

tucked in as a 'surprise smile' for **Meals-on-Wheels**

recognizing **residents** of  
Chartwell Royalcliffe who  
composed this as a group



guided by story facilitator  
www.SandyRoss.ca  
519.871.word (9673)  
wordsmith@SandyRoss.ca



### **Rites of Spring** ♣ Each spring, I/we...

made box kites to fly, was a long process, the boys cut cedar strips to frame up old tablecloths (old aprons worked, too, but our productions were bigger than that!)

♣ played hopscotch, marbles, jumped rope singing skipping songs, threw a ball over the roof in a game of meeny-miny-over ♣ adjust clocks for 'spring forward, fall back' ♣ watch young children pedal their first tricycles ♣ put on backyard concerts for parents and neighbours, singing, tap dancing, and the entry fee was a knitted scarf or balaclava for the troops ♣ were just glad the outhouse wasn't as cold in spring (fumbling in it in the winter, half the time we'd pee on our coattail or in the hood of our snowsuit)

### **Spring Cleaning** ♣ In days gone by ...

baking soda cleaned most everything ♣ washed walls and ceilings, all the kids help ♣ got on our knees, scrubbed floors with rags (no electricity, so no vacuums) ♣ wood floors got a fresh coat of paint, I didn't like the colour Mother used so I later quietly dabbed on multi-colour dots ♣ cleaned laundry out back in a big wash house with a boiler, stirring clothes with a big stick, starting the fire each day for the boiler ♣ laid white linen and bedding out on the grass so the sun bleached it ♣ I can hear the radio, always a particular music station just for her Saturday cleaning, and I can see Mother, scarf wrapped on her head, working away.

### **Harbingers** ♣ **Sights, sounds, and smells ...**

the crocuses around our house, seeing their little heads, then a bit of snow and they'd crunch up until next day ♣ hearing birds yipping in the morning, then I know the cold is over, they're the music of spring ♣ our rabbit, who got out of the pen and over to the neighbour's flowers, loved theirs but left mine alone ♣ earthworms, watching them on the sidewalk, creeping, expanding, contracting, moving along ♣ I can smell the maple shack in our Quebec village, we'd break an egg into the boiling syrup then enjoy its sweet taste ♣ I can smell the grass cut that first time, then hear all the sneezing ♣ I loved our countryside drives when the farmers started to move the soil around, that wonderful smell of earth (but not so much later, when they fertilized) ♣ all the baby lambs and calves in fields nearby ♣ trees budding before the fruit, and the pussy willows, daisies, buttercups, lilacs ♣ jumping in mud puddles, and slipping on the ice underneath

Writers-in-residence and I wish you this **Irish blessing**:

*"May the road rise to meet you.*

*May the wind be always at your back.*

*May the sun shine warm upon your face,  
the rains fall soft upon your fields.*

*And until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of His hand."*

