

Ontario

TRAVEL DISCOVERIES

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Romancing the Snow

Turn up the heat... resort-style

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Well, winter has the hots for you – right here in Ontario.

For many, a big holiday dinner is an essential winter event. But we really don't blame you for not wanting to cook such a large feast. Have you ever considered dining in a 'country castle'?

**FOR
winter?**

That's right, a castle. Ste. Anne's Country Inn and Spa has the chefs whose names are known for consistently exceeding guests' expectations. It's like home, but with fine cuisine and four-diamond service.

Nothing satisfies an appetite like fresh, local favourites. It doesn't matter whether you dine in restaurants, resorts or inns, you'll melt over our memorable meals.

Speaking of memories, pioneers had their share of unforgettable winters. But if it weren't for their tenacity, your yard might still be a bog. Wouldn't you love to hang out with them and ask what it was like? You can! At a traditional Christmas celebration in a pioneer village, where everything feels so 1800s – right down to hand-dyed woolly decorations.

But you'll want to leave your woollies at home when you fire up your love life in true resort-style. Start by turning off your cellphone, turning on the hot tub and turning up Barry White.

Ontario has all these choices waiting for you. For romantics or families. Indoors or outdoors. Thrilling or relaxing. One-day excursions or week-long holidays. It's where your special moments this year become treasured traditions the next.

Visit **www.ontariotravel.net/winter**
or call **1-800-ONTARIO**
for more winter excitement.

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JANUARY 27 - FEBRUARY 9, 2006

Toronto's city-wide celebration of culture, creativity and cuisine!

Defy the weather with breathtaking winter street theatre, cool outdoor concerts, skating parties and more! Or, head indoors and defrost with a showcase of special WinterCity performances and programmes, and great value at Toronto's world-class attractions. Explore Toronto's diverse cuisine, with exclusive prix fixe menus at 120 of the city's top dining establishments and a mouth-watering array of unique gastronomic events.



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- From \$179 CAD per night
- Full Buffet Breakfast for 2 at The Yonge Street Grille
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Reservation number: 1-800-847-5075
Ask for code PKGV & PKGW

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- Parking

Reservation Number: 1-800-905-0667
Ask for code: PKGW

Restrictions apply. See website for details.

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www.toronto.ca/special_events

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Cover photo: Rideau Canal, Ottawa



We've Got You Covered For Travel Throughout Ontario

The reasons to travel Ontario are endless! Going home for the Holidays with family; Pursuing business opportunities at over 300 tradeshow in markets that matter to you; Mastering the slopes of Barrie-Huron; Family getaways to winter festivals, celebrated museums or canal skates; Taking in a show; Shopping for the perfect "find"; Playing the odds at dazzling casinos; Cheering for your favourite hockey, curling or skating team; Stopovers at Pearson International... Winter activities throughout the province that warm the hearts of both young and old.

Whatever your Ontario destination, "We've Got You Covered".

Great locations, spacious guestrooms and extraordinary hospitality provided by some of Canada's most trusted brands. Exceptional rates and all inclusive packages to meet every need. Places where guests rest, swim, dine, relax and dream!

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Travelodge Hotel Downtown Windsor	519-258-7774



Eastern Ontario

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ARC TRIP HOTEL Ottawa	613-738-7888
Holiday Inn Select Hotel & Suites Ottawa	613-271-3057
Les Suites Ottawa	613-232-2000
Radisson Hotel Ottawa Parliament Hill	613-236-1133



Toronto & Surrounding Area

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Holiday Inn Toronto West	905-890-5700
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Holiday Inn Oshawa	905-576-5101
Holiday Inn Toronto Airport East	416-240-7511
Radisson Suite Hotel Toronto Airport	416-242-7400
Radisson Hotel Toronto East	416-493-7100

Central/Northern Ontario

Holiday Inn Barrie	705-738-6191
Holiday Inn Sault Ste. Marie	705-949-0611

For more information or online bookings visit: www.gotocovered.ca

your Ontario

Ontario fares well

Starving from a day of dogsledding and skiing, I was struck how the lodge took on a Norman Rockwell-esque quality in the fading light. Smoke billowing from the chimney was the silent dinner bell welcoming guests to a resplendent New Year's Eve dinner. We dined on exquisite local fare followed by a rousing show of homegrown talent. Family, good music, excellent food, new friends and Mother Nature in all her glory. A suitable reminder of what's really important in life.

*Joanne Thomas Vaccato,
Ontario reader and regular guest at Smoothwater Ecolodge*

How special winter can be

I wanted to commend you on this wonderful magazine. I saw it for the first time packaged with the LCBO magazine and I really enjoyed it. I have lived here for 15 years but this is the first time I've really understood how special winter could be (not just a season to hibernate in), and that places like Thunder Bay and Sault St. Marie have something special to offer. The photography and writing were lovely. Thank you!

*Kristina Turner,
Toronto, Ontario*

It's something that happens to all of us travelling in Ontario: a sudden realization of the connection between our surroundings and ourselves. We want to hear about your special travel moment. Let us know by mail, fax or e-mail in 100 words or less and you may see it here in an upcoming issue of *Ontario*. Send us a photo that captures the moment and we may include that too.

To submit your moment or to offer comments on our magazine, please contact us today.

Mail us:

Ontario Tourism Marketing
Partnership Corporation
Attention: *Ontario* Editor
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900 Bay St.,
Toronto, ON M7A 2E1

Fax us:

(416) 314-7563

E-mail us:

editor@ontariotravel.net

Please note: Remember to include your name, address and telephone number. Please send all e-mailed attachments in JPEG format. Sorry, mailed photos cannot be returned. Thank you in advance for your story and we hope to share your Ontario moments with our readers soon!

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MOUNTAIN

r e j u v e n a t i n g



ontario's winter playground

Open November 2005. Introducing The Westin Trillium House, located at the base of Blue Mountain in the vibrant Village at Blue, just two hours northwest of Toronto. Enjoy endless winter activities at the largest ski and snowboard destination in Ontario—from dog sledding and skating to snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. Exceptional Westin signature amenities are partnered with Oliver & Bonacini Café•Grill, a year-round outdoor heated pool and hot tubs, and interior access to Plunge! Aquatic Centre.

Let us reserve your stay. Call 705-443-8080 or visit westin.com/bluemountain

STARWOOD  PREFERRED GUEST

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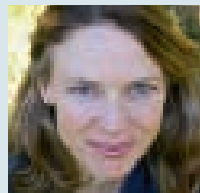
THE WESTIN
TRILLIUM HOUSE
BLUE MOUNTAIN

contributors



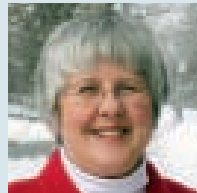
BARB and RON KROLL began their writing and photography careers 34 years ago, with a

two-year honeymoon in Europe. In fact, they say they are still on their honeymoon. “We’re just as happy cocooning in a cosy Ontario inn, as in an African safari tent or an Amazonian tree house.” They combine their romantic getaways with outdoor activities like hiking, kayaking and, in the winter (please see page 59), skating, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Barb and Ron’s stories and photos appear in national newspapers and magazines, three Travel Industry Guides to Canada, books by *National Geographic*, *Michelin Travel* and *Reader’s Digest*, and on their website, www.KrollTravel.com



Intrepid adventure writer **SUE LEBRECHT** thrives on experiencing new things and

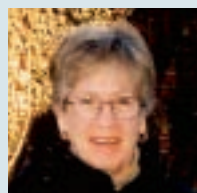
really appreciated the opportunity to try snowboarding. She just wishes that the initiation to certain sports wasn’t so painful. However, she loves what she does and the bumps and bruises are all part of the experience. Writing professionally since 1986, Lebrecht has had more than 1,000 original stories published in newspapers and magazines across North America, and is the author of 11 guidebooks. Her photographs are often published in conjunction with her stories (please see page 48).



For more than 25 years **BETTY ZYVATKAUSKAS** has been writing about Ontario,

sharing her passion for the nature, culture, history and food of her home province with readers of the *Globe and Mail*, *Toronto Life’s Getaways Guide*, the *Toronto Star* and many other major publications.

A long-time Toronto resident, she is the author of two critically acclaimed travel guidebooks (*Naturally Ontario: Exploring the Wealth of Ontario’s Wild Places* and *Great Getaways: The Best Day Trips in Southern Ontario*) as well as a contributor to many others. Whenever possible she enjoys traveling with her two daughters, now 15 and 18 years old. You can read her article on page 26.



YVONNE BUTORAC is passionate about skating. “As a kid I dreamed of

growing up and joining the Ice Follies and although I didn’t follow that career path I’ve continued to be fascinated with the sport.” Yvonne freelances for Canadian and American figure skating publications. She also writes about travel and pens a column for *The Wayback Times* on finding antiques on her travels. Yvonne is the author of *Great Exits: A Guide to the 401*. You can read her article on page 30.

Ontario

Ontario Tourism Marketing
Partnership Corporation (OTMPC)
Ontario Ministry of Tourism
Magazine Design and Layout: FUEL Advertising

EDITORIAL ENQUIRIES
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Publications Manager, OTMPC at (416) 314-7378
or editor@ontariotravel.net

ADVERTISING SALES
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ADDITIONAL TRAVEL INFORMATION
For additional travel information on Ontario
please call the following numbers.

FROM TORONTO CALLING AREA:
English: (905) 282-1721 French: (905) 612-8776

**FROM CANADA, CONTINENTAL
U.S.A. AND HAWAII:**
English: 1-800-ONTARIO or 1-800-668-2746
FROM CANADA: French: 1-800-268-3736
Teletypewriter – TTY/Telecommunications Device
for the Deaf (TDD): (905) 612-0870

INTERNATIONAL INQUIRIES
Contact the appropriate Canadian embassy or
overseas consulate for information on Ontario. For
more information, visit www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/world/embassies/menu-en.asp on the Internet. International
visitors can also obtain information on Ontario
through www.ontariotravel.net

♿️ We provide information to assist travellers
with disabilities. Accessibility information is collected
to address a variety of special needs. Please call the
toll-free line and counsellors will assist you with
the details you need to plan and enjoy travel
throughout Ontario.

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Nous sommes heureux de vous offrir un service d’in-
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le (905) 612-8776 et il nous fera plaisir de vous aider.

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www.OLGC.ca
For more information
visit the Winner's Circle
pour renseignements
en français.

Must be 19 years of age or older. Government-issued photo identification may be required. Some restrictions may apply.



L-R: Lake Superior; Toronto Eaton Centre



Fluffy flakes drift through white woods as a deer pauses in mid-step a short distance away. You and your companion stop on the groomed ski trail to revel in the moment. The silence is deafening. Many minutes pass before the deer happily bounds away, off to entertain guests another day.

Come evening, you cuddle in a pine-panelled cabin – with a stone, wood-burning fireplace – experiencing the beauty of Ontario in all its winter glory. Add scented candles, an alpaca blanket and, of course, a cup of hot java for the perfect winter moment.

A whimsical wilderness blanketed in snow is memorable, but equally so are roofs draped in pretty white snow, ice crystals on shop windows and a flurry of downtown fun. For more on the season visit www.ontariotravel.net/winter or call **1-800-ONTARIO** today.

it all

in the know

THE POINT OF snow return

They're new. They're here. And they're all happening this season only in Ontario. Get the inside scoop on world-class places to explore, once-in-a-lifetime events to attend and out-of-this-world homes away from home.

Horseshoe Valley, Barrie

EVENT

Waiting on band and foot

As night falls, the screams of excitement from concert-goers reach their feverish pitch! They're anxiously awaiting the evening's first performance at the Snowbowl – Ottawa's colourful Winterlude amphitheatre near the Rideau Canal Skateway. Snowbowl is in its second year, hosting an array of family-friendly performances.

An ocean of young and old make up this joyous group of 4,000, all bundled up awaiting their favourite performers. Suddenly, the crowd bursts into cheers as a magnificent multimedia show fills the bowl –



Snowbowl

the stage is set.

Will the talent compare to last year's inaugural celebrations with Keshia Chanté, Kalan Porter and the Rheostatics? Will Jamie Salé and David Pelletier make a special visit again? One thing's for certain: this is more than a concert. It's a magical musical event.

Snowbowl takes place afternoons and evenings during Winterlude.

Winterlude
February 3-19, weekends
www.canadascapital.gc.ca/winterlude
1-800-465-1867

Ottawa Tourism
www.ottawatourism.ca
1-866-644-1234

For more outdoor events that celebrate the season, visit www.ontariotravel.net/winter or call 1-800-ONTARIO.

ACCOMMODATION



Niagara Falls

Waking up to a Falls view

As the mid-morning sun streams through the curtains, you slowly roll out of bed and turn on the coffee maker. Walking up to the large picture window, you draw the curtains back and let sunshine flood the large hotel room, revealing the breathtaking view of the rushing water and soaring mist of one of Ontario's natural wonders: Niagara Falls.

You slowly sip your coffee, allowing the memories of yesterday to slowly filter back to mind. The hand-painted ceiling and gilded chandelier in the lobby. The live performances. The Grand Buffet. The Galleria boutiques. The intense casino excitement. The hot tub late last night. And you can't wait to do it all again today.

You're at Niagara Fallsview Casino Resort Hotel. A little piece of paradise right here in Ontario.

Niagara Fallsview Casino Resort
www.fallsviewcasinoresort.com
1-888-FALLSVUE

EVENT

Flower Power

They're colourful. They're aromatic. They're beautiful. And you'll be surrounded by them! One afternoon spent at Canada Blooms: The Toronto Flower and Garden Show quickly immerses you into nature's annual beauty pageant and you know that spring is just around the corner.

This is Canada's largest flower and garden show – now in its 10th year. You'll see the blossoming imaginations of our leading floral designers come to life through displays, workshops and demonstrations.

Be sure to visit the City of Brampton's display. Brampton loves its flowers – calling itself Canada's Flower City. Besides being a big hit at Canada Blooms, Brampton also won the Communities in Bloom Floral Display Award in 2004, the first year it entered the competition.

Canada Blooms: The Flower and Garden Show

Toronto – March 8–12

Ottawa – April 14–17

www.canadablooms.com
1-800-730-1020



EVENT

Countdown to New Year’s Eve

- 10
- 9
- 8
- 7
- 6
- 5
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1
- Count down to 2006 a little earlier this year with day-long festivities at Science North in Sudbury. Beginning the morning of December 31, the Get Ready for New Year’s Eve event will allow your young scientists to do ‘make-and-take’ workshops and other fun activities all day long. Complete your celebrations at Science North with a special New Year’s Eve family dinner in the on-site restaurant, Landings. Although Sudbury’s big day will be a blast, there are many other places to celebrate the New Year. Deerhurst Resort, in Huntsville, has two magnificent ballroom bashes in the main Pavilion and a live stage show in the Lodge. Terry Dyni, Director of Public Relations for Deerhurst, says they have several package deals for guests which include dinner, show and party for the evening. Just remember to book a room here soon – it’s going to be one great night. For more New Year’s Eve events such as the New Year’s Eve Concert Extravaganza in Niagara Falls and Rockin’ at the Clock in Kingston, simply visit www.ontariotravel.net/winter or call 1-800-ONTARIO today.

