

# NEWS and views

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Simcoe County Historical Association

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## In this issue...

SCHA September Meeting .....	1
Our AGM .....	1
President's Message .....	2
SCHA Executive .....	2
Orillia Events .....	3
<i>R.W. Phelps and Otaco</i> Book ....	3
Oro-Medonte Award .....	4
Lest We Forget Petition .....	4
From the Mailbag .....	5
Park Pass for Grade 8s .....	5
Andrew Hunter Award .....	5
Coming Events .....	6
In Memoriam .....	6

Visit our Website

[www.simcoecountyhistory.ca](http://www.simcoecountyhistory.ca)

# SCHA

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

## September Meeting: September 21, 7:30 p.m.



And now for something completely different, we have decided to present our very own SCHA History Fair.

Bring your collectables, documents and pictures with an interesting history to share. Our Recording Secretary Ellen Millar, BAS, will be

### Our Annual General Meeting

On Tuesday, May 18, we held our AGM at the Sheba Shrine Hall in Barrie. The evening began with a lovely roast beef dinner and delicious dessert, while Amy Hynes serenaded us on her harp. Next, we received greetings from members of our various member societies, and from the Laurentian University history program representatives.

We were thrilled to have the opportunity to honour Ross Wallace, long time member of the SCHA executive and representative for the Orillia and Innisfil Societies. Ross was presented with an honorary life membership to the SCHA and received our thanks for his dedication to historical preservation in the county.

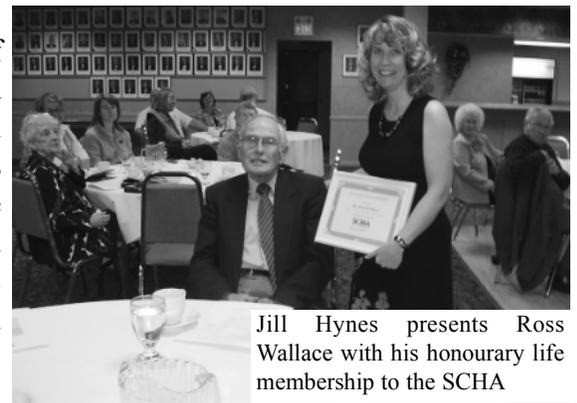
at our meeting to offer advice on the preservation and care of your historical documents and photos.



As usual, we will meet on the third Tuesday of the month, September 21, at 7:30 p.m. at the Simcoe County Museum in Midhurst.

The General Meeting itself took place with characteristic speed and conciseness with all past executive members re-elected for another term.

Following the official business, we enjoyed a detailed presentation from the entertaining Anne Brolley, expert handwriting analyst, who showed us many different characteristics of our own writing and that of notable historic figures.



Jill Hynes presents Ross Wallace with his honorary life membership to the SCHA

2010-2011 events will be detailed in the September issue

## President's Ponderings

by Helen Coutts

First let me share the successful Annual Meeting in May, (and we missed you if you were unable to attend). We fit comfortably into the Shriners' Hall to enjoy a tasty roast beef dinner. A special thank you to Amy Hynes who soothed us with her harp music, while we had a chance to take home treasures from the silent auction. The Executive were all re-elected, but we do require a First Vice President. If you are interested, or know someone who would be perfect, contact the Executive whose numbers are listed below.

Of course the highlight of the evening was Anne Brolley and her interactive talk about handwriting analysis. How do you cross your Ts, dot your Is, slant your script or write large or small words? All of these give clues about your personality to Anne. The Historical personality whose letter was analyzed was Hon. E.C. Drury, and it was uncanny to hear Anne describe him based on his writing. Since he was a neighbour of

ours, we can affirm her assessment. All of us were asked to write a few dictated lines and she pointed out various bits of them to illustrate how our writing shows our personality.

The Board will now be turning our attention to the fall meetings, hoping to have speakers that interest you. I make my regular request that if you have ideas for a program let us know, and if your Society would like to do a joint meeting with us as we did with Barrie with Dr. Karolyn Smardz-Frost, we're ready to join plans and share the costs.

