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Spring 2016

**AN APPETITE FOR HERITAGE**

VOLUME 41

ISSUE 1

Annual Ontario Heritage Conference

# STRATFORD and ST. MARYS

May 12th to 14th, 2016



Photo courtesy of Stratford Perth County Archives

## Preservation in a Changing World

The theme "Preservation in a Changing World" will ensure the conference has something for everyone. Speakers and presenters will address the impact of climate change on preserving our heritage, new approaches to building our communities while preserving our heritage and cultural values, the effect of new technologies on the adaptive re-use of heritage properties, and the use of social media to more effectively organize heritage activism initiatives.

### Conference Venues

Arden Park - 552 Ontario Street, Stratford  
Heritage locations, St Marys

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Sunday May 15th, 2016 from 11:00AM to 12:00PM  
Gallery Stratford - 54 Romeo Street South, Stratford

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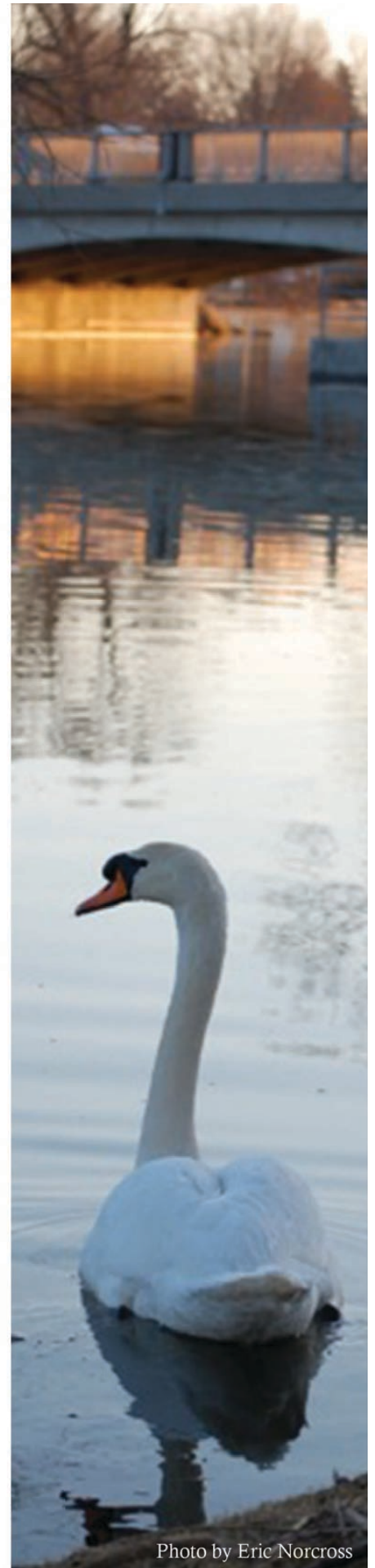


Photo by Eric Norcross

Cover image:  
Dry goods store on  
Baldwin Street in  
Kensington Market,  
Toronto, as it has been  
for at least 40 years

Photo credit:  
Catherine Nasmith, 2016



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# FROM THE PRESIDENT

## Slow Food and Slow Buildings

I like to cook, and I like to work on old buildings. Living and working in Toronto's Kensington Market makes it easy to do both.

Where once ethnic food was the norm, the market is evolving to be a place that supports food counterculture. Every day new places open offering great local food, interesting cheeses, meats from smaller producers around the province or from Quebec, or Toronto's best bread. Not every new enterprise succeeds, but those tiny shops give people a chance to try something new, to bring new ideas and products to market.

One of the most interesting of the "new" businesses is a grocery store called 4 Life Natural Foods, but everyone who shops there knows it by the proprietor's name "Potts" ... short for Potsdam. Potts does run a business, and assures me he is making a living at it, but he seems to spend most of his time exchanging stories with his customers—me among them. He always has a recipe to share.

What makes this shop so special is not just the charm of the owner, it is the way he has chosen to make his business fit his values. He is a committed environmentalist. One farmer at a time, one customer at a time, Potts is changing the way food is grown and distributed, at least in our neighbourhood.

As I've talked to him over the counter many times, I have been struck by just how much the heritage preservation movement has in common with the slow food movement, sharing

values such as localism and traditional practice. Older buildings were built using local materials. The construction methods evolved over centuries and reflect the collective experience gleaned by generations of masons or carpenters. They were built economically, and built to last.

Generally it costs about the same to rehabilitate an older building as it does to build a new one—but the costs are in labour, not material. A rough statistic is that it takes twice as much labour to restore a building as to build new. But labour is an abundant material. Growing food using traditional organic practices also takes more labour, but conserves the soil for the next crop and the next generation of farmers.

Contemporary construction relies on factory-produced materials that are often shipped long distances. Instead of relying on thermal mass or cross ventilation, new construction relies on all kinds of expensive equipment and "high-tech", often oil-based, products to keep the elements out and the occupants comfortable. Such technology yields buildings with a very short life expectancy ... sometimes as little as 30 years. The LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification program gives points for making a building that will last 50 years—not even one lifetime.

Should we support local farming—buy the more expensive, locally produced lamb, or buy lamb that has been shipped half way around the world? Not everyone has the luxury of making such choices, but for those who can, supporting the innovative



*Catherine Nasmith, 2016. Photo Sue Roden*

food businesses in Kensington Market encourages sustainable food practices. Similarly, when we conserve older buildings we conserve traditional construction knowledge and craft.

In preserving older buildings we are also preserving simple, yet sophisticated, technologies that we may want to turn to again when the oil runs out. The slow food movement is about celebrating the local, spending time in preparing and sharing food that is good for the body and the soul. When we prepare ancestral family recipes we pay homage to family traditions and our ancestors. Restoring an old building also pays homage to those who slowly and carefully built it so we could continue to enjoy it long after they were gone.

*Parts of this article originally appeared in OAA Perspectives: The Journal of the Ontario Association of Architects.*

# From Skating to Malting

Bringing craft beer to Dundas

by Ann Gillespie and Jeremy Parsons

The “Valley Town” of Dundas (now part of the amalgamated City of Hamilton) has long been appreciated as a well-preserved community with a thriving downtown in an historic setting. Despite losses of old commercial and industrial buildings in the past, there has been a recent trend towards the preservation and adaptive re-use of historic structures that have outlived their original uses. An excellent example is the recent and highly successful conversion of the former Dundas District High School, an early 20th century Collegiate Gothic building, into loft condominiums, known as Dundas District Lofts.

Property owners Ed Madronich (President of Flat Rock Cellars winery in Jordan) and Shawn Till had an equally bold and innovative vision in converting a late 19th century Victorian brick building, originally constructed as a skating rink, into a craft brewery under the name Shawn & Ed (SHED) Brewing

Company.

The property has a storied past. As early as 1837 it was owned by a Scottish-born entrepreneur, William McDonnell, who had the prominent Elgin Hotel built on the northern half of the lot facing King Street. Nearby lands quickly saw conversion to industrial uses and by 1885 the hotel was no longer in operation. The 1851 map of Dundas by Marcus Smith shows that just south of the property was a sizeable industrial district, which included the foundry of eminent industrial baron John Gartshore (1810–1873). Along with partner James Bell Ewart, Gartshore manufactured machinery, steam engines, and parts for the Great Western Railway. Later maps indicate other industrial operations moving to the area included an axe factory, a tool works, and an agricultural works.

Despite being located near “Foundry Street,” it appears that the current building fronting on Hatt Street did not have an industrial origin but

rather a recreational one. The structure was purpose-built as a skating rink by the Dundas Curling & Skating Rink Company, circa 1889. Roof skylights allowed natural light for skaters and the open-concept interior easily accommodated a large ice rink inside. However, this use of the building did not last long as it was soon converted to a feed warehouse for Caldwell Feed Company Limited, as evidenced on the town’s 1905 Fire Insurance Plan. Decades later the building was acquired for use as a bus terminal and the skylights were covered.

On a recent tour, Madronich indicated that, when the building was used as a bus depot, a number of interior structural modifications were made, including removing some wooden support pillars to allow for fleet parking. The 1951 Fire Insurance Plan for the Town of Dundas shows that the property was, at this time, under the ownership of Canada Coach Lines Ltd. Later acquired by Valley City Seating Company (subsequently Valley City Manufacturing), the building was used as a warehouse for an upholstery business and wood storage facility. The property was acquired by the current owners in November 2012. Little did they know the challenges in store in transforming a warehouse into a brewing and retail operation.

Located directly across from the former Gartshore foundry, the brewery is a 13,000 square-foot, two-storey, post-and-beam structure with exterior walls of red brick masonry. The building retains its original roof shape: side-gabled with truncated ends creating a horizontal roofline between the central piers, originally



View of the front façade and roof section with original skylights (from Davidson and Pirie, eds., Picturesque Dundas, 1896). Photo courtesy of Dundas Museum and Archives

accentuated by chimney-like pinnacles. The original façade featured 12 two-over-two vertical sash wood windows with a central arched carriage doorway spanning the width of the two windows above.

