

# NEWS views

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Simcoe County Historical Association

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## In this issue...

Spring at SCHA ..... 1  
 SCHA Executive ..... 1  
 President's Report ..... 2  
 Family Archives ..... 2  
 Archives Changes ..... 3  
 SCHA Extras ..... 3  
 Sir John A. Dinner ..... 4  
 Upcoming OMAH ..... 4  
 Carmichael Lecture ..... 5  
 Tornado Anniversary ... 5  
 Coming Events ..... 6

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## Visit our Website

www.simcoecountyhistory.ca



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

## Spring at SCHA

Gwen Robinson, Chairman of the Coldwater Heritage Mill will address us on the history of this restored structure on April 16.

This landmark Grist Mill was constructed in 1833-34 for the Ojibwa natives who had been settled on 3969 hectares (9800 acres) between the Coldwater River and the Narrows at Orillia on the western side of Lake Couchiching. In 1830 Sir John Colborne, Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, created the Reserve upon which some 500 native people were settled. By 1831, a good start had been made on farming in the area, some five hundred bushels (17,500 litres) of grain had been harvested, and it was evident that it was of little use unless a Grist Mill was established in the area.

On May 14, Janice Laking and Bill Sargeant will give us a presentation with respect to Sir Robert Barrie. They will recount details of his illustrious naval career and how the city of Barrie came to be named after him. They were also responsible for the large oil painting by Peter Rindisbacher that presently hangs at City Hall, as well as gathering various artifacts associated with Barrie that are on display at the same location.

Saturday, March 23, 2 p.m. at Grace United Church, 350 Grove St. E.

### AGM: A time to reflect on 2018 and plan for 2019

Speaker: Michael Hill "History of the Mariposa Festival" *see page 3*  
Enjoy special desserts with your historical friends

Tuesday, April 16 at the Huronia Room, Barrie City Hall, 7:30 p.m.

### Gwen Robinson on the Coldwater Mill

Tuesday, May 14 at the Huronia Room, Barrie City Hall, 7:30 p.m.

### Janice Laking and Bill Sargeant on Sir Robert Barrie

## Simcoe County Historical Association Executive

Ted Duncan, President	tedcansher@sympatico.ca	705-326-9809
Mark Fisher, Vice President	mwfisher2@hotmail.com	705-728-3825
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## For membership information, contact

Judith Banville membership@simcoecountyhistory.ca

*The SCHA acknowledges the financial support of the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Culture.*



## President's Report by Ted Duncan

My term as President began in May 2017. Since that time our Board of Directors has continued to work toward the preservation of our County's HISTORY.

Thanks to our Executive Board members: Mark Fisher: Vice-President & Speakers; Donna Wice: Secretary; Deb Exel: Treasurer & Website; and our Directors-at-Large: Judith Banville: Membership & Speakers; John Merritt: Articles for the *Simcoe Review*.

At the AGM, the above Board Members have volunteered for the 2019-20 Board, and the following people have stepped forward to be elected as Directors-at-Large: Hope McGilly-Mitchell, Brittany Mitchell, and Deb Crawford. Others are welcome to volunteer from the floor of the AGM.

A special thanks to Jill Hynes, our newsletter editor; she does a great job and we would be lost without her. We have tried to up-grade our articles in the newsletter.

As per our Strategic Plan, we have continued to improve the organization of our finances under the leadership of Deb Exel. We received the Heritage Ontario Grant from the Province to help us support history in the County. Membership has improved as well with the work of Deb and Judith Banville. Our communications

continue to improve through the website with the guidance of Deb.

As well, our Speaker's program brings history stories alive. Ted Barris and his *Dam Busters* book presentation, in partnership with the Barrie Legion, is a perfect example. A new speaker initiative in September, thanks to Donna Wice, was our program to honour Long Time Businesses in our County. This year Les Bertram & Sons made a presentation outlining their 80 year history. We are looking for other companies to honour. Let us know if you have one in your area.

We continue to support the County Heritage Fair with a \$500 donation. Half of this came from funds given us by the Barrie Heritage committee. I'd like to thank John Merritt for his leadership in this.

