

Issue No. 12  
December 2023

(The issue with a  
a little of this and  
a little of that!)

# Grafton Gazette

Proudly serving the community of 5 Ogilvie  
since May 2019

**HAPPY HOLIDAY  
& HAPPY HOLY  
DAYS...MAY WE  
SEE PEACE ON  
EARTH IN 2024**

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD

As we approach the end of the year, we would like to take a moment to thank all the committee members who make our home a beautiful and welcoming place. We hope Gerry Kennedy is enjoying his (much deserved) retirement from the Board. Gerry's contributions to the board have been invaluable, and his commitment to and support of our residents has been greatly appreciated.

This holiday season, we wish you and your loved ones a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

**May** your homes be filled with love, laughter, and joy, and may the spirit of the season bring you peace and happiness.  
The Board.



**A TREE FOR US ALL**

16<sup>th</sup> century German Protestants, for example, broke with the Roman Catholic Church and its iconography, using the Christmas tree to replace Nativity scenes. [Interestingly 'O Tannenbaum' means fir tree - there is no reference to Christmas in the lyrics of this song despite being translated into English as 'The Christmas Tree!'] Later, Puritans objected to feasting and celebrating on Christmas, claiming it lacked biblical legitimacy. Still, other Christians persisted. German and British Protestants, for example, carried Christmas traditions around the world via German migration (to the new world) and British colonization (at one stage the British Empire included almost 25% of the world's population). Today many cultures with no historical ties to

Christianity celebrate Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>. Christmas is global now and you can find Christmas trees in public places in Japan, Indonesia, Hong Kong...

## Older than Christmas

The use of evergreens as a favoured decor long predates Christmas: the solstices, for example, were crucial events - especially the winter solstice when evergreens served as symbols of life during a bleak winter. Indeed with palm branches or fir tree boughs, diverse cultures and peoples marked important events in their calendar- the solstice, the end of harvest - by decorating homes with greenery, giving gifts, singing songs and eating special foods. Some traditions were religious, some revolved around agrarian life - but what we understand by Christmas today - namely the Christian celebration of the birth of Christ - came much later and in fact, benefited from and incorporated pre-existing traditions. Ostensibly, Dec 25 is a Christian holiday, but as many Europeans carried over traditions from earlier celebrations and commemorated their special days together, it really is a 'blended' event. 'Christ's Mass' only came together hundreds of years after the time of Christ and how it was observed underwent many changes over time.

I think about these things when I walk by the Dundas Christmas tree. It gives me great pleasure to think this tree really is for all of us and that we have been celebrating our special days with evergreen trees (or boughs) for thousands of years. The Christian Christmas story adds a meaning and richness which nourishes us all for even the simplest Christmas tree can bring us immense joy if we tune into the spirit of love pervading the Christmas tradition. Whatever your faith or your spiritual tradition, I hope you experience the true meaning of Christmas: peace and love during this holiday season - and beyond.  
- The Ed.

Dear Santa, we want world peace, fossil fuel phase-out, homes for the homeless, courage and cash for the displaced and disenfranchised, sanity and good sense in our leaders and chocolate and enough food for all.

# IN OUR OWN WAY, WE ALL CONTRIBUTE TO THIS COMMUNITY

## But we'd especially like to thank....

**The Board:** Thanks to Sheila (Richardson), Jean (MacKinnon) & Paul (Cvetich) for keeping our condo on the rails so ably. We appreciate all that you do for us.

**Simone Richards:** Thank you for responding to all our concerns so quickly and efficiently.

**Our Coffee Coordinators:** Thanks to **Bev, Jackie, Deanna & Donna** who organize our biweekly get-togethers on behalf of their floors.

**Jackie:** Thank you for buying the coffee (& other supplies)

**Trudy:** Thank you for loaning us your husband's art for the lobby and setting up the creche at Christmas; also thanks for updating the coffee morning elevator notices.

**Our Committee Folks :** Thanks to **Donna** (Social, Garden) **Elaine** (Craft, Social), **Catherine, Elaine & Bev** (Newsletter) for doing all that you do.

**Elaine:** thank you for decorating the lobby & community room, for making bookings for the community room and, especially, for maintaining the bulletin board in the corridor.

**Bev & Lynn:** thank you for facilitating our tree decorating event every year and helping in a variety of other (often secret) ways!

**Trish:** Thank you for ordering fresh from-the-farm eggs for us every two weeks.

**Rick:** Thank you for keeping our common areas so clean, safe & in excellent repair. And for helping us individually from time to time.