Unsympathetic alterations made a number of years ago include the removal of the brick pinnacles, and the substantial enlargement of the doorway, likely by Canada Coach Lines Ltd. to provide access for its buses. The large doorway with its overhead rolling metal doors has been retained for both financial and functional reasons but the partners, in replacing all of the windows, opted to replicate the configuration of the original wood sash. Doorways have replaced the two far windows: one to provide a fire exit and one as an entrance for the new retail space. The previous black metal roof has been replaced with aluminum sheet-metal of the same colour. Additionally, all of the original skylights have been reinstated.

In the early 2000s a truck careening out-of-control down Sydenham Street after brake failure sailed across King Street, crashing into the east brick wall of the building (miraculously with no fatalities). As a result some beams in the south-east corner of the structure had to be reinforced with steel and a section of the wall rebuilt.

The open-concept interior has proved to be very versatile over the years, lending itself to a wide range of

uses, from skating rink, to bus terminal, factory/warehouse, and finally a brewery. The space has been greatly enhanced by the re-opening of the skylights, allowing natural light to flood in. Necessary reinforcing of the roof trusses has been sensitively executed, using aged timbers that are almost indistinguishable in appearance from the original ones, though discernible to the trained eye.

Ed and Shawn are busy preparing for the Grand Opening of SHED Brewing Company, long-anticipated by residents of Dundas, fellow craft brewers, and beer-lovers from around the region. We are all looking forward to tasting the first batches of lagers and ales on tap, while heritage preservationists are also eager to view the rehabilitated building once flocked by ice skaters and experience first-hand the interior transformation. We have no doubt that visitors will be very impressed by this inspiring restoration and renovation of a distinctive historic building, which through the efforts of Ed and Shawn has been given a new lease on life. As

of early February, beer started flowing from the spigots of the brewery's gigantic steel tanks. We are confident that SHED Brewing will prove to be a successful business venture and cultural asset to the community of Dundas and City of Hamilton for many years to come.

#### About the Authors

*ACO and CAHP member Ann Gillespie worked as a heritage researcher and planner for the City of Hamilton from 1986 to 2001 and has since run a part-time consulting business under the name Gillespie Heritage Consulting. Her specialization, based on a 1985 MA thesis, is in the history of architectural sheet-metal work in Canada (1870–1930).*

*Jeremy Parsons is a member of the ACO and a junior consultant working with Gillespie Heritage Consulting. He has recently completed his Master's degree in Geography (Urban Historical) at McMaster University. He has a passion for local history and heritage preservation.*

*The authors would like to acknowledge the contribution of Craig Campbell, Dundas Star News reporter, for numerous articles on the SHED Brewing Company project since its inception in 2012.*



Front (south) façade of the SHED Brewing Co. building at 65 Hatt Street in Dundas, 2016. Photo Jeremy Parsons

# Something Old, Something New

Making memories at heritage venues

by Oksana Kravets

*The Gallery at Ontario Heritage Centre, 10 Adelaide Street East, Toronto, 2015. Photo Ontario Heritage Trust*

What if you could hold your next dinner party at the former residence of a Father of Confederation? Or get married in the oldest school still standing in Toronto? Or host a get-together in the same building where Ben Affleck and Will Smith shot a scene for the upcoming action flick *Suicide Squad*?

The Ontario Heritage Trust, an agency of the Government of Ontario, invites people to do just that by booking heritage properties for weddings, meetings and special events. Through adaptive reuse of its heritage properties—many of which are National Historic Sites—the Trust offers clients one-of-a-kind spaces to gather, work and celebrate.

Last year, 75 weddings were held at the Trust's downtown Toronto venues. Enoch Turner Schoolhouse, Toronto's first free school, is the most popular venue choice for couples. Bright and spacious, this Gothic-revival schoolhouse has a chapel-like quality, harkening back to its century-long career as a parish hall and Sunday school for the neighbouring Little Trinity Church. Those looking for a more intimate space choose George Brown House. Built for George Brown (a Father of Confederation, politician and founder of what is now the Globe and Mail), the house features elegant Victorian details. Meanwhile, at the Ontario Heritage Centre—the headquarters of the Ontario

Heritage Trust—couples tie the knot in a stately former banking hall.

These venues, carefully restored and preserved by the Trust, are a fine match for the popular vintage-inspired wedding—but these days, many clients are mixing vintage stylings with modern elements, including wedding hashtags and live-streamed ceremonies. Busy couples on a budget appreciate the Trust's affordable rates, the ability to provide their own bar and the esthetics of the venues, which require little

additional decor.

The Trust finds that clients enjoy feeling connected to their city's past. "For couples, it is reassuring to know that their wedding venue is a protected site," says Isla Adelson, the Trust's Manager of Fundraising and Business Development. "Some later return for a visit to reminisce about their special day, sometimes even escorted by their children."

The Trust's properties also serve as settings for other types of special events, including receptions, holiday parties, fundraising events, annual general meetings, product launches, town halls and memorials. The Elgin and Winter Garden Theatre Centre in Toronto—the world's last operating double-decker theatre—offers clients numerous lounges and lobbies, as well as the opportunity to dine on the stage of the Winter Garden Theatre. On one occasion an American tour group company capped off a visit to the theatre with a surprise on-stage dinner for the tourists—a catered meal with a magical view of the Winter Garden, which is decorated with lanterns and 5,000 beech branches to resemble a moonlit rooftop garden.

Meetings, including seminars, symposiums and team building activities, are other uses for the sites. In recent years, increased travel costs, coupled with the rise of teleconferencing, have



*Wedding at Enoch Turner schoolhouse, established in 1848, 106 Trinity Street, Toronto, 2013. Photo Emma McIntyre*





Morning/Drawing Room at George Brown House, 186 Beverley Street, Toronto, 2013. Photo Bofei Cao

posed a challenge for many meeting venues. Still, the Trust's heritage venues continue to attract corporate, non-profit and government clients, with nearly 200 meetings hosted in 2015.

Adelson says that organizations are rediscovering the importance of face-to-face gatherings. The Trust's meeting rooms provide a refreshing getaway from the typical office environment and its distractions. By meeting in person, geographically dispersed teams and partners enjoy spontaneous networking and lively group discussion, which can be hard to replicate in the virtual world.

"Every organization understands that it's about the people," says Adelson. "I don't believe technology can fully replace the personal touch. It's important to get together and get to know your team."

Guests enjoy meals prepared by a choice of preferred caterers. The Trust's venue coordinators note that catering

has evolved over time: today, clients opt for healthier choices, and menus have grown to accommodate a wider variety of dietary requirements.

When not hosting events, some of the Trust's heritage properties have taken on unlikely disguises—transformed into a bank, police station, monastery and the office of Sir John A. Macdonald, among others. Trust sites are popular film locations, having appeared in movies such as *Chicago* and *The Recruit* and TV shows, including *Suits*, *Reign* and *Schitt's Creek*. During filming, as at all events, the Trust ensures that the property's heritage features are protected. At a recent movie shoot, for instance, a temporary floor was installed to shield the Ontario Heritage Centre's 1908 floor from the phony blood used in a bank robbery scene.

The Trust also supports up-and-coming artists looking to bolster their portfolios. Photography students, young filmmakers and local musicians have

used its properties as settings for short films, music videos and wedding editorial photo shoots.

Events and film shoots are vital in supporting the work of the Ontario Heritage Trust, which raises almost 60 per cent of its operating revenue. In turn, the Trust's rental venues allow the public to experience first-hand the value offered by an historic setting and hopefully inspire an interest in seeing heritage properties conserved. As Adelson says, "The Ontario Heritage Trust holds these properties for the people of Ontario, and we want to share them with the public. We want people to visit, live and breathe our past, and to recognize how important heritage is to their lives."

#### About the Author

*Oksana Kravets is a Communications and Social Media Intern at the Ontario Heritage Trust.*

# The Working Centre

Food (and heritage conservation) for the people, by the people *by Kae Elgie*

As all heritage advocates know, when *any* historic downtown building is saved from abandonment and decay there are environmental, economic, and tourism benefits above and beyond the specific new use to which the building is put. For the eight older buildings The Working Centre has rescued, the impacts are far greater. Their adaptive reuse projects change people's lives.

It's all in the way The Working Centre goes about renovating buildings.

Process is more important than end product for The Working Centre, a 34-year-old non-profit network of community supports for unemployed, underemployed, temporarily employed and homeless people, based in downtown Kitchener. For every project they undertake, "we ask whether the work is respectful of relationships, whether it builds friendships, whether the environment is better because of it," wrote Joe and Stephanie Mancini in their book, *Transition to Common Work: Building Community at The Working Centre*.<sup>1</sup>

The Working Centre began in 1982 as a place where the unemployed could meet and define their own needs, and seek solutions through sharing experiences, social analysis and education. "From the very beginning, even when it was just extra sandwiches brought to share at lunch, food was an important part of our work," said Joe.

As the 1980s recession deepened, and many long-term manufacturers closed their Kitchener plants to move elsewhere, The Working Centre heard

from more and more unemployed individuals who spent their days scavenging for food and money. In 1985 they opened St. John's Kitchen in a downtown church to redistribute surplus food while cooperatively involving patrons in the daily work of preparing and serving it.

When their stay at St. John's Church ended in 2005, they scrambled to find another large space. Fortunately, the St. Vincent de Paul Society agreed to sell them the former Mitchell Button Factory building at 97 Victoria Street North, which it owned. Unfortunately, the building needed significant renovation work.

