

Guelph Historical Society

www.guelphhistoricalsociety.ca

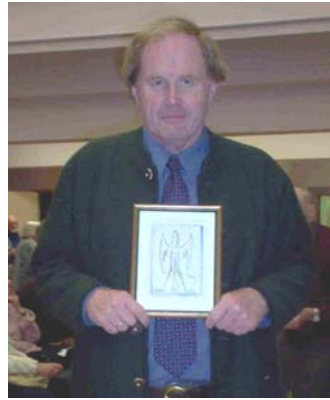
Newsletter - March 2004

Rural Architecture in Eramosa Township

Dr. W. Chandler Kirwin dedicated his talk at our March meeting to the late Florence Partridge, a friend and champion to countless local artists and heritage organizations. He displayed a piece of artwork Miss Partridge had given to him, which had been given to her by artist Josef Drenters. He added that Yosef Drenters along with Ken Danby are two artists that have had an important impact on Eramosa Township.

Dr. Kirwin spoke of visiting Expo 67 and being struck by a large sculpture in the Ontario Pavilion. It was "Pioneer Family" by Yosef Drenters. Upon accepting a position at the University of Guelph in the early 1980s, the Kirwin family moved to a farm in Eramosa Township. Dr. Kirwin became acquainted with local artist Andreas (Andy) Drenters and was invited to visit him at the Rockwood Academy. Upon viewing photographs of the Academy taken in 1966 Kirwin became aware of the location's connection to the sculpture that had so intrigued him in Montreal almost two decades earlier.

Born in Belgium, Josef Drenters came to Canada in 1954 and purchased the Rockwood Academy in 1960. He



restored the structure and also detailed its history. These records are now part of the University of Guelph archives and accessible on their web-site. After Yosef's death the Rockwood Academy became a holding of the Ontario Historical Foundation. Andy

Drenters continues to live and work from the Academy. The fate of the "Pioneer Family" was not so fortunate. After Expo 67 the sculpture was left to rot in a dump while attempts to purchase it were thwarted by squabbles over ownership. As a tribute to his brother, Andy Drenters reproduced the sculpture, on a smaller scale, and the Jocius Family donated the work to the MacDonald Stewart Art Centre's Sculpture Park in memory of Yosef.

In the 1960s Ken Danby purchased the Armstrong Mill and begun the task of restoring the dilapidated structure. In the restoration process, Danby uncovered an archive of information and began to chronicle the Mill's history. Kirwin describes Ken Danby's artwork of the local landscape in the 1960s and 1970s as "simplistic but complex". Kirwin believes this landscape to be similar to that of Tuscany, Italy and in particular Sienna. Kirwin's Eramosa Township home, "Hog Hill Farm" is an example of how local farmhouses were set back from the main road and had long straight laneways leading to them. In 1981 he added an addition to the original stone farmhouse but over time he has allowed the once structured landscaping to become more natural. He has also come to recognize the broad responsibilities of stewardship of this land and the corresponding environmental issues. In concluding his talk, Dr. Kirwin acknowledged that he has become a better person "because of the time he has spent with the pigs".

Next Meeting:

Tuesday, April 6th, 2004 @ 7:30 pm
St. Andrew's Church – 161 Norfolk St., Guelph

April Speaker:

We will explore the racier side of history with **Dr. Stephen Thorning** who will present, *Illicit Romance in the Age of Victoria*. Dr. Thorning received degrees from Guelph and McMaster Universities, and has long been involved with this area's history. His articles have appeared in several publications (including *Historic Guelph* and *Guelph: Perspectives on a Century of Change*), but he is best known for his local history columns which have appeared in area newspapers for almost fifteen years. Victorian idealists limited physical love to the bonds of marriage, but this did not reflect 19th century reality. Dr. Thorning's talk will explore the issues of prostitution, elopement and seduction as they affected the citizens of Guelph and area in the 19th century. Admission is free and all are welcomed.

The Verne McIlwraith Essay Contest Winners...

“Risky Business, An Entrepreneur in Guelph”

At our March meeting Barbara Brooks announced the winners of this year's contest. They are:

First Prize: **Peter Bernardi** – *“Risky Business: A Narrative of the Bernardi Precast Concrete Operations in Guelph”*

Second Prize: **Shawn Day** – *“Hotel Keepers Trade: One Family's Experience in Victorian Guelph”*

Third Prize: **Bonnie Durnall** – *“Each for All and All for Each: The Story of the Guelph Cooperative”*

The essays will be published later this year in our annual publication *“Historic Guelph – The Royal City”*.



Barbara Brooks is shown congratulating second place winner Shawn Day.

Topic For The Next Competition:

“Shaping A Community – How Immigrants Have Contributed To Our City”

Essays (approximately 2500 – 3000 words) will be judged on their originality, literary style and research.

Deadline: January 31, 2005

For further information call
Barbara Brooks at (519) 824-3642

Reminder to Members

The April 6th meeting is our **Annual General Meeting**. The agenda items will include:

- Welcome to members – Andrew Thomson, President
- Minutes from the last Annual General Meeting – April 1, 2003
- Treasurers report – Lyndon Kannenberg, Treasurer
- Committee Reports
- President's Remarks
- Nominations
- Any other business

Support the GHS by becoming a member.
Visit our website for details:
www.guelphhistoricalsociety.ca

GHS Contact Information

Mailing Address: 100 Crimea St., Unit B-4, Guelph, ON N1H 2Y6

Title	Name	Telephone	E-mail
President	Andrew Thomson	(519) 821-8229	amthomson@sympatico.ca
Membership	Pat Bowley	(519) 821-3326	pbowley@sympatico.ca
Vice President, Programmes, Bus Trips	Elysia DeLaurentis	(519) 846-8280	elysia@studiospace.com
Archivist	Erica Morant	(519) 822-9201	
Newsletter	Judi Prigione	(519) 767-2306	judiandcraig@rogers.com

*Any requests for submissions for the next newsletter must be forwarded to Judi prior to **April 12th** so they can be brought forward for consideration at the next meeting of the GHS Board of Directors.*