**The Condo Angels:** Thanks to those who drop parcels at our doors and make sure packages don't linger outside in the entrance foyer

**The Waterers:** Thank you to all those for helping to water the garden and/or plants in the lobby or on floor windows.

**All contributors to this newsletter:** We sincerely thank you for submitting your stories, book/movie recommendations, recipes, poems, jokes, ideas for articles, photographs, etc. We know it takes courage & energy to put stuff out there but it's much appreciated—and valued by us all. We also thank those willing to help in some way: proof reading, printing at the library, distributing the GG, and so on. Whatever you do makes a huge difference. \*Note:: feedback is welcome too! Make us better!

**All being well, the next issue will be out in May '24.**

## COMMITTEE NEWS & VIEWS

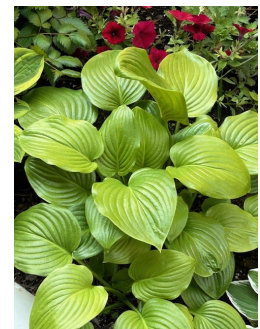
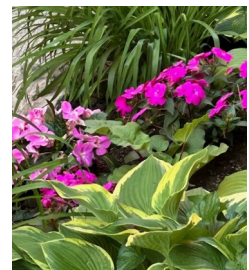


*According to Donna, our Garden guru,*

It was a good year for the gardens. Rain was plentiful and the gardens were lush. In September, the City of Hamilton planted a purple Beech tree to replace the fallen ornamental pear which had died and been removed the previous year. It will be a great neighbour for the lovely Ginkgo tree which the City planted over a year ago. It's a great Program because the City waters the trees weekly for 2 years to ensure their survival. It is planned that the front garden will be expanded.



Columnar Purple Beech



*Elaine & Donna, our Social Committee, say*

Residents enjoy getting together at our various gatherings during the year when we celebrate annual festivities. Not only do we enjoy each others' company, it's also nice to get a break from preparing our own meals.

In May, we had our last Friday pizza night before our summer break. Pizza nights resumed in November. In October, Residents gathered together for a Thanksgiving dinner supplied by Swiss Chalet, a perennial favorite. Our Christmas dinner will be held on Dec. 19 at 6:00 in the community room. Chinese food will be served and vegetarian dishes will be included. All are invited and we hope to see new faces attending.

## WELCOME AGNES HOUWING

Many of you have already met Agnes. She moved into 402 in July and has been enjoying many of our coffee mornings and social events ever since. Agnes moved here from Brampton and really appreciates our location: before this she had to drive *everywhere*. But she decided it was time to downsize and move closer to her daughter Geraldine who has lived in Dundas for 27 years!

Agnes, who is Dutch, came to Canada when she was only 22, primarily due to the urging of her identical twin sister and brother-in law. Curiously both Agnes and her sister had 3 daughters - and they are close in age! Agnes and her then husband liked Canada. When Agnes was 45 she took a job - as a flight attendant! She loved flying and flew for 18 years, really appreciating being able to visit her mother in Holland whenever she wanted.

Agnes loves plants and is enjoying her fourth floor view of Dundas, especially as the seasons change. I think I would have a hard time convincing her that the parking lot view was just as pretty!



CONGRATULATIONS HELENE! 1st in her category in the 4.5 km 'Across the Lake Swim (Kalamalka, BC) Aug 14. Helene served on our board for many years, she & Ador (& Sherpa & Roxy) left us in April 2021.



FAREWELL to Stephanie & Pierre-Nicholas Delage who returned to Quebec with little Clement (our 1st baby!)

A VERY BELATED THANK YOU FOR CONTRIBUTING YOUR NO-LONGER-NEEDED GLASSES TO THE PEOPLE OF JAMAICA. 38 pairs of glasses (& many sunglasses) were donated to the Jamaica Soc. for the Blind by George Cumming (Catherine's brother). They were very grateful: poor vision & blindness is a huge problem in the island & the cost of eye-wear *exorbitant*.



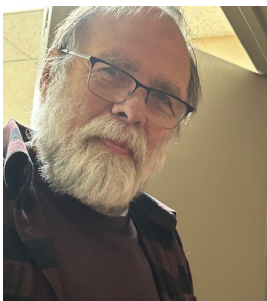
## SAD NEWS

We were sorry to learn that Gail Connor died on November 25. Gail lived here from the beginning—so, many years (+18?) She was beloved by her large family which included 3 daughters, 8 grandchildren, and 1 great-granddaughter! Gail loved children! She taught in primary school for many years then later, worked in the Burlington Public Library children's section - specifically so she could continue her work with young people. She was both quiet but sociable; she clearly appreciated living here and had many friends; and she was a staunch supporter of the Knox Presbyterian church here in Dundas where she sang in the choir.

