

Living HERE

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November | December 2014

1 YEAR ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

Vimy Ridge: Never to be Forgotten

Con Darling

"Brockville's Ambassador of Smiles: Remembered"

20 Questions with Bonnie Pidgeon-Gommert

Santa Claus is Coming to Town

Keeping Holiday Spending at Home

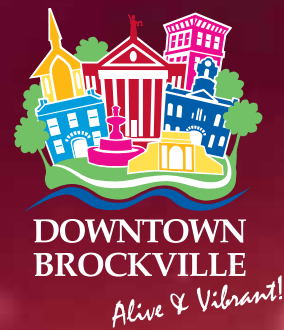
The Last Battle

November 11

Lest We Forget

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What's Happening



❄️ **5TH ANNUAL DOWNTOWN BLACK FRIDAY EVENT**
November 28TH

❄️ **SANTA CLAUS PARADE**
(2pm - 4pm) November 29TH

❄️ **FARMERS MARKET AT THE ROWING CLUB**
(Sat. 9am - 2pm) December 6TH, 13TH, 20TH

❄️ **CAROLLERS IN DOWNTOWN BROCKVILLE**
(11am - 2pm) December 6TH, 13TH, 20TH

❄️ **SANTA AT THE RAILWAY TUNNEL**
(12pm - 3pm) December 6TH, 13TH, 20TH

❄️ ***HORSE AND WAGON RIDES**
(11am - 3pm) December 6TH, 13TH, 20TH

❄️ ****BREAKFAST WITH SANTA AT BUD'S ON THE BAY**
(8:30am) December 20TH

❄️ **REINDEER AT THE RAILWAY TUNNEL**
(11:30am - 3pm) December 6TH, 13TH, 20TH

** Rides leaving from the Blockhouse Island Parkway/Water St. Parking Lot*

*** Reservations are required-one seating only at 8:30 am*

-Proceeds to Brockville and Area Food Bank

All events may be cancelled due weather conditions

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Cover photo by: Lynne Lodge

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Living Here Magazine is locally owned by **Marshall Enterprises** and is published bi-monthly (6 times annually) and distributed free in over 250+ locations throughout Brockville/Prescott/Gananoque and surrounding communities. The publisher assumes no responsibility for opinions expressed and reserves the right to edit or refuse contributions that are discriminatory or derogatory.

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(printed in Brockville by Henderson Printing)

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Cranberry Almond Butter

You'll need...

- 2 cups butter (not margarine) softened
- 1 ½ cups granulated sugar
- 1 large egg
- 2 tsp vanilla
- 5 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 1/3 cups dried cranberries
- 1 cup slivered almonds toasted

To create...

- Cream butter and sugar in a large bowl, add egg, beat well, add vanilla, beat until smooth.
- Combine flour, baking powder and salt in a medium bowl. Add to butter mixture in 3 additions, mixing well after each addition until no dry flour remains.
- Add cranberries, mix well. Divide dough into 3 equal portions. Shape each portion into 8 inch long logs. Wrap each log with waxed paper. Chill for at least 6 hours or overnight. Discard waxed paper from 1 log. Cut into 1/3 inch slices. Arrange about 2 inches apart on greased cookie sheets.
- Gently press 2 or 3 almond slivers in a decorative pattern on top of each slice. Bake in 350F oven for about 10 minutes, until just golden. Let stand for 5 minutes before removing to wire racks to cool. Repeat with remaining logs and almond slivers. Makes about 6 dozen cookies



Prime Rib au Poivre

SERVES 12

ANYTHING "AU POIVRE" SIMPLY MEANS "WITH PEPPER" AND PLENTY OF IT.

You'll need...

- 1 6-8lb prime rib roast
- 2 TBSP Dijon-style mustard
- 2 TSP minced garlic
- 2 TBSP whole mixed peppercorns coarsely cracked

To create...

- Have the butcher completely loosen bones for easier carving of the roast. Trim any excess fat from the top of the beef, leaving a layer about ¼" thick. Combine mustard and garlic in a small bowl and spread over top of the beef. Sprinkle peppercorns over mustard mixture.
- Place meat, bone side down, and mustard side up in a foil-lined roasting pan. Insert a meat thermometer into the centre of the meat, without touching the bone. Roast in a 350 degree oven until thermometer registers 135 F for medium rare (approx. 2 ¼hours) and 150 F (approx. 2 ½ hours) for medium. → Cover meat with foil. Let meat stand for 15 minutes before carving. The meats temperature will increase 5 to 10 degrees during standing.
- Serve with your choice of potato and side dish



Hot Buttered Cider

You'll need...

- 8 cups apple cider or apple juice
- 2 TBSP brown sugar
- 4 inches cinnamon sticks
- 1 TSP whole allspice
- 1 TSP whole cloves
- Peel from 1 lemon cut into strips
- 2 TBSP butter
- Cinnamon sticks (optional)

To create...

- Combine cider and brown sugar in a large saucepan. For a spice bag tie cinnamon, allspice, cloves and lemon peel in a 6 inch square of cotton cheesecloth. Add spice bag to cider mixture. Bring to boil on medium high heat. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 15 minutes. Remove and discard spice bag.
- Top each serving with ½ tsp butter and serve with a cinnamon stick stirrer, if desired. To make ahead, after discarding spice bag, chill cider and reheat to serve. Or to keep cider warm, place in slow cooker on low heat setting. Makes 10-12 servings.
- To make hot buttered rum drink add ½ cup of rum to the recipe just before serving.

Recipes provided
by
Karen Davis





VIMY RIDGE:

Never to Be Forgotten

By Lorraine Payette

April 9, 1917, began as did most days. There was no blaze of glory as the sun rose, no almighty thunder from on high, and no celestial sign to let the world know what would come about on that day. Birds roused from their slumber cried out, and small animals scurried about seeking food. Sleet and snow scoured the countryside as a reminder that winter wasn't quite ready to leave.

Vimy Ridge grumbled in anticipation.

"No Allied operation on the Western Front was more thoroughly planned than this deliberate frontal attack on what seemed to be virtually invincible positions," reports *Canada at War*. "Vimy Ridge was so well fortified that all previous attempts to capture it had failed. However, Canadian commanders had learned bitter lessons from the cost of past frontal assaults made by vulnerable infantry. This time their preparations were elaborate.

As the Canadian Commander of the 1st Division, Major-General Arthur Currie, said, 'Take time to train them.' This is exactly what the Canadian Corps did, down to the smallest unit and the individual soldier."¹

On Easter Monday, 9 April, over 40,000 Canadian infantrymen waited in trenches for the signal to attack. In front of them lay a landscape scarred by earlier failed attempts to seize strategic Vimy Ridge. At 5:30 a.m., thousands of shells began crashing down on German defenders. This was the signal for 15,000 Canadian infantry in the first wave to cross "No Man's Land", burdened down with at least 32 Kg (70 lb) of equipment per man.

Among those who fought were several soldiers from Leeds-Grenville, including Lieutenant Colonel Russell H. Britton, Lieutenant Colonel James McParland, Captain William Hale, Private John G. Herbert (killed April 9) and Private Frederick H. Glover (killed April 10), all of

Gananoque; Adelbert Franklin Brayman of Brockville; and (indirectly) Private Amasa Mallory Shaw of Mallorytown (who was gassed at Vimy Ridge in February, 1917).

