



## Warm greetings from the 1000 Islands History Museum!

We are almost at the end of the most challenging year in memory. While we continue to live and work during a global pandemic, perhaps this is a time to reflect on what makes our many holiday celebrations so important, and to find ways to celebrate still, but safely. I know my online video call skills have improved drastically...and will continue to do so with the extra practice I anticipate in the coming months.

The pandemic has forced all of us to change our day to day lives and habits, and the Museum is no exception. We had to close for three months in the spring, implement protective measures upon reopening (such as mask wearing, physical distancing, hand sanitizing, and reduced hours), and limit the number of visitors in the building. We had to cancel all of our programming, remove all of our interactive and engaging features in our exhibits, and move our outreach to online practices. It was disappointing for sure, but we are also very proud to have been able to welcome over 100 guests a day during the summer and fall. We are grateful to have received emergency funding relief from various sources, which have lessened the impact caused by reduced admissions and donations. The months ahead will be difficult, and we hope that we can count on our members and stakeholders for ongoing support, as we work to preserve our status as a trusted institution in Gananoque and the Thousand Islands.

As we move into this special time of year, I would like to offer my sincere gratitude to all of our staff for being committed to providing safe, professional, and friendly service to our visitors and local community, ever since the pandemic began. We have been inspired by the continued support from our community, and we are focusing on bringing our organization quickly into the 21st century through technology, so that we can deliver services in new and creative ways. Be sure to keep an eye out for future developments!

In the meantime, we have worked with our partners from the Gananoque BIA and our Town Staff to make this season a little brighter. We have installed thousands of lights to make the waterfront glow this winter! Special thanks to Celebrate Ontario, the Town of Gananoque, Gananoque Home Hardware, and FedDev Canada, whose support has enabled us to enhance our Museum experience during these cold, COVID 19 months.

We have entered a different world and we must be proactive, looking for new ways to help each other out. Thank you for your ongoing support! I'm sure we'll all be wishing each other a very heartfelt 'Happy New Year' on January 1st this year! I'm sending my best wishes and hopes for health and joy in the year to come.

## Volunteer Board of Directors

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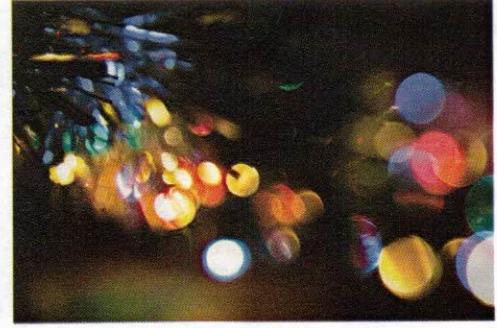
## Layne's Message



Layne Larsen, Chair

*"I am proud and honoured to be part of the team composed of the Board of Directors, our Executive Director, and her employees, who have kept our museum open to the community and visitors throughout the current pandemic. Well done, one and all!"*

# Festival of Lights

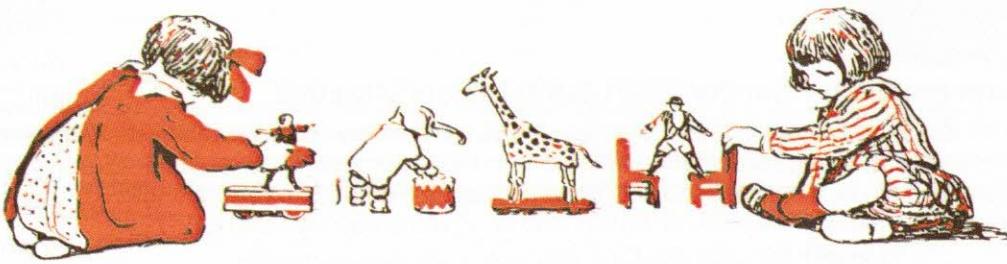


Beginning on December 5th, heartwarming lights will chase away the gathering gloom! Come and celebrate the changing of the seasons with the 1000 Islands History Museum, as they turn on over 3000 Christmas lights this winter. The lights are free for all to enjoy, and social distancing is easy along the waterfront trail.

As the loneliness of social distancing threatens to add a deeper "chill" this year, the 1000 Islands History Museum has decided to go "all out" with their Christmas lights. Red, white, green, and multicoloured strands will robe the balconies and bushes in light, while spotlights bathe the building in a cheerful glow. The Griswold's would be proud!

The Museum is proud to be a part of the Town of Gananoque 'Festival of Lights' initiative. As a beautiful waterfront attraction open year-round in Gananoque, the lights will welcome newcomers and locals alike. The Museum would like to thank Celebrate Ontario, FedDev Canada, the Gananoque & 1000 Islands Chamber of Commerce, and the Town of Gananoque, without whose support this project would not have been possible.

