

*Happy Hanukkah!*

# GRAFTON GAZETTE

*Happy Holidays!*

## The Pandemic Christmas Issue

### Our Board of Directors:

President: Sheila Richardson  
Director: Gerry Kennedy

### From the President's Desk...

As this long and wearying year is drawing to a close, we're entering the traditional festive season - with Best Wishes to all. I hope you've had a chance to read the communique from the Board that was sent out a few weeks ago with some important information included.

Now I would like to take a moment to express the Board's appreciation to each of you for the patience and good cheer you've shown over the past ten months or so. We've all felt the impact in our lives and are looking forward to "better days ahead". It's wonderful that the community spirit is alive and well at 5 Ogilvie despite all setbacks, as this edition of our *Grafton Gazette* shows so convincingly.

In the spirit of the Season, I want to thank all who have contributed to this edition; a community is only as strong as the membership who support it. A special "thanks" to Catherine and Jackie for all the work and time they put in to get it out to us. In reflecting on the time and talent so generously given by many of you over the past year I would like to extend my appreciation to all of you; with special mention to Lynn & Bev for setting up the Christmas tree in the lobby,; and to Trudy for her crèche; to Donna and her garden committee for their work on plans and projects to beautify the property; to Lynn for his diligence in sanitizing the door handles over the spring and summer; to Ric, our custodian, who likewise, stepped up to help out in these extraordinary times; and let's not forget Trish for overseeing the



Christmas Tree by Lynn & Bev

*Merry Christmas!*

egg supply for those of us who wanted to get cracking; Simone our property manager who has provided invaluable support to the Board and has dealt with your concerns when you've contacted her. If I have left out your special contribution to our community, please excuse my omission.

To all, I close with Season's Greetings and a wish that you enjoy, as much as possible, with family and friends a Merry Christmas / Happy Hanukkah / or other celebration religious or secular, and a Happy New Year.



Hello folks: thank you for making this a very special issue. We are pleased to present some of your memories and stories: they are full of heart and love and remind us that despite any differences, the spirit of Christmas is something we all share. We hope you enjoy them. We thought Mary Lou's contribution was a very good place to start.....

Hi everyone,

Thank you Catherine and Jackie for suggesting this great idea to help lift our spirits and trigger some special memories of Christmas's past. I love Christmas and all that it represents; the music, the shops all decorated up with Christmas lights and animated characters, the family turkey dinners, the Christmas church services, and the candlelight advent walk in Dundas each year. My most memorable Christmas's are sharing time with my three daughters and their families. Christmas morning spent with daughter Lynda and her family in Dundas, Christmas dinners with Sandy's family in Barrie, and daughter Sue and family in Fort Francis. Christmas services are always a special time and if I get lucky, I may hear the Hallelujah Chorus sung by the great choir at Central Presbyterian church in Hamilton. I miss my dear friend Allison who shared my life with me for forty-five years. I still feel his presence. He is my Guardian Angel. I also miss all my new friends here at Grafton Square, sharing coffee hours and our annual Christmas Swiss Chalet dinner in the party room. My hope is to see everyone again visiting in the hallways or party room of our special building in 2021.

Merry Christmas dear neighbours.

Mary Lou Collett #203

## DECORATING THE TREE AT #5

- 2019 ++++ tangles, no masks
- 2020 +++ masks, no tangles
- 2021 no masks, no tangles??



During and after...

### It took a village all day!

2020 has been a tough year. Without the caring attitude of this community it would have been much tougher. We have all benefited from the smiles, good humour, empathy, and support of our neighbours. We thank the person who thought to provide 'sunshine calls' and all those whose services kept our ship afloat in waters that were definitely troubled. This too will pass but we will never forget the good-naturedness and care of the folks at #5 in this difficult year.

## AND OUR BEAUTIFUL GARDEN...

"The garden reconciles human art and wild nature, hard work and deep pleasure, spiritual practice and the material world. It is a magical place because it is not divided."

Thomas Moore: *The Re-enchantment of Everyday Life.*

*Thank you Donna & Bob for creating this beautiful side garden. And thank you to all those who took an interest in it & helped care for it.*



Before, during & after...