"I expect you know as much about the battle of Arras (Vimy Ridge) now as we do, but the Canadians did indeed do good work," wrote Britton to his father on April 19. "At 5:20 a.m. on Monday, April 9th, the entire British line as far as you could see north and south, from my observation post, became one sheet of flame, and an ordinary quiet morning became an absolute bedlam of bangs and booms. I was fortunate in being in a place where I had a perfect view. Although it was impossible to actually see the Infantry advancing, owing to the darkness, the artillery barrage could be very distinctly seen, and it was beautiful.

"The fight lasted from 5:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., and the Bosche was entirely up against it. He could not stem the tide at all. The barrage was so intense that nothing could stand against it. Poor old Fritz cannot be blamed for beating it. Eighteen pounders, 4.5 in. howitzers, 60 pounders, 6-in. guns and howitzers, 8-in. howitzers, 9.2, 12-in. and 15-in., were all at him at once, and had been for ten days and ten nights. He was properly up against it, and our Infantry just naturally rushed up the hill behind the barrage and pushed everything before them.



"At nine o'clock, or a little before, the prisoners started to come in. They continued to pour past the entire day, and were generally a pretty happy lot to be well out of it. They are pretty well fed up with the war. We captured a very large number of German guns and ammunition. I have crews from all the Batteries operating these captured guns now, and we are firing his own ammunition at him from all his own guns, which is irritating him very much, as he is coming back at us with all sorts of weapons..."²

By April 12, the exalted goal had been achieved.

James Frederick McParland, born in Gananoque on June 29, 1881, was a graduate of the Royal Military College in Kingston. He wrote:

"It was a glorious victory. The battle started at 5:30 a.m., and I have never seen or heard such artillery fire. There was never anything like it, even at the Somme, and our infantry just walked right ahead and swept everything ahead of them. We captured the whole of the much-talked-of 'Vimy Ridge,' also Hill 145, and Thelus village, and the whole thing was over at two o'clock. Everyone, of course, is wild with excitement over it, as it was such a complete success. Our casualties were very light."³

His definition of "light" varies with our modern understanding.

"Casualties were not light as McParland claimed," says Bill Beswetherick, historian

and member of Royal Canadian Legion Branch 92 in Gananoque. "When the war had started on 4 August 1914, the Canadian Army had just 3,110 enlisted soldiers.

Fighting from the 9 to 12 of April killed 3,598 Canadians and wounded another 7,064. "The Legion has the two Military Crosses awarded to Captain (Doctor) William Hale of Gananoque, who was the medical officer of the 42nd Battalion (Black Watch of Canada) at Vimy, where his actions earned him his first Military Cross."

Adelbert Franklin Brayman's view of the battle differed considerably from McParland's. Having lost three fingers and fractured an elbow at Vimy Ridge, he wrote:

"From the first moment of the attack we came under murderous and hellish fire from machine guns ... we lost about 30 percent of the fighting forces before we got into the green line of trenches and went into hand-to-hand fighting ... As we looked back up that ridge in the early dawn we witnessed a scene never to be forgotten. The entire face of the hill was covered with German green and Canadian khaki. Men lay out there in that blood-soaked field, some dead, some dying."⁴

In honour of those who fought at Vimy Ridge, the Cadets from Gananoque's 492 Military Police Royal Canadian (Army) Cadet Corps, stand vigil at the cenotaph in the Town Park in Gananoque on the anniversary of the battle each year.

Left: Canadian infantry attack at Vimy under bursting German artillery
Top: Lieutenant Colonel Russell H. Britton, killed 2 May 1917

Changing the guard every thirty minutes, they stand with heads bowed throughout the day, silently honouring those who died to defend the world against the advancement of the Kaiser's armies. Although this battle brought the world's attention to the Canadian forces as storm troopers and a major fighting force, this recognition was not achieved lightly.

For those who wish to learn more about Vimy Ridge and Canada at war, local historians Geraldine Chase and Bill Beswetherick have put together several books about the local area and those who participated. Among these are Gananoque Remembers and Voices from the Past: Canadian Letters from the First World War. They may be purchased at the Branch 92 Canadian Legion on King Street East in Gananoque. [LH](#)

Please check in your community with your local legion where Remembrance Day Services will be held and please honour our vets by attending the service. Also, ask your legion about joining as an associate/affiliate or non-voting member and help financially to keep your local legion in your community.

End notes: 1. Canada at War, <http://www.canadaatwar.ca/content-9/world-war-i/the-battle-of-vimy-ridge/>
2. Chase, Geraldine and Bill Beswetherick, *Voices from the Past: Canadian Letters from the First World War*, Kingston, Ontario, Allan Graphics, 2014; 3. Ibid; 4. Ibid; Photos and Cutlines as Provided by Bill Beswetherick, Historian

CON DARLING

“Brockville’s Ambassador of Smiles” Remembered

By Phil Melchers

Con Darling. The name certainly rings to the ear. For most, it brings forth an image of a lone statue on Blockhouse Island, its smile, welcoming and enduring. It has been a long time since the world last saw that loveable clown. It’s been a long time since he last walked in a parade. Yet within the city of Brockville his message remains: joy and laughter, a testament immortal.



Here’s a hint in dealing with Mr. Darling: It would be best to expect the unexpected. So too is this true for his origin story. For Con, the clown originally emerged during figure skating with his brother. Carol Whittaker, widow to Con, remembers. “They were both excellent figure skaters, but in the clown suits they acted like they didn’t have a clue.” This is an example of Con’s flair for showmanship, a staple of his personality. Remembered by his family today, this flair could be seen within his love for music, (he was an avid musician), his inner sense of pure joy (Darling love, as they call it), and of course, his more than eccentric quirks.

Con’s quirks came in many forms, but none were as strange as Myrtle, his poultry companion. Though it was unclear where exactly Myrtle came from, the sight of a chicken in a carriage was certainly part of Con’s image. How exactly the chicken came to be named? Well, the story goes like this: One day a stranger asked Con what his chicken was named. Con replied by asking the stranger what her name was. When she said “Myrtle,” Con then replied, “Well, oh my god, that’s the chicken’s name too!”

Outside of his make-up, Con was described as being “a marshmallow,” and “a big ole softie.” Remembered by his daughters Angie and Heather, Con would often watch Price is Right, outright weeping whenever the person he was cheering for won. That was just how Con was. He enjoyed seeing people happy. As Carol, Heather and Angie all agree, benevolence was in his blood. He was born with it, and when asked if we would ever see another Con Darling, they all replied with a stern, “No!” Though some have tried, none will ever replace Con.

Before becoming a clown, Con originally wanted to be a doctor but couldn’t because he had to work on raising a family. Instead, Con became the next best thing, a clown, giving testimony to the phrase, laughter is the best medicine. “If it is, then he healed a lot of people,” says Carol.

There isn't an adult in Brockville over the age of 30 who hasn't heard the name Con Darling and doesn't have a special memory of him walking the Santa Claus Parade in Brockville for several decades, dressed as a clown, and pushing a baby carriage with a chicken in it. There is film footage at the Brockville museum circa 1962, showing him in a Santa Parade. Mr. Darling was a very generous, giving man, who loved children, loved life, and people. Mr. Darling also donated a lot of his time on telethons to help raise money in the Brockville area as well. He was born in 1926 and passed away in 1993. In Brockville, on Blockhouse Island, there is a statue of Con that was erected in 1995 with these words:

**Con Darling,
Ambassador Of Smiles,
Dedicated His Life to The
Betterment of Humanity.
This Memorial Pays Tribute To
His Love Of Community
Both Young and Old.
May his Memory and Spirit Of
Giving Live In Us All.**



It is true that even though Con started every parade at the front, he always ended each at the back. Though his daughters, who often dressed as clowns themselves, remember having to wait for him, they recognized that his dawdling pace was, in reality, a measure of his generosity. For him, it was important that no child would ever be left without a lollypop or a chance to pet Myrtle. During parades Con made sure to grant significance to every child, to make sure none were forgotten. An

important message he carried, even during his later years.

