

Introduction: The Write It Now program (F18WIN) has been operating at Gloucester50+ Club since 2015. A new session begins each session (Fall, Winter, and Spring). Originally Olivier Fillion (1926-2000), from Alma, Quebec, began the program called “J’écris ma vie”. Olivier believed every person has a story to tell. Write It Now is not copyrighted. Olivier’s dream was that his program would spread. People do not have to be serious writers (or spellers); write just as you talk. The course is run by volunteers, so the fee is minimal. It is not necessary to attend every weekly class as everyone writes at their own pace. However, one should register during the regular registration, easily done by phone. Attendees are welcome to use story subjects from the Manual or just use their own imagination. Some attendees have even worked on short stories and poetry. Interested people are welcome to attend one class “free”; just ask for a “To see who we are and what we do!” card from the front desk.



Gail about 1949



Gail about 2008

Gail Casselman attended W.I.N. and was noted for having a HUGE BOX of ancestry memorabilia which she inherited from an aunt. She was overwhelmed by its contents so just decided to leave the organization of same for posterity! She had a story printed in Volume 1 of a two-volume book set entitled “Our Stories, Their Stories” (Captured Moments of Canadian History Gifted to Us by Canadian Seniors), published by HelpAge Canada, in 2015. Gail gave us permission to put an abridged portion of her story “A Tin House In a Small Town” on our Gloucester50+ website.

Gail’s story: In 1938 I was born in a tin house with a tin roof in a very small Ontario town. I was the second youngest of six children: five girls and one boy. I was brought into this world in this house by our town doctor who attended the birth of all children within a forty-mile radius. The house had four small bedrooms upstairs, several rooms downstairs and a cellar with a cistern and an earthen floor. Oh how I hated it when my mother sent me to get vegetables or preserves from the cellar! It was cold and damp and I was sure something terrible lurked in the dark corners.

We had no running water and no central heating but we did have electricity and a crank up telephone on the wall. No one had a private telephone line. Six or seven people shared that line so you had to be careful what you said as anyone on the shared line could listen to your conversation. As there was no water in the house, we had to use outdoor toilets in the summer and something like a portable toilet in the winter. Once a week the portable toilet was put outside by the road and the “honey wagon” came around to empty it. I never knew or asked where the contents of this “honey wagon” ended up.

I loved our summer kitchen. It had an old couch with many cushions and I spent hours reading comic books there. It was also where the weekly bath was held. An old tin tub was brought in, the water was heated on the wood stove and we took turns getting into the tub. I was too young to remember this but my older sister told me this story. One night my mother saw a man getting water from the outside pump. She brought the man in the house, fed him and let him sleep on our downstairs couch. She warned us kids not to come downstairs in the morning until called. Early in the morning she gave the man a coat and something to eat and sent him on his way. As she suspected, he was an escaped German prisoner of war who was trying to get across the St. Lawrence River to the United States. She said that the fellow was just a young boy, very cold and hungry. It seems to me she could have got in a lot of trouble for helping an escaped POW!