



# THE COBALT LODGE

Newsletter of the Cobalt Historical Society



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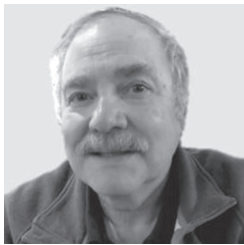
[HeritageSilverTrail.ca](http://HeritageSilverTrail.ca)

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## Selected Chapters of Temiskaming Heritage June 3rd, 2017, Classic Theatre, Cobalt, ON 9 am-4 pm

We are excited!

Registrations are already arriving for this event, and although the newsletter was delayed while we adjusted to the absence of Vivian Hylands, we are looking forward to seeing everyone June 3rd at the Classic Theatre to hear some really interesting speakers.



Starting shortly after 9:00 am, **Dr. John Pollock** will present **Archaeological Sites in the Historic Cobalt Mining Camp-Update 2017**. He will describe the archaeological assessment work undertaken from 2005 to present that has documented more than 100 key archaeological sites in the Cobalt area. These sites help tell the fascinating story of the Cobalt Mining District National Historic Site of Canada from 1903 to its world prominence in the production of silver during the 1920s.

**Norm Hawirko: A 3D Digital Model Study of Cobalt's Historic Townsite Headframe.**



Three-dimensional model of the Townsite head frame, developed from aerial mapping drone flights that Dan Larocque took last year. The historic 1916 insurance map was overlaid over the map portion for a fresh perspective on the Townsite history.

**George Lefebvre: The Darby Mine, Thomas Edison's Latchford Venture** George has updated the information on the Darby Mine and Thomas Edison's connection to the Temiskaming area.



Lunch will be served at the Mezzanine in the Theatre, and light refreshments will be available during the breaks throughout the day.



**Siobhan Angus: Disruptive Visualities: Reading Photographs from the Early Cobalt Mining Camp.**

Photography surpasses other mediums in the representation of day-to-day life and ordinary experiences. As a result 'displaced histories' can be recovered through a close reading of photographs, whether they were preserved intentionally or accidentally. This examination of how the historical photographs of Cobalt be used as a lens through which we understand contemporary discussions about sustainability, climate change, and resource extraction and recover histories and experiences that have been forgotten.

**Bruce W. Taylor: Challenges of Researching the Life of Stephen Lafricain**



Finding genealogical data on the Stephen Lafricain during the early years of his life, and on his service during the U.S. Civil War is an almost impossible task. Remote locations, lack of church and government records, obscure records in both French and English, and failing memory, are some of the impediments to filling out Lafricain's life story. This paper will explain how some of these challenges were addressed over the past fifteen years.

The very simple registration form has been included with this newsletter.

# Vivian Hylands

October 1, 1935 to April 16, 2017



Vivian Hylands Hostetler died suddenly at home in Cobalt on Sunday, April 16, 2017 at the age of 81. Vivian was born on October 1, 1935 to Walter Hylands and Mae Creighton of Cobalt. She was born in Amos, Quebec and grew up in Cobalt. Vivian graduated from Cobalt High in 1955 and attended the University of Guelph and then Simmons College in Boston, where she graduated in 1959.

Vivian married Blair Hostetler in 1956 and lived in the United States and then in Ottawa, where she worked as a librarian with the federal Government, raised her children and enjoyed the social and cultural opportunities of our nation's capital. She returned home to Cobalt in 1990.

In Cobalt, Vivian found ample opportunity for community engagement and her organizational skills. Her greatest interest was the history of the region and she served many years on the board of the Cobalt Historical Society. She contributed her time to the libraries of the Cobalt and Haileybury public schools, the Temiskaming Art Gallery, and the Timiskaming Board of Health. Vivian was also very active in the local literary scene, writing poetry, volunteering with the Spring Pulse Poetry Festival and Hardy Boys' Contest, and helping with HighGrader Magazine and White Mountain Publications. She was a true ambassador and source of living history for the town of Cobalt.

Predeceased by her parents and her sister Judy Hylands Bartlett, Vivian is mourned by her daughter Valerie (Terry Males) of Olds, Alberta and her son John (Viera Saly) of Victoria, BC. She will be greatly missed by grandchildren Nareela, Julia, Kieran and Michael, nephew Christopher and niece Nancy, and by her many

friends and relatives in the Tri-Town area and across Canada.

Family and friends are invited to contribute stories and memories online at the Vivian Hylands Hostetler Memorial Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1043809665719517/>

A celebration of Vivian's life will take place mid-July in Cobalt. A fund will be created with the Temiskaming Foundation in the name of Vivian Hylands Hostetler to further her historical and literary interest in Cobalt. Condolences, contributions and memorial candles may be left at [www.buffamleveille.com](http://www.buffamleveille.com).



It is fitting that a such a valuable part of Cobalt's history be commemorated here. I have permission to reprint Maggie Wilson's blog article,

## A Tribute: What would Vivian Do?

It will be difficult to write this tribute to Vivian without lapsing into hyperbole. Viv was one of those larger-than-life characters in spite of the fact she might have weighed 98 pounds, decked out in her outdoor winter clothing.

I've known her for such a short time. Less than a year. But once we met, she took Reiner and me under her wing and introduced us to Cobalt as only Vivian could.

Vivian Hylands will always remain an inspiration to me. She was fiercely dedicated to Cobalt. She was a "connector." In the short time that I knew her, she introduced me to countless people and events and stories in and around this great ol' town.

A week ago Sunday, it was a lovely mild day. Vivian made a batch of brownies and unbeknownst to me, intended to walk over to our place for an impromptu tea. She got side-tracked at Sue's place and ended up watching the Masters.

