

THE WINDERMERE GAZETTE

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE VILLAGE?

- **Windermere House** - Lots of things happening at WH. Stop in for a drink or meal at one of their lovely dining options.
 - **Windermere Pub & Patio** - Lunch & Dinner - patio open weather permitting. Reservations on Open Table
- 12pm - 11pm weekdays, Weekends 12pm - midnight
Live music - Fri.&Sat. 7-10pm
 - **The Rosseau**, upscale dining, beautiful setting
7 days/week - 12-9pm.
 - **High Tea** returns June 28th - a timeless tradition
 - **The Trading Post** - Artisanal goods & produce, charcuterie, souvenirs and more.
 - **Spa at Windermere** - Daily 9am - 6pm
- **Windermere Marina** - 9am - 5pm until Labour Day. After Labour Day - Thurs. - Sat. 9-5 Sunday 10 - 5. Hiring for next year!! Will train now for next year. Great summer jobs!
- **Windermere Golf Club** - Open to all for lunch and dinner throughout the season at **Iron and Strings Restaurant**. - "**Wing Night**" - every Thursday with live entertainment. **Tuesday night is Euchre Night!**
- **Windermere Garden Centre**
Mon.-Fri. - 8 - 5, Sat - 9 - 5, Sun - CLOSED
- **Taylor Farms** - Mon - Fri, 7am - 6pm. Sat. 9am - 5pm. CLOSED Sunday. Great Cappuccino and Lattes at the cafe!
More details at taylorfarms.ca/market.
Or email strawberries@taylorfarms.ca
- **Lagree by the Lake** - Fitness Studio right in Windermere. Thursday - Sunday. Open until Thanksgiving and beyond. Check out lagreebythelake.com for exact hours and classes.

Windermere Lions Club is offering a bottle drop off for your recyclables - this is part of their fundraising for all the great things they do for the community and beyond. Drop off at Taylor Farms.

- **Christ Church Windermere** - services Sunday at 10:30am. Welcome all.
- **Windermere United Church** - services Sunday at 10:30am. Check out "Upcoming Events" for Taize & meditation schedule.

"Looking back"

Memories of summers at the rectory, and life in the village of Windermere.

By Marcia Shortreed (nee Hill), as told in an interview, August, 2026

Part 2 of 2

Our family's connection to Windermere was born of faith, fellowship, and a generous tradition. My father, Reverend Frederick Allen Hill (who went by Allen), was an Anglican minister from St Catherines and Dundas, Ontario. Every August for ten years, starting in the mid-1940s, we made our home in Mockridge Hall, the rectory sitting right next to Christ Church, Windermere.

Summer appointments to the little church were made by Canon Cecil Stewart, the winter rector of St. Thomas Anglican Church in Toronto, who selected young clergy with young families who would benefit from a Muskoka holiday. It was a great privilege to be invited back after your first year, and my father (and our family!) was fortunate to be one of those chosen.

Getting to Windermere in those early years, however, was no small feat. I was only five years old when we first made the trip, and with the war still raging, gasoline was strictly rationed. We had to meticulously save up coupons to make the long drive from Dundas. My father drove his 1936 two-seater coupe - the only car he had, as wartime steel went to military production and new vehicles were impossible to buy. The five of us made the trek squeezed together: a teenage parish helper sat on the centre console between the front seats, I sat on my mother's knee, and my baby brother, Peter, lay on the shelf under the rear window. We would stop in Guelph to visit both grandmothers, stop in Orillia for lunch, and finally rattle down the unpaved, gravel road from Bracebridge into Windermere. Our mother's helper in the following years was a lovely local girl, Shirley Skinner.

Our summer life was deeply centred around the Anglican Christ Church; the rites, times and people of the church.....but one of our most vivid memories is forever tied to the grand hotel next door, Windermere House. On August 12, 1945, my mother sent me to the local store just before dinner. Cutting back through the Windermere House parking lot, I noticed guests sitting silently in their cars, listening intently to their radios. When I got home and told my father, he quickly rushed to the radio and turned on the 6:00 p.m. CBC news and learned that Japan had surrendered - the war was finally over. He immediately went next door, and rang the church bell. Within half an hour, 86 people had gathered in the sanctuary for an impromptu and moving service. The following Sunday, the church was packed to the rafters! Even the Lieutenant Governor, Mr. Matthews, who lived on the point, attended in his official capacity.

Over the years, Windermere House became a central fixture of our summers. In our youth, Mrs. Aiken - mother of the hotel's long-time operator Mary Elizabeth - would kindly invite us to the Sunday-night movies shown for hotel guests, always whispering a warning to my father if a film wasn't suitable for children.

