

NEWS and views

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Simcoe County Historical Association

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Visit our Website

www.simcoecountyhistory.ca

SCHA

Preserving the Past,
in the Present,
for the Future.

In case Santa messed up

Just in case what you found under the tree was not exactly what you had in mind, or if you find yourself the recipient of a bookstore gift card, or a little extra cash, here are some suggestions for reading material for the coming months.

As editor, this fall I received tips from many different sources about recent publications, so I'll include some ideas.

For those of you planning on attending the renowned Sir John A. Macdonald celebration on January 8th in Orillia, you may want to get to know the literary talents of your speaker, Arthur Milnes. A totally devoted "amateur" historian from Kingston, he is the author of numerous books on prime ministers and Canadian/American relations. He writes frequently for the *Globe and Mail* and *Toronto Star* as well. Two recommended books of his are *The Authentic Voice of Canada: R.B.*

Bennett Speeches in the House of Lords 1941-1947 and *In Roosevelt's Bright Shadow*.

The Historica/Dominion Institute offers a number of books, DVDs and CDs on their website, including *We Were Freedom: Canadian Stories of the Second World War*. Visit <https://secure.historica-dominion.ca/en/store> for information on ordering.

Bygones Publishing recently released *Laura Ingersoll Secord, A Heroine and her Family* by David F. Hemmings, including photographs and significant new, well-researched material on this heroine of Canada.

Lastly, *Towers of Time: Ontario* by Marc Boileau tells the story of 100 clock towers that have graced federal buildings in towns and cities from one end of the province to the other.

Have a very Happy New Year as you catch up on your reading!

SCHA 2011 Schedule – various locations

March 10 – Joint Simcoe County Historical Association/Barrie Historical Association Meeting – 100th Anniversary of the Royal Canadian Navy, speaker TBA – **7:30 p.m. at Barrie City Hall Rotunda**

April 19 – Dr. Todd Webb (professor at the Laurentian at Georgian Program in Barrie) on Monarchs of the Quill: The Bad Art of Nation Building in North America, c. 1800 to 1918 – at the **Simcoe County Museum, Midhurst, at 7:30**

May 17 – Our Annual General Meeting – details to come in March

President's Ponderings

by Helen Coutts

Many people were hoping for snow before Christmas to enjoy their skiing, snowboarding, tubing, snow shoeing, tobogganing and touring on their snowmobiles, but the second week of December was ridiculous. However, as I write this before Christmas, the sun is back, the roads are passable, the municipality crews have caught their breath and begun to haul away piles of snow to improve visibility and give them somewhere to pile it if nature decides to gift us with more.

For those of you who spend the winter somewhere south without snow, enjoy the easier climate and we'll see you when the spring flowers start to bloom.

Out our back window are tracks where the grandchildren slid on the big hill; (people criticized us at the time for building our house at the toboggan hill) someone went across the field on a snowmobile, and more petite footprints where the turkeys came to check under our bird feeders and later gleaned the seeds from the fringe of weeds at the edge of the field. We saw them there today, joining the variety of birds coming to our feeders and to the heated water dish for a drink.

That weather just reinforces the

Associations' decision a few years ago to have no meetings for you in December, January, or February, but on the front page are the dates for March, April, and May. After last year's successful joint meeting with the Barrie Historical Society, we are collaborating again on Thursday, March 10 in the City of Barrie Rotunda with a tentative theme of 100 years of the Navy. Tuesday, April 19 will be a regular meeting, with Tuesday May 17, the Annual General Dinner Meeting. Details will follow in the next *News and Views*.

This is the time of year to renew your membership and to invite neighbours and relatives and friends to join us, too. We especially need younger members so that the aims of highlighting our history will continue into the future.

Our Board is composed of the Elected Executive, appointed Directors who assume named responsibilities, and representatives from your local Associations. Look for one of yours who could join us. We still need a Vice President who could take over when my husband and I travel.

Blame the President for the change which disallows your membership itself as a charitable donation and only allows actual

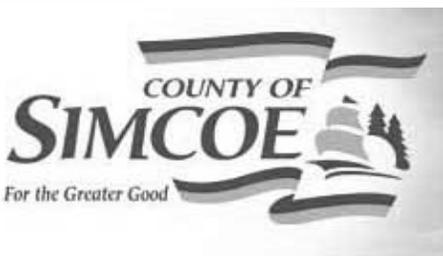
donations. Revenue Canada decided to audit my charitable donations and determined that the very small percentage that represented my membership in two Historical Associations was illegitimate, recalculated my taxes and expected a very small payment. Consequently I contacted the Membership Chair with my experience. He researched, and the form is changed

Those of you who come to our meetings know that I try to have a couple of jokes to add some extra humour to our evenings, usually from the farm press which most of you don't read. In honour of the holiday season when we have lots of family, lots of food, lots of socializing,, but often a little more time to relax, I share this as a member of that generation:

"Did you hear about the elderly woman who talked herself out of a speeding ticket by telling the young officer that she had to get there before she forgot where she was going."

