



# THE REPORTER



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SERVING THE COMMUNITY OF PORT DALHOUSIE SINCE 2005

WINTER 2025

Given the State of the World,  
Now is the Time to Choose  
Love, Peace and Goodwill.

This time of year it's customary to look back over the past year and give thanks to all the positive things that have happened in our lives and the world, and also make resolutions to do better in other areas.

As I write this though, I cannot ignore the fact that world events these days are chaotic and downright ominous, (I'm pointing my finger at you, U.S.A.), and the dire issues such as the erosion of human and civil rights, racism, wars, global warming, etc., that are on the rise.

But for now these bleak issues will have to take a back seat while we celebrate this holiday season of giving, loving, peace, and goodwill, the better qualities of humanity, which need bolstering more than ever.

So let's turn our thoughts and actions to those positive characteristics, and temporarily at least, find glimmers of hope and optimism for the future.

The holiday edition is always my favourite, giving us a chance to reflect on people and events both past and present that help define us as citizens of our beloved town of Port Dalhousie, and above all, celebrate Christmas and the New Year ahead.

*Continued on page 2*

## The Perils of 19th Century Winter Shipping

*19th Century Late-Season Lake Shipping was Risky at Best.*

In the years of the early Welland Canals, thousands of schooners crossed the Great Lakes to transport cargoes between ports. The shipping season usually ended by mid December with the closure of the canal because of winter weather. The late season, however, was often busy with lake traffic as ship owners and shipping companies rushed to schedule more transports to increase the season's profits before the canal's closing. These economic interests posed tremendous dangers and difficulties for the men who sailed these vessels. Winter shipping in schooners on the Great Lakes was risky at best and fatal at worst.

December 1854 was a month that brought these hard realities directly to the village of Port Dalhousie, though residents were always familiar with the brutal hardships of lake shipping. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of December of that year, a howling snowstorm shook the south coast of Lake Ontario, trapping many vessels that were making end-of-season

cargo runs. The relentless shrieking wind beat against schooners and drove them dangerously toward the shore. In these desperate situations, schooner



captains required great skill in trying to steer their shuddering boats in white-out winds, to avoid colliding with any obstacles, and to ground their vessels in shallow waters near the shore as closely and safely as possible. Despite the heroic efforts of captains, the results were often disastrous. Many vessels that went aground in storms were battered to complete destruction by ceaseless winds and waves, and their cargoes lost to the lake. Depending on how close the schooner could get to the

shore would determine the chances of the crew's survival; many a crew were stranded on their vessel in view of the shore but unable to get through the freezing waves and ice to the safety of land.

As the massive storm raged that December, many schooners went aground along the lake's southern shore. At Port Dalhousie there were several calamities, including the two-masted schooner Emma, of Hamilton, which sank here as a result of the storm's power. The Emma lost its cargo of railroad iron but its crew were rescued safely.

At least three other schooners went aground at this port, including the three-masted schooner Potomac, of Oswego, loaded with a cargo of wheat. The Toronto Colonist reported: "We regret to learn that the schooner Potomac, of Oswego, went ashore a short distance below Port Dalhousie, during the terrible snow storm on Monday last. The captain and one of the hands were drowned in attempting to effect a landing in a small boat. The remainder of the crew, seven men with

*Continued on page 2*

## The Port Dalhousie Councillor's Report

*A Recap of Key Municipal Issues by Councillor Bruce Williamson*

### Town Hall Meeting

On Wednesday, October 29th, about 75 residents attended a town hall-style forum at the Grantham Optimist Centre. Mayor Siscoe, Councillor Mako and I listened to citizens' concerns. We responded to most issues and for those we did not have immediate answers, we committed to follow up. There was a wide range and a lengthy list of matters of concern raised including, but not limited to, paid parking, parking conditions on certain streets, vegetation obstructing lakefront views, the condition of the former GM site, snow clearing, accessibility, water

safety, the former YMCA building, street sweeping/water drainage, budget and finance, collaborating with volunteer organizations.

### Commemorative Crosswalk Honouring our Veterans

Your ward councillors were proud to invest money from our discretionary fund to cover the cost of installing a symbolic crossing in front of the Cenotaph. It will enhance the Anne Street war memorial plaza to continue to serve as a lasting tribute to the courage, sacrifice, and service of those who have defended our country. The Port Dalhousie pavement

markings were placed in recognition of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 350 in Port Dalhousie celebrating its 80th anniversary and the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe.

### Remembrance Events

We offer our sincere appreciation to Royal Canadian Legion Branch 350 for continuing the Canadian traditions of remembrance including the Veterans Dinner and the program of remembrance held on the Sunday before November 11th. Melody and I were honoured to attend the annual Veterans Dinner on November 5th. There were 100 guests

including at least 40 veterans and it included a fitting remembrance tribute. Unfortunately, on November 9th poor weather conditions precipitated the wise decision to dispense with the usual march from the Legion to the Cenotaph and back and instead hold the commemorative events indoors. Mayor Siscoe, Councillors Mako, Williamson and Dodge were pleased to participate.

### Piers Maintenance Strategy

One of the most valuable and well-used recreational assets, we are fortunate to have our Port Dalhousie Piers. After they

*Continued on page 3*

Choose Love, Peace  
and Goodwill

... Continued

In this issue we offer articles and memoriam on two individuals who have been exceptionally important to citizens here in Port and Region-wide, Carlos Garcia and Jim Bradley. John Bacher writes a heart-felt tribute to Jim and Bruce Williamson presents an update on the creation of the Carlos Garcia Parkette established in his honour, and his own fond memories of Jim. Nancy Cameron dips into the colourful history of Great Lakes shipping as well as the beginnings of Port Dalhousie. Brian Narhi covers the history of the postal service in town, and Christine Nicholson's Heritage Highlights profiles a local historical treasure, The Brown Homestead.

As usual, we are pleased to present our regular features; Hank Beekhuis' From Where I Sit column, Dennis Gannon's Yesterday and Today, the final installment of What's in a Name, as well as the Beautification and Works Committee report. Coupled with our annual Christmas story, crossword, holiday recipe and photos and featurettes, I think we've come up with a winner.

On behalf of both the Port Dalhousie Conservancy and the Port Reporter, the multitude of BWC volunteers who keep our town looking vibrant and welcoming, and those less visible who are active and instrumental in advocating for our voice in municipal and regional affairs, Have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! ■

- Peter Wing

The Perils of 19th Century Winter Shipping ... Continued

a woman, were saved on Tuesday, after remaining twenty-four hours on the wreck. They suffered terrible hardships, the vessel being one mass of ice."

Those of the Potomac who were saved owed their lives to the gallantry of some of the men of the steamer Welland, together with some sailors belonging to other vessels in the harbour here. They put out in the life-boats of the Welland at great risk to themselves and succeeded in rescuing the survivors "when every hope seemed to have taken flight." The schooner and its cargo were a total loss.

The Colonist further reported that other schooners were also aground not far from Port Dalhousie, including another "ashore at the Four Mile Creek, but owing to the severity of the gale, no boat, at our last advice, had been able to reach her."

Two weeks later in mid-December severe weather again slammed Lake Ontario. For more than 48 hours, the terrible snow-laden gale drove numerous schooners ashore. Most crews were rescued safely, though many of the sailors were badly frost-bitten. Many schooners were wrecked close to shore or out on the lake. The Rochester Union reported

on December 13<sup>th</sup> : "Seven Vessels Wrecked on Lake Ontario - The late dreadful storm has made sad work among our lake shipping. The news of wrecks and disasters reach us daily."

The Toronto Leader of December 12<sup>th</sup> reported that the north shore of Lake Ontario was also heavily impacted by the storm: "We have been informed that there are at present seven vessels including steamers propellers and schooners, locked up in the ice at South

*"December 1854 was a month that brought these hard realities directly to the village of Port Dalhousie, though residents were always familiar with the brutal hardships of lake shipping."*

Bay, this side of Kingston, all of which are heavily laden with winter goods for this port and the ports westward."

The storm also froze the Welland Canal and brought canal traffic to a halt. The St. Catharines Constitutional of December 13<sup>th</sup> reported four more schooners ashore at Port Dalhousie, and noted: "The Welland Canal may

now be considered closed, (though not officially so) as the severe frost of the past few days has coated it with ice several inches thick. Many vessels with valuable cargoes are frozen in, and it is doubtful whether they can be pushed through this season. [Insurance] agents are here attending to some of them." Thirty-six cargo-laden sailing vessels were frozen in the canal, most at or near Port Dalhousie, with an estimated 160, 000 barrels of grain onboard the ice-locked boats.

A further report that day added: "Canal remains closed with ice, little chance of vessels, of which there are many, getting through this winter. It is contemplated by the captains to cut their way through the ice with saws if the weather should prove favorable." By December 15<sup>th</sup>, many men were employed to break up the ice on the canal, and by December 22<sup>th</sup> most vessels were able to leave the waterway and continue their lake journeys. The canal closed officially on December 28<sup>th</sup>, ending a harrowing month for schooner captains, their crews, and those who waited for them in ports around the Great Lakes – a calamitous month that cruelly made plain the dangers of winter shipping on the lakes. ■

- Nancy Cameron



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were constructed and paid for by the federal government, the ownership and responsibility to care for them passed to the city. I made a request for a report at the Council meeting of November 17th to establish a plan to carry out regular maintenance for several reasons. First, is to ensure public safety. It is incumbent upon us to keep the walking surface hazard-free and with the winds, waves and ice they are exposed to, even the best built structures extending out into the lake will be subject to the gradual effects of weathering and erosion. I am particularly concerned about water penetrating the gaps or expansion joints between the concrete slabs where the water-tight sealant (caulking) has gone missing. If we do not begin to take a vigilant approach to maintaining these impermeable seals, natural freeze-thaw cycles will inevitably cause the surface to crack and heave. Without a long-term maintenance plan, small issues become big, expensive problems. A thoughtful, structured strategy will allow the City to budget properly and is the responsible direction to take in terms of cost efficiency by forestalling costly repairs and extending the life of these marvelous public amenities.