Muskoka’s Deerhurst Resort all decked out for the holidays



Westover Inn, St. Marys

Dine Inn

FOOD

The Westover Inn on the banks of the Thames River is a heavenly snow-blanketed oasis separate from the worries of everyday life. But it’s not until you experience the award-winning kitchen’s creations that the true glory of this inn is revealed. With a dash of art and a generous helping of elegance, executive chefs Anthony Gosselin and Ian Johnson have won over the hearts, minds and especially the stomachs of guests. The Westover kitchen also boasts regional produce of the highest quality to satisfy the discerning palate of every welcomed guest.

Westover Inn, St. Marys
www.westoverinn.com
1-800-268-8243

For all your travel needs visit www.ontariotravel.net/winter or call 1-800-ONTARIO.



Ginger Crackle Cookies from the Westover Inn

175 mL (¾ cup) unsalted butter (softened)
250 mL (1 cup) granulated white sugar
60 mL (¼ cup) molasses
1 egg
500 mL (2 cups) all-purpose flour
22.5 mL (1 ½ tbsp) baking soda
1.25 mL (¼ tsp) salt
7.5 mL (½ tbsp) ground cinnamon
7.5 mL (½ tbsp) ground ginger
2.5 mL (½ tsp) ground cloves
Extra granulated white sugar

Sift together dry ingredients. Cream butter and sugar until light; scrape down sides of bowl with a spatula. Mix in molasses and egg; scrape down sides of bowl. With mixer on low, add dry ingredients and mix until incorporated. Scoop dough by tablespoon and drop into a small bowl of granulated sugar. Once dough balls are sugar-coated, place 4 cm (1.5 in.) apart on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper. Bake at 160°C (325°F) for about 10 minutes, rotating cookie sheets at the 5-minute mark; remove from oven when golden brown. Cookies keep well in a sealed container at room temperature for several days, or in a freezer for several weeks. Makes approximately three dozen.

in the know



Artist rendition, The Young Centre for the Performing Arts

Photo: TO Live With Culture - 05/06



EVENT

You gotta have art

Culture is growing! Beginning this September and running through 2006, a colossal celebration of Toronto's cultural venues and events is taking centre stage with the event campaign: TO Live With Culture.

Gregory Nixon, project manager in Toronto's Culture Division, says it's "a massive consolidation of the arts." It's hard not to agree – five of Toronto's grandest cultural institutions have just completed or are currently undergoing major transformations.

"[TO Live With Culture] is an opportunity to galvanize all the art happening in Toronto – of any kind – and package it in a way that can bring attention to it," Gregory says. "We're talking about a cultural renaissance...an age of heroic architecture."

Don't miss the historic installations, festivals, performances and other cultural events occurring during the TO Live With Culture celebrations. Go online or call to find out more.

TO Live With Culture
www.livewithculture.ca
416-338-0338

For more information on
festivals and events
throughout Ontario visit
www.ontariotravel.net/winter
or call 1-800-ONTARIO.

THE ARTS

The magic of Morrisseau

At one point, Norval Morrisseau, the founder of Woodland Art, lived on the streets selling his paintings for as little as \$10 each. But today, to find one of his works at that price, you'd have to be one of the luckiest people on earth. His colourful works are selling for more than \$10,000.

Born on Sand Point Reserve near Beardmore, Ontario on March 14, 1932 (or 1931, depending on who you talk to), Morrisseau looked to his grandfather to learn the ways of the ancient Ojibway culture. Through this knowledge, Morrisseau made it his personal mission to restore the pride of his people by artistically expressing his beliefs through what we now call Woodland Art – whether it was on birchbark, hide, plywood or fabric.

Morrisseau, now in his mid-70s, has had more than 40 one-man shows, is a recipient of the Order of Canada and is also considered one of the greatest Canadian painters of all time. See Morrisseau's masterpieces and all their vivid colours at the National Gallery this winter.

Norval Morrisseau: Shaman Artist
National Gallery of Canada,
Ottawa

February 3–April 30

For all your travel needs:
www.ontariotravel.net/winter
or call 1-800-ONTARIO.

R: Norval Morrisseau, *Untitled (Shaman)* c. 1971
acrylic on paper, mounted on hardboard 130.7 x 89.7 cm
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.
Gift of Audrey and Gary Kilpatrick, Rainy River, Ontario, 2000
© Norval Morrisseau



Image from the exhibition *Norval Morrisseau: Shaman Artist* at the National Gallery of Canada from February 3 to April 30, 2006.



Photos: Edmund Morris Collection © Royal Ontario Museum, 2005

Left: Gallery of Canada:
First Peoples
Jerkin-style shirt 1907–1908
Beads; skin; cloth; thread; beaded;
lane stitch into hide
Bottom: Assiniboine; Carry the Kettle Reserve;
Saskatchewan

THE ARTS

Restoration Celebration

When your day consists of strolling past a wooden 16th century Chinese Royal Palace, witnessing live performances by Canada’s First Peoples and gazing deeply at 3rd century Korean paintings, you know you’re somewhere extraordinary.

This is just a taste of what awaits guests at the Royal Ontario Museum after the opening of Phase One of Renaissance ROM, the largest heritage restoration and museum expansion project taking place in Canada.

This first phase, opening December 18, is over 8,400 sq. m (90,000 sq. ft.) of exhibit space with 10 galleries, including the Far East and Canadian Aboriginal Heritage.

“It is exhilarating to complete the first phase of Renaissance ROM and open the doors to these important galleries,” said William Thorsell, director of the Royal Ontario Museum. “We’ve created a new and inviting environment in carefully restored buildings for the public to experience some of our best and never-before-seen collections.”

The celebrations don’t end in December. Following the first phase’s dramatic opening is the highly anticipated completion of the Michael Lee-Chin Crystal addition in summer 2006. At its completion in spring 2007, Renaissance ROM will have created 28,000 sq. m (300,000 sq. ft.) of new and renovated space.

Royal Ontario Museum
www.rom.on.ca
(416) 586-5549

For more on visiting cultural institutions in Ontario, visit
www.ontariotravel.net/winter
or call 1-800-ONTARIO.



Photo: Niagara Grape and Wine Festival

Niagara Icewine Festival, Ice Bar

EVENT

Icewine on the rocks

It’s easy to spot a 30-foot (9-metre) intricately-decorated block of ice in the middle of a town. It’s not quite as easy once dozens of winemakers and wine

connoisseurs converge around it, transforming it into a bar suitable for one purpose: to serve and sample Niagara Icewine.

It’s just one part of the Niagara Icewine Festival (January 13–22), a celebration of 30 of Ontario’s top wineries serving up the region’s world-renowned beverage. New to this year, The Niagara Icewine Festival Classic Weekend (January 20–22) offers guests tours with winemakers, an expanded Icewine Café, ice carving competitions and plenty of Icewine tastings.

Stop by for a taste...even better, stay for the weekend.

Niagara Icewine Festival
January 13–22
www.grapeandwine.com
(905) 688-0212

For more winter festivals and events, visit
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or call 1-800-ONTARIO.

STYLE

It’s a wrap

– By Andrew Sardone

When you’re making your list and checking it twice, it’s likely that paper, ribbons and the other tools of the gift-wrapping trade are last in line. But during the holidays the perfect package can be as fashionable as a fabulous frock.

Located in Queen West Art and Design District, The Paper Place has been dressing up thoughtful gifts in stylish duds for more than 22 years. It imports handmade and hand-printed papers from around the world to use as stationery, window coverings and wrapping. Its rich colours and patterns resembling vintage wallpapers and retro fabrics can make any gift the star of the most dashing stack of presents.

And if you’re all thumbs when it comes to creasing corners and tying bows, the store offers wrapping workshops during the holiday season.

The Queen West District where gallery hopping and designer shopping meet, is stocked with Canadian fashion boutiques and vintage furniture outlets to satisfy it’s-what’s-on-the-inside-that-counts gift getters.

There is plenty to do and see that appeal to all tastes. If you are looking for something handmade, or one-of-a-kind creations by Canadian artists and artisans, this is ‘the’ district to visit.

– Andrew Sardone is a freelance writer and fashion designer in Toronto. He writes columns about the city’s twenty-something set and has created a line of handbags, called MYOLDPANTS, which at one time he did make from his old pants.



Queen West Art and Design District
www.westqueenwest.ca

The Paper Place
887 Queen Street West, Toronto
www.japanesepaperplace.com
(416) 703-0089

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St. Catharines, celebrates cultural festivals, harvest celebrations and community events year round. You'll have a fabulous selection of festivals and events to choose from no matter what time of year you visit!

St. Catharines will be the backdrop for the Niagara Icewine Festival. Enjoy premier Ontario Wines and outstanding Niagara cuisine during this 10-day celebration. Join us in Downtown St. Catharines for "Winterfest in the Square" on January 14, 2006 from 7pm - 10pm. The 2nd Annual fundraiser for the "Out of the Cold" program features local wine, Niagara cuisine and entertainment. Admission is free and sample tokens can be purchased at the door.

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Ottawa

When you're deciding where to take the kids this March Break, be sure it's somewhere that they can brag to their classmates about. So book your events and have the happiest winter ever! Start right now – it's as easy as flipping to page 24 and picking a few from the list.

GROSS AND GRACE

Grossology: The Impolite Science of the Human Body, Beginning March 4

Boogers and puke are just some of the weird topics to be covered at Sudbury's Science North this March Break. To balance out the experience, check out their many other family-oriented tasteful exhibits.

March Break Opera Program, March 13–17

Kids will never sing the same after attending this five-day program with the Canadian Opera Company at various community venues throughout the Toronto area. If you have eager ones in grades 3–6, they can learn songs and dances from an opera and demonstrate their new skills in front of proud parents.

For further event information and more March Break ideas, please visit www.ontariotravel.net/winter or call 1-800-ONTARIO today.



Nigel Nose-it-All spouts off about the impolite science of the human body at Science North this March break.

March Break Opera
Program, Toronto
Canadian Opera Company
www.coc.ca
416-306-2377

Grossology: The Impolite
Science of the Human Body
Science North
www.grossology.org
www.sciencenorth.ca
1-800-461-4898

event full

november

Winter Festival of Lights
Niagara Falls, November 4–January 2

Festival of Lights at Cullen Gardens
and Miniature Village
Whitby, November 18–January 1

Festival of Northern Lights
Owen Sound, November 18–
January 22

Christmas Magic in Cobourg
Cobourg, November 25–January 1

Winter Wonderland
London, November 25–January 1

Tree Lighting Ceremony/
Magic of Winter
Barrie, November 25–February 5

Cavalcade of Lights
Toronto, November 26–December 31

Showcase of Lights Celebrations
Campbellford, November 26–
January 2

december

Upper Canada Village
“Alight at Night”
Morrisburg, December 1–January 6

Unionville Olde Tyme Christmas
Unionville, December 2–4

Art by the Falls 8th Annual
Christmas Art and Craft Show
Niagara Falls, December 3, 4

Bell Capital Cup
Ottawa, December 29–January 2

New Year’s Eve Celebrations
Barrie, December 31

Rockin’ at the Clock
Kingston, December 31

Get Ready for New Year’s
Eve Family Event!
Sudbury, December 31

january

Niagara Icewine Festival
Niagara Region, January 13–22

Canadian Pond Hockey
Championships
Huntsville, January 27–29

Ontario Winter Carnival Bon Soo
Sault Ste. Marie, January 27–
February 5

Winterlicious
Toronto, January 27–February 9

Winterfest Snowball
Hamilton, January 28

february

Kingston Feb Fest
Kingston, February 2–4

Grand Bend Winter Carnival
Grand Bend, February 3–12

Snowbowl
Ottawa, February 3–5, 10–12, 17–19

Winterlude
Ottawa, February 3–5, 10–12, 17–19

Love Winter
Toronto, February 4

Barrie Winterfest
Barrie, February 4, 5

World of Motorcycles Expo
London, February 10–12

Heritage Day Workshop
Cambridge, February 20

The Advil Outdoor Adventure Show
Toronto, February 24–26

Voyageur Winter Carnival at Fort
William Historical Park
Thunder Bay, February 25–27

march

Sweet Taste of Spring Maple Syrup
Festival
Rockton, March 5–26

Warkworth Maple Syrup Festival
Warkworth, March 11, 12

Return of the Swans
Grand Bend, March 11–April 2

Sugarbush Maple Syrup Festival
Woodbridge, March 11–April 17

College Royal Open House
Guelph, March 18, 19

Windsor Classic Indoor Games For
Physically Disabled
Windsor, March 24–26

Maple Madness Maple Syrup
Festival
Paisley, March 25, 26

The Around the Bay 30K Road Race
Hamilton, March 26

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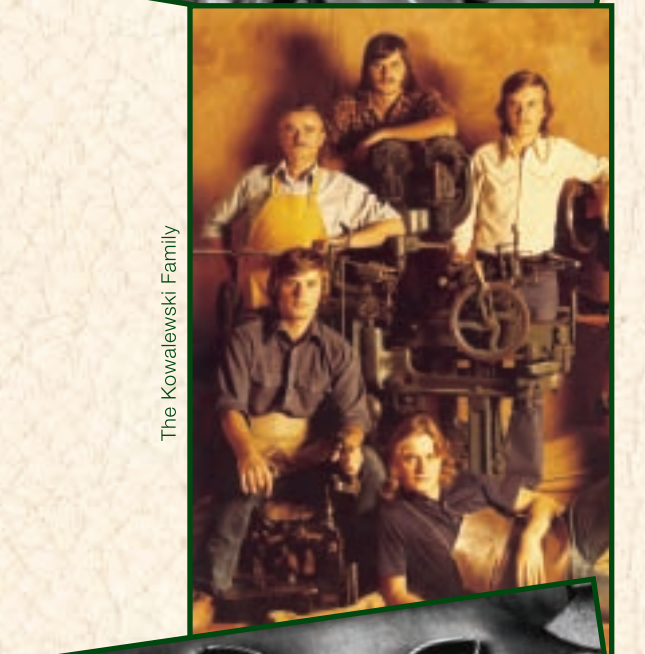
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ONTARIO

Christmases Past

— By Betty Zyvatkauskas

Ever since my girls believed in Santa Claus, our annual trip to Black Creek Pioneer Village for a Christmas by Lamplight visit has become a holiday tradition. Today they are teenagers who would rather listen to Marilyn Manson than Frosty the Snowman, but this Christmas tour is still part of our festive ritual.