Hope the Holiday Season has been enjoyable for you! I wish you a late Merry Christmas and all the best for the New Year 2011.

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The SCHA acknowledges the financial support of the County of Simcoe and of the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Culture.



Simcoe County Historical Association Executive

Helen Coutts, President	721-0587	roheco@sympatico.ca
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Ellen Millar, Recording Secretary	726-9300 ext. 1287	ellen.millar@simcoe.ca

For Membership Information, contact

Earl Elliott, Membership Chair 734-9808 earl.elliott@rogers.com

You are invited to submit photos and articles regarding your historical happenings in Simcoe County. Photos will be returned.

Mail to SCHA, Box 144, Barrie, ON L4M 4S9.

Deadline for the next issue is February 26, 2011

Tony Bianco: A Portrait of Canada

by Gloria Taylor, OMAH Curator

Imagine a walk across the entire country, in paintings and in words. This one of a kind exhibition invites you to explore the magnificence of Canada's National Parks through the eyes of an accomplished painter. Artist, Tony Bianco, has traveled the

country for a decade, documenting his experience in paint. The result is a new collection of Canadian art as moving and beautiful as the country itself. We are fortunate at OMAH to be exhibiting these works by local artist, Tony Bianco, who also happens

to be one of Canada's most eminent artists.

Selected works by Tony Bianco are also on sale on our community art wall. The exhibit continues through to January 8, 2011. The Museum is located at 30 Peter St. South, Orillia.

Take a Vet to Dinner

by Dr. Dick Johnston

On October 30, the OMAH hosted the annual "Take a Vet to Dinner" with special guests the Consul-General of the Netherlands and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Hans and Sonja Horbach. They helped to celebrate the 65th anniversary of the Canadian Liberation of the Netherlands in May, 1945.

In attendance were 70 WWII Veterans, many who were in Holland in the spring of 1945. Eight local high school students read the names of all the veterans in attendance so they could stand and be recognized. The students received a book of WWI poetry signed by Mr. Horbach as a token of thanks.



The students receive the poetry of Rupert Brooke, John McCrae, Wilfred Owen, and other WWI writers from Consul-General Horbach.

Happy Anniversary to Black Creek Pioneer Village

by Helen Yielding

Fifty years ago the idea of a heritage village, formed around a set of derelict buildings on a piece of rural farmland, was an unlikely dream. Yet, the implementation of that dream created the delightful and desirable Black Creek Pioneer Village, a testament to our past within a bustling modern metropolis.

To celebrate this accomplishment, the Tecumseth and West Gwillimbury Historical Society invited Marty Brent, the Village's Manager, to reminisce about the beginnings and changes to this important historic marker. Her memories sparked recollections from several members, some of whom have

family ties to the property and buildings that now make up the site.

Set on two farm properties belonging to the Schmit and Stong families, the original village made use of a magnificent barn, frame house, log house and some outbuildings already on the property. Hurricane Hazel had ensured that this floodplain land would not be suitable for residential housing. Based on historical research, a plan emerged to enlarge the village with other heritage buildings set around a road, to add farm animals, machinery and to employ costumed interpreters. Trees were established, a pond dug, gardens were planted and, bit by bit,

buildings such as the old, general store from Laskay, the Halfway Hotel from Pickering, a mill, a blacksmith shop, post office, school, church and houses were set in place to reflect a growing settlement. A Visitors' Centre was a major addition in the 80s.

Now surrounded by industrial and residential growth, this rural oasis still has the power to draw great numbers of people, to teach our past visually and to preserve many artifacts for the delight of future generations. Marty assures us that Black Creek Village is still growing and responding to our ever-changing society.

Happy 50th Anniversary indeed!

Bell's Grist Mill

Bell's Gristmill has been a part of the Utopia landscape since 1864. In 1876, Richard Bell was hired on to work in the Mill, and within a few years, he and his brother John and Manuel took over the operation of this critical piece of infra-structure.

Bell's Gristmill produced both feed for area farmers and flour for the wider community. The raw material for the mill and the finished product arrived and left by horse and wagon, as well as the Canadian National Railway shed, just north of the property. Much of this grain came from local farms.

