

NEWS and views

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Simcoe County Historical Association

Vol. 35, No. 1

ISSN 0700-4427

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Visit our Website

www.simcoecountyhistory.ca

SCHA

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

SCHA Annual General Meeting

Tuesday, May 15, 2007

This year, the SCHA is pleased to welcome Dr. Brian Osborne, Professor Emeritus, Department of Geography at Queen's University, Kingston, as our guest speaker for the evening. He was scheduled as our speaker last year, but was unable to join us because of an unforeseen conflict. His topic will be "The Power of the Local in Canadian History."

Dr. Osborne's areas of research include aboriginal history, settlement history, cultural landscapes, and the role of the "culture of communications" in the development of a Canadian sense of place. His current research considers symbolic landscapes, monumentalism, and performed commemoration as contributors to the construction of social cohesion and national identity.

Professor Osborne has served as a consultant for the National Capital Commission, Heritage Canada, Parks

Canada, Canada Post, and the National Film Board. He is the immediate Past President of the Onatrio Historical Society.

With a change in location this year, our evening will begin at 5:30 p.m., with dinner at 6:00 p.m. at the Lion's Hall, Barrie, followed by our annual business meeting. If you would like to seek nomination for any of the Association's positions, please forward your intentions to the Nominating Committee c/o Box 144, Barrie, ON L4M 4S9 by May 1st.

Tickets are available through the SCHA's post office address, as above, at our March and April meetings, or by calling Brad Rudachyk at 726-7380. The cost is \$30 for members and \$35 for non-members.

If you wish to contribute to our Silent Auction fundraiser, please let us know by May 1st so we can arrange for pick up of your item.

SCHA 2007 Schedule

March 20 – **Fred Addis**, Curator of the Leacock Museum, at the Orillia Museum of Art and History, 7:30 p.m.

April 17 – **Orland French**, An Historical Atlas for Simcoe County, at the Simcoe County Museum, 7:30 p.m.

May 15 – **Dr. Brian Osborne**, "The Power of the Local in Canadian History," at the Annual General Meeting, at the Lion's Hall on Blake Street, Barrie, 5:30 p.m.

President's Message

One of the comments that I hear from my university students goes something like this: "I never knew that history was so challenging, yet so fascinating and at the same time so rewarding."

The greatest part of my classes is made up of young people who have come to history in the first place because it is "a teachable." It is a course of study that will be useful in their prospective careers as teachers. It falls to my colleagues and me to show them that history is so much more. This can be a challenge when history has been taught as something to be learned rather than explored.

Others come eagerly to history owing to the talent and dedication of their history teachers in elementary and secondary school. For them, a love of history came early. Teaching them is to preach to the converted. They already understand the importance and value of coming to

understand a time not their own.

One of the exciting opportunities that we have in Simcoe County in kick-starting and nurturing a love of history is the Historica Heritage Fair. Last year, the Fair featured 131 projects from the students of 15 Simcoe County elementary schools with representation from across our county. In addition to a host of award-winning projects, one National Fair and four Provincial Fair delegates were selected. Your Association has been a proud sponsor from the time of the first Fair in 2002.

This year, the sixth edition of the Simcoe County Regional Historica Fair will be hosted at the Simcoe County Museum on Wednesday, April 25th. It will be a day-long event filled with the kind of buzzing enthusiasm that only our young people can impart. Come out and see where the seeds of a love of history

and an awareness of its importance are well and truly sown: a place where history is never reduced to the status of "a teachable."

In Memoriam

The SCHA lost a treasured member just after the last publication of *News and Views*. Our diligent, good humoured Membership Chair, Bill Packham, passed away after a brief illness. Bill's boundless energy and unparalleled organizational skills will be deeply missed. We again send our regrets to his wife of 52 years, Marriann, his children Bill (Jackie), Robert, Randy (Joy), and Leanne Rogers (David), and his much loved grandchildren. Bill volunteered for many years, first with the Guelph Historical Society, and more recently with the Barrie Historical Association.



