

Forever YOUNG's Over The Back Fence...

Volunteer Profile . . .

Maureen Tourangeau knows the role of a volunteer inside out. She should, she's been at it since 1967 when she joined the first hospital auxiliary in Ontario without a hospital! She was part of a group of ten across the city and in 1974 when CHEO opened, they were ready!

She helped set up the gift and coffee shop, and again this year, as has been the custom, she will be part of a massive Christmas stocking program that will find 101

stockings being made ready for the children of CHEO. They are all hand made, and bring a special delight to the children who find themselves in the hospital over the Christmas holidays.

Maureen and her group also produce 200 Christmas bags for Candlelighters who work with children with cancer, and their siblings. These are created from brightly patterned Christmas material and are filled with goodies of every description.

Maureen is also active in the Cancer Society, and has a special interest in Roger's House. She is one a group of volunteers who make what are called cuddle cushions, and who knit 40 x 40 inch blankets, make dolls and bibs, and many other things that can bring joy and comfort to a child. As a member of the Volunteer Association of Parkwood Hills, Maureen's days will be filled between now and Christmas finding ways to bring a bit of cheer to the children who find themselves in hospital over what should be a festive season.

This long-time volunteer gets a special joy at this time of year bringing a touch of Christmas cheer to the littlest patients, and *Forever Young* congratulates her on her many years of dedicated service as a volunteer.

Adult volunteers who would be available in the daytime are desperately needed at CHEO. If you would like to be part of the team please call Nanette Labelle at 613-737-7600.

Where Is It Now? – The Popemobile

They were two Canadian-made vehicles specially adapted for Pope John Paul II's 1984 visit to Canada. Not surprisingly, they were known as "Popemobiles."

They were used during the late pope's September 1984 papal tour of Canada, after an assassination attempt in 1981 prompted the Vatican to demand more protection for the pontiff.

Both Popemobiles were built by Camions Pierre Thibault, a Pierreville, Quebec emergency vehicle maker well known for its firetrucks. They're modified GMC Sierra Heavy-Duty V-8 trucks with a large transparent dome designed to keep the Pope fully protected and comfortable, yet completely visible.

The dome area is fully air-conditioned, and is upholstered in red velvet imported from France. The \$15,000 trucks were donated by GM Canada, and the 3.2-centimeter thick bulletproof glass is made of a special laminate valued at \$42,000 and donated by GE Canada.

The cube area accommodated the Pope and four other people. The trucks were equipped with video cameras, which produced footage that was sold to the media and used for security. Total cost for each vehicle was \$130,000.

Originally the property of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, one Popemobile was donated to the Canada Museum of Science and Technology in Ottawa in 1985, where it is occasionally on display. While in storage the vehicle can be viewed by appointment only by calling: (613) 991-3044. The other Popemobile is at the Vatican in Rome.

Funny You Should Ask

Q: I grew up on a farm in Western Quebec, but now live south of Ottawa. We never had turkey for Christmas dinner, always goose. Needless to say, there is a great abundance of geese out here where I live. I won't go into what a nuisance they have become. What I would like to know is can I shoot one or two for Christmas dinner and are they edible?

A: We went to Dave Arbour, Regulations Officer for the Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority, and he said that in order for you to shoot a Canadian goose yourself, you first of all have to have a hunting license, and then a migratory bird license. If this sounds complicated, it is. The hunting license involves a course which you have to pass, as well as writing a test for the Small Game license. Arbour suggests an easier way of doing this. Find a hunter who lives in your area, and ask him to do the deed. Then you bypass having to get your own license and going through all the tests and applications. This person has the authority to nab the goose and give it to you.

Arbour says he has eaten the wild birds, but suggests you may want to get rid of the fat, and although they have a gamey taste, they are indeed edible. So hopefully, you can find someone in your community who already has the necessary licenses, and you can enjoy your Christmas dinner of Canadian goose!

Remember When...

The first Eatons Santa Claus Parade

If anyone remembers December 1904, we'd certainly like to meet them! However, we thought it was worth mentioning that it was in that year that Eatons Department Store sponsored the first Santa Claus parade in Toronto. Santa was drawn through the streets in a sleigh, ending up at Eatons huge department store where treats were handed out to the children. It remained an annual event for many years, but like the demise of the beloved Eatons catalogue, it too was put to rest.