This December it is important to remember Con as the good soul he was. With Christmas being his favourite holiday, no other time would seem more appropriate. So let's remember Con, for his legacy, and his message. The same as we see it on that statue's smiling face: "Joy, simple joy, give joy to all and let none be left behind." **LH**



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THE MIRACLE OF THE CHRISTMAS BASKET

By Lorraine Payette

Most people are familiar with the Christmas basket. Every December, different businesses and charitable organizations get together and collect food, small gifts, and items to give to the “less fortunate” in society and sometimes a basket can mean a miracle.

It was December of 1985. It was snowy, and Christmas was near. A single mother of a 3-year-old boy was enjoying a welcome sleep in on a Saturday morning, when he woke her up.

“Mummy, scratch my back, it’s so itchy,” he said, and then added “Please?”

She rolled over to see a brightly lit sky out the window and a determined face placed firmly between it and her. Sighing, she sat up and checked his back first before scratching it for him.

Lifting his shirt, she found a grainy, garnet coloured, sand like rash that she had never seen before. He was hot to the touch, and she knew this was serious.

“Honey, we’re going to have to go to the hospital,” she said.

This was a challenge. They lived about 18 km from the city, and she didn’t drive. There was a bus on Saturdays, but it would be tough going if she missed it. Neighbours were unavailable, and returning home would be difficult.

They had to get in, so she got him ready and put on her pack. Then off they went. On arriving at the hospital, his temperature was quite high and the rash had started spreading toward his face and down his arms. They were let in right away, and the diagnosis was scarlet fever.

The treatment would not be the modern “Antibiotics and he’ll be fine,” which was just starting to be used, but was an old fashioned “get him home – your family doctor says 30 days quarantine!” Medicine was provided immediately at the hospital, and they were given a ride home by ambulance.

While the boy enjoyed the unusual ride, the mother was terrified. She had been unemployed for quite a while, and they survived through the financial kindness of family members living hundreds of miles away. Quarantine meant 30 days of nobody in or out. Things could be left in the mailbox at the street or out in the yard, but no one was able to leave the house and interact with other people period. This meant she could not do banking, shop or do any of the needed chores outside. With no one to help and dwindling supplies in her home, she had no idea of how they could possibly get through.

They hadn’t been home much more than an hour when the phone rang. She asked her son to please try to be quiet as she answered it, and he toned down the siren noises as he rolled his toy emergency vehicles around on the floor.

“Excuse me, ma’am?” the voice said. “I’m the manager of the Dominion Store on Barrack Street in Kingston. We were wondering if you could use a Christmas basket this year.” Ordinarily she would have said, “No, thank

you,” believing there were others who were far less fortunate than she. This year however, she had to reconsider.

Within an hour, the pick-up truck had pulled up by her door. She called out to the driver, explaining that the black and yellow signs in the windows meant she couldn’t go out and he couldn’t come in. He smiled, waved, and started unloading boxes onto the snow.

So many boxes! She couldn’t believe it. She yelled “thank you” out the window, and she and her son waved as the truck drove away.

Inside was everything they needed to get through, not just the Christmas holiday, but the entire 30 days. There was food and beverages, some toys, mitts and a touque for her son and warm gloves for her. They had even provided cleaning supplies, paper towels and toilet tissue.

Years later, she still thinks back on that basket – it was a Christmas miracle. Her son got better, and they were able to return to their lives after the quarantine was over. The supplies were enough, at exactly the right time. She remains eternally grateful to the people who never knew her, never knew her circumstances, but were willing to reach out and help during this critical time in their lives.

The next time you think about the Christmas baskets and whether or not they can make a difference in someone’s life, please consider this story. You never know when you might be participating in someone else’s miracle. [LH](#)



20 with Bonnie Pidgeon-Gommert

QUESTIONS

By Jonathan Vickers

Bonnie Pidgeon Gommert is The Executive Director of the South Grenville Food Bank (Food for all Food Bank) since 2002.

The Food Bank has 3 locations for clients:

- Cardinal (Cardinal Public Library)
618 King St Hwy #2, 613-657-1967 (Wed 10am-2pm),
- Prescott 136 Henry Street W. 613-925-2444 (Tues/Wed/Thurs 10am-2pm),
- Spencerville, (Spencerville United Church)
16 Centre St. 613-925-2444 (Tues 10am-1pm)

LH: Is Prescott your hometown?

B: No, I moved to Prescott at the age of 7 from Alexandria, Ontario

LH: What can you tell us about growing up in Prescott with your family?

B: Throughout my childhood and teen years, I was very busy. My family organized the Prescott Majorette Core and I took Dance, Figure Skating and Swimming lessons until I was 13. After that I volunteered at many different activities, but mostly enjoyed volunteering at the Brockville General Hospital.

LH: Where did you go to High School and any particular accomplishments or memories?

B: I completed High School at South Grenville, where I was in the production of the "Black Donnelly's". I also played the flute in the school band. Mr. Hoffman, one of my teachers taught me, that if you really want something, then you have to work hard to achieve it.

LH: What high school jobs or activities did you have?

B: I didn't have a job in high school because my mother was very ill and I needed to be home after school to take care of her while my dad went to work. My mom and dad ensured that I was still able to attend all my extra activities at school. I played in the school band and was in drama club. I also played on the volleyball team.

LH: Any lessons from your first job (or activity) that you can relate to now (successes or failures)?

B: My first real job was with Pizza Hut. I think that job taught me how to form the friendships I have with the community today. I have had many interesting jobs over the years including working at the Banff Springs Hotel in Alberta.

LH: What did you study in College and what was your first career choice?

B: I studied business and marketing at St Lawrence College. I completed a two year diploma. One of my diplomas is in Hotel/ Restaurant Management, and the second is in Human Resources Management. Education and learning have always been important to me.

LH: So how did you go about becoming the Executive Director at the South Grenville Food Bank?

B: The very first time I had heard about this wonderful organization was at Brock Telecom. Tracey Faber Hoogwerf was working on the Food Bank Board and asked if I could help. That was nearly 12 years ago and I am honored to still work in my local community to help feed those in need in South Grenville. I value the continued support of our community, the generosity of our donors and partners, and of course, our fantastic volunteers.



Top: Bonnie Pidgeon-Gommert in her office.

Right: Bonnie Pidgeon-Gommert & Joan Rupert-Barkley (Admin. Assistant) in the food bank warehouse

LH: What does an Executive Director do at the South Grenville Food Bank?

B: There is a lot that goes on in my job and I carry out many tasks, but I would have to say my top priorities are client services and maintain donor/volunteer relationships. Every day can be different at the food bank. The need for our service has grown over the past decade. We are always looking outside the box to find new ideas on how we are going to stay open.

LH: What is the best part of your job?

B: Helping people and feeding the needy in our community. When people don't have the basic foods to eat and children go to school hungry, we have a very serious problem. Helping families just to have food on their table is very humbling. No one should go hungry in Canada, period.

LH: Why should young people and really, everyone, have an interest in the work the Food Bank does here in the South Grenville area?

B: The Food Bank is a vital service in the South Grenville area and we have 3 locations to better serve our clients. We offer many different volunteer/donor opportunities to help assist us with providing this great



service. This organization runs mostly on volunteers. Without their help, we could not do the great work needed in our community.

LH: What types of donations are truly needed at the Food Bank? Separate from food items, is there anything in particular the public could really help with?