Sports Hall of Fame

I was pleased to attend the 2025 induction ceremony which celebrated the addition of athletes Doug Fast, Gema Kramer, Chris Leach, Melissa Murphy St. Onge, and builder John Haeni to the Hall of Fame for their significant achievements in sport. This took place Thursday, Oct. 30. Congratulations to these distinguished athletes and builders of sport in our city.

Jim Bradley

September 26th saw the passing of a great community leader and champion of democratic principles. I was fortunate to have known “the dean of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario” since being a student in his classroom in grade 8. He served in elected office for 55 years first as a city councillor, then for 41 years at Queens Park as our MPP and as the head of numerous provincial ministries. For the last seven years he was Chair of the Niagara Region. Jim was someone who knew what it meant to serve the common good and he did so with unsurpassed intelligence, honesty and integrity. I often went to Jim for advice and his wise counsel helped me navigate many challenges. During the past few years he would say to me, “You know Bruce there is no reward for doing good in politics any more.” He noted how bad behaviours that would have once ended political careers now are excused. This was his profound lament for the way in which his civilized, honest, integrity-based approach and belief in the way politics should be conducted has eroded. His life’s work to keep the government responsible to the people is one we can follow. Both your ward councillors supported the City of St. Catharines honouring Jim’s legacy by renaming Grantham Avenue Park to Grantham’s Jim Bradley Park.

The Decline of Local Democracy

Under the Doug Ford government the ability of locally elected representatives to have a meaningful voice on behalf of their constituents in municipal decision-making has greatly diminished. There is a long list of autocratic-style actions this government has taken that

have negatively impacted grass roots democracy and centralized control with him and his big-monied inner circle. These actions include: the granting of “super powers” to selected mayors: overruling municipalities on speed cameras (regardless of which side of the issue you are on the heavy-handed approach is not fair); the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) becoming a body which invariably sides with developers eradicating what little is left of residents’ voices in land use planning matters; amalgamation of conservation authorities; allowing the paving of greenbelt lands; and he has used provincial override powers (e.g., MZO’s) to bypass local governing.

Vote to name outdoor public space

A vote was conducted by electronic survey to name the former site of lock one of the second Welland Canal (1845-1881) now the BWC concert series venue. The choice came down to a list of three finalist names including: Lakeside Commons, Old Lock One Commons or N. Carlos Garcia Commons. Residents could vote for their preferred name for 45 Lakeport Rd. in the short, one-question survey. The winning name was “Old Lock Commons” with 96 votes.

Carlos Garcia Parkette

There has been a terrific alignment of Port Volunteer organizations in the planning, coordinating, finalizing and executing the

work on this project, which is in tribute to our beloved friend. The Port Dalhousie Conservancy, the Beautification and Works Committee, and Dalhousie Yacht Club volunteers worked together to remove the underbrush, old fencing and accumulated garbage and also funded the installation of a new fence along the top of the east wall of the lock approach. City crews did the heavy lifting of removing rotten trees and stumps as well as leveling of the site. Landscaping and amenities are in the works for next spring.

Linwell Road and Lakeport Road Resurfacing

We are pleased that sizable stretches of these city-controlled roads Linwell - from Geneva to Lake Street and Lakeport - from Lake Street to Ontario were resurfaced and necessary curb and sewer drain repairs done in an efficient and timely manner in recent weeks.

Main Street (Regional Road 87)

In September we officially asked for a report on what needs to happen to get this pothole-ridden road fixed. Unfortunately, we have little news to report other than that City and Regional staff have discussed the downloading of Regional Road 87 to the City. Jim Bradley, in his position as Regional Chair, understood the urgent need of getting this arterial road restored and

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**THE PORT REPORTER**

The Port Reporter is a not-for-profit, all-volunteer, community information newspaper published by the Port Dalhousie Conservancy since 2005. The paper focuses on issues related to the St. Catharines waterfront, the conservation and celebration of heritage in Port Dalhousie and across the city. It also encourages residents to work together to improve our community environment.

It is published quarterly, usually in March, June, September and December. 8,500 copies are delivered to homes and businesses in Port Dalhousie ward. It can also be found at Avondale Stores, City Hall, public libraries and in various local business establishments.

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Please send contributions for future issues to [editor.portreporter@gmail.com](mailto:editor.portreporter@gmail.com). All submissions are subject to a review including both editorial approval as well as copy editing for grammar etc.

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# Councillor’s Report

he leveraged his influential position to advocate on our behalf. Yet even he was not able to get work resumed on this front. Hopefully, our pleas will restart movement on this priority project.

## Tenth Anniversary Celebrations of the First Ontario Performing Arts Centre

It is difficult to believe that this superb cultural facility is now ten years old. It has been host to many great performances and events adding a new dimension to our city and downtown. Congratulations to the board and staff for providing terrific programming through the years. Thanks to the generous corporate sponsors, benefactors and volunteers who have helped to keep down costs. Not to dampen enthusiasm, but the news that Brock University is pulling back funding for the use of some municipally-owned facilities at the centre is disappointing. Be sure to check out some of the upcoming offerings at <https://www.firstontariopac.ca/Online/default.asp>

## Invasive Species Management Plan

This plan, requested by Councillor Garcia and me, will guide how vegetative invasive species are identified, controlled and managed across municipal lands. It is most relevant in the Port Dalhousie Ward context to creek valleys and lakefront slopes. We recognize and value the fact that waterfront vegetation provides habitat for wildlife, stabilizes shorelines to prevent erosion and contributes to overall water quality. However, we are not looking to eradicate large swathes of greenery but to trim the top of some banks at lookout points to open up key vistas to enhance the experience of the waterfront for local residents and people walking or cycling on our trails.

## Christie Street Stairs

The project is close to being completed and hopefully will be open for public access by the time this publication is delivered.

## Bill Burgoyne Memorial Arena Public Skating

Public works staff inform us we are in the final stages of completion of the outside of this structure. Burnt orange, gray and black are, dare I say, interesting colour choices for exterior finishes. The investments that have been made in recent years have truly transformed this recreational facility into a much improved venue. Also, please note the arena went “cashless” and it now only accepts debit card, credit card or mobile payments (Apple, Google) so users will have to plan accordingly. Four 2 hour slots for public skating are being offered. They are on Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday (4-6pm) and Saturday (5-7pm) For updated availability check online @ [rb.gy/m6mt3x](http://rb.gy/m6mt3x)



# The Speed Cameras are Gone, Now What?

*Speed cameras in Niagara Region generated over 3 million dollars in revenue 2024, and the Ford government allocated 240,000 to Niagara in interim funding to cover the shortfall created by the revenue stream. The province has said a 210 million dollar fund would be available to the 42 municipalities which had installed speed cameras, and an initial amount of \$42 million will be immediately available to be divided based on the existing programs, with Toronto likely to receive the most. The remaining \$168 million will be shared among municipalities after they complete plans in the new year, but what alternatives do municipalities have to implement traffic calming measures, and are there any new innovative ideas to tackle the problem?*

While more traditional methods of traffic calming remain popular, some ‘out-of-the-box’ road safety measures are being trialled overseas.

The modern driver is well accustomed to speed bumps, roundabouts, median and rumble strips being used to slow traffic down or to encourage more cautious driving behaviour.

But now treatments of a more psychological nature are being used to change the driver’s perception of the road environment.

Traffic calming devices like digital signs display a driver’s speed as a reminder, and landscaping (such as tree planting) and varying road surfaces change the feel of traffic environment to encourage much lower speeds.

“If these devices are designed, installed, and implemented properly, these innovative treatments can markedly reduce vehicle speeds. And reductions in vehicle speed at impact can substantially reduce the risk of injury to a person in the vehicle, walking or cycling,” says Brendan Lawrence from Monash University Accident Research Centre (MUARC).

While digital signs and varying road surfaces are common, in some parts of the world they are using more unorthodox traffic calming methods to get drivers to slow down.

## Optical Illusions and Singing Roads

In the Icelandic town of Isafjordur, the local authority installed a 3D pedestrian crossing that looks like it’s hovering above the road.

The 3D effect is achieved through the design of the lines on the road surface. Isafjordur Municipality’s Information Officer, Halfdan Bjarki Halfdansson, says the 3D crossing was used because physical barriers such as speed bumps had downsides. “Speed bumps are not

the car chassis’ best friend and in a place like Isafjordur they are a nuisance when council workers are clearing snow,” Halfdansson says. According to Halfdansson the 3D crossing did slow traffic when first installed, “but of course people get used to it. I’m not sure about the effectiveness, but at least it doesn’t have the drawbacks of conventional safety measures. We see it as 50 per cent road safety and 50 per cent a great piece of art.”

‘America the Beautiful’ into the car. It’s a technique that’s also been trialled in Denmark, Japan, South Korea, China and Taiwan, just to name a few. However not everyone considers the singing roads art.

According to a New York Times report, a similar singing road trial last year in the Netherlands resulted in an outcry from residents, some of whom described the continual renditions of their regional anthem as “psychological torture”.

## Local Calming

Traffic calming devices remain a key feature of local streets, reducing traffic volumes and speeds to improve safety for all.

One of the most common complaints local governments receive is about cars speeding in residential areas. As well as speeding, other traffic related complaints are about reckless drivers,

high volumes of ‘through traffic’ on residential streets and traffic making streets unsuitable for cyclists and pedestrians.

This can become a vicious cycle – people think it’s not safe to walk or ride due to the number and speed of cars on local roads, so they choose to drive, which then adds to the number of cars on the road.

However, even proven and commonplace traffic calming devices can have downsides. Road bumps and cushions are among the most effective measures, however they’re also the most complained about, with increased noise often a result.

