

# NEWS and views

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Simcoe County Historical Association

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Visit our Website

[www.simcoecountyhistory.ca](http://www.simcoecountyhistory.ca)

# SCHA

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

## SCHA presents A Day of Culinary Pioneer Delights in celebration of Heritage Day 2008

Plan to attend our latest unique annual Heritage Week event on Saturday, February 23, 2008, at the Georgian College Dining Room, One Georgian Drive, Barrie, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Lunch will be provided. And what a lunch it will be!

This year, we have invited Dorothy Duncan, past executive director of the Ontario Historical Society and respected pioneer cooking expert, to bring us knowledge of culinary traditions through demonstration. We will also welcome a lecture on her work on the life and times of Simcoe County VIP, Kate Aitken.

The Simcoe County Museum will provide an artifact display, and we will enjoy a old-fashioned baking contest – see details on page 4!

Tickets are available by sending your \$30 fee to

**Simcoe County Historical Association,  
Box 144, Barrie, ON L4M 4S9**

(You could include your payment with your annual membership renewal and save a stamp!) Tickets will be sent by mail for orders received before February 1st. After that date, you can pick them up at the door.

### Tentative schedule:

10:00 – Registration and coffee	1:15 - 2:15 – Dorothy Duncan presents Kate Aitken
10:30 - 12:00 – Demonstration	2:15 - 2:30 – Break
12:00 - 1:15 – Lunch and Baking Contest Judging	2:30 - 3:00 – Baked Goods Auction

### SCHA 2008 Schedule - Note March Location Change!

February 23 – Heritage Week Event with **Dorothy Duncan**, see above

March 18 – **Heather Kirk**, local author, with her new book *Who Were the Whiteoaks and Where Was Jalna?* at **Whispering Pines Seniors' Residence, 140 Letitia Street in Barrie, 7:30 p.m.**

April 15 – An Evening at Shaw's Pancake House, **Mrs. Shaw** will recount over 100 years of syrup production and traditions, #493 Oro-Medonte Line 14 South, Orillia, Time and cost TBA in *March News and Views* (bring your empty stomach).

May 20 – Annual General Meeting and Dinner at Stevenson Farms, Alliston

## President's Message

Simcoe County is blessed with not only a broad and exciting history, but also dedicated professionals and volunteers who work selflessly to promote and protect that history.

Although a bit dated, my 2004 copy of the *Ontario Heritage Directory*, published by The Ontario Historical Society, lists 70 different groups, organizations, and institutions actively supporting history and heritage in Simcoe County alone.

Residents of Simcoe County and beyond are extremely well-served by the top-notch professionals who work in our museums and the Simcoe County Archives. They are just as ably served by literally thousands of volunteers who cheerfully and freely give their time, treasure and talent to local groups and associations.

Working with shoestring budgets, enthusiasm, and abounding good will, these volunteers are very much in the frontline of discovering, disseminating, promoting and protecting Simcoe County's scarce heritage resources.

Did you enjoy that local history book? It was likely put together by a group of dedicated volunteers. Did you learn something from that plaque? It, too, probably came to be erected thanks to the tireless volunteer effort. The same goes for that meeting, workshop or event. And, let us not forget the countless hours donated by any number of "Friends" groups in support of our County's museums and historic sites.

Of course, in writing these words in *News & Views*, I am preaching to the converted. Each of you knows just

how much goes into every event, meeting, and project.

You know, but does your local council? What about your MPP or MP? Do you feel that our County's history and heritage are being funded or supported to the level that you think is appropriate?

If the answer is "no," what can we do about changing that state of affairs?

In the meantime, let's not only celebrate our proud history but also our many friends and neighbours who help to bring it to life.

Wishing you and yours a very Merry Christmas and Happy and Prosperous New Year.

## SCHA Membership Fees Reminder

Don't forget! It's that time of year again!

Please use the enclosed renewal form and send the appropriate amount to SCHA, Box 144, Barrie, ON L4M 4S9.

(You can include a separate cheque for your Heritage Day fee if you like.)



