

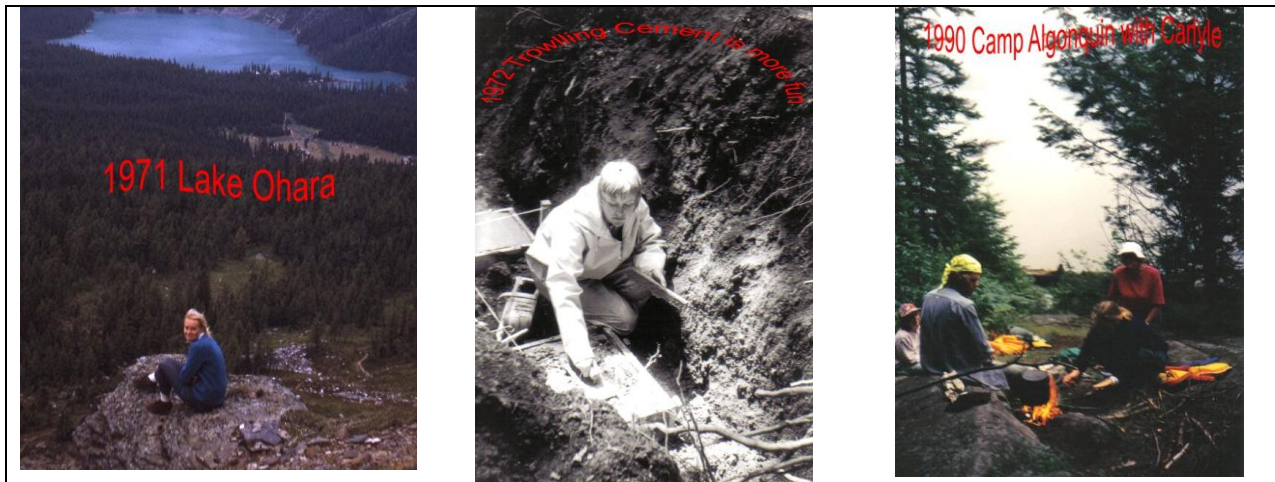
Daphne Elizabeth Nicholls (née Johnston) - 1946-2016



"We can but trust that good shall fall
At last -- far off -- at last to all,
And every winter turn to spring."
-- *In Memorium*, Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Following a battle with ovarian cancer, Daphne Elizabeth Nicholls (née Johnston) died quietly just before dawn on Friday August 26 at Hospice Wellington, surrounded by family. Spouse to Gordon Thomas, mother to Duncan Alexander (wife - Jill Mullen) and Jennie Ariadne (husband - Richard Jackson), grandmother to Tova Élise and Rowan Leonie, sister to Brooke Johnston (wife - Judy), aunt to Cameron and Logan, sister-in-law to David Nicholls (wife - Eva), and aunt to Fred and Tara -- she was richly loved by family and friends.

Daph was grateful for a wonderful childhood provided by her loving family in Toronto. She remembered the love and circle of fun provided by her parents, Frank Whiteside & Emily Elizabeth Johnston, and her brother, Brooke, as well as the many aunts, uncles and cousins from the Johnston, Jarvis, and Matthews families.



On a U of T Outing Club trip in the spring of 1967, Daph dove off a rock at Bon Echo Provincial Park and attracted the attention of Gord. On April 13, 1968 they were married and began a life of adventures, including canoeing and hiking trips in the back country, a summer in Europe, and the construction of a cabin in the Beaver Valley with the help of Gord's parents Ken & Ethel Nicholls. The family soon grew to include Duncan (1973) and Jennie (1978).



Family and a love of nature were central to Daphne's life. Over the years she and Gord turned to the Canadian Shield for restoration and inspiration after busy months in the city. At an early age, Duncan & Jennie went on canoe trips to Algonquin & Temagami, hiking trips to the Rocky mountains & the Bruce Trail. In later years these more active trips turned to cottage life on Lake Weslemkoon, east of Bancroft. It was always wonderful to see Daph get a campfire meal cooked to perfection or do a front flip off the dock as she started a long swim.



In addition to family life, Daph had a diverse life outside the home. After 4 years of teaching grade 3 she took a sabbatical to start a fine arts degree at York U. Studies were postponed with the arrival of children and a move to Kitchener. When her children started school Daph returned to teaching and finished her Honours BA at Waterloo, where she added Environmental Studies to her program.



Daph was a warm & kind friend to many over the years. She kept up contact with her St. Clements friends from high school, as well as opening new friendships in the many areas that interested her. For the past 20 years she concentrated on developing her ability as a watercolour landscape painter, and actively pursued opportunities to protect our environment through participation in groups such as Friends of Hidden Valley, KWFN, and the Grand River Environmental Network, as well as serving as President of the Grand Hill Village association.



Daphne loved a hot cup of tea, music that made her want to tap her feet, quiet times at the lake paddling and swimming, picking blueberries, chatting with strangers, eating chocolate, and sharing stories. She was creative in all facets of her life. She was an avid painter, a champion of the environment, an agitator and lobbyist, and a thorn in the side to local politicians reluctant to prioritize urban green spaces. She had a melodic whistle, could read stories aloud for hours, baked drool-worthy fruit pies, and freely gave warm and comforting hugs. She appreciated good grammar and posture and proper etiquette, and rustic campsites, canoe portages and cheese sandwiches cooked in pie irons over the open fire. She was patient and kind and generous with friends and family, old and new.

Daphne was one part whimsy, several parts practical, horrible with paper, and forever running late.

As she approached the end, Daphne requested her body be donated to medical science. Her final weeks were made more restful thanks to the care of the nursing team at Grand River Hospital and the palliative care team at Hospice Wellington. A private family service of farewell took place on the Sunday following her death.

Friends and extended family are invited to a Celebration of Daphne's life on October 30th at Chicopee Ski Club, Kitchener, from 1 to 5 pm with a short service at 2:30 pm.

Although the political process to improve air and water quality has been slow, Daph had great hope that the example set by the Bruce Trail Conservancy in preserving green spaces for public parklands would soon be followed by *all* levels of government (yes, Kitchener Council, we're looking at you -- it's not too late to make smart choices about preserving Hidden Valley!).

At her request, please send donations of remembrance to the 'Daphne Nicholls Memorial Fund' at the Bruce Trail Conservancy: call Allison Wright at 1-800-665-4453 , Ext 227.



Saying goodbye has been so much harder than we imagined it would be.

She will be missed fiercely and immeasurably.