

# The Madawaska HIGHLANDER

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Free

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## GHOST TOWN---Black Donald Village 1934—1954 (final instalment)

By Howard Popkie (Edited by Wes Bomhower)

In the office of the Black Donald Mines, was a huge map on the wall showing all the workings of the mine. A new man was expected to familiarize himself with this map so that when he went down into the mine he would have a rough idea where he was.

Joe Dodge worked in the laboratory next to the office where there were a lot of little bottles showing the different grades of the stuff, nine in all. I still have five different grades of graphite in small tins. Most of the mineral was shipped in 100 lb. burlap bags or small oak barrels to their destinations around the world. In the 1930s, during winter, they would haul the graphite by horse and sleigh across the frozen lake to Mount St. Patrick and then on down the road to Calabogie where it was loaded on the freight cars of the old K. & P. Railroad. Some years later, they kept their own road open to Calabogie.

The mill was a large frame building, built like a split level on the side of the hill, very dark inside and everything coated with graphite dust, large pulleys and belts going steadily and a crusher chewing up huge chunks of graphite into a powder like form. The men bagging the mineral in there were totally black except for the whites of their eyes and everything was extremely slippery.

The mine shaft itself had a big wheel on top with cables and an electric motor to run the hoist which brought the graphite up to be loaded on trucks for the mill.

Things were different in those days of the mid-Thirties. Everyone had an outside toilet and a big porcelain pot under the bed for middle of the night calls. Most people didn't own a car, cut grass or shovel snow, they just walked on a path from one house to another and the grass didn't get time to grow on the path be-

cause of the heavy foot traffic. No one worried about anyone stealing, no one locked their doors, and if you were going to be away for any length of time, you just placed a small stick in the hasp instead of a padlock.

When the gardens were harvested in autumn, everyone who owned a pig let them run loose for awhile. After being penned up for months on end, the pigs would go 'cowboying' around the gardens, really enjoying their new found freedom. Joe Scully's well was 15 feet deep and Mrs. Scully had forgotten to replace the lid after getting a pail of water with her long hooked stick, the lid being an old wooden door. A pig came nosing along and fell into the open well where its terrified squeals alerted Mrs. Scully and Joe also came running. Joe sized up the situation and said to his wife, "You loft the lid off the well, so you go and tell Erwin Moore we need his help right away to get that pig out". Erwin and his son, Henry, did come right away to rescue the pig but Henry was laughing so hard, he wasn't much help.

We had a pump house which covered a hand pump over a dug well where a lot of people got their drinking water. On the highest point of land in town stood a huge wooden water tower which supplied water to the mill. It was a monstrous affair, 15 feet high and 15 feet in diameter, like a great wooden tub with heavy iron bands around it at different intervals. It was pumped full of water, then gravity fed to the mill.

I attended the same elementary school where my mother went as a child, about one half mile out of town on the road to Matawatchan. It was 30 feet by 40 feet and built much like the houses in the village with a little porch at the doorway and insul-brick siding on the outside. The inside walls, painted with a dull grey paint, were ten feet high and the windows were high also, too high for us to see out. The school

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Old Hutson homestead (Matawatchan)

Painting: Ernie Jukes

## Dispatches from Afghanistan

By Major Ross Allan

**Editor's note:** Helene Thomson, who has a cottage in Matawatchan, but teaches school in Orleans has a colleague, Shirley Allan, whose husband is now serving in Afghanistan. Major Ross Allan has been sending her letters describing his time there. He is with the National Support Element, which is supporting the rotation from CFB Petawawa. Helene thought these letters (dispatches) might interest our readers. The original document amounted to over 8000 words so it has been edited down to a size manageable for the Highlander. We hope that further dispatches will be available to you in the spring.

**Week 1:**

I left Petawawa very early last week (the sun was barely up by the time the bus started moving) and arrived at Kandahar Air Field (KAF) approximately 34 hours later. The Air Force likes to play something called the Air Movements Game whereby the Air Force scores points for inconveniencing the Army and the Army scores by annoying the Air Force; the match I played was a draw. For instance, the Air Force scored major points for

having the Army start moving before the Air Force had clearances for the flight; bonus points were awarded when the Air Force-imposed delays went over the normal meal hour and the Air Force declared no one could leave the terminal while simultaneously failing to provide a meal. However, the Army played a trump card (the Brigade Commander from Petawawa) who permitted his troops to leave the terminal and go eat. To even the score, the Army wracked up a quick flurry of unanswered single points - several individuals did not have a signed travel claim which Air Force regulations mandate as a prerequisite for boarding the aircraft.

KAF is hot. The overnight low (28 C) on the day I arrived exceeded most of Ottawa's daytime highs during the summer of 2008. Daytime highs were 40 C or higher although we had some relief at the end of the week when the highs were only 38 C or so. I have some unkind words for the staff officer who thought there was training value in wearing 40 pounds of tight-fitting, heat retaining, body armour and load carrying equipment for our first day's orientation training in KAF. Fortunately, I work indoors within an air-conditioned environment. I am very sympathetic to those on patrol who wear body

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## Dispatches (Cont)

armour for hours at a time and who rarely experience air conditioning.

KAF is also dusty. There is a permanent haze that, if I were in Ottawa, I would attribute to smog but, because I am in Afghanistan, I know is caused by dust. Although we have thrown down a lot of gravel at KAF, it is still a dusty place and both the vehicle & foot traffic stir up the dust.

The food is good. Although there is not as much variety within the cafeterias as would be the case in a Canadian mess hall (e.g. only 2 choices of bread instead of the 6 found within a Canadian military cafeteria), the food is plentiful and tasty. There are 3 different themed cafeterias - Cambridge (UK food), Niagara (North American fare), and Luxembourg (continental Europe cuisine) with a fourth to open this fall specializing in Mediterranean style food. There is considerable overlap between the cafeterias - all offer scrambled eggs, bacon, and made-to-order eggs for breakfasts - but their specialties are evident. For instance, only Cambridge offers curries while only the Luxembourg has an espresso machine. The cafeterias have at least 3 hot choices for each meal, more selection at the short-order grill, and a five-week schedule. I do not expect to get bored of the food. If I do, there is both a Subway and a Pizza Hut within KAF, a Thai restaurant under construction, and the Burger King is set to reopen after the fire damage is repaired; the Tim Horton's only offers coffee, donuts, and muffins.

I am now in my bunk space that I will occupy for the next 7 months. I share a tent with 5 others and my space is approximately 2 m by 3 m. The tent is insulated, air conditioned & heated, with a plentiful supply of electricity. I am also able to piggyback on the wireless Internet connection of the nearby Old Canada House and surf the net from my bed space. My bed is a cot, which, as a result of upgrades by previous tenants, now supports a proper mattress, a nice sheet of plywood, as well as my own pillow, sheets, and quilt. Curtains separate the individual bunk spaces from each other so we have privacy. At one end of the tent, two unoccupied bunk spaces have been converted into a lounge with 3 decrepit chairs, a close-to-decrepit TV & VCR, and a plentiful supply of DVDs and books that accumulated during the preceding 5 tours. We are the envy of our neighbours because we have a vacuum cleaner.

Unfortunately, we are also less than 5 minutes walk from the Pooh Pond AKA Hershey Pond AKA the sewage lagoon. KAF's 14000+ people produce a lot of sewage and, usually at night, the Pond is upwind. The smell is only mildly unpleasant - similar to an outhouse or a sanitary sewer - and apparently I will get used to it much as people living near airports never hear the planes. By the way, I live near an airport - it is also a 5-min-



**Major Ross Allan in Kandahar**

ute walk from the tent - but more on that next week.

### **Week 2:**

After 10 days at KAF, I saw my first cloud. It was not much by Ontario standards but it was a cloud. Until I saw that lone cloud, I did not realize how cloudless it is here. Shortly thereafter, the weather took an interesting turn - from Friday night through Sunday, there was so much dust that it obscured the sun and visibility was reduced to 200 m or less. The dust did not blow around. Instead, we had fog-like conditions only the fog was composed of dust particles. The airport still operates for those aircraft that can use instrument flight rules but there is so much dust that it is possible to look at the sun during most of the day without experiencing discomfort. Rumour has it that the dust contains a high count of fecal matter however our Safety Officer assures us that the contamination is within acceptable guidelines. He doesn't specify whether he was quoting Canadian or Afghani regulations. On the plus side, the dust is responsible for a 5 C drop in temperature - daytime highs have been 33-34 C instead of 38-39 C.

### **Week 3:**

I have to be careful about what we say and do. For instance, we assume that our cell phone transmissions are monitored and we do not discuss intentions or mention names when using cell phones. Also, when communicating with loved ones and friends, there is a long list of don'ts: names, equipment, tactics, procedures, times, operations, and the like. I read an intelligence report daily and here is an example of a vetted incident: CENSORED found a group of armed insurgents equipped with AK-47 and an 82 mm recoilless rifle [an anti-tank weapon]. They were engaged with CENSORED of CENSORED, CENSORED of CENSORED, CENSORED of CENSORED, and CENSORED of CENSORED; 15 were killed and 1 wounded. Although I cannot reveal how they were detected or what was used on them, I can tell you that more than a ton of munitions was sent their way.

Surprisingly, most of the incidents are non-lethal. On any given day, there may be 5 to 10 attacks within the Canadian

sector but most take the form of inaccurate sniping - two rifle shots from an unknown location, a rocket attack which lands on the same planet but no where near a soldier. A lot of the attacks are 'shoot and scoot' which fits the Afghan culture - it is considered manly to fight but taking a shot is considered sufficient; you do not have to actually hit anything. Plus, we take a dim view of people shooting at us and we tend to respond heartily - just ask the 16 guys that made the mistake of 'asking' for a ton of NATO munitions. If the target does not shoot back or does not shoot back very much, then the Taliban will stick around and hurt people which explains why truck drivers fair poorly (more on this later) and why police are a frequent target - they do not have much protection of weaponry.

