

Winter Carnival rock around the block

Best of MAISIE'S KITCHEN

Let's look back to New Year's 1971 – when the town was alive with winter activity.

A group of locals banded together in the Albion dining room. We met weekly beforehand, planning the first Winter Carnival to be held in January 1971.

Everett Corbett and Ursula Babcock were our leaders.

A bar was set up in the former Stedmans store - where my husband Hugh Clairmont's band entertained all week.

The Kinsmen had a bar on the main floor of the Opera House; and Rotary Club in the basement.

The Skokie Song was written by Howard Cable and Peggy Feltmate and first performed by Hugh's 'Skokie Band' at the old Muskoka Sands ski hill, where Ontario Tourism minister James Auld landed in a helicopter and sat in on the drums for the official kick-off of the song and the carnival. A torch-light parade of snowmobiles lit the way for the Friday night ceremonies each year.

Shorty Kelly flooded the main block for skating; kleig lights were brought in for fanfare; the Orillia Silver Band marched on the rink, minor hockey teams played games. The tin-can curling and skaters also got in on the fun.

Who has a picture of me skating with Charlie Miller?

What else happened? Tommy Common was here and Stompin' Tom Connors (remember his board) played at the old Muskoka Theatre.

The lakes were alive with activities and Rotary house parties and one-time parades abounded. We went from one bar to the other to see who was there. Ask Cathy Seddon, Everett and Wanda Corbett.

There were a half dozen watering holes alone in the main block between the Opera House and Albion.

We even visited Huntsville and Bracebridge, where they too shared in the same 10-day Muskoka Winter Carnival.

Where is your bright orange and green hat and scarf and buttons? Oh, what fun we had. Now, what do we have? (Written Jan. 8, 2009.)



Maisie Clairmont

Editor's Note: This year the carnival revival takes place March 5-7. Maisie can be credited for getting the ball rolling last year.

CHILI CON CARNE

2 lbs. medium ground beef

Brown well to bring out the flavour

Move to slow cooker. **Add:**

28 oz. tin of crushed canned tomatoes

14 oz. sliced mushrooms

28 oz. can kidney beans

1 chopped green pepper, 2 chopped onions

2 tbsp. chili powder 2 tsp. black pepper

1 tbsp. garlic powder 1 tbsp. salt.

Stir well. Leave to cook on low setting. Add tomato juice or water to suit.

It will be ready and waiting when you get back from the Carnival. All you need is some good bread to go with it.

IRISH STEW

2 lbs stewing beef in 1" cubes (or lamb)

2 tbsp vegetable oil

2 cups apple cider

1/4 to 1/2 tsp dried thyme

3 med potatoes peeled & cubed

4 med carrots - cut in 3/4 inch pieces

1/2 med turnip - cut in 3/4 inch pieces

2 med onions cut in wedges

1/4 cup all-purpose flour

2 tbsp cider vinegar

1/4 tsp pepper

1/4 cup water

In a dutch oven - brown beef/lamb in oil - drain - add cider, vinegar, salt if desired, thyme & pepper. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover & simmer for 1 1/4 hrs.

Add potatoes, carrots, celery & onion. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover & simmer 30 to 35 minutes or until beef & veggies are tender.

Combine flour & water until smooth, Stir into stew.

Bring to boil for 2 minutes. Makes 8 servings

1 cup serving without salt equals 315 cal.

238 mg sodium, 70 mg cholesterol, 29 gm carbohydrate, 24 gm protein, 12 gm fat

Diabetic - 3 meat - 1 starch - 1 vegetable

IRISH SODA BREAD

3 cups all-purpose flour

1/2 tsp baking soda

2 tbsp white sugar

1/2 cup raisins

1 egg, beaten

1 cup buttermilk

2 tablespoons margarine, melted

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).

Grease a cast iron skillet. In a medium bowl, mix together the flour, baking soda and sugar. Toss the raisins with the flour mixture until coated. Make a well in the centre and add the egg, buttermilk, and melted margarine. Stir until all of the dry ingredients are absorbed. Turn the dough out onto a floured surface and knead for a few quick turns just to even out the dough. Handle the dough as little as possible. Pat into a flat circle, and place into the prepared pan. Bake the bread for 40 to 45 minutes in the preheated oven, or until the edges are golden.

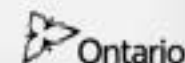
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