HONDA
The Power of Dreams

The Simcoe County Historical Association would like to thank Honda of Canada Manufacturing for their ongoing support of the publication of this newsletter.



Casino Rama generously assisted with the sponsorship of our Heritage Day Event through a support grant for partnership activities in the community.

Simcoe County Historical Association Executive

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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 May 25, 2007

Our Heritage Day Event - time well spent

SCHA's recording secretary Ellen Millar organized and hosted a stellar Heritage Day event on Saturday, February 17th at the Simcoe County Museum. The theme of the day was *Preserving your Historical Treasures*, and all in attendance came away with valuable information, and a slight sense of guilt for the neglect of our possessions! Now we know better!

Stacey McLellan, below, the Collections Manager of Grey Roots Museum & Archives in Owen Sound, provided insight on the preservation of photographs. She also shared her own experiences with disaster recovery and how individuals can best prepare to prevent loss.



Darryl Wines, above, a Preparator at our own Simcoe County Museum, gave a demonstration on document salvage, and the many materials and methods available for document preservation. This was a rare opportunity to understand some behind-the-scenes work. Darryl concluded the day with an interesting example of an agricultural catalogue from the Peterborough area that he worked to salvage, repair and preserve during his student days.

Those in attendance were welcome to ask questions, and discuss specific needs in their own collections. Reference materials and sources for ordering products rounded out a day full of information and expertise.

The ladies of the Crown Hill Women's Institute provided a delicious lunch, complete with warm apple crisp, which kept us all satisfied through the afternoon.

Thanks to all who worked to make this a successful event!

Below: Those in attendance enjoyed a day of hands-on demonstrations and stimulating discussions on challenges faced preserving treasures that previous owners may not have considered precious!

Rule #1: no attics or basements for storage!



Editor's Note

Remember those great Irish dancers from last March's meeting? Well, the girls are still out in the community reeling and jigging across Simcoe County.

The Miller School of Irish Dance would like to invite the public to

attend their Spring Fling Fundraiser in Barrie at the Georgian College Dining Room on Friday, April 20th at 7:00 p.m.

You will enjoy a superb three course meal, an excellent display of Irish dance and music, and an array of

door prizes (including spa and florist gift certificates, sporting goods, and other treats).

Tickets for the evening are \$50 and can be purchased by calling Jill Hynes (proud mother of two dancers!) at 739-6220 before April 1st.

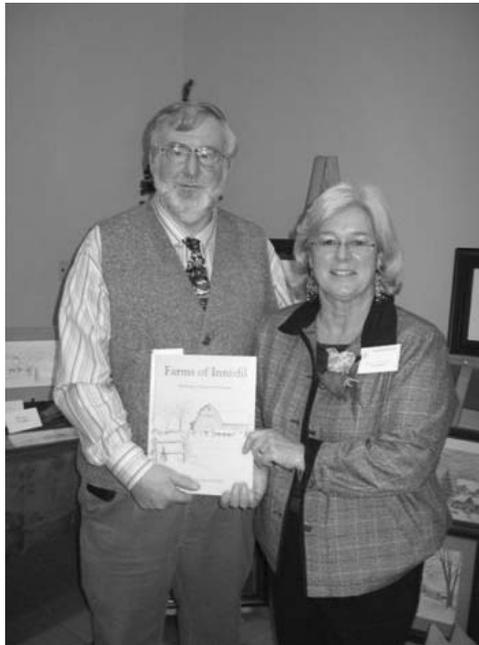
The Successful Release of the “Farms of Innisfil” Book

by Donna Wice

When the reality of a rapidly changing farm landscape collided with a team of people who wanted farm stories to be documented before it was too late, a well written, wheat coloured, hard-covered treasure of a history book was the result.