We have reached out to improve our relationships with member organizations by attending meetings all over the County. I hope we can continue this in the future. Talking about a relationship, we welcome members of the former Barrie Historical Association into the SCHA. During this past year, the BHA has amalgamated with us and we are one. I'd like to thank Mark Fisher for his leadership in bringing this about.

As President, I have proposed a new initiative that I hope will give

us a common goal. That is the picture survey of all BARNs in Simcoe County. The survey pictures and data, once collected, I want to donate to the County Archives for future reference. Much has already been done in many areas of the County: Oro-Medonte, Springwater-Vespra, Innisfil, Bradford West Gwillimbury, Ramara and others places. This is my dream and I hope it can happen with the support of SCHA. Pictures have been taken, books have been written and calendars made. The Women's Institute's has done valuable work in this as well, as they have collected pictures and stories of farms and their Barns over many years.

Other ideas for action that I propose are the following:

- ◆ a County Speakers Bureau
- ◆ a County History Book list and review on SCHA website
- ◆ a County History Conference to share information and ideas
- ◆ support and coordinate County Archives, Museums and Historic Sites
- ◆ a County website linkage

And more can be looked at, but only if we get more volunteer help.

I feel that the SCHA can have a coordination role across the County. We can do more as partners in history. Thank You for supporting our quest to preserve our History.

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## Finding a home for your family archives by Deb Exel

When it's time to downsize or dispose of items, often our children don't want to inherit the clutter, yet we feel reluctant to just throw away the mementos that were a cherished part of our lives. Parting with old family photos or other heritage memorabilia doesn't have to be a painful or stressful experience however.

Many historical organizations would be happy to become the

caretakers, even temporarily, of your family heritage. History is happening every day and even photos taken 10 or 20 years ago are a record of what was and how our communities are constantly changing. So before you send your archives off to their final resting place, we encourage you to contact your local historical organization and offer them the opportunity to digitize any relevant photos

or documents for presentation on their websites or online museums. This way your history can live on for future generations to enjoy.

A list of local historical archives and societies can be found on our website: <https://simcoecountyhistory.ca/member-associations/>

# Simcoe County Archive Changes: What will this mean for your research?

by Hope McGilly Mitchell

Changes are coming for distance researchers that use the information stored at the Simcoe County Archives in Midhurst, Ontario.

As of March 31, 2019, the Archive will no longer be undertaking searches for researchers who do not physically come into the Archive. In the past, Archive staff would take on research inquiries and, for a fee, would conduct the research on behalf of the person who requested it. Due to the processing backlog of donated material to the Archive, this service will be discontinued.

This comes as a double-edged sword for researchers. On one hand, this will allow Archive staff to process the many materials that will be made available to the public. A backlog of donated material is a problem that many cultural in-

stitutions face; however, by starting to clear this backlog the materials awaiting processing will be better preserved and their information made available to the public. Of course, research is still able to occur on site and researchers are encouraged to come into the Archive to be assisted by the Reference Service Coordinator. Regular fees still apply to copy archive material.

However, the discontinuation of the service will now limit the access that people who are unable to physically come into the Archive have. The Archive has prepared a list of organizations that distance researchers can contact in order to hire someone to go into the archive to conduct research on their behalf. This list is not comprehensive but does provide a good starting point for those looking to have research

done. These organizations will all have their own fee schedules for conducting research, so the cost of service should be clearly outlined when arranging for research to be completed. The Simcoe County Archive does not monitor the work or output of third-party researchers and is not affiliated with those listed.

While this may seem to hinder distance researchers on their quest for information, it may actually draw attention to the resources that other archives, museums and historical organizations have. By opening the door to third-party researchers throughout Simcoe County, the knowledge that these independents have of additional resources will now be at the disposal of those who have requested the information.

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## SCHA Extras

### Our AGM Speaker Mike Hill: a Short Biography

Mike Hill was born raised in Orillia and obtained his Education degrees at the Universities of York and Toronto. He taught in elementary schools for 16 years in Scarborough and finished his 31 year career in Orillia. He is married with two daughters and one granddaughter with one more to come soon. Mike, an avid golfer, loves music. He plays guitar and a number of other instruments.

He wrote a weekly column called Trivia in the *Toronto Star* from 1980 until 2011 and published a book called *SuperQuiz Canada* in 1984. Mike has served on the Orillia Public Library Board and on the Stephen Leacock Associa-

tion Board as President from 2009 to 2016. This group administers the nationally acclaimed Leacock Medal for Humour Award.