By the time I reached university, my father had built our family cottage on property gifted by Mrs. Britton Osler on Florence Island. Each morning, I would boat across the water to work as a waitress - or "server," as we would say then - at Windermere House, under the benevolent but strict eye of "Miss" Mary Elizabeth Aiken. She ran a tight, professional ship. She hired excellent staff, including head chef Nick Certzabina, a Hungarian who was the head chef at Hart House in Toronto. His cordon bleu-level cooking, including exquisite lobster terrines and legendary buffets, made the hotel dining room a highly sought-after reservation.

UPCOMING EVENTS

If you have a community event to announce, let us know!

Muskoka Arts and Crafts at the Village Hall!

Open weekends only until Thanksgiving

Sept 3rd & Oct. 1st - The "Garden Club" meeting at Windermere Garden Centre - FREE for all you interested gardeners.

Sept 5th - 8am - 11am - "Wheelie Good Coffee", a mobile coffee company, will be set up outside **Lagree by the Lake** - Drop by for a coffee!

Sept 16th @ 7:30pm @ Windermere United Church "*Peace and Presence in Taizé Tradition*" -

Sept 10, October 8th @ 7:30pm
Windermere United Church is holding *Mindfulness Meditation in the Zen Buddhism tradition*.

30th annual Christmas Craft Sale,

Saturday November 14th 2026 at the
Ullswater Hall

9am - 3pm

Call Darlene to become a vendor @
705-380-3588 or email @ jdpoirier@live.com

The Windermere Gazette will NOT be publishing September 16th or 23rd.

If you have any Fall events you would like our community to know about it, let us know ASAP. The last Gazette of the season will be October 7th.

Submissions, content, or to subscribe
windermeregazette@icloud.com

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Police - Non-Emergency 705-645-2211

Fire Department 705-765-3156

District of Muskoka Office 705-645-2100

By-Law Office Township 705-765-3156

Wharf Master 705-769-3611

Windermere Golf Club 705-769-3381

Windermere Marina 705-769-3661

Windermere House 705-769-3611

Taylor Farms 705-769-2368

Windermere Garden Centre 705-769-3238

Archives windermereandareaarchives@gmail.com

Lions Club - windermereclionsclubmuskoka@gmail.com

Working in the dining room, which held eighty to a hundred guests, gave me a front-row seat to the resort's unique culture. In those days, the hotel was completely dry, as there was no liquor license in the entire village. Guests would party privately in their rooms, and we would watch porters carry endless trays of Coca-Cola, ginger ale, club soda, and ice up the stairs. The young men running the water launches, including my brother Peter and Ian Turnbull, would quietly run to the beer store for guests, reportedly keeping a case of their own tucked safely under their beds.

Tips for wait staff were modest then - often just a quarter from a single diner, or ten dollars for a week-long stay. But my greatest windfall came from two couples from Texas who dined at my table for an entire month. Since the hotel did not serve lunch, they would grab burgers at the marina or the downstairs snack bar, but for breakfast and dinner, they were mine. When they checked out, they left me a fifty-dollar tip, which felt like an absolute fortune to a university student.

From the quiet dignity of the rectory to the bustling energy of the grand hotel dining room, those summers shaped our lives. They represent an era of Muskoka history, preserved in my memory and in the memories of so many others who lived it.

A Celebration of Life

will be held for Albert (Al) Poutanen on **September 20th, 2-4 pm, at the Windermere Golf and Country Club.**

Al and his wife Pat were members of the club and long-time residents of Windermere as proprietors of The Baldwins Resort, from 1980-1999.

They retired on Dawson Road, Portage Bay, Lake Rosseau where they lived for the last 27 years.

Family and friends are invited to attend the celebration to honour Al's life and share their memories and stories.



Lagree by the Lake

will remain open to Thanksgiving and beyond. Check their website for updates.

They are hosting a mobile coffee company, "**Wheelie Good Coffee**"

outside the studio on Saturday September 5th from 8 - 11am.
a Thank You to the community of Windermere for their support this first summer of business!

Windermere Garden Centre 50th Anniversary Sale

For 50 years, Windermere Garden Centre has been proud to grow alongside this amazing community. Now it's our turn to say

THANK YOU!

Celebrate with us and enjoy **50% OFF** all perennials, shrubs, & potted trees, a **FREE GIFT for the first 50 purchases**, home décor savings and more!

Thank you for 50 incredible years of supporting local, growing together and believing in a greener tomorrow.

Sale runs for four days only, September 2nd-5th. We can't wait to celebrate with you!