

NEWS and views

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Simcoe County Historical Association

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In this issue...

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Annual General Meeting: May 31, 2016

On Tuesday May 31, 2016, our Annual General Meeting will take place at the Midhurst United Church. Dinner will be served at 6:00 p.m., followed by our speaker, Tom Villemaire, then our business meeting.

Tom Villemaire has an extensive website under his name and Historylab.ca He is the co-author of *Colossal Canadian Failures: A Short History of Things That Seemed Like a Good Idea at the Time*, and an expert on Canada's great innovative spirit gone haywire.

Tom states that he grew up in Barrie and Simcoe County. In the early 1990s, he was working on a book about offbeat stories in the area that would help interest people in history, but the publisher went down the tubes. A while later, his buddy, Randy Richmond, pitched his publisher, Dundurn, on the idea. They liked the idea, but wanted something more national in scope.

So they both started looking for

weirdness across the country, and found it in history books, newspapers, auditors' reports, interviews with museum curators and historians.

In the end, they had over 300 pages of stories and had a really good response. In fact the first book was mentioned in the House of Commons in regards to the gun registration debate.

The first book came out in the fall of 2002 and the second came out in the spring of 2006. They were fun to do. He has since started a podcast in a similar vein, available on iTunes, called "Seemed like a good idea at the time."

Tom Villemaire is a newspaper reporter and editor and a freelance writer. He lives alone in Balaclava, Ontario, and, at times when she permits, with his girlfriend in Toronto. A failed astronaut and garbage man, Villemaire lowered his sights and settled upon writing as a career.

SCHA 2016 Schedule

April 12 – 7:30 p.m. – John Carter – 1837-1838 – Barrie City Hall Rotunda

April 26 – 7:30 p.m.– Jamie Hunter – Champlain in Simcoe County – Barrie City Hall Rotunda

May 31 – 6:00 p.m. – Tom Villemaire – *Colossal Canadian Failures* – Midhurst United Church, Doran Road, Midhurst

After a delicious dinner, we will hold our Annual General Meeting and elections, followed by Tom's presentation.



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

Our History – Your Story: Barrie Historical Archive

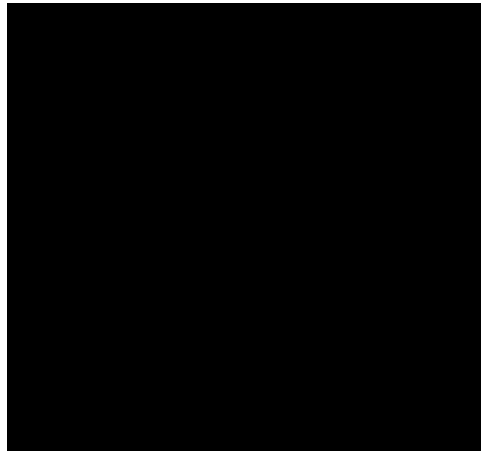
by Dr. Travis Doucette

It's both a wonder and a concern that Barrie doesn't have a museum. With the advances of technology in the last number of years, there has been no excuse to establish an online museum except for time. Well, the time has come. As of January this year, a group of 20 plus eager local historians have embarked on Barrie's most contemporary, advantageous historical pursuit...perhaps ever! The Barrie Historical Archive (BHA) is an exciting new project dedicated to celebrating and preserving "Our History - Your Story".

For a number of years I have been one of three administrators of Barrie's largest Facebook Group (nearly 6000 members) called "If You Grew Up In Barrie You Remember". Social media has provided unprecedented access to scores of never-seen before and unpublished photos of historic 20th Century Barrie. The amount of unseen historical content in Barrie is staggering.

Realizing both the potential for this material to be preserved as well as the limitations of the Facebook platform, I knew something had to be done. Fellow local historian and Facebook group administrator, Nancy Dickey, shared my vision to see an online archive

established that centralized Barrie's content in a way that could be showcased, searchable and enjoyed for free by the public. With the added support of local project manager Deb Exel, our Mayor, Jeff Lehman and much of City Council we had the nucleolus of our new non-for-profit group.



Fast-forward two months and our membership is 20 plus people strong. We are united under a vision to launch the BHA on September 21, 2016, 7 p.m. at an event that will bring back all surviving former mayors for a show-stopping, mouth-dropping, "one night only" free nostalgic event in Barrie's Council Chamber.

The response from the public in every

way has been nothing short of overwhelming. Barrie is ready and excited for this project. Every week we are spending time with local families, business people, and photographers from around the world, unearthing hundreds of photos, many which have never been seen before. The site will launch with over 2000 photos but will also include a handful of historical videos and interviews as well as oral histories (stories) of the great people who have built our city.

