

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** - Open 7 days a week - 12pm - midnight
 - **The Rosseau** - upscale dining in a beautiful setting. Open 7 days/wk - 12 - 9pm
 - **Smokehouse BBQ Packages** - pre-order for pick up at WH
 - **Trading Post!** Artisanal goods & produce, charcuterie, souvenirs & more.
 - **The Spa at Windermere House** spa@windermerehouse.com
- **Windermere Marina** - Open Labour Day Monday 10am - 4pm. Effective Thursday, Sept 4th - Open Thursday through Sundays 9 - until Thanksgiving.
- **Windermere Golf Club** Open to the public from September 3rd - October 11th
- **Windermere Garden Centre** Mon.-Fri. - 8 - 5, Sat - 9 - 5, Sun - Closed.
Lots of specials!
- **Taylor Farms** - Mon - Fri, 7am - 6pm. Sat. 9am - 5pm. Closed Sun. Great Cappuccino and Lattes at the cafe!!
- **Christ Church Windermere** -services Sunday at 10:30am
- **Windermere United Church** -services Sunday at 10:30am. All welcome. Upcoming Evening Taize Services - Aug. 27 and Sept 24 @ 6:30pm.

Interview with Ed Skinner

Monday July 28th 2025 - Bracebridge

"Timothy Eaton (of Eaton's Department Store) had a scheme where they would pay a person's passage from the UK to come to Canada, and the only stipulation was that you had to work for him for a year. Now I'm not sure whether you had to pay it back or once you fulfilled the commitment for a year, you could do your own thing, but what he was looking at, of course, was to fill his stores with staff. Now my grandfather came over to Canada under that arrangement, but chose not to stay after the year and headed north towards Muskoka. —So first of all, the family moved to Bracebridge. That's where my father was born, I think, in 1909.

They had a family of seven or eight all together.

Then they went to Powassan and then they came back to Three Mile Lake because there was a mill at the east end of Three Mile Lake at Bennett Creek. Then I think we headed down to where the Dee River runs in Lake Rosseau. There was a mill there, the owner being Tom Clark. And I think for whatever reason he headhunted my grandfather and gave him some position, although I have no idea what it was. He offered him a house on the property. It was a small house - a story and a half, and all it was, was a roof and four walls; no lining inside, or insulation. My father said that when he was a kid, he remembers laying in bed and he could see right through the cracks on the wall. And when he was old enough to push a wheelbarrow he wheeled shavings from the mill. Tom Clark gave him the scrap lumber to line the inside of the cabin. And then he insulated it.

My grandfather was working at the mill and my grandmother started taking in laundry. We made do. She'd do laundry for the big families around the lake and the kids would row over to pick it up. My grandparents eventually bought a piece of property in the next bay east. Anyway, they bought a chunk of land and they started building a house. But in the interim, the mill took fire and burned down. And whether it was the stress, I'm not sure, but Tom Clark had a heart attack and died. So my grandfather then branched into working for cottagers.

My grandmother was a midwife. She delivered babies all around here. In the days before motor boats and communication, the people on Tobins Island would have to row over to Windermere to get her, and then row back with her to deliver the baby.

My grandfather was a carpenter. And as a matter of fact a cabinet maker. So he would work at cottages doing odd jobs and whatnot. So did my dad. And then fast forward.... My father met a girl from the city, a friend of a girl who's mother worked as a cook at a small resort called Kings Park, just north of Windermere.

My father was doing maintenance. I think it was about 1933 and the city girl moved to Muskoka. That was my mother.

By this time, of course they were over at the new property, my grandfather's, which he divided up for his children. This was an area on Bayview Road. So there was one of those market gardens directly across from our house and I started working there when I was 11 years old, cutting grass, weeding, all that stuff, at Llanllar. And then my mother was there too as a housekeeper, cleaning, ironing, all that jazz. And then my younger sister Ann too - when Irwin was there - they had 4 or 5 kids - Ann used to babysit those kids. So we certainly had a connection there. And of course it was a great. They were only there two months of the year and in the off season, it was a great place to take your bike. They had paths all over. I had complete access to their wooden boats which of course I was connected with.

Anyway, so that's basically our introduction to Windermere.

I'm old enough that I did know some of the pioneers and the families of the early settlers here - the Fife family, the Atkins, the Forges, and later on, the Longhursts.

Now they established the village - It was incorporated in 1924.

They had their own hydro commission, their own school board. They had a road commission. And of course my father, over the years, was always involved.

Mother was also involved, with the school board. And my dad was reeve at one point. It was a very vibrant little community.

