

# Tom Little's **BIG IDEAS**

for Non-Profits

## In This Edition

December 21 to 25, 2020

*This time last year, did you think 2020 would turn out as it did?*

*I am guessing not.*

*So, what will 2021 be like?*

*Don't tell me: I don't want to know!*

*But, between now and then, my colleague Nancy Collins and I hope you have a good holiday, however it unfolds.*

*In the spirit of the season, we are repeating the article from last Christmas that so many of you liked and commented on, titled: The Kidnapping Granny and the Gift She Left Behind.*

# Our BIG Ideas Christmas Story:

## *The Kidnapping Granny & The Gift She Left Behind*

*This is an encore presentation of an article from last year's Big Ideas Christmas edition. That article, about The Kidnapping Granny, was so well received, we thought you might enjoy it again. In fact, we hope we are starting a tradition, kind of like every December watching Ralphie of "you'll shoot your eye out, kid" fame. So, whip up some hot chocolate, find a comfy chair, gather the kids around and enjoy!*

### **The Story**

Since it's Christmas and Christmas is a lot about family, let me share something about the Little family, a Little family secret, a secret long-rumoured, now revealed.

It involves Thomas Little. And a possible kidnapping. Thomas Little was my great-grandfather. The alleged kidnapper was his maternal grandmother, the infamous, to us at least, Granny Scott.

Thomas Little was four years old in 1842 when the act was said to have been perpetrated. His sister Helen (pronounced Ellen) was not two. Their mother, Granny Scott's daughter, had just died at age 24. Also in the household was Thomas' father Robert and Robert's mother, Granny Isabella Little. They lived in Scotland, near the border with England, in town called Wilton, across the river from Hawick. Robert was a labourer in one of the many knitting mills that proliferated there, some remaining to this day. To ease the burden on Robert and his family, while her daughter was ill, Granny Scott took care of Thomas.

Family mythology suggested that after her daughter's death, Granny Scott surveyed the scene and concluded that Robert was not capable of looking after two children on his own, so decided she would spirit Thomas away, and take him to Canada, joining other members of her family near Smiths Falls. That she took him was known: that she kidnapped him was suspected... but unproven.

Until now.

At a recent gathering of Little family members interested in its history, we discovered a letter written by Thomas' sister Helen to Thomas in 1858, sixteen years after the purported kidnapping. It read in part:

*Dear Brother, when you was taken away from here, my Grandmother (Little) was not at home but she says that when she came home she did get a surprise for she found my Father confined to bed with grief and vexation after he had buried our Mother to be parted from you so soon after. It was a sore trial for both him and my Grandmother (Little). They never have got over it and I do not think that ever my Grandmother (Little) will get over it...*

So here we finally had indisputable proof, in the words of his sister, that Thomas was in fact taken against the will of his father Robert and his Granny Little and that both had suffered greatly as a result. We also learned that Granny Isabella Little had stepped up to play the role of mother for Helen. Any suggestion that Thomas' father Robert was incapable of raising children, either on his own or with the help of his mother, was put to rest.

Granny Scott was indeed, a kidnapper.

## The Skinny



One of the reasons I tell you this is because it was my work over a period of years with Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley that took me near to where Thomas spent most of his adult years, the village of Beachburg, close to the rafting centres on the Ottawa River and not far from CLUOV in Pembroke. Detouring to visit Beachburg on my way through kindled my interest in knowing more about him.

It turns out that Thomas enjoyed a long and productive life, spending almost a century on this planet before succumbing at age ninety-four. He farmed. He built and ran a saw mill in Beachburg and later a dairy. He built a church in nearby Foresters Falls that is still in use.

He built houses, also in Beachburg, including one that is now the Whitewater Inn B&B, where we stayed during our family history gathering. The house is located on the corner of Beachburg Road and Little Street. Elliott Street, named after Thomas' wife Margaret Carr

Elliott, is close by.

Perhaps because he had only one sister, a sister he hardly knew, Thomas fathered thirteen children. The first born was a girl, and that girl too was named Helen.

## The BIG Idea

Christmas is about family. It is also about presents. Granny Scott gave her grandson, Thomas Little, a present, even though he was too young to know it.

In kidnapping him to Canada, she gave him the chance for a better life.

Granny Scott's present to Thomas has since been passed down through five generations. The most recent recipient, Thomas' great, great, great-grandson, Henry Little (see picture), is one year and two months old.

Hers was the gift that keeps on giving, the gift that all immigrants grant their offspring.



As for the price that was paid for that present, the intense pain of losing her brother, Helen (see picture) put that behind her.



Showing a strength of spirit and an optimism that belied the difficult life she, her father and her grandmother experienced, a life where they communicated only occasionally with Thomas because they couldn't afford the cost of postage, she wrote: *"...but still I am always looking forward to the time when we will meet for there is nothing that would give me more pleasure than to come to you but dear Brother we may never see each other on earth but may we both meet in heaven which will be a far more joyful meeting for when we never will have to part again"*, perhaps sensing she would die in an epidemic a few years later, just twenty-five years old.

In this season and throughout the year, may we all be so forgiving, and generous.

## This Week's TomBit

As a follow up to the last two newsletters and the discussion of diversity and inclusion, let me recommend once again the eBook "Building Inclusive Governance: A toolkit for not-for-profit boards", from onBoard Canada through the G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education, Ryerson University. The book can be downloaded for free at:

<https://pressbooks.library.ryerson.ca/inclusiveleadership/>

In addition to covering the topic in depth, "Building Inclusive Governance" contains an inclusivity assessment tool and a listing of other resources you can access.

