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November | December 2019

6TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

Coming to Brockville this December!
River of Lights

150 Years of British Home Children in Canada:
They Came with so Little & Contributed so Much!

The “TWINS of GENIUS” Ontario Tour

Christmas Shop & Hop Lyndhurst & Seeleys Bay

Rural Villages Bring on the Magic of Christmas!



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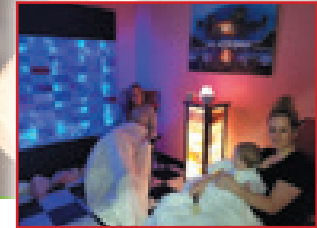
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*My Christmas List

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Sunday Dec. 8th, 2 shows

*Turn The Page

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Sat., Sun. matinee Jan. 24th, 25th

*On The Road Again

Cliff Edwards, Michelle Kasaboski perform Willie Nelson & Dolly Parton
Sat., Sun. matinee Feb. 29th, Mar. 1st

*Georgette performs Bonnie

Georgette Fry and her band return with a musical tribute to Blues legend Bonnie Raitt
Sat., Sun. matinee Mar. 28th, Mar 29th

*United We Stand

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Living HERE

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Living Here

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Uncle Bucks Peppermint Candy Cane Ice-Cream Pie

Prep time: 10 minutes ~ Freeze time: 3 hours

Total time: 3 hours 10 minutes ~ Serves 4

Enjoy this recipe as an Old-Fashioned Country Christmas idea

What you'll need...

2 Oreo Cookie Pie Crust (pre-made) 9" pie shell
(from dollar store or grocery store).

8 oz. frozen whipped topping (partially thawed).

1 473ml peppermint ice cream.

Candy canes crushed or peppermint candy,
your choice or both for garnish.

Optional: crumbled Oreos and chocolate sauce.

To Create:

- ➔ Soften ice cream until easily mixed with cool whip.
- ➔ Spread into cookie pie crust.
- ➔ Freeze for several hours.
- ➔ Top with crushed candy canes or crumbled Oreos or chocolate sauce.



Uncle Bucks Roast Christmas Lamb

Prep time: 15 Minutes ~ Cook time: 1 hour 15 minutes

Total time: 1 hour 30 minutes ~ Serves 4-6

What you'll need...

1 (2-lb.) boneless lamb shoulder roast, tied with butcher's twine.

4 cloves garlic, minced.

1 tbsp. fresh chopped rosemary.

2 tsp. fresh thyme leaves.

3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, divided.

Kosher salt to taste.

Freshly ground black pepper.

2 lb. baby potatoes.

To Create....

- ➔ Preheat oven to 450° and place oven rack in lower third of oven. In a small bowl, mix together garlic, rosemary, thyme, and 1 tbsp. oil. Season generously with salt and pepper. Rub all over lamb.
- ➔ In a 9" x 13" baking dish, toss potatoes with remaining oil and season with more salt and pepper. Place lamb on top of potatoes and roast until internal temperature reaches 145° C, about 1 hour.
- ➔ Let rest 15 minutes, remove twine, then slice roast and serve.
- ➔ **Honey glazed carrots are a nice side dish:**
Cook carrots, drain, then toss with 1 tbsp. butter, 1 tbsp. honey, mince 1 clove garlic or 1 tsp. garlic powder, toss and enjoy.



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Tree of Light, courtesy of Ron Zajak (Recorder & Times)

COMING TO BROCKVILLE THIS DECEMBER! RIVER OF LIGHTS

By Special to Living Here - Brockville Tourism

Light and sound shows are popular all over the world, and Brockville has one of the best happening every day in Canada's First Railway Tunnel. Now, starting **November 30th**, Brockville has a new light and sound event called **River of Lights**. Our new lights and music event will happen on Blockhouse Island with the **River of Lights** until **January 2nd, 2020**.

In partnership with the Brockville Chamber of Commerce, the City of Brockville and Expert Contractors, over 24 trees on Blockhouse Island will be lit with over 75,000 lights. The result will be an automated light and music show with a mix of traditional Christmas music and modern up beat Christmas music. Today's hits and classics also work well with the lights, so listen for Thunderstruck by AC/DC with its heavy beats and high crescendos, and watch the spectacle unfold before your eyes. Walk around and listen to the music and see the spectacle of the dancing lights up close. Drive around and you can tune your radio station to hear the music in the comfort of your warm car.

That's not all! On **November 30th and December 1st**, Brockville's first **Christmas Market** will be happening at the entrance to the Railway Tunnel and there will be an inflatable kid's village with a giant inflatable slide. An inflatable igloo with LED lighting will be available during the day and it will have live music, food and drink in the evening.

You better watch out, you better not cry, you better not pout, I'm telling you why - Santa Claus is coming to town! The **Brockville Rotary Santa Claus Parade** is being held on **November 30th starting at 5 p.m.** Then

Santa and Mrs. Claus will be heading down to Blockhouse Island after the parade to assist in flipping the switch for the River of Lights.

Watch for the DBIA events starting **Friday November 29th**. Not only is it Black Friday for those great shopping deals, but the **DBIA Mega Christmas Tree** will be lit on Courthouse Avenue above the fountain. Saturday morning there will be a breakfast with Santa in the Igloo. The **Aquarium** will be having their **Community Days** with free admission with the Farmer's Markets on **December 7th, 14th and 21st**.

The season will wrap up with the **28th Annual New Year's Eve Concerts** in the historic downtown churches. It's going to be an incredible year with the line-up the committee has secured. Country, Jazz, Pop and Traditional acts will be showcased.

Here is a quick overview of the key events happening this season so you can mark your calendars now and not miss a thing:

Friday November 29th

Black Friday & Lighting of the Mega Tree (DBIA)

Saturday November 30th

Breakfast with Santa in the Inflatable Igloo (DBIA)

Christmas Vendor Market & Kids Zone in front of the Tunnel (ProductionsDoubleConcept)

Brockville Rotary Santa Claus Parade (Brockville Rotary)

Official Lighting of the River of Lights on Blockhouse Island (Chamber of Commerce, City of Brockville & Expert Contractors)

Evening Party in the Igloo (ProductionsDoubleConcept)

Tunnel will be open! (Weather dependent)

Sunday December 1st

Christmas Vendor Market and Kids Zone

River of Lights is on from **4pm – 11pm**, and **continues until January 2nd, 2020**

December 7th, 14th, 21st

Community Days at the Aquarium with the Brockville Farmer's Market

December 31st

Ring in the New Year in Brockville's historic Churches with the 28th Annual concerts in the Churches.