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



## Simcoe County Historical Association Executive

Brad Rudachyk, President	726-7380 rudachyk@rogers.com
Mark Fisher, Second Vice President	728-3825 mwfisher2@hotmail.com
Peter Wiseman, Treasurer	725-0224
Jill Hynes, Corresponding Secretary	739-6220 mark.jill@sympatico.ca
Ellen Millar, Recording Secretary	726-9300 ext. 1287
emillar@county.simcoe.on.ca	

## For Membership Information, contact

Earl Elliott, Membership Chair	734-9808 earl.elliott@rogers.com
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You are invited to submit photos and articles regarding your historical happenings in Simcoe County. Photos will be returned.

Mail to SCHA, Box 144, Barrie, ON L4M 4S9.

**Deadline for the next issue is February 25, 2008**

## Drummond Island Migration Celebrations

Although it's still some months away, mark the weekend of September 19-21, 2008 on your calendar. Penetanguishene Centennial Museum & Archives will be hosting the 180<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Drummond Island Migration celebrations.

Plans include special events at the museum and throughout the community. Featured guests include

Survival in the Bush, Inc. on site at the museum, and author John Bentley Mays as a guest speaker at the gala dinner on Saturday evening. Many more exciting events are in the planning stages.

Our planning committee always welcomes new members. Phone the museum for upcoming meeting dates, status reports or information at

705-549-2150. As well, you can visit the Events and Exhibits page on the Penetanguishene Centennial Museum and Archives website at <http://www.pencenmuseum.com/>. Many of the various features and the times for the weekend of events are listed there and will be updated throughout the coming months.

## Orillia History Committee

by Dr. Richard Johnston

On November, 3, the third annual Take a Vet to Dinner Night took place at the Mariposa Inn. Over 220 people, including 85 veterans, listened to Eva Olsson give a very moving toast to Canada. She had just returned from her first visit back to Auschwitz since 1945.

The veterans were all recognized from the podium as six local students read each veterans' name. They stood, one at a time, and were applauded by the crowd.

At the dinner, Fred Addis, curator of

Leacock Museum, presented information on the upcoming photo tour on Canadian cenotaphs. This remarkable exhibition in pictures and words, entitled *Canada Remembers: Monuments & Cenotaphs* features the photography of David Street and Robert Shipley.

“The ways in which we remember our heroes speak volumes about our country and our Canadian way of life. Our monuments, cenotaphs and other places of remembrance are not just reminders of past events and

sacrifices. Many carry forward into the future, our hopes and dreams for peace and justice.” – *from the museum's exhibition folder*

This body of work will open to the public in May, 2008 at the Leacock Museum in the Art of Writing Galleries.

Finally, the tenth annual Sir John A. Dinner, scheduled for January 12, sold out in mid-December. Richard Gwyn will be speaking about his new book on John A. Macdonald: *John A – The Man Who Made Us*.

“Gwyn's book is also a hymn of praise to what he sees as a miraculous country, miraculous in its peacefulness, its diversity, its tolerance and its determined un-Americanism ... Those positive national qualities can be traced back unmistakably to its first leader. This is the personal and contemporary insight that distinguishes this biography.” – *Toronto Star review*

Once again, the special guest of the evening will be Hugh Gainsford, the 90-year old grandson of our first prime minister. He will be flying in from Brandon for the event. Mr. Gwyn visited him in Brandon for an interview for his new book.



2007 Ottawa Hall of Valour Inductees RJ and Jessie Clayton attended the Veterans' Dinner. RJ was a POW in Japan from December, 1941 to August 1945 between the ages of 19 and 23.

## Calling all Bakers! Join our cookie baking contest

As a feature at our upcoming Heritage Week event, we would like to announce a baking contest. Mrs. Dorothy Duncan, our speaker for the event, provided this authentic pioneer cookie recipe for you to attempt.

This recipe appeared in the first cookery book published in Canada by James Macfarlane of Kingston, Upper Canada in 1831. She also used it in her first book *Nothing More Comforting: Canada's Heritage Food*.

*Nice Cookies that will keep good three months:*

*Nine cups of flour, three and a half of butter, five of sugar, large coffee cup of water with a heaping teaspoonful*

*of pearlash (substitute baking soda) dissolved in it; rub your butter and sugar into the flour, great spoonful of caraway.*

*The recipe does not give directions, but Dorothy has made these cookies many times and would recommend that the baker makes only one-third of the recipe (or less), that the ingredients are well mixed, and tiny amounts rolled into a ball and placed on a buttered baking sheet, and flattened very thin with a cookie press or a fork, then baked in a moderate oven of 325-350 degrees for about 10 minutes or until golden brown.*

For the purposes of our contest, please bring a plate of 15 cookies to our February 23<sup>rd</sup> event at the

Georgian Dining Room. All entries will be accepted between 10:00 and 10:30 a.m.

