eggy smell. On some cold winter night, strike a Redbird and quickly blow it out. Then close your eyes, and let the smell take you places.

It takes me back to youthful summers at the cottage, which is a nice place to be. My brothers and I would light them off our thumbnails, our zippers, even our front teeth. To us, it wasn't a type of match, it was more like a command: strike anywhere. With pleasure. —Mark Schatzker

The All-Guilty Pleasures Thanksgiving

A holiday snack down

Cooking a multi-course meal is a lot of work. But what if you could compile Thanksgiving dinner in the time it takes to rip open a few bags of munchies? Good news: you can

Dessert
Neal Brothers Honey Mustard Pretzels

Dessert
President's Choice World of Flavours Maple Bacon

Seasoning + Condiments
Miss Vickie's Jalapeño

Appetizer
SunChips Garden Salsa

Seasoning + Condiments
Kettle Brand Salt & Fresh Ground Pepper

Seasoning + Condiments
Pringles Dill Pickle

Seasoning + Condiments
Planters Wasabi & Soy Sauce Almonds

Main
Veg option Tostitos Black Bean and Garlic

Veggie Side
Covered Bridge Sweet Potato & Sea Salt

Appetizer
Smartfood Gouda & Chive

Main
Lay's Roast Chicken

Veggie Side
Humpty Dumpty Onion Rings

Veggie Side
Old Dutch Corn Twists

Oh, you want some legit Thanksgiving recipes? Fine. See p. 70.

DESSERT, RELOADED

Thanksgiving without s'mores is like...well, it's pretty much still Thanksgiving. That said, the holidays are a time to indulge. Why not change things up and try one of these Cottage Life-tested s'more rejigs?



Spicy S'more
Replace graham crackers with ginger snaps.
Testers said Delicious. The best one! The spice cuts a bit of the sweetness.



Tropical S'more
Replace regular marshmallow with toasted coconut marshmallow.
Testers said One marshmallow only gives you a whisper of coconut; use more for stronger flavour.



Triple Chocolate S'more
Replace graham crackers with chocolate-coated butter cookies.
Testers said I think I died and went to chocolate heaven.



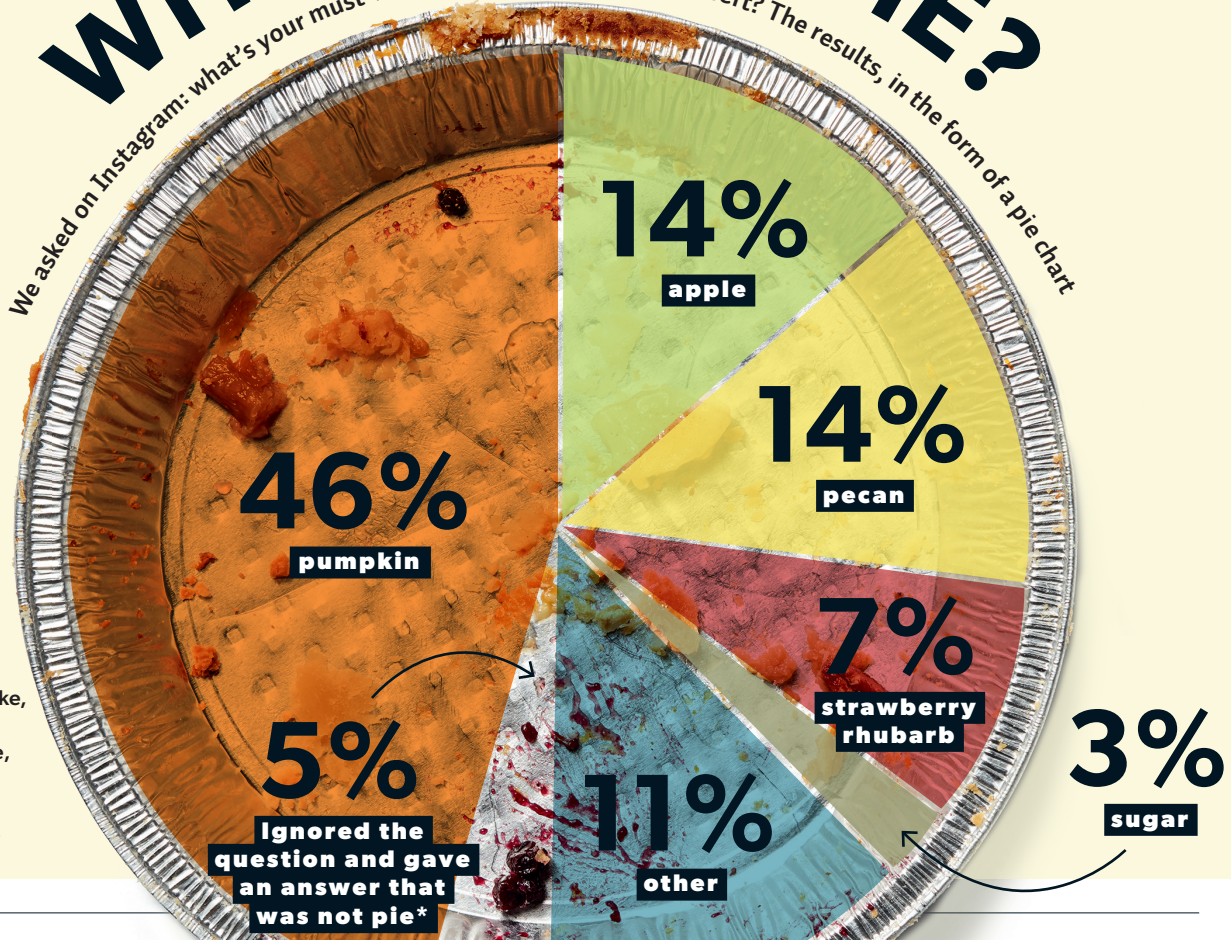
Choco-less S'more
Replace chocolate with caramel sauce.
Testers said The S'more Police would say that this is not a s'more, but we say it still works.