### It didn't take all day!

## LYNN AND BEV'S LITTLE RUBBER HOUSE THAT COULD...

Lynn and I moved to Dundas with our three small children aged four and under in 1969. Ours was a storey and a half tucked under the Escarpment on a Court off York Road. Two bedrooms up, one down and one very small bathroom, no shower. But what we didn't know was that the little house had rubber walls!

By that time, trying to see family both in Woodstock and Toronto at Christmas was difficult and the kids didn't want to leave their newly-opened gifts. So we offered to have Christmas for both sides of the family. Lynn traditionally drove to Woodstock Christmas Eve day with our kids to get them out of sight and picked up his parents who stayed the night. Two others came by train from Toronto and again, Lynn and the kids picked them up at the Dundas station. And reversed it all Boxing Day. Yes, you have correctly counted a family of five plus four overnights, not all couples! Others drove over for the day.

The saving grace in the house of rubber was a fully finished basement with a bar along one end, storage behind. This became the buffet. Lynn removed two household doors and laid them over wooden 'saw-horses' transformed into the sit-down table for 12-15 people. White tablecloths made all the difference with an eclectic assortment of china and utensils united with bright seasonal napkins. Helpers brought the food down the stairs, one dish at a time. The tree was in this room and it was very festive.

After dinner my Mom and Lynn's Mother rinsed, washed and dried the dishes in the double laundry sinks in another room, laughing together as if they were in their right minds! As far as sleeping arrangements went, Lynn and I had our own bed and the kids slept in the rec room but to this day, we can't remember how we managed beds for the others and bathroom time for all, but it happened. Photos from those days are almost unbelievable but they are memorable Christmases for all of us to this day.

Bev Hayden, #503.

## ADVENT

### A VERY SIGNIFICANT TIME IN THE CHRISTIAN CALENDAR



Nativity Scene kindly lent by Trudy Collins

For Christians, the Advent season has great spiritual significance. It joyfully anticipates the arrival of Christ and keeps Christ at the centre of the four-week period leading up to His birth on Christmas Eve. Celebrating Advent usually involves a period of prayer, fasting and repentance; this is followed by anticipation, hope and joy. Christians celebrate the wonder of Christ's birth, His presence among us in the form of the Holy Spirit and they reflect on and prepare for His coming again.

#### Come, Lord Jesus, Come

Come, Lord Jesus, Come;

come again to be born

In the stable of this world,

awakening with your human cry

the buried, dormant love

of the One who made us,

whose Life is stored within us.

Wake up the world to hear

your labouring cry echoing

through every rock and branch,

Every star, and every soul.

Wake us up and bring us

through birthing pain

to the bringing forth

of your Life on earth,

the fulfillment of your implanting,

And let it begin with me

Flora Irwin, 1999.

From 'A Final Word: The Poetry of Flora Litt-Irwin' with the blessing of Wayne Irwin. We miss our dear friend and neighbour who died on March 29th of this year.

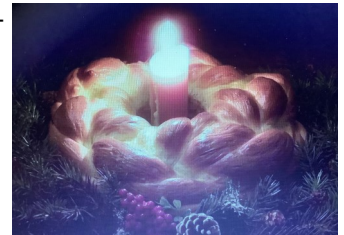
Thank you Joyce and John for sharing your very special Christmas traditions with us...

#### OUR UKRAINIAN CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

We are of Ukrainian heritage. Some of my favourite memories are when we lived in Thunder Bay and were part of the Ukrainian Church there. The ladies would gather to make perogies at Christmas and at other times of the year. They would be sold to raise money for the Church and for senior's activities. Both the men's and ladies groups would work together; we would go caroling in both English and Ukrainian. We did so much together that it felt like a big and happy family to me.

Typically, Ukrainians celebrate Christmas on January 7, but we have adopted the western tradition of Christmas on December 25. Christmas Eve, December 24, is the most significant time for us. This is a day of fasting to commemorate the hardships endured by Mother Mary on the trip to Bethlehem. The whole family typically gathers for the Holy Supper. The table is set with wheat stalks either under the table cloth or in a vase. There is a braided bread called *Kolach* with a lit candle inserted in the centre as a symbol of prosperity.

Dinner does not start until the first star is seen in the sky; the children are sent outside to announce when it appears.