An interesting data point - the Canadians just leaving (Rotation 5) experienced more roadside bombs than did all the previous 4 groups. Approximately 90% of the road-side bombs are discovered before they go off, or they fail to explode, or they explode & miss, or they hit but cause no damage to Canadians; you only hear of the successful attacks within Canada. It is difficult to catch the bombers in the act of planting their devices because we cannot cover all the roads and roadsides. However, the roads get searched and locals will report suspicious activity. For instance, one foiled attack was a bike bomb in a public market - a large bomb, disguised as a fruit basket, was strapped to a bike and left alongside a roadway frequented by local police and foreign soldiers. The locals got suspicious and called the police to investigate. Bomb making supplies, the sites where they are made, and even the bomb makers are frequently turned in; sometimes we get lucky and the bombers have premature detonations. However, there is a lot of foreign money funnelled in to find new bomb makers and to buy their supplies.

Fecal dust - last week, I described the dust/fog, its fecal content, and the low health risk. Paraphrasing what the Safety Officer has to say, there are two concerns with airborne fecal particles. First, there is the total amount (KAF air is within acceptable limits) and then there is particle size - small particles can invade the body while larger ones get caught and coughed out. When he told me this, he assured me that KAF particles were large size

and therefore not a hazard especially given the lowish amount. He told me this three days after the dust had lifted and on the last of the mornings when I started the day with a gentle cough...now when people tell me that I am full of it, I can honestly say that it is no longer the case.

I signed my first contract this week. I cannot name the person or company to whom we awarded it for fear that the Taliban will get the name and apply a retribution standard that pre-dates the Old Testament. However, I can say that I hired interpreter(s) to help with Canadian plans to rebuild the country. Today, I learned that a Canadian-contracted truck driver escaped uninjured from an ambush. The police escorting him were not so lucky and they had one person killed and a vehicle destroyed. The day before, the truck company's local representative told me that five of his drivers had been murdered during 2008 and he had to ransom another two. He has hired security for his trucks and he pays select Afghans a consideration to leave his vehicles alone but, if you are seen to help the foreigners, the Taliban consider you a legitimate target. You do not have to

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Your comments and story ideas are welcome

**Published in Matawatchan**

## Black Donald (Cont)

was heated by a long, iron wood-burning box stove which could handle pieces of wood 3 feet long, and on cold winter days, it was too hot near the stove and too cold away from it. At the front of the one room school was the teacher's desk where hung a black leather strap, 2 inches wide and a foot long, used for disciplinary purposes at recess or after 4 o'clock. On each side of the teacher's desk were old library cabinets containing encyclopaedias from the past century complete with coloured pictures.

On top of one cabinet was the mounted skeleton of a large house cat, very well done, like you would see in a museum. At the back of the schoolroom was a row of nails for hanging our hats, coats and school bags on. In one corner was a grand piano that didn't work, with one leg missing, and in the other corner was a small table which held a pail of drinking water from the lake and a thermos cap which we all used to drink from. On the same table was a dirty wash basin, a saucer with a piece of soap and a black towel. A lot of good memories from those days and I still recall how I learned to spell 'arithmetic'. It goes like this. A Red Indian Thought He Might Eat Turnips In Church.

One of the schoolboys, Manford Bridges, had the job of unlocking the school and making the fire every morning, which he got paid for. One morning, for some reason he failed to show up. Our teacher, Lillian Gough, was a little bit of a woman, always well dressed and in high heeled shoes and she never seemed at a loss in any situation. I was a big guy, taller than the teacher, so she got us to haul a ladder out of the woodshed and place it up under the school windows, pry open a window and let all the smaller children in first. Up the ladder they went and through the window where they had to jump about five feet down to the floor from the window sill and they all seemed to manage quite well until it was the teacher's turn. I held the ladder for her and she climbed up and onto the six inch window sill inside, but then the children inside began to shout. "The teacher is going to faint and fall down"! I hustled up the ladder, got past her on the window sill, jumped to the floor, then stood on a nearby desk and gently lifted our little teacher from her precarious perch to the floor. I can still see her, pale as a ghost, sitting in a



*Graphite miners at Black Donald*

child's small desk, her head in her hands and feeling so grateful for her rescue.

We had visits from the doctor to administer needles and visits from the priest to check on our Christian education, and once a year we had a visit from the School Inspector whom we all thought was checking up on us children, not the teacher, so we were always on our best behaviour when he came around.

We had a school concert at Christmas and one year the Graphite Company gave all the children a gift, the best Christmas ever. The boys received chemistry sets and the girls got dolls. There was no hydro in the school, so everyone brought a kerosene lantern at 7.00 p.m. when the concert started and hung the lanterns at various locations throughout the school. We always performed some plays and sang a lot of Christmas carols. One recitation went like this:

I ran around the corner, I ran around the block,  
I ran right into the bakery shop  
I picked up a doughnut off the case  
And handed the lady a five cent piece.  
She looked at the money and she looked at me,  
She said this money is no good to me.  
There's a hole in this nickel, there's a hole right through.  
Said I there's a hole in this doughnut too.

I can still remember everyone going home after the concert in a long line down the road carrying their lanterns. (This is the same school and teacher mentioned in a

previous story of when I returned from the Korean War).

We had some poor families in our village of Black Donald. Joe McCoy and his family at Christmas time decorated their tree with burnt out 40 watt light bulbs they found in the dump plus some coloured paper. There were no presents under the tree on Christmas morning either.

In later years, during the Second World War, my brother Rueben drove an old Chevrolet with worn out tires and it was difficult to obtain new tires for any car

at the time. Aunt Agnes, Lloyd's mother, had an old Willys Overland, (the forerunner of the famous Jeep) with almost brand new tires, which just happened to be the same size as Rueben's old Chevy required, so quite often at night he and his buddies would jack up Aunt Agnes's car, borrow her wheels for the night, take their girl friends out or whatever, then replace the wheels on Agnes's car in the wee hours of the morn. She wondered why her tires wore out so quickly

When the church and the town of Black Donald was abandoned, and before the whole area was flooded to make way for the Hydro development, some people held drinking parties inside the church and what a mess they made. They had a big sheet of metal on the floor where they lit a campfire right inside the church, beer bottles all over the place and church stationary everywhere. In disgust, the priest from Calabogie had someone set off a case of dynamite in the church basement and after that you could not find any remnant of the church more than 3 feet long.

So many memories of a place that no longer exists except in our memories.

**Editor note:** I apologize to Howard Popkie for leaving some parts of his story untold, but space would not allow. Sincerely, Wes Bomhower

End

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*Howard's dog Shep at Black Donald*

## Dispatches (Cont)

be helping the combat forces or even the elected government to be targeted - in a separate attack within the last 24 hours; a suicide bomber killed two doctors working for the UN. Nonetheless, people willingly work for us despite the risk of death because, in part, we pay very well by local standards. I am told that older Afghans, especially those who fought the Soviets, are actually ambivalent or perhaps sympathetic to the US because Americans supplied the guns and money for that war; plus, the Soviet-era fighters are old instead of bold. They prefer to sit out this conflict and it is the next generation(s) fighting us whether for ideological reasons or for money.

### Week 4:

This week, I wrote my first big contract. I hired a group of people and equipment to help Canada with the rebuilding. If we exercise all the options, the total will come to nearly \$1,000,000 and I have at least three more, similar contracts at various stages of the bidding process. Some of the more mundane purchases this week - \$160,000 of air time on local cell phones (albeit a lot of cell phones and a lot of air-time) and \$10,000 for airtime with commercial broadcasters. I heard that there are discussions to make an Afghani version of '24' in which the heroes work for the Afghan Army or police. The police could really use an image makeover as they are neither well liked nor respected. Nonetheless, there are Afghans who want their country to work, who don't want the Taliban back, and who work for little pay and uncertain prospects to make life better for their fellow citizens. They realize that education is key to undermining the Taliban message; so do the Taliban, which is why they take particular delight in blowing up the schools, intimidating the teachers, and, in some cases, shooting the students.

There are two large cell phone providers within Afghanistan. Within the Kandahar area, one is dominant as it offers much better coverage. They used to provide equal service but one company's fortunes took a turn for the worse because its cell phone towers would spontaneously blow up. At first, everyone blamed the Taliban but rumour has it that the Taliban actually favoured the company that was losing towers. There are some things that they don't teach in business school

I met two Afghans directly affected by violence. The first was near a suicide car bomb. He called an acquaintance to report that, though in the area of the bomb, he was fine. It was the friend's birthday and, instead of getting a 'happy birthday', the birthday was happy because of the first person's good fortune. The second person was not so fortunate. Although the roadside bomb did not target him, his was the next vehicle behind the target and he was literally stunned by the attack. When I met him, he had just had

the stitches removed from the impressive gash on his face. I believe that if you ask an Afghani whether they personally know someone touched by violence, then all will say 'yes, within the last year'.

Talking to Canadians at the camp with the 'fire-fighting reservoir', their camp fired four local employees for conspiring to poison the Canadians. Afghanistan is not kind to foreign invaders. If the population believes that we are here to help, then we might be able to accomplish something and leave on our terms. Just as we are better organized and delivering more aid than a few years back, the Taliban are better organized and offering more violence. The average Afghan is caught in the middle and wants first to survive and then to better his situation. The Taliban threaten the survival while the coalition hopes to better the situation. Time will tell who has the better strategy.

### Week 5

Someone asked me recently if we had to wear body armour to the gym or when we go running. The short answer is 'no'. If the threat level were sufficiently high, then we would wear body armour all the time including during PT; obviously, people would cut back on PT. However, the threat level is not that high. Even out at the forward outposts, where they receive unfriendly fire on a daily basis, the tendency is to have body armour on hand as opposed to wearing it continually. For instance, people in those forward posts might carry the body armour to the gym tent, put it beside the running machine, and work out with their protective gear within easy reach.

The Canadian military at KAF carry weapons and ammunition at all times with two exceptions: when performing PT and ablutions (there is no room in the shower stall for a rifle). However, the weapons policy is national and not a KAF policy - some nations do not carry weapons day-to-day within the confines of KAF. Quite frankly, I would be worried if there was a ground attack and several thousand NATO support troops (the fighting troops tend to be outside KAF) all started pointing loaded weapons within KAF. My personal plan is to find an enclosed area, lie down, pull out my Sudoku book, and wait for the quick reaction force to declare all clear. There are a significant number of mortars, armoured vehicles, guard posts, and quick reaction forces within KAF so I can do my bit by keeping out of the way.

I do my bit by contracting for goods and services. Within the last week, I selected winners for two contracts that will each employ dozens of Afghans during the next six to nine months as they help with

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## What Is Christmas?