Reflecting back on the flurry of the last two years gives my hardworking committee and I a lot of satisfaction. It was on a snowy Heritage Day in 2005 that the *Farms of Innisfil* book project was officially launched and with the solid support of the farm family attendees, the committee never looked back. The master list of Innisfil farmers, past and current, who wanted their stories and pictures included, just grew and grew.

December 8th was the exciting day on which the *Farms of Innisfil, Challenges, Chores and Changes* book was introduced to the public, in particular to the over 800 people who placed preorders. Not ever having been through this process before, I



Innisfil Mayor Brian Jackson congratulates Project Coordinator Donna Wice on their beautiful book.

had no idea how those orders would confirm the great anticipation farm families felt. During the three weeks before Christmas, sales were brisk as word spread among the community

about this tremendous success. Complete strangers and locals alike phoned to offer their thanks for the committee’s hard work and to exclaim how many a Christmas dinner was delayed as yet another excerpt was shared before dinner could be served. There could be no greater compliment than that!

Sales now approach 1300 copies sold, a benchmark which has allowed us to settle all our financial commitments. As well, each Innisfil school, over the next several weeks, will receive a complimentary copy for their library. Of course, copies are still available by contacting Hank Abspoel, book salesman extraordinaire for Innisfil Historical Society, at 436-3476.

While I may not want to repeat this totally absorbing experience any time soon, I wouldn’t have wanted to miss the opportunity to meet and talk with so many farm folks for the world.

Ontario Heritage Connection



ONTARIO HERITAGE CONNECTION

Connecting to timely information on heritage issues across Ontario

After more than two challenging years in which OHC web site has been providing up-to-date heritage news for the people of Ontario, they learned early in August that their small volunteer-driven organization has received a generous three-year grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. This has allowed them to take a welcome next step. They now have a professional web master on

side and with his help, their site will become even more timely and more inviting.

They welcome your input. Keeping abreast of current heritage stories is their main objective. They want the site to be a first stop for anyone looking for late-breaking items of interest. And also they will continue to provide links to heritage groups and communities throughout Ontario.

So, do visit them at OntarioHeritageConnection.org and then please send them your news. Let them know of your success stories, and of any endangered buildings, recent appointments, current projects, new books, environmental undertakings, upcoming meetings or pertinent political news.

It’s all about working together to protect Ontario’s heritage. They want to be part of the picture!

<http://www.ontarioheritageconnection.org>
260 Adelaide Street East, Suite 51,
Toronto, Ontario M5A 1N1

TecWeGwil Happenings

by Helen Yielding

Show and Tell!

The Royal Mail and the Tecumseth and West Gwillimbury Historical Society appear to have much in common. The inclement weather on Monday, January 15 prevented neither regular mail delivery nor the attendance of more than 30 members of this Society at their annual Show and Tell meeting.

Individual presentations of memories and memorabilia, household items, jewellery, tools, books, picture and diaries, skillfully coordinated by George Phillips, made for an interesting evening. The highlight of the evening, however, was an outstanding account of the War of 1812, complete with a model of General Brock and a demonstration on how to fire a canon, by 7-year-old Kent Chambers, whose early bedtime prevented him from enjoying the whole evening and the refreshments afterwards. Apparently, history matters to all ages!

Lotions, Potions, and Snake Oil-Medicines or Quackery?

Aches and pains, disease and suffering are part of the human condition. In the past, the promise of cures came not only from the medical profession, but also from the use of many remedies sold by entrepreneurs who travelled the countryside, peddling elixirs and devices that Bert Platt, speaker at the February meeting of the Tecumseth and West Gwillimbury Historical Society, labeled "Potions, Lotions and Snake Oil." Bert's enthusiasm for his topic made for a most enjoyable evening.

