

Lives We Lead, Volunteer Profile of Ralph and Marilyn Scribner, Fall 2015 Newsletter



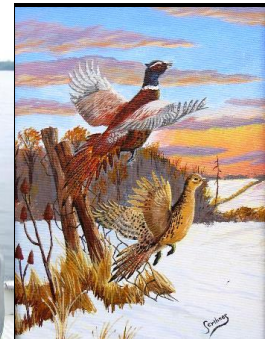
Wedding Picture



On Sable Island



Proud Big Fish



Painting by Ralph

Ralph and Marilyn Scribner are proud "down-easterners" but they moved to Ottawa in 1986. They joined GSAC in 1996. Ralph is the much appreciated Web designer for our GSAC web-site (www.storm.ca/~gsac). Marilyn graciously used to handle the front desk on Tuesday afternoons. She also was the Bus Captain for monthly Casino Trips. Both are avid genealogists, busy researching their respective family lineage and histories. They love gardening – Marilyn with her flowers and Ralph with his vegetable patch. Ralph was a member of the Gloucester Allotment Garden Association for six years but much to Marilyn's chagrin now finds his garden space encroaching on Marilyn's beloved flower beds! They play darts on Friday morning at GSAC and are well-known for lending a hand wherever it is needed.

Marilyn (née Wellwood) grew up in the small community of Elmsdale, on the Shubenacadie River in Nova Scotia and was the fourth of eight children. Ralph was the third eldest of nine children. His most vivid childhood memory was a near tragedy. At ten years old he was cycling in his home village of Lewisville (now part of Moncton) and was struck by a drunk driver. He had a concussion, broken pelvis, and broken thigh bone. He spent all summer in the hospital, immobile in a body cast. As Ralph had been riding his friend's bicycle, his worried dad felt ethically obliged to replace the friend's bike.

After high school Marilyn went to work in the Records Division of Halifax Victoria General Hospital. Ralph had obtained his Pilot License as a teenager with the Air Cadets and joined Transport Canada after Tech School. Marilyn's cousin ran a boarding house in Halifax and any new single men boarders immediately brought out the "Fast and the Curious". The boarding house had an old player piano with pump pedals and music recorded on rolls; young and old got together there to sing and dance. Marilyn's aunt and uncle thought it would liven things up to "doll" Marilyn up and have her meet Ralph. (After all, she was Marilyn Monroe's namesake! And one of "the first" Marilyn's (less famous) quotes was "We should all start to live before we get too old"!)

Marilyn was game to go to the party but (luckily?) insisted on toning down her clothes and make-up. But something seemed to click that night; perhaps it was not "love at first sight", but it was definitely "interest at first sight". Marilyn and Ralph got engaged in 1967 and married in May 1968. Ralph had already been on one tour of duty to Sable Island and asked Marilyn if she would be willing to move there with him. Marilyn was an adventurous soul and agreed. Their first son, Kevin, was born in April 1969 and they moved to the island when he was six months old. They lived in a bungalow which had once, in the fifties, billeted old radio operators who communicated weather data to the mainland by Morse code.

I asked Marilyn if she felt lonely while on Sable Island, this with a small baby, and isolated from other young mothers. She said that she really enjoyed it, as she loved long walks on the beach with the baby, looking for

artifacts that had washed ashore. Ralph was an electronic maintenance technician, among other things keeping the very important navigation beacon functioning to guide ships and airplanes. In earlier years there had been numerous shipwrecks on the shores of Sable Island. The beacon was new technology that replaced centuries of light stations. (Sable Island became a national park in 2011 and is home to over four hundred free-roaming feral horses. It has no natural trees but is covered with distinctive marram grass.)

After they came out from Sable Island Ralph and Marilyn purchased their first house in Waverley, a suburb of Halifax. (Waverley was renowned for its gold rush days and for having a cartoon character mascot called Gold Rush Gus.) Their second son, Karl, was born in 1972. In 1973 new opportunities opened up in the maintenance of new state-of-the-art airplane landing equipment. A position became available in Moncton and they were pleased to move closer to Ralph's family. They bought another small bungalow in Riverview, a suburb of Moncton, located on the south side of the Petitcodiac River. Marilyn was very busy with Kevin and Karl enrolled in speed skating and then in hockey. During their thirteen years in Moncton, Ralph volunteered for the Lions' Club, and was Chairman of the Sight and Blind Group.

In 1986 Ralph was transferred to Ottawa and they started over yet again. Marilyn had their sons mostly grown by then, so in 1988 she left the realm of "time-and-a-half" homemaking and went to work for Sears Canada and loved it. In 1995 there were big changes in Transport Canada with the split-off of NavCan. Ralph had thirty years' service so when a buyout became available they found the idea of leaving the rat race appealing. After retirement they took Tole Painting which they thoroughly enjoyed. Then Ralph "graduated" to GSAC Art lessons, taking Judith Fenton Richard's Acrylic classes. Being the talented all-purpose fellow that he is, he entered several paintings in Art Shows, and then progressed to Watercolour painting.

Ralph and Marilyn were members of Paul Adams' Village Squares dancing club when Ralph became interested in jamming. Paul gave Ralph guitar lessons and Ralph began jamming with buddies. Eventually they were invited to play rhythm with a group named A'Chord East. They play at various Seniors' Residences in east Ottawa. Soon after, they heard about the Rideau Mac Resort on Big Rideau Lake in Portland, Ontario. They joined the resort and bought a trailer. Eventually this led to members forming a new association and buying out the previous owner. Ralph was overjoyed to have access to many big fish that he hadn't already caught! (The fish were somewhat less pleased.) (The Resort is on the Rideau Canal which has recently been designated a World Heritage Site.)

Marilyn and Ralph are lucky to have their sons living in the Ottawa area--Kevin in Nepean and Karl in Carleton Place. To their delight Karl managed to provide them with two adorable grandchildren, Tessa now eleven, and Nicholas nine.

A description of Ralph and Marilyn's lives would be incomplete without mentioning the pet that exuberantly "runs" their family. Banjo is their fourth English Springer Spaniel. Every time they have the misfortune to lose their beloved pooch, they are so heart-broken that Marilyn says "Never again another dog!" But, somehow, Ralph always hears of another kennel with English Springer Spaniels for sale. He invariably says "Let's just go take a look--we're not going to buy one." Guess what happens when they get there? They fall in love with a puppy again and can't resist. (At least Ralph can't resist; Marilyn sometimes takes a few days longer.) Luckily Banjo is only seven and in good health. But when Banjo (hopefully a long time from now) goes to "doggy heaven" what do you think Marilyn will do if Ralph manages to take her for a drive and stop by a kennel?