It is tenderness for the past, courage for the present, hope for the future. It is a fervent wish that every cup may overflow with blessings rich and eternal, and that every path may lead to peace.

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# Pine Valley

# GREATER MADAWASKA LITERARY MATTERS


By Mary-Joan Hale

So much comes down the blogging pipes in the library CEO world. We comment on many things, but a common thread deals with the cuts which come to the arts, culture and literacy. Read the daily papers and it is front and centre. Why is that? Even when I worked for a school board, when cuts were needed, ping!!! Let's cut the library budget. Yeah, that's it, and while we are at it, art, music and drama...frills... Frills, you say, tell that to, Pinchus Zucherman, Karen Kain, Roch Carrier, Stompin' Tom and any and all Valley musicians. It is time that all levels of government recognized that contributions to the arts, culture and literacy are essentials. Festivals bring in much-needed funds and exposure to the communities where they are held. Vibrant minds contribute to the health and happiness of the places we call home. It is time for politicians to wake up to this reality. Can you imagine the Acropolis of Athens without the Parthenon or the other impressive works of artistic architecture? They created an active work force. Workers buy or rent homes and make use of local merchants and tradesmen. What about the great symphonies, folk musicians, poets and storytellers of all times and places? What would our Valley be without the stories recorded by Pat Finnigan, Frank Cosentino, Elmer Strong, Mac Beatty and our own Wes Bomhower? The Stone Fence Theatre entertainingly presents the history of the Valley. Want a real giggle? Listen to the songs by the North Algona All-stars, two teachers who have recorded some of the funniest stories with a local history bent.

This segues me into a wonderful innovation in the hall leading into the library. We have partnered with the Calabogie Artists. Thanks to Georgette and Gary Reed, who installed the art display boards, we will

be highlighting a rotating art show. When the Library Board created our Strategic plan, focus on local artists and artisans was one of our intentions. It is now a reality. At present, you may view works by Georgette Reed, Dwyene MacNabb and Kim Carnegie. Arts and literacy are alive, but it is a struggle for funding and it should not be. In depressed economic times, we need to feed our souls.

When we moved here, we made many wonderful friends. One of the kindest, sweetest of them all is Wes Bomhower. Sadly, soon we will not see him on his daily constitutionals in the village. I will not be able to take a rest on his lawn chair and pass the time of day when walking from the Post Office. He is moving away. If any group such as Home Support, St. Andrew's United Church, Most Precious Blood Catholic Church, the Library or the folks at the Manor needed a host of musicians for an event, we all called Wes. In a wink, he had called his loyal group of musicians and a show was in the making. He never said 'No' and he always did it with a smile and often wearing his kilt! Our family hosts an annual Estedfodd (Welsh celebration of music and recitation) and he has entertained with many a Celtic or local song, often composed by Wes himself. Someone crowned him the Valley Poet. For any special celebration highlighting one of life's many passages, birthdays, weddings and funerals he composed special poems. I understand that an Italian Opera singer, Maria LaScala even joined him and his alter egos (Gino, or Angus McBogie) for the odd duet. She has told me "I cannot theenk how I weel leeve when my boyfran' goes to ceeti. My heart she is, how you say in Engleesh, broke two sides." I could not make out the rest since she was sobbing uncontrollably. For my part and I am sure I speak for all of the folks touched by his kindness, 'we'll tak a cup for auld lang syne...'.  
**End**




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# The Madawaska HIGHLANDER

“read cover to cover”

## Ending another year

The first issue of The Madawaska Highlander was printed in December of 2003. Our commitment to ourselves was to give it a go for five years. The last issue accomplished that, this one is the beginning of our next phase.

The Highlander has brought a variety of reporting story lines, its articles on local history the most popular and these provide some documentation for future researchers. Once in a while we wade into issues, and on those occasions a serious effort is made to provide either opinion, balance or facts. The environment always gets a close look, our local people in the arts are always in our sights be they in fine arts, writers or photography. The paper is a vehicle to provide information from government services and local businesses who share their expertise. Unchanged over the years is our commitment to not overloading the paper with advertising, providing the reader with interesting information, and the opportunity to browse and absorb the advertising without visual overload. Readers do in fact claim that they read the Highlander ‘cover to cover’, often associated with designated time and place and their choice of chair and beverage.

In October we held a celebration of past Highlander and current Madawaska Staff at the home of contributor Ernie Jukes and his wife Audrey. Many attended and it was a visual pleasure to see the size of

**Dear Editor,**

When I first moved here, I had an entirely different attitude about hunting. The typical city person thinks of the poor gentle animals shot down by the big bad hunters and left to rot in the woods. It did not take long to see the real picture. Freezers are filled with steaks and roasts for the year. I had no idea that the meat was butchered in the same way as beef and pork. I did not understand the culture of the ‘hunt camp’. For families who have been hunting and bonding for generations it is a natural part of the annual circle. The first time a deer and our car had a face-to-face, another light went on. Tales of deer starving in the woods last winter due to the amount of snow and over-population brought tears to my eyes. I also had no idea that hides are turned over to the natives for their craft industry. My husband and I will never hunt, but I understand now why many of you do and I apologize for my ignorance in the past.

**Mary-Joan Hale, Calabogie**

community participation, and have the opportunity to thank our contributors in person. Without these people there would be no newspaper. We acknowledge their efforts once more in this public forum. Our advertisers have supported the paper with a good mix of businesses and many committed throughout each edition. Again, a thanks to them, for they are also enablers of the paper. No paper can exist without you, the reader, and readers have responded with interest, encouragement and with attention to our advertising as many of our advertisers said. Copies in circulation now range up to 3000, with over a hundred delivered by direct mail all over North America and beyond.

The next phase will look pretty much like the last. History will be a focus, local authors will get precedence, ad rates will stay as low as possible with content levels unchanged. Attention will be paid to environmental and energy issues and we continue to rely on the Ottawa River Institute for factual and timely articles. We do endeavor to provide the highest quality in print and reproductions and that is a continuous process that seems to yield quality surprises with too many issues.

Bill, Richard, Adam and Jamie would like to thank everyone for their continuing contributions and our advertisers for making the whole thing work. We wish you all a very Merry Christmas and New Year holiday season. Stay safe. Our next volume will resume in February or March.

**End**

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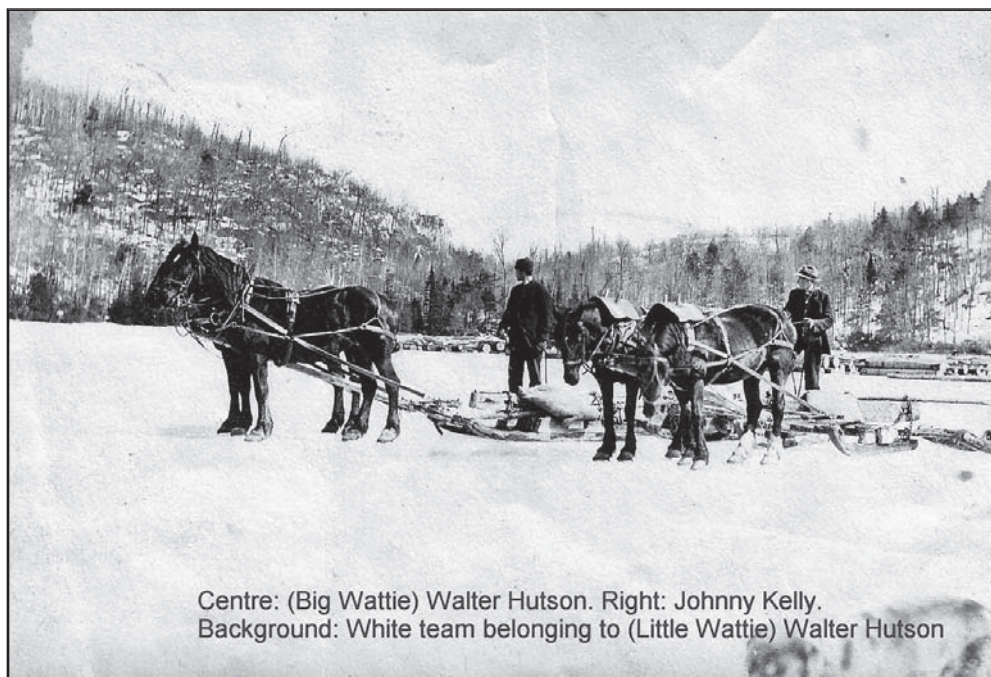
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## Looking back...



Centre: (Big Wattie) Walter Hutson. Right: Johnny Kelly.  
Background: White team belonging to (Little Wattie) Walter Hutson

## PET-bottled water: not just the carbon footprint, but also the toxic price tag

The intense public interest over BPA and polycarbonate plastic has also focussed new attention on the single-use water bottles made of polyethylene terephthalate (PET). PET plastic can leach phthalates into the liquids inside the bottle. An equally important issue is the enormous environmental footprint created as millions of bottles are turned out by plastic manufacturing plants and trucked around the country. Then, for hundreds of thousands of them, the final destination is the landfill where they can take centuries to degrade.

A new study published last year in the journal Food Technology and Biotechnology found that small amounts of toxic phthalates routinely migrate from the PET plastic bottles into the drinks they contain. The levels were highest in soft drinks, but researchers also found the bottled waters were contaminated with phthalates that had leached out of the plastic.

Among phthalates they found were diethyl hexyl phthalate (DEHP) and dibutyl phthalate (DBP). DEHP and DBP are listed as reproductive toxins on California’s Proposition 65 list.

That’s good reason alone for individual consumers and communities to look for ways to reduce the number of PET bottles they buy, especially bottled water. The environmental reasons are just as compelling because of bottled water’s contribution to global warming.

According to a 2007 study commissioned by the plastics industry, manufacturing the PET plastic used in single-use water bottles generates almost five times the bottle’s weight in greenhouse gases (CO2 equivalents).

Across Canada, more than 1.4 billion bottles of water in single-use bottles were sold in 2007 - and the number has been rising every year as PET plastic replaces glass and other plastics. Producing those bottles generated 13 8,592,253 kg of greenhouse gases. It also used up 865,300 barrels of crude oil - the amount that would be consumed by 63,731 Ford Explorer SUVs driving from Vancouver to St. John’s.

Recycling offsets that impact only slightly.