Twelve vegetarian dishes symbolize the 12 Apostles who gathered for the Last Supper. The Lord's Prayer is said and supper is started with a dish called *Kutya*, a cooked wheat dressed with honey, ground poppy seeds and sometimes chopped nuts. Traditionally, the head of the family raises the first spoonful and greets the family by saying "Christ is born" to which they reply "Let us glorify Him". This is the same greeting Ukrainians give each other during the Christmas season. The family sing Christmas carols. Soon after midnight or in the morning, the family attend a special Christmas service. The celebration of the birth of the Christ child continues until the Epiphany.

We do exchange presents but our celebration is focused around the church, community and family. It has always been a joyous occasion but never more so than when we were part of a large Ukrainian community. Together with family and friends, we celebrated our shared traditions and beliefs in a wonderful Christmas spirit. We have many happy memories. Not being able to even attend our Church this year is a real sadness for us.

Joyce & John Kohut, #508



Twelve-dish Christmas Eve supper by Jacques Hnzidovsky

**For most of us, Christmas means time spent with family. Some of our most special memories revolve around those precious connections. We think you'll enjoy these....**

### **A Granddaughter Remembers**

Christmas was always a very exciting time in the Brunton household. My grandmother always decorated for Christmas, ensuring that each room had a number of special touches. She extended her love of decorating downstairs to the Community Room at Grafton for a number of years and many of her decorations are still used today. I am certain she would be pleased about this.



Perhaps some of my most cherished memories were the Christmas Eve's spent with my Grandmother, Evelyn, at the condo. Every Christmas Eve I came to the condo to have a sleepover with my grandmother. This usually consisted of indulging in yummy Christmas treats and a Christmas movie marathon. Even in her later years we would stay up past midnight laughing away at some of our favourite movies. She always favoured comedy over any other genre.

As some of you may know, my grandmother was a great cook. She taught my dad and I most of what we know about preparing the perfect Christmas meal. She always assumed the role of "gravy consultant" and would taste test throughout the preparation. Each year she made her cranberry orange relish to accompany the turkey dinner. We all loved the relish and she always said it was her secret special recipe. Not long ago she finally shared her top-secret recipe - simply following the directions on the back of the Ocean Spray Cranberry bag! We all had such a laugh over this! One of the things we will miss most was her fabulous sense of humour and the laughter she brought to our lives.

Jess Brunton , #202

Sadly Evelyn died on October 7. Our community is not the same without her.

### **EVELYN'S SUPER-SECRET CRANBERRY-ORANGE RELISH**

1 unpeeled orange, cut into 1/8ths & seeded

1 12-oz pkg fresh Ocean Spray or Frozen cranberries, rinsed & drained

3/4 to 1 cup sugar

Place cranberries & oranges in food processor. Process until evenly chopped.

Stir in sugar. Store in fridge or freezer. ENJOY!

### **YOUR COVID CORNER**

What do you tell yourself when you wake up late and realize you have a fever?

*Self I so-late*

Now is not the time to surround yourself with positive people.

I'll tell you a coronavirus joke - but you must wait two weeks to see if you get it.

### **MARILYN'S CHRISTMAS SHORTBREAD**

1 lb butter, softened

1 cup icing sugar

1/2 cup corn starch

1 tsp vanilla extract

3 cups all-purpose flour

Beat butter til it looks like whipped cream. Add dry ingredients. Drop by teaspoon onto ungreased cookie sheet. Decorate with chopped cherries, coloured sugar or indent with thumb & add a drop of jam to the dent. Bake at 350 for about 10 minutes. Cool in pan. ENJOY! [also in Spec, Dec. 10].

### **A Daughter Remembers**

Baking was the most delicious Christmas activity in our house. The cakes were first. Chopping raisins, candied fruit and walnuts was snack heaven to me. Then we cut lining from paper bags for the three graduated round tins. Next we poured boiling water on the almonds to help remove the skins, before grinding them for the almond paste which iced the cakes. They were then put away to be served to visitors. The squares and the cookies were the most delicious part of the preparations. Of course they were also stored until Christmas visitors arrived. Yum.

My mother had a talent for decorating and trimming the gifts which I eagerly copied. I was proud of my skill, which ultimately led to the worst Christmas I recall. Worst because I secretly opened every present with my name on it and was able to rewrap it. Having to pretend surprise and delight took its toll. This wasn't fun. I felt ashamed of my lying. Important lesson learned at 12 or 13.