The members of our group are second-to-none and have channeled their passion and love for Barrie into countless hours of photo sorting, organizing and labeling. Establishing a legitimate archive from the ground up is not for the faint of heart and requires a rigid attention to detail. That said, we are always looking for more to join our incredible team and have a wide range of areas where folks can serve including fundraising, public relations, event management, administration, archival research and organization. If you have a positive attitude, are a team player and love Barrie, there's a space for you on this team as we work together to celebrate and preserve "Our History - Your Story".



The SCHA acknowledges the financial support of the County of Simcoe and of the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Culture.



Simcoe County Historical Association Executive

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For Membership Information, contact

Earl Elliott, Membership Chair	705-734-9808	earl.elliott@rogers.com
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Upcoming Orillia Speaker Series Information

March Meeting

Michael D. Stevenson is an Associate Professor in the Department of History at Lakehead University. He specializes in Canadian military and diplomatic history and has published *Canada's Greatest Wartime Muddle: National Selective Service and the Mobilization of Human Resources during World War II* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001). Dr. Stevenson is also an editor with the Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell project based at McMaster University. He co-edited Volume 21 of this series, *How to Keep the Peace: The Pacifist Dilemma, 1935-1938* (Routledge, 2008),



and he is presently editing Volumes 22 and 23 covering Russell's life and writings from 1938 to 1944.

On March 16 at 7:30, Dr Stevenson will present *Bertrand Russell and*

Patricia Spence: Lives in Letters.

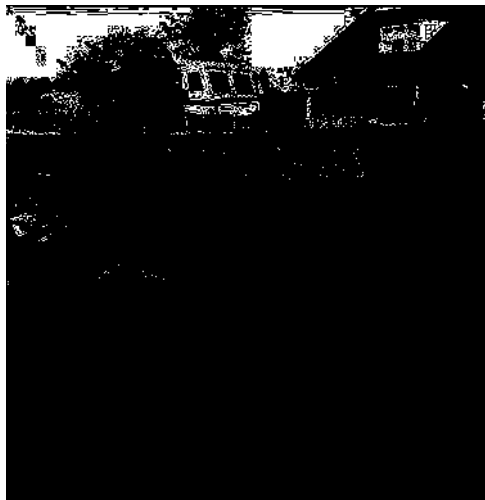
This talk will provide an overview of the life of Bertrand Russell, the Nobel Prize-winning British philosopher and peace activist, and then focus specifically on Russell's relationship with Patricia Spence, his third wife, between 1931 and 1949. The recent lifting of the embargo on the voluminous correspondence between Russell and Spence allows important new insight to be gained into Russell's professional life and his complex personal affairs in the 1930s and 1940s.

Admission to the talk is free and all are welcome.

April Meeting

Alan Brunger, retired professor of Geography at Trent University will be the guest speaker on April 20 at 7:30. Alan has completed research on the Fairmile motor launches. These boats navigated the Trent Waterways and served in the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) in World War II in flotilla and anti-submarine patrol between 1941 and 1945.

Orillia's own Hunter Boat Works, a well known boat building firm located on the shores of Lake Couchiching in Orillia was one of a number of companies in Canada chosen by the the RCN to build



Fairmiles for use in the War effort. Seven of the boats were built by Hunter Boats.

From his extensive research,

numerous photos of the Fairmiles during their journey along the Trent Canal en route to the Gulf of the St. Lawrence and the North Atlantic and interviews with Donald Hunter late President of Hunter Boats Ltd, Alan will tell the story of the Orillia produced Fairmiles and the important role they played in the war effort.



May Events

On May 18 at 7:30, Jim Dykes will be speaking on the building of the boathouse at the Leacock Museum. More details are available at the March and April meetings.

As well in May, the 12th annual Carmichael Lecture will be held at the Orillia Museum of Art and History on Thursday, May 12 at 7:30. Tickets are \$15.00 for adults and \$5.00 for students and can be purchased at OMAH. The Carmichael Lecture is

hosted by the History Committee in May each year to honour the memory and contribution of Orillia born Group of Seven artist Franklin Carmichael. This year the lecture will compare artistic careers of Carmichael (1890-1945) and Lucius O'Brien (1832-1899).

Lucius O'Brien was born in Shanty Bay. His parents were among the earliest settlers in this area. His artistic talent from an early age was encouraged by his family. In addition

to his paintings and art exhibitions, O'Brien was a leader in founding the Royal Canadian Academy and the National Gallery.

