



SCOC

A Community That Cares

Advent Traditions – Germany and Canada

Christmas starts on the first Sunday of Advent. A large Wreath with four red candles either hung or on the dining room table has one candle lit. There are 3 to 4 crèche scenes. Wherever there is space there are evergreen boughs with appropriate décor. We have 3 two to three feet high Christmas trees—one of birch bark, one of pine cones and one of large wood shavings. Every Sunday of Advent, another candle is lit.

Going back to the first Advent—my most magical advent experience was in boarding school at Willhelmsdorf (south of Stuttgart); we were woken early and came down the grand staircase in our night-gowns. There were cookies that we could take—suspended down the stairs. When we are all down, the dining room doors opened to a large wreath hanging from the ceiling, with one candle lit. The only other lights were candles behind transparencies, in all of the windows. We stood in awe. The head-mistress led us in prayer and then we went to breakfast.

I told this story to many people. When Nicholas Dick, who was our minister at the time (and also married us), heard it, he asked if I would make a wreath for church (Toronto United Mennonite Church). So, for the next 20 plus years, we, together with friends, would spend the Saturday before the first Advent going up north to get few trees, toboggan, and have hot cider, and make the wreath. Others carried on after we stopped. A hula-hoop was the base; my father made a hanging stand.

Back to our celebrations—Christmas Eve is our Christmas, and also happens to be my birthday. Early in the afternoon we go to my mother and our son Marcus' gravestone, put decorations on the overhanging tree and light a candle. We then come home, decorate our tree with real candles and many glass balls and hangings, and have a long delicious dinner. We then share presents (unwrapped) and sit around the Christmas tree watching the candles flicker and sparkle. Prior to this, I've spent a day making "Schnitzbrot"—Christmas fruit bread. My daughter usually helps.



By Rosemarie and Victor Heinrichs

Newsletter Team

Pauline Campbell
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Margaret Friesen
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Next Issue, Spring 2013

From the Editor:

As Christmas nears — the time of year when we celebrate Christ's birth — we're drawn to traditions. We especially think of family — far and near, or those we've lost — and of those who are less fortunate, lonely, or perhaps grieving the loss of loved ones.

Celebrate your family — reach out to family, or a friend you've been telling yourself you "need" to re-connect with. Reach out, and help the less fortunate — don't procrastinate reaching out. Have a Blessed Christmas — "be" a blessing, and Happy New Year!

Margaret Friesen

From the Executive Director's Desk:

Christmas time at SCOC is always a busy time with special events and activities starting early in December. The anticipation of the upcoming banquets for residents and family members are among the favourites. For over 23 years I have enjoyed festivities at SCOC. This year is a memorable one for me, having been lucky enough to win the beautiful handmade quilt in the Residents' Council Annual Peppermint Fair.

As a child, Christmas was always a busy time. Our family business was a hot dog and orange drink stand in the basement of Simpsons in downtown Toronto, and also Simpsons Toy Town during the Christmas season. As a young girl, Toy Town was a magical place - I loved the Christmas windows, the smell of chestnuts roasting, and watching families together enjoying the Christmas season. I learned the true meaning of giving watching my dad, as he gave free hot dogs and drinks to families who otherwise, would not be able to afford them. A favourite memory was the time my Dad helped me organize a trip for two kindergarten classes from my school to come downtown, visit Santa and enjoy a free hot dog and orange drink. The nice feeling you get from doing something special for others has stayed with me over the years.

On behalf of all of us at SCOC, I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Susan Gallant

Project North Pole!

Everyone has their own traditions at Christmas and at SCOC it is no different. This year we are following some of our annual traditions as well as some new ones which we are calling "Project North Pole". We began with baking for Peppermint Fair and the Peppermint Fair itself. We also had fun coming together to Deck the Halls in the meeting room. For some a Christmas tradition is the annual Christmas Light Tour which is going to Simcoe this year. The Girl Guides will come and remind us of that child-like joy of Christmas, while our Christmas Banquet will remind us of the joy of spending time together. Margaret Nemeth will be leading carolers through the hallways, which is one of our best loved traditions and she generously shares her time here on Christmas Eve where residents and family can gather to sing and enjoy each other's company. We are having a new tradition this year where our Long Term Care, Adult Day Program and residents are invited to participate in a Christmas Program/Pageant. One of the highlights of this program will be our newly formed Chimers playing their first concert. We hope that "Project North Pole" will help to remind us of the true meaning of Christmas!