Speed bumps are effective but are also one of the most complained about traffic calming devices

Although audio tactile lines on roads are currently used, particularly in regional areas to inform drivers they might be speeding, musical rumble strips and 3D crossings are not popular with drivers.

The use of rumble strips that create a musical tune when driven across at a



A 3D crosswalk painted onto the road surface in the town of Isafjordur, Iceland



The 3D crosswalk viewed from the side

Similar 3D crossings have been trialled in India, Malaysia, China, the US, New Zealand, and Australia. The idea of merging art and infrastructure has also inspired singing roads.

In the US, on Route 66 near Albuquerque, the New Mexico Department of Transport installed a section of road that ‘sings’. When motorists travel over special rumble strips at the designated speed (45mp/h), the rumble of the tyres over the grooves transmits a rendition of

certain speed is more of a novelty or tourist attraction than a serious road safety measure. The impact of the musical aspect is hard to measure. Drivers must also drive at a certain speed that may not relate to the posted limit and may create a road safety hazard as they attempt to drive across the rumble strips at different speeds. Main Roads had a similar view of 3D crossings. The 3D markings may appear as a road hazard to an approaching driver, with the potential to result in unpredictable behaviour.

**The ‘Actibump’**

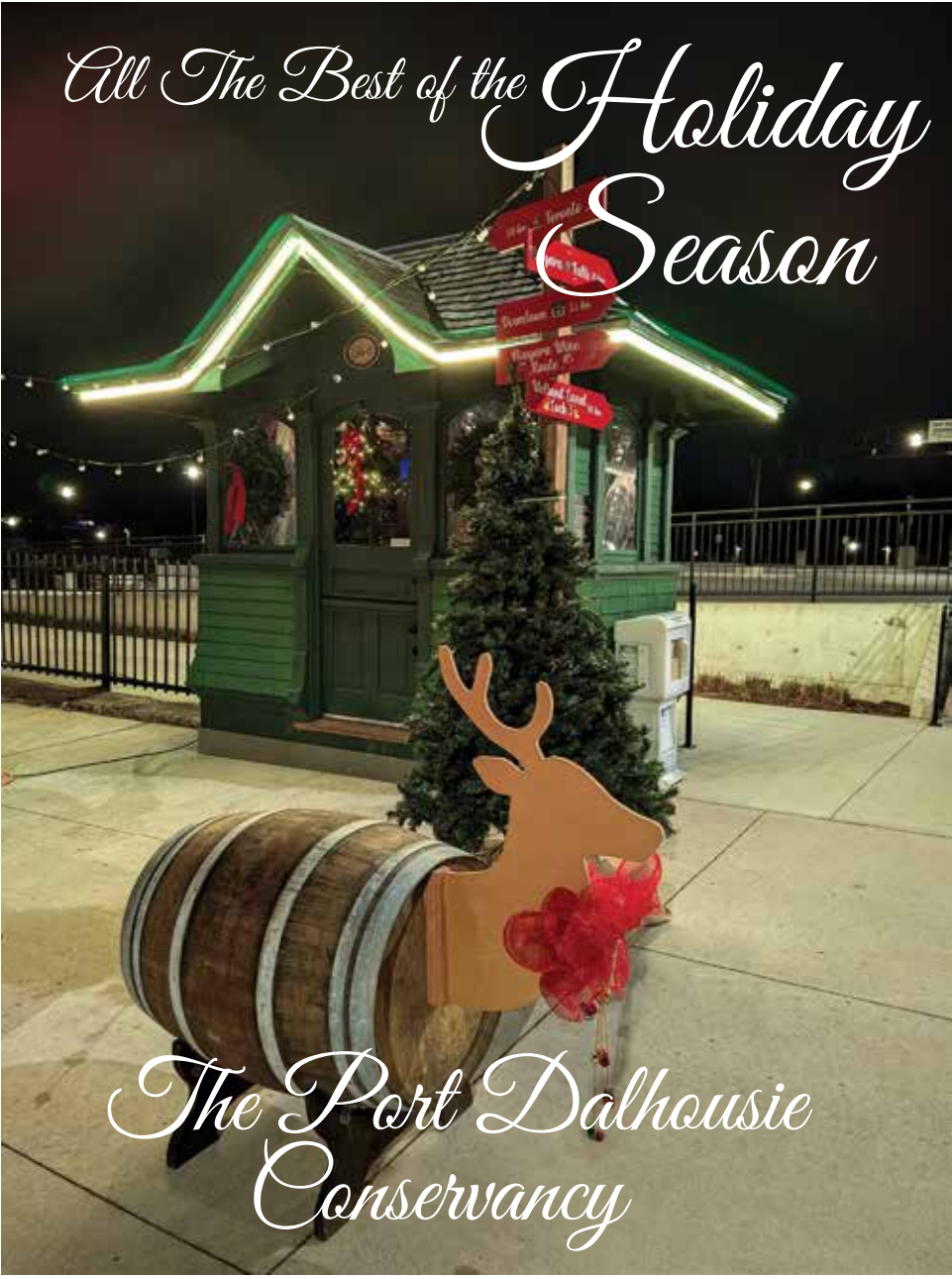
One new traffic calming device which has been introduced is the ‘Actibump’, a speed bump developed by Swedish company Edeva. When a radar in the device detects a speeding vehicle approaching, it lowers a hatch a few centimetres, creating an inverted speed bump. The ‘smart’ speed bumps have significantly reduced the number of speeding motorists, steadied traffic flow and provided a safer environment for pedestrians. People on bikes can ride closer to the middle of the street with cars passing only if there is enough space. The intention is also to improve safety for pedestrians and increase landscaping to make the boulevards attractive places to walk and ride.

Self-explaining streets, which includes street narrowing, chicanes, speed bumps, median treatments and tree planting have been installed, and have proven to be effective. Multi-coloured asphalt and street-side trees are also part of the traffic calming agenda, and peanut-shaped roundabouts are being used where intersection space is limited.

Well-designed traffic calming treatments have benefits for community amenity and help create an environment where safety is instinctive for people using the road. ■

- Jim Mathers

*Reprinted from Horizon Magazine*





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# The Legacy Of Jim Bradley *Hard Working and Respected, He Was Simply a Good Man.*

Although he was an active member of Trillium United Church, (formerly Grantham United), the location of the funeral for Jim Bradley at Bethany Church on Third Street Louth just north of the Queen Elizabeth Highway was vividly symbolic of his achievements. This I discovered while walking the beautiful landscape of part of the surviving core of the Niagara Fruit Belt on the way to the ceremony.

The tribute to Jim Bradley resembled the funeral for the NDP legislator Mel Swart, one of the founders of the Preservation of Agricultural Lands Society, (PALS). Both gatherings united people who loved the precious landscapes of Niagara. Many of Jim Bradley's great triumphs as Ontario Minister of the Environment, most notably those impacting the protection of the Niagara Escarpment and the curbing of acid rain, were worked out together with Swart on the VIA train trips between St. Catharines and Toronto where they were members of the Provincial Legislature.

It is inspiring to walk the 15-minute pilgrimage between the transit stop at Main and Martindale and Bethany Church. In between is a landscape dominated by the remarkable J. C. Bakker and Sons Wholesale Nursery, which contains several impressive residences of family members. One of them is good advertising for the fruits of

the business, since it is surrounded by some spectacular trees, most notably Dawn Redwoods. Close by is the only Canadian grove of the Endangered Cherry Birch.

For those familiar with the history of the Niagara Fruit Belt, which began to emerge in the 1880s when deforestation made it the last bastion for peach growing in the Carolinian zone, a walk along Third Street is tinged with a dose of sadness. The beauty of the homes and gardens resemble those nurtured in the 1880s around Grimsby by the remarkable entrepreneur E. D. Smith. They have now become engulfed by urban sprawl on what was once Canada's most productive agricultural land spotted with the castles of the vanished Fruit Lords' families.

From its start in 1967 when he wrested the Liberal Party's nomination for MPP from a Mayor of

St. Catharines, Mackenzie Chown, Jim Bradley's political career was shaped by a determination to protect the Niagara Fruit Belt, and the Niagara Escarpment which sheltered it. While Bradley helped shape the Liberal Party in Niagara to become a formidable force for conservation, it was not so when he joined it. After he was elected to St. Catharines City Council in 1970, for seven years he became the part of a core group of six aldermen who consistently opposed the attempt to remove agricultural zoning protections on the unique Niagara fruit lands. His colleagues in this difficult battle included Mike Collins, Joe Kushner, (who still serves on council) and Stan Brickell.

Upon being elected to the Provincial Legislature, Bradley distinguished himself in 1978 when he became the only Liberal in the legislature to vote against a private members bill to dramatically reduce the size of the

Niagara Escarpment Plan area. With his help the bill was defeated; the government of Premier Davis had, a month earlier, weakened the plan by removing the Niagara Fruit Belt from its protections. Such protections were restored under Bradley's guidance when in 2005 the Greenbelt protected the great remaining vistas stretching from the Niagara Escarpment to Lake Ontario. During the remaining 13 years that the Liberals governed Ontario, Bradley throughout a range of different portfolios, remained the Minister responsible for the Greenbelt.

Bradley's achievements in the 15-year Liberal regime at Queen's Park from 2003-2018 were herculean. Based on fond memories of his role in shaping most of the province's environmental regulations, public servants compared his return to Winston Churchill's, becoming again, First Lord of the Admiralty. One of the most significant victories was his imposing a full environmental assessment upon the Dufferin Mega Quarry. Its proponents soon gave up and the threat to Ontario's potato belt vanished. Sadly, some of Bradley's greatest accomplishments when he returned to power were never understood or applauded except by a small group of environmentalists. Most notable was the demise of the mid-Niagara peninsula expressway, secured

... Continued on page 9



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# Port Dalhousie: 1826

## *The Beginning of a Canal Village 200 Years ago.*

The community of Port Dalhousie dates from 1826, its beginnings a direct result of the construction of the First Welland Canal.