A little story about Gail. Gail lived below me and one night, about 1 am, a huge pot fell in my unit. To my amazement, I soon heard a knock on my door. Gail heard the sudden noise and came to make sure I hadn't fallen. I was a little embarrassed (I hoped she'd slept through the noise & didn't want to phone and disturb her) but she was not at all bothered - had just wanted to make sure I was okay. That incident told me a lot - about Gail and about the amazingly supportive community we have here. [What I never did find out was how the pot managed to fall in the first place!]

-Catherine

Thanks to **LYNN & BEV** who facilitate our **TREE DECORATING EVENT** every year. But every event is a wee bit different! This year we had a super peanut gallery — this included a few folks on their way somewhere! It sure felt like a party this time. **SHEILA** kindly provided lots of delicious goodies, some mulled cider and some festive music (thank you Sheila). Thanks to all who decorated the tree but especially **MINA** who didn't miss a beat with **INGE** a close second. Finally thank you to **DONNA** who is so good at rounding us up! *Y'all come next year now!*



Our very supportive spectators: (& passers-by!)

**DONNA, JOYCE, DIANE, MARLENE, BARBARA**

**LIZ, ELAINE** (couldn't make it but was there in spirit) **INGE, JEET**

**MARGARET, BOB, TIM** [alas, we didn't get Tim's photo]



**....Have a happy and healthy Christmas....**



***May the new year be promising—let wisdom, justice and good sense prevail***

**BEV & LYNN, SHEILA, [MINA, CATHERINE] , BEV AND OUR FABULOUS CHRISTMAS TREE**

**WE HAD A WONDERFUL TIME CELEBRATING PHYLLIS' 100TH BIRTHDAY!  
CONGRATULATIONS PHYLLIS! April 21, 2023**



And thank you to her lovely family! Here is Phyllis's grandson Kyle and his wife Angela (on the left); Phyllis' daughter Shelley; Phyllis, her son Tim behind her; son Brad and his wife Nancy (on the right).



**OUR STORIES, OUR SELVES** ..... We love stories & thank our contributors for these gems..

**ST. AUGUSTINE'S CHURCH, DUNDAS..**

As I sat in the pew of St. Augustine's Church on Sunday morning, memories flooded my mind. As a five-year-old child, I remember the church as being a very dark, sombre place, very quiet and maybe even spooky. The church was very old as it was built around 1863. It is the oldest of the Gothic churches in Dundas. The design of the church is in the form of a cross, the head being formed by the sanctuary or apse, the arms and shaft is the nave. The altar, Gothic in style, was inaugurated in 1883. It is white and gold with a large canopy over it. There was a large rood near the ceiling with the words "In this Sign, Thou Shall Conquer". The pews were dark in colour as was the communion rail. Huge pillars supported the high arched ceiling. There were two side altars. In 1886 a beautiful side altar, with exquisite wood carving, dedicated to the Sacred Heart was added. The dedicatory plaque, which was placed next to next to the altar, stated: "This altar was erected in 1886 by John McManamy of Beverly, in memory of his beloved parents, Patrick and Bridget McManamy, who died in April and September 1872 being married 56 years." These are my great grandparents. The altar no longer exists, but my brother Austin has the marble plaque.

At the age of six, I walked down the long centre aisle to attend mass and make my first holy communion. On Sunday afternoon, I attended Sunday school. I spent most of the time looking at the beautiful stained glass windows, portraying the events of the life of Jesus, the Birth, and the Agony in the Garden, the Resurrection, as well as at the Stations of the Cross depicting the Passion and Death of our Lord. I was to learn that these Stations were painted by "Provenance" in Paris.

I was to walk down that same aisle when I was confirmed and on my wedding day, joyous and happy times. I also walked down that aisle at the funerals of my mom and dad, sad times

Today I see the physical part of the church as a bright, lively and welcoming edifice. The walls are white and pale blue with some areas painted tan. The huge columns are white. The original altar is still there, but a new altar was added where the priest now faces the congregation the pews. The pews are now a light colour and new improved lighting has been added. The wonderful adult choir uses the loft while the folk choir is at the front of the church, off to the side, where they use the piano and guitars.