Both Carmichael and O'Brien were exceptional painters who painted the Canadian landscape and used the local scenery for their early paintings. The 2016 OMAH Carmichael Lecture, using illustrations of their work, will compare the artistic careers of O'Brien and Carmichael, in a dialogue of discovery.

Historical Thinking Summer Institute: July 11-16, Vancouver, B.C.

Historical thinking is now a foundation for history and social studies curricula across the country and internationally, and museum and heritage educators are similarly embracing it. This Historical Thinking Summer Institute is designed for teachers, curriculum developers, professional development leaders, historians and museum educators who want to enhance their expertise at designing history courses, programs, and educational resources with explicit attention to historical thinking.

Attendees of the 2016 Historical

Thinking Summer Institute will participate in a variety of activities including presentations, workshops, field trips, discussions of readings, guest lectures, and group work to explore six historical thinking concepts.

These concepts will shape our exploration of the substantive theme of migrations, Aboriginal/settler relations, resource extraction, and labour history. Visits to museum exhibitions and collections storage will provide the opportunity to discuss the role of material culture in history education and historical

interpretation.

Sessions will be led by Dr. Lindsay Gibson from the University of Alberta and Dr. Viviane Gosselin from the Museum of Vancouver.

Founding director Dr. Peter Seixas, University of British Columbia, will present the Introduction to the Historical Thinking Concepts on Monday, will join us for the group dinner on Wednesday night, and will attend the final group presentations on Saturday.

See canadashistory.ca for details. Registration deadline is May 30.

OHS Reach Project Spring Webinar: Project Management for Digitization Programs

Session 1/3: Planning Your Project - Wednesday March 23, 2016

Session 2/3: Implementing Your Project - Wednesday March 30, 2016

Session 3/3: Bringing Your Project Online - Wednesday April 6, 2016

(Sessions will run from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.)

Where: Online

Cost: \$25 OHS members, \$50 non-members, for all three sessions

Are you thinking of digitizing your local history collection? Not sure where to start? Join Loren Fantin and Jess Posgate of OurDigitalWorld to talk about approaching digitization projects of all sizes. Learn more

about engaging your community by inviting users to contribute, volunteer, comment and share your history online effectively and for long-term discovery.

Every collection is unique, whether it's photos, town records, oral histories or local newspapers, but digitization projects follow similar patterns, requirements and challenges. Let's take the mystery out of digitization so you can share your community history with the world!

To register, go to <https://ontariohistoricalsociety.ca/index.php/services/webinars>

Loren Fantin is currently helping steer OurDigitalWorld, a not-for-

profit organization promoting sustainable digitization initiatives for open access to community collections. Her professional experience includes positions as an assistant archivist, project archivist, and adjunct professor, as well as project manager for online access initiatives.

Jess Posgate's background is in the Humanities and Information Management. She has been the Project Coordinator for OurDigitalWorld since 2008. Jess' work includes coordinating digitization projects, database migrations, local history projects, and independent website design.

OPP Museum 5th Annual Pedal and Run for the Past

On September 11, 2015 after a mist of morning rain, almost 50 cyclists, runners and walkers teamed up at Hardwood Ski and Bike to enjoy a picture-perfect fall day in the hills and rustic scenery of Oro-Medonte to help raise approximately \$20,000 in The Friends of The OPP Museum's fifth annual Pedal (and Run) for the

Past (P4P) fundraising event. Seeing so many enthusiastic cyclists on the roads of Oro and the Hardwood trails wearing the Friends cycling jersey was an inspiring sight and helped raise the profile of both the Friends and the Museum.

Planning is already underway for our 2016 event, which will be held on

Friday, September 9, 2016 at Ste. Marie Among the Hurons near Midland, and feature routes and trails through the scenic hills of Tiny and Tay townships and the towns of Midland and Penetanguishene. Keep an eye on our website for more information.

Visit www.oppmuseumfriends.ca

Arts at OMAH

This spring will be an artist's, storyteller's and film lover's dream at the OMAH. Here is a sample of the many activities available at the museum.

March 19, 7 p.m. – *Strong Women: Stepping Up!* An evening of stories and conversation for World Storytelling Day

April 7, 1:30 p.m. – Join us at OMAH for an afternoon of film, discussion and of course popcorn! OMAH will be screening a film by Louise Bourgeois titled *The Spider, The Mistress and The Tangerine*. Following the screening, there will be a discussion on the film and the life of Louise Bourgeois.