In the years following the War of 1812, the government of Upper Canada was greatly interested in the idea of a Niagara canal to connect Lakes Ontario and Erie to provide improved defence and transportation across the Niagara area. A Select Committee was formed in 1821 to investigate this question. Engineers carried out surveys to determine options and challenges. Several routes were proposed and considered. None of these incorporated the use of Twelve Mile Creek and its mouth at Lake Ontario.

In 1823, William Hamilton Merritt, a businessman in the small community of St. Catharines, began to promote the idea of a canal between Lake Ontario and the Welland River; the Welland River's connection with the Niagara River well beyond the Falls was the intended link in the proposed canal to provide access between Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. It was from this original plan that the name "Welland Canal" came about. Various business interests supported this idea, and two

factions of canal supporters emerged with competing ideas of the route and its northern entry point. Merritt and a number of his neighbours and supporters endorsed the Twelve Mile

charted in January 1824, without a definite route decided; the thorny question of whether Niagara or Twelve Mile Creek should be the Lake Ontario terminus remained.



Creek route, with its mouth at Lake Ontario as the canal's northern entry. There was also a very strong faction in Niagara (now NOTL) who wanted the canal's northern terminus to be at their town.

The Welland Canal Company was

Ongoing debate continued through 1824. Canal engineers completed a number of surveys in which the location where Twelve Mile Creek meets Lake Ontario (present-day Port Dalhousie) is described at length as the ponded, marshy mouth of the Creek. There was no harbour, no port, no community there.

Merritt set out to secure funding for the project. In February and March of 1824 he went to Kingston, Montreal, and Quebec, seeking financial support for the canal plan. The Governor-General, Lord Dalhousie, (resident at Quebec) expressed interest in the project, purchased a few shares, and promised to bring up the question with the British government.

In the fall of 1824, Merritt went to New York state and received significant financial support from American investors, notably J.B. Yates. It was this financial support that made the construction of the canal possible.

At the end of 1824 and in early 1825, preparations for construction began. Construction commenced at the central area of the canal, even though the canal's northern terminus was still not yet determined. Merritt and his faction were firmly decided in their support of the Twelve Mile Creek route. The Niagara group were still making great efforts to have the canal terminus there.

On February 25<sup>th</sup> 1825, the act granting the new charter to the Welland

... Continued on page 9



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# Winter Report



Port Dalhousie looked magnificent this past summer thanks to our watering volunteers who tended to all our planters and pots in what must have felt like desert conditions at times. Our “Weeding Wednesday” volunteers also worked very hard to keep Port looking tidy. The Halloween Walk was a huge success judging from the numbers who attended. We reckon 400 kids plus parents; it was busy. Our local merchants went above and beyond handing out treats, as did residents of Canal and Simcoe streets. Again, this could not have happened without our many volunteers. Kudos to all! Our Lions Club marshals did an excellent job crossing everyone safely over the roads again this year. Please check out the fabulous photos on Facebook (Port Dalhousie Beautification & Works Committee) courtesy of local photographer Anne Kalagian. We will be decorating downtown Port to prepare for the festive season in the last week of November. So, if anyone can donate greenery for the BWC planters, please reach out to us at [portdalhousie@yahoo.com](mailto:portdalhousie@yahoo.com)

## Candlelight Stroll 2025

Please join in on the festive fun at our annual Candlelight Stroll, Saturday, Dec. 6th. The Stroll will feature candles (for purchase), concessions, 10 fun performances, a photo stop, and Santa leading the way! There will be no parking along the Stroll route. Free parking and washrooms are available at Lakeside Park. Please find our promotions on Facebook, on downtown sign boards, the City community calendar, 88.5 FM, or join our email notification list at [portdalhousie@yahoo.com](mailto:portdalhousie@yahoo.com) Special thanks to the City of St. Catharines, The Rennie Senior Apartments, and The Royal Henley Retirement Community for sponsorship this year!

## Port Dalhousie’s Newest Parkette

The parkette project adjacent to the Lock One stage has progressed through the first two stages. There has been overwhelming support with the capture of additional green space thanks to the valiant efforts of volunteers and City crews. The parkette is a cooperative effort of your BWC, PD Conservancy, DYC, and the City of St. Catharines. Our vision is a memorial parkette in honor of Carlos Garcia, a fitting tribute to his dedication to preserving Port’s heritage and village culture. This spring, coinciding with Port Dalhousie’s



A Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from all of us at the BWC!

bicentennial, we begin phase 3 with work on a conceptual design with a baseline drawing prepared by Architect JamesMcWilliam.

## Town Hall Meeting ,October 29<sup>th</sup>

The town hall meeting was a wonderful opportunity to present to our Mayor and Councillors the BWC’s mission, accomplishments, and key priorities going forward. The presentation was well received with strong confirmation by the panel of the importance of volunteers and specific support for the BWC. The BWC and City will continue to work cooperatively and build upon our positive relationship. We further support the City’s new policy on “Volunteer Work Groups” which strongly affirms support for community volunteers.

## Martindale Pond Fountain

Do you remember when there was a fountain in Martindale Pond located just past the grandstand finish line? In addition to being aesthetically pleasing, the fountain helped maintain a healthy ecosystem for the various plants and wildlife who call the pond home. The fountain eventually fell into disrepair and was removed. Residents brought it to the attention of the BWC through our strategic planning process and advocated for its reinstatement. A fountain would also help to maintain a healthy water system for recreation and the rowing community. The BWC has submitted a proposal to the City to review feasibility while the Henley Island Helpers organization has made a generous pledge of capital funding for

a new fountain. We are hopeful to have the fountain active by Spring 2026 to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Port Dalhousie.

## Volunteer Appreciation Event

The BWC recently held its annual Volunteer Appreciation event to acknowledge the important contributions of individuals, community partners, and students to achieve the goals of the BWC. The volunteers are the heart and soul of the committee and without their continued efforts and goodwill, the community projects and events we host would not be possible. These connections enhance and sustain Port Dalhousie for current and further generations. As an organization solely dependent on volunteers, we value the individual and collective effort made by all.

Find us on Facebook at Port Dalhousie Beautification and Works Committee or contact us at [portdalhousie@yahoo.com](mailto:portdalhousie@yahoo.com)



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# The Legacy Of Jim Bradley ... Continued

when he served as Minister of Transportation. If built, it would have cut up the Niagara Escarpment, destroyed swamp forests, and paved over prime irreplaceable agricultural land.

Through Bradley’s quiet leadership urban boundary expansion attempts in both Niagara Falls and West Lincoln were prevented by provincial interventions, which sadly were eventually reversed after the return of the Conservative Party to power. Much of this debate was not covered in the media, so few voters were aware of such related issues as the fate of the fragile Twenty Mile Creek, and a shrinking natural corridor south of the Niagara Escarpment.

One of Jim Bradley’s heroic failures as Minister of Transportation was an attempt to seal Niagara’s urban boundaries in exchange for massive provincial investment in what was termed at the time as “higher order transit.” This would have likely involved a Light Rail Transit Corridor from St. Catharines to Port Colborne and a comparable service from Welland to Niagara Falls. The green plan was worked out between Bradley and the Regional Planning Commissioner, Patrick Robson, and conveyed to Regional Council through the presentation of impressive powerful images. The proposal was supported in Regional Council led by Councillor Tim Rigby, but fortunately the majority of Regional Council voted against the offer of massive provincial transit funding to support land speculators in Niagara Falls and West Lincoln.

As he approached death, Jim Bradley showed again his concern to protect Niagara’s farmlands that had shaped his entire adult life. He timed his physician-assisted passing to ensure that arrangements were made to affirm that his generous donation in the fall of the year to PALS went through. Jim Bradley was a quiet and fierce warrior for public interests until the very end. ■

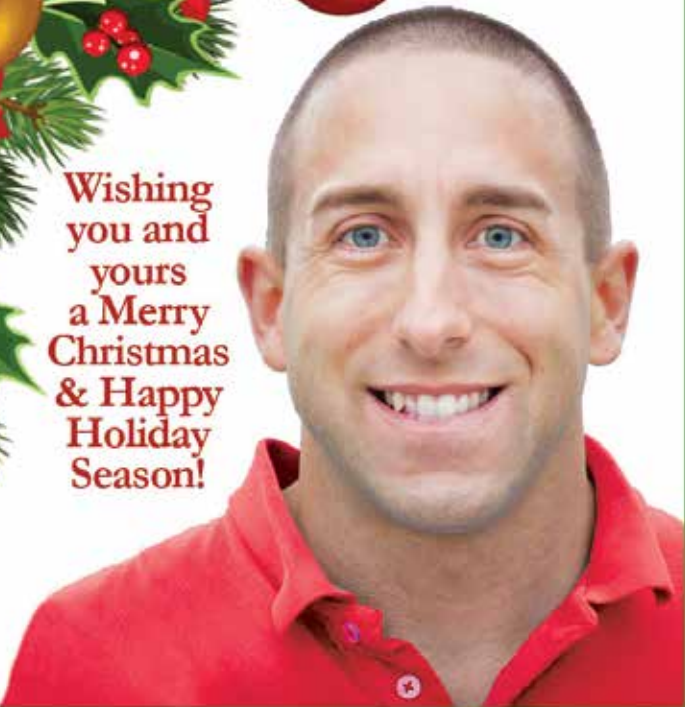
- John Bacher

# A Growing Memorial to Carlos in Malcomson Park

On September 20, 2025 a group of Friends, and Local politicians planted a maple tree in memory of Carlos Garcia in Malcomson Park. Carlos was an enthusiastic supporter of this amazing natural park along the Welland Canal. It was quite apparent from those who spoke that he was well appreciated far outside of Port Dalhousie for his tireless efforts as a city councillor.



