



Guelph Historical Society

www.guelphhistoricalsociety.ca

April/May 2005

NEWSLETTER

APRIL SPEAKER

At the April meeting, Katherine McCracken, Director of Guelph Museums, presented a lecture entitled *Guelph Museums: The Future of Our History*. It was a timely topic given the museum's current search for a new facility and the recent recommendations of the task force on the Loretto Convent.

McCracken began the lecture with a brief history of the museum. In 1962, the Guelph Historical Society donated artifacts to the City of Guelph. From 1964 to 1967, the Museum Board of Management were the custodians of the collection. In 1967, the collection was moved to the stables of the Winter Fair building. However, by 1974, the facility was no longer satisfactory. In 1977, the former Knights of Columbus building, on the corner of Waterloo Avenue and Dublin Street, was purchased. The new museum was opened to the public on International Museum Day in May 1980.

The Guelph Museum is again experiencing space constraints and the collection exceeds the capacity of the current building. The building is 11,000 square feet and the Museum would like to have a facility with approximately 24,000 square feet.

In February 2005, the report of the feasibility study on the expansion of the Museum at the current location stated

that an addition would fill the existing parking lot and a better option would be to look for new location.

In early April, the task force on the Loretto Convent released its recommendations. The task force strongly favoured the Loretto Convent as a new location for the Museum. The convent is in good condition and a renovation is possible. A museum in the Convent would conform to the restrictions on use requested by the Diocese of Hamilton. From the Museum's perspective, the Loretto Convent would meet its criteria to have a downtown location and a heritage building. The Museum is continuing to study its options.

The Community Museum in Canada

Ms. McCracken also discussed the role of community museums in Canada. In the past, museums focused on the collections. Today, museums are being asked to demonstrate their contribution to the community and to serve the public. McCracken believes the Guelph Museum should continue to balance public service and collections.

It is an exciting future for the Guelph Museum. McCracken helped to provide a context for the expansion of the Museum and the role it plays in our community. ♣

AGM HIGHLIGHTS

Erica Morant retires as GHS Archivist

Erica Morant has retired as the Guelph Historical Society's Archivist. She has done a great deal to preserve our considerable collection. The GHS would like to thank Erica for her years of service. In recognition of her involvement, Erica was given a lifetime membership. As well, the GHS scholarship for GCVI was renamed the Erica Morant Award because of her years of dedicated work at both the GHS and GCVI archives.



Andy Thomson retires as GHS President

Andy Thomson has completed his term as the GHS President. We would like to thank him for his contribution to the GHS and his leadership throughout his term as President. In recognition of his contribution, Andy was presented with a copy of the book *Battlelines*. Recent Vice-president Elysia DeLaurentis is our new President.



Verne McIlwraith Award Annual Essay Contest

The winner of the Verne McIlwraith Award was announced at the AGM. Bonnie Dirtnall's essay, entitled, "Strangers in a Strange Land: Chinese Immigrants from 1885-1939" was the recipient of this year's award. Her essay will appear in the next issue of *Historic Guelph*.

The topic for next year's essay contest was also announced. The Committee has decided to open the contest to any topic relating to the history of Guelph. More information on the essay contest will be available in the fall.

Top: Erica Morant was awarded a life membership for her contribution to the GHS.

Below: At the AGM, Andy Thomson and Erica Morant were both recognized for their service to the GHS.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GHS LECTURE SERIES

The 2004-2005 lecture series is finished. The lectures will resume in October 2005. Details of up-coming speakers will be available in the fall.

The lectures take place on the first Tuesday in October, November, December, February, March and April. All are welcome to attend and admission is free. We hope to see you next fall.

ANNUAL BUS TRIP: CENTRE WELLINGTON

Date: June 8, 2005

Price: \$65.00 for members and \$70.00 non-members

Space: Limited to 50 people

Deadline to sign-up for bus trip is May 27, 2005

The annual Guelph Historical Society bus trip will take place on June 8. Steve Thorning, a well-known local historian, will be our guide for a tour of Wellington County that will include stops in Fergus and Elora.

An elegant lunch at Drew House in Elora will be followed by a short walking tour of downtown Elora. In the afternoon, the group will tour the Wellington County Museum and Archives. Tea will be served at the Museum before the bus returns to Guelph.

The bus is an air-conditioned coach. There will be pick-up points in the north and south ends of Guelph.

Members who are interested in signing-up for the bus trip should contact:

Deb Nash-Chambers

Tel.: 767-9895

nashchambers@rogers.com

HISTORIC GUELPH FOR SALE

Issues of *Historic Guelph* from 1978 to the present are available for sale. For more information, please contact:

Ken Irvine

Tel.: (519) 821-3241

Email: kirvine@city.guelph.on.ca

WELLINGTON COUNTY MUSEUM & ARCHIVES BUS TRIP: OWEN SOUND

Date: May 19, 2005

Departure: 8:30 am from the WCMA

Price (includes bus, lunch and admission to all facilities):

Museum volunteer, \$40; Museum member, \$44;

Non-members, \$48

Participants will visit the Heritage & Visitor Centre in the morning and the Billy Bishop Heritage Museum and Marine & Rail Museum in the afternoon. The Billy Bishop Heritage Museum features exhibits on Billy Bishop, WWI & WWII aviation. Artifacts include uniforms, medals, and photos. The Marine and Rail Museum features exhibits related to the history of industry and marine and rail transportation in the area.

For more information or to reserve a space, please phone 846-0916 ext 221. Payment is required to confirm a seat on the bus.



GUELPH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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