The Working Centre engaged Kitchener architect Robert Dyck who held a design workshop with the patrons of St. John's Kitchen. "The group met in a circle and a wooden spoon was used as a talking stick," Joe and Stephanie relate in their book. "They had clear opinions on how open the

kitchen should be, what kind of kitchen equipment was needed, where the dishwasher should be located, what were the best colours, how to design the washrooms, and how much light the windows should let in. The patrons had been thinking for years about the best amenities for a community kitchen."<sup>2</sup>

The massive work of stripping down, refurbishing, and reconfiguring the two-storey, 15,500-square-foot building took 13 months. The Working Centre was its own contractor, led by experienced building contractor Don Gingerich and framer Greg Roberts who were both committed to doing construction from a grassroots perspective. These two were attracted to The Working Centre's goal to create work that engaged people as equals and completed tasks cooperatively. "I'm not the boss. I'm just the scheduler," Gingerich told the volunteers, unemployed workers on training grants, and short-term casual labourers—people unable to work full



St. John's Kitchen, 97 Victoria Street North, Kitchener, 2016. Photo Phillippe Elsworth

time recruited through The Working Centre's Job Café<sup>3</sup>—who ultimately renovated the 1920s building.

The same approach, which The Working Centre calls “work as gift”, guides the daily operations of the Kitchen. Patrons are the main workforce. There is no volunteer schedule. People simply come when they want, set their own commitment and schedule of work. This collaborative, respectful, cooperative work produces up to 300 meals each weekday.

In 2006, The Working Centre opened two other food-related projects in heritage buildings it had rescued from vacancy and disrepair. Queen's Street Commons Café, at 43 Queen Street South, is a “third place”—not home, not work—where everyone from professionals to addicts feels welcome to hang out for company and conversation. It offers affordable vegetarian meals and fair-trade coffee at a dollar a cup. Maurita's Kitchen, across the street at 66 Queen Street South, provides the food for the Café, while teaching how to prepare healthy affordable food to its volunteer workers: newcomers learning

English, youth needing work experience, and people who are unable to hold full time jobs for physical, mental health or lifestyle reasons.

The building at 66 Queen Street South was built in 1899 to house Randall and Roos, Wholesale Grocers and Liquor Dealers, at the time the largest distributors in southwestern Ontario. In 1905 43 Queen Street South was built as an urban renewal project. “In view of the progress the town has been making and the rapid growth of business along all lines of trade, the owners have decided to put up a modern business block [to replace] the old repair shop on Queen street south” proudly announced an article in the Kitchener Daily Telegraph. Ninety years later, the building was vacant and dilapidated in a downtown which politicians and planners alike acknowledged was in serious decline.<sup>4</sup>

The Working Centre approaches adaptive reuse with an expectation of surprises and a healthy and proper fear of the reality that costs can escalate out of control. “They don't make buildings like they used to—thank God,” said Joe. To counter this, they attempt to do most

of the work themselves. They break down the renovation tasks and train people to do the work that most organizations would rather hire out to a contractor. This, coupled with a frugal administrative structure and hard working volunteers and staff, is how The Working Centre renovates.

But they don't skimp on safety. “Fire rating is the most important thing to learn,” said Joe. “We have worked closely with the Fire Department and City building officials to make sure our buildings meet the highest standards via 5/8” double drywall, fire-rated exits, doubled-up joists, etc.”

In a community where most heritage building renovations create high-end condos or work spaces for high tech firms like Google, it's refreshing to see that adaptive reuse can occur without gentrification. For The Working Centre, the renovation process is a community building tool.

#### Notes

1. Mancini, Joe and Stephanie. 2015. *Transition to Common Work: Building Community at The Working Centre*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 41.
2. *Ibid.*, 72.
3. Doyle, Cristina. 2012. “Job Café: Keeping People Connected”. *Good Work News*, no. 109, June.
4. Borovilos, George. 2002. *Downtown revitalization: the Kitchener experience*. Papers in Canadian Economic Development, vol. 8, 90–106.

#### About the Author

Kae Elgie is a member of ACO North Waterloo Region. She first met Joe and Stephanie Mancini 35 years ago, while working for Waterloo Public Interest Research Group at the University of Waterloo. Like many other ACO NWR members, she has long been impressed with the end products of The Working Centre's heritage conservation, but it wasn't until writing this article that she realized the importance of the process of their work.



The restored exterior of 66 Queen Street South, Kitchener, 2006. Photo Joe Mancini

# A Taste of Spring

## Maple syrup heritage in Lanark County

by Liz Lundell

As puddles form on rural roads from melting snow banks, the best way to sample spring's sweet offering is to head to a sugar bush where the maple stands, sugar shacks and shanties form cultural heritage landscapes that are associated with Canada's national identity—both at home and abroad. Ontario's Provincial Policy Statement 2014 explains that a cultural heritage landscape is

a defined geographical area that may have been modified by human activity and is identified as having cultural heritage value by a community, including an Aboriginal community. The area may involve features such as structures, spaces, archaeological sites or natural elements that are valued together for their interrelationship, meaning or association.

The old sugar bushes of Ontario are full of examples of cultural heritage landscapes, ranging from small family undertakings to some of the largest harvesters in Ontario.

When National Geographic published a list of "Top 10 Foods to Eat in Ontario" on its Traveler webpage, the number one pick was maple syrup in Lanark County. Although many regions of eastern Canada and the northeastern United States are home to large stands of maples, Lanark County, about 60 kilometers southwest of Ottawa, is dubbed the "Maple Syrup Capital of Ontario."

About 70 maple syrup producers are currently located in Lanark County and there is a long history of maple syrup production in the area. Many families have been carrying on this tradition of

"sugaring off" for generations on their farms. For example, the Fulton family started producing maple syrup on their 400 acres near Pakenham in the 1840s and now the fifth generation is involved. The Ennis family has been farming and tapping trees on the eastern shore of Bennett Lake since they emigrated from Ireland in the 1860s.

In 2009, Parks Canada erected three Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada plaques recognizing the cultural significance of maple syrup production to Canada's heritage. The plaques state:

Known and valued by Aboriginal peoples long before the arrival of European settlers, products from sugar maple trees have a rich history in Canada. Their production and trade have played an important role in the economy of the Maple Belt, notably by providing supplementary income that helped ensure the survival of many family farms.

Two of the heritage plaques were situated in Québec, which produces roughly 75% of the world's maple syrup, but the third plaque, and the only one erected in Ontario, was placed at the Wheeler family's sugar bush, 30 kilometers west of Perth in Lanark County.

Vernon Wheeler started helping out in the sugar camp on his family's farm at the age of six. In 1980, he and his wife Judy started collecting sap on their own Lanark property. Over the years, the operation has grown and the Wheelers now have more than 15,000 taps and 400 kilometers of pipeline to carry the sap to the sugar camp. Wheelers Maple Products is now one of the largest producers in Ontario and is adding another 5000 taps on neighbouring leased land this year.



Vernon Wheeler preserved the sugar shack built by the Robinsons on the property in 1936. Photo Liz Lundell

Wheeler found a number of heritage structures on the property, which has now grown to 730 acres. The original settlers' log house dating back to the 1880s still stands at the end of the lane into the property and it has been recently restored. Also preserved is the log barn that would have been among the first permanent structures on the farmstead. As well, the Wheelers preserved the 1936 sugar shack built by the Robinson family, the prior owners of the property.

A logger by trade, Wheeler became acquainted with another Lanark resident, Pat Wolfe, log builder and founder of a log building school that is widely known. Wheeler took a weekend course with Wolfe and then started into log construction himself.

In 1994, he started getting calls about collapsing barns on old farmsteads in the surrounding countryside. He explains that the finest quality logs always went into barns. When the settlers first came to their tract they would go into the swamps and select the choicest cedars to construct shelter for their livestock, as they depended on the animals for their survival. Lesser logs would go into the house because the goal was to upgrade to a frame or stone house once a farm was established. Wheeler says, "Every log is different, no two are the same. When you use these old materials to construct your building, it's got the history behind it."

He incorporated the reclaimed logs



*Wheeler's Pancake House is built of logs reclaimed from collapsing homesteaders' barns and spruce and pine harvested from the property. Photo Guy Barry*

along with large spruce trusses and v-joint pine boards from trees harvested on the property to build a large hall, Wheeler's Pancake House, which opened in March of 1996.

Over the years, Wheeler assembled antiques related to maple syrup production, including spouts, buckets, sugar moulds, kettles, First Nations artifacts, and coopers tools. He also collected chain saws, logging equipment, and farming items. He says of his collections, "I blame it on my dad." Earl Wheeler was an auctioneer and Vernon inherited his father's fascination with old things.

In 2000, Wheeler built a structure

from reclaimed logs—doing the dovetail work himself—to create Wheeler's Maple Heritage Museum, a home for his syrup-related collection. Exhibits include a cooper's shop, the history of sap spout development, and collecting artifacts. The Guinness World Records certificate framed and hanging on the wall reads: "The largest collection of pure maple syrup artefacts consists of 5,228 items and was achieved by Vernon Wheeler at Wheeler's Maple Products in McDonalds Corners, Ontario, Canada on 17 January 2014."

The first recorded mention of maple syrup production at this particular sugar bush is 1868. Today, as many as 1000 visitors flock to the Wheeler pancake house and sugar bush on any given day during the busy spring production season and all four of the Wheeler's adult children work together with their parents in the operation.