In 1903, the mill caught fire, and despite the entire community coming out to assist, the structure was completely de-stroyed. The community rallied however, and the new mill opened up a mere seven months after it had been gutted.

The mill continued to operate until 1965, having served the community for over a century. The mill closed, falling victim to the shift to the production of bread to large industrial mills. And while the production ceased, the building remained.

Bell's Gristmill is in fact, a remarkable look back at our past. With a foundation that is almost four and a half feet thick, and sunk, some say, up to 30 feet deep, the foundation of this structure hark-ens back to a time when things were built for the long term.



'Friends of Utopia Mill and Park' and the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority, have established a five-year lease arrangement for the property, and a team of citizens dedicated to preserving the mill, and restoring its functionality have been working hard to retain this piece of local history.

Aviva Insurance, a leading Canadian property and casualty insurance is currently offering to fund a number of community based projects across

Canada. The decision on which projects to fund is driven completely by the number of votes generated.

Top vote-getters move on to the final round to compete.

The good news is that Bell's Gristmill has made it through to the final round of voting. The polls closed on December 15th, and the results will be announced on January 25th. We'll let you know what happens! Think about how your group might participate next year in this reputable competition.

This is the second year Aviva has sponsored this competition. In September, the Community Fund Idea Entry opens with voting taking place to establish 90 semi-finalists. Of this number 30 are chosen for the final round and the chance to share in the \$1 million awards. There are three categories, under \$25,000, \$25-100,000 and \$100,000-500,000. For more information, visit <http://www.avivacommunityfund.org/about/aboutthecompetition>.

(All information and image for this article found on the Aviva website.)

Learn more about the Gristmill at <http://www.utopia.on.ca/>

New Innisfil Mural

by Donna Wice

This eye catching mural, recently erected on an exterior wall of the



Stroud Arena, has certainly received positive reviews from the public. There to hear all about this 1925 streetscape were 50 Grade 3 students from Sunnybrae School as well as local donors and interested folks.

Donna Wice, mural coordinator, took a few moments to comment on the old Stroud School, the gas pump at Chantler's General Store, the four old gentlemen sitting on a bench in the sun near Stroud Garage...all captured

for future generations to marvel over. Muralist Sonja Rathke of Penetanguishene was honoured and thanked for sharing her expertise with the Town of Innisfil and Innisfil Historical Society, partners in this artistic endeavour. Sonja was also the creator of our first local history mural in Lefroy. Located on the Lefroy Arena, it depicts the Lefroy Train Station, grain elevators, tall pines and horse jitney services.

Fun Things from the Simcoe County Museum

To fill a little space, I thought I'd explore the Simcoe County Museum website for a few minutes, and share what I found!

Under Family Fun, there is a contest!

Share your favourite photos of you and your family enjoying a museum visit for a chance to win a family membership and prize pack!

Criteria: Photos must be high resolution, and select photos will be posted on the Simcoe County Museum website. Please send your photo (digital format only) by email to museum@simcoe.ca

Limit of 5 submissions per person

Contest Deadline: March 31, 2011

Next, I found a recipe for Sugar Mice Mints, an edible Victorian ornament. These treats were sometimes made by children as a gift to their parents. The goodies would have been hung on the tree in small baskets or cornucopias. During the Twelfth Night Celebration, the children would get to take the goodies off the tree and eat them.

Sugar Mice Mints Recipe

3 egg whites, room temperature

1 pound (1/2 kg) icing sugar

1 teaspoon cream of tartar

Dash of peppermint

Make a very stiff dough and use immediately (within 15 mins.). Dough will soften to Play-Doh consistency when handled. Decorate with black licorice whips for tails and silver edible balls for eyes. Makes approximately 25 mice.

Amazing what you find during a few spare minutes online! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

The Andrew Hunter Award 2011

The Andrew Hunter Award is offered annually for historical research on Simcoe County, Ontario, written by an undergraduate student for a course in any university or college. In this seventh year of competition, we look forward to receiving many worthy entries for each of the two awards being offered.

Conditions: The entry shall be an essay between 3,000 and 5,000 words in length or a fourth year undergraduate thesis paper (no length restriction) on some aspect of the history of Simcoe County, Ontario, written in English or in French. The author must have been a part-time or full-time undergraduate student in a degree program at an accredited university or college at the time of writing. The essay must have been written to meet the requirement



of an undergraduate credit course during the 2010-2011 academic year. The thesis paper must have been submitted for grading in the 2009-2010 academic year. Entries become the property of the Simcoe County Historical Association and may be published as part of an essay collection.