B: We are a nonprofit organization that relies on the generosity of our donors as well as our volunteers. We are a registered charity that can issue tax receipts. There are three different ways you can support the food bank; you can donate money, donate items or you can become a volunteer. The food bank can be reached @ 613-925-2444 so you can find out more about how you can help.

LH: Now for the more personal stuff: How did you meet your partner Darrell?

B: Darrell and I met over 20 years ago on a camping trip. We have been friends for many years but only recently have we started dating.

LH: What is family life like for Bonnie and Darrell when you have off time and where /or what activities do you both like when you spend time together?

B: We both enjoy traveling to cottage country where we can fish and enjoy the peace of the countryside and the outdoors. It is our hope someday to buy a small piece of land where we can spend our weekends and relax.

LH: If you could visit any place in the world, where would it be?

B: This is easy, I have been lucky enough to travel to many places in this wonderful world but I would still really enjoy going to Italy.

LH: What is your Favourite Guilty Pleasure?

B: My guilty pleasure is milk chocolate (ok actually anything) chocolate or sweet

LH: Favourite TV Shows?

B: Murdock Mysteries. This is a Canadian production. Everyone should watch it.

LH: Favourite book or Author?

B: Danielle Steel

LH: What is a characteristic in people you dislike?

B: I really dislike people that are dishonest. I enjoy people and most people I meet are fantastic.

LH: If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?

B: I would like to be taller; thank God I can buy heels! (lol) But I will never be taller.

Bonus question:

What's the best part about "LIVING HERE?"

B: I grew up in Prescott and now I reside in Maitland. I think that the South Grenville area is the best place to live because it's so beautiful. I have always been involved in the community, even as a young girl.

Editor's Note:

In all our communities Food Banks play a vital role in helping out families in need. Below is a contact list for Local Food Banks and Organizations that will help and also accept food or monetary donations.

In Brockville, the Brockville & Area Food Bank is located at 58 Buell St (James St) 613-342-0605 it is open 2nd Monday every month from 6pm-7:30pm and Tuesday to Friday 12pm-3pm.

The Salvation Army Brockville, Brockville Community Church 175 First Ave 613-342-5211 Tues/Thurs 10am-3pm by appointment

In Gananoque The Gananoque Food Bank is located at 55 King St East 613-382-4434 (basement of the Legion)

Salvation Army Gananoque Care & Share Food Bank (Soup Kitchen) 120 Garden St. 613-382-3105 (serves Gananoque/ Lansdowne/Seeley's Bay/Lyndhurst/ Rockport) Mon-Fri 10am-4pm

In Athens contact; Athens Ministerial Food Bank/ Crisis Fund Association Monday 10:00 am - 12:00 noon, except for holidays. Free Methodist Church on Elgin Street Food vouchers for temporary needs

For information contact Shirley 924-2625, Bernice 924-9112, or Jessie 924-9048



KEEPING HOLIDAY SPENDING AT HOME

By Lorraine Payette

Whether you live in a huge metropolis, a tiny backwater town, or even so far off the grid that your neighbour's house is more of a fairy story in the back of your mind than a reality, this is a time not only of spiritual celebration and contemplation, but of giving. Every year we go out seeking the perfect gift, something that will truly light up the eyes, mind and heart of the receiver.

What if you could give gifts that would benefit your entire community, gifts with meaning and substance that help others as well as being for a special person?

Every community is filled with hard working, dedicated people who would love to be part of your gift giving plans. Each time you purchase services locally, especially from the small owner run businesses in your community, you provide work for people who live where you live, shop where you shop, worship where you worship, whose kids attend school with your kids. It is time for communities to be helping communities, and to stop waiting for government and big commerce to pull us out of our rut.

Check with local craftspeople and artisans for the perfect gift, whether it be a hand-knit garment from homespun wool; novel jams, jellies or preserves; farm fresh soaps; artisanal breads and baked goods; innovative furnishings; or exquisite works of art, to liven up the home environment.

Attend the flea markets, rummage sales, and craft fairs throughout your area to find treasures you might never have known existed. Think small owner operated business before large chain franchise, and see how many people in your neighbourhood can benefit from that simple decision.

Visit owner operated restaurants in the area and partake of their specialties. Then go out to a great show. Whether you attend a play at the community theatre, a performance of the Nutcracker by local children, or listen to your favourite music by a hometown band, there's plenty of great live entertainment.

The possibilities are endless, from home spun wisdom and craftiness, through giving generous tips to those who serve us everyday and get so little recognition for all they do. It all starts with just looking at things a bit differently, of

bringing the holidays home instead of the other way around.

Think gym memberships, gift certificates (whether individual or in books) for car detailing, driveway sealing, lawn mowing, driveway plowing, cleaning sidewalks, even a few rounds of golf at the local golf course.

Maybe you'd rather look at giving a nice dinner out at a locally owned restaurant, or even a few breakfasts at McDonald's or Tim Horton's (who hire many people in the different communities) as a break for the household cook. Perhaps an in-home catered meal, with maid service for a day or carpet steaming. Perhaps chimney cleaning would be exactly the right gift for that someone special on your list.

Every car owner needs the regular oil change, tune up, or some other form of maintenance. The same goes for all of our computers, and most of our household appliances and heating systems.

The possibilities are endless. Every dollar you put into the local economy is a seed that grows more dollars, contributing to the joy of the season for everyone. This year, let's make our gifts wonderful for all.

LH

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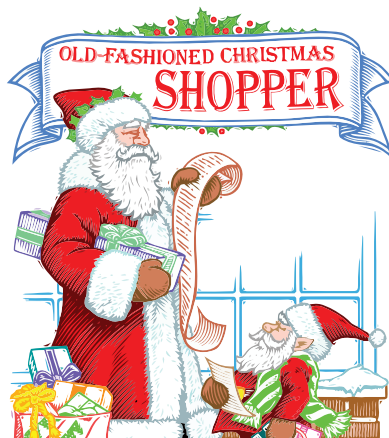
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SANTA CLAUS IS COMING TO TOWN

By Lorraine Payette

The holiday season is fast upon us, and it just wouldn't feel right without the Santa Claus parades to brighten things up. Throughout the region, communities go out and light up their streets, decorate homes and shop windows, and set an amazing stage for the Clauses to come out and strut their stuff. Be sure to get out and attend – the magic is there for the taking.



Athens

Saturday December 6th, 7:00 pm

An evening parade, organized by Dale Howard of Howard's Bus Service (613-924-2720), with involvement from the Athens Santa Claus Parade Committee, Athens Chamber of Commerce and the Athens Lions Club. The entire community is invited to participate. Prizes are awarded to participants for Best Original, Best Horses, Best Religious and Best Walkers. Free hot chocolate along the route and a visit with Santa after the parade at Howard's Bus Service.

Brockville

Saturday November 29th, 2:00 pm

This is a daytime celebration, organized by the Rotary clubs of Brockville with help from other community groups and involvement of Santa Claus and kids of all ages. There are 60-85 participants in the yearly parade, along with collections of letters to Santa, canned foods for the food bank and snowsuits in support of the Kinsmen snowsuit drive. Awards are given for Best Overall entry (1st – 3rd place), Best Band, Most Humorous entry, Best Walking Entry, Best Clown and deserving honourable mentions.

"Everybody, young and old, is invited to participate, and we have a few surprises in store for this year," says Doug Phillips, Parade Chair.