We burn our fingers peeling open chestnuts just out of the fire.

We cut paper ornaments to trim trees and nibble crumbly shortbread cookies and sticky sugarplums in historic log cabins.

We stand in the snow singing Christmas carols by lamplight, then try old-fashioned toys like spinning tops, ball-and-cup and Jacob's ladder. It's a Christmas ritual that helps us recapture childhood joy.

We always start with a visit to the tinsmith who snips sheets of shiny tin into long shards, then twists them into 'icicles' to hang on the Christmas tree. He gives us each an icicle to hang on our tree at home – one of the many gifts offered on the annual evening tour: paper snowflakes, tin icicles or butterflies, embossed paper gift tags and Christmas cards off a flatbed press.

We collect fluffy balls of hand-dyed wool decorations at Daniel Stong's first log cabin and marvel at how his whole family spent the winter in this tiny, frigid home. Over the years we have saved all the ornaments we've been given so we can hang them on our tree to relive memories of past visits. The Sailor Moon dolls so coveted one Christmas are long gone, but every time we retrieve those balls of coloured wool from the Christmas box, we all remember the snowy December night when we watched the horses' steamy breath and made paper chains at Black Creek.

A fire blazes in the hearth at the Stong family's second home and each of the eight children's plates holds a breakfast of Christmas goodies. Spanish oranges, hard molasses toffee, maple sugar candy and cookies. We eat sausage rolls warmed on the griddle in front of the fire and admire the impressive spruce decorated with strings of popcorn, candles and paper doily cones filled with dried flowers.



During summer months it's often difficult to drag youngsters indoors away from the farm animals, but on a frigid December night they welcome a warm-up stop at the Halfway House Inn to eat hot mince tarts, then linger in the taproom to do a craft or two.

This evening is literally a taste of history with lots of traditional nibbles to sample, including savoury cheese straws at the Mackenzie House and rose-scented Turkish delight at Burwick House where we listen to a flute duet – one of half-a-dozen traditional concerts performed throughout the village, including a Celtic folk band, a dulcimer performance and a storyteller who enthalls the standing-room-only crowd with traditional Christmas tales in the broom shop.

With only simple garlands of evergreens decorating the cedar rail fences and lamplight glowing on new fallen snow, the village is remarkably romantic in the evening and we can't help but notice that this program seems to have become a popular date night.

Like Christmas shoppers more than a century ago we always enjoy dropping by the Laskay Emporium. On the popular lamplight tours the old general store is probably busier than it ever was in the 1800s as dozens of modern-day visitors shop for tin lanterns just like the ones carried by costumed interpreters in the village. We always buy brown

paper bags of old-fashioned humbug candies and maple sugar to bring home those tastes of Christmas past.

Now that my children are teenagers they enjoy watching the reactions of younger children. "Where are the pioneers?" a young girl asks at the harness shop while her parents admire sleigh bells. As the tinsmith explains the horse-and-buggy technology of the mid-1800s another youngster asks, "Didn't the dinosaurs eat the horses?" Though we all laugh, I fondly remember how recently it was that my own teenagers asked such innocent questions.

For kids who have grown up with this delightful Christmas tradition, it's not surprising that these festive winter evenings in the soft lamplight at Black Creek have become a romantic favourite for young adults looking for an interesting date destination. ❄️

– Betty Zvyatkauskas is a Toronto-based writer who enjoys travel, nature and culinary history.

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Top-bottom: A traditional 19th century Christmas lantern used by Ontario's early settlers; Preparing for Christmas, a village interpreter hangs a home-made wreath typical of a Victorian Christmas; Roblin's Mill (a 5-storey stone building built in 1842)
Photos, top-bottom: Black Creek Pioneer Village

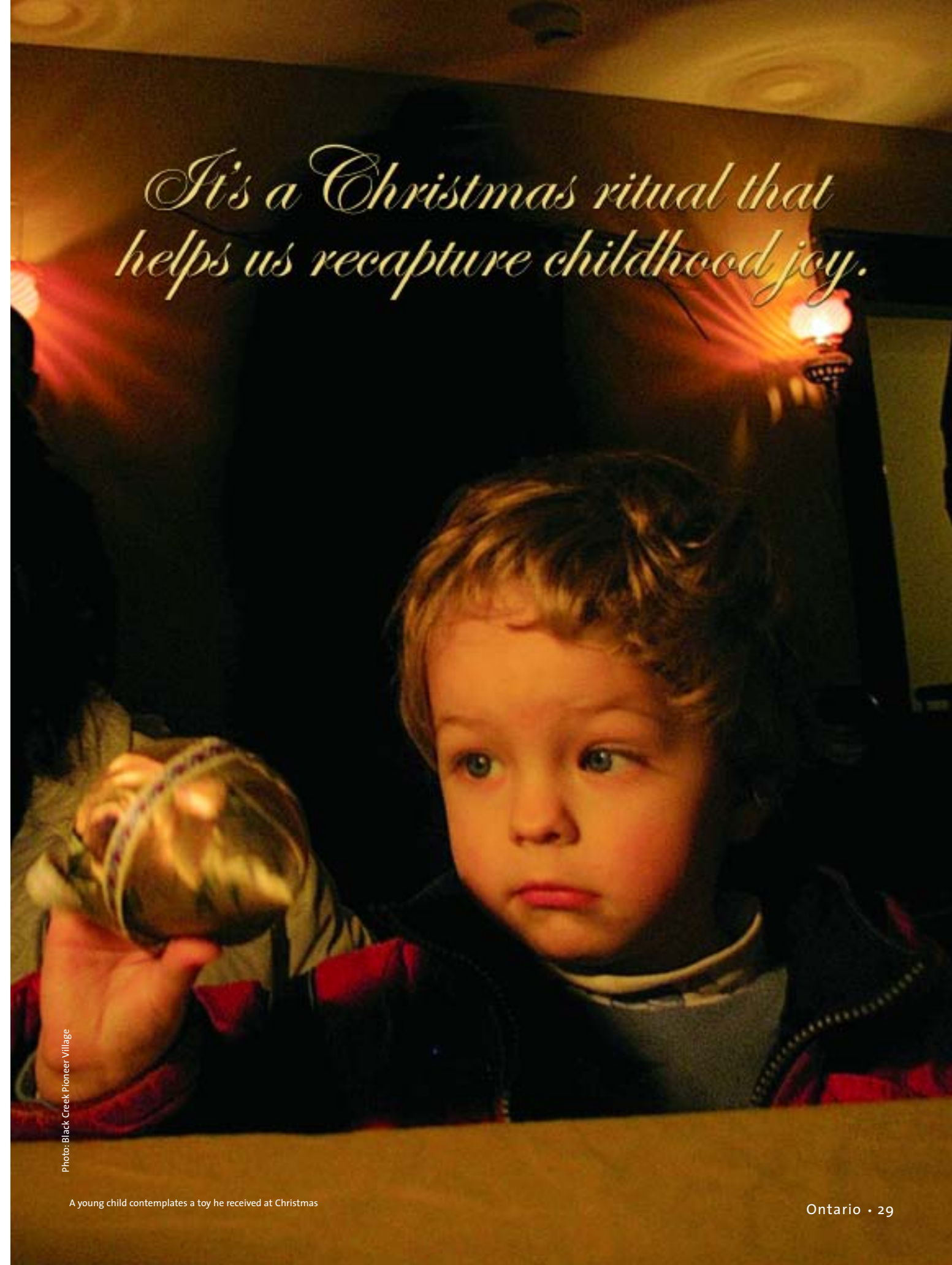


Photo: Black Creek Pioneer Village

A young child contemplates a toy he received at Christmas

skate



THROUGH HISTORY

— By Yvonne Butorac

I don't remember the first time I skated. I just did.

Like legions of Canadian kids I laced up as soon as I could find a pair of skates that fit. The frozen pond in the field behind the barn was my Maple Leaf Gardens.

When I changed into my skates one February day last year in one of the heated huts on Ottawa's Rideau Canal, I was reminded of how long it had been since I had skated on natural outdoor ice. But you know, little had changed.

Well, admittedly the nearby Parliament buildings presented a statelier backdrop than the rail fence on the farm. And where I often starred on my private pond, on the canal I became part of a kaleidoscope of speed skaters gliding to the office, visitors on rental skates, and dads pushing bundled-up babies in sleighs.

On those cold days decades ago I couldn't have imagined skating outdoors while feasting on a piping hot BeaverTail smothered with cinnamon sugar. Nor did I dream of ordering a steaming cup of hot chocolate from a concession stand at the edge of the ice. And if I wanted respite from the biting wind, I faced a cold trek back to the house, not a quick warm up in a nearby chalet. Although it's definitely more comfortable to put wings on your feet on the Rideau Canal Skateway than it was on the frozen farm pond, some things remain constant. The wind in your face, now that's timeless.

Until the winter of 1970-71 the Rideau Canal was just that, a canal. Pretty in spring, summer and fall, and in winter piled high with snow. That first experimental season National Capital Commission crews cleared a small rink with shovels. Now from December to March maintenance workers constantly



The mouthwatering taste of a BeaverTail is an essential part of the Ottawa experience

groom 7.8 km (4.8 mi.) of canal from downtown Ottawa to the Hartwell Locks near Carleton University.

When the ice reaches the required thickness of 25 to 30 cm (10 to 12 in.) – usually between Christmas and New Year's Day – the green flags go up. And the debate begins. Is skating on the pristine ice of early morning after the nightly flooding the ultimate experience? Is a moonlight skate hand-in-hand with someone special the perfect antidote for winter chills? Or is the freedom of skating for kilometres from one Ottawa neighbourhood to another the

greatest thrill? Whatever the motivation this year, skating on the canal has a special cachet. This past July, Guinness World Records officially recognized Rideau Canal Skateway as the world's largest naturally frozen ice rink.

I happened to be skating on the canal during Ottawa's winter festival, Winterlude, so I was on the watch for an Ice Hog. The Skateway is centre stage for the festival and these magical mascots can be sighted cavorting around hockey games and figure skating demonstrations. They've even been spotted hugging ice sculptures. Rumour has it that the Ice Hogs, that's Mama, Papa, and children Noumi and Nouma, come and go through the orange-painted holes in the ice that are used each night for flooding. A more likely rumour is that the 28th Winterlude, which runs from February 3 to 19, will again include both a triathlon with skating on the canal as one of the race segments, and the annual on-ice bed race.

This year when your legs tire or your feet begin to feel the cold there's another skating adventure waiting for you in the warmth of the Canadian Museum of Civilization. Lace Up: Canada's Passion For Skating opens there on January 27 and continues until March 4, 2007. Antique ice skates, historic costumes,



The magnificent Fairmont Château Laurier overlooks thousands of skaters on the Rideau Canal

trophies and medals selected from museums, archives and personal collections tell the story of skating in Canada from before confederation until the present. The exhibition not only champions Canada's outstanding hockey, speed and figure skating athletes but also applauds the skater who laces up just for the sheer joy of swooshing down the ice.

If Lace Up whets your appetite for skating's history you mustn't miss



Professional ice carvers sculpt temporary works of art during Winterlude

Ice is nice – especially in Ottawa, where it's carved by professionals and skated on by all



skating on the outdoor rink at Rideau Hall, the official residence of Canada's Governor General. In 1872 Lord Dufferin who was totally smitten with Canadian winter sports, built the first outdoor skating rink there. He intended it primarily for friends and family who wished to practise their valzes and figures but opened it to anyone who was properly dressed. This season when Canada's most prestigious backyard rink opens for public skating on weekend afternoons from January to March, you can be assured that no one will be scrutinizing skating costumes.

More than a century ago, Lord Dufferin made Ottawa the capital of winter. I think he'd be pleased that skating in Ottawa continues to be a capital idea. *

— Yvonne Butorac is a Toronto freelance writer who skates, writes and knows Ontario well. She is the author of *Great Exits*, A guide to the exits of the 401.



Collection Jean-Marie Leduc; Photo: Harry Foster, CMC

SKATING ON THE RIDEAU

The Rideau Canal Skateway opens every year at the end of December and when Winterlude dominates the social and recreation calendar on weekends in February (Feb. 3 to 19) the Skateway is always one of the highlights. By early March, with spring just around the corner, more than one million have laced up their skates.

Rideau Canal Skateway Ice conditions at www.canadascapital.gc.ca/skateway or call 1-800-465-1867.

Winterlude
www.canadascapital.gc.ca/winterlude

Lace Up: Canada's Passion for Skating
Canadian Museum of Civilization
www.civilization.ca
1-800-555-5621

For accommodations, getaway packages and more activities in the area, visit www.ottawatourism.ca or call 1-866-644-1234. For other art exhibitions, visit www.ontariotravel.net/winter or call 1-800-ONTARIO.



Couples think skating on the Rideau is a capital idea



The Rideau Canal Skateway—the world's longest ice rink.

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holiday

twist

— By Ilona Kauremszky

ON DINING IN ONTARIO

The age-old call, "What's for dinner?" echoes daily in most kitchens. But that familiar plea takes on a new ring during the holidays when carloads of hungry in-laws, long-lost cousins and friends come knocking at your door.

Photo: Ste. Anne's Country Inn and Spa



Photo: Marijo Corcoran



L-R: White orange chocolate mousse covered in dark chocolate; fieldstone building known locally as the Grafton Castle, now called Ste. Anne's Country Inn and Spa

Since my taste buds enjoy a culinary ride (and whose don't), I hightailed it to some favourite winter hot spots to see what was cooking for the holidays. For this sneak peek, I rounded up one of the season's best sources, my mom, who over the years has stuffed countless birds as well as whipped up her famous Hungarian Christmas Eve dinners. So together we took our appetites in search of a few new twists on holiday fare.

Here's the skinny on the season's favourite menus:

Eastern Ontario

Ste. Anne's Country Inn and Spa rests in the rolling Northumberland Hills near Grafton. Situated in the former Massey family cottage, this whimsical stone castle was nicknamed Ste. Anne's after Quebec's own Ste. Anne de Beaupré, synonymous for its own brand of healing qualities.

For our holiday introduction, Executive Chef Christopher Ennew inquires about food allergies and recommends his succulent nuggets of salmon over a five-bean salad drizzled in a coconut curry soup. Who could resist?

The wardrobe of the day is ultra-casual as white robed and slippered patrons indulge in the airy dining room. Suddenly holiday dining has new meaning. Jennifer Goheen, Marketing Manager, described the dining phenomenon here. "Although we're more of a family restaurant, we try to be comfortable. People feel like they are coming home and they can just be themselves. Yet the quality is a four-diamond service."

Recently back from the World Culinary Olympics, Chef Chris and his Team Ontario won three medals including two golds. He shares

some of his prized kernels on where holiday cuisine is heading.