When the Mariposa Folk Festival returned to its roots in Orillia in 2000, Mike volunteered. Over the years, he has served Mariposa as site coordinator, Festival Organizing Group Chair and on the Festival's Board of Directors from 2003 to the present. From 2006 until 2017 he was the Festival's Artistic Director. After retiring as AD, Mike Hill wrote his book on the History of the Festival.

### Community Projects

Is your group or society planning a historical activity and could use a little financial boost? Check out

our website for the Community Partnership Grant Application. ([www.simcoecountyhistory.ca](http://www.simcoecountyhistory.ca)) If your project aligns with our philosophy, then please submit the completed application to Board Secretary [mdwice@sympatico.ca](mailto:mdwice@sympatico.ca) for consideration.

### Long Time Businesses in Simcoe County

SCHA is searching for Simcoe County businesses which have existed for over 70 years. Les Bertram & Sons of Barrie/ Midhurst was honoured in 2018 for 80 years in the construction field. If you know of a business to recommend, please tell them about this project and kindly ask them to contact the SCHA Board Secretary at [mdwice@sympatico.ca](mailto:mdwice@sympatico.ca)

## Sir John A. Dinner Event

Orillia's Annual Sir John A. Macdonald Dinner began when local history lovers decided to celebrate Canada's first prime minister, on the Saturday closest to his birthday on January 11<sup>th</sup>.

Now in its 22<sup>nd</sup> year, the dinner celebrates Canada and is a fundraiser for the Orillia Museum of Art & History (OMAH). Cumulatively, the Sir John A. dinner has raised close to \$100,000.00 to support OMAH's programs.

This year, the Sir John A. Macdonald Dinner committee presented \$17,000.00, before expenses, to the Executive Director of OMAH, Ninette Gyorody, and Manpreet Hayer, Visitor Experiences Coordinator at OMAH.

Featured speaker was Donald Smith, Professor Emeritus at the University of Calgary, whose life's work is First Nations history. Dr. Smith pro-



From Left to Right: Donald Macdonald: Chair Sir John A. Macdonald Dinner Committee; Ninette Gyorody: Executive Director, OMAH; Mary Ann Grant: Member, Sir John A. Macdonald Dinner Committee; Manpreet Hayer: Visitor Experiences Coordinator, OMAH

vided contemporary context for Sir John A.'s interactions with First Nations. Successive governments' policies were examined too. History illustrates the need for our journey of reconciliation with First Nations.

Saturday, January 11, 2020. Another dynamic speaker, an evening of good food and good company will benefit OMAH, in celebration of Canada.

Thanks to attendees of the dinner: sponsors Ted Burton, Burton Team of Investment Planning Counsel; John Mayo; The Shock Doctors; Thor Motors Orillia; Subaru of Orillia; Mundell Funeral Home Ltd.; HGR Graham Partners; Bruce Stanton; Jill Dunlop; and Charles Pachter.

Next year's dinner will be held on

## OMAH History Speaker Series Update

This year the Orillia Museum of Art & History (OMAH), the hub of culture and heritage for Orillia, surrounding townships and Chippewas of Rama First Nation, celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

In January, the third floor of OMAH was at capacity for Evelyn Ross' riveting talk about her parents' escape from Nazi Europe. It was a full house again in February when Ann and Ron Harrison recounted their ancestors' escape from slavery in the USA to freedom in Canada via the Underground Railroad.

Members of our community have intriguing and important stories to tell about their heritage and history. Please join us. The following is a preview of our upcoming talks.

**April 17:** Orillia Secondary School – Orillia Soldiers Who Fought On D-Day and 75<sup>th</sup> Commemoration at Juno Beach

Forty-seven students from Orillia Secondary School will travel to Europe to participate in the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day this June. At our April 17<sup>th</sup> meeting, students will share the plans for their journey during which they will be tracing battles, including Ortona Beach, Juno Beach, Vimy Ridge and Brussels. The importance of keeping the memory of both WWI and WWII soldiers alive is keenly appreciated by our student speakers. Biographical highlights will bring back memories when we hear of some of the Orillia soldiers who served.