Cardinal/Spencerville

Friday, December 5th, 7:00 pm

Called the Starlight Parade, this is an evening event, organized by the Edwardsburgh/Cardinal Fire Department, with involvement from family, business and non profit organizations. The parade usually involves about 20 entries, and is getting larger every year. This season's theme is "A Christmas Remembered", with floats and marchers encouraged to design their entries accordingly. Special to Spencerville is "A Country Christmas Remembered" weekend in the town, based on a 1930's Christmas. It is the 10th anniversary festival this year.

Gananoque

Saturday, November 29th, 4:30 pm

A twilight parade, organized by the BIA, the entire community is involved, including Teams, Businesses, Churches, Organizations and members of the public. The parade usually involves 56 entries, with official rules and regulations kits available from the BIA office, 613-382-9900. Special guests for this parade are the Toronto Signals Band who have played throughout North America since 1926. Parade viewers are encouraged to bring non-perishable food donations for the food bank and Salvation Army.

"We are also working on a special surprise at the end of the parade," says Lisa Bird, BIA. "However, a very diminutive little creature, Quinton Elf, who is in charge of Santa's sleigh, has sworn us to secrecy..."

Lansdowne

Sunday, November 16th, 2:00 pm.

A daytime parade, organized by the Lansdowne Agricultural Society, it involves merchants from the Township, Royalty from the summer Lansdowne Fair i.e. Mini King & Queen, Youth Fair Ambassador, Fair Ambassador, owners of horse teams, Municipal, Provincial and Federal Government representatives, groups like Dreams in Motion, along with a lot of help from the local OPP detachment. There are usually 35 groups participating, with this year's

theme focusing on the 150th Anniversary of the Lansdowne Fair. The parade ends at the Lansdowne Community Building, where all are invited inside to warm up with hot dogs and drinks, a chilli contest and face painting. Kids write letters to Santa, visit him and can have their photo taken with him. Prizes are awarded to Parade participants.

"Begin your holiday season with the Lansdowne Santa Claus Parade and After Party with Santa," says Kim George of LAS. "All it costs is a smile!"

Lyndhurst

Saturday, November 15, 2:00 pm

This is a daytime parade, organized by the Lyndhurst Santa Claus Parade Committee, made up of a group of about ten volunteers from the community. Everyone is invited to participate, and there are usually about 30 entries including floats, bands, horses, cars and even people and dogs dressed up for the occasion. Unlike most parades, it can be viewed from both sides as it winds its way down the parade route to the stone bridge, then turns around and comes back again. All participants get free hot chocolate and hot dogs. At the end of the parade, Santa is at the library to visit with children and give out candy.

"The Lyndhurst Santa parade has been a loved community event for over 30 years," says Terri Dawson, parade volunteer. "We have lots of small town charm and our local businesses can be counted on for creative often home-spun floats. All floats and marchers are welcome, no need to pre-register, and there are cash prizes for best entries."

Mallorytown

Sunday, December 7th, 5:00 pm

A night time parade, organized by the Township via the Front of Yonge Christmas Parade Committee, anyone in or near the Township who is interested can enter a float. A collection of 30-40 floats, bands and other marchers participate, including neighbouring township fire departments, the Senator, MP, MPP and the Brockville Lions Steel Band. There are post parade treats, announcement of winners and Santa is available to meet the kids for pictures at the Community Centre. FOY also offers an Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony with Carolling, Free Treats and Hot Chocolate on Thursday, November 20th at 6:00 pm at the Township Office.

"Come celebrate the Christmas season with us in Mallorytown at our Tree Lighting ceremony and parade, as we show we are 'Yonge and Active', promoting fun, games, sports and healthy living in our community!" says Sean Burns, Committee Chair.



Prescott

Friday, November 21st, 7:00 pm

Their 16th annual night time event, the parade has been organized by the Prescott Fire Department for the past 60 years and starts from South Grenville High School. Volunteer firefighters, BIA and local businesses participate, with the town and local area encouraged to join the fun. Bands come from all over, and the Kinsmen Club runs the Spirit of Giving Campaign. The parade has recently had 75 floats by organizations/businesses and 7 bands. They are planning to have the Governor General's Foot Guard Band in for a return performance. Prior to the parade, various organizations provide musical entertainment and food for purchase (hot dogs/ hot chocolate), and Royal Canadian Legion Branch 97 organizes a yearly spaghetti dinner.

"The Prescott Fire Department takes great pride in organizing and running the annual Santa Claus parade and encourages all participants to 'Help Santa Light Up the Night' during our 16th yearly night parade," says Brent Norton, Parade Co-chair. "You can never have too many lights!" [LH](#)





APPETITE FOR FELLOWSHIP

By Joan Rupert-Barkley

Once the signs go out advertising an upcoming church dinner, people automatically know the menu will include delicious food and good company. Anyone who doesn't want to cook, or has out of town guests or wants to socialize, can find what they are looking for at a church dinner.

"Church dinners are truly one ecumenical undertaking which bring together members of many faith communities. They offer wonderful food, good fellowship and the means to support the activities of the host church," commented John Reynolds of Johnstown.

No matter where you live, church dinners are all about socialization.

Susan and Marvin Ells, from New Brunswick, recently attended the Spencerville United Church dinner. They commented that in their community, church dinners are held in the spring and fall. The one in the spring is held on the long weekend in May because the cottagers are coming to clean their cottages and they don't have to worry about preparing meals.

"They all come to the church dinner because they haven't seen each other all winter long and they see all their neighbours and community people," noted Ells.

In this area seniors make it a ritual to check the newspapers to see when each church is having their dinner. Grandparents enjoy treating their grandchildren to a church meal and even the Red Hat Ladies have been spotted at several of these dinners. Most churches are easily accessible and barrier-free. Take-out orders are usually available and left-over's are sold immediately following the dinner.

People who have a sweet tooth love church dinners because they can indulge in more than one dessert. Charline Vande Burt, who volunteers at St. Paul's United Church in Prescott, looks after the pies for their smorgasbord that serves more than 400 people. She commented there are 90 pies needed for the dinner.

The banquet-style setup of the tables allows diners to interact with, not only people from different communities, but sometimes people from different countries.

Sue Michael, from Sterling Heights in Michigan, was visiting relatives in Spencerville recently and decided to attend the dinner at the Spencerville United Church. According to Michael, church dinners in her community are usually held in community centres. She commented that she was looking forward to the home-cooked meal in the church setting.

Not everyone who attends a church dinner is there to eat. It takes many volunteers and hours to put a dinner together. For some volunteers, it is a family tradition to help out, but for others like Cameron Lawrence and his two friends, Liam and Noah, it is a fun way to get volunteer hours for school.

Over the years, church dinners have been a great way for churches to raise money to help pay for such things as tables and Sunday school supplies.

"Dinners are one of the most cost-effective ways to raise money," commented Reverend Myra Garvin of St. Paul's United Church in Prescott.

Many people who attend these fundraising events know they will get a good home-cooked meal at an affordable price and at the same time, they help the church. It is also a chance for people in the community to see the church in a different light.

Whether they are serving ham, turkey or spaghetti, there are different reasons why people attend church dinners, so if you have the time and a good appetite, attend a dinner and meet new people. Socialize with your friends or neighbours and have a great time and meal. The money that is raised always goes to a worthy cause. [LH](#)





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Speaking of wine

By Russ Disotell

CONGRATULATIONS ON THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY ISSUE OF LIVING HERE MAGAZINE.

Time certainly does fly! This must mean a Christmas column with turkey and wine combinations!

The first thing to remember is to relax and not obsess. Christmas dinner isn't the ideal occasion for contemplating wine. There is a table full of culinary delights with different flavour profiles and textures. Undoubtedly there will be more dishes than are usually served for a family get-together. There will also certainly be a number of guests who could care less what is in the glass.