Clow's Christmas Trail will also be open this December. Take a magical walking journey to view over 35,000 lights and 7 different staged buildings including a Post Office, Candy Shop, and Santa's Workshop. It's located at **2224 Hallecks Road West in Brockville**.

LH

Visit the www.BrockvilleTourism.com site for all of the activities, times and other details throughout December and you can then be linked through to all the events and festivities.



Left: Athens' British Home Child Monument was recently honoured with the placement of the BHC 150 flag and symbolic sunflowers. The monument includes a photo of Brockville's Fairknowe Home.

Above: David Cheyne was a local farm hand. He was wounded in WWI and never revealed that he was a British Home Child.

Above Middle: Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" was written during a period of devastating poverty in Britain when many street urchins were sent to Canada as Home Children.

Right: Athens Police Chief Scottie McLean joins neighbourhood youth on a Walkathon to raise money for the local rink.

150 YEARS OF BRITISH HOME CHILDREN IN CANADA: They Came with so Little & Contributed so Much!

By Sally Smid

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the arrival of British Home Children in Canada. Interested groups, individuals and communities in Canada and around the world were asked to mark this milestone with 'Beacons of Light' displays in their memory. Local memorials were decorated with the BHC flags and symbolic sunflowers.

These children, between infancy and 18 years of age, arrived here from Great Britain between 1869-1940. They were not generally orphans, but were impoverished for various reasons and often institutionalized in workhouses, residential schools, farms, reformatories, or homes run by a variety of philanthropic societies. These children were victims of poverty, often due to unemployment in Britain's industrial revolution. Charles Dickens was authoring his books such as *A Christmas Carol* and *Oliver Twist* during this era. His own personal experience with childhood poverty and feelings of abandonment were a heavy influence on his writings. It might even be noted that it was more than likely the "home child" was also an inspiration for Anne Shirley Montgomery's central character in *Anne of Green Gables*.

Such children often wandered the British streets and were taken away or given up by their parents who were usually too poor or incapacitated to provide for them. Their final destination was often emigration to Canada for the chance at a better life. Both governments supported this program which provided work for children who were 10 and older. Younger children were often adopted by interested families. Male home children usually were placed in rural areas, as much help was needed on farms. Most had never seen a cow or plow and were unfamiliar with such frigid winters. Girls often went to urban areas where they worked as domestics or in businesses.

Local MP Steve Clark was instrumental in helping to designate **Sept. 28th, 2019** as British Home Child Day in Ontario. In the House he told the story of home children like Scottie McLean who later served his country in WWII as many like him did, eager to defend their former homeland. Perhaps recalling the hardships of his own youth and wanting to be a role model and guide to youth, he volunteered with the Scout and Boys Club programs and supported the local rink. He eventually revealed that because of all of the trouble he got into on the streets, he was given

the choice to either go to jail or to Canada as a home child. Ironically, he served as the Athens' Police Chief for many years! McLean's home child friend Tom Lightfoot told of being mistreated at the farm where he was placed. The postman found him crying at the mailbox one morning. The kind postal worker brought him home and took over in raising him. Home child Jimmy Paterson was fortunate enough to inherit the farm where he worked. He created a BHC monument in the Athens Memorial Park. His home child trunk and McLean's uniform are part of a BHC display in the Athens Museum which also houses many more home child archival details. Securing information is a challenge due to much related stigma. Most families have little information and many do not want to recall or disclose the cruel treatment they received.

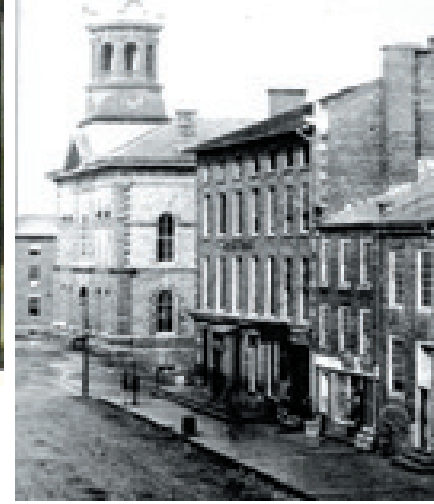
Some 100,000 home children came to Canada and today it is estimated that one in five Canadians have descended from British Home Children. Many of them did quite well in Canada and most worked very hard. So many home children came with so little, but so many gave so much to their new homeland! **LH**



Far Right: Revere House Hotel in Brockville

Above: Rossin House Hotel in Toronto 1885

Left: Clemens and Cable photographed together on tour



THE "TWINS OF GENIUS" ONTARIO TOUR

By Special Contributor: Brian Porter

Mark Twain and George Washington Cable, two of America's most prominent writers and novelists of the 19th century, arrived in Brockville during an intense snowstorm, on Monday February 16, 1885. Their train was three hours late, delayed by an earlier derailment.

A horse-drawn sleigh brought them to the Revere House hotel on King St. & Market Square where they were met by their manager, Major James Pond, and given a generous dinner, before their performance.

The two famous writers, who billed themselves as the "Twins of Genius," were nearing the end of a gruelling, but lucrative, four-month speaking tour. From November 3, 1884 to February 28, 1885, they did 103 performances in eighty cities, including five cities in Canada.

On December 8 and 9, 1884, in Toronto, they packed the 2500 seat Horticultural Garden Pavilion (now Allan Gardens). The cost was 50c, with reserved seats and an extra 25c at the door for walk-ins. (approximately \$11:50 & \$16:50 in 2019).

They stayed at the upscale Rossin House at the corner of King St. and York St., which was demolished in 1969 to build the T-D Centre.

The tour continued back into Canada in 1885, with shows in London on Friday, February 13, Toronto on the 14th, Brockville on the 16th, Ottawa on the 17th and Montreal on February 18 and 19.

Mark Twain, age 49, from Missouri and George Cable, age 40, from Louisiana, had first met

in 1881. Twain had built up a reputation for humour with novels such as his best-selling *Innocents Abroad* (1869), *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and *The Prince and the Pauper* (1881).