**May 15:** Chris Decker – Glenn Gould's Orillia: His Cottage Connection  
Concert pianist Glenn Gould,

who hailed from Toronto, is an inductee into the Orillia Hall of Fame. Dr. Chris Decker's talk will trace the fascinating, eccentric life of one of the greatest pianists of the twentieth century. Glenn's essential bond to Uptergrove, located on Lake Simcoe and Orillia will be explored through a multimedia presentation. This is not to be missed.

History Speaker talks begin at 7:30 p.m. Doors open at 7:00 p.m.

Admission to the talks is free. Donations to OMAH are much appreciated. All are welcome.

The History Speaker Series will take a break for the summer. Stay tuned for details about October and November Speakers on the OMAH website at [orilliamuseum.org](http://orilliamuseum.org).

## 2019 Carmichael Art History Lecture

by Mary Ann Grant

On Wednesday May 8<sup>th</sup> the History Committee at the Orillia Museum of Art & History (OMAH) presents the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Carmichael Art History. This event was the brainchild of the late Qennefer Browne. She believed an event should be held each year to honour the birthday and contributions of Group of Seven artist Franklin Carmichael. Carmichael was born in Orillia, lived on Scott Street and is an inductee into the Orillia Hall of Fame.

This year's talk will be a fascinating one! Join us to hear Robert Browne and well-known local artist Tony Bianco present "The Art of Money: Design of Canadian Coinage".

Tony Bianco has designed over fifty coins for the Royal Canadian Mint. Many of you have seen the coins created by Bianco for numerous significant Canadian milestones, including a commemorative coin designed for



OMAH to mark Orillia's sesquicentennial. He will walk us through the process of creating these coins.

In 1937, celebrated artist and sculptor, the late Emmanuel Hahn, designed iconic coins the "Bluenose Dime" and "Caribou Quarter" for the Royal Canadian Mint. They are still in circulation today. Emmanuel Hahn is father of the late Qennefer Browne. His son-in-law, Robert Browne, will elaborate on the life of Emmanuel Hahn, and will share with us

his memories of his father-in-law Emmanuel Hahn creating these timeless coins.



We have art in our pockets and in our purses. Come and hear the story of their creation.

Tickets to the talk, a major fundraiser for OMAH, are \$15.00 per person and are available for purchase at OMAH effective Monday, April 1, 2019.

## Barrie Tornado Anniversary

by Judith Banville

Friday May 31<sup>st</sup> will be the 34<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Barrie tornado. Whether you are a survivor of the worst tornado in Ontario's history or a newcomer curious about this city's most life-changing event, join the creator of The Barrie Tornado Remembered on the day many thoughts return to



that tragedy. Grace United Church in Barrie offers a screening of the image-filled documentary of first responders' and survivors' tales from the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The screening will be accompanied by a dinner and discussions with documentarian Judith Banville and survivors on the impact of the event and how it helped the community heal. Dinner, screening and discussion is \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door on May 31<sup>st</sup> if available. Fundraising event for Grace United Church parking lot restoration.

Call 705-734-0760 for tickets or information. The Governor General's History Award-nominated documentary DVD will be available for sale at a special price of \$25, with a portion of sales also donated to the parking lot fund.

If you or anyone you know has photos or unique survivor stories of the Barrie tornado and would like to share them for possible inclusion in a book, please email [judith.banville@gmail.com](mailto:judith.banville@gmail.com) or call 705-790-6490.

## Coming Events of Member Societies

**Alliston Historical Society**  
Contact Jackie Baillie 705-435-5626 cknowles@rogers.com  
Meet at Museum on the Boyne 2 p.m.  
2nd Wednesday Feb-June, Oct-Nov

**Barrie Historical Archive**  
[barriearchive.ca](http://barriearchive.ca)  
Contact Deb Exel  
deb@barriearchive.ca

**Bradford/West Gwillimbury Historical Association**  
[Bradford.library.on.ca/?page\\_id=311](http://Bradford.library.on.ca/?page_id=311)  
Contact Bill Marks  
905-775-6179  
Meet at BWG Library 2 p.m.  
4th Saturday Jan-May, Sept-Nov

**Coldwater Canadian Heritage Museum**  
[coldwatermuseum.com](http://coldwatermuseum.com)

**Collingwood District Historical Society**  
[historicallyspeakingcdhs.ca](http://historicallyspeakingcdhs.ca)  
Contact Joan Miller  
705-445-1119  
Meet at Leisure Time Club 7 p.m.