Add to this the chatter, and the general hubbub of annual family gatherings, and you have a situation where wine isn't the star of the show. Probably not even the co-star. At best it has a walk-on cameo. So don't worry about every little nuance.

This is also not the time to be experimenting. Stick to the tried and true. In the case of turkey, this means Pinot Noir for red and as a white wine selection try Riesling, a medium-bodied Chardonnay, or Viognier. Keep to a moderate price range unless your family includes a number of Masters of Wine!

We have talked about Chile's Cono Sur Bicicleta Pinot Noir (CSPC# 341602, \$9.95) in this column before. The 2013 vintage is superb. You can expect a fresh cherry nose, followed by a medium-bodied palate, with deep flavours of ripe berry and cherry fruit, with a light peppery spice and soft, supple tannins. The finish is lengthy, fresh and flavourful. Simple and straightforward, it offers great balance and is eminently quaffable, a great quality for a Christmas wine.

Vina Leyda Reserva Pinot Noir 2012 (CSPC# 358929, \$12.50) is another Chilean candidate for a Christmas invitation. This is the first vintage of this attractive Pinot Noir to appear on LCBO shelves and hopefully there will be many more. This complex Pinot offers fresh, forward strawberry fruit, with a hint of red cherries, herbal nuances, a light smoky quality and a touch of mineral, especially on the crisp, refreshing finish. Medium-bodied and superbly balanced, it is sure to become a favourite go-to Pinot.

For a white wine, you can't go wrong with another new arrival on LCBO shelves. Laroché Viognier De La Chevalière 2013 (CSPC# 377622, \$12.70), from France's Languedoc-Roussillon region. Look for a medium-bodied complex white, with intense peach, apricot, pear and honeysuckle fruit with a touch of herbaceous spice and plenty of food friendly acidity. The finish has great length and flavour.

I wish our readers a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Relax and enjoy!

Russ Disotell enjoyed a twelve year career with the LCBO. He spent the last four years as Product Advisor in Vintages purchasing where he was a member of the buying panel and endured the arduous task of tasting products every week! Since leaving the Board he has written columns and articles on wine, helped develop wine lists and conducted wine tastings. [LH](#)



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Left - Spencerville's "A Country Christmas Remembered" is one of several regional festivals celebrating memories of years gone by.

Bottom - A well worn family picture depicting winter travel in Edwardsburgh-Cardinal during the first half of the 20th century.

REMEMBERING CHRISTMAS

By Joe Martelle

Christmas comes but once a year. In her lifetime, Mary has seen the passing of eighty-five yuletide seasons. Sixty-seven of those have been as a resident of Edwardsburgh-Cardinal Township. She moved to the municipality as a young bride and alongside her husband Joe, devoted a lifetime to raising her eight children here. While local festivals might offer a visual picture and historical description of Christmas's gone by, it takes some time talking with someone like Mary to truly appreciate the way things used to be.

For Mary, the biggest change has come, not in the advancement of technology, but rather in its effect on the community. She remembers equipment being rarer, winters being harsher but hearts being warmer. "People were closer then. Back then you knew every neighbour on the road. Nobody had televisions, and you were lucky to have a battery powered radio. All you had were your people. We would finish up chores at night, then get together and play cards or just talk. We all knew each other's families. All the kids went to the school on the corner. At Christmas they'd have a concert and you would know every kid"

Winter made the camaraderie of neighbours more of a necessity. "We seemed to get a lot more snow back then.

Sometimes the whole side of the barn would get drifted in. The ploughs weren't as big and when it really snowed, they just couldn't go through. We would have to use a horse and cutter to go anywhere. We were three close neighbours and we all had kids in school. I remember the men would take turns dropping the kids off and picking them up."

The severity of winter also created the need for innovative thinking. "Not everyone had a phone, and sometimes storms would knock them out anyway. Our neighbours, Ike and Mildred, had a windmill. Every now and then his brother Herbie would climb to the top and look as

far as he could to see if there was smoke coming out of the rest of the chimneys on the road. If there was smoke coming from the stoves we knew everyone was all right."

It was the lack of material possessions that made those earlier Christmas' memorable as a family. "Kids back then didn't get the things they have today. Our kids got gifts on their birthdays, but Christmas was the big one. When we were first married we would shop (for gifts) in Lachine Quebec. I remember they had tax there and we didn't. After a while we started shopping closer to home. I remember Joe would buy ten pounds of hard candy and ten pounds of mixed nuts. You could buy them right out of big wooden barrels and boxes. They don't do that now. The last place we could find them was at Coon's Store in Brinston...that was probably around 1970. For the kids, the big thrill was the Eaton's Catalogue. They would go through it and make lists of what they wanted. The kids always looked forward to Christmas. Christmas was much more special then."

Modern society might be able to research and recreate weekends of winter festivals. Offering a glimpse of what memories might look like, but if you want to know what those bygone Christmas' honestly felt like, take the time to talk to someone who lived them, and enjoy the pictures created in your imagination... **LH**



THE LAST BATTLE

By Jon Marshall



Thomas Vickers stopped to catch his breath against the cold dark night sky. His breathing was heavy, as he had been walking for what seemed like hours on this cold dark Christmas Eve night in 1814. He had left Fort Wellington well over 2 hours ago to make his way on patrol along the shoreline of the St. Lawrence River.

Thomas was just an infantryman assigned to the Fort in the late fall of 1812 and had left England that spring to fight for the British Militia at the very young age of 17. His parents had seen him off on the ship that would take him to Upper Canada. They tried to talk their son out of joining the fight, but the young lad felt it was his duty and time for adventure. Thomas felt going to a new land and earning his way in life, instead of joining his father's mercantile business as a clerk, was the most sensible decision to him.

How wrong he was, he thought, as he trudged slowly into the frozen crusted snow. Sometimes he was able to walk upright, but more often his foot would go deep below the surface of the snow and he would almost fall over with the weight of his musket and backpack of meager supplies. His Greatcoat could keep him warm, for the most part, but with very little to cover his hands and face, the cold of the winters night had started to chill him to the core. He started wondering about what happened during the past year and a half as he questioned why he chose the life he was now leading and really clinging to.

In the fall of 1812, when he first arrived,

the seasons were changing and the St. Lawrence River looked magnificent against the backdrop of trees that lined the river. Though the Fort was still in the process of being built, it was an important communications point for the British and Upper/Lower Canada. Upon arriving at the Fort, Thomas was assigned to the Glengarry Light Infantry that was under the command of Lt Colonel George MacDonnell. Little did Thomas know that the following year, 1813, would almost be the end of his young life!

In the early winter of 1813, MacDonnell had his Infantry raid Ogdensburg. With guns and sleds going across the frozen St. Lawrence River, in what the men thought was an exercise, they went only to go on and destroy American ships and barracks in Ogdensburg. Thomas and almost 500 men greatly surprised the enemy and returned with rations, ammunition and prisoners. Thomas fought bravely and held his own, but these were eye-opening experiences for someone so young. The worst was yet to come. Later in the year, Thomas was part of the garrison that marched to Chrysler Farm and fought the Americans again in November, on a bloody day he soon wanted to forget. Thomas lost a lot of friends that day and some he never saw again, as they went missing. Thomas had killed 6 Americans and thought he wounded a few more, but the day was a blur in his head. The aftermath of seeing bodies on the ground, from both sides, the stench of musket powder and the sight of destruction made him sick. He wondered why he was in a

strange land fighting men he hadn't even known. Now, almost a year later and with endless marches and training, helping to reinforce the Fort, here he was on patrol near the river and was given sentry orders to look for the enemy. The British did not trust the Americans and worried that an attack could come at any time from Ogdensburg or beyond.