Inception S'more
Replace graham crackers with Frosted S'mores Pop-Tarts.
Testers said Tasty, but soft. Good for people with false teeth.

WHO WANTS PIE?

We asked on Instagram: what's your must-have pie for Thanksgiving dessert? The results, in the form of a pie chart



THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE: LLAM MOGAN

*Fruit flan, pumpkin cake, pumpkin cheesecake, pumpkin ice cream, butter tarts

REPORTER

Hot water, web win & float fail

FEELIN' HOT HOT HOT Great Lakes cottagers may have noticed warmer-than-normal water this summer after they bravely cannonballed off the dock. By July, Lakes Erie, Huron, Ontario, and Michigan were, on average, 3.3°C to 5.5°C warmer than they were at the same time last year, according to the Great Lakes CoastWatch program. A high-pressure system—fair weather, little wind—had moved over the region and stayed there; this warmed the usually-chilly lakes into the mid-20s.

A DIGITAL REVOLUTION The internet is coming! Lakeland Energy is launching nearly a dozen projects to bring broadband to Gravenhurst, Muskoka, and Parry Sound. Translation? Better high-speed access for countless Ontario cottagers. Hot damn! It'll be easier for them to visit *cottagelife.com*. Why else would they go online?

PINK FLAWED A bird is not a boat. In July, the Hamilton Police Service Marine Unit rescued three adults stranded on a flamingo floatie that had drifted about four kilometres away from Lake Ontario's shore. The trio had some useful tools onboard—an air horn, paddles—but they were missing a key element of water navigation: an actual boat. Then, roughly a week later, the Marine Unit collected two more adults on a rogue pool inflatable. To be fair, in this case, the floatie was at least boat-shaped.



Prey for them

The wolf cull isn't saving the caribou, and a new study shows that the plan was based on flawed research

When the clock is ticking, governments and conservation managers rely on accurate, verified data to help at-risk animals. A new paper now indicates that a recent wolf cull in Western Canada was based on statistically flawed 2019 research. That study (Serrouya et al.) had concluded that culling wolves, a caribou predator, and using maternal pens—fenced-off areas for pregnant females to protect calves—would help stabilize the rapidly declining populations of caribou in the region.

The mistake? The study omitted a routine statistical test, an error that led to the destruction of more than 460 wolves over the winter of 2019-2020 in B.C., while failing to protect caribou.