We're just back from three weeks in Italy and that part of the Mediterranean. Our heads are spinning with ancient ruins and statutes and the abundance in that country of churches of every description, and our legs are weary from climbing steps and walking miles.

On a personal note I was fortunate in April to attend the Triennial

Conference of the Associated Countrywomen of the World in Hot Springs, Arkansas. ACWW is the world organization of the Women's Institute and is connected to Simcoe County history since the main organizer in 1930 was Madge (Mrs. Alfred) Watt who carried W.I. from her birthplace in Collingwood to B.C., then to England, and then collaborated to form a world organization.

As I expected the weeds made good progress in my garden while I was away, but as I write today the light rain dictates leaving the plants alone.

P.S. Innisfil Historical Society's latest book, *Memories of Cookstown*, is now available. (See article in March issue). After a quick overview, I can guarantee that this is a wonderful addition to the library of anyone who has Cookstown connections like me. I was born there, and my great-grandparents lived there as well.



*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
Mark Fisher, First Vice President	728-3825 mwfisher2@hotmail.com
Gord Harris, Treasurer	739-7649 gordon.harris@xplornet.com
Jill Hynes, Corresponding Secretary	739-6220 mark.jill@sympatico.ca
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 August 25, 2010**

## Significant Historical Events in Orillia

by Dr. Richard Johnston

On May 6, the sixth annual Franklin Carmichael Lecture took place. Carmichael (1890-1945) was born in Orillia and was a founding member of the Group of Seven. He is an inductee into the Orillia Hall of Fame.

This year's guest speaker was Tobi Bruce, Senior Curator of Canadian Historical Art at the Art Gallery of Hamilton. Qennefer Browne was the event chairperson and co-ordinator.

Ms. Bruce gave an excellent presentation on a number of well known Canadian artists such as Paul Peel, George Reed and William Bruce who studied in Paris in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

We also had a very successful dinner on May 4, commemorating the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Canadian Navy. Over 200 were in attendance at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 34 for the celebration.



Lt. Commander (Ret'd) Al Hutchings brings the Toast to the Navy

The Toast to the Navy was made by Al Hutchings (Lt. Commander, Ret'd.) The guest speaker, Commander McKee, is a noted naval historian and author. Many WWII and Korean War Navy Veterans were in attendance. McKee's talk was "The Canadian Navy: the past, the present and the future".

The *Naval Service Act* brought the Royal Canadian Navy into being on May 4, 1910. When WWI broke out, the Navy had fewer than 350 sailors and two under-equipped warships. By the end of WWII, it had grown into

one of the world's greatest naval forces, with roughly 100,000 men and women and a fleet of 365 ships.

Tables for the evening were named after various Canadian naval ships. For instance, the *Mariposa Belle* was a Fairmile Class coastal patrol vessel built in Orillia. (A large model of the Belle can be found in the lower level of Georgian Mall in Barrie, near the main entrance.) The evening was a great success.



From left, Murray Cayley, Lloyd Dennis O.C., and Dr. Ken Hedges, wearing the Polar medals, celebrated together

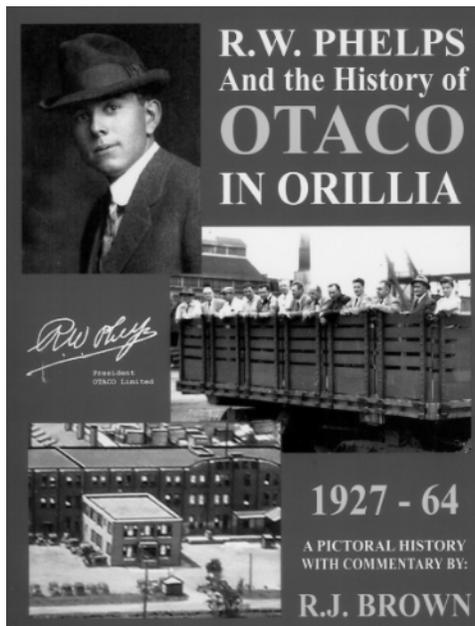
## R.W. Phelps and the History of OTACO in Orillia

by Gloria Taylor, OMAH Curator

Mr. Bob Brown has recently compiled a pictorial history regarding his grandfather, R.W. Phelps, and his years at OTACO. This warm and informative volume tells the story as it was told to Bob. It is rich with family insights, with a true warmth of style. Mr. Brown has filled this book with never before seen photographs and anecdotes of a man who understood industry and the people that worked for him.

