

CULTURAL MOMENT FOR JUNE 1, 2026 CELEBRATES HOMER MAGAZINE

According to the Oxford Dictionary, culture is defined as the customs, beliefs, art, way of life, and social organization of a particular country or group. Over the years, our very own HOMER magazine has written about all the above at one time or another. There are 33 issues now published.

The HOMER, unlike many other magazines, is not a read and toss type. They are read, displayed on living room coffee tables, kept and collected. The Wellington County Museum and Archives, in their Archived Record, lists the magazine as containing 125 subjects. That's a lot of different subjects for hours of enjoyable reading. Everything from 4-H to the Second World War.

The idea for the HOMER is unique for our area, but is modelled after the Cape Breton's Magazine which began in the 1980s and is published by Ronald Caplan. They have the same size and format, are black and white, and interview people and their local history.

When asked where the name came from, Campbell Cork advised that it's a combination of home as in local, and the baseball term 'homer' being a successful run of all the bases to succeed in scoring a point.

The first issue of HOMER published in 1994 does not have any roman numeral in the title. Nor the second issue. That started in the third issue. But in that first issue, Campbell alluded to other issues when he wrote "...this is the last HOMER until this time next year."

Of all the stories that Campbell has written or accepted over the years and published, he was quick to acknowledge the one story that gave him great pleasure. The time Leonard Manion stood up to Ontario Hydro when they were running the hydro lines right next to his house, and won. Ontario Hydro ended up buying Leonard out at a decent price and changing the way they operated.

The saddest story? There really isn't one. In Issue XIX, Pat Morris wrote of The Japanese of Maitland Hall. It told of the unfairness during the war to the Japanese Canadians who were displaced. But even this story ended with kind words and hope for their future.

One of his most favourite stories is the Byes, who are an amazing family. So many people contributed tender and humorous stories from Harry riding his horse home down the Main Street sound asleep, to Harry lifting the back of a tractor to win a beer at the Ayton hotel. And Harry's father Walter was famous for standing on his head at the roof peak of any house he finished building.

When you think of the HOMER, it's synonymous with Campbell Cork. In its lifetime, there have been so many contributors with their stories, pictures, and memories that have not been written anywhere else. Memories that would have been lost if not for the combined effort of Campbell, all the other submitted accounts of people and events and the advertising that supports everyone's efforts. Our local events are even read by some coast to coast.

Now, Ron Caplan has published 74 issues of the Cape Breton's Magazine. Does that mean we have another 41 issues of the HOMER to look forward to?