Wishing you and yours a Merry Christmas & Happy Holiday Season!



**Marty Mako**  
City Councillor, Port Dalhousie



# Port Dalhousie: 1826 ... Continued

Canal Company was approved by the Assembly and on April 12<sup>th</sup> it received the lieutenant-governor’s assent It was a clear victory for Merritt and the St. Catharines group, as it laid down in detail the route to be followed. The canal was to terminate in Lake Ontario at the mouth of Twelve Mile Creek and would pass through St. Catharines and not Niagara.

Construction of the canal’s northern entry lock on Lake Ontario at the mouth of Twelve Mile Creek began in 1826, and was completed in the autumn of that year. This is clearly and extensively documented in the original records and annual reports of the Welland Canal Company.

With the construction of the entry lock (locally called the Harbour Lock) and the ensuing construction of the first harbour, piers, towpath, and lighthouse, which were all requisite for the operation of the canal terminus, there were reasons for a community to be there in service of the canal, and to benefit from its related economic opportunities.

It was the Harbour Lock’s completion in 1826 which provided the reason and motivation for landowner Nathan Pawling to begin to sell village lots in 1826, and for the name “Port

Dalhousie” to be chosen in honour of the Governor General of British North America.

The First Welland Canal officially opened in November 1829, but the Harbour Lock at Port Dalhousie was in commercial use before that in 1828, as grain-laden schooners from St. Catharines passed through it on their way across the lake to Prescott for shipment on to Montreal.

Port Dalhousie began as a canal village in 1826, its earliest days tied to the construction of the Harbour Lock of the First Welland Canal. It continued as an important canal village for the next century, until the opening of the Welland Ship Canal, and then adapted to new conditions and new opportunities as a vibrant lakeside community, now marking its two centuries of rich history. ■

- Nancy Cameron



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# YESTERDAY AND TODAY:

*The May-Clark-Seiler House was the Oldest in St. Catharines, Until it was Guttled by Fire.*

The burnt out building in our old photo this week was generally known as the May-Clark-Seiler house, and at the time of its destruction was believed to be the oldest house in St. Catharines and vicinity.

The building's name reflects three of its important owners during the 200 years that it stood out in the former Grantham Township, just south of today's Ontario Street-Lakeport Road intersection.

William May, a descendant of German immigrants to America, served in the Indian Department and later in Butlers Rangers during the struggle to preserve British rule during the American Revolution. The battle lost, in 1783 he migrated to what is present day Ontario and for his loyal service was granted 700 acres of land in Grantham Township. May built a sturdy wood frame house for himself and his family in about 1784, and cleared and farmed the rest of the adjacent property.

May himself died in 1827; his family continued to occupy the house

until 1838. In that year the house and substantial acreage around it was

purchased by Lt.-Col. John Clark, then the Collector of Customs at Port Dalhousie. He was another Loyalist refugee from the United States, was an officer in the Second Regiment of the Lincoln Militia, had fought in the Battle of Queenston Heights under Major-General Sir Isaac Brock, and had later served in the Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada. Clark dubbed his new property the Walnut Dale Farm.

After his death in 1862 and that of his wife two years later, the May-Clark homestead passed into the hands

of a series of other families as the decades passed, and the original 700-acre grant around it was slowly, steadily whittled down to the size of a normal urban residential plot, which is what Hermann Seiler and wife Inge found when they purchased the house in 1961.

By this time the house, then some 180 years old, was showing its age, and by the end of the 1970s the Seilers built themselves a modern house next door to the old homestead and declared their intention to demolish the old building. This caught the attention

concluded that it was likely the oldest surviving residence in the city, and urged that it be saved — ideally to be removed to another location and turned into a local heritage museum.

The Seilers were willing to co-operate with these plans, and work began to refurbish the old structure and find a place to which it could be moved. However, all that ended on Oct. 30, 1984, when the old house was gutted by a fire, believed to have been the work of an arsonist.

If you go out to Sparkes Street today you'll find an empty space between the homes at 3 and 5 Sparkes. That's where the old house used to stand. Opposite it, in a small traffic circle at the end of Sparkes Street, there's a historic plaque outlining the history of the May-Clark-Seiler house and its ultimate fate. ■

- Dennis Gannon  
*Is a member of the Historical Society of St. Catharines.*



The house was built in 1784 by William May.



The house was gutted by fire in 1984.

of local heritage advocates who researched the history of the building,

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# A History of Postal Service in Port Dalhousie

*Postal Service in Port is Nearly as Old as the Settlement Itself.*

The earliest post office in the area was located at Fort Niagara, while it was under British control, between 1789 and 1796. When the fort was surrendered to the Americans under the terms of Jay's Treaty, the post office was moved across the Niagara River to the Town of Niagara where Joseph Edwards served as the first postmaster until 1811.

The next post offices were established in the region in the summer of 1801 at Queenston, Chippawa, and Fort Erie. These offices were located at commercial and military centres, and at the ports of entry, and were obvious choices for receiving and forwarding mail. The Queenston office was a vital link in forwarding or receiving overseas mail via the Lewiston office. Other mail to or from the United States was handled by the Niagara and Fort Erie offices.

Grimsby acquired its post office in 1816, St. Catharines in 1817, and Thorold in 1826. William Hamilton Merritt served as the St. Catharines postmaster between ca. 1821 and 1841, and Jacob Keefer was the Thorold postmaster until his death in 1874.

During this early period, the residents of Port Dalhousie either picked up their mail in St. Catharines, or

letters and parcels were delivered to the village. Alexander Muir, in his "Recollections," stated that "there were two mails each week, and Captain Ingster's son, a lad of about 12 years of age, brought these mails on horseback from St. Catharines"



People were often notified that they had mail through notices published in the local newspapers entitled "Letters Remaining at the St. Catharines Post Office."

This situation was partially remedied

when the first post office was established at Port Dalhousie on July 6, 1831. The first known postmaster was George Smith who served in that capacity in 1832. It was probably located in the vicinity of Front and Lock Streets where some of the later

who served in that capacity between ca. 1842 and 1846. In his recollections of the early village, Alexander Muir described Pawling as "a sober Protestant...an old bachelor who never married. He was a magistrate, schoolteacher, storekeeper, farmer, and postmaster."

By 1853, John Harrison Martindale had been appointed to serve as the village postmaster which he did for the next seventeen years. Martindale was the son of John and Jane Martindale. He was described as a "merchant" and "innkeeper" during the 1850s and '60s.

Martindale's successor was Richard Wood, who was appointed in April 1870 and served until March 1875. The newspapers published advertisements for Richard Wood's grocery at Port in 1862-63. His business was destroyed by fire in 1866, but it was rebuilt.

Lieutenant Colonel Johnson J. Gregory was the postmaster between May 1875 and July 1883. He was the son of an old family in the area who settled in Grantham and Louth. Gregory was a grocer and hardware merchant at the corner of Front and Lock Streets, and he kept the post office at the same location. He served as the Reeve of Port Dalhousie in 1877.

*Continued next page*

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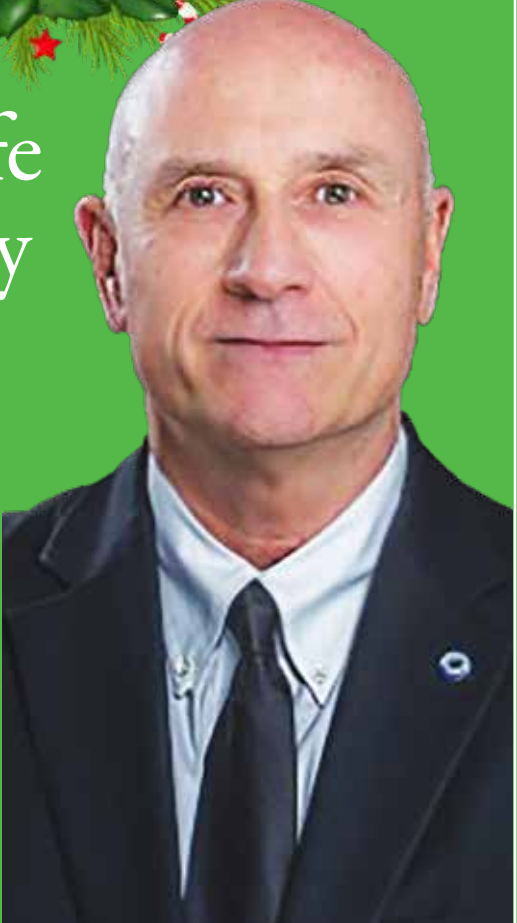


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# History of the Postal Service ... Continued

The next postmaster was Eugene F. Dwyer who served between July 1883 and April 1891. During Dwyer's tenure in charge of the mail, the office was located in the Wood House at the corner of Front and Lock Streets. This building was burned in December 1884. Dwyer and his wife Anna Maria May were the grandparents of the late Corlene Taylor (1928-2025), who helped to establish the Mayholme Foundation on Ontario Street. Dwyer also served as the Reeve of Port Dalhousie.

Alphonso Kelly served as postmaster for the next three years, from June 1891 to December 1894. Records referred to him as a grocer and hotel keeper at Front and Lock Streets. The *Standard* reported on business at the Port office in 1892: revenues of \$642; 426 money orders issued valued at \$5,299; the postmaster received \$14.18 compensation "on money order business," as well as \$8.89 "on savings bank business."

In February 1895, James Stanton, a grocer in Port, was appointed to serve as postmaster. He purchased the lot located between the Austin House and Hogan's Alley in 1896 and built the two-story frame building, numbered 12 Lock Street, which still stands there today. Stanton was a native of Port who served as postmaster until his sudden death in mid-July 1925. He held the record as the longest serving postmaster for Port Dalhousie. In

his duties he "came in contact with all residents of the village and his personality was such that he endeared himself to all, young and old" with his "cheery words of greeting."