The congregation joins in the singing, which is why I now find it lively. The same glass windows are still there as well as the Stations, whenever I enter my church, Saint Augustine, I know that I am at home for there I feel a sense of peace, contentment and serenity.  
Trudy Collins



**Dear Ancestor,**

Your tombstone stands among the rest,  
Neglected and alone.  
The names and dates are chiseled out  
on polished marbled stone.  
It reaches out to all who care.  
It is too late to mourn.  
You did not know that I exist.  
You died and I was born. ...  
Yet each of us are cells of you  
In flesh and blood and bone;  
Our blood contracts and beats a pulse  
Entirely not our own.

Dear Ancestor, the place you filled,  
One hundred years ago;  
Spreads out among the ones you left,  
Who would have loved you so.  
I wonder when you lived and loved,  
wonder if you knew;  
That someday I would find this spot  
And come to visit you.

-Walter Butler Palmer  
Contributed by Diane Mitchell

YOU CAN'T HAVE EVERYTHING:  
WHERE WOULD YOU PUT IT?

## TIM'S STORY

When I was 4 or 5 my mom attended a very large church in town, not because she believed in God, but because it was the thing to do.

So I was put in Sunday school in a different part of the building while she attended church..

During my break time at Sunday School another boy a bit older than me came and told me he found a secret room full of stairs. My response "Where?" So off we go. Out of Sunday school into a quiet hallway and there's a very narrow door. He opens it and yes stairs, big stairs, spiraling up so high you can't see the end.

We start climbing and the stairs were so tall and I was so small I had to use my hands and feet to go up. I was scared of falling backwards cause they just kept going higher and higher, spiralling around.

"Look at this" and we popped out in a little room with one table and one chair. On the table was a neat stack of sheets of paper. And on one wall, were three windows, no glass or frames more like rectangular holes just low enough that we could reach the bottom of them and no light just black.

So we took paper and made paper airplanes and started throwing them through the holes. This was incredible fun for us and we just kept making more because every time we throw one we could hear some noise like a murmur or something and the more we threw the louder it got. We thought this was hilarious and so we kept on going.

Til we heard the narrow door open and a man call out: "who's up there?" We froze til he came up and got us, and helped us back down. Then a bunch of people were asking us 'where are your parents and what are your names?"

My mom came and took me home. I thought now I'm going to get it. But the adults all talked about the Reverend giving his sermon and a paper airplane came floating down from above and behind him. Floated over his head and into the congregation like a message from God and then another and another and more till he threw hands up in the air and said "Truly we are blessed."

There was laughter and I don't remember any spanking or even a talking to! -Tim Fleming

**Fyi: MAY 26 is NATIONAL PAPER AIRPLANE DAY**  
(thought to have originated in China 1000s of years ago)

**fyi: OCTOBER 25 is INTERNATIONAL ARTIST DAY**  
dedicated to honouring the work of artists all



*The artist at work...*



**ART by Sashya, 3**

**(alas: IT SEEMS THE WHITE PAPER GOT LOST IN THE TECHNICAL TRANSITION!)**

**A MESSAGE TO ABSENT FRIENDS** We don't always get a chance to say good-bye or to wish you well if you have to go to hospital, but we do miss and honour you - for your spirits grace our hallways.

## DR. SEUSS SOUNDSCAPE SONNET

Snores, wheezes, garbled inbreaths, warbling outbreaths, loud sighs of peaceful slumber or exaspiration, Covid coughs. Breathless attempts. Bings, dings, muffled whispers, big man's help calls, outbursts of agony. Quiet listeners. Homeless kicked out into a frozen night by security..

Welcome to the General ER Department, a place to embrace the overnight soundscape with no plans for sleep tonight.

Here I find peace in its impermanence.

-Dekyi-Lee Oldershaw

## ON GRATITUDE

In rural Latvia in the 20's and 30's, there was no such thing as a corner store, grocery store, or any kind of shopping. For my father, a treat was a very rare thing, and sweets were almost unheard of, even during Christmas and Easter. Although my father's family did have chocolate once or twice during that time, the best gift that my father and his brothers and sister could possibly receive at Christmas time was an orange.

When my siblings and I were children, a treat was an almost equally rare thing. About once a year, although we never really kept track, usually when we were all in the car going somewhere, my father would pull in to a variety store. When he came out, in his hands were seven Coffee Crisp chocolate bars - one for each of us. The happiness this one chocolate bar gave us is indescribable. Coffee Crisp day was a gift from the heavens, and every second of that day was treasured for its rarity.

For the last fifteen years of my parents' lives together, my mother made the same meal, cooked the same way, every night of the week. Roasted potatoes and chicken. The sameness of it almost drove me to distraction, and I tried to change it once or twice, to no avail. Yet every evening, after my father had finished this repetitious meal, he would wipe his lips and say, with utmost sincerity, "that was very good, Hilda - Thank you!"