Submissions: Essay entries shall be postmarked by April 8, 2011 and undergraduate theses shall be postmarked by January 28, 2011. Submissions will not be returned to the contestants. Papers must be typed in Times New Roman 12 point font, double spaced, and should not bear the instructor's comments or grade. Three

copies must be provided. A cover sheet must list the author's name, address, phone number, year of study, school affiliation and department, and the name of the instructor for whom the paper was written.

Entries should be sent to:

The Corresponding Secretary

Simcoe County Historical Association

P.O. Box 144

Barrie, ON L4M 4S9

Adjudication: Entries will be judged by a distinguished panel appointed by the Simcoe County Historical Association. The winners will be announced in early May 2011 with the presentation of the awards to take place at the Annual General Meeting of the Association.

Award: There will be two awards offered in Canadian funds, one for \$500 for the best undergraduate essay and one for \$500 for the best undergraduate thesis. The Simcoe County Historical Association may edit the winning entries for the purpose of publication.

The Simcoe County Historical Association is under no obligation to grant the awards. For more information, see www.simcoecountyhistory.ca

COMING EVENTS

of our Member Societies

Alliston Historical Society – contact Jackie Baillie

705-435-5626 or
cknowles@rogers.com

Meet at Museum on the Boyne, Fletcher Cres., Alliston 2:00 p.m. Second Wednesday of the month February - June & September - November.

Barrie Historical Association – contact Doug Hamilton

Meet at Barrie City Hall – 7:30 p.m.
www.barriehistorical.com

January 13 – Show and Tell

March 10 – Joint meeting with SCHA

Collingwood District Historical Society – contact Joan Miller

705-445-1119

Meet at Leisure Time Club, 100 Minnesota Street, Collingwood – 7:00 p.m.

www.historicallyspeakingcdhs.ca

January 10 – Bruce Brigham – Abandoned Houses in Simcoe County

February 7 – Jane Coxon – The Girl Guides of Canada

March 7 – Annual General Meeting – Eileen Crysler and Marie Cruickshank will present “The Way We Were”

Essa Historical Society – contact Olive Lee

Meet at Thornton Library fourth Saturday of the month except July, Aug. & Dec. – 1:30 p.m.

January 22 – Annual Meeting

Friends of Historic Fort Willow – contact Gord Hanson

http://fortwillow.com

Genealogical Society – contact Linda Mitchell

Meet at Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

79 Ferris Lane, Barrie – 2:00 p.m.

www.simcoebogs.com

January 8 – John Geck – England: Looking back from the 19th Century

February 5 – Glenn Williams –

Preventive Conservation of Research Materials

March 5 – Janice Nickerson – Crime and Punishment in 19th Century Ontario

Huronian Museum Huron Ouendat Village – contact Jamie Hunter

549 Little Lake Park Road, Midland – Call 526-2844

www.huroniamuseum.com

Innisfil Historical Society – contact Donna Wice

Meet at Knock Community Centre, 10th SR at 9th Line, Innisfil – 2:00 p.m.

www.innisfilhistorical.ca

January 15 – Dorothy Duncan, *Feasting & Fasting: Canada’s Heritage Celebrations*

February 19 – Military Reenactments

March 19 – Police Chief Bruce Davis

Museum on the Boyne – contact Katie Huddleston-Naieb

250 Fletcher Crescent in Riverdale Park, Alliston – Call 435-0167

Orillia Museum of Art and History – contact Gloria Taylor

30 Peter Street South, Orillia – Call 326-2159 www.orilliamuseum.org

to January 8 – Tony Bianco: A Portrait of Canada – see page 3

January 11-March 5 – Fully Exposed 2: Celebrating the Nude Art Form

History Speaker Series – contact Dan Byers

Meet at St. Paul’s United Church, Peter St. and Coldwater Rd., Orillia – 7:30 p.m.

January 8 – Sir John A. Macdonald Dinner

Penetanguishene Centennial Museum and Archives – contact Nicole Jackson

13 Burke St. at Beck Blvd.

Call 549-2150

www.pencenmuseum.com

Simcoe County Museum – contact Kelley Swift-Jones

1151 Highway 26, Midhurst –

Call 728-3721

Stayner Heritage Society – contact Dorothy Millsap

www.staynerheritagesociety.com

705-428-2540

Tecumseth & West Gwillimbury Historical Society –

contact June Chambers

Meet at Tec We Gwill Hall, Newton Robinson, 7:30 p.m.

Call 905-775-7144

January 17 – Show and Tell