Patent medicines, the opening of the American West and marketing strategies are all intertwined. Whether the cure for disease was marketed as a syrup, pills, an electrical device, magnetism or a salve, there were willing buyers whose testimonials were promoted to an increasing and easily duped

population. Many medicines were alcohol-based, a built-in, feel-good factor, which often led to a medicine addiction. Lydia Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, perhaps the most successful and popular of all patent medicines, was mass-produced in a factory employing more than 100 people in the 1870s and, aided by pamphlets published in five languages, continued to prosper well into the 20th Century. In 1906, after a series of newspaper articles investigating more than 80 million medicines, the United States Government adopted the Pure Food and Drug Act to regulate the more outlandish examples of quackery.

To round out the meeting members recalled some of the remedies from the past, such as mustard plasters and horse liniment that they endured as children. All in all it was a great meeting.

From the Mailbag

Dear Editor:

I am writing a biography for my grandfather, James Alexander Debenham. He was born at Dalston in 1858 in a log house that was located at 27 - 1 Vespra. I am trying to find material and especially pictures describing that place at that time.

I would also like to find out anything that I can about the church that he attended as a young man. Thomas Syme MacLeod had a homestead somewhere in that district and was a lay minister in the Presbyterian church. His son, to whom he gave the same name, was born in that district

in 1860. That family came west to Sinaluta, Saskatchewan in the 1880s when my grandfather did and homesteaded in the same district. In 1932 his grandson, Meredith, went back to Ontario. For years he managed a store in Edgar. Meredith's son Tom still lives in Edgar. Tom had two sisters residing in Edgar, Helen and Sandra. They are married, but I do not have their married names. Do you have their names or anything else about this family? I believe that my grandfather attended the same church that he did. Could you tell me anything about this church?

Thank you for any help that you can give me.

Sincerely,

Alex Debenham

Box 17 - 8

Thetis Island, BC, V0R 2Y0

Phone: 250-246-4299

The logo for SCIIA (Society for Cultural and Historical Information and Archives) features the letters "SCIIA" in a large, bold, serif font. A stylized, grey, curved line or swoosh is positioned behind the letters, starting under the 'S' and ending under the 'A'.

2007 Sir John A. Dinner

by Dr. Richard Johnson

The Ninth Annual Celebration of Sir John A. Macdonald took place on Saturday, January 13th at the Mariposa Inn, Orillia. The sold-out venue was another rousing success for the Orillia Museum of Art and History. The guest speaker for this year was Dr. Jack Granatstein, Distinguished Research Professor of History Emeritus at York University, renowned author of *Who Killed Canadian History?* and numerous other books. Once again, the special guest for the evening was great grandson of Sir John A., Hugh Gainsford.



Left to right: OMAH Guest speaker Jack Granatstein, Mrs. Pat Angus, and Mr. Jim Angus enjoyed an evening of great food, stimulating conversation, and historic reflections.

Museum on the Boyne Events

Irish Immigration!

New Tecumseth has its roots in our Irish culture. Learn about the potato famine and Irish immigration to South Simcoe. Join local historian Mary Munnoch and others to explore this topic.

Date: Saturday March 17/07

Time: 1-2pm

Fee: \$5 museum member, \$10 non museum member, \$15 family maximum.

Look out for Leprechauns!

Kids age 5-10 can join in on this fun program that explores the Irish culture and traditions and their impact on our South Simcoe settlement. Learn traditional legends, create crafts and games, dance and even look for your own leprechaun's pot of gold!

Date: Saturday March 17/07

Time: 10:00am-noon

Fee: \$10 museum member, \$15 non museum member

Celtic Knot Pattern Design NEW!

In many cultures knot patterns reflect the "Lattice of Creation" – the interconnectedness of all matter, form and energy. In this drawing workshop, join artist David Rankine and learn a quick and easy "eyeball" method. Create your own knot and interlace designed art in the Celtic style. All material supplied. Call the Museum on the Boyne to register (705) 435 0167.