Even in those provinces where recycling programs are most effective - B.C., Quebec and Nova Scotia - the recycling rate is just over 70 per cent. In B.C. alone, according to recycling company Encorp Pacific, 128 million plastic beverage bottles ended up in landfills in 2007. More than 50 million of those were single-use water bottles

Reducing consumption of single-use water bottles by even 20 per cent would save 173,060 barrels of crude oil and eliminate 27,718,451 kg in greenhouse gas emissions (CO2 equivalents) on an annual basis.

**Editor’s note:** This article is a reprint from the most recent *CancerSmart Update*, which is published by *Toxic Free Canada*. To learn more, visit their website at: [www.toxicfreecanada.ca](http://www.toxicfreecanada.ca)

**End**



# CABA GOES TREASURE HUNTING WITH "STASH-A-CACHE" Project

Debora Giffin, President, CABA

"Geocaching" is a relatively new phenomena that the Calabogie and Area Business Association is promoting, in an effort to grow our number of tourism visits and to provide a fun, outdoor, recreational activity, available for everyone.

This treasure hunting game is played throughout the world by adventure seekers equipped with simple (and now affordable) GPS devices and coordinates of the caches they are seeking. The basic idea is to locate the hidden caches (full of treasures), then register the "find" and share experiences online.

Free membership in the most popular "official global gps Cache Hunt Site" owned by Groundspeak, has a geocaching registry, providing detailed descriptions, driving directions, content details, visitor comments, and the gps coordinates of 687,860 caches located around the globe.

An environmentally friendly sport, enjoyed by people of all ages and walks of life Groundspeak encourages their participation in a "Cache-In, Trash-Out" program – a wonderful way to clean up litter from the countryside.

CABA's inaugural **Festival of the Senses** (October 4 & 5) was the perfect opportunity to launch 16 new geocaches; touted as a **Sense of Discovery**. In the first month, the caches logged visits by over 200 parties, and, since the treasure hunters travel in groups, this meant that more than 200 new visitors were attracted to our area. Some shopped and some ate in our restaurants and some promised to return with friends and family. Visitors to the K & P Trail series of 7 caches,

including "Clickety Clack Clyde", "On Your Way to Norway", "Walk-a-Mile in M.J.'s Shoes" posted comments such as "This is a great series... we saw a moose on our way!", "Very nice walk on an old railbed. I will bring my family here next summer." and "Thanks for the wonderful series of caches along the K & P!"

Some caches were hidden in nooks and crannies not commonly known or visited by tourists. "Splish Splash", "To See or Not To Sea", "1967", "Spirit of the Anishinabe" and "Belanger's Busy Beavers" took geocachers to scenic vistas. We were rewarded with comments such as "If not for the cache I wouldn't have known this was here.", "I was on a high up here!", "What a view! Thanks!", "Took photos of the great scenery", and "Enjoyed leisurely drive down country lanes".

Other caches were placed in readily accessible locations, "Tommy's Legacy" and "Can-u-Canoe" as easy finds for youngsters and the elderly. Comments included "Haven't been to Calabogie for many years" and "What a beautiful park!". Three caches presently hold "travel bugs" waiting for the next geocacher to find and move towards the final destination chosen by the "bug" owner.

CABA plans to place additional caches in conjunction with the 2009 Festival of the Senses and it is hoped residents and businesses will "stash-their-own-cache", growing the numbers exponentially.

If you would like to learn more about geocaching and CABA's caches, visit [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com). After registering as a (free) member, go to **Hidden By** and enter the phrase **somuchmore**. Happy Hunting!

End

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# Space Weather:

By Douglas Vasey

## MERCURY RISING

Mars, Earth, Venus and Mercury comprise the "Inner Terrestrial Planets" of our solar system. Mercury is the innermost and closest to the sun. It is the only terrestrial planet, besides Earth, to possess a global magnetic field. They are referred to as terrestrial planets since their composition and characteristics are much like our own planet Earth. Mercury's density is the highest of any planet, and is thought to have a molten core.

After a 2 billion mile cruise and three and a half years, NASA's MESSENGER spacecraft flew within 124 miles of the planet Mercury on January 14, 2008, pulling itself onto a path that will lead it to orbit our Solar System's innermost planet in 2011. The complete 4.9 billion mile voyage will include 14 more loops around the Sun before it flies into orbit around Mercury.

Mercury has a very thin atmosphere with no cloud layer. Temperatures on Mercury are the most extreme in the solar system ranging from about -180 degrees Celsius at night to about +425 degrees during the day. Some Polar Regions on Mercury don't come into contact with sunlight and preliminary investigations show the existence of water ice within some of the craters there. Something noteworthy is that between the frigid Polar Regions and the blazing hot areas exposed to sunlight. There may be small temperate areas on Mercury that could accommodate human exploration and discovery.

Planet Mercury experiences only 3 days and nights over a 2 year period. Earth's day night cycle takes about 24 hours. The days and nights are so very long due to slow planetary rotation. However, because Mercury is much closer; its orbit around the sun is tighter and faster than Earth's. Subsequently Mercury experiences four solar years during the passage of one year on Earth. The further a planet is from the sun the longer it takes to orbit, therefore, the longer the planet's year.

Planetary seasons are caused by two factors: axial tilt and variable distance from the sun (orbital eccentricity). Earth's orbit is nearly circular and so has little effect on climate. It's our planet's axial tilt that causes almost all seasonal changes. When the North Pole is tilted toward the Sun, it is northern summer. Six months later the North Pole tilts away from the Sun and we experience northern winter.

## SUNSPOT ACTIVITY

**NEWS FLASH:** NASA and NOAA (National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration) are reporting that our sun has been quite quiet and is just now showing sunspot signs of solar cycle 24's minimum stage. The eleven year period that will characterize cycle 24 is predicted to be

one of the most dramatic in recorded history. Cycle 23 peaked in 2000 and is now fading away as it has overlapped with the emergence of cycle 24. Last month Cycle 23 unleashed a series of B-class solar flares. Although B-flares are considered minor, the explosions made them-selves felt on Earth. X-rays bathed the dayside of our planet and sent waves of ionization rippling through the atmosphere over Europe. Ham radio operators monitoring VLF radio beacons noticed strange "fades" and "surges" caused by the sudden ionospheric disturbances. New-cycle sunspots always appear at high latitude, while old-cycle spots cluster around the sun's equator. The magnetic polarity of new-cycle spots is reversed compared to old-cycle spots (they rotate in the opposite direction.) Four of October's five sunspot groups satisfied these two criteria for membership in Solar Cycle 24. Although Space Weather Canada is reporting all its Aurora areas to be presently quiet, NOAA has been reporting a stretch of daily geomagnetic and electron flux warnings. Sunspot forecaster David Hathaway of the NASA Marshall Space Flight Center cautions that "We're still years away from solar maximum and, in the meantime, the sun is going to have some more quiet stretches." Even with its flurry of sunspots, the October sun was mostly blank, with zero sunspots on 20 of the month's 31 days.

"University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR) predicts cycle 24 will be one of the stormiest sunspot cycles on record and it will be 30-50% stronger than the previous cycle. Earth is presently experiencing a drifting of its magnetic poles. Although geological records show changing characteristics over time, not enough is known about the effects of the present movement except that it does affect compass readings and the location of Aurora displays.

According to the BBC the Earth's magnetic field has weakened 10% over the past 150 years. During the same period, the north magnetic pole wandered about 1,100km (685 miles) and is quickly accelerating out of Canada and into the Arctic Ocean.

Many scientists are coming to understand that solar storms do affect our planet in significant ways. In August 2006, a paper: (Es-spread effects in the ionosphere connected to earthquakes); reports that effects in the ionosphere are connected to seismic earthquakes and volcanic activity. In return the Earth's geomagnetic activity also affects the ionosphere. Magnetic field levels have been collected in Central Italy since 1989. Similar effects have been observed in other places like Japan. Many reports proved the occurrence of electromagnetic effects clearly related to tectonic events (seismic and volcanic activity) in active areas of our planet.

Sept. 23, 2008: NASA headquarters, solar physicists announced that the solar wind is losing power. "The average

Continued on page 15

# Don't let fire ruin your holiday celebrations

By Betsy Sayers

The Greater Madawaska Township Fire Department (GMTFD) Station #2 in Griffith would like to remind our friends and family to enjoy the holiday season, but to also be careful. We wish you and yours the very best of the holiday season and wanted to pass along the following tips from the Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council:

- Looking for a novel, yet practical gift to give this holiday season? Consider smoke alarms or portable fire extinguishers. What better way to show you care than to give a gift that may save a life?
- There is nothing more appealing on a cold winter's night than a blazing fireplace and the warm glow of candles. But open flame can be an invitation to disaster. Always treat fire with respect. Never leave fire unattended. Don't burn wrapping paper or ribbons and always use your fireplace screen. Make sure candles are in a secure holder and place them out of the reach of children.
- Every year in Ontario, the joy of the holiday season is marred by tragic fire deaths. We urge you take a few life-sav-

ing minutes to protect yourself and your family. Test your smoke alarms to make sure they are in good working order and change the batteries, if necessary. Then review your fire escape plan. Do all members of your household know two ways out of every room?

Don't let fire ruin your holiday celebrations. The men and women of the Greater Madawaska Township Fire Department Station #2 in Griffith would like to thank you for your support in 2008 and wish you a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

End

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# Community Calendar

## CHURCH SERVICE SCHEDULE

### GRIFFITH AND MATAWATCHAN

**St. Andrew's United Church**  
 Sunday Worship 8:30 a.m.  
 Sunday School 8:30 a.m.

**Our Lady of Holy Rosary Catholic Church**  
 Sunday Mass 11:00 a.m.

**Hilltop Tabernacle**  
 Sunday School 10:00 a.m.  
 Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.  
 Evening Service 6:00 p.m.

### DENBIGH AND VENNACHAR

**Vennachar Free Methodist Church**  
 Sunday School 10am  
 Sunday Worship 11am  
 WMI meet first Monday of the month  
 Weekly Bible study Tuesdays 7pm  
 at Fellowship Hall and in Plevna  
 Pioneer Club Thursdays 6pm at  
 Clar-Mill Hall, Plevna  
 New Beginnings, 3rd Sunday  
 of the month, 6:30pm, Clar-Mill Hall

**St. Luke's United Church**  
 Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m.  
 Sunday School 10:00 a.m.

**St. Paul's Lutheran Church**  
 Sunday School 9:00 a.m.  
 Sunday Worship 9:30 a.m.

**The New Apostolic Church**  
 Sunday School 9:00 a.m.  
 Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.  
 Wednesdays 8:00 p.m.