In September 1925, Wilfred Laurier Hart was appointed as Stanton's successor. He resigned this post in June 1945. Hart was a native of Port who served overseas in France during the Great War, losing a leg at Vimy Ridge. Hart was a "striking figure... with his gray flannel pants, navy blazer, beret and a resplendent row of war medals on his chest" at the yearly cenotaph ceremony. He lived with his family "above the post office" in Stanton's former store on Lock Street, and afterwards on Front Street in the shop beside the old Port Mansion.

In December 1946, Robert Francis Smith became the last postmaster for Port Dalhousie. He served in this capacity until February 1962 when the Port office was closed and Smith was reassigned to Post Office number 2 at St. Catharines. During Smith's tenure as postmaster, the Port post office was relocated to the Masonic Lodge building at 15-17 Main Street. Charlie Simmons was employed as a clerk in the office, and he later became a mailman in the 1960s when door to door mail delivery was introduced in the town. ■

- Brian Narhi



## The Christie Street Stairs Construction is Complete

It's been a long journey to complete the stairway reconstruction but the wait is over. Public access to the lake has been a priority for the city for some time and we are finally able to enjoy the fruits of their labour,



## The Port Dalhousie Piers Holds the Record

Walking on piers that go out into the water is a very popular activity for residents and visitors alike. But Port Dalhousie holds the record for the longest walking pier in Canada. If you Google "the longest pier in Canada" you get the wooden pier in White Rock, British Columbia. It's a beautiful pier, but our piers in Port Dalhousie are longer by 44 feet. It's time we let the world know about our great refurbished piers and give White Rock some competition, eh?

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## From Where I Sit ...

### *Are Insurance Companies the Latest Threat to Heritage?*

Hank  
Beekhuis

It's bad enough when our provincial government is not supportive of heritage buildings or that we need more reasonable and practical guidelines that respect heritage while keeping things safe, but now there is a new and significant danger. And the justification for this is unsupported by facts.

I have spoken to many business owners over the years who sincerely wish to be heritage-friendly but face a lot of frustration with both municipal guidelines, building inspections and unrealistic building codes being retroactively applied to heritage homes and buildings. In fact, the comment I hear often is that once they finally get it done, they swear they will never do it again. This is not good news.

Now it seems that insurance companies are getting in on the action. Insurance companies have had to pay out huge sums all over North America due to extreme weather and are now looking for any way possible to increase premiums in other areas, whether they are justified or not. It seems that Heritage Designation may become a new risk category.

There are cases in Toronto and Kingston where residents are having a difficult time getting sufficient insurance or even being

outright refused. Recently in Niagara on the Lake, a Heritage designation was paused on the basis of these concerns. St. Catharines also recently failed to create a Heritage District downtown, at least in part based on these concerns.

The implications of this are completely outrageous and will lead to more destruction of our very limited heritage assets in Canada. If owners cannot insure their buildings or have to pay significantly more, there is little hope for the future of Heritage if insurance is based on age or designation alone.

*"If owners cannot insure their buildings or have to pay significantly more, there is little hope for the future of Heritage."*

When you speak to the province, they will say that Heritage Designation alone should not affect insurance premiums, something we all agree with.

The National Trust of Canada who is in the business of saving heritage buildings has even begun an insurance program for their own members. A poll of their membership reports that 61% of them had some difficulty insuring due to age, heritage status or type and condition.

Even the Insurance Bureau of Canada clearly states that condition, not designation, should be the criteria.

Old or Heritage designated buildings are no more of a risk than any other building. It is just an excuse to find more premiums to fill the coffers of insurance companies. What increases risk is the same as any building, heritage or not, and that is regular maintenance and upgrading, if required. This is true for a 20-year old building as well as a 250-year old building. If you don't do anything to a building, it falls apart.

The fear with designated buildings lies partly on the fact that municipalities are not good at adapting to change and make unreasonable demands. Rendering a building safe is not the same as retroactively adhering to a new building code. We need experienced inspectors who have 25 years of renovation, building experience and common sense, and who know what works and what doesn't in a retrofit. It can't simply be a check list done by a bureaucrat. The only criteria ought to be two-fold: Is it safe and is it in good restorable condition. We cannot arbitrarily put age and heritage status into the equation. These factors should have no effect on insurability. Perhaps we should see how Europeans deal with 500-year old buildings before we assume risk that does not exist. ■



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## The Brown Homestead: *Welcome, the Door is Open.*

If you drive along Pelham Road and follow the curve to the southwest corner of the city's boundary, you can't miss the majestic building known as the John Brown House. This 2-storey historical gem, which incorporates a smaller 1½ storey home built in 1796, is the oldest remaining residence in St. Catharines. Today the property consists of 7.5 acres with stunning pastoral views of park lands (Short Hills) and neighbouring vineyards. Settled by United Empire Loyalists John & Magdalena Brown in 1785, this property is a well-preserved example of the region's earliest settlements. For over two centuries, generations have lived in this historic home. It is a testament to a remarkable past which sheds light on early agricultural practices, architecture, craftsmanship and insights into the domestic and social realities of the time. Thanks to leaders who have a passionate interest in heritage conservation and a forward-looking vision to engage current and future generations, The Brown Homestead (TBH) is projected to be a new cultural heritage center for Niagara.

TBH is also home to a log cabin built by Mohawk Chief Teyoninhokarawen — also known as Major John Norton — around the year 1817. Moved from its original location to save it from demolition in 1997, the cabin now rests on the TBH grounds, upon the historic Mohawk Trail which ran along the top of the Escarpment from the Niagara River to Ancaster and beyond. It is important to note the structures on TBH exist on land that is within the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee

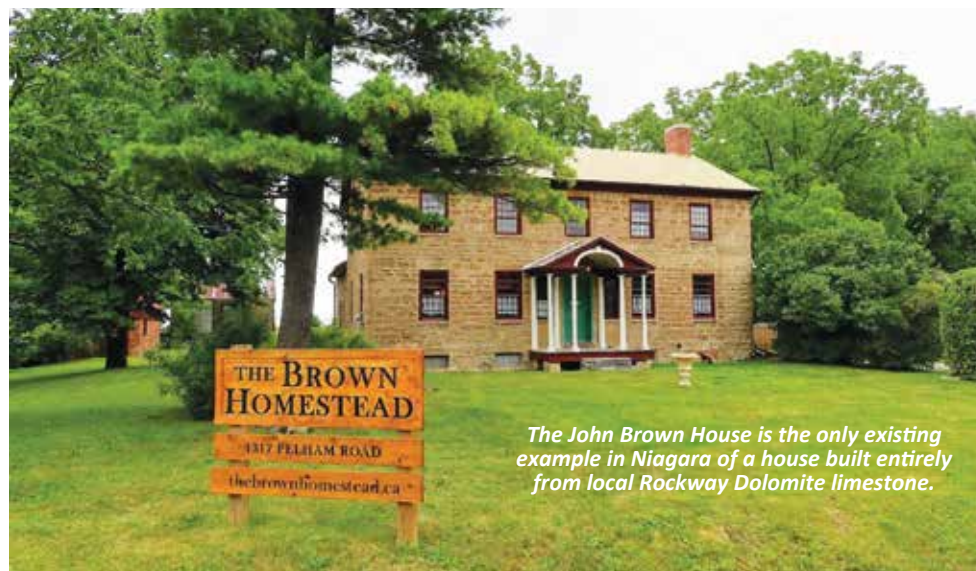
peoples. Niagara remains home to many Indigenous people whose rich culture and contributions are recognized and embraced by the TBH.

The Brown Homestead's strategic location enabled it to serve multiple purposes for the community, including a Niagara tavern & inn and an important

building in 1982. It is the first home in St. Catharines to receive both interior and exterior Heritage Designation.

### If Walls Could Talk

During my visit to the homestead, it was easy to envision a lively vibrant home with so many of its authentic features intact. Entering the house the



*The John Brown House is the only existing example in Niagara of a house built entirely from local Rockway Dolomite limestone.*

stop along the Niagara-Dundas stagecoach line. The property was used to conduct military drills during the First World War, and other uses. The Loyalist Georgian-style home changed hands from the Brown family to significant local families until 1979, when the lot was sold to heritage consultant and archeologist Jon Jouppien. Considerable gratitude must be extended to Jouppien's recognition of the house's historic significance which led to Heritage Designation protecting the

original bright stenciling in the centre hall floor was welcoming. I could imagine generations of children sliding down the black walnut bannister of the staircase. The Summer Kitchen, the oldest part of the house, with the original fireplace, fostered warm thoughts of families gathered to cook and eat. The old growth hand-hewn floor joists, and lath work within the wall exposed 10-foot-high studs 3 inches thick, conjured images of the backbreaking work involved in building such a home. A special feature is the six-panel Loyalist parlour door with

original Victorian oak graining with a plaster cornice and central ceiling rose. I plan to return to the upstairs Ballroom with West-facing windows to view the setting sun as those families once did. This beautiful house must be seen to be appreciated.

In 2012, Andrew Humeniuk and his wife Jennifer viewed the house and purchased the property a few years later. To guarantee the homestead's legacy beyond their lifespans, in 2015 they established The Brown Homestead, a registered Canadian charity dedicated to reimagining historic sites.

So how do advocates for heritage conservation prepare for the future? Why they look to past, of course!

Mohawk Chief John Norton's traditional name Teyoninhokarawen, translates as "His Door Is Open." These words inspired Andrew and Jennifer to literally open the door and consult neighbours, community stake holders, local tradespeople, educational groups, cultural heritage professionals and local government to develop a strategic plan to move forward. Along with a small but creative staff and a group of dedicated volunteers, this outreach proved invaluable. Through this they redefined the TBH mission of, "Reimagining historic sites as engines of progress."

Within our distracted digital age, stimulating interest in heritage requires a departure from the static 20th century's 'traditional museum house model' which emphasized period costumes and the viewing of artifacts. As educational and informative as these activities were, competing for visitor engagement in the 21st century would necessitate integrating a "re-adaptive reuse" to

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“rehabilitate” cultural tourism.