My parents did not much celebrate the various holidays of their new country. Christmas was a low key affair, Easter was primarily a religious holiday. One went to look at the fireworks on Victoria day, but there was no notice at all of Thanksgiving, or the rest of the holidays. Even birthdays went by with almost no fuss. We children made our own birthday celebrations for each other.

The one exception to this lack of celebrating holidays was Halloween. For some unfathomable reason, my parents loved the idea of children dressing up and going door to door to collect candy, and both parents looked forward to it eagerly. My father would go to the German delicatessen about a week before the day and buy a few bags of "cow candies". These candies are a real treat in most of eastern Europe still, and consist of a type of brown sugar fudge, wrapped in paper with a picture of a cow on the front of the wrapper. My mother's 'job' was to go to the door as each group of children arrived, and distribute the candy. Each child got only one piece of candy, money being very tight in our household. During the night of Halloween, my parents' eyes sparkled with delight, and they early awaited each group of children to ooh and ahh over the costumes. Some years costumes. Some years, watching them, I almost thought that they were reliving the rare delightful parts of their own childhoods through this annual ritual.

There was one year, though, that Halloween became an unbearable burden to me. As always my father bought the

the cow candies, my mother stood behind the door with barely restrained anticipation, and the children came again to receive their annual haul of treats. After about an hour of children coming to the door a rather unruly group of what appeared to be teenagers came to the door. Each got a candy, but as they went down the driveway, I heard, "What kind of s— candy is this? Holy f—, what a bunch of cheapskates - only one little candy!! F— this s—" And with that, they each threw their candy at my parent's house.

-Liz Locs.

## A NOD TO HALLOWEEN.....



Trudy and Mina



Dekyi Lee

*He who blames others  
has a long way to go on  
his journey*

*He who blames himself  
is halfway there*

*He who blames no one  
has arrived.*

*-Chinese Proverb*

SEEN AT THE DUNDAS CACTUS FESTIVAL..



SEEN AT THE MCMASTER GALLERY OF ART: PAUL CVETICH'S FASCINATING SCULPTURES in THE CONTEMPORARIES' THIS MUST BE THE PLACE ' SHOW (8 buddies who trained together at Mac exhibited together!)

**Congratulations**

**Paul**

|



**HOUSEKEEPING TIPS—FROM MINA**

Dust if you must, but wouldn't it be better  
To paint a picture, or write a letter,  
Bake a cake, or plant a seed;  
Ponder the difference between want and need?

Dust if you must, but there's not much time,  
With rivers to swim and mountains to climb;  
Music to hear, and books to read:  
Friends to cherish and life to lead.

Dust if you must, but the world's out there  
With the sun in your eyes,  
and the wind in your hair;  
A flutter of snow, a shower of rain,  
This day will not come around again.

Dust if you must, but bear in mind,  
Old age will come and it's not kind.  
And when you go (and go you must)  
You, yourself will make more dust.  
-Rose Milligan.

**MANAGING HOLIDAY WASTE RESPONSIBLY:**

**GIFT WRAP**

-the following **cannot be recycled**: paper with glitter, plastic, lamination

**\*best to wrap with**: butcher or kraft paper, newspaper, tissue paper (if free of contaminants)

-note:tissue paper may be decorated with stickers, paints, coloured pencils, markers, etc. **-Tinsel, bows & ribbons, cannot be recycled**

**OTHER PACKAGING**

-Follow the usual rules: clean plastic bags, glass & selected plastics may be recycled  
-recycle clean paper only [no food, plastic, glitter, etc]

**ON GIFT -GIVING**

**Little money? Don't know what to give? Liz Locs suggests:**

A book of homemade coupons for 1) a night of babysitting; 2) a kitchen clean-up, 3) a big homemade breakfast... Anything your imagination can come up with... — A valuable gift for an overwhelmed parent or caregiver.

**Confused? What makes a good gift? Catherine suggests** [inspired by a *Guardian* article on the Art and Science of Gift giving]

Don't go for A REACTION via a surprise gift or an expensive one, or one focused on a WOW factor! It's not what YOU think the recipient needs, but what THEY want [what's on THEIR 'hope-to-get list?'] Also sentimentality is okay (eg. a framed photo) And giving an EXPERIENCE can generate precious memories ... **SOME GIFTS KEEP ON GIVING.** (e.g. a plant rather than flowers). Of course there's a role for consumables too: chocolate, cheese, soaps, etc. Give from the heart, not the pocketbook! It shows! [And shop locally if poss..]

**THAT'S IT! BE WELL!**