"For the holidays you get to go back to the basics of cooking. People want something substantial," he says and adds, "Holiday cuisine I see is going back to the family. The circle is coming around again."

For this downtown Toronto born, bred and schooled chef, holidays were special events when families brought over potluck. These days Chef Chris' holiday fixings feature a seven-course dinner event dubbed 'Festival of Life' for New Year's Eve.

Using such ingredients as rhea, a fowl similar to ostrich and emu with



Chef Christopher Ennew



Photo: Curtis Trent

a stronger taste resembling pheasant, and lamb tenderloin, these main courses are paired with light sauces rich in local maple syrup, tangy cranberries or zesty citrus.

Ski Country

Upon arriving at this brasserie there is an Elvis look-alike orchestrating a ballad of steaks, seafood and soups in an open galley kitchen.

With a flambé heating up the evening, Copper Blues Bar and Grill is part of Blue Mountain's upscale Tyrolean Village. This local eatery in the heart of ski country is perfect for families, couples and snow bunnies.

Open all year, Chef Terry Prince prepares a traditional holiday menu with all the fixings. "It's all about comfort food. People see the rare delicacies on the menu but always seem to order turkey, especially during the holidays," says the chef, who is known to strum his guitar and sing a few of The King's ballads.

This casual dining spot offers live entertainment and is buzzing the night we arrive. The slopes of Blue Mountain are packed and the temperature outside is -28 degrees Celsius. Who could ask for a more satisfying meal than Prince's popular Surf and Turf? A plateful of shrimp, lobster, scallops and a 6-oz. fire-grilled New York strip loin is the perfect end to a day on the slopes.



On the Twenty

The staple around the holidays is turkey, but at On the Twenty, they add a holiday twist...



Wild mushrooms and sea scallops in a phyllo purse

Niagara

No doubt, Niagara's wine country has recently produced some stellar vintages. But how does it look on the culinary front? Being a Niagara-born girl myself, I am very familiar with the bounty of the Niagara's fruit belt.

For family outings, we picked strawberries, grapes and loaded up on peaches. In winter, dad's spicy sausage made its way to our table with a glass of his own signature wine.

Venturing into the heart of fruitland, the scenic road leading us to Jordan Valley is draped in a ribbon of snow. On The Twenty, made famous by former chef Michael Olsen, offers a panoramic view of the valley below, with its snowcapped trees and the frozen creek. As we proceeded into the basement of the former canning factory, a vast catacomb of wine cellars appeared. And then in a separate chamber, there was the rich aromatic smell of cheese aging like fine barrels of wine next door.

The staple around the holidays is turkey, but at the On The Twenty they add a holiday twist, pairing the seasonal bird with toasted nuts, pistachios, pinenuts, chestnuts and cashews. With a smooth sweet potato mash loaded with Parmesan, the delicacy is served with a glass of Cave Spring Cellar's best.

Another favourite among repeat customers is a newly introduced blind tasting menu, with each of the five, or seven courses partnered with wine at every course.

Our parade of plates began with a Consommé of Duck Ravioli followed by Sesame Crusted Scallops



Chef Terry Prince

Photo: Copper Blues Bar and Grill



Photo: Martin Lortz/outerimages.com

Copper Blues Bar and Grill

in Plum Sauce. All the fixings made this turkey stuffed but somehow I managed to leave room for dessert, a chocolate torte with a dollop of hazelnut ice cream in a berry sauce.

In the heart of wine country Hillebrand Estates Winery

Restaurant is where Chef Tony De Luca pairs the estate's wines with his culinary festival called "Tour of Niagara." Our lunch tour started with a puréed grilled vegetable soup topped with a dollop of cream, followed by an artistic platter of

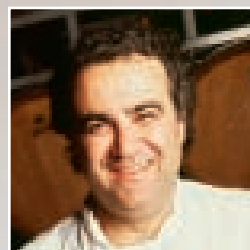
prosciutto-wrapped quail, scallops over chilled apricot, pinenut and green cabbage slaw and seared pork medallion on a spicy chorizo sausage. "What a symphony of food," declares mom while toasting with one of the three flights of Hillebrand's finest.

In the heart of wine country Hillebrand Estates Winery Restaurant is where Chef Tony De Luca pairs the estate's wines with his culinary festival called "Tour of Niagara."



Hillebrand Estates Winery and Restaurant

Photo: Joseph Chan and Steven Chan/ARTiculation Group Toronto



Chef Tony De Luca

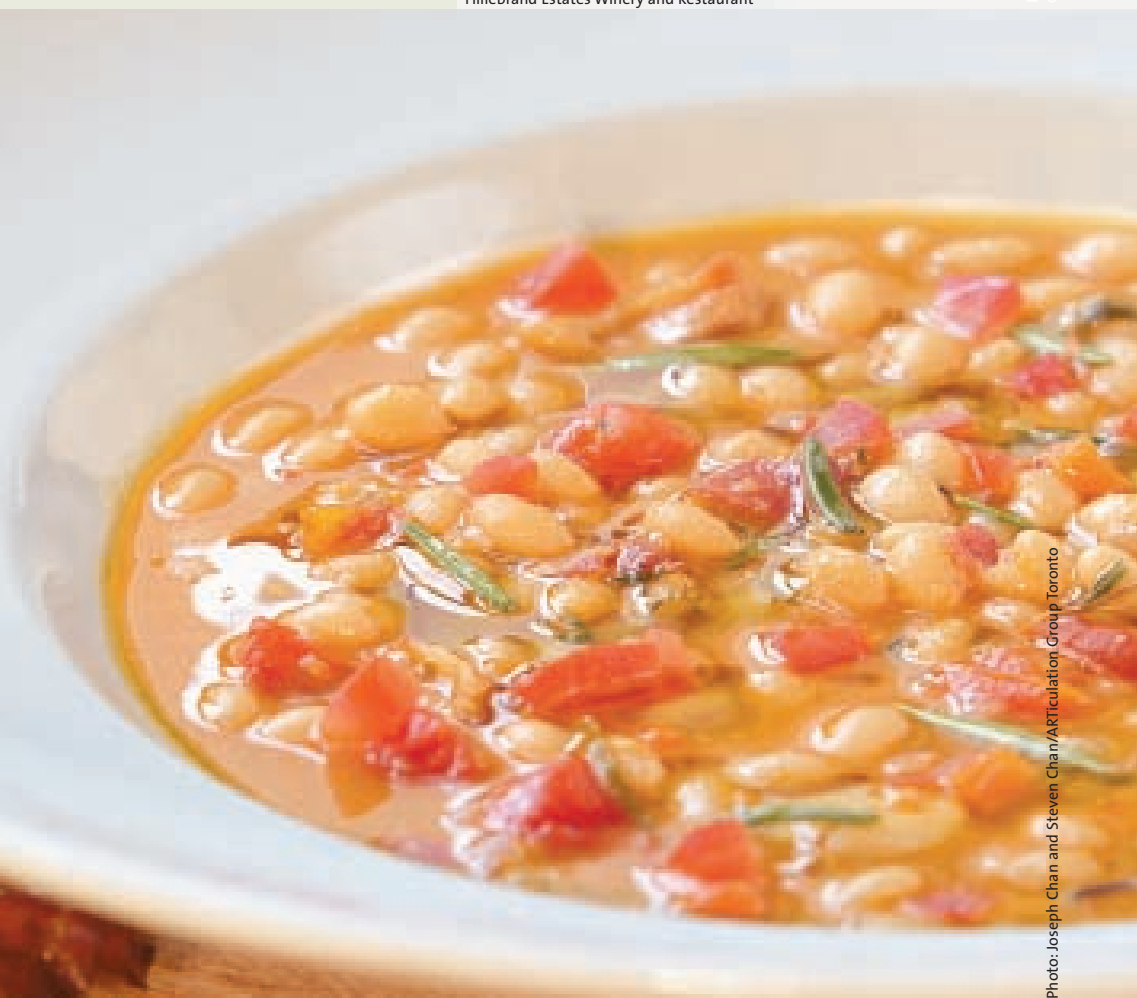


Photo: Joseph Chan and Steven Chan/ARTiculation Group Toronto

Divinely Inspired White Bean Soup



Chef Chris Smythe

Olive oil poached globe artichokes with baby purple cabbage leaves and oven-dried tomatoes vinaigrette

Photo: Riverbend Inn and Vineyard

With the Niagara Escarpment blanketed in snow the Riverbend Inn emerges as a grand Georgian mansion. Formerly an art gallery, the Riverbend Inn re-opened in April 2004. The historic landmark was sold to hotel maverick John Wiens, the former owner of the Prince of Wales Hotel.

Local chef Chris Smythe created the inn's first foray into holiday dining last Christmas. "There were sleigh rides, carols and later mulled wine by the fireside," chimes Chris.

Knowing turkey is still the number one holiday request, Chef Chris

paired this comfort food with corn-bread, sage and pecan stuffing. The pièce de résistance was dessert: baked rum toffee and pecan bread pudding.

"I try to use a sense of the south here using lots of pecans," he notes, reflecting how he tries to marry the sumptuous cuisine with the Georgian style inn.

Decadently Delicious! Mom approved. Happy Yuletide Dining! ❄️

— Ilona Kauremszky is the editor of www.mycompass.ca and a weekly travel columnist for the Toronto Sun. Her stories on Ontario have been published in newspapers and magazines across North America.

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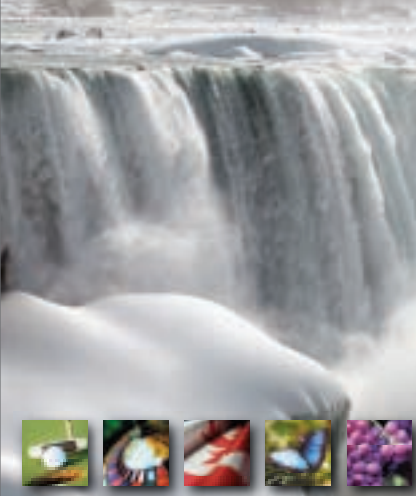
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Please note: Holiday menus and feature dishes subject to change.

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boarding school

— By Sue Lebrecht

I ski, he doesn't. It's our first winter together, what's a girl to do? Stick him on the bunny hill while I play in the bumps? That wouldn't go over well. Nah, I figured my best option was to switch teams, take up snowboarding that is, so we could both start at go, learn together and play on common ground.

Talking him into it was not an easy task. Morris doesn't like winter, nor the cold, nor the snow. To him, January and February are merely depressing months. The world only looks good again when he can get on his bike, the mountain bike fiend that he is. I was determined to help change his outlook on winter.

Mountain biking and snowboarding could easily go hand-in-hand.

I earmarked some popular ski and snowboard areas, picked a warm, sunny day, and worked on building spirited anticipation. "Snowboarding on Saturday – oh-boy, oh-boy, oh-boy!" I'd say, then mess up his hair, give him a kiss, a wink and

saunter by, smiling at his smirk.

It's a well-known fact that the learning curve for snowboarding is incredibly fast, and perhaps consequently, also brutal. On the first two outings particularly, one can count on falling a great deal, getting bumps and bruises along with sore muscles in

places you never knew existed.

Fortunately, Morris wasn't equipped with this foreknowledge, and I certainly wasn't going to enlighten him. This initiation to learn snowboarding had to seem like nothing else but an invitation to having winter fun.

INITIATION

Horseshoe Resort

At the rental booth at Horseshoe Resort, Morris was asked, “left or right?”

The way Morris saw it his odds weren’t bad. He had a 50/50 shot at arbitrarily choosing correctly.

Admittedly, however, he did realize it was probably best to know what was being asked. “What do you mean?” he replied.

It’s the one question everyone faces when starting. You need to know if you’re more comfortable with your left or right foot forward. It determines the positioning of the snowboard bindings, and ultimately how you’re going to stand for the rest of the day.

“With what foot would you kick a ball?” asked the attendant, by way of explanation. It actually was a back-handed way of attaining the answer. They say if you tend to kick a ball with your right foot, you’d be more comfortable with your left foot forward.

Morris was deemed left-footed, and I was ‘goofy,’ the term for those leading with the right foot.

I had booked the Discover Boarding Package, an excellent enticement for beginners, providing a lift ticket, lesson and rental equipment at a substantially discounted rate. Outside, our instructor Ryan

first had us ‘skate’ the board on flat ground, pushing it with our back foot. Next we tried the smallest incline, gliding with our back foot resting between the bindings, as if getting off a chairlift. Then wasting no time, Ryan put us on a chairlift,



Sue Lebrecht and boyfriend Morris Martini sit atop Talisman

Then wasting no time, Ryan put us on a chairlift, yet not on the one servicing the gentle, segregated learning area, but on the high-speed chair running to the resort’s hilltop.

yet not on the one servicing the gentle, segregated learning area, but on the high-speed chair running to the resort’s hilltop.

“The steeper slope is easier for learning,” Ryan explained, at our obvious unease. “You’ll see.”

Amazingly, Morris and I both managed to get off the chairlift without falling. On-slope, we were introduced to the heel stop, the toe stop, to side-sliding the board downhill while facing forward, then backward, and finally to turning.

Morris was first to manage a turn. It was spectacular because he was heading for the trees at the time. When we poured out praise, he said, “Yeah, well, fear does funny things.”

It wasn’t all heroics. There were dues to pay. When we were on our own, after the lesson, Morris hurt his lead foot, his left elbow and right, lower cheek. Me, I fell hard on my tailbone. As I lay there in the shock of pain, not wanting to move, Morris came to my side. He said, “Are we hurting enough to call it quits yet?”

SECOND ATTEMPT

Mount St. Louis Moonstone

Funny, how roles can suddenly reverse. Morris was keen; I was wary. At Mount St. Louis Moonstone I booked another lesson for us, and our instructor, Dave, who didn’t know our level of ability, took us to the top of the beginner run and said, “well, let’s see what you can do.”

Morris shined. Was it male pride? He cruised off the chairlift, whereas I fell. He started downhill, while I hesitated, and he succeeded in doing

My perception of Blue Mountain as a proficient skier is radically different from that of a ‘newbie’ snowboarder.



Photo: Club Intrawest – Blue Mountain

The Boat House and Great Lodge, Blue Mountain

not just one turn, but two! While I'm not sure of the probability factor of executing linked turns on your second day and third hour on a snowboard, I do know it was impressive.

When I caught up to him and the instructor, I blurted out, "Morris actually isn't that good. He's never done turns before. It was a fluke; beginner's luck. Really." Morris smirked. It was like he had gotten away with something; performing with attributes he didn't possess. He knew it too; he looked smug. You could practically see his peacock feathers fanning out behind him.