## CALABOGIE

**The Calabogie Bible Fellowship Congregational Church**  
 The Mill Street Chapel at 538 Mill St.,  
 Regular service – Sundays 10:30 a.m.  
 Bible study: Wed. at 7:00 p.m.

**Most Precious Blood Catholic Church**  
 504 Mill St., Rev. Father Pat Blake  
 Sundays 10:30 a.m.

**St. Patrick's Catholic Church**  
 Mount St. Patrick  
 Sundays at 9:00 a.m.

**Calabogie St. Andrews United Church**  
 1044 Madawaska Dr.  
 (on the waterfront)  
 Church Services Sunday Mornings at  
 8:45 a.m. Communion  
 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of every month.  
 Bible study every Wednesday evening  
 7:15 – 9:00

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

### Calabogie

**Santa Claus Parade**, Sun. Dec. 7, 1:30 pm  
 starting at Most Precious Blood Church,  
 Mill St., Calabogie; Santa meets children  
 at 4 pm at Community Hall, 752-2922

**Bogie Lights**, Sat. Dec. 6, 5:30 pm  
 Heritage Point, Calabogie- turning  
 on the Christmas tree lights, singing of  
 carols, free hot chocolate, hot dogs and  
 cookies, sponsored by Calabogie Seniors'  
 Club. Everyone welcome. 752-1291

**Christmas Dinner & Dance**,  
 Calabogie Seniors' Club, Dec. 12.  
 For info call 752-1291.

**Calabogie Women's Institute**  
 meets second Thursday monthly,  
 7:30 pm. at Calabogie Home Support Office

next to Murphy's Landing Restaurant.  
 New members welcome. 752-2598

**Calabogie Arts and Crafts Assoc.**,  
 Oct. 20 & Nov. 10, every 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday  
 (if holiday, then 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday),  
 10:00am – 1:00 pm, Community Hall,  
 prospective members most welcome  
 (\$12 per year), 752-2598

**Lion's Club Bingo** every Wednesday,  
 7:15 pm, Calabogie Community Hall, 752-  
 0234.

**The Calabogie and Area Ministerial Food Bank**  
 538 Mill Street,  
 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month  
 10:00 am to 12:00 noon  
 For emergency situations, please call 752-  
 2201.

### Griffith & Matawatchan

**Annual Christmas Tree Lighting**  
 December 12 at 7 pm in village centre  
**Christmas concert** follows at 8 pm  
 At Matawatchan Hall

**Lion's Club Bingo** every second  
 Tuesday at 7:30 pm  
 Christmas Bingo Dec 9

**Lion's Club Annual Craft Sale**  
 Saturday Dec. 6 – 10 am to 3 pm  
 Tables available for \$10

**Children's Christmas Party**  
 December 14 – 1 to 3 pm

Lion's Hall Griffith

**New Years Eve Party**  
 December 31 at 9 pm  
 Lion's Hall

**Sylvia's Foot Care**  
 Every six weeks  
 St. Andrews Church (Matawatchan)  
 Call Annabell Marshal 333-1752

**"Northern Lights" Seniors**  
 Meet the third Tuesday of each month  
 at 1:30 p.m. alternating between Griffith  
 and Matawatchan. For information  
 contact Lois Robbins at 333-1082. All  
 Seniors Welcome

### Denbigh

See **Denbigh Checking In**  
**on page 12 for more events happening**  
**in Denbigh and area**

**Diners Club**  
 Dinners are held the first Monday of the  
 month at the Denbigh Community Hall  
 at 12 noon. Full Course Meal \$6.00.  
 Contact Faye Mieske at 333-2784 or  
 Irene at 333-2202 for information.

**St. Luke's United Church**, Denbigh  
 Exercise Group - Tuesdays 9:30 a.m.

**HEALTH CARE**  
**Paramed Health Care Services Foot**  
**Care Clinic/Denbigh**  
 Call 333-5559, Muriel Burgess, for an  
 appointment

**Lion's Club Annual Craft Sale**  
**Saturday Dec. 6 – 10 am to 3 pm**  
**at Griffith Hall**  
**Baked goods, door prizes,**  
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# Mistletoe

By Floris Wood

Before I retired, I knew a guy named Ray who, at every office Christmas party, would hang out near the door decorated with mistletoe just to try to trap unsuspecting, attractive women into giving him a kiss. While Ray was a harmless nuisance he became a sociological phenomenon because of the anxiety caused to the women Ray choose not to kiss, especially if, in previous years, they had been found by Ray to be kiss-worthy.

Sponsoring this whole charade were the Norsemen of Northern Europe, Celts of the British Isles and the Greeks, all of whom revered Mistletoe as a harbinger of good health, high fertility or successful love. Kissing under the mistletoe was presumed to please the Norse goddess of Love, Freya (some say Frigga), after whom they also named Friday. The Angles and Saxons also thought mistletoe had medicinal qualities. The European variety of mistletoe (*Viscum alba*) is still used in Europe in apothecary medicine as a cure for many things. But, before you jump up and head for the bush looking for some mistletoe to cure your mother-in-law's cancer, I need to emphasize that Ontario's mistletoe (*Arceuthobium pusillum*) has a reputation, deserved or not, for being poisonous. The Ontario Poison Centre lists mistletoe as a plant that should be kept away from children. Commonly called Eastern Dwarf mistletoe, *Arceuthobium pusillum* can be found in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland as well as adjoining states in the U. S.

I could not find any references to human mistletoe fatalities, but, one website stated that it has killed dogs who ate the berries, although no particular cases were cited. In fact two researchers from Pittsburgh studied 1,754 cases of exposure to mistletoe over a seven year period. These case studies were collected by the American Association of Poison Control Centers. No fatalities reported here either. In fact, in 90% of the cases no ill effects were reported at all. Minor discomfort was reported for 10%. Children who ingested a few berries from the mistletoe plant experienced digestive tract discomfort but were treated at home by phone from a poison control center. In short, I guess the best that can be said is that the poisonous or medicinal properties of any mistletoe are controversial and inconclusive

Mistletoe plants grow on the branches of other trees because mistletoe is a parasitic plant. Plant parasitism is fairly rare among plant species with only 14 to 18 species demonstrating this characteristic. Plants that get all of their sustenance from the host plant are complete parasites. Mistletoe belongs to a group of plants that are partial parasites (hemipar-



asitic). They begin life completely dependent upon the host tree but, later, develop green leaves that produce chlorophyll, enabling them to convert light rays into energy, hence to live less dependent upon their host. The seeds of the mistletoe are inside a white, viscous berry.

Birds spread the berries in two ways, first by eating the berries but not digesting the seeds. Then they leave the seeds in the bird droppings on the tree branches. Secondly, the viscous juices make the berries stick to the birds' bills. When they clean their bills by wiping them on tree branches, they unwittingly spread the seeds to other trees. Berries also fall off the mistletoe branch and stick to lower branches of the host tree. Very few seeds survive the winter snow, spring rains and predators to germinate in the spring. Upon drying, the seeds read the chemical makeup of the plant upon which the seed came to rest, testing if that plant is one upon which the mistletoe thrives. If it is, the seed sends out tiny roots along the hosts limb until its root finds a crack in the bark through which it can enter the lower Cambria of the tree. It continues to penetrate the tree until it reaches the tree's phloem or vascular system through which nutrients flow from the tree's roots to its limbs. The mistletoe forms a tiny, gall-like body known as the haustorium, which serves as a permanent interface between the mistletoe plant and the host tree.

Each species of mistletoe grows in its own preferred species of trees. The most common European variety prefers hardwood trees as does the most common variety found in most of the United States. The Ancient Northern Europeans especially revered a variety of mistletoe that grows in Oak trees because the Oak had special religious significance to them. In Canada the Eastern Dwarf mistletoe is found only in some evergreen trees, especially the Black spruce which the paper industry depends on for high quality pulp. The other evergreens frequently affected are Red and White spruce. Other evergreens become infected when they grow in close proximity to another species that is infected. These are eastern larch, jack pine, eastern white pine, red pine, balsam fir and blue spruce. Mistletoe looks like a large rounded tuft grow-

ing at a higher level in a tree. There may well be several of them at the same level. They remind one of a hanging plant stuck high in a tree.

Some parasites have a symbiotic relationship with their host, meaning that their presence on their host is beneficial to the host. In some cases the parasite is even essential for the host to survive. That is certainly not true of mistletoe. The Eastern Dwarf mistletoe is the only mistletoe found in substantial quantities in Ontario. The damage done by dwarf mistletoe goes pretty much unnoticed unless one makes ones living harvesting Black spruce or other evergreen trees. Then to look up into a Black spruce and see mistletoe is cause for alarm. Severe infection is fatal to the host but it is death by slow degree. It would be counterproductive for the mistletoe to kill off its host immediately. The Dwarf mistletoe starves the area of the tree above the mistletoe of water and nutrients, and that area may appear stunted or black. The tree develops abnormally; forming what is called "witches brooms" within its branches and produces less timber than surrounding, uninfected trees. If the mistletoe infestation is persistent the host's lifespan can be shortened. Black spruces, for example, usually enjoy a lifespan of from 80 to 140 years. Forests infected with Eastern Dwarf mistletoe seldom reach an age of 100 years. The only sure treatment for Eastern Dwarf mistletoe is to remove the mistletoe manually or, in heavily infested areas, to burn off the infected trees. Aerial photographs taken of Black spruce stands in Minnesota reveal that Dwarf mistletoe rendered 3-11% of the Black spruce population useless to the timber industry. Damage to trees includes inhibitive growth rate of the tree, reduction of reproduction rates and diminishing the host tree's ability to fight off other types of infections. Mistletoe may attack a tree of any age but it prefers host tree branches that are about four to five years old.

Hence it usually starts high up in the tree where these younger branches are developing. One reason mistletoe is so devastating to Black spruce is that Black spruce is more likely to exist in pure stands, i.e., not mixed with other species of trees. Unlike most trees that host Dwarf mistletoe, Black spruce thrives in low land. This concentration of a host species makes it easier for the Dwarf mistletoe to spread quickly to other susceptible trees.