TBH has plans to rediscover its ‘roots’ through the creation of a Heritage Garden. This connects the farmhouse (once active for over 180 years) with the current sustainable “shop local, eat local” campaigns (which btw, are truly old concepts) and builds two gardens to grow heirloom vegetables and flowers, with hands-on in-garden workshops.

#### When the Past Reveals the Future

In the upstairs ballroom, twenty-five layers of wall paper needed to be carefully removed to be preserved both physically and digitally. In doing so, a small section of Victorian wallpaper



Left: The elegant portico of the Brown Homestead

Below: John Norton's (Teyoninhokarawen) cabin on the grounds of the Homestead.



was revealed. It is on display under glass for protection. However, imagine walking into the rooms to see the walls decorated as they once were. Currently, TBH is partnered with Brock University in an ongoing project using modern technology to enhance the possibilities for interpreting this space. Projecting different wallpapers onto the walls using 3D modelling as an augmented interior ‘mixed reality’ will offer visitors an immersive experience which may enable a dialogue which resonates with diverse cultures and a younger demographic.

This prompts Andrew to pose an interesting question, “Why represent only one layer of history?” History, like wallpaper over the years, may require a layered approach. As all history is a continuum, TBH is a work in progress, many of their future projects are yet to be unveiled. I left The Brown Homestead feeling the best is yet to come! ■

- Christine Nicholson

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# What's In a Name? *Our Final Installment Exploring the Origin of Street Names in Port Dalhousie*

### Old Lakeshore Boulevard

Located at the west end of Lakeshore Road. It is the stub-end of the street that was left over when its intersection with Ontario Street was reconfigured.

### Old Martindale Road

Runs south-easterly off Third Street Louth, north of the QEW. It is the remains of the original Martindale Road that was left when this street was reconfigured several years ago. In 1967 the County of Lincoln took over the abandoned streetcar line and widened Martindale Road, replacing the old trestle over Richardson's Creek with a new road bridge. The road continued along the old right-of-way to Lakeshore Road. Meanwhile, the old road goes down the hill crossing the Creek and up the other side as Old Martindale Road.

### Ontario Street

Begins at St. Paul Street and runs more or less northerly until it joins Lakeshore Road. It was probably an old Indian trail. It may have been named after our Province or, in the alternative it was so named because it runs in the direction of and almost to Lake Ontario. Originally, "Ontario", was probably a Huron name. It means a "good", "large" or "beautiful" lake, or "sparkling water". At the time of amalgamation in 1961, Port Dalhousie also had an Ontario Street. It was renamed Lakeport Road.

### Pawling Street

Runs north-westerly off Bayview Drive in Port Dalhousie. Presumably named after Nathan Pawling, one of the first Councillors of Port Dalhousie which was incorporated as a Village in 1862. It had been called Ninth Street but was changed to Pawling Street by City of St. Catharines. Pawling is regarded as the founder of Port Dalhousie and was its first Postmaster.

### Paxton Avenue

Runs north-westerly off Bayview Drive in Port Dalhousie. It's named after the Paxton Family. John Paxton was born in Scotland in 1836 and died in Port Dalhousie in 1912. John was

instrumental in bringing the Ontario Rubber Company to Port Dalhousie. He was a locktender and a member of Village Council. This street had been known as First Avenue but it was changed to Paxton by City of St. Catharines to avoid a duplication of names resulting from amalgamation.

### Peel Street

Runs north-easterly from Considine Avenue to Paxton Avenue in Port Dalhousie. Prior to amalgamation in 1961 it was called South Drive. Bob Bell, a former Regional Councillor thought he probably came up with this name. All of the renaming of the streets necessitated by amalgamation was done in one night. As there were exactly 100 street names to be changed

grew so tall and straight. Accordingly, in early Crown Land Grants, the Crown reserved to itself all white pine trees then growing or that thereafter might grow on the land being granted.

### Port Master Drive

Runs easterly off Dalemere Court in Port Dalhousie. It was so named by the developer and is another example of street names in this area that have a marine derivation. Covered by City of St. Catharines Plan M55.

### Port Royal Crescent

Runs northerly off Port Master Drive in Port Dalhousie. Its name is yet another example of streets with a nautical flavour. Covered by City of St. Catharines Plan M55.

### Read Road

Runs northerly off Carlton Street on the east side of the Welland Canal to Happy Rolph's Bird Sanctuary on Lake Ontario. It may be named after Thomas Read, Reeve of the Village of Port Dalhousie 1897-1898 and again in 1902-1906. His father was a pioneer resident of Port Dalhousie. They owned a large tract of land on both sides of Main Street at the west end of the Village where they kept horses used for towing ships through the Canal. Read's Island, now Henley Island, was part of their holding.

### Robert Street

Runs south-easterly off Mary Street to Dalhousie Avenue in Port Dalhousie. It is one of three streets in Port Dalhousie that were named after the children of the Corbett family that owned the farm where this street is located. The others were Mary and Catherine. Robert E. Corbett was born in 1914 and died in 1979. He is buried in St. John's Cemetery in Port Dalhousie.

### Shelley Avenue

Runs north-westerly off Bayview Drive in Port Dalhousie to Lake Ontario. It is named after Percy Bysshe Shelley, one of the great English lyric poets. He came from a wealthy family. He attended Eton and Oxford from which he was expelled. He tried to encourage the Irish to rebel against England which, he felt were oppressing them. He was born in Sussex in 1792 and drowned in Italy in 1822. Before amalgamation it was known as 8th Avenue.

### Simcoe Street

Intersects Main Street in Port Dalhousie. In all likelihood it was named after John Graves Simcoe, the first Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada (1791-1796). Simcoe developed a number of roads emanating from Toronto which subsequently became the initial framework for our system of highways. Perhaps his most notable achievement was the passing of legislation that eventually abolished slavery in Upper Canada. Apparently there were two Simcoe Streets at the time of amalgamation in 1961 as one of them was renamed Colbey Street.

### Verdun Avenue

Runs south-easterly off Main Street. Most likely it was named after Verdun, France, the site of many battles, the most famous being fought during World War One. Another Verdun Avenue existed but in 1961 it was changed to Champion Drive.

### Vineyard Street

Runs north-easterly off Old Mill Road in Port Dalhousie. So named by the developer, Mary Ann Corbett. The name was probably chosen because of the many vineyards that exist in this part of the Peninsula. Covered by Plan 297, Registered in 1951. ■



the naming committee was probably getting tired and giddy toward the end of the evening and Bob suspected the name Peel Street simply came from the old ballad, "Do You Ken John Peel".

### Pine Street

Runs south-westerly off Ann Street in Port Dalhousie. Undoubtedly it is named after the pine tree. In the Colonial Period, white pines were very much in demand to be used as the masts for British ships because they

### Queen Street

Runs north-westerly off St. Paul Street to Welland Avenue. Almost every town and city in Canada has a Queen Street. It is another reminder of our early links with the British monarchy. At the time of amalgamation in 1961, Port Dalhousie also had a Queen Street. It was renamed Dalhousie Avenue. Port Weller also had a Queen Street. It was renamed Newport Street.

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The St. Catharines Street Name Project  
was compiled by  
**Maurice Gomme**  
on behalf of the  
St. Catharines Heritage Committee

The World's Best  
Gingerbread Cookies



Yields: 24  
5 inch tall cookies



Ingredients:

3 cups all-purpose flour  
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder  
3/4 teaspoon baking soda  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1 tablespoon ground ginger  
1 3/4 teaspoons ground cinnamon  
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves  
6 tablespoons unsalted butter  
3/4 cup dark brown sugar  
1 large egg  
1/2 cup molasses  
2 teaspoons vanilla  
1teaspoon finely grated lemon zest

Directions:

In a small bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, ginger, cinnamon, and cloves until well blended.

In a large bowl (KitchenAid's great for this) beat butter, brown sugar, and egg on medium speed until well blended.

Add molasses, vanilla, and lemon zest and continue to mix until well blended.

Gradually stir in dry ingredients until blended and smooth.

Divide dough in half and wrap each half in plastic and let stand at room temperature for at least 2 hours or up to 8 hours.

Preheat oven to 375 deg. Prepare baking sheets by lining with parchment paper.

(Dough can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 4 days, but in this case it should be refrigerated. Return to room temp before using.) Preheat oven to 375°.

Grease or line cookie sheets with parchment paper.

Place 1 portion of the dough on a lightly floured surface.

Sprinkle flour over dough and rolling pin.

Roll dough to a scant 1/4-inch thick.

Use additional flour to avoid sticking.

Cut out cookies with desired cutter-- the ginger bread man is our favorite of course.

Space cookies 1 1/2-inches apart.

Bake 1 sheet at a time for 7-10 minutes (the lower time will give you softer cookies-- very good!).

Remove cookie sheet from oven and allow the cookies to stand until the cookies are firm enough to move to a wire rack.

After cookies are cool you may decorate them any way you like.

I usually brush them with a powdered sugar glaze when I am in a hurry, but they look wonderful decorated with Royal icing.

Recipe by [gingerkitten D](#)  
@ [www.food.com](http://www.food.com)

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## The Mystery of Mistletoe



The yuletide decorations are up: a trimmed tree, jolly stockings on the mantel and—wait, what’s that weed hanging from the ceiling, and why are people so amorous when they find themselves beneath it?

Mistletoe, a parasitic plant, is actually accustomed to the suspension: In nature, it grows only on other trees’ branches. And it’s long been associated with mystical power: In Norse myth, the god Balder is mistakenly killed by an arrow of mistletoe—after which the plant becomes synonymous with his grieving mother’s undying love. While mistletoe’s berries are poisonous, ancient Romans and Greeks used its leaves medicinally, to treat cramps, epilepsy and ulcers. And first-century Celtic druids apparently used mistletoe to make a sacred fertility elixir—one historic use that presaged the plant’s now-dominant identity as an excuse for kissing.