After the war, Fred Baldwin and his wife bought the Maple Leaf Lodge from Iraneous Hough and renamed it the Baldwins. I think he was a football coach and very involved in sports.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sept. 14th - The Windermere TERRY FOX RUN!

- 9am Registration - @ the Community Centre
- 10am Race Start

BBQ, Live Music, Face Painting, Kids Games, Silent Auction
"Dinosaur Disco"

- **Aug. 27 & Sept. 24 , 6:30pm - Evening Taize** @ the Windermere United Church.

- **Wing night** Thursdays @ WGCC 5-9pm

- **Butcher Block Chef's Choice** @ WGCC
- Fridays starting June 27th

- **Live music** - Fridays and Saturdays @ **Windermere House** - from 7-10pm

- **August 28th** - Final lunchtime BBQ at the Windermere Wharf - in support of the Windermere and District Lions Club.

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**
windermereandareaarchive@gmail.com
- **Lions Club**
windermere@ar2lions.ca

He turned it into a four season hotel. Very, very innovative! At the time nobody had a four season hotel. He was a real class act. He was always dressed quite dapper and he smoked a cigarette with a cigarette tip. He drove a 53 Lincoln Capri and he also had a 55 Ford station wagon.

So anyway, I worked there in the winters and it was a great job for a teenager because the guests arrived in on a Friday night and my job was to take the bags up to the room, get the ice for the drinks, and then I got behind the wheel of the car - now most of them were new cars, right? - push buttons - I parked them. And my other job was to wash up the jeep and clear all the snow. He had an open ice rink too, with a shield on the north side (to protect from the wind). And then he had these lounge chairs and buffalo robes to sit in and those aluminum things to direct the sun rays onto your face. It was wide open to the kids in the village to come and use it. I think he had two shuffleboards beside that. They had cross country skiing, show shoeing and what not. I had my evening meals there too at the hotel. I was in high school between 1953-1959, so it was a fantastic job for a teenager. Then I went on the drive the water taxi at the Windermere Roof Gardens and then I moved on to becoming an outboard mechanic in Port Carling.

I was in high school for six years. I was with a group of guys and we weren't very good students. After six years I decided it was time to get out. I ended up at Dukes, which I ended up running for over 30 years.

In the shoulder season, before the snow, we could cut right across the golf course to go to school - the Community Centre - that was the school.

When I was going through public school and my older sister ahead of me - when they reached age 12 - if you wanted to go beyond that, you had to go into Bracebridge and board. My mother was instrumental in organizing to

get a bus service. So I was probably one of the first ones to get on the bus to go out of Windermere to school. As a matter of fact, somewhere along the line I ended up driving the bus! It was kind of cool. Park the bus, grab my school book.....

As you know the Christ Church had only a summer service for many years.

And then in the 50's my father seemed to get more involved and he was instrumental in raising the money just to put a furnace in the church so they could have services year round. It wasn't very practical because, of course, the building wasn't insulated at all. So my job as a teenager, when I came home from chasing the girls on Saturday night, I'd stop by the church, run in, and pull the switch for the furnace. It would run all night until the morning service. We'd have the service and then we shut it off again. It made services available and there was actually a fairly active community in Windermere and surrounding area at that time. As I became a teenager I was the guy that rang the bell.

So as you know with the Christ Church Windermere, it's myself, and my two sisters that are the oldest surviving members of that church.

And I've confirmed that with the Oslers and the Mockridges because the Oslers and Mockridges were the ones that spearheaded getting the church built. Before that they used to have services in the Mockridge cottage. They raised the money to build the church and I don't know how they did it.

During the off-season we went to Sunday School at the United Church. I ended up being a Sunday School teacher when I was in High School.

During the war, we did have a car, but you couldn't buy gas, you couldn't buy tires, and we rarely went into Port Carling. So we would hitch rides occasionally until we could go drive into town.

One of my early memories as a kid, was I remember my father had made a sleigh - like a box - and he and my mom would pull us in the sleigh to the Christmas concert in town.

I have a long history in Windermere, and I think it is fantastic to see people embrace it. The village just wouldn't exist as it is today.

It would be so sad to see if the developers came in and bought all the property. The village just wouldn't exist as it is today."

Ed passed away August 21st, 2025

Christ Church Windermere is seeking a new musician to play hymns on a great keyboard every Sunday at 10:30 am.

We need someone who can play at a very good, but not necessarily professional level, and who will practice and then play hymns chosen each week by our Priest. Remuneration is negotiable but in the area of \$ 75 - \$100 per week with mileage assistance for anyone living relatively near by. Please just come on out to Church any Sunday morning, and speak with Rev. Judie Cooper and our Wardens for further information or to apply.

We are a fun group of people and will make you very welcome!