My father was responsible for buying the tree, which had always been a fir. One year he came home with a Scotch Pine which was becoming popular and a bit cheaper than fir. We all hated that tree and complained strongly. He finally agreed to get the fir tree but it was the most bedraggled sight to us, More grumbling and tears. My mom and 3 kids were no match for my Dad and at last he brought us an acceptably beautiful Christmas tree.

My Mom had an artist's eye and insisted on a strict order for trimming that tree. First the lights were fastened on the inner branches to light the inside of the tree. The largest ornaments were for the lower branches and the smallest for the top. Of course an angel topped the tree. Silver icicles were my favourite part of the event and, as I was too impatient to place each one on its twig, I would hang bunches of them together. Alas, this was not acceptable. Eventually I did learn how to hang them separately— and found that all it took was a little time.

Marilyn Corbeil Waters #402.

We are pleased to learn about this Muslim festival... and also about two 'non-Canadian Christmases ...

## THE MUSLIM FESTIVAL OF EID UL-FITR



In the name of God, the most Compassionate and the most Merciful, we wish all our brothers and sisters here at 5 Ogilvie Street and throughout Canada and the rest of the world, a very happy Holiday Season.

We are very grateful to you all for remembering us at this time and showing interest in how we Muslims celebrate our most important festival, Eid ul-Fitr (Eid).

Eid is celebrated after the month of Ramadan, the month of fasting. During Ramadan, Muslims are to refrain from any food or drink from before sunrise until sunset. It is meant to be a strengthening and enlightening task. It also opens our eyes to those who are less fortunate than us. While fasting, Muslims are supposed to remember God as much as they can, through prayers, charity, and other acts of kindness.

After sunset on the last day of Ramadan, preparations for Eid begin. Delicious food and sweets are prepared, people greet each other with affection, and homes are decorated. The morning of Eid begins with a congregational prayer and sermon at the mosque. A donation to the needy is also paid by each family. After the sermon, all people present greet each other with hugs and saying, "Eid Mubarak" which means Happy Eid. The rest of the day is spent visiting friends and family. Children are always happy to receive gifts or money, known as Eidi.

Eid gives the message of kindness, sympathy and brother/sisterhood. It is a festival of love and compassion.

Wasi and Meena, #208



## REMEMBERING MY DANISH CHRISTMASES

At Xmas time, my family and I would go for a Danish Xmas dinner at "Sunset Villa" every year; it was just nice to see everybody, and the food was so good; now we can't do that because the restaurant has closed down because of Covid 19; we will all miss that, and maybe we could find a new place to go to. I hope so, Christmas is special and should be shared.

In Denmark, at Xmas time, we dance around the Xmas tree, hand in hand and sing Xmas songs. It is a tradition, and also we had real candles on the tree, which was kind of dangerous, but we never had any problems. I remember one Xmas, when I was 8 or 9, in Denmark, where I was born, when I got a pair of rubber boots that I really wanted. I was so happy and had to put them on and go and show my friends; we didn't have much so we usually got something we needed.

Inge Trudel, # 206



A Danish Tree with Real Candles!

### Note

The term Xmas does not secularize Christmas by removing Christ. The term is historically correct, though much used as an abbreviation today. Christmas comes from the Greek *Christos* & the Latin *missa* (for mass). X is the symbol for the Greek letter *chi* and with *mas* represents Christmas with the same meaning. But note: *Xmas* is pronounced *Christmas*!

## CONGRATULATIONS TO ADOR ESTRAVILLO (#507)

Ador takes up a new position in Richmond, B.C. in January! He & Helene have lived here for 19 & 23 years respectively! They love it here & will return often but the coast, mountains & trails called! Ador will be a New Product Introduction/Quality/Continuous Improvement Leader with the company *Photon Control*. We'll miss you Ador and we will miss Helene (& Sherpa and Roxy) when they join you in May. *May all go well!*



WE ALSO SAY FAREWELL TO... Terri (#404) who could only be with us for a short while. We hope she'll come back to say hello!

Also Jeremy Woodley (#405) left us for *Wentworth Lodge* in January. He was very grateful for all the help this community provided him. We wish him well, as we do the loved ones of other Graf-tonites who reside in long term care homes.