The methods of gathering sap and sugaring off have changed a great deal over the centuries, but Lanark is still actively perpetuating this aspect of our agricultural heritage. As Wheeler says, "What better to promote maple syrup than our history?"

#### About the Author

*Liz Lundell was the founding president of the ACO Muskoka Branch and she is the branch representative on Provincial Council. She is a historian and author of seven books on aspects of Ontario heritage.*

# Dinner with Morden Yolles at Scaramouche

by Richard Longley

In November 2015, ACO's Post-1945 Award was given to structural engineer Morden Yolles and, posthumously, to his former partner, the late Roland Bergmann. Two months later I dined with Morden Yolles and Roland Bergmann's son Andy at Scaramouche, the restaurant "Mordy" founded in 1980. It is located in Benvenuto Place, the building that launched Mordy's career and that of Peter Dickinson, who is for Mordy "the architect who brought Modernism to Toronto."

In 1950, 24-year-old Peter Dickinson arrived in Toronto from England, with his bride of 10 weeks, the Austrian model Vera Klausner. He had \$40 in his wallet and an appointment to meet architect Forsey Page of Page & Steele. Dickinson's immediate impression of Toronto? "Shabby, dreary, and ugly." It was an impression he was determined to change and, in the span of just 11 years, he did.

Developer Leon Yolles hired Peter Dickinson in 1951 to design an

apartment-hotel he intended to build on Avenue Road where it soars upward towards St Clair Avenue. He named it Benvenuto. To build what Leon Yolles wanted and what Peter Dickinson was determined to design required innovative structural engineering as well as architecture. The developer's son, 26-year-old Morden Yolles, provided the engineering solutions.

Mordy's engineering allowed Dickinson to set broad concrete slabs on plain cylindrical columns, without drops or flares, to distribute floor load. This economy allowed Dickinson to achieve a low building form with generous ceiling height in a structure that seems to crouch, ready to spring from its hillside.



Benvenuto Place, Avenue Road, Toronto, 2016. Photo Richard Longley

Beth Tzedec Synagogue, Four Seasons Motor Hotel, Westbury Hotel, and Inn on the Park. In Montreal, the architect's work included the CIBC tower, which Mordy considers to be Dickinson's masterpiece.

In 1950s Toronto, where "nobody swings on Sundays," Peter and Vera Dickinson swung. They drove fast; they smoked; they drank; they partied. In the words of architecture critic Adele Freedman, "Peter and Vera Dickinson romp through Toronto like F. Scott Fitzgerald and Zelda. He the reckless artist, she the willing accomplice." And Peter designed: in his office, at home, on napkins, on the backs of cigarette packets, during his parties and ensuing hangovers, insisting, "Damn the fee, I want to do the job!"

In 1952, Mordy partnered with 30-year-old Roland Bergmann, "a genius; I could imagine the question and Roly could answer it." As well as their many collaborations with Peter Dickinson, Yolles and Bergmann's prodigies include the Katimavik inverted pyramid at Expo '67, Raymond Moriyama's Ontario

As well as Benvenuto Place, Peter Dickinson—mainly in collaboration with Morden Yolles—designed many of Toronto's most recognized Modernist projects: the Richmond-Adelaide Centre, O'Keefe Centre,



Scaramouche after the renovation with a magnificent view, 2016. Photo Richard Longley

Science Centre and Canadian Embassy in Tokyo, Ron Thom's Trent University, Bruce Kuwabara's Kitchener City Hall and for the Reichmann brothers, First Canadian Place in Toronto, Canary Wharf in London and Battery Park in New York.

Mordy cannot remember the Dickinsons' parties but he remembers well the parallel universe he and his wife Edie created in the 1950s and '60s. A European tour in 1959 inspired them to form a gourmet circle with friends who included George Minden, owner of the restaurant Three Small Rooms. At their potluck dinners the host provided the main course, while guests supplied appetizers, dessert and wine—creating oases in what was otherwise, with some brave exceptions, a culinary desert.

On October 15, 1961, six days short of his 36th birthday, Peter Dickinson died of the stomach cancer that had left him doubled over with pain without stemming his creative energy. The mark of his prodigious output is profound but too many of his works are doomed, some to lives not much longer than his. The Benvenuto survived, but by 1980, 25 years after it opened, its restaurant was tired. Mordy and Edie decided to re-invent it rather than close it.

The brick wall of the restaurant was blown out to reveal a spectacular view of the city. The new kitchen that thrusts into the dining room might belong to an ocean liner. Mordy, Edie and their friends tested potential chefs but none qualified. George Minden suggested a young Canadian who cooked for him and his family at their ski chalet in Switzerland. Morden invited the young man to Toronto and he agreed to come, provided he could bring a friend who worked at the Grand National Hotel in Lucerne.



Morden Yolles with Andy Bergmann at Scaramouche, 2016. Photo Richard Longley

Thus Mordy and Edie attracted Jamie Kennedy and Michael Stadlander who were destined to become two of the most sought after chefs in Ontario. And the Yolleses acquired a name for their new restaurant. During a holiday in Italy, they met artist David Schorr who had made sketches of the characters of the *Commedia dell'arte*—Harlequin, Columbine, Pantaloon, Dottore, Pierrot, Pulcinella ... and Scaramouche. The Yolleses bought them to adorn the walls of the restaurant taxi drivers had taken to calling "the Benny" and they re-named it, *Scaramouche*.

Jamie Kennedy and Michael Stadlander remember their time at Scaramouche fondly: Michael, smoking eels in the ravine beneath Benvenuto Place and both introducing *nouvelle cuisine*. But what gave them most trouble was cooking *à la minute*, that worked in small restaurants but not in one as large as Scaramouche, where guests might be forced to wait *une heure* to be served *à la minute*. After two years, they moved on—to careers that continue to have enormous influence on Ontario cuisine.

Sixty years after it was completed,

Benvenuto Place—Peter Dickinson's mid-century Modern masterpiece—has lived long enough to be designated heritage by the City of Toronto. This means it is not likely to be demolished, as too many of his buildings have been. Scaramouche flourishes too, under chef Keith Froggett, with Morden Yolles, its co-owner, a regular guest with an appetite for food, life and heritage—past and future.

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#### About the Author

Richard Longley joined ACO in 2005 and was ACO president from 2013 to 2015. As past president he remains very actively involved with the organization.



# Heritage on the Menu at the Revamped Guild Inn

by John P. Mason

Artist's rendition of the restored Bickford House and Guild Inn. Illustration courtesy of Dynamic Hospitality

**H**ospitality will soon be served again at Toronto's historic Guild Park & Gardens.

A 37,000-square-foot restaurant and event complex is now under construction at this 88-acre public space on the Scarborough Bluffs, about 20 kilometres east of Toronto City Hall. The \$20-million project centres on the adaptive reuse of a 1914 Arts and Crafts style country estate, known as the Guild, one of Toronto's designated heritage resources.

The shoreline setting offers spectacular views of Lake Ontario and tracts of Carolinian forest. It's also an important cultural landscape as, over the years, it has welcomed First Nations people and Irish pioneers, missionaries and the military, plus thousands of Torontonians, tourists and celebrities—ranging from Holland's royalty to Hollywood's movie stars.

For decades, the site was overlooked and underappreciated. Some visitors know it as a sanctuary for century-old architectural artifacts. A few know it as a place where hundreds of artists and artisans lived, worked and exhibited their crafts.

In the early 20th century, one of Toronto's prominent families, the Bickfords, acquired the property for an expansive country estate, with enough space to keep a stable of horses and to play polo.

The family's two-storey summer residence, known as "Bickford House,"

was built in the Period Revival style with Arts and Crafts detailing. This structure is being restored today as a modern restaurant—a site for weddings, corporate meetings and community activities. The project is a partnership between Dynamic Hospitality and Entertainment, the private company that will operate the dining and event development, and the City of Toronto, which manages much of the site as a city park.

"Citizens of the GTA will finally see the landmark location revived to its original splendour," notes Sam D'Uva, managing director at Dynamic. According to the company, the project includes a revamped restaurant within a restored historical building, plus contemporary-style additions—featuring a green roof—for separate banquet and meeting facilities that can host up to 1,000 guests.

The "Guild Inn Estate" restoration and design is a joint project of design consultant Giancarlo Garofalo Architect; Queen's Quay Architects International; and Philip Goldsmith Architect, as heritage consultant.

The new development's name pays homage to a pair of unconventional philanthropists—Rosa and Spencer Clark. Their passion for the arts led them to turn what began as the Bickford family estate into a unique restaurant and hotel that some still remember fondly as the old Guild Inn.

In 1932, Spencer Clark was a recently graduated engineer who had returned

from a tour of Europe full of energy and ideas. Rosa was a wealthy woman in her forties, widowed with four children. After a chance meeting, they discovered a shared urge to make the world better by supporting the arts. Rosa had just bought the secluded Bickford House when an unexpected romance unfolded. The two got married at Rosa's new estate and opened their home to artists and professional craftspeople who were struggling through the Depression.

Their dream was to create a vibrant, self-supporting community of artists. They based their concept on the European tradition of "guilds," groups of skilled artisans—including painters, sculptors, weavers, potters—who supported themselves and passed their skills on to apprentices.