Date: Saturday March 24, 2007

Time: 1:00 – 4:00 pm

Cost: \$25.00 Museum members, \$30.00 Non members

Mandala Experience Workshop with David Rankine NEW!

This workshop utilizes visual art and music making. Mandalas (Sanskrit for whole circle) are designs based on simple geometric forms. They are created all over the world by all cultures. More than anything, mandalas are about CREATIVITY – the sheer joy and absolute beauty of

human creativity. It is not about how good our works look at the end of each session but about the pleasure – the experiential texture of "just doing it". All materials included. Call the Museum on the Boyne to register (705) 435 0167.

Date: Monday March 26, 2007

Time: 6:30 – 9:30 pm

Fee: \$25.00 Museum Members, \$30.00 Non Members

Easter Egg Hunt (All Ages)

The Easter Bunny is coming to town! Join Museum on the Boyne, The Town of New Tecumseth and our Community Sponsors for New Tecumseth's annual Easter Egg Hunt! Fun contests, an egg hunt, hopping games, Egg-tastic crafts and family fun!

Date: Saturday April 7, 2007

Time: 11:00 – 2:00 pm

Fee: \$2 per child

Collingwood Society Hosts Unique Topic

Arlene Noble, the current resident of the Anglican Rectory on Ontario Street in Collingwood, will speak about The Romantic Rectory on Monday, April 2nd at 7 p.m. at the Collingwood Leisure Time Club, 100 Minnesota Street.

The Anglican Church Rectory has been featured in many architectural magazines and recently in "On the Bay" magazine. It is known as the finest example of Gothic Revival Architecture north of Toronto. Over the past few years Arlene has taken on the project of renovation and restoration of the rectory to its present amazing condition. Local residents John and Cheryl Thomas, assisted Arlene with this project and will also take part in the presentation.

For a detailed architectural description and photographs of this beautiful residence, visit http://www.heritagecollingwood.com/I_75Ontario.html.



Photo from Heritage Collingwood

OMAH Exhibition

Gifts and New Acquisitions

Opening reception

Saturday, March 17, 2007, 1-3 p.m.

"Gift" noun: something given voluntarily without payment in return.

"Acquisition" noun: something acquired; an addition.

Last Call for Papers!

The Andrew Hunter Prize 2007

The Andrew Hunter Prize is awarded annually for the best essay on the history of Simcoe County, Ontario, written in a course by an undergraduate student in any university or college. In this fourth year of the competition, we look forward to receiving many worthy entries.

Conditions: Entries must be undergraduate essays between 3,000 and 5,000 words in length on some aspect of the history of Simcoe County, Ontario, written in English or in French. The author must be a part-time or full-time undergraduate student in a degree program at an accredited university or college. The essay must have been written to meet the requirement of an undergraduate credit course during



the 2006-2007 academic year. Entries become the property of the Simcoe County Historical Association and may be published as part of an essay collection.

Submissions: Entries shall be submitted no later than March 31, 2007 and will not be returned to the contestants. Essays must be typed in Times New Roman 12 point font, double spaced, and should not bear the instructor's comments or grade. Two copies must be provided. A cover sheet must list the author's name, address, phone number, status, 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, 2007 with the presentation of the prizes to take place at the Annual General Meeting.

Prize: There will be two prizes offered, one for \$750 and one for \$250, in Canadian funds. 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 award a prize. For more information, see www.simcoecountyhistory.ca

From March 13 to March 31, 2007, this OMAH exhibition will display recent donations to the museum. Each item will be identified and OMAH's future plans for each piece will be explained. This exhibition will give insight into the process of a museum's collection development

policies and explore the museological differences between a "gift" and an "acquisition."

30 Peter Street South
Orillia, Ontario L3V 5A9
Telephone: (705) 326-2159
info@orilliamuseum.org

COMING

Alliston Historical Society – contact Jackie Baillie 705-435-5626 or cknowles@rogers.com

Meet at Museum on the Boyne, Fletcher Cres., Alliston every 2nd Wednesday except July, Aug. & Dec. – 7:30 p.m.