George Cable, from New Orleans, wrote about life in the American South, dealing with racism and mixed-race Creole families. His first novel, published in 1881, was entitled *The Grandissimes: A Story of Creole Life*. It was an historical romance looking at racial injustice. Cable eventually moved to Massachusetts, when his writing stirred hostility in the South.

Mark Twain, aka: Samuel Langhorne Clemens, was especially concerned to travel in Canada to secure Canadian and British copyright for his upcoming book, that was destined to become his masterpiece, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. He had lost thousands of dollars to pirated versions of his work and wanted to prevent Canadian and British publishers from printing a version of the new novel when the American version was published. Both *Prince and the Pauper* and *Huckleberry Finn* were first published in Canada.

There was such great excitement in Brockville to hear Twain and Cable were to perform, the Snowshoe Club even cancelled their outing for that day. The Brockville Evening Recorder for Friday February 13, 1885, announced their appearance at the GRAND OPERA HOUSE – One Night Only – priced at 75c, 50c, and 35c, which would be up in "the Gods" or second balcony.

The Monday edition for February 16 discussed the "Authors as Elocutionists." This was a new form of popular entertainment, with the

authors doing dramatic readings from their novels, bringing characters to life with actions and accents. Charles Dickens had done this to great effect in Great Britain.

The reporter wrote, " Since the character of the theatre has undergone a change which renders it no longer attractive to very many persons, it was only a question of time when a new form of popular entertainment would be developed to meet the general demand. the author presents his own characters to an audience, illustrating his subjects with various side-lights, such as a song or dialect and thus vividly picturing the scenes he projects with local colour..." They had "great success with a new departure combining literature with the Lyceum..."

Mark Twain was widely known for his deadpan humour and the reporter added that, "the man's appearance is suggestive of humour, but he never laughs at his own wit, which in fact helps to make others laugh more."

The whirlwind tour was nearing the end when they reached Brockville. Twain was becoming annoyed with Cable and in a letter complained about him never buying any paper or envelopes of his own.

They went their separate ways at the end of their tour. Twain continued to write for another twenty-five years, until his death in 1910. Cable continued to write as well until 1925. Brockville's Grand Opera House underwent a major reconstruction in 1911.

To this day the Brockville Arts Centre continues to host many prominent entertainers. **LH**

LETTERS TO SANTA IN THE 1940'S & 1950'S

By Diann Turner

Dear Santa... Have You Seen the 1952 Sears Christmas Book?

No season rivals Christmas when it comes to being powerful for children. During the second world war, the imaginations of children seeing Santa and his sleigh glissading over snow and ice, bringing toys for them, was an even greater prospect of joy than today's children's experiences. It took little to satisfy them.

In that less materialistic time, Christmas seemed nebulous until the Sears Christmas catalogue arrived in late November. Window shopping accelerated and strings of Christmas lights blinked on in neighbourhoods. In schools and homes, children were encouraged to write letters to Santa. What young child's mind wouldn't be dizzy evaluating their actions of the past year while contemplating the red-suited soul crafting toys with his elves in the North Pole workshop?

The Sears Christmas Book debuted in 1933. In 1945, the Slinky was the toy to acquire, but Radio Flyer and Rex Jet wagons were desired as well. Little girls' eyes scanned dolls of all sorts, real China tea sets and things to play house with. A boy saw toy trains, drum sets, guitars, toy revolvers, Atomic Robotman and toboggans.

The post-war 1950's, economic boom brought the emergence of media heroes. Times were less complicated and Santa's gifts were simple: Hula hoops, Barbies Dolls and Matchbox cars, Hardy Boys books and Farm sets prevailed.

Televisions became a fixture in people's living rooms and heroes like Roy Rogers & Dale Evans, The Lone Ranger and Hop-along Cassidy soared. In 1954, Disneyland's Mickey Mouse somewhat eclipsed Westerns. By late 1957, Captain Kangaroo dominated networks. In 1966, the nation's living rooms had converted to family motion picture theaters. Once that occurred, an ocean of stuff for children began to suffocate everyone!



In 1952, Junior Miss Suzie wrote her letter to Santa following hours spent in Sears Christmas catalogue:

Dear Santa

For Christmas this year, I'd like one of those pogo stix things on payge 293 and if thats two big for your slay, Mr. Potato Head, Gumby or a Barbie doll werks. I have been a good girl except when I cut my sisters hare all off. I said sorry. Oh – and maybe a Hoola Hoop thing like Kathy got. Red pleeze.

Love, Suzie.

Befitting gifts for young boys inundated the market in the early 1950's as well, and Sears Catalogue went over board to sound enticing! Roy Rogers, his horse Trigger, and his German Shepherd dog, Bullet, were top sellers. The 1952 Christmas Catalogue spun statements like – "Just what your pint-sized cowhand wants to top off his western outfit!" Or, how about – "Hat-to-spurs outfits for gun-totin', range-ridin' young cowpokes?" The Roy Rogers Deluxe Six-Shooter set was \$8.95. "You gotta have the Official Holster Set – Yippee and Cap-Firing Pistol" was another catch phrase. "See what your Christmas money can buy" jumped off the pages!

In 1954, Seven-year-old Bobby wrote:

Dear Santa

I need a Roy Rogers 6-shooter. I promise to only shute in the leg of bad guys. I'd like Trigger the Bucking Horse to. Do you think I could have the farm set? It is only \$4.99. I seen a bulldozer tracter I like. If I have to read, A Hardy Boy book would do. I promiss Im gonna be goode.

Bob

P.S. I like Tinkertoys bestest.

Ten-year-old Carrie had different ideas in 1948:

Deer Santi

My name is Carrie. Could I please have a tryke and one of them Silvertone record player things? A guitar is what I want two. I will be good evry day. I leev cookies and milk out for yoo. What about a cudlee soft babe doll? Thank you.

Carrie

For Carrie, the Deluxe Velocipedes Tricycle was \$14.39 in the catalogue. I'm sure Santa knew how to spread it out evenly!