Here it was Christmas Eve. He was just looking forward to Christmas Day, where everyone's rations were doubled and the infantrymen were allowed a drink of ale. The officers had put up evergreens from the trees in the area to decorate the barracks. The small Mess Hall at the Fort had soup and stew ready for the men, with bread and pudding and various pies for dessert. He wanted to go to the church service that was going to be held at the Fort to give thanks that he was still alive. He also wanted to pray for his family and pray for forgiveness, as Thomas just wanted to go home to be with his family again.

Suddenly his thoughts were shattered with a sound off in the distance down river. Thomas stopped in his tracks and cocked his head to listen. He could hear the water on the St. Lawrence, with its great current, crashing against the ice, but for some reason he thought he heard a human voice, a voice calling for help. Thomas started to move toward where he thought the sound was coming from, down the river east of him. He was off the shoreline by about 30 or 40 feet, but thick trees and bushes slowed him down. He maneuvered around them and plunged every now and then into the snow. It was dark and cold, and he could not see much more than 10 or 15 feet in front of where he was walking. "Who goes there?" he called out sharply, not expecting a reply. To his surprise a muffled "Help, Help, we're down here", a man's voice called out.

Thomas looked down an embankment to his right towards the river and an open waterway. He saw a boat about 25 feet long turned upside down in the water near shore. On the shoreline, 4 men completely wet, cold and shivering, looking totally lost and near death. Thomas squinted in the dark and saw that these men were American soldiers. The men had no muskets and no backpacks and were huddled up against each other for body heat. "I ask again, who goes there?" Thomas asked sternly, but with his hands shaking on his musket pointed down at them.



"Sir" one of the men replied, "We are soldiers from the American Regiment 1st Rifle and have landed inadvertently on your side of the river!"

Thomas knew the Regiment, as he had fought them before, earlier in the year in the raid of Ogdensburg. Thomas called out to the soldier, "Sir, I do not believe you; I think you are attempting to scout our position or attempt a retaliation raid shortly. Who are you? What is your rank and position? What is your mission here?" Thomas even surprised himself at the quickness and firmness of his questions in light of the situation.

The American looked at Thomas and grimaced. He shook his head and fist, and then replied, "Nonsense, this was purely an accident, as our boat got caught up in the ice, we lost our oars and the boat capsized due to the current and rushing water and the weather. We lost our gear and we are stuck on your side. We are certainly not attempting a raid nor are we scouting your fort by any means!"

The man now was standing, shaking with nervousness and was shivering and wet,

but tried to show he was confident and the leader of these men. Thomas looked at the man and his men and knew they were only minutes away from death in the freezing cold. Thomas had to make a decision fast. He was alone, without help from the Fort for at least a couple of hours. There were only a couple of options, he thought.

"You there", he pointed his musket to a man huddled with 2 others. He looked like he was in the best condition of the 3. He was stout for his size and looked like he wouldn't give Thomas any trouble. "Go about and grab some bare branches and grass for kindling as quick as you can, now," he added almost shouting at the man. "You two" Thomas pointed at the other men, "Grab some rocks nearby and make a circle for a fire."

Thomas lowered his musket and took off the bayonet and threw it towards the leader of the men. "You, start cutting down some larger branches for firewood and help the other two by trying to dig a hole in the ground with the bayonet to let the kindling light!"

Fezziwig Christmas Party, 1815

Thomas only hoped the leader of the men wouldn't take a run at him with the sharp bayonet, but he knew time was of the essence to save these men from frostbite or freezing to death in the cold night. He had only minutes, not hours.

The men gathered themselves up, and silently but quickly set about their tasks, grabbing nearby dry branches off trees, and breaking off brush. Piling it up quickly near the embankment off the shore, where the wind was low. Thomas had his musket trained on them but took off his backpack quickly. He had a blanket and some rations with him, and by luck had brought his flint and tinderbox that his father had given him as a gift before he left home. He threw the flint and box to one of the men and told him what to do. Though the wind had picked up from the river and it was cold, one of the men started using the flint against the metal object Thomas had in his box and sparks were quickly seen against the dark sky. The men huddled around the man using

the flint and within what Thomas felt was hours but was mere minutes, a small fire was burning. Thomas ordered one of the men to undress and wrap him in the blanket. He had the man hang his clothes near the fire to dry and told each man to rotate with the blanket and to dry their clothes. Meanwhile, Thomas gave each man some of his rations to eat, which was hard bread, dried boiled beef and some vegetables, Thomas had managed to take with him from the Mess. Thomas also had hidden a small flask of whiskey in his backpack and offered it to the men.

Finally, the leader of the men, with his hands over the fire, looked up at Thomas and said, "My name is Pike, Capt. David Pike. These other men with me are Brooks, Chase & Petty. They are under my command and are riflemen. I was under orders to come and scout ahead to see how well stocked your Fort and area communities were, as there were plans to possibly come and raid your fort as a retaliation from earlier in the year," said Pike, with hardly any emotion. "Our small boat got caught up in the current against the ice. With the heavy wind and weight of our supplies, muskets, gear and so forth, the boat shifted and capsized. All was lost except the four of us."

Thomas couldn't believe his ears. On the night before the Holiest night of the year, these men had come to possibly start another provocation before year end or sooner, he feared. Thomas looked at Pike and said, "Sir, if I am to believe this story, how many more of your regiment is across the river at the moment? When is this supposed attack to come?"

Pike looked at Thomas forlornly and muttered quietly, "It was Col. Benedict who wants revenge on this matter Sir; he has never gotten over the raid your army made last year and embarrassed us with the looting and destruction of our barracks. He was given a reprimand and demoted for a while but now wants, in his own mind, to square the deal, as they say. Sir, quite frankly a lot of us in the regiment have tired of the fighting and we want it to end. We have heard the rumors that representatives in our government have already left for England some time ago for talks of a treaty."

Thomas took all of this in. The men now all looked at Thomas for a response and they had all for the some part, dried their uniforms and coats enough to put them back on. Thomas had a decision to make.

If he brought these men back to the Fort, no doubt they would be tried and probably hung or executed as prisoners. Worse, they could be transported to Australia, far away from their home never to see their families again. Thomas knew in his mind what he had to do; he had seen enough death, desolation and destruction, friends gone and families never to see loved ones again. Thomas wanted just what these men wanted, to go home and be with their families and be at peace.

"Capt. Pike," Thomas mustered up his voice firmly and with his musket pointed at the 4 men. "Turn around and march, single file quick step." The 4 men looked at each other incredulously, turned and started to march along the shore. They only walked about 100 yards when Thomas called out, "Halt, eyes right downward." There at the feet of one of the men were the 2 oars of the boat that washed up on shore.

Thomas called out, "Capt Pike, I say fate would have you. On this Holy Night sir, I give you this gift, the gift of freedom but also of life. I pray sir, you, Brooks, Chase & Petty will take this gift and use it wisely. Do not ever come on this shore again. Do not tell anyone of this meeting, and only tell this Col Benedict, revenge ruins a man's heart and courage. It ruins his character and dignity, but most of all his soul. If he comes across to fight, then fight we all will and he will be defeated again, but most of all his life will not be spared as I will be looking for him."

Thomas, for maybe the first time in his young life spoke words that he felt made him feel older and wiser. It made him proud inside.

Pike looked at Thomas, his eyes were moist and he put his hand up to salute. "Your servant sir, I respect and admire your courage and you will hear no more from me or my men, God bless you sir, and if I may say Merry Christmas."