The first known reference to smooching under the plant dates to a 1784 English poem, in which three men “kiss beneath the mistletoe” the lips of a “girl not turn’d of twenty.” By then, any woman or girl who walked beneath this vegetal decor had to stop and wait to be kissed. As for the girl on the receiving end, the era’s (otherwise chaste) social customs dictated she never refuse a kiss under the mistletoe, lest she invite bad luck on the marriage market.

Today’s typical mistletoe decor differs from its 19th-century precedent in a few ways. Its berries aren’t poisonous—because the stuff’s usually fake; those false berries are often mistakenly red, rather than white; and the sprigs are (one hopes) no longer being used to force kisses upon unwilling recipients. Still, at family gatherings and in cheesy movies, mistletoe remains the catalyst of many an awkward or playful holiday peck.



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# The Big Wheel Truck Stop

Our Annual Christmas Story for Your Reading Pleasure.

In September 1960, I woke up one morning with six hungry babies and just 75 cents in my pocket. Their father was gone. The boys ranged from three months to seven years; their sister was two. Their Dad had never been much more than a presence they feared. Whenever they heard his tires crunch on the gravel driveway they would scramble to hide under their beds. He did manage to leave \$15 a week to buy groceries.

Now that he had decided to leave, there would be no more beatings, but no food either. If there was a welfare system in effect at that time, I certainly knew nothing about it. I scrubbed the kids until they looked brand new and then put on my best homemade dress. I loaded them into the rusty old 51 Chevy and drove off to find a job.

The seven of us went to every factory, store and restaurant in our small town. No luck. The kids stayed crammed into the car and tried to be quiet while I tried to convince whomever would listen that I was willing to learn or do anything. I had to have a job.. Still no luck.

The last place we went to, just a few miles out of town, was an old Root Beer Barrel drive-in that had been converted to a truck stop. It was called the Big Wheel.

An old lady named Granny owned the place and she peeked out of the window from time to time at all those kids. She needed someone on the graveyard shift, 11 at night until seven in the morning. She paid 65 cents an hour and I could start that night. I raced home and called the teenager down the street that baby-sat for people. I bargained with her to come and sleep on my sofa for a dollar a night. She could arrive with her pajamas on and the kids would already be asleep. This seemed like a good arrangement to her, so we made

a deal.

That night when the little ones and I knelt to say our prayers we all thanked God for finding Mommy a job. And so I started at the Big Wheel. When I got home in the mornings I woke the baby-sitter up and sent her home with one dollar of my tip money – fully half of what I averaged every night.

As the weeks went by, heating bills

scrub his floor than it did for him to do the tires.

I was now working six nights instead of five and it still wasn't enough. Christmas was coming and I knew there would be no money for toys for the kids. I found a can of red paint and started repairing and painting some old toys. Then I hid them in the basement so there would be something for Santa to



added a strain to my meager wage. The tires on the old Chevy had the consistency of penny balloons and began to leak. I had to fill them with air on the way to work and again every morning before I could go home. One bleak fall morning, I dragged myself to the car to go home and found four tires in the back seat. New tires! There was no note, no nothing, just those beautiful brand new tires.

I made a deal with the local service station. In exchange for his mounting the new tires, I would clean up his office. I remember it took me a lot longer to

deliver on Christmas morning. Clothes were a worry too. I was sewing patches on top of patches on the boys pants and soon they would be too far gone to repair.

On Christmas Eve the usual customers were drinking coffee in the Big Wheel. These were the truckers, Les, Frank, and Jim, and a state trooper named Joe. A few musicians were hanging around after a gig at the Legion and were dropping nickels in the pinball machine. The regulars all just sat around and talked through the wee hours of the morning and then left to get home

before the sun came up.

When it was time for me to go home at seven o'clock on Christmas morning I hurried to the car. I was hoping the kids wouldn't wake up before I managed to get home and get the presents from the basement and place them under the tree. (We had cut down a small cedar tree by the side of the road down by the dump.) It was still dark and I couldn't see much, but there appeared to be some dark shadows in the car – or was that just a trick of the night? Something certainly looked different, but it was hard to tell what.

When I reached the car I peered warily into one of the side windows. Then my jaw dropped in amazement. My old battered Chevy was filled full to the top with boxes of all shapes and sizes. I quickly opened the driver's side door, scrambled inside and knelt in the front facing the back seat.

Reaching back, I pulled off the lid of the top box. Inside was whole case of little blue jeans, sizes 2-10! I looked inside another box: It was full of shirts to go with the jeans. Then I peeked inside some of the other boxes: There was candy and nuts and bananas and bags of groceries. There was an enormous ham for baking, and canned vegetables and potatoes. There was pudding and Jell-O and cookies, pie filling and flour. There was a whole bag of laundry supplies and cleaning items. And there were five toy trucks and one beautiful little doll.

As the sun slowly rose on the most amazing Christmas Day of my life, I was sobbing with gratitude. And I will never forget the joy on the faces of my little ones that precious morning. Yes, there were angels that long-ago December. And they all hung out at the Big Wheel truck stop. ■

- Anonymous



Mayor Mat Siscoe  
City of St. Catharines

## Seasons Greetings!

As the winter season arrives in Port Dalhousie, I extend my warmest wishes to all residents and local businesses. This time of year, reminds us of the importance of togetherness as we gather with family and friends, share in community traditions, and support the local shops and restaurants that make this neighbourhood so special.

I'm especially looking forward to the return of Let It Glow, which will once again illuminate Rennie Park until January 4. It's a wonderful way to celebrate the season, take in the festive lights, and enjoy the magic of winter in Port Dalhousie. Your kindness and community spirit continue to shine brightly, even on the coldest days. Thank you for all that you do, and may this season bring you warmth, joy, and lasting memories with those you hold dear.

@MatSiscoe

@MatSiscoe

@MayorMatSiscoe

mayor@stcatharines.ca



# WINTER CROSSWORD

Across

- 1. Spaceman Shepard
- 5. Humdingers
- 10. Surgery reminder
- 14. "You've Got Mail" director Ephron
- 15. Man on a mission?
- 16. New Zealand fruit
- 17. Breaks environmental regularity?
- 20. Give the nod
- 21. Claptrap
- 22. Cyclone center
- 23. Losing proposition?
- 25. Bartlett or Bosc
- 27. Several reps, in the weight room
- 30. Proper partner
- 32. Brunch fare
- 36. Warm, so to speak
- 38. Big hit on Broadway
- 40. Lima's land
- 41. Follow the planned arrangement?
- 44. Brainstorming result
- 45. Culinary directive
- 46. Lethal loop
- 47. Meet an untimely fate
- 49. Get steamed up
- 51. Once named
- 52. Coward of the stage
- 54. Common canine
- 56. Ten Commandments container
- 59. For the taking
- 61. Darts down
- 65. Thorough investigation of war?
- 68. Word from Bishop T.D. Jakes
- 69. Pending
- 70. Word with fish or wish
- 71. Clarinet component
- 72. Act the coquette
- 73. Escape slowly

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14					15						16			
17					18						19			
20							21					22		
			23			24		25			26			
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56	57	58		59			60		61			62	63	64
65			66					67						
68					69						70			
71					72						73			

Down

- 1. Singer/songwriter Paul
  - 2. Clark's colleague
  - 3. Circle parts
  - 4. Like a jaybird, perhaps
  - 5. More recent
  - 6. "Yecch!"
  - 7. Actor Cobb
  - 8. Square, so to speak
  - 9. Keep at bay
  - 10. Hit the slopes
  - 11. Quote as an authority
  - 12. Elsewhere
  - 13. Baptism, e.g.
  - 18. Hidden marksman
- 19. Laser light
  - 24. Nepal neighbor
  - 26. Copy, briefly
  - 27. Makeshift money
  - 28. Sidestep
  - 29. Printer powder
  - 31. Recurring theme
  - 33. Slot machine fruit
  - 34. Take off the board
  - 35. He's in a class by himself?
  - 37. Wood coloring
  - 39. A funny thing happened on the way there
  - 42. Escort from the premises
  - 43. Ring combo
- 48. Mushy
  - 50. Iron-pumper's pride
  - 53. Sierra \_\_\_\_
  - 55. Pyramids, e.g.
  - 56. A long way off
  - 57. Cold crust
  - 58. Dummy's seat
  - 60. James of jazz
  - 62. Symphony member
  - 63. Mass of glass
  - 64. Dance instruction
  - 66. Deep place?
  - 67. Casual greetings

\*Answers on page 23





St. Ann's School students - Halloween, 1976



## Stockings of Love 2025

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[stockingsoflove2@gmail.com](mailto:stockingsoflove2@gmail.com)

### Drop off locations:



**"Elf Headquarters" in Port Dalhousie @ 19 Main St. Mon to Fri 10-4**

**No Frills:** 581 Lake St., St. Catharines

**Sobey's:** 400 Scott St. (at Niagara St), St. Catharines

**Avondale Store:** 359 Main St., Port Dalhousie

**Avondale Store:** 260 Lakeshore Rd., St. Catharines

**Avondale Store:** 109 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines

**Your Boutique:** 25 Main St., Port Dalhousie

**Avondale Store:** 224 Lakeport Rd. St. Catharines



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A City of St. Catharines worker paints the decorative commemorative crosswalk in front of the Cenotaph.

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# Chris Bittle

Member of Parliament - St. Catharines



Hope you have a safe and happy Holiday season!

Have any federal issues, reach out to my office, we would be happy to help!

**Community Office** [www.ChrisBittleMP.ca](http://www.ChrisBittleMP.ca)

61 Geneva St. Unit 1, St. Catharines, ON L2R 4M6  
905.934.MPMP (6767)  
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