Edwin Osgoode Grover wrote that "Santa Claus is anyone who loves another and seeks to make them happy; who gives himself by thought or word or deed in every gift that he bestows!" **LH**



Diann Turner in her 1950's Rex Jet Wagon



1940's Boy and his gifts from Santa

Left: Mr. Potato Head
Favourite Toy 1940's



Above: Christmas decorations created from natural materials are very attractive, environmentally friendly gifts.

Top Left: Baskets of fruit, baking, and canning make great gifts which can be delivered in person and can include a visit over a cup of tea.

Bottom Left: Wooden Toys are durable, earth-friendly gifts for kids that also promote creative play.



WAYS TO GIFT OTHERS WHILE GIFTING OUR PLANET

By Sally Smid

In this day in age, when environmental awareness seems to have become so very important, it would seem that many are also becoming more concerned about earth friendly Christmas gift choices as well. It is certainly unfortunate when a gift item is not needed or it contributes to pollution and over-consumption.

There are many ideas that can help make our Christmas gift choices Eco-friendlier. When considering any purchase, it is always best to look for bio-degradable materials. Clothing made from a natural material like cotton is a better choice than any synthetic. It is also very important to look for ecological materials when making purchases. Try to avoid over packaging and plastic products. Wooden toys are so much more durable, earth friendly, organic and renewable. Kids also love the idea of following treasure hunts with a gift hidden in the closet. This adds fun and helps eliminate wrapping materials. When gifts are wrapped, reusable cloth or simple paper bags are wiser. Lots of Christmas decorations can also be made out of natural materials.

Seniors are often problematic to shop for, but many would be thrilled with a plant, perhaps from your own garden. A small evergreen "Christmas" tree that could be planted outside later is another great idea. Older folks also enjoy watching their "feathered friends", so bird seed and suet are often welcome gifts. Another valuable gift for a whole family could be a journal. A grandparent could write down their memories to preserve family history. The offer of help with this task would probably be welcome. A gift certificate that could be redeemed for a family meal, household chores, repairs, or snow removal, might be quite appreciated. A certificate might also be one that indicates that a local charity is receiving a donation in the name of the recipient.

"Consumable gifts" are usually welcome by everyone and can be in the form of fruits or baked and canned goods in reusable or recyclable containers.

When it comes down to it, perhaps the greatest gift is the gift of time. It might be offering to go on a special outing, play some games, or teach a new skill.

Christmas cards are becoming less popular it seems, but many still look forward to family newsletters. There is also the possibility of making your own creative cards by using recycled materials from previous year's cards. Many folks also choose to send e-cards, which might also be considered as environmentally friendly.

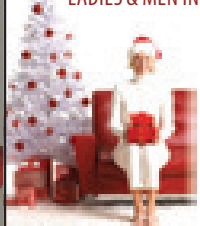
Many wonderful gifts can be purchased in thrift or "new-to-you" stores, which often support local charities and are a great way to re-purpose items that could end up in landfills.

It is always so easy to get caught up in the consumerism of the holidays and forget the real meaning of Christmas gifts. It was the Wisemen who brought those first gifts to the Christ Child. Perhaps the best way to "gift Him" and our loved ones, is by taking care of His creation in responsible ways. It just may be that in considering a more earth friendly gifting this season, we can experience a truly more fulfilling and joyous holiday, as well as a new year that will hold more promise for the future of our fragile planet! **LH**

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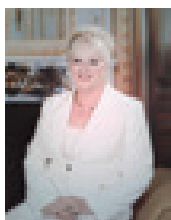


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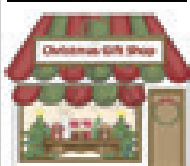
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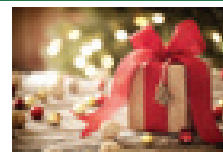


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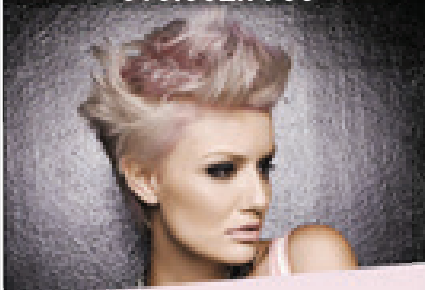
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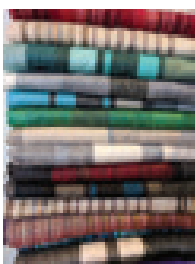
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CHRISTMAS SHOP & HOP IN LYNDHURST & SEELEYS BAY

By Andi Christine Bednarzig

Christmas shopping already? It's a tradition we either love or endure. Just after the last leaves have fallen, Christmas songs are piped through stores, and shopping centres are festooned in bright holiday colours.

How about an alternative shopping event away from the stress of crowded malls, or impersonalized on-line shopping?

On **Saturday, December 7th**, enjoy a day visiting merchants and businesses offering unique gifts and delectable treats at a Christmas Shop & Hop in the Lyndhurst and Seeley's Bay district.

Step into your car and drive along the countryside to one of Leeds and Thousand Islands Township's best kept secrets. This largely rural area is home to many local craftspeople and artisans who will happily share their creations and stories with you.

Start with an information gathering stop at **The Green Gecko (435 Lyndhurst Rd.)**, set in a historic home in the heart of Lyndhurst. Owner, Terri Dawson has organized this event for seven years. It is not all confirmed, but Dawson expects 14 vendors this year.

"Everyone was very supportive from the start," Dawson said. "Local merchants like the opportunity to work together and promote our area, while local shoppers enjoy the chance to shop locally, and of course have fun collecting stamps for the chance to win prizes."

A prescribed route of the area to meet local merchants has been drawn up. At each stop, shoppers will be met with welcoming smiles, specials, treats, or giveaways. Participants can accumulate stamps along the way. With a minimum number of stamps, a ballot can be entered to win prizes.

"We make it reasonable," Dawson explained. "The idea is for people to experience shopping at each location and not just feel they are dashing about collecting stamps."

Before setting out, see the treasures the Dawsons have brought back from their travels in south-east Asia, as well as sterling silver jewellery, pottery, gourmet food, art, candles, bath products and woodwork. Dawson realizes how busy shoppers are and offers greeting cards and gift bags. For the Shop & Hop, taxes are exempt, and you'll receive a gift.

Is there someone on your list especially hard to buy for? Head out to **LYNdurst Laser (3336 County Road 3, Lyndhurst)** where Marilyn Wykes can custom laser engrave on just about any medium (glass, ceramic, or wood). Just choose your artwork or message. It was Wykes' first experience last year.