The lesson went by incredibly fast with much good advice. But truth be told, what we needed now more than words of wisdom was basic practice. Snow started to fall, and the more that fell, the easier snowboarding became. At some point, everything came together for me – stance, movement, timing, rhythm. For a long moment, I was riding! "Look at all this snow Morris!" I gushed. "Isn't this amazing!"

THIRD TRY Blue Mountain

My perception of Blue Mountain as a proficient skier is radically different from that of a 'newbie' snowboarder. Even while Blue has



Barrie

Snow started to fall, and the more that fell, the easier snowboarding became. At some point, everything came together for me – stance, movement, timing, rhythm. For a long moment, I was riding!

the highest vertical drop for a public ski area in southern Ontario, to me, it had never looked so big. I was suddenly humbled.

We were at the south end, the most gentle and gradual part of the resort's stretch of the Niagara Escarpment. It was a usual, busy Saturday and here we were in the fine company of others also seeking competency. Everyone was trying to get the knack of sliding on boards.

Initially, when we started

snowboarding, Morris had bought us helmets. Good thing too, because he needed his. Third run down, he caught an edge, launched a cartwheel and banged his head. It was a short visit. Ski patrollers arrived fast and advised Morris to call it quits for the day. So it was, we just toured the shops in the colourful base village, and did some sightseeing in the area.

FOURTH INDULGENCE Talisman Mountain Resort

Thinking it was time to ramp things up, I booked a weekend package at Talisman. With cosy rooms, breakfast and dinner included, plus its heated outdoor pool, hot tub and other amenities, I figured Talisman would provide excellent ambience for enjoying the weekend regardless of snowboarding outcomes.

We arrived rusty and got off to a rough start. Specifically, Morris made me fall. Unbalanced as he got off the chairlift, he grabbed my jacket, taking me down with him. Charming!

Moreover, we inadvertently discovered Talisman's steepest slope. Not having looked at the trail map, we suddenly found ourselves out of our league on the steep face of the Sinkhole. It certainly gave us something to laugh about later. Yet, it was also quite bonding at the time, in the

grips of fear. We came to each other's aid, reached out, helped and rescued.

And after that, things got down-right romantic. Sitting close together on the chairlift, holding each other up while stepping into our snowboard bindings, getting someone to take a picture of us, capturing the moment. Heck, we even began to snowboard well, the both of us, one run after another, not falling, feeling great and looking good, delightfully at play.

Morris said, "You'd think we've been doing this for a long time." "Yeah," I said, "we're fooling people." He replied, "We're fooling ourselves."

The way I saw it, illusion or not, we were co-stars in our very own snowboarding production, and we had finally arrived at the good part. ❄️

– Adventure writer Sue Lebrecht is the author of nine guidebooks.



Blue Mountain Resort, Collingwood

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Royal Alexandra Theatre, Toronto

Ontario • 55

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While you're in the entertainment neighbourhood, go see *The Boy Friend* – the theatrical spoof of 1920s musicals directed by Julie Andrews at the Royal Alexandra Theatre.

Even though it's winter, it's not unusual to crave Rain after the show. Rain, the fine-dining restaurant, not the weather, is decked out in waterfalls, bamboo, comfortable seating and has fine Asian cuisine. It was Toronto's first women's prison, but now both men and women are welcome (with far better food, too).

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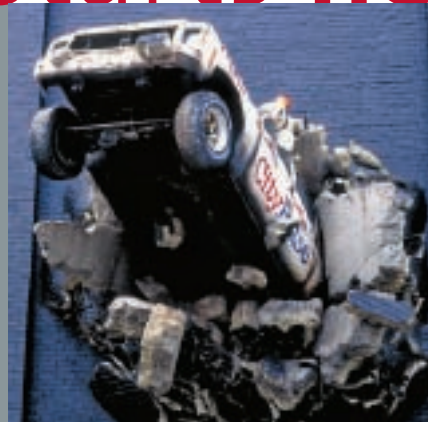
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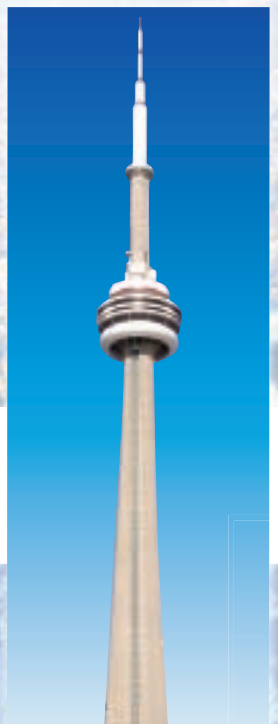
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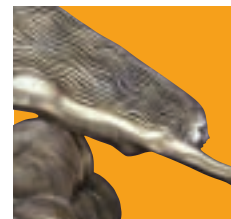
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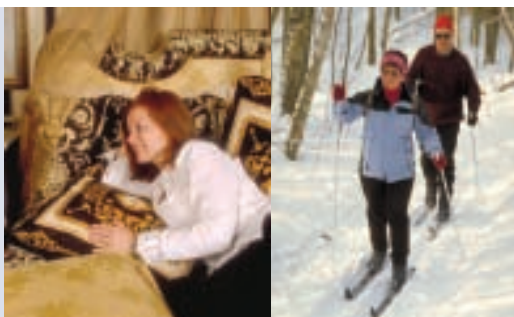
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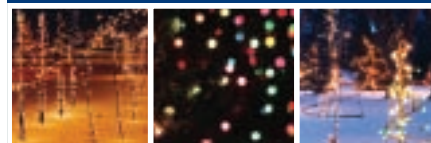
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ROMANCING the SNOW

— By Barb and Ron Kroll

Photo: Barb and Ron Kroll

Bear Trail Couples Resort, Whitney

We felt like we were inside a snow globe. Candlelight glittered on our wine glasses and warmed the white linen tablecloth, as we dined on lamb with fresh rosemary. Background music played softly. Outside our tableside window, big puffy snowflakes blanketed evergreen trees and fieldstone-fronted wooden buildings.

Smiling smugly, we toasted each other: “Here’s to not driving home on snow-covered streets!” It was the first evening of our two-night romantic getaway at Whitney’s Bear Trail Couples Resort.

After dinner, we strolled two minutes to our room. Our boots crunched on fresh-fallen snow that sparkled like diamonds. We looked up and there was the Big Dipper. The clouds had cleared. It was obvious why the resort

named its spa villas and châteaux after galaxies like Andromeda and constellations like Orion and Lyra.

We loved the carefree ambience. Want skates, snowshoes or cross-country skis? Just sign for them. Only dogsledding and snowmobiling carried extra charges.

The resort’s ideal location, near Algonquin Provincial Park’s east gate, allowed us to cross-country ski into the park’s network of groomed and tracked trails. We whirled around the skating rink, holding hands, then donned snowshoes to explore the Lookout Trail. Following red



Getting ready to skate on frozen Galeairy Lake

bear paw signs we snowshoed into an area that looked like a beautiful holiday card.

Pine boughs drooped under thick white icing. We made oval tracks over cotton batten snow, passing clumps of white birches and stumps topped with frozen marshmallows. Except for twittering chickadees and the staccato drumming of an ambitious woodpecker, the cold crisp air was silent. At the lookout, we

wrapped arms around each other’s waists and gazed over forested islands frozen into Airy Bay.

A rabbit’s trail led us down to the lake. The new-fallen snow was irresistible. Detaching our snowshoes, we made snow angels.

Back in our spa villa, we warmed up in the sauna and steam room attached to our bathroom. Blazing logs crackled in the fieldstone fireplace, as we totally relaxed in our bubble-filled, double hot tub.

Our room had everything we needed – thick, white

terry robes, candles, a king-size bed, hot chocolate mix, coffee, a microwave and fridge. When we wanted something else, the staff was happy to oblige. “Champagne flutes? Of course! Would you like a silver bucket with ice as well?”

Snuggled together, we watched a romantic classic from the cushy leather sofa in front of the fireplace.

As we checked out, a glance through the guestbook revealed that other couples shared our sentiments: “Very relaxing!” “Can’t wait until our next romantic getaway!” ❄️

– Barb and Ron Kroll are travel writers whose stories and photographs appear in major publications throughout the world.

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1-800-340-INNS (4667)

Resorts Ontario
www.resorts-ontario.com
1-800-363-7227

Premier Spas of Ontario
www.spasontario.com
1-800-990-7702 or (705) 721-9969

Ontario’s Town and Country Getaways
www.ontariotownandcountry.ca

For additional winter romance and Valentine’s Day packages, visit:
www.ontariotravel.net/winter
or call 1-800-ONTARIO.

hoe hoe hoe

– By Mike Friskney

While a big part of the excitement of the holiday season is the anticipation of annual traditions and events, every year my family and I like to experience a new tradition with a twist. One of the best is the Rockwood Farmers' Parade of Lights.



Photo: Rockwood Farmers' Parade

The parade started back in 1992 when a group of local farmers decided to dress up their farm equipment for the Christmas season and ride through the village streets as a holiday gesture of goodwill to their non-farming neighbours. Thirteen years later, the Rockwood Farmers' Parade of Lights has grown to become an annual event that draws over 10,000 people – more than four times the population of the village of Rockwood!

We were told to get there early to ensure we got a good spot along the route. We decided to go even earlier to

combines and spreaders paraded past us, each one covered from tip-to-toe in garland, bows, and strands of colourful festive lights.

Tractors pulled farm-themed holiday scenes created on flatbed trailers. We tapped our toes and marvelled at the fancy footwork of a talented group of cloggers. Our little ones were mesmerized by the sight of the wire-framed balloon-covered Dancing Christmas Tree bobbing and weaving on a skid loader decorated to the hilt with 400 lights.



THE ONLY PARADE KNOWN FOR **JOHN DEERE** AS MUCH AS **REINDEER**



Photo: Rockwood Farmers' Parade

Light load, John Deere tractor pulls a grain buggy

give us time to enjoy a pre-parade chow-down at Stone United Church, one of five local churches that hold these dinners. With our insides warmed by a hearty meal we headed out to the sidewalk and staked our claim on a prime curbside vantage point. Good thing we did as minute-by-minute the sidewalk began to fill with rows of people.

While waiting for the start of the parade we chatted with a few of the locals who told us that 20 area farms join in the spirit of the season to put on the parade. More than 200 farmers, their families, employees and friends participate in the fun of decorating and riding the floats each year. Many begin decorating their equipment a month in advance, dedicating hours to getting their floats and machinery decked out just right.

At 7:00 p.m. sharp the wail of police sirens signalled the start of the only parade known for John Deere as much as reindeer. It was a fabulous festive spectacle. Modern and vintage tractors, balers, threshing machines,

The twinkle of the lights from the displays was only outdone by the twinkle in the eyes of the farmers and their families who waved and smiled enthusiastically as they rode past on their merry Massey Fergusons.

Of course, a Christmas parade wouldn't be complete without Santa Claus and sure enough there he was bringing up the rear, ho-ho-hoing and spreading holiday cheer from aboard, what else, his Case IH 1680 Combine.

The Rockwood Farmers' Parade of Lights was truly a wonderful, unique holiday outing that brought a smile to each and every one of our faces. ❄️

– Mike Friskney is a freelance writer and devoted day tripper based in Newmarket, Ontario.

Rockwood Farmers' Parade of Lights – December 8
www.rockwoodfarmersparade.org
(519) 856-4496

For more holiday parades visit
www.ontariotravel.net/winter or call
1-800-ONTARIO.

THE outdoors ARE ‘IN’

— By Darren Hakker

We were in desperate need of a getaway. I was suffering from the midwinter blues and was surely going to lose it on my co-workers. So for their safety and my sanity, I escaped with my wife, Darlene, to Elmhirst's Resort, a family-run cottage resort in the delightfully quiet town of Keene.

We like snow but aren't so gung-ho about it that we'd book an expedition to the North Pole. The Extreme Winter package at Elmhirst's is for

those who are looking to sample winter activities over just a few days.

Our winterized cottage offered a spectacular view of Rice Lake. The pine-panelled, two-bedroom retreat boasts a wood-burning fireplace, living room, dining area, full kitchen and a very large bathroom with whirlpool tub. Heaven.

Shortly after our arrival, the resort owner, Peter Elmhirst, greeted us in true 'extreme winter' style: a one-horse open sleigh. So this is what it's

like, we wondered. We had been missing out!

This was also the first time we ever rode snowmobiles. Much to our surprise, we found it easy to learn. There are no pedals. No fancy-stimancy buttons or knobs. Just an accelerator on the right handle. A brake on the left. We each piloted our own and, with Peter leading the way, careened across Rice Lake's frozen shell, volleying huge plumes of snow in our wake. "It's an

adrenaline rush," Darlene said when we finished. "We have to do that again."

The Elmhirst family's excitement for snowmobiling is equivalent to their love for cuisine. Many ingredients come from within the region, including beef, eggs, fruit and vegetables, which are produced right on the resort's property!

Guests choose one of three ways to dine at the resort: in the main dining room, catering to their cottage, or they can bring their own food, dining in their own cottage. Since we were on a getaway to try new things, we chose the main building's dining room and its duck ravioli and red deer filet mignon. Delectable choice.

Greg Elmhirst, Peter's son and operations manager, offers guests complimentary tours of the wine cellar (a welcomed break from our intense afternoon). A dreary basement only five years ago, Greg tells us it was converted and

now boasts hundreds of Ontario's finest wines. Guests may also take the wine-tasting class for a small extra charge of \$10.

Darlene had never been cross-country skiing, so we strapped on our shoes and after a few baby glides, we were going full-force. She's glad she tried it — but I could sense she probably won't do it again. It's okay though, that's what this trip is all about — trying new winter activities. The resort has various groomed trails for beginners and experts alike.

Relaxing after our epic adventure, we donned our swimwear for the indoor pool, soaked in the hot tub and thought about what outdoor adventure to do next: snowshoeing, skating or tobogganing. We were fully enjoying our extreme winter experience and couldn't wait to hit the snow again. ❄️

— Darren Hakker is a writer with Fuel Advertising whose work appears regularly in this magazine.



L-R: Darren snowmobiling on Rice Lake; Main lodge dining room; Two of the beautiful horses at Elmhirst

Elmhirst's Resort — Extreme Winter package:

The Extreme Winter package at Elmhirst's Resort takes surviving winter to a whole new level. You get three nights' stay in a beautifully appointed cottage, hearty breakfast basket, one hour of snowmobiling or ATV'ing with a guide, full access of snowshoeing and cross-country skiing trails, a horse-drawn sleigh ride or wagon ride, as well as full use of the indoor pool and hot tub. This special package deal is only available midweek (Sunday–Thursday) from December to March, for only \$429 per couple.

Elmhirst's Resort
www.elmhirst.com
(705) 295-4591.

Resorts Ontario
www.resorts-ontario.com
1-800-363-7227.