Barrie Historical Association – contact Val Brucker

Meet at Barrie City Hall – 7:30 p.m.

Apr. 12 – AGM – Alladin Banquet Hall, 41 Essa Road, 6:00 p.m.

May 10 – Barrie Union Cemetery Tour – meet at main gate at 6:30 p.m.

Collingwood and District Historical Society – contact Joan Miller

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

Apr. 2 – Arlene Noble – The Romantic Rectory (see page 7)

Genealogical Society – contact Claudia McArthur

Meet at Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
79 Ferris Lane, Barrie – 2:00 p.m.
www.simcoebogs.com

Apr. 28 – Conference 2007

May 12 – Lee Ann Eckhardt Smith – How to Write your Family History

Huron Museum Huron Ouendat Village – contact Jamie Hunter, curator

549 Little Lake Park Road, Midland – Call 526-2844
www.huroniamuseum.com

Apr. 21 – Heritage Dinner with Gord Laco – 5:30-9:30 p.m. – call for tickets

Innisfil Historical Society – contact Ross Wallace

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

Mar. 17 – Tim Crawford – One-Room Schoolhouse Reenactment

EVENTS

Apr. 21 – Farmers Panel – Guest speakers talk about life on the farm

May 19 – Grand celebration of Knock Restoration

June 16 – Annual Mystery Tour TBA

Midhurst Historical Society – contact Alice Mitchell

Meet at the Library, Finlay Mill Road 7:30 p.m. Call 726-5940

Apr. 23 – Simcoe County Museum representative

Museum on the Boyne – contact Rachele Clayton

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

www.allistonontario.com/Museumonth
eBoyne.html
(see page 6 for more details)

Mar. 17 – Everything Irish 11:00-2:00

Mar. 24 - Celtic Knot Pattern Design 1:00-4:00

Mar. 26 - Mandala Experience Workshop 6:30-9:30

Apr. 7 - Easter Egg Hunt 11:00-2:00

Call for display help! 2007 marks the 100th anniversary of the Canadian Pacific Railway in South Simcoe. Any locals with artifacts, memorabilia paintings and stories to share, please help Museum On The Boyne fill the year with incredible events and activities.

Museum on the Boyne is looking to launch its new Hanging Gallery with a limited engagement of Original Sir Frederick Banting Art Work. To complement the display of this Group of Seven student and Discover of Insulin, we are calling local artists to loan their work on either the Banting Homestead or Banting. Look for this exhibit in May.

Contact Rae today for details
705-435-0167 or
boynemuseum@town.newtecumseth.on.ca

of our Member Societies

Orillia History Committee – contact Ross Wallace

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

Mar. 21 – Dave Brunelle – The War of 1812

Apr. 18 – Harvey Medland – Tombstone Tales

May 16 – Jim and Peggy Frumau – Wartime Memories of TOW Dutch Children

Orillia Museum of Art and History – contact Sim Salata, curator

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

Mar. 20 – 7:00 p.m. – SCHA Meeting Speaker: Fred Addis, Curator, Leacock Museum National Historic Site

to Mar.31 – Gifts and Acquisitions (see page 7)

Penetanguishene Centennial Museum and Archives

13 Burke St. at Beck Blvd.
Call 549-2150
www.pencenmuseum.com

to Apr. 9 – Remembering John McCrae

Tecumseth & West Gwillimbury Historical Society – contact Helen Yielding

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

http://www.ntpl.ca/twghhistoricalsoc.htm
Call 905-775-7144 or 905-936-3659

Mar. 19 – Chris Raible – The relationship between Sir Francis Bond Head and William Lyon Mackenzie, whose feud sparked the rebellion of 1837

Apr. 16 – Donna Wice – *Farms of Innisfil*

May – Visit to Stephenson Farms B&B

June – Annual Picnic