"It was fabulous and fun and lots of people just loved it," Wykes said. She is still deciding if this year's giveaway will be a laser cut snowflake or an angel ornament.

Take a short, 10-minute drive towards Seeley's Bay with a stop at **Briarlea Kitchen at Sweet's Corner Rd.** It was here at Chef Moira Vanderwerf's farm where conception of the event took place. When she opened her doors of her storefront and commercial kitchen to business, she wanted to encourage people to visit other local businesses. The event started with just a few locations in Lyndhurst and then expanded to include Seeley's Bay. Soon there were enough stops to make it a full day's event.

There will be a variety of sweet and savory samples to taste on Shop & Hop day. Traditional Christmas cookies, mince meat tarts, shortbread and gingerbread, as well as take home ready-to-heat meals, perfect for the busy holiday season.

Need a caffeine fix by now? The next stop would be **SHaBean Coffee Roastery (127 Haskins Point Rd.)**, a small artisanal coffee roastery operated out of a Seeley's Bay home. Here Mary Whitney and her husband, John Barker will offer a free cup of freshly roasted coffee made of hardy, intensely flavoured arabica beans. **On Shop & Hop day, save \$2:00 off a package of coffee.**

What is Christmas without chocolate? A stop at **Ridgeway Confections (159 Main St., Seeley's Bay)** would gratify your sweet tooth. For the 4th year, owner Cindy Healy has been creating fine, hand-crafted Belgian chocolates with 100% sustainable cocoa beans, and fresh local ingredients.

"We typically offer free hot chocolate, made with dark cocoa, and freshly whipped cream - a little pick me up for holiday shoppers," said Healy. **Healy also offers a customer favourite of brittles (chocolate covered sponge candy) and barks at 20% off.**

This event is sponsored in part by the **Lyndhurst, Seeley's Bay & District Chamber of Commerce** to promote the region and to help local businesses grow.

Now, imagine for a moment that it is the beginning of December. The first snow is gently falling, gifts have been wrapped, your freezer is filled with baked goods and holiday meals, as you sit back and relax with a glass of eggnog or cup of tea, while the rest of the world hurries on. **LH**

Editor's Note: There are many more vendors participating, and the list is still growing. Keep up to date by visiting the website and signing up for emails at www.shopandhop.ca



Above: When tulips appear each spring in the area, it is a reminder of the gifts of tulip bulbs that were given to Canada in thankfulness for the Liberation of the Netherlands almost 75 years ago.

Top Right: Many Dutch Canadians continue to place their shoes out on the hearth on Dec. 5th with a treat for Sinterklaas and his horse.



"Sinterklaas" appeared in the Athens Parade of Lights several years ago to the delight of many local Dutch Canadians.



SINTERKLAAS DAY: A Dutch Tradition Comes to Canada

By Sally Smid

As the 75th anniversary of the Liberation of Holland at the end of WWII approaches, the great number of Dutch Canadians who are thankful for Canada's role in that event becomes perhaps even more evident. It seems that many came to Canada, in part, due to an admiration for their Canadians liberators.

Dutch culture has become woven into the traditions of our country. **Sinterklaas Day is celebrated on Dec. 5th** in a variety of ways in Canada. Traditionally, in the Netherlands, Sinterklaas arrives in mid-November by boat from his home in Spain.

Sinterklaas, also known as Saint Nicholas, has a long white beard and is dressed like a bishop. He wears a red cape and a tall red and gold head dress. In one hand he carries a staff, in the other a book of names with notes about each child's behavior for the past year. The elderly saint, with the long white beard is stern and dignified, unlike the fat and jolly Santa Claus we envision here in Canada. Children place their shoes by the door at night and Sinterklaas rides through town on his white horse Amerigo and places little treats or gifts in the children's shoes, assisted by his helpers, the Peters.

Children often leave a carrot for the horse and a glass of milk for Sinterklaas and his helpers, who fill their shoes with traditional sweets, like spiced biscuits, marzipan and chocolate letters.

The original Saint Nicholas was a Bishop of Myra in Asia Minor during the first half of the fourth century. By the late middle ages,

his death on the 6th of December, was commemorated annually. Legend has it that St Nicholas came back to earth with gifts for all deserving children and punishment for the rest by leaving coal or "a birch switch for parental use". Zwarte Piet, Black Peter, was Saint Nicholas' Moorish servant. In recent years he has been quite controversial. Many who have grown up with this tradition insist that there is no racism involved and that Piet's face is blackened with soot from entering houses through the chimneys.

Sinterklaas Day is one of fun and gifts, while Christmas Day is a religious holiday that includes a church service and a time to commemorate the birth of Christ, which seems to help distinguish the true meaning of the holiday in many ways. It is interesting to find that many second and third generation Dutch Canadian descendants still continue the tradition of Sinterklaas and "put out their shoes" and receive gifts on Dec. 6th.

Santa Claus, in some fashion, is the most universally recognized figure in the world and has been adopted into many different cultures. In France he is Pere Noel, in the United Kingdom he is Father Christmas, and celebrated in Germany he is Weihnachtsmann, the Christmas Man. Japan knows him as Hoteiosho, a God, bearing gifts, and in Norway he is Julenissen or the Christmas Gnome.

Holland's Sinterklaas is similar, as he too, is a figure who brings presents. He has become a cultural tradition for many who still embrace their Dutch Heritage while enjoying the many privileges of living in Canada! **LH**

Santa shops locally and so Should You! Warm Hospitality Awaits!



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*Happy
Holidays*

At this wonderful time of year, I would like to wish you a safe and happy holiday season.