Upcoming Events:

- Caroling in the halls, Tues., Dec. 18, 1pm
- Christmas Program/Pageant, Thurs., Dec. 20, 2pm
- Christmas Eve with Margaret, Mon., Dec. 24, 7pm
- Pedestrian Safety presented by Sargeant West of 54 division, Thurs. Jan 3, 2013, 1pm
- CNIB TTC passes (available to those who qualify), Tues, Jan. 8, 1pm-4pm
- Robbie Burns Banquet 5:30pm (replaces the New Years' Bash), Fri., Jan 25, 5:30pm
- Valentine Party with entertainment by the West Enders Band, Thurs., Feb. 14, 2pm
- Healthy Bones presented by Farzana of East End Health Centre, Wed., Feb. 20-Mar. 27, 10am-12 noon
- **Watch for special "Therapeutic Pool" Fund-Raising events, leading up to SCOC's 30th Anniversary Celebrations, in spring 2013.**

Remembering . . .
July Gladys Donnelly
Phyllis Head
Doris Neal



Operation North Pole

Getting ready for the Peppermint Fair



Peppermint Fair 2012 Browsing . . . Shopping . . . Eating!



Tea Room



← LTCH
"Made with love"
↓



"After 23 years —
I WON!!"
(Susan Gallant,
on winning the raffle)

Guatemala:

Christmas Traditions & Customs

For nine days before Christmas, posada processions pass through the streets. The beat of drums and the crackle of fireworks provide lively accompaniment as the figures of Mary and Joseph are carried to a friend's house, where a carol is sung asking for lodging for the Holy Family. After ritual questions and answers, the doors are opened and Mary and Joseph are taken to the *nacimiento*, or manger scene, where they will remain until the next night, when they once again go out seeking shelter. Everyone who accompanies the figures on their quest makes a great party with punch and hot tamales and dancing once the goal is accomplished. On Christmas Eve, the figure of the Christ Child is added to the *nacimiento* at the last of the nine houses to receive the Holy Family. This is the signal for the biggest party of all, and the home selected had better be a large one, since everyone who was involved over the last nine days will show up on this night. The Christmas tree has joined the *nacimiento* as a popular ornament because of the large German population in Guatemala. Midnight Mass (*Misa del gallo* or the rooster mass) on Christmas Eve follows the posada.



Feliz Navidad, Dora Trujillo

A New "Therapeutic" Pool:

We don't want only to restore the pool; we want to transform it into a place where seniors will get help with arthritis, stiff limbs . . . and other ailments, which prevent them from living independently.

We will call it the "therapeutic pool".

Some seniors may not need it but appreciate its benefits; many others do, including those in the neighbourhood, some of whom have used it and are disappointed that it is no longer available. The pool is also valuable for its recreational purposes. Our SCOC families miss it.

We need money so that our pool can be transformed and we need it now! Lots of it; like \$300,000 or more, of which \$100,000 has already been pledged. Talk to your family, friends, churches, companies . . . about seniors who need the pool now!!

A group of seniors, staff and neighbourhood members has formed, to fund-raise. Please help them, so that seniors and families at SCOC and the neighbourhood, will not be disappointed and have to wait much longer. Call!!

Cheques or pledges should be sent to the SCOC Foundation, marked: "Therapeutic Pool" c/o SCOC, 2701 St. Clair Ave. East, M4B 3M3

For more information contact Susan: 757-8757, Nicholas: 416-699-8351 or Jane: 416-285-7760.

The SCOC Fund-Raising Group

Please Save Our Pool!

Here's what our children say:
"We want a pool, and here is some money to fix it — \$31.75.
Please help us fix it!!"



SCOC Foundation News:

The St Clair O'Connor Foundation reports that a sizable bequest has been received from the estate of the late Yvonne Zahar. Some of the six-figure amount will be used for projects in the near future, and some is dedicated to growing the SCOC Endowment Fund.

Foundation Chairman, Aldred Neufeldt, says: "Such generosity speaks to how fine a place SCOC is. Bequests like this help keep the Community welcoming and vibrant. There always are projects where help is welcome. Particularly thoughtful is the contribution to the Endowment. Here, the gift keeps on giving. Investment earnings become available for projects at SCOC on a predictable basis year after year."

Please consider an annual contribution to the Foundation, to build SCOC's future.

From the Gift Shop & Tea Room:

We are busy preparing for Christmas. When thinking about doing your Christmas shopping, please consider popping by the Mennonite Centre Store. We have a variety of lovely gift items available, including flameless candles, children's books, Christmas ornaments, fine bone china mugs — and more!

Residents, family members and visitors are always welcome to drop in to the tearoom and enjoy some freshly baked muffins and pastries, and the best cup of coffee in town.



Our dedicated volunteers and staff will be happy to help you pick that special gift, for that special someone. We thank you for your support, and wish you a very Happy Christmas!

Store Hours: Mon.-Sat, 10am - 4pm; Sun, 2pm to 4pm

Donna Terry, Gift Shop & Tearoom Supervisor

The St. Clair O'Connor Foundation

Accepts gifts of: Cash, Stocks, Bequests from Wills and Estates

The Foundation is there to help the St. Clair O'Connor Community (SCOC) continue as a vibrant and life-giving community well into the future. If you value SCOC, include the Foundation in your annual charitable donations and estate planning. For information, call SCOC (telephone number below) to speak with Susan Gallant (ext. 229) or Hetty Berretti (ext. 226), and they will link you with a Foundation Representative.