Thor Motors (Bob Brown and Chris Thor) is generously donating 400 of these books to OMAH as a fundraiser. We will use the proceeds to acquire an electronic screen to thank our many sponsors and donors, to offset our operating costs, and to

provide workshops to those that who are interested in writing about their own family history.



Signed copies of the book are selling in our Gift Shop.

As stated in the May 28 *Orillia Packet and Times*, keeping the memory of Orillia's past alive is important to Brown. "I think it's important people write down their history because we are about to lose it all," he said.

It's all about a company that was so important to Orillia. It's seeing it from the family out, rather than seeing it as an industry. The book goes into the type of people who were in the industry at that time, how they treated the people they worked with, where their ideas came from. It's a wonderful read. I didn't put it down.

## Oro-Medonte History Association receives Award

by Geoff Booth

The Oro-Medonte History Association has been recognized by the Ontario Historical Society for its work in the Township. On June 12, the Society presented OMHA with the B. Napier Simpson Jr. Award of Merit. The honour recognizes

municipal heritage committees in Ontario for special contributions to heritage conservation in their community.

As seen in the photo below from left to right, making the Award presentation to Mr. Geoff Booth of

the Oro-Medonte History Association was Mr. Jim Leonard, Second Vice President, OHS; Dr. Brad Rudachyk, First Vice President, OHS; and Dr. Sharon Jaeger, Chair, OHS Honours and Awards Committee.

The SCHA congratulates the members of the Oro-Medonte History Association for their award. For more details on the recent undertakings of this busy society, visit [www.oro-medonte.ca/Community/history/index.htm](http://www.oro-medonte.ca/Community/history/index.htm) where you will find a listing of historic plaques, locations, publications and articles related to the history of Oro-Medonte.



Photo Credit:  
The Ontario Historical  
Society

## Petition to save the “Lest We Forget” Program

by Pat Elliott

As a member of the SCHA, a Simcoe County teacher-librarian and a granddaughter of a WWI veteran, I am concerned about the Library and Archives Canada (LAC) cutbacks to its popular program “Lest We Forget”, an award-winning series of workshops on the history of the First World War. In the workshops, students are introduced to hands-on primary historical research. The on-site workshops are being cancelled and replaced by a much-diminished digital version of the program.

For the past number of years, LAC, through its public Learning Centre, has offered workshops to Canadian students in which they engage in primary historical research with records from the First World War.

Now LAC plans to cut the

workshops. Richard Provencher, a spokesperson for LAC, despite acknowledging that the program has “exploded basically, it’s gotten very popular,” has stated that cuts to “Lest We Forget” are part of a “modernization exercise” after which only a small sample of the wartime documents will be digitized and made available. At the end of this school year, the Archives staff who have run the workshops and done so much to inspire hundreds of students to become interested in the First World War and Canadian history will be re-assigned to other work.

Recently, with the passing of Jack Babcock, Canada’s last First World War veteran, the Prime Minister’s Office stated, “Canada mourns the passing of an entire generation, a

generation that defined our nation.” Peter MacKay, the Minister of Defence, issued a statement saying, “We vow to honour his memory in our actions and deeds.” At the same time, another arm of the government, Library and Archives Canada, is cutting back on a program designed precisely to promote the very thing the Prime Minister and Peter MacKay claim the government wants to do. We believe the federal government should move beyond issuing statements and, through deeds and actions, fully restore the “Lest We Forget” program. If you agree, we encourage you to sign our petition.

To sign, please visit [www.gopetition.com/petitions/lest-we-forget.html](http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/lest-we-forget.html)

Thank you.

## From the Mailbag

I am seeking information on newsstand weights, the usually cast-iron weights that saw their heyday in the 1950s on newsstands across the world. They bore the insignia of newspapers, magazines, and corporations like The New York Times, Time, Life, The Saturday Evening Post, Buick, and Smith Brothers Cough Drops.