**Collingwood Museum**  
[collingwood.ca/museum](http://collingwood.ca/museum)  
Contact Susan Warner  
705-445-4811

**Essa Historical Society**  
Contact Olive Lee  
705-458-9971  
teddylee1@rogers.com  
Meet at Thornton Library 1:30 p.m.  
4th Saturday Jan-June, Sept-Nov

**Friends of Fort Willow**  
[nyca.on.ca/recreation/ConservationAreas/FortWillow](http://nyca.on.ca/recreation/ConservationAreas/FortWillow)

**Friends of the OPP Museum**  
[oppmuseumfriends.ca](http://oppmuseumfriends.ca)  
Contact Matt Eade 705-330-4178  
support@oppmuseumfriends.ca

**Huron Museum/Huron Ouendat Village**  
[huroniamuseum.com](http://huroniamuseum.com)  
705-526-2844

**Innisfil Historical Society**  
<http://www.ourstoriesinnisfil.ca/IHS-about>

Contact Donna Wice  
Meet at Knock Comm Centre 2 p.m.

**Mar. 16 Carolyn Morris**

Children's Books

**Apr. 13 Jennifer Bazar** Mimico Asylum and its Historic Buildings

**May 11 John Trotter** Trotter's Garage: The Oldest Business in Innisfil

**Museum on the Boyne**

Contact Katie Huddleston  
705-435-4030 x. 1802  
boynemuseum@newtecumseth.ca

**Orillia History Speaker Series**

Contact Ted Duncan  
Meet at Orillia Museum 7:30 p.m.

**Mar. 20 Rachel McMillan** Lucy Maud Montgomery's Muskoka

**Apr. 17 OSS** Orillia Soldiers

Who Fought on D-Day

**Special Event May 8 Tony Bianco/Robert Browne** The Art of Money: Design of Canadian Coinage - see page 5

**May 15 Chris Decker** Glenn

Gould's Orillia: His Cottage Connection

**Orillia Museum of Art and History**

[orilliamuseum.org](http://orilliamuseum.org) 705-326-2159

**to Mar. 24 Legacy Landscapes** celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Couchiching Conservancy Land Trust

**to Mar. 31 OMAH@20** A look back at the museum's early days

**Apr. 27 7-9 p.m.** Mariposa Gala

Tickets at <https://orilliamuseum.org/events/1034-mariposa-gala>

**Penetanguishene Centennial Museum and Archives**  
[penetanguishene.ca/en/Museum.asp?mid=23034](http://penetanguishene.ca/en/Museum.asp?mid=23034)

Contact Nicole Jackson  
705-549-2150

**Ramara Historical Society**  
<http://ramarahistoricalociety.ca/>

Contact Cathy Westcott  
westcott.cathy963@gmail.com

Meet at Udney Community Centre 7 p.m. 3rd Thurs Jan-June, Sept-Dec

**Mar. 21** Cool Collections Show & Tell – bring along your vintage collections to share with us!

**Apr. 18 Roger Selman** History of Lagoon City

**May 16 Curt Morris** Provincial Parks in Ramara, Mara & McRae

**Simcoe County Branch, Genealogical Society**

[simcoe.ogs.ca](http://simcoe.ogs.ca)

Contact Nancy Leveque  
Meet at Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints 2 p.m.

**Apr. 6 Linda Corupe** The Irish Immigrants Tale \* meeting location to be determined

**May 4 Sher Letooze** Free sites for Canadian Research

**Simcoe County Museum**

[museum.simcoe.ca](http://museum.simcoe.ca)

Contact Kelly Swift-Jones  
705-728-3721

**Stayner Heritage Society**

[staynerheritagesociety.com](http://staynerheritagesociety.com)

Contact Tom Scholte  
705-517-5171

**Tecumseth & West Gwillimbury Historical Society**

Contact Janine Harris-Wheatley  
905-936-6549

Janinehw20@gmail.com

Meet at TecWeGwill Hall 7:30  
3rd Monday Jan-May, Sept-Nov