## The Town of Gananoque Civic Collection Presents: TOYS OF YESTERYEAR



Toys have captured the imagination of children for generations. Their hopes for the future, their parent's expectations, and everyday life can be seen in a simple doll house. Would she grow up to be a mother? Would her husband own a house with furniture this nice? While gendered expectations may have changed, the joy a child shows when receiving a present is ever the same. These toys were donated to the Town of Gananoque by residents past and present, who wanted to share their childhood memories with you. Enjoy this walk-by window exhibit at the 1000 Islands History Museum.

## Remembering the Spirit of Christmas Past by Gretchen Bambrick

For most of us our 2020 holiday celebrations will be very subdued this year due to Covid-19. So, maybe this is a time to reminisce about Christmases of old. For five years, from 1995-1998, Gananoque sparkled in Christmas cheer during the four festive days of the 1000 Islands Christmas Festival. Activities for all ages abounded, starting with the lighting of the Christmas tree and carol singing at International Square (often called Confusion Square in my youth), followed by a jovial social at the Blinkbonnie Hotel.

It was a joyous time for children as they bounded from activity to activity: the Children's Craft Extravaganza at Gananoque Carpet, a workshop at the 1000 Islands History Museum making Christmas trees from Rice Krispies squares and lots of candy trimmings and frosting and then, the best part of all, eating their trees. And, of course, Santa came to town. Santa and Mrs. Claus' boat landed at the Gananoque Boat Lines to receive all the children's wishes as they perched on Santa's knee. Music rang out all over town throughout the festival. In 1998 The Village Green featured musicians like pianist Doug McIntyre, accordion player Trudy Forschner and choral director Jay Mittler and the Young Choristers; a concert of Christmas music featuring trumpet and organ at the United Church and an ecumenical carol service at St. John's Roman Catholic Church.

For seniors enjoyment Debbie's Dance Academy presented a dance recital at Carveth Care Centre. Our museum hosted a seniors' art workshop for plate painting. Community artists, members of VAGA, embraced and expanded the Christmas spirit by opening their homes to display their artworks and offering holiday refreshments and nibbles to their guests like hot cider and Christmas cookies.

There were raffles, cookie sales and auctions; 32 events took place in 18 different venues in the 1998 festival. This didn't happen without the dedicated efforts of scores of local volunteers.

It was a celebratory time. It was a sense of community. It was the spirit of Christmas brought to life. This year will be different in that we cannot celebrate all together in the public square. But in the spirit of community and in the spirit of Christmas past, let us all try to reach out - be it virtually - to our neighbours, friends and family, to wish them good health, hope and dreams for future Christmas festivals.



Friendly faces from the Festivals

# Our “Saving SARA”

## Program is Coming to a Computer Near You!

By Samantha Peever



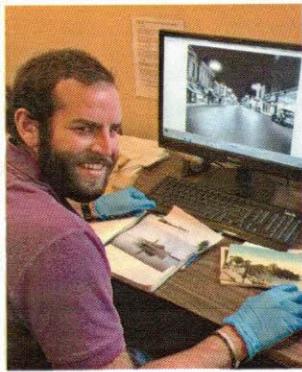
Not even a global pandemic can dampen our enthusiasm when it comes to school programs! Last spring, the Museum created an educational program about Species at Risk. In light of the pandemic we have changed gears, and the program will soon be available online through the museum's website.

Numerous creatures who are listed under the Species at Risk Act (SARA) live in the Thousand Islands region, making Species at Risk an important topic for our local students. In fact, a number of our native species cannot be found anywhere else in Canada! Such biodiversity is a privilege, which comes with a great responsibility. As residents, we have a duty to protect our nature neighbours!

This 'duty to protect' is the basis for our online school program. The program will consist of a series of videos about Species at Risk and how to help them. The videos are aimed at students aged 5 to 17, with activities such as storytime for the Grade 1s, and roadside turtle rescue kits for the Grade 12s. The videos are currently in production, and will be ready for release in the New Year. Special guests may be involved - stay tuned for details!

The Museum would like to thank The Arthur J.E. Child Foundation for its financial support, and board member Alan Code for volunteering to film the videos. Without our partners and volunteers, this project would not have been possible.