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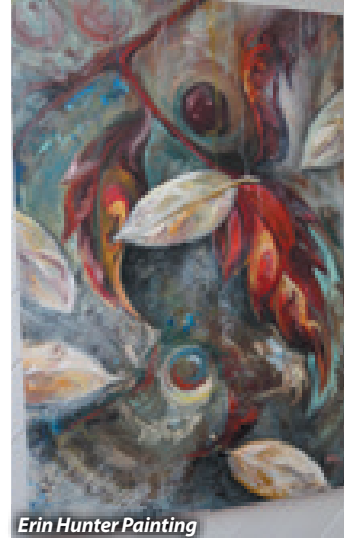
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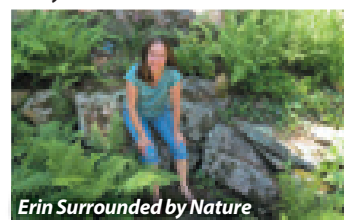
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Back Yard Shed

Photos by Diann Turner

Art by Erin Hunter



Erin Surrounded by Nature

ERIN HUNTER: Inspiring Artist & Teacher

By Diann Turner

It has been stated that if you feed the body food and drink it will survive today but if you feed the soul art and music, it will live forever.

Some folk's display a vulnerary sense of calm the minute you enter their world. Erin Hunter, teacher and artist achieves this instantly. Her amazing creativity jumps out as well, and you want to explore the works of her hands! Not many would take the time to paint wispy words on their steps and risers about "leaves whispering tall tales and telling truths."

Erin (Henry) was raised in Iroquois, Ontario on a poultry farm where her parents had a Bed & Breakfast for a time. Here, her imagination unfolded, and she found herself needing to self entertain and invent stories; all her friends lived in town. At seven, she began art classes with Brockville's Dianne Godwin-Sheridan. Erin remembers Dianne walking with groups of children all over the downtown. "During our walks, we would sketch boats, old buildings and the water fountain, then we would return and learn how to water colour our sketches," she said.

During her high school years, her dad took a transfer for a year in Naperville, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. This was fortuitous for Erin because the cultural climate was rich with museums, festivals and an ingenious

arts programme at Naperville Central High School. With a student body of 2500, courses were abundant, and Erin took the jewelry making course and learned how to weld silver rings. In art class, she began to experiment using mixed media, constructing multi-layered works of art. "I had tons of homework in that school," Erin told me, "and I drew every night and learned life drawing."

Erin attended Waterloo University where she studied Fine Arts as a major and English as a minor. During university, Erin did a stint teaching art to seniors; they did their own thing, which confirmed she did not want to teach adults. She married Oak Hunter just out of high school and waited for him to complete university, so they could attend teacher's College at Queen's University.

After graduation, Erin got a job at Homer Watson House and Gallery museum in Kitchener, Ontario. Pay was skimpy, but she thrived in the atmosphere and loved her life there! "I taught art to little ones," she said. "Some of them were blind and I taught them how to do sculptures and photography by the water." At night, Erin curated at the museum and set up the gallery for art shows. Interestingly, there was an old stone house, and several little cabins where the Group of Seven hung out and painted!

Erin and Oak headed to Wha-ti in the Northwest territories to teach after graduation. They were the only two high school teachers in the town. Eighteen months later, they were both hired at Perth District High School. A few years later, Erin was offered Dave Sheridan's teaching position at Thousand Islands Secondary School, but went with her gut, and decided to teach English at Brockville Collegiate Institute.

Erin has a well-organized studio in her home. She is currently painting a sunset for someone in Toronto. "I did all my big paintings at an easel my Dad made for me," she said. This past winter, Erin painted moon rock props for the Brockville Dance Studio. "When I retire," she stated, "I'd like to teach therapeutic art to young people at risk." She tells young artists and writers to look for inspiration everywhere – "walk down the street and hear something, or find something, out of place." "Have your eyes and ears open," she admonishes. "Everything is beautiful. Art is about life. It can even be ugly because it is all about self expression."

I've had the privilege of watching Erin work with young people; she expertly imparts skills with a heart full of compassion and is a philanthropist in the true sense of the word.

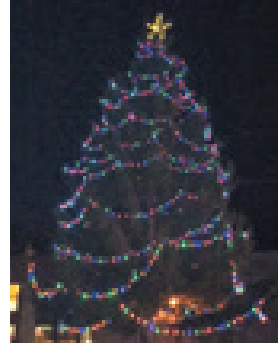
LH



Mallorytown Christmas Horse-drawn Rides
Photo Credit: Sally Smid, Courtesy of The Mural



Mallory Coach House Craft Sale
Photo Credit: Sally Smid, Courtesy of The Mural



Right: Tree Lighting Celebration in Lansdowne
Photo Credit: Donna Dempsey

Bottom Right: Mallorytown Christmas Parade
Photo Credit: Sally Smid, Courtesy of The Mural



Christmas Tree Lighting, Mallorytown
Photo Credit: Richard Marcoux



RURAL VILLAGES BRING ON THE MAGIC OF CHRISTMAS!

By Diann Turner

I will never outgrow the excitement of the approaching Christmas season! Christmas music can't begin early enough for me. The first tumble of snowflakes sets the tone for massive preparations for weeks to come. Laura Ingalls Wilder stated that- "We are better throughout the year for having, in spirit, become a child again at Christmastime!" **"Living Here"** is a delightful Regional Contact magazine and it was richly rewarding to connect with local community folks in Lansdowne and Mallorytown, who are currently active in preparations to make Christmas unforgettable for local children and adults.

You can begin with the Tree Lighting Ceremony on **Thursday, November 21, 2019** in Mallorytown. Mrs. Claus will be there to greet you and hot chocolate and cookies will be served right alongside the tree (inside if it's too cold). The Caintown Choir leads and inspires everyone to get into the Christmas spirit with buoyant Christmas carols.

Sunday, December 1st at 5:00 pm you can come out and watch the annual Santa Claus parade, or better yet, become a participant! The theme changes every year. The parade starts at the KOA on County Road 2, winds its way through the village, and ends up at the Community Centre. Mr. & Mrs. Claus disembark and everyone happily heads into the warmth of the indoors. Hot dogs and hot chocolate are for sale and the Colouring Contest prizes are issued. There are invited guests and sometimes, a musical troupe visits

and plays lively Christmas music.

On **Saturday, December 7th**, there is a miscellaneous Christmas Craft and Bake Sale at the Community Centre and the Mallory Coach House. Make it a stop for shopping and plan on lunch; Junetown Women's Institute will provide soup or chili for a small fee. Friends of the Library will be hosting a Book Sale simultaneously. Yonge in Bloom beautifies the village with Christmas creations in their planters. Collectively, these events draw great crowds and bring community folks together during the most spell-binding time of the year!

