

Christmas Traditions in Clarington II



Horse drawn wagon ride at Knox Pumpkin Farms located north of Mitchells Corners. Photo by Kristin McCrea. View her photo gallery at www.ClaringtonPromoter.ca

by Charles Taws

CLARINGTON MUSEUMS
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When talking about an early pioneer Christmas it is important to have an approximate date. The very earliest settlers, who came at the end of the 18th Century, would have celebrated the holiday differently than the ones who came later at the end of the 19th Century. To the first settlers Christmas was a religious holiday. Families may have gotten together for a religious service or attended church if one was relatively nearby. Their festive dinner would be more likely to include beaver, deer, moose, fish and pigeon rather than goose or turkey. Some gifts may have been given, but

they would be practical in nature and certainly not as big a part of the holiday as it is today. It's important to remember that many of our pioneers came from Scotland. To them Christmas was strictly a religious holiday. Their big party day was New Year's Eve which they called Hogmanay.

By the late 1800's the growth in Canada's population and prosperity along with the general development of the middle class made the Christmas we enjoy today. People had more leisure time to devote to holiday activities, more money to spend on decorations and gifts and they had access to familiar foods such as turkeys, geese, oranges, flour and sugar. Many Canadian Christmas customs are a blending of the nationalities that settled here. The Irish brought the custom of light-

ing a candle in the window and setting out a miniature nativity scene; the Dutch introduced us to Santa Claus; the English gave us mince pies, plum pudding and the Yule log tradition and the Germans, the Christmas tree.

In 1995 Hilda Tamblin wrote down her memories of a Christmas Day in Clarke Township in 1945. She recalled the trip from her home in Orono to her parent's house on the Lakeshore just east of Newcastle:

Christmas Day dawned clear and crisp but with high swirling winds at times. It was very cold and some roads were snowbound and they would remain so until an early spring thaw. Snow ploughs were rather primitive by to-day's standards. Farmers made gaps in their field fences so if the roads became plugged people with sleighs

could cut across their fields. Farmers carried a shovel in the cutter or sleigh and might have to walk ahead (leaving the reins to the wife, already shivering, and wondering why she hadn't stayed at home) and shovel out a very deep snow drift. Sometime a stream would get plugged and create a large frozen pond. This was ideal for skating in sunny afternoons and moonlit evenings.

We lived in Orono and my husband used a panel truck for his business. In it we packed our two little boys and baby girl. The baby was kept in her carriage with a rug over the top to keep her warm. We also had a small bundle of parcels and off we started for Newcastle and beyond along the Lake Shore Road. We had phoned ahead as we knew the road was not passable all the way. My dad

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and brother had a team with sleigh waiting to meet us at Lake's Hill.

They lifted the baby carriage and all onto the sleigh and we bundled up the boys

as it was a very cold morning with the Lake looking as if there were clouds of steam rising from it. Sleigh-bells ringing, the horses took us along the road a short distance and then through a fence gap and into a field.

We travelled across fields and over two railway bridges before we pulled into the yard of "Grandma's House". We unloaded and had our Christmas greetings and then got unbundled and warmed by the box stove. Through this trip the baby slept blissfully on.

Christmas gifts at this time were usually much needed items such as: mitts, scarves, toques, sweaters, pyjamas, pillow cases and tea towels (usually hand embroidered). Many of these would be hand-made from salvaged material. However, a child might also find a book or game under the tree as well. A box of homemade candy, such as maple fudge, was an acceptable gift and soon disappeared as it was passed around. Few people had turkey for Christmas

or New Year's. It was more likely goose or a brace of ducks, which the housewife had raised that year. Some advantages to a pair of ducks were that there was two pair of wings and drumsticks, which the children liked best. After a hearty dinner and some gift opening the baby was given her two o'clock feeding and then it was time to repack and get taken back to where we left the truck. The men on the farm would hurry back with the team and begin their afternoon chores at the barn.

To start a cold vehicle on a frosty day was no mean chore. It sometimes took quite a while to get it started and the heater was not comparable to what comfort people enjoy today. Even while riding in the truck one could feel the cold nipping



Traditional Christmas Card, circa 1910 from the collection of the Clarke Museum and Archives.

at one's cheeks and ears and one's legs and feet became ice-cold. Snowsuits of synthetic fabric and interlining were unknown fifty years ago and when one got home from an outing it took some time to get limbered up and cosy again.

Although Christmas has

been celebrated for almost 2,000 years, the way we celebrate it has changed over the centuries. One wonders what Christmas will be like 50 years from now, and what fond memories the children of today will be telling their children and grandchildren in the future.



Kristin McCrea

Remember when a pair of skates or a sled kept a child busy all winter long.

Planning for the Unexpected



by Peter Hobb

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We all hope we can leave our business at a point in time we are ready to leave, we can transfer or sell the business to whom we want, and it occurs at a value that is consistent with our wealth objectives. Unfortunately it doesn't always happen this way. Death or a permanent disability can derail your plans for an orderly transition of your business. If this happens do you have a

contingency plan in place that will ensure that the people you care about most will be looked after? Death or permanent disability while running a business, if it is not planned for, can quickly destroy the business. This event can leave your family in a position where they have to wrestle with many personal and business issues without your guidance.