The experienced judges will enjoy sampling three cookies from each competitor, then the remaining dozen will be auctioned off at the conclusion of our event. The winner will receive a complimentary 2008 SCHA membership and a signed copy of Dorothy's book *Nothing More Comforting: Canada's Heritage Food*.

The logo for the Simcoe County Historical Association (SCHA) features the letters 'SCHA' in a large, bold, serif font. A stylized, curved line or swoosh is positioned behind the letters, starting under the 'S' and ending under the 'A'.

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## History Education Link

Information provided by Pat Elliott

In the ongoing effort to provide local history for the students of Simcoe County, the Education Co-ordinator at the Dufferin County Museum and Archives has produced a number of Road Show education programs.

As members of the historical community, our Board Member Pat Elliott, a Simcoe County District School Board resource teacher, wants us to be aware of many of the wonderful resources available.

### The Pioneer Road Show:

Your interpreter arrives at your site in period costume carrying an emigrant's trunk. In the next hour the trunk is opened and the students begin to explore its contents. Learn why this trunk was so important and why they packed what they did. The students also get to try on some pioneer clothing. This program is an

ideal introduction to Pioneer studies.

### First Nations Road Show:

Can you imagine what life was like without steel knife blades or axes? How would you cook without metal pots and pans? What did the First Nations people eat and just who are the "Three Sisters"? We take a good look at what life was like before the Europeans arrived. What did they wear and how did they tan hides? This is a very visual and interactive program. Your interpreter will be wearing a traditional Chippewa dress made of brain tanned leather. You will also see weapons and tools of the time period.

### Fur Trade Road Show:

Let's take a look into the life and times of a Canadian Voyageur. Your interpreter arrives in costume along with an original Voyageur's cassette.

You will be taken through its contents and see many original items. You will also experience a portage and see many trade items as well. How many beaver hides did it take to trade for a blanket? How did they light their fires? These and many more questions are answered.

## Museum on the Boyne request

Rachelle Clayton needs:

Adult Program Programmers...  
If you have an idea for a program come in and discuss.

Scrapbooker...The museum has a collection of clippings of happenings and our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary is coming up in 2009-2010. We would like them to look nicer by putting them in some sort of scrap book. Can you help?

Call 435-0167 for more information.

## TecWeGwil had a Tasty, Musical Fall

by Helen Yielding

### Cookbook Leads to Family History

What's in a name?

A great deal according to Patricia Blackstock, a member of the Tecumseth and West Gwillimbury Historical Society, who spoke about her family history to fellow members at their September meeting.

After the death of her grandmother, Patricia began a memorial cookbook with some of the Blackstock family favourite recipes. Although she was aware that her great-great grandfather was an early settler in New Tecumseth, she realized that she knew little about other branches of her family. With the same enthusiasm for history as for cooking, she delved into old records, newspapers, historic documents and census records to reveal a fascinating portrait of the marriages, landholdings, professions and stories of her forebears. In fact, she can claim relationship to many families whose names still exist locally as well as relations in nearly all the provinces in Canada and a number of American states.

Patricia is now a skilled genealogist and researcher. Isn't it amazing where a family cookbook can lead?

### Right to Your Front Door

Modern life has many advantages when compared to life in the past.

Cars, shopping centers and pre-packaged goods are readily available. Yet, there was a time when the housewife could expect that many necessities of life, like bread, milk eggs, groceries and other household necessities were delivered, daily, right to the front door of her home. How convenient!

Herb Kingston, a former milkman and Simpson's deliveryman, treated the members to a delightful slide show and discussion of the home delivery business in the cities and town of Ontario. From the 1890s to the 1950s, dairies, bakeries, ice companies and department stores vied for business with horse and wagon services. It was a huge business. Herb related many stories of the trade; drivers who competed for local trade with free goods, wagon-building companies who flourished until trucks replaced the wagons in the 1950s, and loyal horses who knew their routes as well as their drivers. One of Herb's stories was most amusing. The last stop for a certain horse was always a local pub and the horse refused to go back to the barn until he had his daily treat of a beer and a Spanish onion! Herb also displayed an interesting collection of milk bottles, dairy logos, breadbaskets and bottle cartons that brought back memories and recollections from his audience.

