



Newsletter

NOTTAWASAGA LIGHTHOUSE PRESERVATION SOCIETY

“Lighthouses are endlessly suggestive signifiers of both human isolation and our ultimate connectedness to each other.”

Virginia Woolf

BOARD NEWS

Over the last several years, the NLPS has had the privilege of working with Kevin Pidhirniak of the DFO, Department of Fisheries and Oceans. He has helped us navigate the long, very complicated path toward ownership. Kevin recently accepted a new position with the government. The NLPS would like to wish him well. Bill Ariss of the Burlington office of the DFO is our interim contact. We look forward to meeting and working with Bill.

NLPS has had to postpone some upcoming events due to the Coronavirus...

- Participation in the Collingwood Chamber’s Spring Market is on hold awaiting a new date from the Town of Collingwood.
- Our Yard Sale is postponed. Please save your gently used items until we set a new date.
- The Paddlethon and Community Picnic, both scheduled for August, await the lifting of social distancing guidelines before we can confirm these events.

Because these are difficult times for everybody, charitable organizations have been granted permission to delay their Annual General Meetings. We will inform each of our members of the date of our AGM once confirmed.

There are many worthy groups and organizations seeking much needed

Board member, Pat Anstett and her husband, Steve Woodhouse took advantage of the beautiful weather recently and headed out to the Lighthouse. She provided us with the following report: "Looks to me like the wrap is in great shape! You can see how high the water level is and the fencing has been destroyed. The gulls & cormorants were very busy and there are only 2 tall trees left where the herons & egrets were."



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Happy, friendly, enthusiastic, helpful, encouraging, hard working, full of good ideas, **Derek Crespy** is the ultimate volunteer. He has served as the Worshipful Master of Manitou 90 Mason Lodge in Collingwood and was also the First Principal of Manitou Chapter 27 in Collingwood. Derek is married to Sara and father to seven year old Niall and four year old Lydia. He is a busy realtor with Remax, buys and sells vintage collectable toys, is an active member of the Y and is training to compete in triathlons.

Derek is one of NLPS' longest serving volunteers, serving on the fundraising committee and the Ski Day committee. Derek describes why he has chosen to give NLPS his time and talents. "I have chosen to volunteer my time and efforts with the NLPS because I grew up in this area and I have always admired our Lighthouse. I believe it is an important architecturally as well as a navigational landmark that is connected to the history of Collingwood. Our Lighthouse was

first lit in 1858, which is the same year Collingwood was incorporated as a town. Through volunteering with the NLP S I get the chance to meet and volunteer with really great people. It also allows me to give back to my fine community! My young children are always excited to hear about my "adventures" with my friends at the Lighthouse. As a team working together, I hope we preserve our beautiful Lighthouse for the enjoyment of generations to come."

A Look Back at a True Collingwood Hero

by *Gary Norman*

Though he was often commended for keeping the station in excellent condition and beautifying the island, keeper, **George Collins** is remembered more now for having helped save the lives of numerous people who were shipwrecked near Nottawasaga Island.



Late in the evening of November 24, 1872, the 120-foot steamer *Mary Ward*, loaded with coal oil, salt, and twenty-seven people, ran aground on Milligan's Reef, two kilometres offshore from Craigeith, and a few kilometres west of Nottawasaga Island.

Though the grounding must have startled the passengers, a quick inspection of the vessel revealed little damage. Frank Moberly, the head of a Canadian Pacific survey party that was aboard the vessel and George Corbett, one of the ship's new owners, set off in a lifeboat. They planned to go to Collingwood to enlist the help of a tug. Everyone else was to remain aboard the *Mary Ward* awaiting rescue.

Just after midnight, the wind shifted. By dawn, breakers were sweeping across the stern of the vessel. Captain William Johnson launched another lifeboat and made it safely ashore, eight men who tried to follow drowned when a large wave toppled their lifeboat.

The storm abated later that afternoon and keeper Collins and his twenty-one-year-old son, Charles launched their lifeboat and headed to shore to see how they could help. Joined by Moberly whose tug had proved no match for the storm and had made his way by train to Thornbury, as well as several fishermen from Thornbury, George and Charles managed to save all those still aboard the *Mary Ward*.

The government awarded George and Charles Collins and eleven other men the sum of fifteen dollars. In 1879, seven years after the wreck of the Mary Ward, Keeper Collins was presented a silver tea service from the Masonic Lodge in Boston for having saved four of its members in a daring rescue during which Collins capsized four times before reaching the men.

Keeper Collins was in charge of Nottawasaga Lighthouse for thirty-one years, far longer than any of his successors. Collins Street in Collingwood is named for George Collins. The George Collins Room, a meeting room at Living Water Resort is also a tribute to our hero.

In these challenging times it is always good to remember the people who have come before us and acted without hesitation to help and save others.



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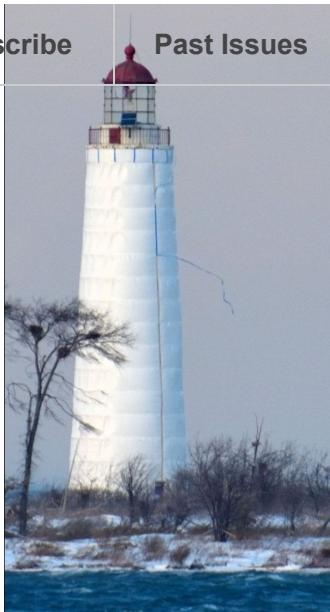
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