The first step in developing a contingency plan is to provide written instructions as to what should happen if you are unable to be active in your business. Who should run the business, whether the business should be sold and who the purchaser may be, and the advisors the family should turn to assist with the sale, continuation or liquidation of the business. You need to provide your contingency plan to your key advisors and of course review it with your family. Nor-

mally the business is the most important asset of most business owners. The protection of the business is normally one of the key considerations to ensuring that your family will be looked after.

What are the risks to the business if there is no contingency plan? Normally the business owner has strong relationships with the customers and suppliers of the business. If the owner is no longer running the show and there is no game plan in place, customers will likely get nervous and possibly move their business to someone else. Key suppliers may stop supporting the business. Worse yet, the business's bank may restrict access to new funds or even demand repayment of existing loans. If no one is given the authority to make decisions confusion will rule the day and key people will possibly leave. People may

start pursuing their own agenda, including family members, and consequently, not do what is best for the business. The business needs to be able to respond quickly. This will be difficult if there is no contingency plan in place.

Insurance can play many roles in any contingency plan. Insurance can be used to ensure the family's financial needs are looked after in the case of your death. Key man insurance can be purchased on the life of the owner that would pay a death benefit to the company. This money can be used to provide breathing space to allow the company to adapt to new management, take the time needed to sell the business, provide extra funds to pay bonuses to key people to encourage them to stay, etc. If you have other partners or shareholders insurance can provide funds to purchase the

shares of a deceased shareholder leading to a much less stressful transition of ownership. If this purchase is not funded the family may be left waiting for the money possibly leading to financial hardship. If you have partners who hold shares in your company make sure you have a shareholders' agreement. One of the elements of this agreement would include a section setting out what would happen in the case of death or permanent disability of one of the shareholders.

One big risk arising from the premature death or disability of the business owner is the loss of knowledge and skills critical to the business. This is one very important reason why you should be working towards making yourself expendable. Most business owners do not like this concept but it can be essential if you are going to have a sustainable busi-

ness. You need to be transitioning knowledge on a regular business and making sure that your business has access to the skills you bring to the table if you are not there. Document what you do and how you do it. Train and educate employees so they can step into your shoes. Not only will this facilitate your exit from the business but it will also make life easier for you while you are active in the business.

Preparing a contingency plan detailing what should happen if you are not there should be the first step in developing a plan to exit your business. Planning brings clarity, gives you more control over your future, enhances the chances that you will achieve your business and personal goals, and reduces anxiety for the people you care about most.

Many Hands Make Light Work



by Jim Abernethy, Editor

jim@ClaringtonPromoter.ca

The Occupy Toronto story was a tragedy for St. James Park and all of the people who benefit from walking over a small patch of green grass growing in the middle of a city the size of Toronto.

Fortunately for the taxpayers of Toronto another grassroots movement mobilized to repair the damage done by the first.

Members of Landscape Ontario and Nursery Sod Growers Association of Ontario gave back to their community when they volunteered thousands of man hours, topsoil, sod and machinery to restore the park.

We have a similar situation unfolding right here in Clarington.

No, nobody is occupying one of our parks. However a growing list of volunteers and local businesses are coordinating efforts to give back to our community in a similar fashion, and on a much grander scale.

I am one of more than 30 volunteers working together to educate the public about a preventable tragedy that occurs each spring and fall. We are also coordinating the fund raising efforts that are underway to complete a unique construction project to prevent this tragedy.

Al Strike and Harold Hammond are Co-Chairs of the Valleys2000 Fund Raising Committee which includes: Jim Abernethy, Kevin Anyan, Russ Arbuckle, Justin Barry, Eleanor Colwell, John Greenfield, Jack Hampsey, Jackie Hampsey, Peter Hobb, Bill Huether, Bill Humber, Doug James, Robert Lloyd, Frank Lockhart, Edgar Lucas, Paul McIntyre, Neale McLean, Paul Morris, Brad Parker, Gail Rickard, Joe Raby, Doug Rutherford, David Shives, Sherry Shives, Derrick Stroud, Charlie Trim, George VanDyk, Paul Hood and Ron Robinson.

Last month I dedicated this column to help build awareness about the construction project which is truly "A Miracle in the Making."

The project is called the Valleys2000 Fish By-pass Channel, and in my opinion the "Miracle" is the way in which the project is unfolding.

I invite you to learn more about the project. If you have access to a computer and would like to learn more about this tragedy visit: www.valleys2000.ca or visit www.clarington-promoter.ca to access the article in our November edition, on page 6 written by William Humber.

No access to a computer? Drop by the newly opened Valleys2000 Office located inside the Veltri Complex at 68 King St. East, Bowmanville, 905-261-7448 right next to the offices of Bev Oda MP.