Finally, we sadly acknowledge the passing of Mary Kowalchuk who moved to *Amica* last year. We remember her fondly.

In 2021 Ramadan begins Mon. Apr. 12 & ends Tues. May 11

## CHRISTMAS AT GRAN'S

Christmases at my Gran's home in Kingston, Jamaica were magical! We travelled there annually so Daddy could work and Mummy could 'go home'. My brother and I loved being with our grandmother and aunt but we also loved being in her big house (there was so much to do) and in Jamaica for the vibrant Christmas season. Gran's house bustled with activity. Ethel and Irenie were always sprucing it up while Cookie had to chase us from the kitchen to keep the goodies safe. With babysitters on hand, my mother and aunt either shopped or were locked in their rooms wrapping gifts. In late afternoons visitors would come, inevitably unannounced, for tea or drinks. We'd often eat supper on our own for in the evening, our parents would be off to their parties! We had parties too! A favourite was my friend Belinda's birthday party on December 14<sup>th</sup>: after games in the garden, and the *nyam*-ing of goodies and cake, we'd anticipate Santa's arrival - but forget reindeer, he arrived on a donkey!

Christmas week began with a special evening service at the English garrison church at Up Park Camp. In the flickering candle-light, the choir's sweet voices filled the air. Later that week, we welcomed choristers from the *Wortley Home for Girls* who sang carols for us, endearing in their red robes and white dresses. The girls were all ages (did they *all* live at the home?) My family always supported the work of this wonderful institution.

Meanwhile the tree went up and was decorated, the presents forming a veritable mountain underneath (two children visiting from abroad were doomed to be spoiled by Gran and her friends). On Christmas Eve we set out Santa's snack and placed our stockings at the foot of our beds. I guess we slept for in the morning their eclectic trivia thrilled us no end. Christmas Day meant breakfast, church, present opening, and a late dinner. Church was either St. Andrew Parish Church (with a 'high' Anglican service) or a tiny church in the mountains called The Grove (with a 'low' fire-and-brimstone one). Both were special but only The Grove had a Marchallock pew. Present opening was orderly: Daddy gave out gifts, my Aunt recorded them - and *nobody* was forgotten. Indeed, the best part was having the staff there and seeing their delight when they opened their gifts.

Christmas dinner featured turkey and ham, with many local veggies that even children loved: plaintain, cho-cho, breadfruit, yampi.... A rum-laden plum pudding followed, flambeed of course. This, on top of eggnog and the spicy Christmas drink - sorrel (brewed from the sorrel bush but more or less alcohol-laden) made the adults happy, but our fruit punches weren't bad either! Festivities continued for Gran hosted a huge rum-punch party every Boxing Day. Guests filled all the verandahs and spilled out into the garden. Christmas is a holy and spiritual season in deeply religious Jamaica, but it is also a sociable one for Jamaicans love to entertain and to party.

A day or two later we would dress up to attend the Christmas Pantomime held at the Ward Theatre in downtown King-



ston. Modelled on the English ones with mime, music and dance, it celebrated archetypal figures like *Anansi* (a West African trickster-hero). I didn't understand everything but I loved *Miss Lou*, a marvellous performer (and the first to write poetry in patois). Her stature made her the true *Miss Jamaica* (though she was definitely not the pin-up type).

Quite another event made Christmas for us too: the appearance of *jonkunno* (or John Canoe) masqueraders who, dressed in extraordinary costumes and often wearing white mesh masks, paraded through towns, stopping at many houses to perform. Usually men, the characters depicted were both scary and compelling: Cow-head, King, Pitchy-Patchy, Bride.... Their antics and music - generated by fife, bass, rattling drums and a grater - stirred the blood and highlighted complicated ties to west Africa.

Alas, *jonkunno* has all but gone; so too the colonial era in which these visits occurred. My Gran died in 1957 (and death duties took her home); and my father died in 1959 (after which we moved to Jamaica). But Jamaica was on already becoming a different place for it became independent in 1962. As a young nation, it has its difficulties but it punches above its weight in music and spirit. This is because its people make it rich and they come from every corner of the globe. Indeed Jamaica's national motto is: *Out of Many, One People*.