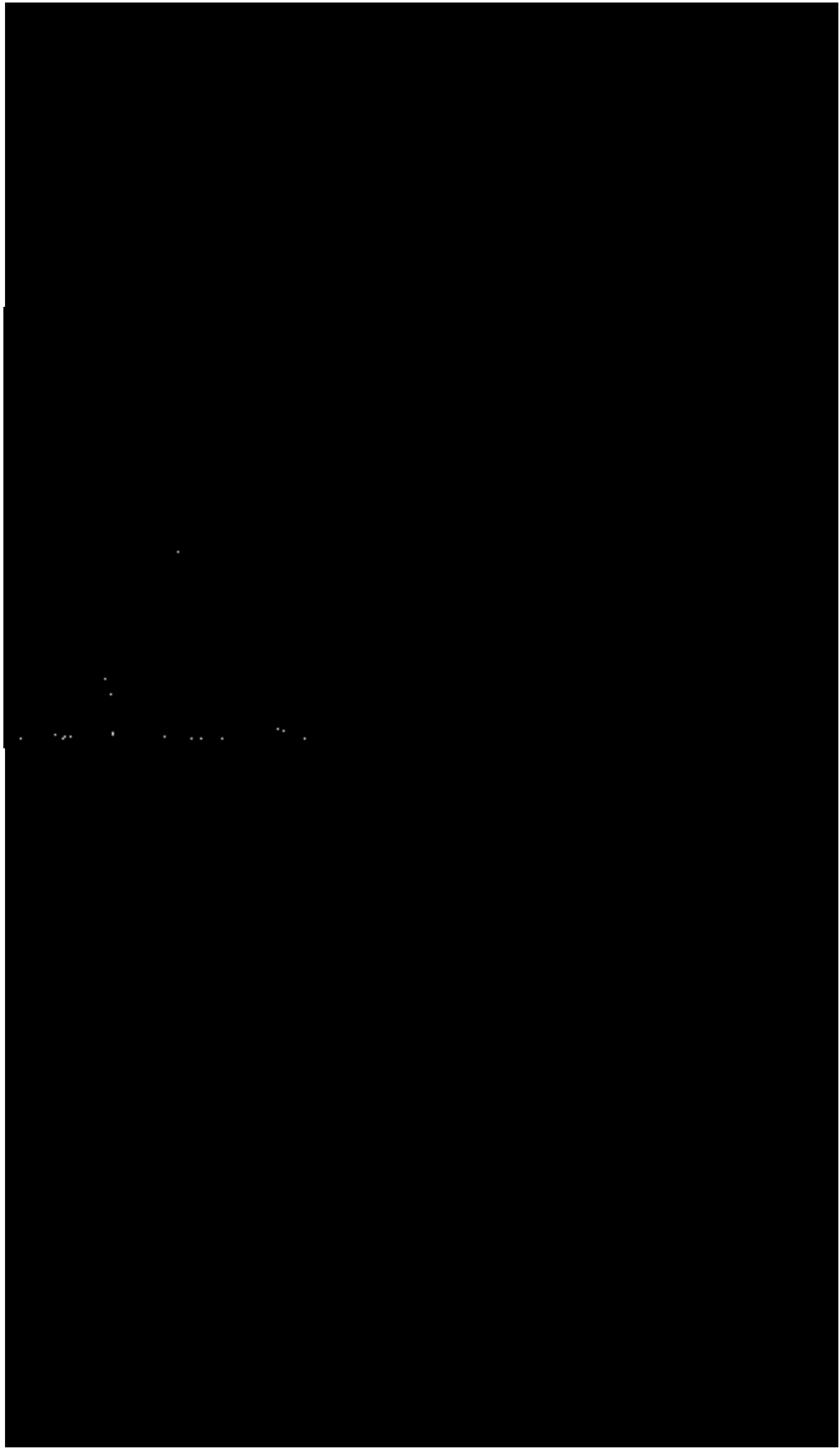
April 9, 11 a.m. – *Slow Art Day* focuses on the experience between the viewer and the art. Typically, an individual will look at a piece of art for an average of 8 seconds. During Slow Art Day, each individual will look at five pieces of art for ten minutes each. The five pieces of art work featured will be from the 20th International Women's Art Day show and include works by: Jennifer Copeland, Kathryn Kaiser, Elizabeth Martel, Lisa Tessman and Georgeanne Matthews.

A discussion period with refreshments will be held after the viewings where participants can talk with each other and the five featured artists about their experience and any questions that may have arisen while viewing each piece of art. This can be a time where participants can discuss the nature of the art, how it was created, what themes or questions the art brings to the audience and much more.