Perhaps the Internet and related mail order companies are providing efficient services to today's customers, but the personal services of a friendly deliveryman with his horse and wagon or truck still resonate with many as a fond memory of time gone by.

### Songs Remember the War Years

Harmonizing memorable songs from the war years and intertwining them with a musical history of love, sadness and hope from the same period, the Upper Canada Chordsmen, a barbershop chorus from Newmarket, enthralled the members of the Society at their November meeting.

From an opening chorus of "O Canada", through "The White Cliffs of Dover" and "Silhouettes on the Shade" to "I'll be Seeing You," and the contemporary "Raise Me Up," over 30 handsome men in dark suits and white shirts, led by Pauline Appleton, brought back warm memories and toe-tapping responses from their audience. Particularly appealing was a set sung by a quartet, whose blended voices embodied the joy of barber shopping.

What a wonderful way to acknowledge Remembrance Day and warm up a cold November evening. Thank you Chordsmen!

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## A Letter from the Ontario Historical Society

Dear Members:

There has been progress on the issue of acquiring General Liability Insurance at a discounted rate for affiliated and member societies of The Ontario Historical Society. Finally!

There are a number of specific questions that will affect the price of such insurance.

1. Number of members
2. Level of risk (does the organization own an historical building?)
3. Annual revenues

However, we have a good chance of formulating a plan that will encompass the wide range of heritage activities that our affiliated and member societies undertake. We have asked for pricing for \$1 million

in liability, with a possible extension (at extra cost) for those groups who require \$2 million dollar policies.

Would those of you whose organizations are interested in such insurance please e-mail [OHS@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca](mailto:OHS@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca). Thanks so much.

Karolyn Smardz Frost  
Executive Director, OHS

## Barrie Landmark Destroyed by early December fire

photos by Brad Rudachyk

Just before midnight on December 6, an explosion and ensuing fire devastated the 130 year old structure originally known as the Wellington Hotel. In 2007, the building housed four downtown businesses and the dwellings of 20 Barrie residents. Amazingly, no one was injured in the destruction, but over \$4 million damage occurred.



## The Gwillim Group's Project

by Barbara Verney

We, the Gwillim Group, sub-committee of the Bradford West Gwillimbury Local History Association are delighted to inform the community about our project to commemorate the Town's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. We have commissioned a bronze sculpture of Elizabeth Posthuma Simcoe (nee Gwillim), to be placed in the Post Office parkette on the corner of John and Barrie Streets (on the Yonge Street route). The sculptor is Brenda Wainman Goulet, who created the bronze sculptures of Dr. Bethune in Gravenhurst and the Tom Thomson in Huntsville.

The subject of our sculpture, Elizabeth Gwillim, after whom our town was named, was the wife of John Graves Simcoe, the first Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada.



Elizabeth was an accomplished artist, who painted pictures of many settlement areas where they lived, assisted in copying Simcoe's maps, sketched flowers, butterflies, and fish, and kept journals of life in the colony.

## The Andrew Hunter Prize 2008

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

**Conditions:** Entries must be undergraduate essays between 3,000 and 5,000 words in length on some aspect of the history of Simcoe County, Ontario, written in English or in French. The author must be a part-time or full-time undergraduate student in a degree program at an accredited university or college. The essay must have been written to meet the requirement of an undergraduate credit course during the 2007-2008 academic year. Entries become the property of the Simcoe County Historical Association and may be published as part of an essay collection.



**Submissions:** Entries shall be submitted no later than March 31, 2008 and will not be returned to the contestants. Essays must be typed in Times New Roman 12 point font, double spaced, and should not bear the instructor's comments or grade. Two copies must be provided. A cover sheet must list the author's name, address, phone number, status, school affiliation and department, and the name of the instructor for whom the paper was written.

**Entries should be sent to:**

The Corresponding Secretary  
Simcoe County Historical Association  
P.O. Box 144, Barrie, ON L4M 4S9

**Adjudication:** Entries will be judged by a distinguished panel appointed by the Simcoe County Historical Association. The winners will be announced in early May, 2008 with the presentation of the prizes to take place at the Annual General Meeting.