Just a few kilometers west of Mallorytown lies the lovely village of Lansdowne. It is also ratcheting up preparations to enhance the Christmas season in its community. **Save the date – Thursday, December 5, 2019, 4:00-8:00 pm** for another evening of jovial activities in Lansdowne to usher in the Christmas season!

Lansdowne Association for Revitalization (LAFR) provides a Tree Lighting Celebration. With the help of the Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company, and their crew, a ginormous tree at the Community Centre is decorated with one thousand lights; perhaps one for every island?! There is a gathering around the tree; a countdown ensues and a member of the Lansdowne Fair Royalty connects the power. The joy of the season is further enhanced with carol singing, lead by the school choir. Back at the Telephone Office, a group of busy elves prepare to host Santa

with cookie decorating, face painting, snacks and many rousing events for all ages! Horse-drawn wagon rides amble through town, dropping folks off at the venues, passing everyone's lights. Craft vendors are located at the Community Centre and shoppers can get some Christmas shopping accomplished while the kids are entertained with laser tag, crafts and snacks in the library.

By the end of the evening last year, a letter was written to Santa, cookies were decorated, devoured, and faces were painted. Wagon rides culminated with parents and kids being dropped off at the Community Centre to take part in these events, where a cup of hot chocolate and cider awaited. Entertainers provided Christmas carols throughout the evening. Everyone anticipated, and loved this event; kids went home with sugar plums dancing in their heads!

The cheerful season of Christmas brings that special spirit of loving and the idea of life. Get out and enjoy your community events and make every bit of life an odyssey to remember, especially for the children! **LH**

Editor's Note: The Town of Prescott is hosting their 3rd Annual Tree Lighting Celebration Friday December 6th at 5:30pm to 7pm at the Clocktower Square, Downtown Prescott. Free family event activities, hot chocolate served.



HOLIDAY FUN WITH THE REVERSE ADVENT

By Lorraine Payette

Advent calendars are old hat. Sure, the kids like candy every day, but most of them get in and steal it ahead of time, and it doesn't last. Instead, why not do something fun and meaningful for advent, start a new tradition, and make Christmas better for someone else at the same time?

Reverse Advent is a great way to put extra meaning into the season. First, find someone you want to help. Maybe there's a senior citizen down the block who is struggling financially, or a single parent who could use a boost, or someone who has lost a loved one and needs to be lifted up, or... There's always someone out there. Learn about this person, what is needed, and start from there. It is also a good idea to make sure they would be open to receiving such a gift – some people are not comfortable with the idea, no matter how much they might truly benefit from it.

Next, get a nice container and decorate it appropriately. Maybe some ribbons and greenery, a little tissue paper, whatever makes it feel festive. If you know the person well enough, look for something he or she would enjoy. Maybe tea towels would be a good choice, or small toys, or something else.

Every day of Advent, put something appropriate into the container. It can be non-perishable food items, clothing, toys, diapers, pet food, whatever would be appreciated

by the person you have in mind. Make sure to put in fun things as well as necessities – remember how much you hated getting socks and underwear when you were a kid? A senior might like puzzles or a couple of books, a single mum might like something for her kids, but also something special for herself like bath salts or scented candles. Be sure to put in something sweet if the person can enjoy it – a bag of special candies can put a smile on the saddest face. Coupons for goods and services like hair styling or foot care, donut shop cards, and magazine subscriptions are great additions to the collection.

It's amazing how much you can get together in 24 days – be sure your original container is big enough to handle it all. And remember, December 24 is the day you've been aiming at. Tuck in a cheery holiday note with an uplifting message about how much you want this person to have a wonderful time during the season.

When you make your delivery, make sure that the person is ready for it. Although it would be great fun to deliver everything anonymously, we are living in an era where that might actually frighten the recipients. You are far better off setting up a time with them that will be mutually convenient and letting them have a say in that part of the process. Make sure that the person you chose is able to receive the gift and help them get it inside where it can be best appreciated.

Whatever you choose to give and whomever you choose to receive it, reverse Advent adds extra meaning to the season. Instead of getting something for yourself, you are giving something from the heart to someone who can really use it, and that can be the best gift of all. **LH**

A nicely decorated basket of useful items is a fun way to celebrate Advent with people who could use a boost during the holiday season.



CELEBRATING THE YULETIDE

By Lorraine Payette

Winter in Canada brings snow and warm clothing, bright lights and decorations, good feelings toward our fellow people. Many in our area celebrate holy days each December, and you may be surprised to learn that many of the traditions used in the celebrations come from a common background.

While most of us are familiar with Judaism (the December holiday being Chanukah, starting each year on the 25th day of Kislev in the Jewish calendar) and Christianity (Christmas, celebrated by most in our area on December 25), the oldest and perhaps least recognized religion is Paganism. Though not well known in modern society, signs of this faith may be seen everywhere throughout the months leading up into January.

Perhaps one of the most ancient of sacred observances, the winter solstice has been celebrated by humans dating into pre-history. The Chinese celebrate it as Dongzhi, the Talmud recognizes it as Tekufat Tevet. Pagans call the holiday Yule, and many of its traditions are well known. The date varies as the winter solstice officially falls when the North Pole is tilted 23.5° from the sun, which usually occurs between December 20 and 23. A celebration

of the longest night of the year, it welcomes the returning sun.

In older times, many animals were slaughtered to prevent having to maintain them through the winter, making meat plentiful at Yuletide. A large log known as the Yule Log would be burned to provide continuous warmth and light during the celebrations. The feasting lasted twelve days.

To honour the deities (often referred to as the Lord and the Lady, and having equal but different powers), greenery would be brought into homes and used as decorations. Wreaths of holly would be placed upon the doors, mistletoe hung in the middle of the ceiling. Garlands of pine boughs and other evergreens would be hung for all to see, and a tree would be placed in a central point in the home. Ornaments would be placed upon the tree, usually made of natural things like pinecones and nuts, pieces of fruit, strings of berries and other cheerful items, and lights added in the form of candles to push back the darkness. Gifts brought by elves, gnomes or witches could also be placed among the branches or under the tree to share its fruitfulness with all.