While mistletoe has become a delightful part of our Christmas celebration we can see that there is a dark side to its story. Not all species of mistletoe are as devastating to their host as the Eastern Dwarf mistletoe. But the meaning of the word mistletoe gives us some hint of what the host trees must think of it. "Mist" in old and modern German means dung. "Toe" means twig. I'll leave what I am thinking to your imagination in order to relieve Bill, the Highlanders editor, of the decision whether to publish these thoughts or not, but how would you translate "dung on a twig"?

The author, Washington Irving, describes in a footnote in *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent*, that mistletoe was hung in the kitchen of farm houses and young men were privileged to kiss young ladies under it. Each time such a kiss was dispensed the young man had to pick a berry off the mistletoe sprig and dispose of it. When the berries were all gone the privilege was revoked. That part of the tradition about the berries seems to have been lost. Reinstating it would presumably curb such excesses as practiced by Ray and his ilk. There are probably some people, mostly women, who would just as soon see Ray dispose of the berries by eating them, settling once and for all the controversy over just how much of a tummy ache the berries cause in humans. Have a very merry Christmas and a happy, prosperous and healthy 2009! We hope you will read us again next year.

End

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# The best of the Season to everyone

# from all of us at the Madawaska Highlander



# Griffith Matawatchan News

By Garry Ferguson

After more than a decade spent behind a counter, Denis Cale punched up his last sale, closed the cash register and shut down the Rapids End Store. Anyone wishing to contact him over the next few months will have to run fast or ski well because he plans to spend a lot of time far from a phone on the Calabogie Peaks. We couldn't even guess at the number of our publications that were passed out from "the store" over our five years in business so we here at *The Madawaska Highlander* will miss his help and cooperation. We do wish him a long and busy retirement – though hopefully not quite as busy as the – mostly retired – staff, scrambling to meet deadlines here at the "paper."

Paticia (Pat) Strong, of Matawatchan, won the prize for the "best lumberjane" dress at the "Musical Salute to the Lumberjacks" staged by the Heritage Old time Country Music Association at the Eganville Legion on October 18, 2008. Two winners, "best lumberjack" and "best "lumberjane," were picked from the many who came dressed in shanty-style bush attire. Wes Bomhower, one of our star writers noted for his historical and amusing (Out on the First Concession) articles, won "best lumberjack."

Speaking of Wes, he recently told me that he has sold his home in Calabogie and will move to Ottawa in December. He will be sadly missed on the busy Calabogie social scene, but we hope that we will continue to enjoy his witty submissions in this paper.

The Matawatchan Hall Board has planned the annual Tree Lighting and Christmas Concert for December 12, 2008. The Tree

Lighting will take place in the village centre at 7 p.m. The Concert, designed to last approximately one hour, will begin at 8 p.m. In the Matawatchan Hall.

Except for a week at Fishing Derby time, the hall will again be closed for the winter. Savings on heating fuel costs are quite substantial during a time of sparse usage, so the cost of keeping the building heated during deep winter cannot be justified. The Board has also divested itself of the permanent liquor licence; consequently, renters wishing to serve alcoholic beverages at any private function must purchase the necessary insurance and obtain a Special Occasion License from the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario.

Board meetings, held at 7 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month are open to the public: as a matter of fact, they'll be so glad to see you that they might even feed you.

The Denbigh Griffith Lions Club has asked us to pass along its appreciation for the continuing support from the community. It is incredible that the Club raised \$25,000 for the Renfrew Victoria Hospital over five years and has already made a third instalment on an equal contribution (\$25,000) to Hospice Renfrew. These amounts are amazing considering that they are raised in such a small community and are on top of the many smaller donations given locally as well as to national and international organizations. Nice going!

The Lions Club is again stirring up the Christmas spirit by busily planning a number of upcoming annual events. The Craft Sale will take place from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on December 06; the Christ-

mas Bingo at 7 p.m. on December 09; the Children's Christmas Party from 1 p.m. To 3 p.m. on December 14 and the New Years party in the Lions Hall commencing at 9 p.m. on December 31, 2008. It is heartening to see that the Fire Department has been able to attract recruits over the last few months. Added to the roll call are Dave Parks, Garnet Wilkes, Brandon Bird and Andy Myatt. New as well is a pumper truck to arrive sometime in the near future. It will be identical to one procured by Station One in Calabogie. Seems Council found them cheaper by the pair.

Training at the Department is always a priority and a constant. All members will ride classroom chairs this fall as they worked their way through the complete fire fighter's curriculum on fire behaviour. For some, this was a refresher, for the rest, an eye opener. Eight members also attended a Ministry of Labour Chainsaw Users Certification Course in Calabogie. In our modern age, firefighters not only swing those big, ugly axes but they cut "stuff" down with saws too so a certification is required.

Fire safety education is also a top priority with the Department so it has been passing out free, green, reusable shopping bags with a message imprinted on them: "Check your smoke alarms. Change the batteries." For those who missed the freebie, you heard it here. With Station Two's best wishes for the Season comes a warning: "Have a safe Holiday! Use extreme caution when using candles. Never leave them unattended."

In mid September of this year, Carol Anne Kelly received, from the County of Renfrew, a thorough, three-page response to her June petition urging action on the yet-to-be-rebuilt sections of the Matawatchan Road. Mr. David Darch, Director of Public Works and Engineer-

ing, detailed a council-approved 10-year capital works program based on anticipated funding allocations. He even listed the six major factors on which the planning and prioritization of county infrastructure, within this 10-year plan, are based.

We're not sure how these factors will affect the Matawatchan Road's priority, however, Mr. Darch stated that staff is proposing that funding be allocated in the 2009 capital budget for engineering design, utility works, environmental assessments as well as identifying and securing required land. Due to the magnitude of the costs, construction will have to be staged over 2011 – 2013. Negotiations with the Ministry of Transport have been underway for some months regarding the design of the Highway 41-Matawatchan Road intersection. This multiyear program (subject to Council approval) is now being proposed by the Department.

In conclusion to his letter, Mr. Darch wrote, "*I realize that the users of the Matawatchan Road would prefer to see the rehabilitation works implemented in a more compressed time frame, however, since the rehabilitation works require extensive pre-engineering and as well represent costly undertakings, it is necessary to stage the rehabilitation in a strategic manner, while addressing the needs of the County as a whole.*"

Mr. Darch evidently spent considerable time on his response to our concerns and deserves to be commended for it. Until the project is completed though, we can only hope like hell that our reflexes don't fail us and we're still able to keep on dodging those potholes.

A "Merry Christmas" and a "Happy, prosperous 2009" to all our readers. Have a good winter.

End

## Denbigh Checking In

By Angela Bright

\*35 children in the form of pumpkins, lady bugs, butterfly princesses and superheroes, enjoyed the Halloween party on Saturday, October 26th at the hall. It was a messy, rainy day outside, and messy inside too with the carving of some very original pumpkins. The children also decorated cupcakes, coloured and crafted, played Halloween bingo and had a good lunch. Thanks to Denbigh Recreation for putting on this event.

\*St. Luke's United Church hosted a lovely turkey dinner at the hall on November 7th. Lots of good food to go with good company from neighbours and friends!

\*At the first two meetings of the children's program at the Denbigh Library this year, the kids made lovely Thanksgiving centerpieces, a paper witch and two bird feeders. Stories were read and snacks enjoyed. The December kid's night will be on Thursday, the 11th at 6pm. Leading

up to the holidays, the children can also go to the library on Saturdays for Christmas crafts; November 29th Christmas Ornaments, December 6th Making Gifts and December 13th Christmas Colouring and Activity Pages. The crafts are independent projects, so for the younger kids at least, moms and/or dads would need to lend a hand to their children.

\*Just a reminder that the local TOPS chapter meets Tuesday mornings at 9am. The meetings are held at St. Luke's United Church. Come out and meet the members, stay for exercises and Drop in. All are welcome.

\* The Denbigh Recreation Committee is having their Second Annual Santa Clause Parade on Saturday, December 6th, at 6pm. The parade will start from Berndt's Garage on HWY 41, run down Bridge Street and end at the community hall. Santa will greet the children and then there will be entertainment for all to en-

joy. There will be refreshments and anyone wishing to bring along some cookies or squares to share would be greatly appreciated. Donations to the Food Bank are also welcomed. Letters to Santa will be picked up along the parade route, so kids start writing. The Rec Committee is also purchasing a plaque to be put in the hall and each year the name of the winner of the Best Christmas Float will be engraved on the plaque. For information call Janice Kerr at 333-2797. The Family Health Day which the Rec Committee had planned unfortunately had to be cancelled, with the possibility of trying for next year. Also, keep watch for details as a spring concert is planned.