Also in that year, (certainly no relation to Eatons Department Store) 1904, the teabag as we know it today, was invented.

Gearing Down

This month we received a query from a reader who is indeed facing a dilemma. She is moving to a retirement home, but not until spring, staying in her home, and delighted to do so, because each year she is the one who has all her family together for Christmas dinner. She said next year she will be sitting down to dinner at someone else's table.

However, as soon as the holiday season is over, she is going to start culling down her belongings, and this includes dozens (yes dozens, she says) of boxes of Christmas ornaments that have been in her family for decades.

She has approached her children, who now have children of their own, and no doubt have accumulated their own Christmas treasures, and no one, it seems, wants to relieve her of the boxes of ornaments.

They are too good to throw out, and she has no idea what to do with them. Of course, she realized the time she should have gotten rid of them was in the fall! It's pretty hard to palm off Christmas decorations when the holidays are over.

We made some inquiries, and sadly, they all say that had they come in the fall, before the Christmas season, they would have gladly taken the decorations off her

hands. These are consignment stores and charities, which suffer from the same problem as many: storage, or lack of it. It is impossible to store these items for a whole year waiting for the Christmas season to come around.

Our only suggestion is, since they are in good condition and are not candidates yet for the blue box, or the garbage bag, that the best of them be put in compact boxes, and implore your children to find a spot in their basement or garage to store them until they can be given away to a charity next year. It isn't an ideal solution, but because of the timing, it would be very difficult to dispose of them after the holiday is over.

We wish we had a better answer for our reader. And we would like to remind all of you to let us know if we can help you find solutions to your problems as you try to gear down. We will do our best.

The Farm Scene

While most of us are sitting in front of the Christmas tree early Christmas morning, ripping paper off presents, for Debra and Dick Straaphof of Arnprior, in many ways, it's just another work day. Share-farming with in-laws, the 600-acre farm comes alive while the rest of us are still snuggled down in our beds.

For Dick, he may grab a bowl of cereal before he heads out to the barns by 5:30 am, to start the milking of 120 cows by 6. It's a two hour job. And then there's the feeding of the young heifers, the clean out of stalls, and new bedding-down. All the time he is hoping and praying nothing unforeseen has happened overnight to the water lines, that the tractor will start, and that two feet of snow hasn't dropped from the skies since he went to bed the night before.

There will be no Christmas presents opened until these necessities are tended to.

Once the morning chores are done, the household takes on the atmosphere of a "normal" family. "After the presents, we usually go to one of the grandma's houses, and we have our Christmas dinner mid afternoon, because we are always mindful that the whole process of tending to the milking and the livestock rolls around by 5 o'clock," Debra says.

The Straaphofs' try to keep it a family day, but that has to include the top priorities of milking, tending the livestock and dealing with all unforeseen problems like a heavy snow fall, broken pipe lines, or a sick animal. Although ever mindful of the true meaning of Christmas, as with every other farm operation, keeping on schedule with the chores that have to be done, regardless what day of the year it is,

is the main order of the day, but the Straaphofs' wouldn't have it any other way.

This Month in History

Liberal leader Pierre Trudeau decides to postpone his retirement and later leads the Party back to power in a majority win over Conservatives.

The Doctor Is In

Q: I am concerned about getting medical attention over the Christmas holidays. My own doctor closes down for two weeks. Am I better to go to a walk-in clinic (are they open over the holidays?) or to emergency, even if I am not in desperate need, but may need some medical attention?

A. Many family physicians take time off with their families over Christmas, as there are usually fewer patients who want to see a physician over the holiday season. If you become ill and need to get urgent care (not renewal of a prescription because you forgot to ask for a refill) go to your nearest walk-in, and if not open, go to the emergency department of the hospital.

Dr. Alan Johnston, Family Physician, Orleans, Ontario

Editor's Note: Please take heed of Dr. Johnston's advice about being sure your prescriptions are filled well before the Christmas holidays, especially medication that you are on that must be taken regularly.

Who Said What...

"The great themes of Canadian history are as follows: Keeping the Americans out, keeping the French in, and trying to get the Natives to somehow disappear."

- Author Will Ferguson

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