## Current CMCS Clients

We are pleased to be working with York Region Centre for Community Safety, Community Living Thunder Bay, Canopy Support Services (formerly Tri-County Community Support Services), Community Living Port Colborne-Wainfleet, Community Visions and Networking (Quinte), Chatham-Kent Family Health Team and Community Living St. Catharines.

Recent clientele includes Literacy Network Northeast, Durham Youth Services, Community Living Trent Highlands and Mill Creek Care Centre.

## About Tom Little and Nancy Collins

Tom Little and Nancy Collins are the principals of CMCS.



In addition to consulting for many years, Tom has been Executive Director of a large human service organization, experience he brings to the table when working with his non-profit clients. In his younger days he was lucky enough to be part of three Canadian champion hockey teams while attending the University of Toronto.

Nancy's background includes a degree from Wilfrid Laurier and working at a downtown Toronto law firm. In her spare time, at least when there is no pandemic, she plays goal in women's hockey and catcher in summer slo-pitch. A life-long Leafs fan, she no longer apologizes for her unwavering commitment, given their resurrection in recent years. Now if they could just win a playoff round!



## Testimonials

*On behalf the Board of Directors, we would like to thank you very much for facilitating the work of creating a new strategic plan for our network. It was a pleasure to work with you and everything flowed smoothly. It is great to have this project complete! I hope we will get the opportunity to work together again in the future.* **Rita Delaurier, Executive Director, Literacy Network Northeast**

*Thank you so much (for your Board training)! Looking forward to the notes and your presentation was very well received! Lots of growth happening with the board and you helped steer more of that in the right direction. Really enjoy working with you and will keep you in mind for my other boards.* **Natasha Cosulich Vemb, Board of Directors, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Clarington**

*Thank you again to you and Nancy for all the work, dedication and effort put into this Operations Review. We made the right choice in hiring you to do this project and on behalf of the board of directors, I express our deep gratitude.* **Roz Werner-Arce, Board Chair, Durham Youth Services**

*Our Strategic Plan is moving along better than I could have imagined. I chair the group of around 20 Board and staff who have been meeting monthly for the past 6 months and plan to continue through the fall. Great enthusiasm from all involved and much is being accomplished already, particularly on renewed focus on our Mission and Vision. Thanks again for getting us off on the right foot!* **Frank Moore, Board Chair, Community Living Central Huron**

## Free Resources From CMCS

We offer a range of free resources to help non-profits be better. For your copy, contact us at [info@cmcsconsulting.ca](mailto:info@cmcsconsulting.ca)

Board Duties  
Policy Board Model  
Board Meeting Minutes  
Board Decision-Making Checklist  
Board Evaluation Form  
Dealing with Risk  
List of Possible Board Policies  
Board Recruitment (Stop the BIG LIE)  
Management Principles  
Member and Director Qualifications  
The Importance of Planning  
Canada's Great Non-Profit Websites  
Transitioning to the New Not-for-Profit Corporations Act

## Tom's Book For Boards of Directors



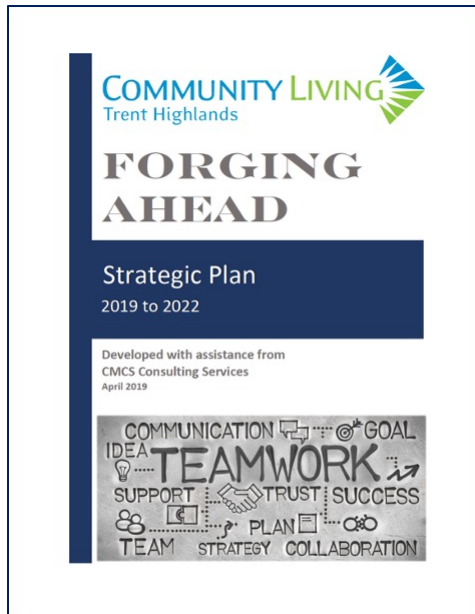
One hundred and ninety-pages. Thirty-six *BIG Ideas*. Thirteen of them are *The BIGGEST of the BIG*, ideas Tom's experience says are critical to any non-profit. Then come twenty-three *BIG Ideas*, more ways to enhance the governance of your organization.

You don't just get ideas either. The book contains all kinds of resources for implementing them. For example, *BIG Ideas* includes samples of strategic and Board yearly action plans, and of evaluation formats Boards can use to rate their own work.

*Tom Little's BIG Ideas* is formatted as a work book, so it can be used on a continuous basis by the Directors. It is easy to read and has a fun quality your Board members will appreciate.

Just \$40 plus HST and shipping. For your copy, contact us at [info@cmcsconsulting.ca](mailto:info@cmcsconsulting.ca).

## More About CMCS



At CMCS, our specialty is strategic planning. Since the start of 2018, the following 14 organizations have completed their strategic plans with help from CMCS:

Kenora Association for Community Living  
Community Living Dryden-Sioux Lookout  
Community Living Trent Highlands  
Elmira District Community Living  
Literacy Northwest  
Durham Region Child Care Forum  
Tollendale Village  
Centennial College School of Transportation  
York Region Violence Against Women Coordinating Committee  
Autism Home Base Durham  
Canoe FM Community Radio  
Toronto Island Residential Community Trust  
York Region Centre for Community Safety  
Literacy Network Northeast

We provide Board training that comes with a bonus: A Board action plan developed by participants based on the discussion.

Tom wrote his book for non-profit Boards, which you can buy and use as an ongoing resource. We are great facilitators and can help develop agendas for Board and management retreats.

Much of our past work has been in the human service sector, especially disability. But we have assisted in other sectors such as community colleges, local workforce authorities, family health teams, Big Brothers Big Sisters, United Ways and violence against women. We have even assisted a community radio station.

We have built our reputation on producing quality products that have great content and are appealing to look at.