April 15, 7 p.m. – *100 artists, 100 works of art, 100 tickets at \$100 each!*

Tickets will be sold for \$100 each which guarantees the purchaser 1 original work of art. The catch? They don't know whose work of art they'll get. Artwork will be displayed with only a number. The guest's number will be selected and that is the work of art they'll get to keep! See <http://www.orilliamuseum.org/> for more details.

The Andrew Hunter Award 2016



COMING EVENTS

of our Member Societies

Alliston Historical Society – contact Jackie Baillie

705-435-5626 or
cknowles@rogers.com

Meet at Museum on the Boyne,
Fletcher Cres., Alliston 2:00 p.m.
Second Wednesday of the month
February- June and October-
November

Barrie Historical Association – contact Mark Fisher

www.barriehistorical.com

Coldwater Canadiana Heritage Museum – contact Elaine Scott

1474 Woodrow Road, Coldwater

Collingwood District Historical Society – contact Joan Miller

705-445-1119

Meet at Leisure Time Club, 100
Minnesota Street, Collingwood –
7:00 p.m.

www.historicallyspeakingcdhs.ca

**April 4 – 40th Anniversary
Celebration – Rob Leverty, Executive
Director of the Ontario Historical
Society**

Essa Historical Society – contact

Olive Lee 705-458-9971
teddylee1@rogers.com

Meet at Thornton Library fourth
Saturday of the month except July,
August and December – 1:30 p.m.

Friends of Historic Fort Willow – contact Gord Hanson

fortwillow.com

Friends of The OPP Museum – contact Dave Osborne

705-330-4178
support@oppmuseumfriends.ca
www.oppmuseumfriends.ca

**Sept. 9 – Pedal and Run for the Past
fundraiser in Midland**

Proceeds help us promote and
support The OPP – see page 4

MuseumGenealogical Society – contact Nancy Leveque

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

www.simcoebogs.com

**Apr. 9 – Lori Oschefski – British
Home Children**

**May 7 – Fran Murphy – New
England Research**

**Huronian Museum Huron
Ouendat Village**

549 Little Lake Park Road, Midland
– 705-526-2844

www.huroniamuseum.com

**Apr. 29 – Huronia Museum Heritage
Dinner 6–10 p.m.**

North Simcoe Sports and Recreation
Center, 527 Len Self Blvd, Midland

**Innisfil Historical Society – contact
Donna Wice**

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

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

250 Fletcher Crescent in Riverdale
Park, Alliston – 705-435-3900 ext.
1802

Orillia History Speaker Series – contact Ninette Gyrody

Meet on the 3rd floor of the Orillia
Museum of Art & History, 30 Peter
Street South. – 7:30 p.m.

**Mar. 16 – Professor Michael
Stevenson – British philosopher and
social critic Bertrand Russell**

**Apr. 20 – Alan Brunger – Fairmile
Motor Launches and Orillia's Hunter
Boats**

May 12 – Carmichael Lecture

**May 18 – Jim Dykes – Leacock
Museum Boathouse**

See page 3 for more details

Orillia Museum of Art and History

30 Peter Street South, Orillia –
705-326-2159

www.orilliamuseum.org

See page 5 for details

**Penetanguishene Centennial
Museum and Archives – contact
Nicole Jackson**

13 Burke St. at Beck Blvd.
Call 705-549-2150

www.pencenmuseum.com

**Apr. 13 – 7:00 p.m. – The Ship's
Company of Penetanguishene**

**May 4 – 7:00 p.m. – Dr. Jennifer
Bazar – History of Waypoint Mental
Health Centre presentation**

**June 1-29 – P.S.S. Remembers
exhibit**

Ramara Historical Society – contact Cathy Westcott

westcott.cathy963@gmail.com

Meet at Udney Community Centre,
2347 Concession Road 10 (east of
Orillia)

7:00 p.m. Third Thursday of the
month (except July and August)

**Simcoe County Museum – contact
Kelley Swift-Jones**

1151 Highway 26, Midhurst –
705-728-3721 museum.simcoe.ca

Apr. 17 – Earth Day at the Museum

**Apr. 26/27 – Simcoe County
Heritage Fair**

**Stayner Heritage Society – contact
Dorothy Millsap**

www.staynerheritagesociety.com
705-428-2540

**Tecumseth & West Gwillimbury
Historical Society – contact
Patricia Blackstock**

Meet at Tec We Gwill Hall, Newton
Robinson, 7:30 p.m.
Third Monday of the month January-
May and September-November
416-247-6551
