

Rural mail in Coldwater has interesting history

by E. Lorraine Orr
Rural mail in Canada and particularly in Coldwater has an interesting history. The father of rural mail in Canada was George Wilcox of Springfield, Ontario, who owned a farm in the State of Michigan. He learned of the rural service in the United States and introduced it to Canada in approximately 1913. The first local post-office, established in October, 1835, was named Medonte. In August 1851 this was changed to Coldwater. The house on Eplett Street, at the extreme south end, now owned by Cliff Tregenza, contained the first post-office with James Shaw as postmaster from August 1851 to January 1865.

After the death of Mr. Shaw the post-office was moved to Main Street South, in the house now owned by Cecil Lovering. Mrs. Shaw continued as post-mistress until John Miller was appointed and held this position for approximately three months in 1865. John Eplett was postmaster from 1865 to 1871 and then his son Samuel D. Eplett took charge. After a number of years Mr. Eplett sold the property and built a residence and post-office on Mill Street at the corner of Eplett. He remained in office until 1931.

In October 1932 Fred W. Brown was appointed post-master and the post-office was located in the Eplett Block on the west side of the main street now occupied by the Coldwater New and Used. In the year 1933 the building now containing the Embassy Theatre was the home of the post-office for a short time. Then it was moved to Millard's Drug Store.

The building where the Busy Bee Antiques is now located, housed the postal facilities for several years until it was moved to its present location on the east side of Main Street. Fred Brown retired in January 1965 and Wilbur (Wib) Schaller, the present postmaster began his duties. The first rural routes were established in 1915. The mails were delivered by horse and buggy or horse and cutter at this time. Without the convenience of the plowing of roads in winter for easier transportation.

Coldwater rural route no. 1 was established in 1916, covering the territory of Matchedash Township. The mailman was the late Finlay McCuaig who travelled 20 miles a day. The route was later delivered by George Marshall of Mill Street. He retired from postal service after 48 years. However, the Marshall family are still very much involved with the mail. Rural Route no. 1, now a distance of 62 miles, covering Matchedash Township and Black Lake, has been delivered by Kay Marshall for the past 11 years. Mamie and Russell Marshall together, drive 53 miles a day. Mamie has delivered Rural Route no. 2 for 26 years, servicing the area from The Rolling Hills Restaurant in Coldwater

mail delivery to Jarret, Oro, and Horseshoe Valley, a distance of 51 miles on RR4. The late George Biggs, who resided on River Street in Coldwater, started this route, a distance then of 23 and 7 8 miles. Mrs. Balkwill has serviced RR5 for 11 years, travelling 30 miles through Medonte, Foxmead, Matchedash and Warmister to the Orillia Town Line.

It is the dedication of the above mentioned mail carriers that ensures delivery of rural route mail regardless of weather conditions.

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The last rose of summer has faded and gone and even our beautiful fall season has deteriorated very rapidly and now it's the last week of October with Hallowe'en fast approaching. The small fry are thinking of their costumes for the big shelling out night and its important that parents think about this too. Do remember to help your children pick a costume that can be seen on the dark streets. White or light colours are preferable or put some special tape on the costume where the car lights can pick it up. Caution your children to respect other peoples property, we all know that Hallowe'en night is a night for trick or treating but willful damage to property is unforgivable. By the way what ever happened to the days of the Unicef collection? If the community would back the Unicef appeal and encourage their children to collect their pennies to help other children that are not as fortunate as ours, wouldn't this be tremendous lesson in sharing and helping their fellow man? If children learn to share in their formative years it is found that in later life these are the people who care and "will do onto others as you would have them do onto you", and isn't this what life is all about?

On Tuesday, October 19th last, the first Service Club Luncheon of the fall season took place at the Windrifer Restaurant. There was a fair turn out of representatives of our service clubs, industries and churches but those of you who did not attend missed an excellent panel that discussed the mechanics of our Contact Centre. Everyone came away feeling re-vitalized about the supportive role of Contact in the community, bringing people and services together and encouraging people to trust the resources that exist. Our sincere thanks to Mary Rogers, Sylvia Cameron and Kate Whittington.

For those of you who do not know or are not aware of our service luncheon, may I take this opportunity to explain what it is all about. Why a Social Service luncheon? 1) To meet the people we work with on a personal basis. 2) To know new people in the area of social services. 3) An opportunity to understand more fully the services offered in the Huronia area. 5) To interject new ideas by having interesting speakers. The luncheons are held the 3rd Tuesday of every month and a week prior to this day the staff of Contact telephone the different agencies (clubs, churches, etc.) to remind them of the luncheon. I am sure that the community at large can benefit from what transpires at these luncheons and would be kept abreast of the changes and new resources of the community. Would it not be possible that if you as the minister or president or chairman of your organization could not attend you could send a representative in your place? All agencies must have a member that is retired who would enjoy attending our luncheons and could take back the information and report it to their respective groups. This could be another exercise in helping your fellowman - everyone needs to be needed.

Don't forget our garage sale of November 6. Everything and everyone is welcome. Happiness is helping others to help themselves.
Mary M. Gibson,
Administrator.

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Christian Worship, 11 a.m.

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Waverley United Church: 10:00 a.m.
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