*One Love, One Heart  
Let's Get Together and Feel All Right*



Pitchy-Patchy



*jonkunno*—circa 1954

Catherine Woodley, #405

## TRADITIONAL JAMAICAN RUM PUNCH RECIPE

- 1 of sour
- 2 of sweet
- 3 of strong
- 4 of weak

**[Alternate 4th line: forget the weak!] (joke!)**

## YOUR CHRISTMAS QUIZ

**Do you know how this tropical plant (euphorbia pulcherrima) became the Christmas flower we all know and love?**

**(note: this photo shows a 'wild' plant)**

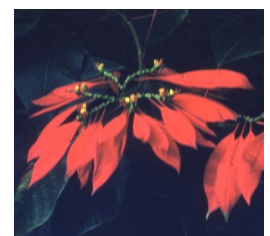


Photo: Cumming 1952



### THE POINSETTIA

This beautiful plant became associated with Christmas when a poor girl in Mexico offered this simple flower to commemorate the birth of Christ at a church service. This legend then inspired

the commercial development of the plant while very clever marketing went on to make it hugely successful in North American and other Christmas markets.

**Expecting a quiet & lonely Christmas this year?** How can one person look forward to the big day? One idea: set up a **Treat Box** for yourself and slowly put in things like: a book you've longed to read, a DVD you've wanted to watch; some yummys, a bottle of .. (never mind), a book of poems... **Other ideas:** plan a special walk (weather-permitting); take advantage of quality programming on TV & radio (check schedules ahead of time); or if you're crafty, make something for a person you're missing... **Set up a Phone Date** with a relative or a friend (if that's not practical, write them).. **Do something you've never done:** watch an opera on You Tube,, have a cold weather swim in Lake Ontario [ask Helene about this), have a vegan Christmas (because you love the planet), **Or.... your turn to think of something!**

### A Merry Christmas COVID-version

**Let's just say this year was a BUST!**  
**Dropping vacations and outings a MUST!**  
**But the future ahead is looking bright,**  
**Thanks to a vaccine to make the world right.**

**2021 will be the year,**  
**To bring back family, friends and cheer.**  
**The light at the end of the tunnel is near,**  
**Wishing you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!**

**ps. Until the tip of the needle pricks your arm,**  
**stay safe, stay healthy and away from harm.**



**LAST, BUT DEFINITELY NOT LEAST...for Jackie leaves us with an important thought about our next Christmas!**

### REMEMBERING... AND ANTICIPATING

When I think of favourite memories of Christmas I always go back to early childhood. Some how they seem simple and uncomplicated. My earliest memories are of being woken in the middle of the night to come downstairs to the splendour of the "tree". I would think I had never fallen asleep but, of course, I had probably been having a fitful sleep for hours! It was the stockings that most impressed me. There was always an orange and some unshelled nuts in the toe. How I loved cracking the shells and eating the hidden nut beneath! The ribbon candy was also a treat I remember fondly. We didn't have sweets very often. Most of all, I think it was the happiness, the joy of the occasion that had been excitedly anticipated for weeks. These were the memories that served as the foundations of all my Christmas-es to come.

I have always found the mood of the community shift around Christmas time. That has been especially noticeable in the town of Dundas as people shop on our beautifully decorated main street. People seem happier, are freer in greeting others with smiles and hellos, even to those they do not know personally. If we have some snow flakes in the air, it adds to the feeling of anticipation. Living in our community of Grafton Square has brought another positive dimension. We have our decorations, usually lovingly placed by a number of people from our community, our Christmas dinner, our coffee's. We find ways to gather to share well wishes.

This year Christmas has a melancholy feel to it. Many family gatherings will not occur or, if they do, will be greatly shrunk. We grope to find a way to deal with the current reality. Gerry and I will see our children and their families only for an outside greeting, some conversation and well wishes before heading indoors to the warmth. It is the memories of our celebrations in the past that will nourish us, our conversations by phone or Skype that will have to do. **I will hold the hope that by next year our celebration of Christmas will be more similar to the past — our long anticipation making it even more special and joyous**

Jackie Beavers, #204

**Editorial Office:** The editor thanks Jackie Beavers for her invaluable assistance & apologizes if the editor got the most fun pulling this issue together. And she thanks all those who contributed—it's a scary thing to do—for your stories and memories will help to make Christmas for many of us this year. We sure look forward to 2021 when hopefully we can say: **TG IT'S OVER!**