The Fish By-pass Channel is a collaborative project between five entities: Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority (CLOCA), the Municipality of Clarington (MOC), Veyance Technologies (formerly Goodyear), Float Fishing Conservation Group, and Valleys2000 which is a non-charitable organization of volunteers whose mandate it is to rejuvenate and manage the public trails running through the valleys of Bowmanville Creek and Soper Creek.

Considering that the project cannot proceed without approvals from the Provincial Ministry of Natural Resources and our Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans, one might say that coordinating this number of government agencies is in itself a miracle.

The "Miracle" however is how individuals and our business community are coming together to meet and overcome the many challenges and obstacles that stand in the way of a project that promises to bring educational, social and economic benefits to our community.

Two of Clarington's largest employers have stepped up to the plate without any hesitation. More are coming, but more are needed.

OPG provided the seed money to help complete the initial engineering report which now forms the project blueprint and is expected to continue to play a Major Contributor role in the project.

St. Mary's Cement, another Major Contributor, has generously offered to donate the specially formulated concrete required to build the new channel and shore up the earth on the east side of the dam.

Our community is fortunate to have two great corporate citizens such as OPG and St Mary's and we appreciate that they are always there to help our community.



Committee Co-Chairs and representatives from OPG and St. Mary's tour the project site to better understand why the fish by-pass channel is needed and how it will increase the number of large fish that navigate upstream past the old Goodyear Dam in the Bowmanville Creek.

Others are helping too! Here are more examples of our community coming together for the "Miracle in the Making."

Walter Hillman of Trade-Tech Industries on Lake Street offered his help when he learned that one of the components of the project is to build and install a steel viewing bridge to span the fish by-pass channel. The bridge will facilitate safe observance of the enormous sized trout and salmon jumping below.

This large bridge is an important, yet expensive feature which is expected to become both an educational platform and a major tourist destination in our community.

It just so happens that the Toronto Conservation Authority has for sale a used bridge that needs some work. Walter, being in the steel fabrication business offered to donate his resources to refurbish and deliver the bridge to the project site, further reducing the project costs by thousands of dollars.

Another example is the management and staff at Boston Pizza. They have offered to donate 10% of the total value of the dinner receipts generated at their Bowmanville location, between the hours of 5-8 PM on Sunday January 8, 2012. So mark your calendar, invite some friends and enjoy a dinner knowing you are making a donation to Valley2000.

These are but a few examples our community spirit to help "A Miracle in the Making" happen right here in Clarington.

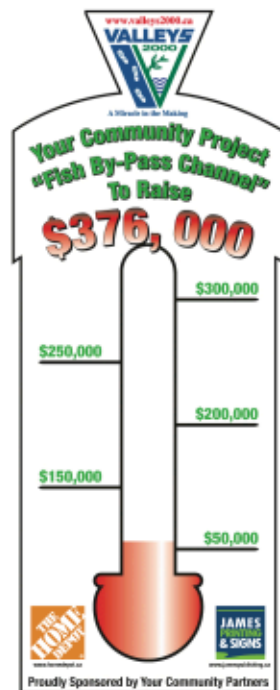
Our primary challenge is to raise \$376,000. These funds are required to begin the tender process to select a contractor in time to allow the project to be completed during July/August 2012. Understandably, the summer months are the only months The Ministry of Natural Resources will permit the creek bed to be disturbed because the water levels are then at their lowest, and the fish are not spawning.

Thanks to the many people who completed and mailed the donor card that appeared in our last edition. Your donations are appreciated..... many hands do make light work.

There is much to do and little time to do it. So we have upgraded the Valleys2000 website to allow you to make your donation on-line..... simply visit www.valleys2000.ca

Remember that Christmas is a time of giving. No gift is too great or too small. Know that your donation to Valleys2000 is a gift that will go on giving, including to the children that are expected to stand on that bridge and learn about nature, the eco-system of the valley and the life cycle of the fish.

Merry Christmas!
Jim



NOW ACCEPTING ON-LINE DONATIONS



A Miracle in the Making

www.valleys2000.ca

How Can You Help ?

- Learn more about the project - visit www.valleys2000.ca and forward the address to your friends
- Drop by the Valleys2000 office - Veltri Complex 68 King Street East, Bowmanville
- Donate on-Line
- Donate by Mail
- Develop you own Company or Organization Fund Raising Campaign

In April of 2008, CLOCA, the conservation authority having jurisdiction over the Bowmanville Creek Valley, hired Greck and Associates to design a Fish Passage Improvement Project at the Goodyear Dam (now Veyance) so that various species of fish, now hindered, could by-pass the dam to spawn upstream. Many of the larger fish could not make it up through the existing fish ladder, dying on the cement shelf and in the pool and stream below the dam, resulting in an objectional stench.

A final report on the fish passage, released in January, 2010 recommended the construction of a by-pass channel with a leaping component to prevent the upstream passage of sea lamprey, as a cost effective solution to the poor migration of fish upstream; and it would provide a valuable educational addition to the Valleys mosaic.

And guess what? Valleys was asked to raise the funds necessary for the new by-pass channel.

Now accepting
On-Line
Donations