The Clarks called it "Guild of All Arts." By providing free room and board to resident artists, the newlyweds became patrons of Canada's only artists' colony of that era. Public interest in the Guild grew and the remote site turned into an unlikely tourist destination. Rosa and Spencer began serving meals and offering accommodation in their home to guests. Soon, they expanded to become a formal inn and restaurant.

The Clarks owned and operated the Guild Inn for the next four decades, with a break during the Second World War when the isolated property was used for military training and as a hospital. By the 1950s, the Clarks were back in the hospitality business, hiring European chefs and hotel staff to give the Guild



Inn a bohemian flair unusual for “Toronto the Good.”

Guests included a young Glenn Gould; a popular modern sculptor, Sorel Etrog; best-selling novelist Arthur Hailey; and Academy Award winners Sir Lawrence Olivier and Sir John Gielgud. In 1967, royalty came calling when Queen Juliana of the Netherlands stayed at the Guild Inn for part of her official visit to Canada.

Starting in the 1950s, Spencer saw that notable buildings were getting torn down due to a lack of heritage protection. While advocating for better safeguards, the Clarks used their own money to acquire architectural artifacts from more than 50 demolished structures in Ontario, putting them on public display in the Guild’s gardens.

What they saved was irreplaceable and included several significant items:

- A façade from Toronto’s first skyscraper built in 1896. The 12-storey, Romanesque Revival Temple Building was designed by George Gouinlock for the Independent Order of Foresters;

- Marble columns and arches from the 1913 Beaux-Arts-style Bank of Toronto headquarters, designed by Carrère and Hastings. These elements were repurposed by Canadian architect Ron Thom to create Guild Park’s outdoor “Greek Theatre” in 1982; and

- Architectural details from the 1947 Bank of Montreal building, designed by Canadian sculptors Emanuel Hahn, Frances Loring, Florence Wyle and others.

As a result of the Clarks’ efforts, author Pierre Berton wrote that visiting Guild Park was “like a walk through history.”

But passing years were unkind. Rising property taxes in the 1950s forced the Clarks to sell off much of their 500-

acre estate. They ensured that much of the land, located in the woods near the Guild, became Scarborough’s first planned community by commissioning prominent urban planner, Dr. E.G. Faludi, for the project that became known as “Guildwood.”

Continuing competition from bigger, updated hotels and the opening of Highway 401 took more business away. Adding a modern hotel wing to the Guild proved unprofitable.

In 1978, the Clarks sold the Guild

Inn and their remaining property to the Ontario Government. Rosa died in 1981, a year before the Guild marked its 50th anniversary with an international sculpture exhibition. Operations were increasingly contracted out to private companies and municipal departments. Spencer’s death in 1986 led to further decline.

The Guild Inn locked its doors in 2001. A decade later, the building was listed among the country’s most endangered heritage sites by the National Trust of Canada—an example of “demolition by neglect.”

So how did this century-old structure begin its resurrection these past five years? The reasons are complex, but three factors have played a role:

- City of Toronto officials began adopting a more business-friendly approach.

- Dynamic entered into the complicated negotiations supported by an experienced and multi-disciplined team of architects, each with experience on major projects involving heritage properties.

- Public awareness increased about Guild Park’s value as a cultural landscape and a community resource as people began attending volunteer-run activities including festivals, performances, and walking tours. Visitors voiced strong support for immediate improvements.

The metamorphosis is underway to create an entirely refurbished facility by early 2017. When the doors open of the new Guild Inn Estate, Dynamic promises customers will once more enjoy a taste of the Clarks’ legacy in art, heritage and hospitality.

#### About the Author

*John P. Mason, BScF, BJ, MBA, is President of Friends of Guild Park & Gardens and long-time resident of Guildwood. He’s an active community volunteer in Guild Park’s ongoing revitalization.*



Frances Loring’s sculpture of the Ontario panel preserved from the 1947 Bank of Montreal building in downtown Toronto, 2015. Photo John P. Mason

# In the Shadow of Catholic Hill

## Guelph's notorious Albion Hotel

by Susan Ratcliffe

The lady in white wanders the third storey of the old hotel. Is she looking for her lover Al Capone or does she suffer the shame of her affair with the married man who jilted her? Was bootlegged beer smuggled through a tunnel up Catholic Hill and loaded into trucks behind Guelph's Church of Our Lady Immaculate?

The urban legends abound and the fascination with ghosts and hidden tunnels persists. The ancient floorboards echo with the sounds of 160 years of footsteps; The Albion Hotel has hosted spirits both bottled and unbottled. It is a Guelph landmark whose reputation for the best draught beer, great cheap food and good music made it a key memory of generations of University of Guelph students. It has a long and storied

history in the shadows of Catholic Hill.

A former hotel that holds the second-oldest liquor license in Ontario, also boasts the first outdoor patio built in Guelph.

In 1856, Sheriff Grange owned the empty lot at the corner of Norfolk and Macdonnell Streets until he sold it to John and Rosanna Stell. They built the first structure on the lot—a two-storey frame inn known as Stell's Tavern. In 1857, Patrick and Rosanna Murphy bought the business and renamed it the Murphy House. Although the construction date of the limestone building is unknown, by 1867 the building was listed as The Albion Hotel, and the Murphy family were owner-proprietors until about 1882. Constructed of limestone from local quarries, its three-foot thick walls are

supported from the basement by 18-inch timbers.

During the 1860s, some hotels were known as "farmers' houses," with stables but no room for vehicles. The Albion had large stables that were destroyed by fire in 1871. In the early years of the hotel, the beer was made from water piped down from a spring on Catholic Hill to the hotel's basement. The entrance to that water tunnel can still be seen at the foot of the lobby stairs. In 1869, Guelph with a population of 5,700 had more taverns than any other town of its size in Upper Canada. The average across the province was one hotel per 300 residents, but Guelph boasted one per 285 residents. No surprise that Guelph also had more temperance organizations than any other similar-sized city.

During the late nineteenth century,

The Albion, along with the twenty other hotels in the immediate area, served the needs of farmers coming into town for the weekly market and the Provincial Fair in front of City Hall. Large businesses, like the Bell Piano Company, Stewart Lumber, and Raymond Sewing Machines—each with more than 600 employees, and all situated downtown— attracted workers and salesmen who



The Albion Hotel, circa 1895. Photo courtesy of Guelph Museums image #2009\_32\_2163

needed temporary and long-term accommodation ... and refreshments.

In 1888, Macdonnell Street was known as Whiskey Street for the 22 hotels, saloons and bars that thrived in the area. In 1886, during the first of many eras of Prohibition, Albion owner John McAteer was charged for serving booze disguised in teacups. In 1913, rooms rented for \$1.50 per day, including choice of wine, liquors or cigars and first class stable accommodation.

The Prohibition years of the 1920s and 30s (after the passing of the Ontario Temperance Act in 1916 that made Ontario dry) slowed The Albion's business considerably, but also swelled the number of stories that swirled about it. Since 1850, Guelph had been the home of the Sleeman Brewery, which grew to be one of its largest industries. Present owner John Sleeman plays on his family history of "notoriety" during this era, a notoriety that is due to his great uncles and their bootlegging activities.

Al Capone ran illegal shipments of Sleeman beer into Detroit during this time, aided by the Sleeman brothers. Legend has it that a secret tunnel ran from the basement of The Albion, up Catholic Hill, to an opening at the back of the church where waiting trucks whisked away the brew to be smuggled in to the United States. Since the tunnel was built only large enough to convey the sweet spring water to The Albion basement for making beer, that story is purely an intriguing legend, one that persists among tunnel explorers today.

The story also persists that Al Capone had a room in the hotel and that he kept a mistress in that room for his bootlegging visits. Author Ed Butts in his book, *Outlaws of the Lakes: Bootlegging and smuggling from Colonial*



*The restored Albion Hotel, 2016. Photo Susan Ratcliffe*

*times to Prohibition* (2004), has proved this legend also to be false. Rocco Perri, a well-known gangster from Hamilton who closely resembled Al Capone was more likely the contact for the Sleeman brothers' smuggling operations in Guelph. Perri had a mistress in Hamilton who later committed suicide; she may have spent some time at The Albion and her notorious death may have been the source of the lady in white hauntings.

Certainly, the Sleeman company paid the penalty for their bootlegging and consequent tax evasion. In 1933, Sleeman Brewery was shut down for unpaid taxes with the promise of making no beer for 50 years. In 1983, John Sleeman, who knew nothing of his family history, was given the brewing book with the famous glass bottle designs and beer recipes. The Sleeman phoenix rose again in brewing history.

The Albion lives on in Guelph filled with traces of its long history: the trap door to the tunnel; hotel mailboxes in the lobby with the faint names of some

of the tenants of the original 22 rooms on its three floors; parts of its original bar and floorboards; original tables and chairs; a chrome stair railing with an Art Deco stylized "A" custom made for the stairs to the second floor; and an original Bell Piano made just down the road by workers who might have lived there.

The Albion's present owner, Andrew Donaldson, has done extensive renovations and improvements, such as restoring the limestone shell inside and out, replacing the windows and doors, and installing distinctive new decor. The Albion Hotel lives on as one of Guelph's most storied landmarks.