For other packages and great places to stay this winter visit www.ontariotravel.net/winter or call 1-800-ONTARIO.



IF THE SNOW SHOE FITS WEAR IT!

The Greenbelt, like in all the other seasons, is an oasis of tranquility and outdoor fun. You can hop on 2,500 km (1,553 mi.) of trails anywhere from Rice Lake to Queenston to Tobermory, and enjoy the outdoors with your skis, snowshoes or, depending on when you visit, just a good pair of hiking boots.

After parking at one of many easy access points to the trails, you strap on your snowshoes, slip on a cosy toque and mitts, then you're off. The only sound you

hear is the crunching of snow beneath your feet.

If you're not into the whole snowshoeing thing, strap on your cross-country skis and glide to bliss. Many of Ontario's provincial parks in the Greenbelt encourage cross-country skiing, as well as tourism operators such as Scenic Caves Nature Adventures in Collingwood.

The Greenbelt has Canada's largest network of walking paths and is just as beautiful in winter as any other time of year.

MORE ON THE GREAT WHITE GREENBELT

Snowshoeing and skiing are just two of the many things you can do in the Greenbelt. For these fun outdoor activities and much more, contact any one of the following:

Greenbelt
www.greenbelt.ontario.ca

The Bruce Trail Association
www.brucetrail.org
1-800-665-4453

Oak Ridges Trail Association
www.orta.on.ca
1-877-319-0285

Scenic Caves Nature Adventures
www.sceniccaves.com
(705) 446-0256

Ontario Parks
www.ontarioparks.com
1-888-ONT-PARK

For more outdoor fun in Ontario visit www.ontariotravel.net/winter or call 1-800-ONTARIO.

exclusively ours

some like it

HAUTE

National treasures like the Canadian Museum of Civilization and the National Gallery of Canada – along with a world-renowned cooking school – are part of an appetizing package of experiences in the National Capital Region.

It's the Some Like It Haute package. And hot it is. Anything that offers something so fashionably elegant tends to be a hit. Le Cordon Bleu Paris Ottawa Culinary Art Institute has opened dozens of demonstration classes to those who want to work a culinary experience into their vacation. You can learn how to prepare pears cooked in red wine, braised lamb shoulder and salmon escalope baked in paper.

The demonstrations last three

hours and visitors sit in a regular classroom with 40 students who will some day work in the world's greatest restaurants. You do as the students do and when the demonstration is over you do what all great chefs do before serving the public – you get to taste what you have made!

Le Cordon Bleu Signatures Restaurant has just been rated a Five Diamond restaurant by the Canadian/American Automobile Association. A Five Diamond rating is the highest honour bestowed upon restaurants by CAA/AAA and Le Cordon Bleu is the only culinary institute to run a Five Diamond restaurant. Only 57 restaurants in North America – nine of them in Canada – carry the Five Diamond rating!

Cost for this two-day package starts at \$133 per person.

- two nights' hotel accommodation for two adults

- casino cash certificates up to \$20 CDN

- Rideau Centre Visitor Values coupon book

- demonstration class at Le Cordon Bleu Paris Ottawa Culinary Arts Institute

- admission for two to either Canadian Museum of Civilization, National Gallery of Canada or Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography

- complimentary Le Cordon Bleu cookbook

Optional add-ons are available

For more details on this package and others in Ottawa, visit www.ottawatourism.ca or call **1-866-644-1234**.

For more decadent getaways in Ontario visit

www.ontariotravel.net/savour or call **1-800-ONTARIO**.

exclusively ours

EVERY DOG
HAS ITS DAY

The dogs of Haliburton Forest and Wildlife Reserve love Ontario.

Especially in winter when the forest trails are blanketed in snow and they effortlessly pull a cross-country skier through this winter wonderland.

Skijoring – an age old Norwegian tradition which connects a cross-country skier to a dog or team of dogs using a specially designed belt



Photo: Haliburton Forest and Wildlife Reserve
MacDonald Lake, Haliburton Forest

and tug line – has become the fastest growing winter sled dog experience in North America. Combining the romance of dog sledding with the simplicity of walking your dog, skijoring is a cooperative sport that complements the athletic abilities of you and your best friend.

See what it's all about! A half day excursion teams you up with Haliburton Forest's staff and, of course, their Siberian huskies. Then, when you've got the hang of it, take a dog, or bring your own for a full day excursion.

Skijoring: Adventures with Siberian huskies package includes:

- Instruction (previous cross-country ski experience is preferred)
- Two hours of guided skijoring
- Eager Siberian huskies – don't worry, they're pros!
- All equipment and harnesses
- Add lunch for \$10.00 per person
- Price: \$55.00 per person – 4 person minimum

Options: for those who'd like to add a luxurious spa tub soak at day's end, ask about overnight accommodation at the Delta Pinestone Inn.

To book, call Haliburton Forest and Wildlife Reserve at (705) 754-2198 or visit www.haliburtonforest.com for more information.

More dog-gone
places to skijor



Photo: Haliburton Forest and Wildlife Reserve
Base Camp, Haliburton Forest

Dog Paddling Adventures offers opportunities to skijor with your own dog or dogs within an hour of the GTA

www.dogpaddlingadventures.com
(905) 477-2493

SKIJORING AND WINTER CAMPING AT QUETICO

For those with experience or who prefer to rough it, Quetico Provincial Park offers a fabulous opportunity for people and their dogs to travel where motorized travel is prohibited www.ontarioparks.ca/english/quet.html 1-888-ONT-PARK

For more skijoring and other outdoor adventures, visit www.ontariotravel.net/outdoor or call **1-800-ONTARIO**.

For more winter packages, visit www.ontariotravel.net/winter or call **1-800-ONTARIO**.

great escapes

Ride, ride, ride – let it ride!

Say goodbye to the hard life for a weekend and take a drive to Lanark County.



Photo: M. Parr
Calabogie Peaks Resort

Whether you go to ride on skis, on a sleigh or on a snowboard, Lanark, just west of Ottawa, will remind you that having a winter adventure is a must!

When you pull up to Calabogie Peaks Resort, take your time admiring two of their grandest sights: Dickson Mountain with one of the highest vertical drops in Ontario, and Dickson Manor, a gorgeous chalet-style creation housing guests, pools, a spa and restaurant.

Are you a first-time skier? No worries! Their 20 runs vary in ability – from beginner to expert. Calabogie prides itself in modern facilities and top-notch equipment too, including three lifts built since 2000.

They even have a Girls Gone Rippin' program where women (no boys allowed) enjoy a four-hour ski lesson followed by an après social. Then, if you're in need of rejuvenation, saunter over to the recently renovated Les Saisons Spa in Dickson Manor – with luxurious therapeutic and aesthetic treatment packages to relax every muscle in your body after a full day on the slopes.



Photo: Lorraine Downey



Photo: Old Burnside Bed and Breakfast

L-R: Fulton's Pancake House and Sugar Bush, Pakenham; Old Burnside Bed and Breakfast, Almonte

Let worries ride at Old Burnside Bed and Breakfast in Almonte – about 45 minutes from Calabogie. Howard and Marilyn Campbell pamper their guests with warm hospitality. “We’ve been doing it 12 years so we’re pretty good at it,” Marilyn says. The Georgian architecture, gourmet breakfasts and a 7.5 m (25 ft.) waterfall help make this a unique and necessary rest for the night.

From here, it’s only a short drive to Fulton’s Pancake House and Sugar Bush where you can take a horse-drawn wagon or sleigh ride through the sugar bush. And why not? Lanark County is the maple syrup capital of Ontario. Shirley Fulton-Deugo, fourth generation owner of the site, recommends guests also take the self-guided tour and sample their maple syrup goodness on pancakes or in its equally yummy taffy form.

Lastly, an afternoon riding a snowboard at Mount Pakenham! They have tubing and skiing too, which both look quite tempting but for boarders, the Terrain Park is especially irresistible. ❄️



MAKE CONTACT WITH SNOW

Calabogie Peaks Resort, Calabogie
www.calabogie.com
 1-800-669-4861

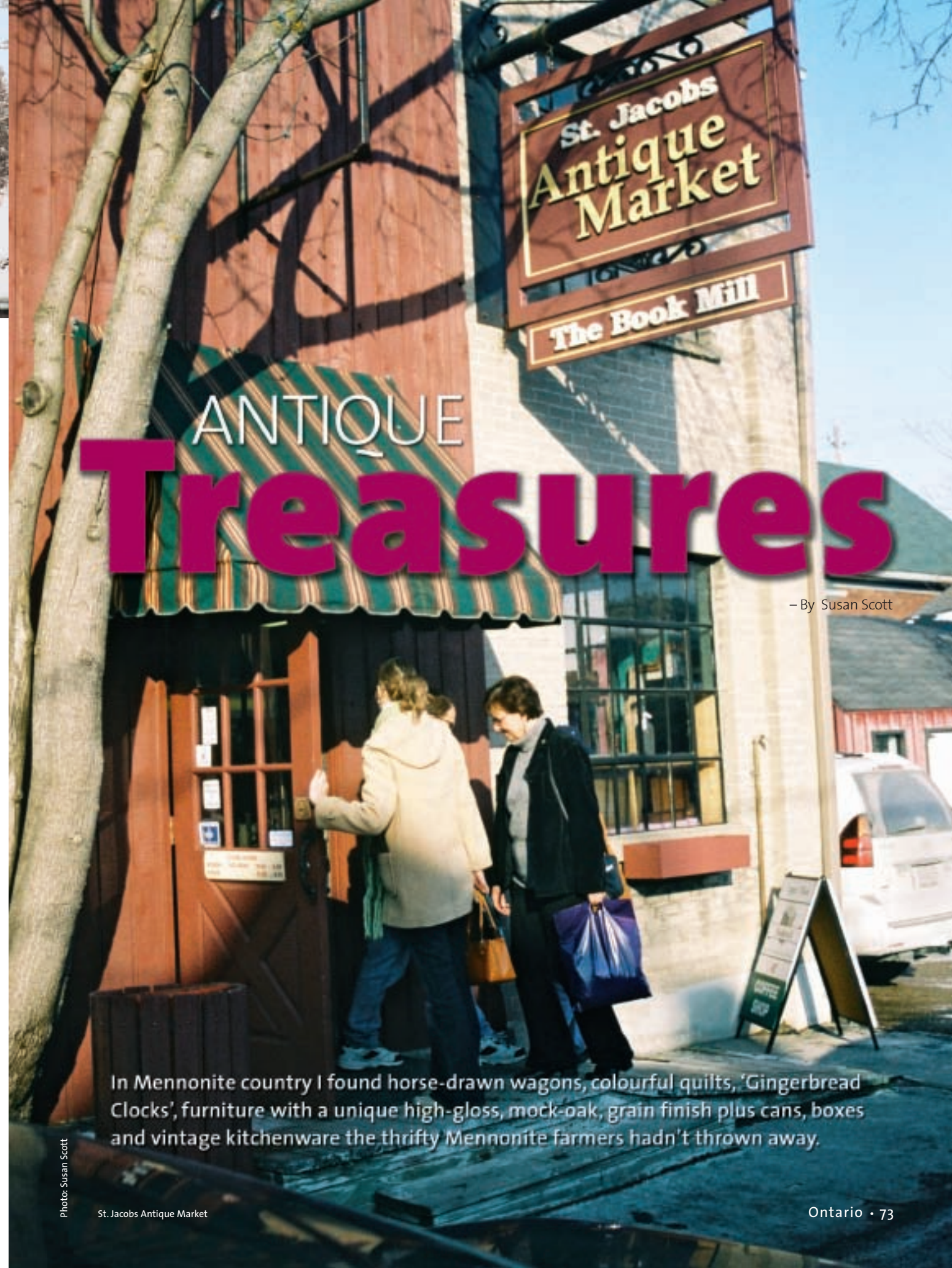
Old Burnside Bed and Breakfast, Almonte
 (613) 256-2066

Fulton’s Pancake House and Sugar Bush, Pakenham
www.fultons.ca
 (613) 256-3867

Mount Pakenham, Pakenham
www.mountpakenham.com
 (613) 624-5290

For more to do in Lanark County visit
www.perth.igs.net/~county/tourism
 or call 1-888-452-6275.

For more places to visit this winter
www.ontariotravel.net/winter
 or call 1-800-ONTARIO.



– By Susan Scott

In Mennonite country I found horse-drawn wagons, colourful quilts, ‘Gingerbread Clocks’, furniture with a unique high-gloss, mock-oak, grain finish plus cans, boxes and vintage kitchenware the thrifty Mennonite farmers hadn’t thrown away.

Photo: Susan Scott

St. Jacobs Antique Market

great escapes

I also found glittery 1950s costume jewellery, fine porcelains and depression glass in shops that stay open through the Ontario winter.

I started at Bill Little's Elora Antique Warehouse and found myself surrounded by general store memorabilia from Bill's personal collection. Up the road at Hamwic House, Tim Burt will sell you an ancient Judaic coin for \$5, or a rare spear head from Saxon England for hundreds of dollars. Farther along, Marty Van Vliet at Mermaid Antiques, sells vintage jewellery and furniture in an 1860s building.



Next stop is St. Jacobs where the Waterloo County Antique Warehouse hosts an eclectic mix of goods and dealers. At the downtown St. Jacobs Antique and Book Market, once a shoe factory, the staff showed me how to tell the age of Mennonite quilts by the size of the stitching. I had a visit with owner Ron Hook and his 40,000 books up on the top floor. Around the corner, Artefacts Salvage & Design showcases doors, grates and pillars from demolished houses.

A quick drive through rolling farmland brought me to Jonny's Antiques in Shakespeare. For 35 years this shop has offered everything from Mennonite furniture to museum-quality ceramics. Across the road at Chanticleer, Heather Laflamme creates tables and desks from doors and other salvaged oddments in what was once the Shakespeare post office.



Photo: Susan Scott



Photo: Susan Scott



Photo: Susan Scott

The Stratford Antique Warehouse was my last stop. Manager Jayne Trachsel and her staff are enthusiastic about antiques and about their town. I love getting out on the antiquing trail. This well-worn path from Elora to St. Jacobs, to Shakespeare and Stratford, is a comfortable trail to follow even in February. Just remember, if you get really cold you can always buy a quilt or a Hudson's Bay coat. *

— Susan Scott is a freelance writer specializing in travel and antiques. She has written about the experience of antiquing throughout North America and England.

R: Hudson's Bay Blanket Coats in St. Jacobs Antique Market

WHERE TO PLAY

There's much more than antiques to delight you in Ontario's Mennonite country. Take a walking tour through historic Elora. Drive to West Montrose to see Ontario's last covered bridge (the famous 'Kissing Bridge' over the Grand River). Join 'Kitchenerites' in a century-long tradition of ice skating in Victoria Park. Spend an afternoon in the village of St. Jacobs; visit the Quilt Gallery in the Country Mill or walk a block to the Visitor Centre and learn about the history, culture and religion of the Mennonite people.