Thomas returned the salute and walked behind the men, back to their boat. He helped shove them off into the water. Thomas gave Pike his bayonet as a gift out of respect. Thomas called out to Pike "Merry Christmas Capt." Thomas could see the men struggling with the oars, as the boat slowly moved across the water. He heard Pike's voice call out, "You never gave me your name or rank sir." Thomas thought for a second and called out, "My name is Thomas Vickers of London,

former infantryman of the Glengarry Light Infantry."

There was no reply from Pike, as his boat slipped into darkness and all Thomas could barely hear was the sound of the oars striking the ice and splashing the water. Thomas slowly turned and made his way back to the fort. He had no idea what time it was and how long he had been out in the cold. He knew he could never report this encounter or he would be tried for treason. Now all Thomas wanted was to go home. Home to England and be with his family.

The war ended that night on December 24, 1814, with the Treaty of Ghent. Thomas and those American soldiers had no idea of all the nights of the year, Peace was struck on another continent far away from them. News of the treaty took awhile to reach both sides and the British and Americans did continue to fight well into 1815. Andrew Jackson won the battle of New Orleans that summer against the British and hostilities ended soon after on both sides.

Thomas, meanwhile, left for England in early spring of 1815 being released from the fort and his duties. He found out, arriving home, the war had ended effectively the night he let the Americans go. What haunted Thomas more than ever was what happened to those men? Were they alive, did they fight on? Were they punished for being caught?

All those scars and memories of war bothered him for a very long time as he settled into his new life as a clerk in his father's mercantile business. His father encouraged him to join his business and learn from the "bottom up". In December 1815 Thomas was invited to a party in London, given by a merchant of importance by the name of Fezziwig. Upon arriving, he was introduced to fellow clerks by the names Marley and Scrooge. (But that is another story for later). Thomas made connections with these 2 men that would serve Thomas well in later years as Thomas started his own business and would do very well. Thomas found that night was the pure joy of family and friends celebrating life and good times with each other. Thomas danced and celebrated the traditions of merriment with people of all class, and for the first time in a long time, found some happiness if even for one night.

It is now 1845, some 30 years later. Thomas married a woman named Claire. They have 2 children, a boy and a girl whose names are James and Victoria. Thomas and Claire have one grandchild Jeremy, a son of James and his wife Elizabeth. Victoria is married to Edward, a clerk who works for Thomas, but they do not have children.

Thomas and Claire live in a modest flat in East London. Thomas has owned his own merchant business for about 20

years after leaving his fathers business to start his own. He has done well, but as time goes by, when Christmas comes around, old memories haunt him of that Christmas Eve night so long ago. Did he do the right thing? What happened to those men? On Christmas Eve night 1845, Thomas received a letter by messenger. It was postmarked from New York and addressed to Thomas Vickers of Water Street London. Marked on the letter was: "Do not open until Christmas Eve"

Thomas opened the letter and started to read:

July 4, 1845

My Dear Friend Thomas,

I pray that this letter will find you well and will serve as a source of comfort to you. Almost 30 years have gone by and everyday I think of the night you saved me and my men. Only providence could have intervened that night and sent you to save us and to let us go free. When I was in the boat with the men, I did hear you call out your name. We all agreed never to reveal what happened that night and when we got back to our barracks and reported to Col. Benedict, we stated we could not get across the river that night due to weather and ice. It was all good on that account because it was believed and as I told you that night, Benedict was out for revenge. He was relieved of command and discharged early in 1815 in January. All of us asked for our discharge and received it soon after in the spring of 1815 when word came to our regiments that a treaty had been signed. Unfortunately word did not get to other men and they had to fight on into the summer of 1815 in New Orleans but Brooks, Chase and Petty did not go and fight and stayed in and around Ogdensburg. They are all alive because of you and have families. They are farmers and have provided well for themselves. I have been fortunate to have a wonderful wife and 3 children and I am now a grandfather for the first time this past spring. I live in New York and have done well for myself in business. I have entered politics and have represented my district in Congress for the past 5 years. It has taken me many years to inquire about you discreetly, and to track you down, but a business acquaintance who was visiting London last year met with 2 men of business, Scrooge and Marley, who knew you and were kind enough to provide information that this letter will, I hope find its way to you. Thomas, thank you for giving me a chance for a life, and on behalf of my comrades, we all thank God you were there that night to save us.

God Bless and Merry Christmas.

Representative David Pike

(formerly Capt Pike—American Regiment 1st Rise)
12th District New York -United States Congress

Thomas had his grandson on his knee as he finished reading the letter. He was by the fireplace in the flat and his eyes got moist. He stood up and held his grandson in his arms as the church bells started to ring out. It was midnight, Christmas Day. Thomas hugged his grandson and he knew, everything was going to be okay now. LH

This Short story is fictional. Any dates or historical references could be somewhat factual or fictitious, for the purpose of the story. All characters appearing in this work are fictitious. Any resemblance to real persons, living or dead is purely coincidental.



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Final Thoughts

By Jon Marshall

Welcome to our Nov/Dec., 1st Anniversary Edition of "Living Here" magazine, the sixth edition of 2014 and our 7th issue. We publish on a bi-monthly basis; our next issue will be out the week of Jan. 5th. This will be our Jan./Feb. 2015 issue.

It is amazing how fast a year has gone by. A year ago I personally made the decision to start up a publication that would focus on our local communities featuring stories of People/Lifestyles/Arts/Entertainment/History & More! I felt that something was missing in our local areas that reflected who we are and what's happening around us in stories that were not being told. In the past year with our 7 issues, we have covered many different stories and articles that have connected with readers, so I am grateful to you all for the tremendous feedback and comments over the past year. "Thank you" for your support and encouragement.

This brings us to our current issue, where we have articles on Vimy Ridge, a tribute to local Veterans who were there from our area and letters they wrote while in battle. We have a story about Church Suppers and how they are so popular in our communities. There is an article on upcoming Santa Claus parades, as "You Know Who?" will be visiting a lot of our towns. We have a 20 Questions article with Bonnie Pidgeon-Gommert of The South Grenville Food Bank & finally, a very special 4 page article set in the War of 1812-1814. A Christmas story to help celebrate this special edition, just to mention but a few of our interesting reads! Our Cartoonist Murdock reminds us "Lest we Forget" on November 11th to our Vets.

You cannot produce this type of publication without help and encouragement, so I would like to thank my wife Catherine for everything she does behind the scenes and for her contributions.

I would also like to thank our writers personally, those currently writing for us and those who have contributed throughout the year: Lorraine Payette, Phil Melchers, Russ Disotell, Brenda Visser, Joan Rupert-Barkley, Daniel Geneau, Joe Martelle, Becky Bridger, Jonathan Vickers, Karen Davis, Joanne Rennie, Emma Taylor, Jan Murray, Jessica Brassard, and of course our Cartoonist, Lawrence Murdock..

On a separate note; special thanks to Lynne Lodge, Kevin Neadow, and Bob Pearce at Henderson Printing.

To some other special friends: Jeff Marshall, Dan Roddick, Dale Murphy and Lyne Seguin, Rob Tavares, Heather Chapman, Matt Evers and of course every single advertiser who gave us their support and their business during our first year a very sincere "Thank you".

We look forward to the future and what lies ahead with new stories and adventures in 2015 and beyond!

Lastly, I encourage all readers to "Shop Local", especially now that we are preparing for the holidays and the Christmas season. Help support our local business community. "Living Here" will NOT feature USA ads. We only advertise local businesses and Canadian companies. Until our next issue, THANK YOU for reading. Check out our website: livingherebrockville.weebly.com

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to everyone and their families! **LH**





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