#### About the Author

*Susan Ratcliffe is a past president of ACO and a member of the Guelph-Wellington County branch. She is a regular contributor to ACORN and is chair of the magazine's editorial committee.*

# Gemütlichkeit returns to New Hamburg's The Imperial

by Marie Voisin

New Hamburg is a small town in Southern Ontario originally settled by Germans and Mennonites from Pennsylvania. In 1872, The Imperial Hotel was built and soon became the principal hotel in town. It offered accommodations to travellers, salesmen and new residents. It was so popular that a third floor was added to the

Hotel business had slowed down to an occasional renter. By 1982, the second and third floor windows were boarded over and only the main floor bar was used.

The superior accommodations were not the only things that made the hotel popular: the dining room, located behind the hotel lobby, was renowned for its home-cooked, hearty

after work until the bar closed. It was a meeting place for the townspeople—mainly the men. As liquor laws and lifestyles changed during the 1970s, no longer did patrons drink as long as they wanted to and then drive home. The ensuing years saw the number of patrons decline. By 2014, there were only a few regulars who patronized the bar. Gone were the days when 70 kegs of beer were consumed each week.

The Imperial became a victim of time and changing eating and drinking habits. Once the mainstay of the New Hamburg environment, it became an obsolete crumbling edifice. The Imperial was just another old hotel in small-town Ontario, outdated and deteriorating.

I purchased the decrepit Imperial Hotel in April 2014. I hired an architect, engineer and restoration-construction company to help me rescue it. The second and third floors were

transformed into apartments for the active seniors of New Hamburg. The seniors required accommodation downtown convenient to the amenities that they needed. Twelve luxurious, self-contained, one-bedroom apartments were designed in which the original details of the hotel were copied: baseboards, hardwood floors, window trim, doors and doorframes, windows and stained glass windows. Interesting



Imperial Hotel, New Hamburg, 1880s. Photo courtesy of [www.imperialnewhamburg.com](http://www.imperialnewhamburg.com)

building in 1902. The entire building was redecorated in 1908 in the latest Edwardian style. Interesting fact: the third floor never had heat or plumbing.

Business boomed until after the First World War. New Hamburg had been an industry-based town before the war. That all changed when the industrial boom deflated after the war. There were fewer travellers, salesmen and settlers. Soon after, the third floor of the hotel was closed off and by 1961, The Imperial

meals: cabbage rolls, pork ribs, pig tails, burgers, chicken dinners, corned beef and limburger cheese and onion sandwiches were its specialties. The full-menu-dining room gradually disappeared and only pub food was served.

The bar room was also a popular feature of The Imperial. It had the steady patronage of the workingmen in town. They stopped in at lunch and again

fact: many of the new tenants are the descendants of the original residents of New Hamburg.

On the exterior of building, the bricks were chemically treated to remove multiple layers of paint and one layer of stain. Ten thousand bricks were replaced, and all the bricks were repointed. Signboards, dentals, finials, and the parapet were all rebuilt based on the 1908 redecoration of the building. An addition was built on the back of the building for more apartments and a travel agency.

One of my goals was to create retail space for a brewery, bakery and restaurant/ bar on the main floor—businesses that New Hamburg had been renowned for. They all fell into place: the three businesses that had been the staples of the 1908 town would once more be part of New Hamburg's eating and drinking establishments.

New Hamburg's former brewery, The Rau Brewery, was well known to the residents of New Hamburg. Its Cream Porter, Bavarian Stock and Export Lager were delivered to the many establishments in the surrounding towns. The brewery would still be distilling had not Prohibition ended its life. The brewery closed its doors and became a cheese factory in 1916. The Oak Grove Cheese Factory is still in operation on the same site at the edge of downtown but the beer industry has disappeared.

However, a new brewery, The Bitte Schon Brauhaus, will soon open in The

Imperial. The brew master, Robin Molloy, a chemist by trade, studied brewing in Germany, and will brew German-style beer on site. Since Waterloo County is historically a German-settlement, its inhabitants will appreciate and welcome this beer.

New Hamburg always had a local bakery downtown. The smell of freshly baked goods would waft through the streets and entice people to consume bread and pastries. The former Luft Bakery was situated beside The Imperial for many years until it closed in 1963. The town has needed a bakery: Chrissie Boon

when the hotel was modernized. Under this paper, we found hand-painted walls in the same colour and style of the original lobby dating to 1872. The new restaurant/bar will retain some of the Edwardian themes: tin ceilings, arches, and high baseboards.

Thus the food and beverages that the historic hotel and New Hamburg were known for will be reestablished in The Imperial. Completion is projected for the spring of 2016.

The Imperial will rise again and become the lifeblood of the town: a restored heritage building,



The restored Imperial exterior, 2015. Photo Marie Voisin

of New Hamburg and owner of Too Nice to Slice Bakery in Kitchener, wanted to open a bakery in New Hamburg. She will open Sweets in The Imperial in the spring of 2016.

The restaurant in The Imperial will open later this year and will cater to families. The aroma of home-cooked meals will once again drift to the corner of Mill and Huron streets. When the 1960s panelling was removed from the former dining room, we discovered layers of beautiful wallpaper. This exquisite paper was most likely added in 1908

restaurant/bar, bakery, brewery and accommodations for the people of New Hamburg.

#### About the Author

Marie Voisin is a historian/writer and as of 2014, became a developer when she purchased and restored a heritage hotel. The 1872 building now houses twelve apartments for seniors, a bakery, restaurant, microbrewery and travel agency in the heart of New Hamburg. The project is targeted for completion in May 2016.

# The Demolition of the Mayfair Hotel

by Marg Rowell

The Mayfair Hotel at 11 Young Street and the section of the building known as 156–158 King Street West, occupied by Hymmen Hardware for many years, stood on the corner of King and Young streets in downtown Kitchener for 110 years.

Edward Lippert built the three-storey structure in 1905 in the Commercial Edwardian style. The building was of light brown brick with rectangular and segmentally arched windows and featured decorative brick labels over the windows and brick corbelling under the cornice. It was operated as a furniture store and an undertaking business. In 1929 a three-storey addition was added to the building, which then became the six-storey Mayfair Hotel. Operated by the Lipperts until the 1940s, it was then owned, for a number of years, by Frederick G. Gardiner, former Chairman of Metropolitan Toronto Council. Various businesses had occupied the ground floor. In January of 1975 the hotel closed.

The City of Kitchener purchased the building in 2001 as part of the larger Centre Block land acquisition. At the time the building served as affordable housing on the upper floors and housed a bar on the ground floor. Kitchener Housing was retained to manage the rental housing component.

In 2006 a staff report recommending that the Mayfair building and the neighbouring 156–158 King Street West, be listed on the Heritage Register, was endorsed by council. The next year the building became unoccupied, but the City continued to maintain the building ensuring that heat and hydro services, fire alarm monitoring and regular site

visits were carried on.

In 2008, with council approval, the City issued a notice of intention to designate the property under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. However, the City did not follow through with the designation and the next year the City sold the property to Andrin Investments Limited. In December 2012, with Council approval, the property was sold by Andrin to Ridgewood Holdings.

Late in January 2013 a water pipe inside the Mayfair froze and burst. The cleanup cost was \$250,000. In May 2013 another sale took place, this time to the Mayfair Development Corporation, after an inspection of the building by City staff confirmed the building was intact with no water leaks and no exposure to the elements. A year later the owner received a building permit to allow for the removal of interior finishes so that the building's full structure could be exposed to determine to what extent its redevelopment would be possible. It is this action—removing interior finishes—that Lisa Harmey and Simone Panziera, architects with experience working on

heritage buildings, feel weakened the structure.

In the spring of 2015 a water service break occurred in an underground pipe between the city valve and the building's



The Mayfair Hotel, circa 1930. Photo courtesy of Helen Lippert

Young Street foundation wall, which caused flooding inside the building and damaged its foundation. The City of Kitchener website describes what happened next:

The Chief Building Official inspected the property and after viewing the damage to the foundation, directed the owner to hire a structural engineer to make a recommendation for its repair. After discussion with the engineer, in light of the potential

risk to public safety, the City closed Young Street as a precaution. The City also retained MTE Consultants to conduct an independent inspection of the building. MTE provided a report stating that a combination of structural issues, some existing as well as the most recent foundation damage caused by the flood, rendered the building unsafe and unstable. The report indicated that the building poses immediate life safety concerns and is not repairable because any work inside would jeopardize the lives of workers. The Chief Building Official issued an Order to remedy an unsafe building under

PreservationWorks! program. However, the Chief Building Official refused to allow any further inspection of the building, citing safety concerns. Kae Elgie, ACO branch president, considered appealing the decision to withdraw the notice of intent to the Ontario Municipal Board, only to discover that this decision is not appealable.

On May 11, 2015 council met to consider withdrawing the notice of intention to designate the former Hymmen Hardware building next door to the Mayfair. This time the City's

gathered across the street from the Mayfair to watch the loss of yet another heritage building in Kitchener. The local newspaper, the Waterloo Region Record, had numerous photos and articles written by reporter Catherine Thompson about the Mayfair during the demolition.

In late May an Ad-Hoc Committee was formed that consisted of several architects and engineers as well as some members of the branch executive and other interested people including Ken and Helen Lippert. This committee

prepared a long list of questions to ask council about the steps involved, from beginning to end, that resulted in the demolition of the building.