**Prize:** There will be two prizes offered, one for \$750 and one for \$250, in Canadian funds. The Simcoe County Historical Association may edit the winning entries for the purpose of publication.

The Simcoe County Historical Association is under no obligation to award a prize. For more information, see [www.simcoecountyhistory.ca](http://www.simcoecountyhistory.ca)

Elizabeth is the central life-size figure, in this stone and bronze sculpture, and there are two bas reliefs, one on either side. Under her right arm are her sketch book and pencils, as if she were coming from a day of sketching one of her famous drawings depicting life in Upper Canada. On the left side, Elizabeth Gwillim and John Simcoe are meeting with Chief Grey Sail, who is holding their son, Francis. Among the company are native braves, members

of the Queen's York Rangers, and Simcoe's dog, Jack Sharp. Our statue, made of rock and bronze, will cost \$75,000 plus landscaping costs. We are hoping that the funding will be provided by the many families, businesses and organizations interested in history, arts, and culture.

The group may be contacted at P.O. Box 1498  
Bradford, Ontario L3Z 2B8

# C O M I N G

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

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

**Barrie Historical Association – contact Val Brucker**

Meet at Barrie City Hall – 7:30 p.m.

**Jan. 10** – Growing up in Barrie

**Mar. 13** – Jamie Hunter – Archaeology and the Preservation of Simcoe County’s Past

**Apr. 10** – AGM – Alladin Banquet Hall, 41 Essa Road, 6:00 p.m.

**May 8** – Mark Fisher – Sir James Robert Gowan and the Gowan family

**Essa Historical Society – contact Olive Lee**

Meet at Thornton Library – 1:30 p.m.

**Jan. 26** – Bill Smith – The Northern Railway

**Feb. 23** – Henry Jones – Antique Appraising

**Mar. 22** – Annual Reports and Show and Tell

**Genealogical Society – contact Claudia McArthur**

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

www.simcoebogs.com

**Jan. 5** – Ellen Millar – Simcoe County Archives

**Feb. 2** – Keith Butler – Interactive demo of restoring old photos

**Mar. 1** – Jane MacNamara – Manorial Records

**Huron Museum Huron Ouendat Village**

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

# E V E N T S

**Innisfil Historical Society – contact Ross Wallace**

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

**Jan. 19** – TBA

**Museum on the Boyne – contact Rachele Clayton**

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

www.allistonontario.com/Museumonth eBoyne.html

**Jan. 20** – Hogmanay 11:00-3:00  
Exploring our Scottish roots through song, art, dance and storytelling at the Scottish New Year – Hogmanay!

**Feb. 16** – Town of New Tecumseth Heritage Day  
10:00-12:00 Historical Demonstrations  
1:00 Wall of Honour Ceremony

**Orillia History Committee – contact Ross Wallace**

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

**Jan. 13** – Sir John A. Macdonald Dinner, sold out – see page 3

**Jan. 16** – Mary Mick – Irish-Palatines: A Little Known Immigrant Group

**Feb. 20** – Ron and Ann Harrison – The Underground Railroad

**Mar. 19** – Bob White – The Haida

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

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

**to Jan. 5** – Iroquois Beadwork

**Jan. 10 to Mar. 1** – Peter Stranks: Decisive Moments

**Jan. 19** – 7-10 p.m. – Opening reception

**Jan. 24** – 7 p.m. – Artist’s talk

**Mar. 5-May 3** – Symbols of Canada: The Paintings and Quilts of Ada Bruce Torrance

# of our Member Societies

**Mar. 8** – 1-3 p.m. – Opening reception  
**Apr. 12** – 1 p.m. – Curator’s Talk:

**Penetanguishene Centennial Museum and Archives**

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

**Feb. 15-17** – Winterama Weekend – Rug Hookers Exhibit

**Feb. 16** – Noon – Pea Soup and Chili in the Replica Fire Hall

**Simcoe County Museum**

1151 Highway 26, Midhurst – Call 728-3721

**Stayner Heritage Society – contact Dorothy Millsap**

Centennial United Church (corner of Oak and William Streets) – 7:30pm.

**Feb. 11** – Dr. Karolyn Smardz-Frost *I’ve Got a Home in Gloryland: A Lost tale of the Underground*

**Tecumseth & West Gwillimbury Historical Society – contact Helen Yielding**

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

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

**Jan. 21** – Show and Tell

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Happy New Year  
from the



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