\*Vennachar Free Methodist Church will hold the Annual Sunday School Christmas Concert on Sunday December 7th at 7pm, and a Christmas Eve service at 7pm. An invitation is extended to all to join in celebrating the joy of the season. \*The New Apostolic Church in Denbigh joyfully welcomes the festive Christmas

Season. November 30th is the first Sunday of Advent. Seasonal carols by the choir and congregation will be part of every activity in the church until Christmas. On Friday, Dec. 14th at 4 pm is the annual Christmas Carol Sing-A-Long followed by some seasonal refreshments and fellowship. Then Sunday, Dec. 21st immediately after the morning Divine Service, the 'Sunday School' will present their Christmas program of verse and song. For this event there is a practice every Saturday morning until the program and any children wanting to join in may do so. Christmas Day will be celebrated with a Divine Service at 10:30am, a wonderful opportunity to thank our great God for the marvellous gift of His beloved Son. To close out the old year, there will be a New Year's Eve Service Wednesday, Dec.31st at 7pm, and one to celebrate the New Year, Thursday at 10:30am. You are very welcome to all or any of these seasonal activities. You may also visit us on the web at [www.nacdenbigh.8k.com](http://www.nacdenbigh.8k.com)

End

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### Council Meetings for December 2008

<b>December 4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Standing Committee Meetings</b> (Council Chambers - Calabogie)	
	Finance & Administration	9:00 AM
	Environmental Management	11:15 AM
	Public Works	12:30 PM
	Planning & Economic Development	2:30 PM
	Public Services	4:30 PM
<b>December 11<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Committee of the Whole</b>	<b>4:00 PM</b>
	(Council Chambers - Calabogie)	
<b>December 18<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>4:00 PM</b>
	(Council Chambers - Calabogie)	

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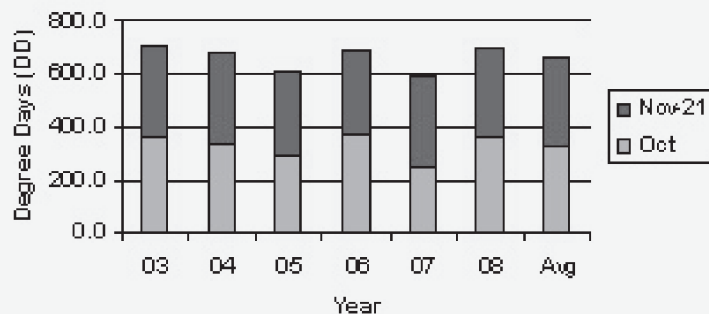
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### Winter Hours

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**Merry Christmas**  
**and a Happy New Year**

Degree Days Oct/thru Nov 21/ 6Year Avg



Degree Days

Year	Oct	Nov-21	2 Month
03	362.1	347.8	709.9
04	334.9	344.0	678.9
05	292.5	315.1	607.6
06	369.2	317.0	686.2
07	244.9	350.5	595.4
08	360.8	334.8	695.6
Avg	327.4	334.9	662.3
Tot	1964.4	2009.2	

Here's the Degree Days heating for October and first 21 days of November & the same period for each of the past 5 years. A little colder than average so far. Not the coldest October but cold enough to cool things down from the warm beginnings of November.

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— Richard Gill

# Canoeing the Lower Madawaska

By John L. Neale

Three and a half years ago I discovered the Madawaska Highlands and was lucky enough to find and purchase a year-round cottage on Centennial Lake, which my wife and I visit frequently from our Ottawa home. For the past three Septembers, the cottage has served as a launching pad for the "Boys' Annual Canoe Trip". In 2006 and 2007 the annual canoe trips were to the Schooner Lakes. The four of us paddled two canoes down the southeast arm of Centennial Lake and then worked our way up Mackie Creek to Round Schooner Lake where we camped on sites we reserved and paid for on the Internet (go to <http://www.northfrontenacparklands.com>). Site 11 on Round Schooner Lake offers a picturesque base-camp for canoeing and hiking in the area.

However, this year we decided to add some excitement to the trip and eliminate the over-night element. Bernie, Richard, Chris and I decided to paddle the Madawaska River from Aumond Bay to Griffith to try our hand at some white water.

On Saturday September 27, the day was overcast but the rain held-off. After a bouncy ride in Don Adams' old red pick-up truck, we pushed our two rental canoes into the dead-calm waters of Aumond Bay just before 9am. After about 3 km of flat water, our hearts began to beat faster as we heard the roar of the first rapid in the Snake Rapids series. Island Rapids is a Grade 3 rapid which means that it can be dangerous for novices like us.

After scouting our route we decided to proceed. Both canoes skidded along the side of the same log as the current overtook our futile efforts to execute our



Richard and Chris Neale on the Madawaska, west of Griffith.

planned route. We made it through with wet pants and feet thanks to the rather large rooster tail at the bottom of the chute. Seven more rapids followed in quick succession as we mostly followed the deep-water "V" into Dog Leg Rapids, Shallow Rapids, The Narrows Rapids, Exam Time Rapids, Rifle Chute Rapids (which we portaged), Split Rock Rapids (which we should have portaged!), and Raquette Rapids. Split Rock rapids just about jettisoned me out of the canoe as we lurched off the side of a rather large standing wave!

After the Snake Rapids series was over, there was 6 km of relatively flat water before the next rapid. We enjoyed the autumn colours as well as the company of a Blue Heron who seemed to be taking the same route as he hunted for food. Occasionally, we would sneak up on each others' canoe and easily push each other off course. White water canoes have no keels. As our stomachs began to grumble, we heard the roar of Slate Falls in the distance. Slate Falls is a Grade 5 rapid and a mandatory portage for novices and experts alike. As the guide book points out, "The rock strata tend to face upstream, just waiting to catch the slightest error. Be wise and walk"<sup>1</sup>. It was a great place to have a well deserved lunch, but the

portage trail was twisty and narrow and not an easy haul when carrying a heavy Royalex canoe in water shoes.

Crooked Rapids, Wadsworth Rapids, Stoney Swift, and Buck Ledge were evenly spaced over the next 7 km. Crooked Rapids was challenging with a route that demanded at least three sudden course changes, none of which we executed particularly well! These we performed to the amusement of two campers looking on from their island campsite. After an easy paddle down the right channel of Wadsworth Rapids, we began to notice motor boats and cottages on the river again.

After another 3 km, we could hear the roar of Highland Falls, our last rapid before Griffith. Highland Falls is a Grade 4 rapid that looks like it could potentially be shot by experts using a complex route down the right channel. It would likely involve numerous back ferries to zig-zag around numerous ledges. Bernie and I decided to portage Highland Falls while Richard and Chris shot the last segment. We then enjoyed the last 2 km of flat water leading to our take-out in Griffith.

As we pulled our rental canoes out of the water at about 4pm, the rain that had been threatening all day finally began to

fall. Needless to say, we felt very lucky to have spent such a perfect day on 23 km of the Lower Madawaska. We spent the evening recounting the highlights of the day.

On Sunday we hiked the Fire Tower Trail in Matawatchan to see the beautiful fall colours from Fire Tower Hill (overlooking Dunn's Lake and Hutson Lake).

We are certainly blessed with a beautiful natural setting. As I write this article, the view from the cottage window reminds me that there is *so much more* to explore and enjoy in the Griffith / Matawatchan region of the Madawaska Highlands. At the same time, I have come to appreciate local entrepreneurs, like Don Adams, that make the enjoyment of our recreational resources conveniently accessible to locals and visitors alike.

End

## Space weather (Cont)

pressure of the solar wind has dropped more than 20% since the mid-1990s," says Dave McComas of the Southwest Research Institute in San Antonio, Texas. "This is the weakest it's been since we began monitoring solar wind almost 50 years ago." It could be the calm before the storm. Solar cycle 24 is expected to peak around 2012. I don't know if the date is significant or coincidence. However, I do find it curious that solar maximum will occur on or around the end of the Mayan calendar. Stay tuned as more discoveries come to light.

End

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## Cottage Corner

### The Hitchhiker's Guide to Recycling

By John Roxon,

The old leather couch ended up at the cottage. The one from the cottage – a strange old loveseat whose material can be best described as a lovely exfoliate made of tweed and sandpaper – will end up in the garage. I have lots of good memories of sore necks from that loveseat, let me tell you. In the garage it will either be a maternity ward for mice, a target backstop or a workbench – I haven't quite decided. The tippy canoe also found its way south. I want to use it in more populated waters so that when my body is found it won't be too much more bloated than it already is.

The point is that, I'm trying. I'm trying, dammit, to reduce, reuse and recycle, but it sure isn't always easy. Oh sure, it's easy to recycle a pop can or a newspaper but it's always a bit of conundrum figuring out what to do with the bigger stuff. I mean, old tools which mysteriously cease working one day – what to

do with it? Can't really throw it in the garbage – it may be easy to fix, there may be some good parts on it, perhaps I'll start a tool museum, it will rip the garbage bag – can't really sell it – it is broken after all – who would buy it? One possible solution is to pretend that it's working fine and then give it away. That way when the hapless recipient mentions in casual passing that the power drill you gave him doesn't work you can just shrug your shoulders as if to ask how he effed it up. But this solution has its drawbacks too because in all likelihood whomever you give these "gifts" to will likely want to reciprocate and then all you have is two friends giving broken stuff to each other while insinuating that the other is all thumbs who couldn't even operate a butter knife. So it finds a corner in the back of the garage or workshop and just sits there. You acknowledge its presence on occasion by thinking that you should really clean up this place....and so it sits for one more year.

When you think about it, we shouldn't even be going through this environmental guilt trip at all. I would certainly drink a coke if it was in biodegradable banana

skin – if it was available. I would also be very happy to buy a drill that would last for 20 years that was actually worth fixing. Instead excess packaging is foisted on us and cheap workmanship forces us to replace items more often. It's at the point where it's difficult finding quality because those manufacturers can't compete with their much cheaper competition. So we save 50% by purchasing something that will last 25% as long. Now that we can afford all this crap we're also faced with the responsibility of getting rid of it. So life becomes more crowded.

As I said, I'm trying. And why are we faced with all the extra work and guilt when well over 50% of what we try so hard to clean and separate and tie and bag ends up in the landfill anyway? And in a long, long term view – does it really matter? Look at it this way, everything we consume initially came from the earth. Every shopping bag, water bottle, cheap drill and TV box was once either on top of or below ground in a slightly different version. Everything we throw out will biodegrade – eventually. So it may take 5000 years. Is that really a big deal or a huge amount of time when compared to universal time-lines?

We're a big part of a giant eco-system which rotates raw materials into finished products into – well eventually raw materials again. Given enough time, absolutely everything ends up back in the earth – every single bag, box or bottle. So why worry about it? Recycling companies are just using manpower, energy and other resources to delay the inevitable. If making a difference was really that important to us there is only one thing to do and again, when compared to timelines made up of billions of years, this is strictly penny-ante stuff – that is to consume as close to nothing as possible. The rub here is that by doing this you're effectively erasing over 5000 years of "progress". We would have to go back to our hunter-gatherer roots. This would effectively mean a much simpler life devoid of the latest and greatest gadgets like i-Phones, Blackberries and plasma TVs.

Yet, I'm still trying. I also just figured out what to do about that broken drill, snowmobile and cardboard box—absolutely nothing. Hopefully I can be around in 5000 years to watch the crumb that the drill has become dissolve innocently into the earth.

End



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## Out on the First Concession

I'LL SING A SONG, WILMA SAID

By Wes Bomhower

My sister Wilma, about a year and a half older than I, was not that big a person but what she lacked in stature she more than made up with intestinal fortitude. She was never at a loss for words and could talk down the meanest bully in the whole school and make him squirm with embarrassment. Many years later I know why no one ever gave me a hard time in the schoolyard; she was always there to save my hide. This was after our older siblings had moved on to high school or work on the farm.