For more information on antique shopping, attractions and accommodations visit www.ontariotravel.net/winter or call 1-800-ONTARIO.



Photo: Susan Scott

WHERE TO SHOP

Antique collectors rejoice! There are more ways to get your fill in Mennonite country.

Elora Welcome Centre and BIA office
www.elora.info
(519) 846-2563

Centre Wellington Chamber of Commerce
www.ferguselora.com
1-877-242-6353

St. Jacobs Country
www.stjacobs.com
1-800-265-3353

Kitchener-Waterloo Tourism
www.kw-visitor.on.ca
1-800-265-6959

Woolwich Township
www.township.woolwich.on.ca
1-877-969-0094

great escapes

Skis, Trains & Snowmobiles

*Dear outdoor adventure enthusiast,
A new epic adventure movie is being produced this winter
in Sault Ste. Marie entitled Skis, Trains and Snowmobiles.
And you're requested to play a leading role!*

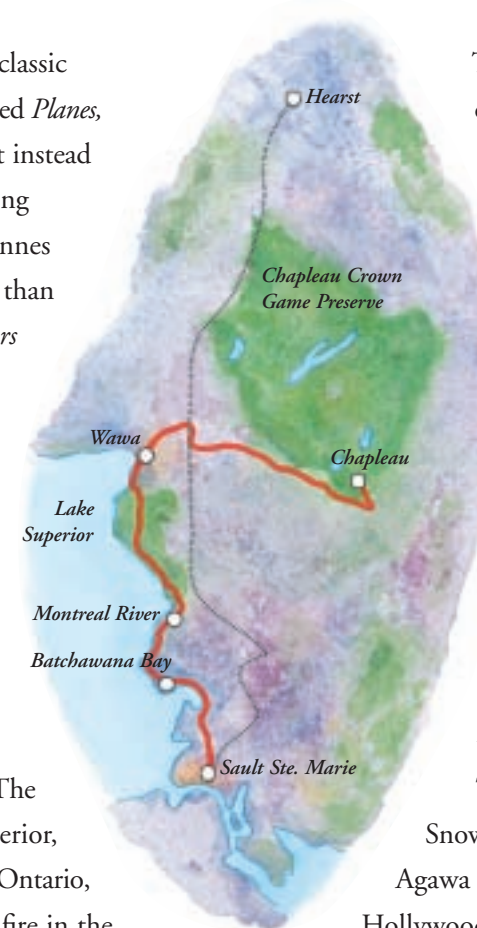
Photo: Stokely Lodge, Main Lodge

Skiers heading 'out to the trail'

The working title is based on the classic Steve Martin/John Candy movie titled *Planes, Trains and Automobiles*, except that instead of disasters, headaches and annoying people, you'll have rolling hills, tonnes of snow and more outdoor action than *Caddyshack* and *The Bad News Bears* combined.

The production crew is ready; the film rolls the second you arrive.

The opening sequence will have you cross-country skiing to the summit of King Mountain at Stokely Creek Lodge and Ski Touring Centre just outside Sault Ste. Marie, commonly known as 'The Soo'. Here, you'll gaze at Lake Superior, one of the most beautiful sights in Ontario, then take off your skis and start a fire in the cosy warming cabin.



The plot thickens as you continue skiing on more of Stokely Creek's 130 km (81 mi.) of groomed trails. Director Fraser Craig will make sure everything goes smoothly – from trail grooming to ski rentals. Oh, and if you show up 'on set' on a Saturday or Sunday, you'll have a cutaway at Norm's Cabin, a one-of-a-kind 1950s trapper home, for a refreshing break of tea and cookies in the wilderness. "It has become a real tradition around here," Fraser says, with guests coming from as far away as Detroit, Toronto and Cleveland for this experience.

Then we'll dissolve to a scene aboard the Snow Train. You'll travel to the beautiful Agawa Canyon featuring a backdrop even Hollywood can't reproduce: jagged rocks, snowy white landscapes, and wildlife, too. This is what the

L-R: Agawa Canyon Snow Train; All aboard for the Snow Train! One of the finest winter train trips



great escapes

cliché 'winter wonderland' is all about, says Snow Train's manager, Michael Morrow. It's the full-blown winter train movie production, with an inspiring view of Lake Superior.

The shooting schedule is tight, but we'll make sure you'll have time for a snowmobile ride with Algoma Sled Tours. Those starring in this scene are guaranteed a thrilling expedition on hundreds of kilometres of groomed trails. You'll be crossing cedar swamps, checking out wildlife, zooming around winding trails – all with professional guides! They have modern hotels and lodges ready in preparation for your arrival. And by now, if you're having way too much fun (which is very likely), we'll finish off with a drive up Highway 17 to Wawa to do some sledding on the groomed, yet pleasantly uncrowded and scenic snow highways there.

Okay, we admit it. There's no film called *Skis, Trains and Snowmobiles*. But you'll *feel* like a star with a winter adventure in Sault Ste. Marie. ❄️

Happy travels,

Ontario

SOO MUCH MORE

Stokely Creek Lodge and Ski Touring Centre

www.stokelycreek.com

1-866-786-5359

Snow Train

www.agawacanyontourtrain.com

1-800-242-9287

Algoma Sled Tours

www.algomasledtours.com

1-888-243-5143

Wawa Sno-Riders Club

www.wawasnoriders.com

1-800-367-9292

Tourism Sault Ste. Marie

www.sault-canada.com

1-800-461-6020

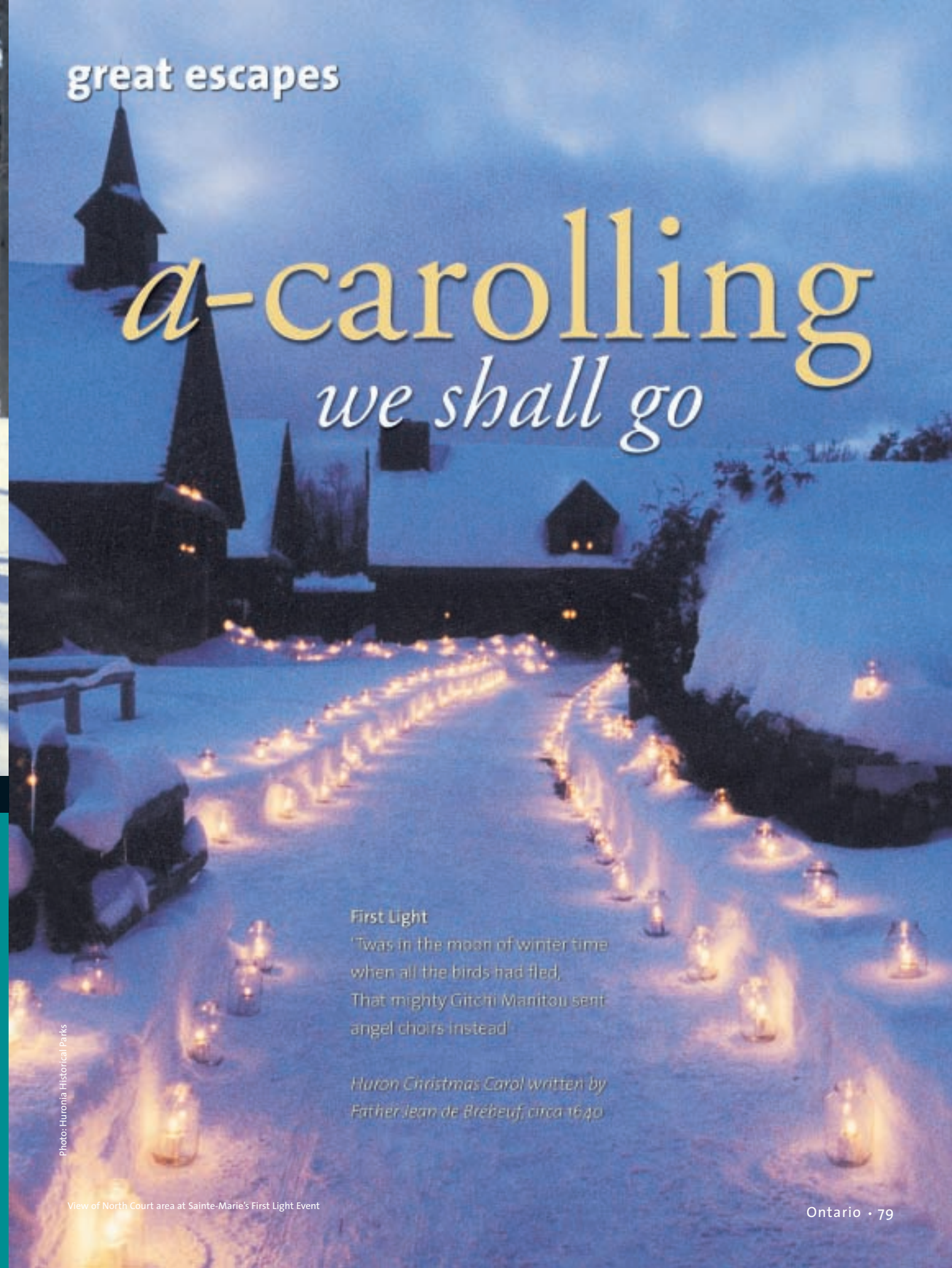
There's more in The Soo! And there are many more places you can cross-country ski, snowmobile or hop aboard a train too. Visit www.ontariotravel.net/winter or call 1-800-ONTARIO today.



Snowmobiling in a winter wonderland

great escapes

a-carolling we shall go



First Light

'Twas in the moon of winter time
when all the birds had fled,
That mighty Gitchi Manitou sent
angel choirs instead'

*Huron Christmas Carol written by
Father Jean de Brébeuf, circa 1640*

Photo: Huronia Historical Parks

View of North Court area at Sainte-Marie's First Light Event



Photos: Hudson Leavens, Artist: Fred Lenz

L-R: Midland's murals capture the town's history; 'First Light' is a joy for the whole family

When the moon is full and the snow drifts impossibly high, this familiar tune echoes for but a brief moment in early December by carollers who gather at Sainte-Marie among the Hurons in Midland.

How fitting as this special place is where Canada's first Christmas carol was penned by Father Jean de Brébeuf back in 1640. The festive celebration now known as First Light that occurs at this 17th century reconstructed Jesuit mission is brightly illuminated with over 2,000 flickering candles guiding visitors through the 25 buildings where historically accurate events of daily life are re-enacted. The southern shores of Georgian Bay also offers snowshoeing, cross-country skiing and mural gazing.

Don't be surprised if you spot elegant trumpeter swans as you swoosh through the ski trails by the Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre. Open year-round, the wilderness sanctuary has resident swans that rest by the frozen pond including its share of busy beavers, porcupines and minks that might

poke the heads up at you, as you plant your ski pole. Wye Marsh's natural beauty doubles as a winter adventurer's dream with over 22 kilometres (13.6 miles) of groomed cross-country ski trails and separate snowshoe trails. You can snowshoe in the morning and ski in the afternoon.

For those of us who wish to see how a community beautified its old town buildings and waterfront silos,

Midland has done a superb job transforming public space into public art. Noted for the province's largest collection of murals (there are over 30), the outdoor gallery poignantly capture Midland's history as you walk by them.

The area boasts the only Catholic shrine of pilgrimage in Ontario (Martyrs' Shrine), the largest collection of freshwater islands in the world, the first recreated First Nations Village in Canada, Ontario's first European fortress and many winter festivals including Winterama at Penetanguishene.



— Ilona Kauremszky is a freelance travel writer with a weekly travel column in the Toronto Sun. Her stories on Ontario have been published in newspapers and magazines across North America.

To Know

The First Light Celebrations occur December 1–3. For further information visit www.saintemarieamongthehurons.on.ca or call (705) 526-7838.

Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre has an all-day pass for \$6.50 and offers a complete ski package rental for \$10 (boots, poles, skis) and snowshoe rental for \$2. For calendar of events and directions, visit www.wyemarch.com or call (705) 526-7809.

Other Festivals

21st Annual Winterfest Celebrations, February 3, 4

Horse and wagon rides, snowshoeing, hockey, pancake breakfasts are just some of the fun-filled events occurring during Midland's annual Winterfest. For more details visit www.town.midland.on.ca or call (705) 526-4275.

58th Annual Winterama, February 17–19

A three-day festival held in Penetanguishene, Winterama is all about fun and includes polar plunges, silent auctions, parades, toboggan races and more. For more information visit www.town.penetanguishene.on.ca or call (705) 549-7453.

Jackrabbit Program and Festival

A fun learn-to-ski program for children ages five through 12 starts January 7. The eight-week program ends with a two-day festival, February 25, 26. For more details visit www.hardwoodhills.ca/nordic/jackrabbits.htm or call (705) 487-3775.

Southern Georgian Bay

www.southerngeorgianbay.on.ca
(705) 526-7884

For more winter activities visit www.ontariotravel.net/winter or call 1-800-ONTARIO.

looking ahead

GET Creative THIS Summer

You don't have to be a mathematician to figure out that summer + freedom = Ontario. It's easy to find your place in the sun this summer: simply vacation here. Not only do we have the sandy beaches, but we also have a colourful mosaic of culture, avant-garde architecture, famous works of art, grand resorts, family-friendly provincial parks and a unique history.

Explore the Outdoors

Ontario is loaded with 200 holiday havens catering to your family's unique tastes. Our resorts have it all: canoeing, angling, golfing, horseback riding, jet skiing, cycling, sailing, and the list goes on. Each has their own specialties, so visit Resorts Ontario online for a complete list of all the fun, outdoor activities and really cool places to play this summer. But make sure you book your favourite summer destination now – packages will be going fast!

A Walk on the Wild Side

Every family needs an escape from chaos and into the sun. Our 111 operating provincial parks offer camping sites and facilities to get you and your kids beyond excited. Where else can your kids make funny faces at beavers, white-tailed deer, otters and butterflies in the wild?

If you'd like to sleep under the stars or spend a night in a rustic cabin in a park, you can book your stay up to five months in advance of your arrival. Choose whatever suits your family best and book now so you're not disappointed!

Celebrating Creativity

Get pumped for culture. As you may have read in our 'in the know' department, massive changes are happening to Toronto's finest cultural institutions – big time. The Royal Ontario Museum will be dotting the T's and crossing the T's on its new addition, the new Young Centre for the Performing Arts will be welcoming its first guests in the Distillery Historic District and the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts will soon be hitting the right notes. And there's more – lots more. Go online to check it all out.



