

HERITAGE CORNER

School students discover the magic of vintage toys



The annual Christmas program offered at the Moore Museum attracts students from schools across Lambton County. Grades 1, 2, and 8 students from St. Anne Catholic School recently visited the museum and one of the lessons they enjoyed was a class on vintage toys. Museum staff member Linda Woods introduced them to a number of

musical and mechanical toys, from a small metal walking robot to the Jack-in-a-Box, along with some tiny replicas of household items children would use to play house. **Above: The students listen carefully as Linda demonstrates the ball-and-cup game, which isn't nearly as easy as it looks, but Linda nailed it!**



The enlightened tree

LEFT: The Victorian Era tree at the Moore Museum is topped with the Union Jack and covered with handmade decorations, card board picture cut-outs and fabric bows. The tree, which would have been illuminated with real lit candles before the introduction of electricity, are represented by plastic replicas.

Candles on the tree, so the story goes, were first put there by Martin Luther in the 16th century to symbolize the star of Bethlehem. It became a German tradition which Queen Victoria's German-born husband, Albert, brought to England from his homeland. *Bonnie Stevenson photos*



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Sleigh ride, anyone?



A family on the way to Grandpa Brown's Farm at Christmas.

~Photo courtesy Bill and Gail South

By Kari Boone, Moore Museum

Let's take a stroll back in time to wintery landscapes in the time of our early homesteaders and recall their winter modes of transportation. Once winter set in, the ways of transportation needed to change. Wheels on the wagons would often get stuck in the snow, and with the river frozen, travel by boat was not a viable option.

Winter travel choices included long, tear-shaped snowshoes which helped distribute the wearer's weight and allow him or her to walk on top of the snow. But the most nostalgic sight to see was a cutter or sleigh. This mode of transportation was more comfortable and faster due to the use of runners instead of wheels. Though it did not

come without its share of hazards, it was a welcome change from the slower, bumpy-wheeled wagon rides used in spring, summer, and fall. Adding to the sight was the sound of bells attached with ribbons to the bridles of the homesteaders' horses to warn other travelers on the trail of their presence.

Postcards depicting this travel choice have appeared for many years, and sleighs and cutters have been featured in plenty of holiday movies. Many people still have the opportunity to experience this form of winter travel. Rides in cutters, sleighs and hay wagons continue to be offered at many resorts, in towns, at special functions, and at family farms.

~Story by Kari Boone

Beacon Bit *Another year has passed, another birthday gone, but there is one thing we can all take comfort from: the older-looking you get, the harder it is to see yourself in the mirror...unless you get new glasses.* **HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM THE BEACON!**

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Sombra Museum collection yields good fun and good wishes from long ago

The Sombra Museum Collection contains a wealth of photo and written treasures. Museum Curator Kailyn Shepley says New Year's dinner and traditions sometimes warranted an even bigger celebration than Christmas for some people. The New Year's card shown at right, a design copyrighted by John Winsch in 1911, is an example of the kind of cards they would exchange.



Living near the river had its perks in the winter. Mrs. Hilda Kerr and her daughter, Clara, are shown here posing for the camera while skating on the St. Clair River, south of Sombra Village, in February, 1920. The Toner family home can be seen in the background on the right side, and local children are enjoying sledding on the river. Skating, sledding and all ice sports were common winter hobbies for locals back in the days when rivers froze solid

for most of the winter.

The children who attended Wilkesport school even skated on the Sydenham River during recess or on lunch breaks!

The Kerr family moved to Sombra in 1919 and opened a store in what is now Nautical Hills (the former Pic 'N Pay building).

~Information from Curator Kailyn Shepley



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More MUNICIPAL NOTES

Shell project to allow biodiesel blending

At the Dec. 5 meeting of council, Shell representative Paul Kaethler made a presentation to introduce the new biodiesel blending project being built at the Shell manufacturing centre north of Corunna.

The blending process starts with a renewable diesel known as FAME (Fatty Acid Methyl Ester), made from vegetable oils, animal fats, or waste cooking oils, is blended into hydrocarbon diesel. It is now being produced at facilities, throughout North America and around the world.

When the blending project is operational, tanker trucks will deliver the FAME at an average expected rate of two additional truck visits every three days.

Construction on the relatively small project will take place between April and October, 2023, with higher than usual traffic in the area of the terminal, and heavy machinery will be required. Occasional increased noise may be heard but the presentation noted there should be "...no changes to noise, light, odour or any other effect in a tangible way."

With the addition of biodiesel to the Shell site and into the local market, Shell expects to reduce the carbon footprint of the overall site.

Moore Sports Complex update

The Moore Sports Complex is coming back to life in a big way. The three-week Appreciation Event that ended on Nov. 27 was a big success, according to Kendall Lindsay, Director of Community Services. Popular offerings like spin classes and Sunday public skates, along with aquatic programming and fitness classes, are all back in operation. The dry group fitness class attendance was up 110 per cent during Appreciation Week and aquatic clas-

ses were up 44 per cent.

Children's activities like Parents Night Out and the Monday Craft night had good attendance and families enjoyed the free swims and free skates.

MSC Update

Rink #1 is operational except for a few deficiencies that are being remedied. Work on the roof is almost complete, with only a few items left to be done.

Only one major item remains undone. A new outside electricity supply needs to be connected and power to the entire facility will have to be shut down to allow for the job to be done safely. The estimated time needed to remain without power and complete this work is estimated to be one day to one and a half days.

Sombra Community Hall update

Work on the Sombra Community Hall is proceeding and, in searching for the cause of the floor moisture problems, work crews discovered the foundation for the floor was a crazy quilt of bad building practices and unworkable shortcuts.

An old clay drainage tile that ran underneath the building where the old concrete slab was poured has now been capped off and the water redirected to a new tile installed around the building. Some cinder blocks, believed to be the remains of an old wall upon which the concrete for the old floor was poured, were knocked down. The contractor also believed the old floor looked as if the old concrete had been poured directly onto dirt and not a granular base. The contractor has put in a properly prepared granular base and the new concrete floor was slated to be poured on Dec. 1.