In the winter of 1938 we moved from a rented farm to another farm twenty five miles away that our parents had purchased on the First Concession, and as any child who has moved to a strange school can confirm, it is very traumatic attending a new school with a different teacher and brand new school mates. The children seemed especially backward at this new school as compared to what Wilma and I were accustomed to and not all that friendly. They looked on Dad with some wonder because he had served overseas in the First World War and Mom was an oddity also because she had taught school for some time, as had her mother before her. Nevertheless, we made a few

friends in the one room school, but there was room for improvement

One Friday afternoon teacher announced that because all eight grades were up to date on their assignments, we would have a little sing-along as a diversion from our studies. She produced a tuning fork from her desk and asked everyone to join her in singing a simple ditty most of us knew. Then she said, "Would anyone like to come up to the front and sing a song"? Everyone hung their heads and looked at their feet, too shy to do such a thing, then a little voice volunteered. "I'll sing a song if Wes will sing along with me". It was Wilma!

Well! Wilma and I went up to the front of the classroom and sang 'The Rhode To The Isles' (acappello of course,) and the children were dumbfounded though they applauded with teacher's prompting. The teacher encouraged us to sing a few more songs more that day and by Monday we had a lot more friends than before. Many seasons later, I met the man who had been the school bully in those long ago years, and these were his words. "Wes, as long as I live I'll never forget that day when your sister Wilma said, 'I'll sing a song if Wes will sing along with me'", which proves what I've always said, music is one of the greatest mediums and ice breakers on earth.

How times have changed.

End



# NOEL-YULETIDE-CHRISTMAS

By Ernie Jukes of Camp J

This wonderful season of "goodwill among men" will continue to carry that much needed "peace" across Canada and much of the world. It has evolved to be a time for church -and God - a period for family and friends - an occasion for children to be merry - and a spell to renew traditions.



With most people it is a time for gifting and often a moment for kids to wish for something special for themselves... it might even mean a letter to Santa Claus.

The preparation for Yuletide may start early, even during summer, and last right up to Christmas morning. With the making of marvelous foods and even last minute shopping and wrapping, the time flies by us all.

There have been a host of Yule traditions that we owe to our various immigrants since they first came from Europe in the mid-1500s. The first Christmas tree and Greeting cards came from Germany and spread with the Saxons who invaded Britain. The Druids used the Hollybush in their early religious ceremonies, actually very little of this sort of thing seems to be Christian.

Through my years of celebrating this

pleasurable season we have often been able to cut our own tree. We have also made our own home decorations and wreaths. Today of course a lot of electrical lights and decorations are used, particularly in town - perhaps too many. But it's only once a year.

Now I will let you in on a tiny secret. Ever since I can remember as a wee lad, I always wanted an electric model train. You know a big layout but in small HO gauge. Not expensive - but detailed. It would have mountains and tunnels and lakes and streams with towns and farms, for it to stop at - or go through. But no matter how many letters I wrote I never got more than a new shirt or a pair of socks.

But the food was stupendous and sometimes we got candy or fruit along with that lump of coal in our stocking. Candy canes seemed to be delicious back then.

Choosing our own tree was always a lot of fun and still is, with an evening set aside for family and friends to get together and help decorate it. Later in life we tried having Christmas in tropical lands, but without real evergreens it just isn't the same.

Christmas morning we start off by most of us having a coffee while everyone opens their stockings. Then we have our traditional breakfast. This includes "stolen", a German coffee cake, "Strata" with it's layers of bread, bacon, eggs, broccoli, cheese and mushrooms prepared the night before and baked Christmas morning. It is accompanied with a "Buck Fizz", Champaign and orange juice drink invented by the architect Buckminster Fuller. Then after eating this breakfast we open all our gifts. Still I haven't got my train; yep you guessed it ----usually clothes or maybe a book!

I recall in the past cleaning off part of MacPherson's lake (now Dunns) for ice skating and to play a bit of shinny. We would also snowmobile up Dan's mountain with our skis in the Skiboose. Then fly down the trail, often not making the sharp turns as they were cross country skis and not maneuverable like down hill skis. Often it was simply a walk in the woods after our heavy duty turkey and cranberries of Christmas dinner with Audrey's "trifle" for desert.

The Christmas or New Years dance at the hall was always a lot of fun as were visiting our local friends. One time we had a wide spread ice storm and we were invited to Amey's and Marion's down at the store as the local dance had been cancelled. We stepped out the door and - woops - suddenly found ourselves at the bottom of the hill on Frontenac Road. We slid almost to their door on the ice. After the party we walked home through the bush for traction.

Another time it was 40 degrees below and my Chrysler just wouldn't start. Yes, even though I had removed the battery and brought it inside the cabin to keep it warm. But my old friend Ardean Kelly brought over his brand new 4 wheel drive truck (see what he got for Christmas?) and towed me over to the flats between Wilson and Park's farm in Miller. The sandy stretch where the snow had blown

clear was perfect for my car to skid, grab and kick over.

Sometimes we have a real dump of snow; some may call it an old fashioned Yule. We have always had snowshoes since my Dad Walt was around, they sure allow one to get around - riding on top of the snow.

The cold has never really bothered us much inside the thick, hewn logs of Camp J. We just throw another log in the fire, although long Johns and track suits always seem in winter vogue. And with the left over turkey for sandwiches and various pies for dessert we never really could go hungry. What a time of the year.

Well, just so you know, my son Dave got an early surprise one Christmas. I made sure he got a train - by the time he was about four years old. It was a grand layout with mountains, tunnels and farms and even cattle. I suppose I put a few months of work into it. He was too young of course - but no damn shirts or socks.

Our Madawaska Valley and Highlands consists of a unique blend of villages and towns from early pioneers. They boast hospitality that welcomes visitors to our lush woodlands year round. Our rural old fashioned ways, our music and arts and winter recreational activities are especially enjoyable during Yuletide holidays. We have many good singers that sing in church and our concerts. The violins, piano, organ, guitars, and accordion all support the words of our valley voices. We are definitely a fortunate region of Ontario.

Making gifts for Yuletide is another happy pastime for all ages. It captures the personality of the giver and often means a lot more to the recipient. It is a part of our holiday spirit that can continue throughout the calendar for birthdays, anniversaries and graduations. Sometimes it's just swell to give - for no reason - try it! And watch their eyes light up.

So! ! Whatever your old traditions are for this joyful Canadian holiday or whatever your religious beliefs may be, we must always remember that Christ is still the reason for this blissful season.

End

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## Save your money

**Editor's note:** At a recent "Home Energy Upgrades" workshop sponsored by the Ottawa River Institute I learned money-saving tips. Here are a few of them.

**Heating and cooling:** Conservation can be as easy as planting a tree. Plant leafy (deciduous) trees on the sunny (south) side of your house. During the summer they provide shade, and in winter they will shed their leaves to let the warming sunshine through. Pine or fir trees planted on the north side of your house provide an energy-saving windbreak.

**Water heater:** On average, water heaters use the most energy in the home after heating. A 175-litre tank can use up to 5000 kWh per year, a cost of almost \$500 at today's prices. By putting on an insulating blanket on your tank on hot water pipes, and by turning down the thermostat on you hot water tank, great savings can be realized.

**Refrigerator:** Don't overfill the refrigerator, as this blocks air circulation. Conversely, a full freezer will perform better than an empty one.

**Stoves / Ovens:** Microwave ovens use up to 75% less energy, so whenever possible, use a microwave instead of your stove or oven.

**Dishwasher:** Using a dishwasher can actually be more efficient than washing

dishes by hand, assuming you use the dishwasher once for every 3 to 4 times you would wash dishes by hand.

**Clothes washer:** Wash your clothes in cold or warm water. A whopping 85-90% of the energy used in washing machines is for heating the water. You can save a lot of energy by lowering the water temperature.

**Clothes dryer:** Clean the lint filter after every load. A clogged lint filter can increase energy use up to 30%, and may be a fire hazard.

**Home office:** Less energy is consumed when computers and monitors are turned on and off (as often as required) than when left on over time. In fact, all electronic devices use more energy when left on, as opposed to being turned on and off as needed.

**Lighting:** Contrary to popular belief, less energy is consumed when lights are turned on and off as you come and go than if a light is left on all the time.

Use compact fluorescent light bulbs. They cost more than regular light bulbs (starting at \$5), but can use 75% less electricity and last years longer. One compact fluorescent light bulb can save you three times the cost in electricity.

End

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## Dispatches (Cont)

the reconstruction efforts. In the interest of their security, I will not identify them or their work. Since 1 April, my team and my predecessors have let more than \$12 M worth of contracts. Increasingly, Afghan companies or companies with Afghan offices are getting the business. Part of my mandate is to get more money into local hands, using the local currency, instead of paying US dollars to a Kabul office of a foreign multinational.

### Week 6:

During a 6-month tour within Afghanistan we get a break during which we must leave Afghanistan whether to return home or visit some other location. To minimize disruptions for the formed units, the vacations are spread over the 6-month tour with some people leaving after a few weeks in theatre and others waiting several months before their leave period. During my tour, most people asked for their break to coincide with Christmas; most people were disappointed with their allocation. Within my team, those with young children and those filling junior positions had first pick. Consequently, the senior member of the team, whose children have left home, got last pick. It came as little surprise that last pick was the first flight home. In turn, this means that, after a few weeks in Afghanistan, I was on the first flight back to Canada. The last week before the flight passed in a blur – there were last minute panics and reallocation of responsibilities before I hopped on the plane.

The final week before my flight home may have passed in a blur but Flight Day was memorable. For the second round of the Movements Game, the Air Force's opening gambit was subtle – they delayed the airplane's departure by one hour but did not ask people to report an hour later than originally scheduled. Their second move was not as elegant; in this instance, I had to queue up in the mid-morning sun until the Air Force decided to process passengers and let them into the terminal. As the flight was delayed, the Air Force felt no particular need to honour the original opening time. Mercifully, we were not held outside for the full hour's delay. Perhaps the Air Force was swayed by the fact that all the passengers were armed.

Sometime thereafter, I was safely at home enjoying clouds, a bathtub, paved roads, and reliable flush toilets after several weeks' hiatus. It felt odd to go to bed and not have to lock up a firearm.

End

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