## Behind the Scenes 2020



Mathew Thivierge: Intern

### From Collections

*I am a graduate of the Museum Management and Curatorship (MMC) Program at Fleming College, and I am currently participating in the Young Canada Works Building Careers in Heritage Program here at the 1000 Islands History Museum. My previous museum experience includes volunteering at the Canadian Canoe Museum in Peterborough, where I also completed my curriculum-based internship for the MMC Program. At the Canoe Museum, I got to work with a world-class archival collection, and was responsible for completing data entry for the collection, as well digitization of their archival records. As part of my internship, I developed a digitization manual for the archives that was aimed at assisting volunteers with the digitization process. I have also spent time working as a Museum Technician for The Friends of Algonquin Park at the Algonquin Park Visitor Centre as well as a Gallery Experience Officer at the Royal Tyrell Museum of Paleontology. I began to volunteer at the 1000 Islands History Museum in late winter of this year prior to the pandemic. I was completing an inventory of the Prosser Photograph collection and entering the photographs into our collections management database. I really enjoyed this project as I got to look at old photos of Gananoque, mostly from the 1940s through to the 1960s. It was really neat to see how the town has changed since them. As part of my internship, I recently completed the entry of these photographs into our collections management software and I am now helping to identify the photographs on social media.*

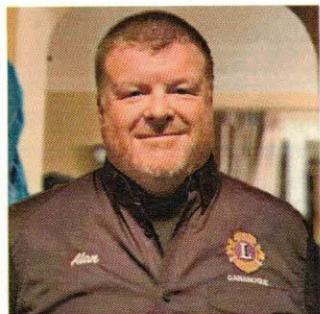
### From the front desk

Visitor Services was fortunate to welcome back Kaydence and Briar, two returning high school students from last year. This allowed us to quickly get prepared for the summer season. Though the number of visitors was lower than last year, our average donation per visitor was up. We limited the number of visitors to 10 at a time and had to manage a few line ups around the front veranda through the summer. We sanitized the exhibit several times a day and the whole museum every afternoon. Our summer exhibit Iron Willed: Women in STEM drew considerable attention. We had several large family groups that were taking a one or two day holiday, just to get out of the city. This seemed to be this summer's norm; mini-vacations. We welcomed a young engineer from a company that makes flight simulators and he was quite impressed with our Link Trainer, and the humble beginnings of his industry. Several veterans visited that had also 'flown' on the Link Trainer, and some had amusing anecdotes of pulling out of their dive being 200 feet underground. With the Boat Line limited to 50 passengers per trip, the waterfront was relatively quiet this year; you could actually find a place to park! We will continue to greet visitors through the winter and prepare for next season.



Briar Whitehead: Student Interpreter

### Board Member Profile: Alan Code



Alan grew up in Gananoque, where his father ran the Ford dealership, and his Mum was a nurse. It seems, however, that Alan has made the whole world his oyster! He has lived in Vancouver, Toronto and Melbourne (Australia), and has worked across North America, Europe and Africa. Finally, he returned to settle in Gananoque in 2014 with his wife Pam, a local baker and talented photographer.

A large part of Alan's career has been in film and television production and in no small way! He was the editor of a 2004 Academy Award winner titled *Ryan* (<http://nfb.ca/film/ryan/>) and he produced a documentary which was distributed world-wide featuring local demolition derby drivers (<https://vimeo.com/39593395>).

More recently Alan has embarked on a new career in Real Estate and, in keeping with his community interests, he is an involved member of the Gananoque Lions Club.

Music, and the River are favourite passions of Alan's. He plays guitar, bass, and drums with local musicians, and summertime means boating in the islands whenever possible.

Alan has a longstanding interest in the history of Gananoque, which shows up on his Facebook page, "Gananoque Love", where he shares photos and stories of Gananoque's long and rich heritage. As of December 2020, "Gananoque Love" has 21,000 followers! Local history buffs should check it out!

Clearly Alan's background and knowledge of our community makes him a welcome and natural fit for the Museum board. Although a newcomer to the board, Alan dove in and put together an attractive video for our virtual gala this past summer. He is currently working on new projects to assist us in becoming more adept in the virtual world.

He says he likes that everyone on our board shares the same passion for our town and that we can always strive to make it better.

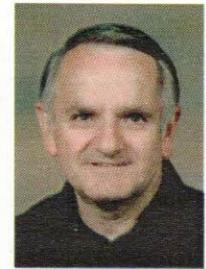
# John Nalon – Gananoque's Mr. History by Paul Scott

If there was a Ripley's Believe It Or Not category for the person who has continuously gotten "fan mail" for over 36 years, that person is John Nalon, president of the Gananoque Historical Society. Now John may not be your typical Rock Star, but he is certainly appreciated by the 857 members of this history-lover's organization. And when the membership dues start rolling in, it is hard to keep up with the words of encouragement.

"Here's a little extra with my membership to help with expenses."

"Keep up the good work, John, really enjoy the newsletters."

"When the newsletter arrives, everything stops! Thanks John."