At a meeting at the end of June our branch presented the questions to council and asked for an independent inquiry into the process of decisions leading to the loss of both the Mayfair and Hymmen buildings. Council refused the request for

the inquiry but did ask staff to answer as many questions as possible. The Ad-Hoc Committee is ongoing and hopefully, in the future, demolition of older buildings that the City owns will be prevented.



*The Mayfair Hotel and Hymmen Hardware in April 2015, just before demolition. Photo Kae Elgie*

the Ontario Building [Code] Act, which calls for the demolition of the property.

An emergency meeting of Kitchener council was called for April 23, 2015 to consider the withdrawal of the notice of intention to designate. At this point ACO North Waterloo Region, contacted by architects Panziera and Harme, intervened to ask that the City seek advice from a professional engineer experienced with heritage buildings before proceeding with demolition. ACO General Manager Rollo Myers wrote to Council offering the services of ACO's

Municipal Heritage Committee joined ACO-NWR and architects Harme and Panziera in asking that an expert in heritage renovations be allowed to evaluate the building. Again the request was refused. The withdrawal of the notice of intention to designate was approved and demolition started on May 19. At the end of May, the back wall, which was the one that was feared would collapse, was still standing. By June 12 the building was completely demolished.

Many people were very opposed to the demolition. A crowd always

#### About the Author

*Marg Rowell is Vice-President of the ACO North Waterloo Branch. She would like to acknowledge the contribution of Ken and Helen Lippert for many of the facts in the chronology of the demise of the Mayfair. She also appreciates the assistance from Kae Elgie, branch president.*

# Kensington Market

## A different type of Heritage Conservation District?

by Catherine Nasmith

**W**hat makes a place like Toronto's Kensington Market so culturally valuable ... and elusive to protect?

Formally recognized as a National Historic Site by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada in 2006, and listed on the Canadian Register of Historic Places in 2009, Kensington Market is a very special place in the City of Toronto. It is a highly desired neighbourhood, a popular tourist destination, and on countless school tours.

As a resident I worry that all that attention could be the kiss of death—that this vibrant place will be hollowed out by success and that rising prices will make it impossible for the entrepreneurs who are its lifeblood to find spaces to start or continue any and all kinds of independent businesses.

The market is under great pressure from the relentless Toronto condominium development boom closing in from all sides. Wars between owners of businesses that are local institutions and their landlords can become front-page news, and local causes célèbres.

One of the strategies being pursued to protect the market is a Heritage Conservation District (HCD). The City of Toronto has placed it on its priority list for study. HCD conjures up images of perfectly preserved places, places that have become gentrified caricatures of their former selves. Downtown Niagara-on-the-Lake is perfectly gorgeous, but is no longer the place of the butcher, baker or candlestick maker, no longer a place where purveyors of everyday goods such as groceries, hardware, or even a liquor store can compete.

Niagara-on-the-Lake is a conservation and economic success story, drawing tourists from around the world, but a similar result in Kensington Market would be a disaster.

Kensington Market is a place that supports a huge range of interesting enterprises and activities, where change is continuous, desired and healthy, as long as it continues to happen incrementally, in tiny measures, one shop at a time. Even today, a certain degree of planning anarchy is critical to the success of the place. For example, not long ago the City proposed new street lamps, the best of the lot modeled on “ye olde” style of fixtures. Once installed, they cast a ghastly white glow over the streets. The Business Improvement Association got right to work with Red Pepper Spectacle artisans and, in short order, hand-painted paper lanterns were hung over the lamps. They softened the light and added to the ramshackle liveliness that is the character of the market. Quirky and appropriately unique.

The National Historic Site Statement describes the character of Kensington:

It has been home to numerous successive waves of ethno-cultural communities who have immigrated to Toronto since the beginning of the 20th century; it is a microcosm of Canada's ethnic mosaic, where many different ethno-cultural communities, searching for an affordable home, have each added to the market's layers of cultural variety, maintained a dynamic, culturally diverse market, and contributed to a vibrant street life; and, its network of narrow streets and alleyways fronted by closely built rows of small, narrow houses many of which have been converted to



Shops on Augusta Avenue in Kensington Market, 2016. Photo Catherine Nasmith



commercial use by the addition of makeshift ground-floor shops and by small-scale purpose-built stores and cultural institutions such as the Kiever and Anshei Minsk synagogues collectively create a distinctive urban district.

In my view, the most important factor that supports the diversity of enterprise is the many tiny properties owned by a multiplicity of owners. The small lots evolved from an earlier residential subdivision. When the houses were converted to shops to supply the needs of the community there was no zoning system to stop it.

Some owners live over the store and having paid down the mortgage, are not subject to the vagaries of indiscriminate rent increases. Those are the most stable businesses in the market. There are also properties owned by the descendants of the original owners that are rented out. Some business owners prefer to be tenants, others would love to be able to buy their own premises. One owner may not need to get a high rent, or may be agreeable to construction work in exchange for rent. With many different players, many different arrangements are possible.

What the guidelines would need to address is prevention of land assembly, concentration of too many properties into single ownership. Such concentration leads to out-of-scale development and infiltration of the chain operations that are the only businesses that can afford the cost of operating in new construction. Last year the market



*Big Fat Burrito opened first in Kensington Market and has expanded to other sites across Toronto, 2016. Photo Catherine Nasmith*

community gathered over 100,000 signatures on a petition to keep a Walmart out of the neighbourhood. The developer got the message.

If it is possible to establish a minimum lot size, then surely a maximum lot size ought to be a possibility? In inquiring about this option from planning lawyers I have been advised that the planning system can introduce measures to regulate the maximum size of shops, or buildings, but measures to control ownership patterns are legally problematic.

Heritage Conservation District Guidelines are usually focused on the “heritage fabric” but are rarely designed to preserve the cultural activities that place supports—the intangible values of the place.

Ontario’s “values-based” heritage planning system offers us the chance to conserve Kensington Market differently. It will not be about preserving any one building, or even a whole lot of buildings, but preserving the way these tiny

properties interact. Most buildings could be replaced over time, one at a time, and still support the liveliness of the local culture. Ramshackle, makeshift, ad hoc aren’t terms one usually finds in a District Guideline.

A District Guideline for Kensington Market would be more about what property owners can do than what they can’t. The guideline would need to be able to encourage and support the ongoing small-scaled anarchy that is the lifeblood of the market. Its fundamental question will be “can or should we regulate anarchy?” Just what are the minimum protections needed to support the anarchic evolution of Kensington Market?

#### About the Author

*Catherine Nasmith, OAA FRAIC CAHP, is a resident of Kensington Market, an architect and heritage planner. She is currently President of both ACO and ACO Toronto.*

# Make Time for Cambridge Farmers' Market

by Marilyn Scott

Market buzzing with shoppers, 2008. Photo Linda Fegan, City of Cambridge

If you plan to shop at the Cambridge Farmers' Market, don't be in a hurry. This market is all about time: the span of time rooted in the community; the time it takes to stop and chat with friends and neighbours, and the time it takes to appreciate the bounty that's grown or raised or harvested and brought to market for our benefit.

My family and I have been life-long market shoppers, so much so that the Saturday morning routine defines—even anchors—our week. We grab my grandmother's woven wicker basket, and head into the Galt

section of Cambridge to stock up for the coming week, just as generations before us have done.

This marketplace has been in continuous operation in the same location since around 1830, which makes it one of the oldest in the country. In 1887, a one-storey vegetable market opened, and was enlarged with a two-storey addition in 1896 under the

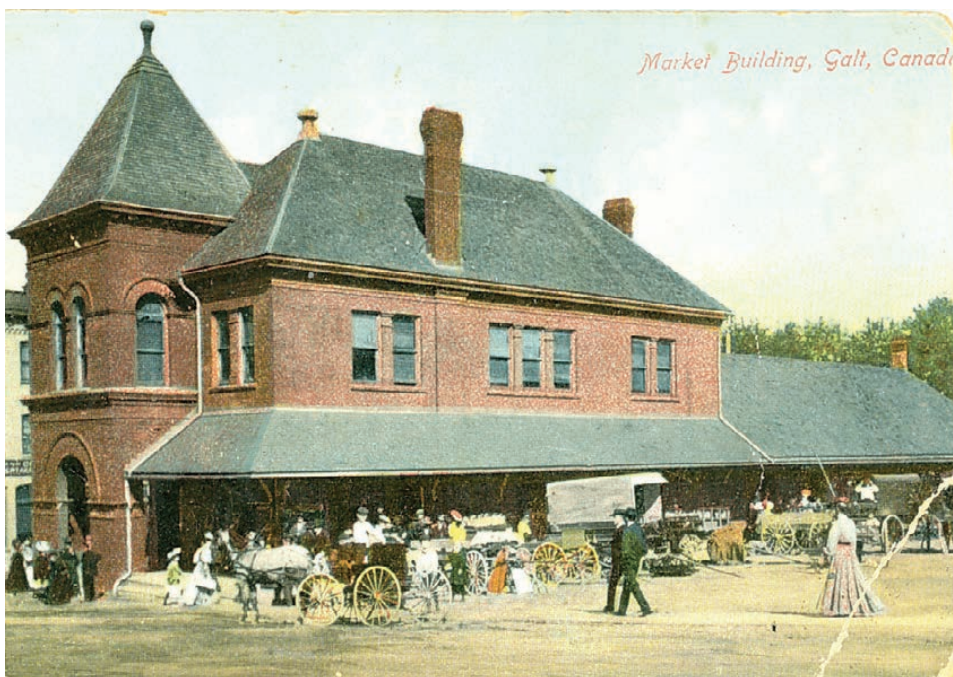
direction of architect Fred Mellish.