FUN TIMES
HEAT UP HERE

Resorts Ontario
www.resorts-ontario.com
1-800-363-7227

Ontario Parks
www.ontarioparks.com
1-888-ONT-PARK

TO Live With Culture, Toronto
www.livewithculture.ca

Don't wait any longer to plan your summer getaway! Log on to www.ontariotravel.net/outdoor for outdoor adventure packages or www.ontariotravel.net/gofish for the anglers in the family.

Visit www.ontariotravel.net or call 1-800-ONTARIO for everything else you've ever dreamed of in a summer vacation.



looking ahead



Get your tickets for Tolkien

Middle-earth has sent its hobbits, elves and dwarfs to the urban centre of Ontario: Toronto! They've been rehearsing for the world premiere stage production of *The Lord of the Rings*.

Opening in Toronto's lovely Princess of Wales Theatre, J. R. R. Tolkien's epic trilogy of friendship, courage,

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21 Molson Park Dr. East L4N 9A9
Tel: (705) 725-7280 Fax: (705) 725-7285
Toll-Free: 1-800-567-1140
May 15 - June 10 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m.
June 11 - Sept. 4 8 a.m.-8 p.m.
Sept. 5 - Nov. 30 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
Dec. 1 - Mar. 31 7 a.m.-5 p.m.
April 1 - May 14 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Cornwall*, 903 Brookdale Ave. K6J 4P3
Tel: (613) 933-2420 Fax: (613) 933-3387
May 15 - June 9
Sat. - Wed. 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m.
Thurs. - Fri. 8 a.m.-8 p.m.
June 10 - Sept. 4 8 a.m.-8 p.m.
Sept. 5 - May 14 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

Fort Erie*, 350 Bertie St., Unit 1 L2A 6S6
Tel: (905) 871-3505 Fax: (905) 871-6461
May 15 - June 9 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
June 10 - Sept. 4 8 a.m.-8 p.m.
Sept. 5 8 a.m.-6 p.m.
Sept. 6 - May 14 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

Fort Frances*, 400 Central Ave. P9A 1X8
Tel: (807) 274-7566 Fax: (807) 274-7870
May 15 - Sept. 3 7 a.m.-7 p.m.
Sept. 4 - May 14 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

Niagara Falls*, 5355 Stanley Ave. L2E 7C2
Tel: (905) 358-3221 Fax: (905) 358-6441
May 15 - June 10
Sun. - Thurs. 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m.
Fri. - Sat. 8 a.m.-8 p.m.
June 11 - Sept. 4 8 a.m.-8 p.m.
Sept. 5 - Oct. 8
Sun. - Thurs. 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
Fri. - Sat. 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m.
Oct. 9 - May 14 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

St. Catharines*, (Westbound QEW at east end of Garden City Skyway)
RR 4, Niagara-on-the-Lake L0S 1J0
Tel: (905) 684-6354 Fax: (905) 684-3634
May 15 - June 10
Sun. - Thurs. 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m.
Fri. - Sat. 8 a.m.-8 p.m.
June 11 - Sept. 4 8 a.m.-8 p.m.
Sept. 5 - Oct. 8
Sun. - Thurs. 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
Fri. - Sat. 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m.
Oct. 9 - May 14 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

Sarnia*, Blue Water Bridge
1455 Venetian Blvd. N7T 7W7
Tel: (519) 344-7403 Fax: (519) 332-4576
May 15 - June 10
Sun. - Thurs. 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m.

Fri. - Sat. 8 a.m.-8 p.m.
June 11 - Sept. 4 8 a.m.-8 p.m.
Sept. 5 - Oct. 8
Sun. - Thurs. 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
Fri. - Sat. 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m.
Oct. 9 - May 14 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

Sault Ste. Marie*, 261 Queen St. West P6A 1A3
Tel: (705) 945-6941 Fax: (705) 945-6943
May 15 - June 10 8 a.m.-6 p.m.
June 11 - Sept. 4 8 a.m.-8 p.m.
Sept. 5 - Oct. 15 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m.
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Windsor Huron*, Ambassador Bridge
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May 15 - June 10
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Sept. 5 - Oct. 8
Sun. - Thurs. 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
Fri. - Sat. 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m.
Oct. 9 - May 14 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

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Fri. - Sat. 8 a.m.-8 p.m.
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Sept. 5 - Oct. 8
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Fri. - Sat. 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m.
Oct. 9 - May 14 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

SEASONAL CENTRES

Hawkesbury, 777 Highway 417, RR 1
Chute a Blondeau K0B 1B0
Tel: (613) 674-2000 Fax: (613) 674-2689
May 15 - June 10
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Sept. 5 - Oct. 10 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
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Hill Island*, 700 Highway 137 (Lansdowne)
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Tel: (613) 659-2108 Fax: (613) 659-2102
May 15 - May 21 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m.
May 22 - June 9
Sat. - Wed. 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m.
Thurs. - Fri. 8 a.m.-8 p.m.
June 10 - Sept. 4
Sept. 5 - Oct. 10 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
Oct. 11 - May 14 CLOSED

Lancaster, 20806 County Rd. 2 & Hwy. 401
RR 1 K0C 1N0
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Oct. 11 - May 14 CLOSED

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June 16 - Aug. 26 9 a.m.-6 p.m.
Aug. 27 - Sept. 5 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
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May 15 - June 9 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m.
June 10 - Sept. 4 8 a.m.-8 p.m.
Sept. 5 - Oct. 10 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
Oct. 11 - May 14 CLOSED

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May 15 - 21 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m.
May 22 - June 10
Sun. - Thurs. 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m.
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Sept. 5 - Oct. 10 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
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Rainy River, 301 Atwood Ave.
PO Box 100 P0W 1L0
Tel: (807) 852-4449 Fax: (807) 852-3124
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June 10 - Sept. 4 8 a.m.-8 p.m.
Sept. 5 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
Sept. 6 - May 14 CLOSED

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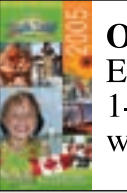
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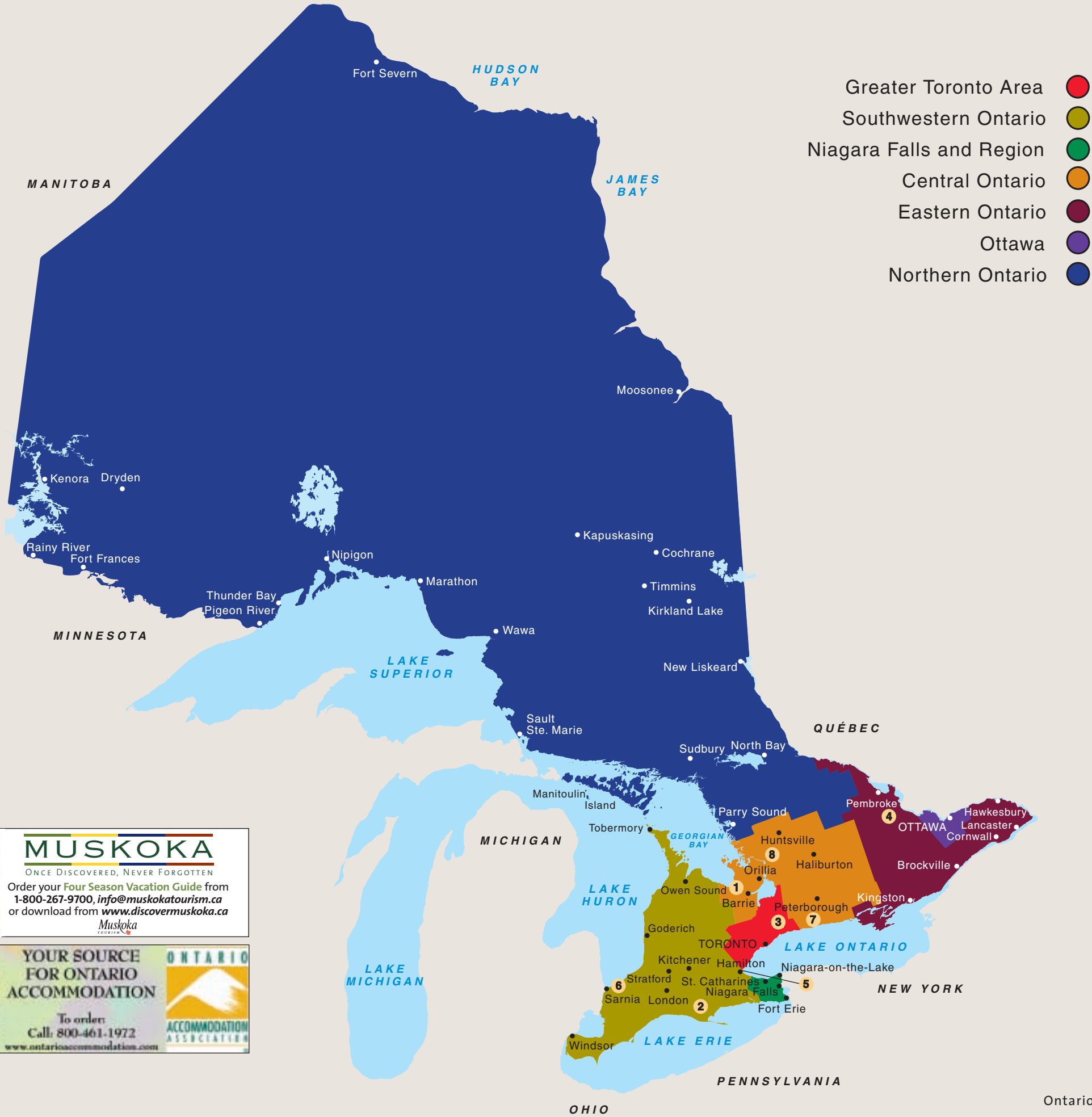
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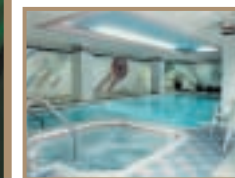
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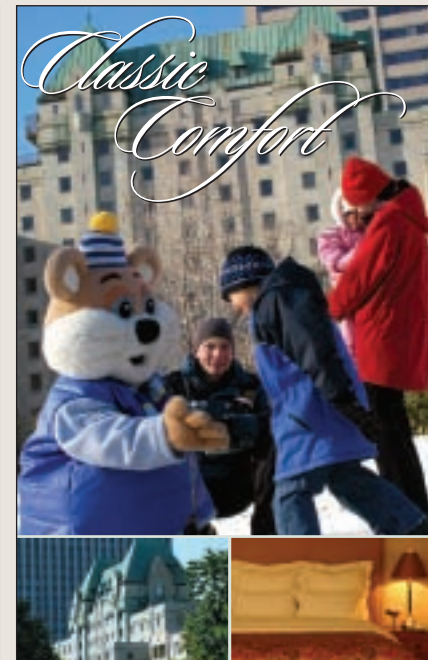
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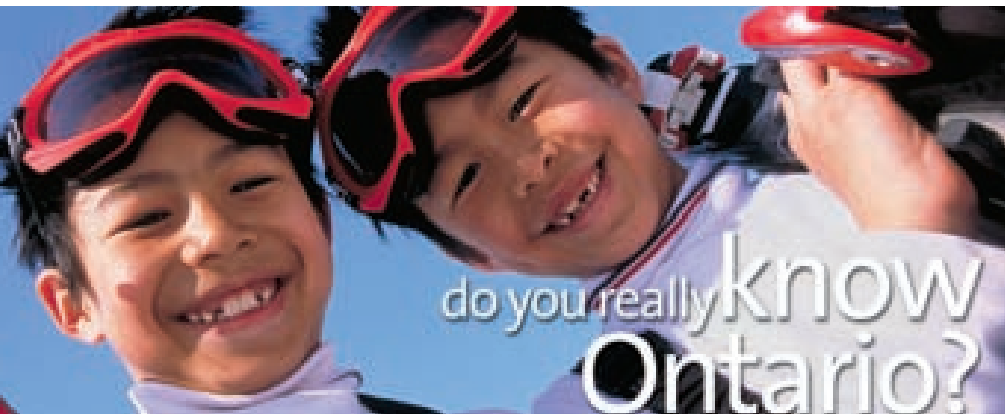
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ontario trivia



Don't zip up your coat just yet. Throw another log on the fire and test your Ontario knowledge. If you're really stumped, the answers are at the bottom of the page. Good luck!

What famous toy did Donald H. Munro invent in Toronto in 1932–33?

- a) Table hockey
- b) Lincoln Logs
- c) Play-Doh
- d) Wooden clacker



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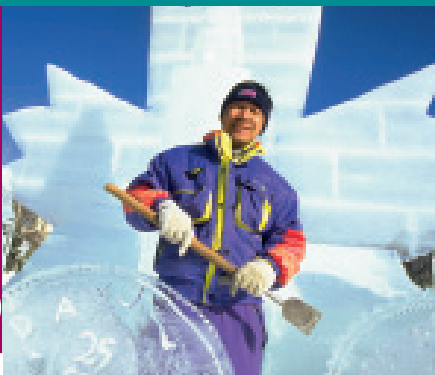
1 More than 150,000 help turn Upper Canada Village into a winter wonderland every holiday season.

- a) Christmas trees
- b) Christmas carollers
- c) Christmas lights
- d) Jugs of eggnog
- e) All of the above

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- a) WinterCity, Toronto
- b) Winterlude, Ottawa
- c) Ontario Winter Carnival Bon Soo, Sault Ste. Marie
- d) Snowball Winter Carnival, Dorset

2



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- a) Cross-country skiing
- b) Tobogganing
- c) Downhill skiing
- d) All of the above

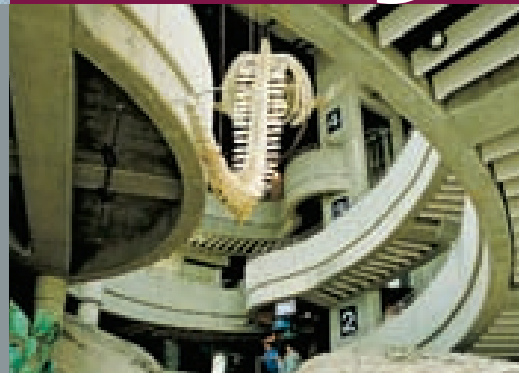
3



At this popular Ontario attraction, kids earn points by bringing in things from nature and trading them in for cool stuff like sharks' teeth.

- a) Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto
- b) Canadian Museum of Nature, Ottawa
- c) Science North, Sudbury
- d) London Regional Children's Museum, London

5



ANSWERS: 1. c) Christmas lights (Photo: Upper Canada Village) 2. b) Winterlude, Ottawa 3. d) All of the above 4. a) Table hockey 5. c) Science North, Sudbury

My huskies howl with pure joy.

They're not quite reindeer, but they love flying
through this snow. My bundles of joy are
completely rapt – laughing all the way.

Ontario 
moments