With a keen memory for facts, figures and faces, he can surely recall some little tid-bit of information about most members. And although time consuming, he enjoys replying to them in writing. **Forty years at the helm of the Historical Society** – four to six meetings and two newsletters per year. That's 180 meetings, 145 guest speakers, and an annual Christmas Dinner. Currently he is working on the 75th newsletter for a total of 2023 pages to date. And get this, he writes all the stories long hand, and then types them onto a word processor – corrections are made with white-out. Then Barb re-types everything onto her computer and the disk is then given to the graphic artist for layout and printing. When in jest, it is pointed out that there are now computers, his response is, "I know, I know, but I'm not going to change now, Paul!"

"Some folks feel that I run it as a one man show. But I do appreciate the many folks who give their time and others who stand by ready to assist whether it's delivering newsletters by hand, making home cooked goodies or items for door prizes." Barbara looks after the registration table and handles kitchen duties while John conducts the meetings. Seventy-five is the average attendance. John does like working on projects on his own and at his own pace. "I am definitely not a committee person," he admits.

Where did this insatiable appetite for Gananoque history come from? He remembers it well – Grade 7, Mrs. Abeles class at St. Joseph's school. "One of our major assignments that year was the history of Gananoque and I was blown away by the stories and the town history that was presented. I was hooked, but didn't realize just how much, at the time!" As a young boy, John had a fascination for postage stamps and became a passionate collector. He had three complete albums of first issue stamps from 1851 to 1912, all meticulously presented on custom printed pages and assembled with the care and attention that was typical of him. John is a perfectionist. After high school graduation, he trained and worked at Thomson Rivets as a machinist and tool maker for 10 years. Then the unthinkable happened. In 1975 Canada Post was setting up letter carrier delivery in Gananoque. He kept being reminded by a friend to go and try the test. They should both apply. Finally John relented and put in his application only to find out later that his friend never quite got around to it! He wrote the test and had mixed feelings about becoming a letter carrier. John delivered mail to homes in Gananoque for 30 years, and that leads us into the next chapter. Always enjoying talking to people, John didn't just deliver letters, he also engaged with folks he met and that led to his renewed interest in local history. Folks would meet him at the door, "I've been cleaning out the attic and came across these old pictures, would you be interested in them?" The answer was never, NO. Word got around town! About the same time he discovered old post cards and became an avid collector which he still enjoys.

By the late 1970's the current society members led the charge in the complete restoration of the Town Hall. They were tired and decided to take a break and see if others could re-ignite the flame. An advertisement was run in The Reporter and the first meeting in the early 1980's had 19 attend. That was the catalyst. John Nalon agreed to design a newsletter that landed on the street and in homes in September 1984. The interest was phenomenal. **How could this happen?** It came down to goals, challenges and passion. Remember, John Nalon was a letter carrier. He met folks on the street every day. Everyone was a potential member of the Historical Society. At first the idea was to try to get 100 members. That attained, he decided to go for 200, then 500! And when there were 500 members, he eyed the 1000 mark. When the society grew to over 1100 members, he got phone calls from the president of the Kingston society asking what the actual membership was – an obvious typo they thought! **So why does he keep doing this?** He grew up in a family that was always willing to help out, to give back to the community. His father Bill, served in World War II for six years and after the war returned to his position at Parmenter and Bulloch. He was active in The Royal Canadian Legion, Fire Department, the South Street Armories, Knights of Columbus and was mayor of Gananoque for 12 years. When there was anything going on in these organization's Ladies Auxiliaries, his mother Mary was there with sleeves rolled up.

"I have met so many good people and have so many good friends as a result. There is no better place to live than Gananoque. This is my way of giving back to a community that has given me so much," he said.

And the old photos that are the bases for his newsletters? A few years ago the Arthur Child Heritage Centre provided space and the Historical Society paid for the renovation with a Town sponsored grant. The photos are catalogued, organized by street and safely stored in Gananoque Historical Society room. "My hope is that some day that Historical Society room will be open to the public and that all the photos can be digitized and preserved electronically. The thing is, I'm not looking for more work," he concludes. John Nalon had open heart surgery about 20 years ago, and although he enjoys good health, finds he does have to pace himself. And he finds that organizing meetings and producing the newsletter are things he can do from home.

John and Barb have been married for 50 years, have a son Chris, daughter Pam and three granddaughters. John Nalon has a life-long love of local history. And from that we continue to benefit. Thank you John for all you do to preserve and share Gananoque's rich history.

By-the-way, did I mention that John sold the majority of his stamp collection recently at auction in Ottawa for \$100,000? He still collects postal history items and post cards related to Gananoque's past.



We gratefully acknowledge the Town of Gananoque and the Arthur Child Foundation for their continuing support and the Governments of Canada and Ontario for funding.



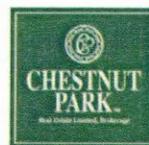
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