My parents' company manufactured these weights and related advertising and sales promotion materials. We have a collection of several hundred international newsstand weights, plus the company archive including original designs, mahogany patterns, aprons, caps, bundle cutters, correspondence, news clippings and more.

I am writing my M.A. thesis on this topic and seek information of any kind on weights used at newsstands. I hope to learn of other manufacturers of these newsstand advertising paperweights, speak with people familiar with them, and be directed to written, photographic and other pertinent information.

Please contact Harvey Spiller, 4148 - 54th Street, Woodside, NY, 11377 or call 917-553-4831. You can also contact me via e-mail at [hspiller@nyc.rr.com](mailto:hspiller@nyc.rr.com).

## Park Pass for Grade 8 Students

Grade 8 students across Canada are invited to experience Canada's national parks and historic sites for free. The launch of "My Parks Pass", a program partnering initiative with Nature Canada and The Historical-Dominion Institute, will allow over 400,000 Grade 8 students to enter Parks Canada administered national parks and national historic sites for free for twelve months.

For more information, visit [www.myparkspass.ca/passes.html](http://www.myparkspass.ca/passes.html). The passes are valid until May 31, 2011.

## 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](http://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

**Collingwood District Historical Society –**

**contact Joan Miller**

www.historicallyspeakingcdhs.ca

**October 4** – Jamie Hunter – The Huron Ouendat Village and its People

**November 1** – Bonnie Roarke – Sea Cadets on Georgian Bay

**Essa Historical Society – contact Olive Lee**

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

**September 18** – Unveiling of Plaque Commemorating the Founding of Baxter 206 Murphy Road, Baxter, 1 p.m. RSVP to Olive Lee 458-9971 by Sept. 3

**Friends of Historic Fort Willow –**

**contact Gord Hanson**

http://fortwillow.com

**Sept. 18** – Nine Mile Portage Heritage Festival

**Genealogical Society – contact Linda Mitchell**

Meet at Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

79 Ferris Lane, Barrie – 2:00 p.m.

www.simcoeboogs.com

**September 11** – Sue de Groot Ontario – Dead and Buried – Accessing the Records

**October 16** – Open Discussion on the Future of Simcoe County Branch followed

by a Workshop: Suggestions on where to look for information

**Huron 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

**September 18** – Celebrating the Guiding Movement

**October 16** – WWII Veterans

**Midhurst Historical Society – contact**

**Meagan Arnott**

Meet at the Library, Finlay Mill Road 7:30 p.m. third Monday of the month

**Museum on the Boyne – contact Katie Huddleston**

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 August 28** – All-Ontario Open Juried Art Show

**History Speaker Series – contact Dan Byers**

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

Meetings will resume in September

**Penetanguishene Centennial**

**Museum and Archives – contact Nicole Jackson**

13 Burke St. at Beck Blvd.

Call 549-2150 www.pencenmuseum.com

**July 1** – Canada Day Celebrations

**Sept. 25** – Settlers' Day

**Simcoe County Museum – contact**

**Kelley Swift-Jones**

1151 Highway 26, Midhurst –

Call 728-3721

**Starting July 4** – Summer Sundays Explore daily life of early settlement in Simcoe County through a variety of activities

**Stayner Heritage Society – contact**

**Dorothy Millsap**

Centennial United Church (corner of Oak and William Streets) – 7:30 p.m.

www.staynerheritagesociety.com

**July 3** – 14th Annual Heritage Day in Station Park

**Tecumseth & West Gwillimbury**

**Historical Society –**

**contact June Chambers**

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

Call 905-775-7144

**Sept. 20** – Launch of Fall Season

Have a safe and happy summer enjoying all the various activities and places around Simcoe County.

### **In Memoriam**

Bernie Longson, founding member of the Fort Willow Improvement Group and long-time SCHA member, died May 24, 2010. He was a quiet, dedicated worker who enjoyed sharing his knowledge with old and young alike.

His wife Maureen passed away one month later on June 21. Our condolences to their family on the loss of two wonderful people who contributed with great skill to their community.