Mellish was a local architect who also oversaw the design and construction of the Galt Fire Department Hall in 1898 (now the Fire Hall Museum) and the nearby Galt Carnegie Library in 1902, which today houses private offices. Each of the market building, the City Hall and

the arcaded tower entrance. Also notable is the market verandah which runs the full length of the building, providing shelter for shoppers. Closer examination reveals many original details such as the windows, transom lights, wood cornices and decorative brick mouldings.

The market experience encompasses

more than the building however. It's also about the people. It's about chatting with the vendors—all of whom come from within 100 km of the market—about their wares. We've interacted with vendor children as they learned how to make change, and witnessed the transition as they sprout up taller than their parents. Some eventually take over the business as it's



The farmers' market more than a century ago. Photo courtesy of the Cambridge Archives

the Fire Hall Museum have distinctive towers, which echo each other for an interesting heritage streetscape.

In 1984, the Cambridge Farmers' Market building was designated by the City of Cambridge, under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* and it is documented in the city's Heritage Property Inventory. It is described as Romanesque Revival, and one of its most distinctive features is

handed from one generation to the next.

At a farm market, the passing of the seasons is tangible. One of the highlights of the growing year is the arrival of those first fresh harbingers of spring. Rhubarb, asparagus, fiddleheads, tender plants for the garden ... and new-crop toddlers, lurching around and hovered over by their young parents.

Then we race through the growing

season, as just-picked fruits and vegetables come in fast and furious. There's nothing quite so alive as the combination of sights and sounds and scents at a farmers' market: buskers, dogs on leash, fresh bundles of flowers, scents of food samples wafting through the air, bundle buggies and strollers laden with provisions. Shoppers are tempted with an abundance of fresh meats, baked goods, cheese, cold cuts and sausages, European breads, fresh poultry, maple syrup, jams and honey, and farm fresh eggs. Customers cruise the aisles and stop to sample specialty teas, or morsels of salami, or Ontario wines.

Trends come and go, but some endure longer than others. Eating well is hardly a trend, as a 180-year market tradition attests, but there's a renewed embrace of fresh, locally sourced consumables. Many farmers' markets pop up from spring to fall, where the slow food movement, eschewing harmful chemicals for organic grown, supporting local farmers and producers, and preserving agricultural lands all coalesce.

Welcome to the Slow Marketing Movement.

#### Facts

*The market building is owned and operated by the City of Cambridge, and assisted by a Market Advisory Committee comprised of vendors, city staff and local citizens.*

*The building was designated in July, 1984, for architectural and historical reasons.*

*Cambridge Farmers' Market is located at 50 Dickson Street in Cambridge, Ontario.*

*Open year round: Saturdays 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.*

*Seasonal Wednesday markets, May through November*

#### About the Author

*Marilyn Scott is a member of ACO Cambridge (formerly Heritage Cambridge), a former board member, and an active volunteer with numerous cultural organizations in Cambridge and Waterloo Region.*

## ERIC ARTHUR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD Presented to Rollo Myers

The ACO's founder, Eric Ross Arthur, initiated and inspired the preservation movement in Ontario. This award is presented in recognition of outstanding contributions to heritage conservation in Ontario over a sustained period of time. At ACO's Awards Dinner 2015, the award was presented to Rollo Myers.

For the more than 40 years since he arrived from Australia, Rollo has spent considerable time working in—and contributing to—the field of heritage conservation. He has applied his engineering and architectural knowledge, and his love of the heritage of Toronto and the province, to matters important to the ACO.

Through his company, Topographics, Rollo produced impressive and accurate three-dimensional models of the City of Toronto, the Town of York and Fort York using a practice he invented. They are now housed in Toronto City Hall, the museum of Toronto's First Post Office, and at Fork York. Among his many contributions to heritage preservation, Rollo played an instrumental role in establishing the Cabbagetown Heritage Conservation District and he served on the Toronto Historical Board for six years. He served as Ontario Governor on the Heritage Canada Foundation and has been recognized with the Award of Merit from Heritage Toronto, the Jane Jacobs Medal, Heritage Toronto Special Achievement Award, and the Queen's Jubilee Medal.

The state of the province's architectural heritage would not be what it is today without the significant contributions of Rollo Myers. He continues to advance the field as ACO's Manager, a position which he has held since 2004.

Congratulations Rollo!

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"The Falls in Bala, Ontario." ©Amy Calder, 2015

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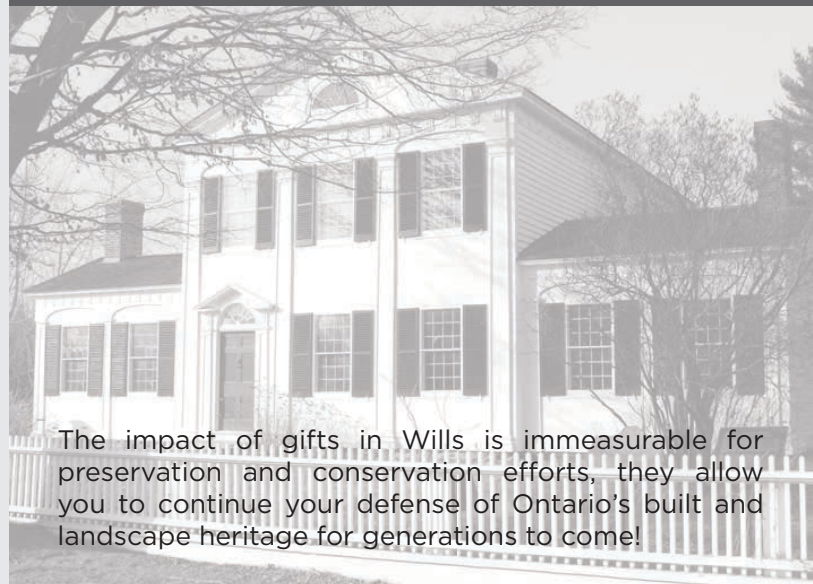
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# Burns Night at the George Brown Chefs' House

by Richard Longley



Sword dance in the open kitchen as Burns Night dessert is plated, The Chefs' House, 2016.

Photo Bill Taylor

The birthday of Robert Burns is a grand occasion at George Brown College's The Chefs' House in Toronto. There's a piper and highland dancers, Burns recitations and, for nourishment: *cullen skink* (smoked haddock, potato and onion soup); *neeps* and *tatties* (turnip atop mashed potato); *haggis*, that "great chieftain o' the puddin' race" (sheep's *pluck*—heart, liver and lungs—ground with onion, oatmeal, suet and nutmeg, simmered in a sheep's stomach); a sufficiency of Scotch whisky and chasers of Scottish ale; and, for dessert, marmalade pudding topped

with *cranachan* (whipped cream, whisky, honey and raspberries).

The Chefs' House is the most recent resident of 215 King Street East. Designed by architects Wickson and Gregg for the A. Muirhead Paint Company in 1914, it's a four-storey, brick industrial building of a kind that once packed the old city of Toronto. Between 1981 and 2004 it was the home of Pasquale Brothers' delicatessen.

In 2008 renovation by architects Gow Hastings and Kearns Mancini transformed the building into the restaurant of the George Brown Chef School. Here students learn restaurant skills, front and back, from Master Chefs John Higgins and John Lee and "from the

best teacher—experience." Outside, apart from signs and 15-foot-high ground floor windows, there is little alteration; but inside, within walls of exposed brick, there is a twenty-first century dining room and a brilliantly lit open kitchen, where students can be seen by guests as they work their way to becoming chefs of the future.

The Chefs' House is highly recommended, but it's popular so best make your reservation well in advance!

## About the Author

Richard Longley joined ACO in 2005 and was ACO president from 2013 to 2015. As past president he remains very actively involved with the organization.



The Chefs' House, George Brown College, 215 King Street East, Toronto, 2016. Photo Richard Longley

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*The ACO is especially grateful to the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport and the Ontario Heritage Trust for their continuing support.*

# BACK TO SCHOOL

Call for Submissions • ACORN Fall 2016

There are examples across Ontario of where education and heritage intersect:

- adaptive reuse of former schools
- educational programs in heritage conservation
- historically significant schools
- heritage buildings preserved on campuses
- heritage instruction on YouTube or other e-platforms and
- inspiring people who teach about heritage

For the fall 2016 issue of ACORN we're asking for enlightening submissions about the education/heritage connection from which we can all learn. We want lessons that "encourage the conservation and reuse of structures, districts and landscapes" of educational and cultural heritage significance. So sharpen your pencils and share your new twist on "old school" education.

Preference will be given to engaging articles either 500 or 1000 words in length accompanied by high resolution photographic images (300 dpi or greater). Photography guidelines are posted on [www.arconserv.ca](http://www.arconserv.ca).

Queries may be sent to [liz.lundell@rogers.com](mailto:liz.lundell@rogers.com) and the deadline for submission is July 29, 2016.



*The 1890 Glen Orchard schoolhouse now serves as the Women's Institute, Township of Musoka Lakes, 2008. Photo Liz Lundell*



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