Songs were sung to make the season more festive. Carols such as "Deck the Halls", "The Boar's Head Carol", and "The Twelve Days of Christmas" all refer back to ancient Yuletide celebrations. Roaming bands of carolers would go from house to house indulging in wassail (a warm alcoholic beverage made from spices, fruits and mead, sherry, port or other wines) and companionship. They would carry lanterns with them, bringing the promise of returning light wherever they went.

Feasting for the event was always of greatest importance. Not only were many kinds of roasts available, but other favourites included sweet treats such as fruitcakes, plum and figgy puddings with hard sauce, and fudge-like candies made from fruits, honey and spices like ginger, cinnamon and cloves.

Many of these traditions are now fully accepted as part of Christmas or Chanukah celebrations. Their presence has been with us longer than we can remember but they all mean the same thing – have a warm and blessed holiday season, whatever faith you practice.

LH

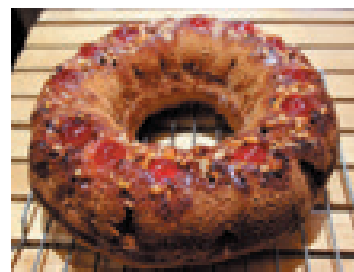
Below: Wreaths of holly and other greenery are hung on many doors

Middle: Whether inside or out, a decorated, well lit tree is a popular symbol of the season.

Right: Wreath shaped coffee cakes decorated with fruit and nuts are welcome at Yuletide

Right Middle: A festive fruitcake decorated for the season

Bottom Right: Dark, rich, and mysterious, a steamed figgy pudding served with hard sauce is always a hit





CHRISTMAS FAMILY RECIPES SAVED & SHARED

By Lisa Crandall



Do you have a favorite recipe that you learned from your mom or your grandmother? Recipes are the bedrock of family culture and as young people discover the joys and benefits of cooking from scratch they'll be tweaking and enjoying those family recipes and hopefully passing them on to the next generation.

In our household those recipes include my great grandmother's recipe for date squares made with a blend of large and small oatmeal with no vanilla or orange zest. From my husband's family there is a treasured recipe for ginger snaps that are soft enough to bite into without cracking. When asked, one friend remembers learning how to make grasshopper pie because it was a favorite of her father's. Nowadays she makes it to share as a gift during the holidays. Another friend makes corn pudding and brings it to every potluck because it was a family favorite when he was growing up. As a single man the recipe is too large for one so he takes advantage of every opportunity to enjoy it and share it at the same time. The range of recipes passed along is infinite. Husbands bring them from their mother's kitchens and daughters learn them from their mothers.

Ultimately there is one primary reason recipes get handed down through the generations. They taste good! And for the most part they are easy. And those details are important when the holiday baking season rolls around and families gather, clamouring for familiar tastes. The following recipes are some of my favorites.



Date Squares

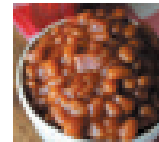
What you'll need...

1 lb cooking dates • 2 cups brown sugar (plus 1 handful) • 2 cups flour • 2 ¼ cups of oatmeal (see note) • 1 teaspoon baking soda • 1 cup hard margarine

Note: use a blend of large and small flake oatmeal aka old fashioned and quick cooking. Slightly larger flake.

To Create:

- ➔ Put the dates into a pot and almost cover with water and a handful of brown sugar. Cook on low-medium heat until soft enough to mash thoroughly. While they are cooling mix up the dry ingredients using a pastry blender to make a crumbly mixture.
- ➔ Place approximately ½ of the crumble mixture into a greased 9" x 13" pan and pat down gently to form the bottom layer. When the dates are cool enough to work with spread evenly across the pan. Spread the remaining crumble mixture loosely across the top. Do not pat this down
- ➔ Bake in a 350 oven until the edges are just starting to brown. Cool before serving. These freeze well.



Baked Beans

What you'll need...

1lb (approximately 2 ¼ cups) dried navy beans, or any kind of dried bean • 1 cup (generous) chopped onion • 5 cups water • ½ cup ketchup • ⅓ cup molasses (not blackstrap) • ¼ cup brown sugar, packed • 1 teaspoon dry mustard • 1 teaspoon salt • ¼ teaspoon pepper • 1 slice of pea meal bacon • 1 teaspoon baking soda • 1 cup hard margarine

To Create:

- ➔ Combine all ingredients in 3 ½ quart slow cooker. Stir. Add the pea meal bacon last and bury it slightly in the middle of the beans. Cover. Cook on low for 8-10 hours or on High for 4 to 5 hours.
- ➔ This makes about 6 cups of deliciously flavoured baked beans.



Buttery Corn Pudding

What you'll need...

1 can creamed corn (14 oz or 19 oz cans will both work) • ¼ cup all-purpose flour • ¼ cup sugar (I often use a tsp ± less) • ¾ cup milk • 3 eggs • ¼ cup melted butter • a pinch of salt • 2 tsp melted butter (for baking disk - I just rub it on cold)

To Create:

- ➔ Combine corn, flour, sugar, milk, eggs & ¼ cup of butter in bowl.
- ➔ Mix thoroughly. (Mix everything else before adding the corn)
- ➔ Pour into 1 ½ quart casserole, greased with remaining 2 teaspoons of butter.
- ➔ Bake at 350 degrees for 45 – 60 minutes, until set. Serves 8. Reheats nicely.

I think it is this tendency to want tried and true recipes that makes community cookbooks so popular as projects and as fundraisers. I bet you've got several in your cookbook collection. Maybe today would be a good day to pull one out and browse through to see if there is something interesting to experiment with. Or maybe this year would be the right time to create a family cookbook as a truly unique holiday gift. LH

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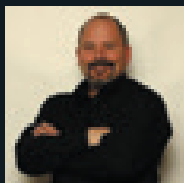
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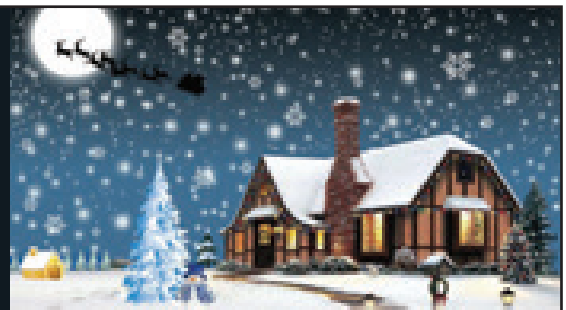


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