This past weekend, with it being so dull and windy and grey, I thought to myself, I hope she doesn't plan to walk over in this nasty weather.

Then I got word.

What a terrible loss – my condolences to everyone who knew her – and especially to the Town of Cobalt. She's gone too soon.

Rest in peace, Vivian. You will not be forgotten.

## What would Vivian Do?

Take ownership – if a job needs doing, do it.

If you can't do it, talk to those who can.

Walk everyday.

Bake a batch of brownies and make enough to share.

Appearances matter. Good grooming is vital. So is the state of your community parks and sidewalks.

Cultivate a garden – and your taste in music, poetry, and art.

Educate yourself. Keep up to date on current events and politics.

Share your knowledge.

Take care of yourself. Eat a proper diet.

Enjoy a shot of rye and water, too.

Surround yourself with like-minded people.

Seek enlightenment, and encourage it in others.

Be proud of your community's heritage.

Punctuation matters.

As does proper pronunciation.

Invite people to your home for tea and sherry.

Do not suffer fools; do not mince words.

Give

And give some more. Keep on giving until the day comes when you are no longer there and those who remain will realize that the universe is slightly askew today: Vivian didn't call.

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I know there will be many more days when the door to the store will open, and I am expecting her to come breezing in. She was in the middle—literally—of re-typing and editing Maude Groom's book *The Melted Years* for reprinting later this year. We had settled on a title *The Melted Years Revisited*, because there were so many things she corrected, added. And yes, she left notes and was going to place an ad so that anyone out there with a copy that had notes in it could be incorporated. It was going to be as accurate as possible. We will continue this work in her memory.

And so we do what Vivian would have done, did do many times: we go on. The work continues; she accepted no less.

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The Cobalt Historical Society's Board meeting was held as scheduled on April 24th. A great deal of the meeting was trying to fill the hole she left. Our Acting President is now Maggie Wilson, who will chair at the symposium June 3rd. The keys, the work, we'll all pitch in and cover as best we can. We have it covered Viv.

## Another 1977 Fire Story

Rodney Button was 15- years old when he went to work at the Silver Miller Mine on Brady Lake in the Township of Coleman. The Chitaroni brothers, Elio and Albert guided the young man into the ways of hard-rock mining to the extent that Rodney learned underground blasting technique.

He became a married man; his wife was Clare Murray and a daughter was born. By 1977 the Buttons were living on Earle Street in Cobalt.

It was Saturday May 23 and the Buttons were down at Marsh Bay ready to spend the long Victoria Day holiday fishing for pike and pickerel at Clare's uncle's cabin.

Rodney had the radio tuned to the New Liskeard radio station CJTT; a fire in Cobalt. That wasn't too unusual. Given the time of year it was probably a grass fire. The time was 1:00 p.m.

He listened a little while later to hear that the French Catholic Church off Lang Street was burning.

"Claire," Rodney said "we better go back to Cobalt."

They returned to find that their house on Earle Street had burned to the ground!

Nothing was saved.

Clare at that time was working at Bernie's Tavern on Prospect Avenue in Cobalt and Rodney was working at Canadaka Mill where Bob Mitchell was Manager. It was located in the Kerr Lake area beyond the famous Silver Sidewalk. The building had been relocated from the United States to process tailings from the wet-lands project. Fred Chitty lent Rodney clothes so that he could go to work.

They stayed for the summer at the cabin at Marsh Bay then rented a house on Cobalt Street. By 1983 they had bought their house on Pyrite Street in Cobalt's Wright Sub-Division.

Another fire-the Canadaka Mill burned; Rodney continued working, operating equipment while the Mill was rebuilt.

Now in 2017, forty years after the year he lost his home, Rodney continues to reside on Pyrite Street, coming to the Cobalt Legion Branch 44 to have a beer and talk over mining days with friends.

*[Vivian's last direct contribution to the Newsletter]*

# Horse Racing on Cobalt Lake



My favourite phrase here is “Only in Cobalt.” The year is not marked, but it looked like everyone was having a good time. If someone has a year we could peg to this photo, please let me know.

## Membership Renewals

If you haven't renewed your membership for your 2017 membership, we hope you will continue with us. We're looking to accomplish bigger and better things in 2017, including new signage on the Trail, the repair/replacement of the Right-of-Way roof and the symposium on June 3rd, which we are hoping may become an annual event.

First week of May, film crews were in Cobalt to film for the show **Still Standing** to be aired on CBC TV. It promises to be full of surprises, as the crew was surprised as they went through their preliminary location scouting and research. The Cobalt Historical Society provided a starting place for them to gather the information, but I know they were helped by everyone they met here. Stay tuned for the air date.

Cobalt is a great place to be. But you all knew that already.

## Notes from the Board:

The Cobalt Historical Society is a member of the Ontario Historical Society, and are new members of the Temiskaming Shores & Area Chamber of Commerce. We are increasing our reach and visibility to accelerate our educational program. The Symposium on June 3rd is part of it.

As part of that reach we have a new website that is mobile friendly, ([heritagesilvertrail.ca](http://heritagesilvertrail.ca)) and a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=cobalt%20historical%20society>) we hope you will join us when you can to help promote this incredible historic town.

As of April 24th, our new President Maggie Wilson took up the reins, and joins the rest of the Board which now consists of:

Jack Church (treasurer)  
Reg Holdsworth (Past President)  
Reiner Mielke  
Deborah Ranchuk (secretary)  
Peter Greyson  
Florence Dean

and soon we hope: Kendra Lacarte