Lee E. Harding, the lead author on the new research and a retired Canadian Wildlife Service biologist, and his co-authors realized there was no “null model” (a routine statistical analysis) included in the 2019 study. Running the original data through a null model, they

found that “there was no statistical difference at all between the so-called treatments of wolf culling and/or maternal pens versus random chance,” says Harding. In other words, there was no evidence that killing wolves was better than any other way to help the caribou.

They also reanalyzed the data and found that the 2019 paper focussed more on different plans for managing the caribou population, rather than looking at the various kinds of caribou and how each is faring. Instead of using a one-size-fits-all management strategy, government scientists should have carefully considered the individual needs of different caribou ecotypes, says Harding.

In Western Canada, there are four ecotypes of caribou, each occupying a specific habitat. Only the Southern Mountain ecotype forages for lichens on trees in areas with up to three to four metres of snow cover. The 2019 study didn't account for the rise in popularity of motorized winter recreation and the

impact that this activity has had on these caribou: encroaching snowmobilers and heli-skiers can force the animals into subpar habitat. B.C. did enact snowmobile closures across the mountain caribou range starting in 2009, but the 2019 study didn't factor these restrictions into its analysis, thereby tipping the scales towards a wolf cull. Harding is hopeful that B.C. and the federal government will reassess the current management plan, “that the blind faith support for wolf culling and maternal pens is not necessarily applicable for every place or every ecotype of caribou.”

Ludwig Carbyn, a Canadian member of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature canid group and an adjunct professor in the Department of Renewable Resources at the University of Alberta, often sees wolf tracks near his cabin north of Edmonton. Carbyn says that regardless of whether the wolf cull continues, the problem remains how to protect at-risk caribou. “Wolves are only one of many factors contributing to the decline,” he says. “We have to use all the tools in the tool box to get the job done in conservation.”

For Sadie Parr, the executive director of Wolf Awareness, a not-for-profit that promotes coexistence between people and wolves, the wolf kill program has been a cruel distraction from one of those tools: habitat protection for caribou. “It's well accepted that wolves are important for ecological balance and resilience,” she says, adding that wolves are emotional animals, who live in family groups where unique behaviours and cultures are passed down through generations. “We can't ignore the welfare and well-being of individual animals in our conservation efforts.”

Carbyn's view? Unfortunately, he admits, “to manage an endangered species, you may at times have to kill elements, in this case wolves, to try to achieve that.” That said, “wolves are very important. We don't want to eliminate them.”—Grace Hunter

THIS PAGE: COURTESY VALERIE LEFEBRE, OPPOSITE, ALENA SKARINA

Going strong since 1970: family members from Saskatchewan, Alberta, and B.C. participate in the Gerwing Annual Gathering.



TRADITIONS

MUSIC TO THE MAX

Every August long weekend for the last five decades, my family has gathered in one place or another to reconnect. It's the Gerwing Annual Gathering, or GAG, as my sister Maxine called it. We're always by a lake, most recently Brightsand Lake in northern Saskatchewan. The first GAG only involved me and my husband, my brothers and sisters, and our parents. Now, it's a multi-generational, multi-day affair. There are more than 50 of us, and the event lasts an entire week.

Each GAG is packed with activities: a Bocce tournament; Texas Hold'em; a clothing swap. We have some laughs, we share some good food, we do water sports of all kinds. But the best part—ever since Dad instructed us to learn all the words to “Me and Bobby McGee” so we could sing it as a group—has always been the campfire sing-alongs. Standards are important: sometimes family members get annoyed if the gang doesn't perform a particular song—say, Kim Mitchell's “Patio Lanterns”—quite right, and we have to sing it again. We're a competitive, musical bunch, and eventually we launched a “Best New Song” competition. We had a trophy made, and named the award the Max after Maxine, who passed away in 2004. She was a guitar player and the true engine to our campfire singing.

This summer would have marked the 50th anniversary of GAG. Sadly, this year also brought COVID-19, and we had to shelve the event. But we plan to resume in full force next year. We have survived heartaches—even deaths—and we will survive COVID-19. We all firmly believe that having a supportive family helps us navigate life with more confidence. As one 40-year-old nephew told me, “I've never known a life without GAG.”—Valerie Lefebvre