



# BHS Quarterly

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## Peter and Eliza Jones at Credit River Mission

This is Part 2 of a three-part series compiled by Robert L. Deboer from *Brant County: The Story of its People, Volume I*, by Jean Waldie and "The Beaver: Magazine Of The North," Summer 1977, by Donald B. Smith.

In late September 1833, Rev. Peter Jones arrived at the Credit River Mission with his English bride. It is difficult to imagine how the settlement must have looked when Eliza first saw it. The Government Inn at the river mouth, the solid oak and pine forest on each bank, and her new home in the Indian village two miles upstream no longer exist. Well over a century and a half have passed and urbanization is in full control: high rise apartments, A & Ws, gas stations and power transmission lines. In excess of 250,000 people live in the area that several hundred Indians once claimed as theirs. The original inhabitants are gone and time has erased all but the tribe's name, dutifully preserved in the name of the Toronto suburb, Mississauga.

A memorial to Eliza does not exist. A blue and gold historical marker erected by the Ontario Government indicates the site of the old Government Inn by the harbour at the mouth of the Credit River. It was here at the river mouth in 1805 and 1818 that the Mississauga surrendered what today is some of Canada's most valuable real estate, a huge tract of land of 2,000 square miles lying between present-day Hamilton and Toronto. On Mississauga Road, about two miles from Lake Ontario, just north of the Queen Elizabeth Way is another of the government's historical plaques. It stands close to the fence enclosing the grounds of the Mississauga Golf and Country Club. The plaque, simply headed "CREDIT INDIAN VILLAGE, 1826," gives the following account:

In 1826 the Government assisted a band of Mississauga, who had recently converted to Christianity, to settle in this vicinity, and within five years laid out a village plot, and constructed log cottages and a sawmill. Methodist missionaries, notably Peter Jones and Egerton Ryerson, ministered to the converts, who in 1829 built a combined

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Eliza Jones with an unidentified child.

Photo courtesy of the Brant Museum & Archives

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Celebrating 96 years of preserving local history



# President's Reflections

Annual meetings are seldom exciting, but they are the democratic way of deciding future paths. I was encouraged by the large number of people present at the Annual General Meeting on Feb. 18, 2004, and especially thank some of our new members for pointing out what we all need to remember. When speaking of the past, we tend to speak in shorthand, forgetting it is not understood by many. I have been challenged, and in future as chair, I hope I will recognize that problem so that all members feel part of the decisions of the society.

Most important for many were the recommendations of the building committee to divide the historical society into two separate incorporated organizations. While these were defeated, the building committee was instructed to investigate the desirability and feasibility of such a separation. Since the committee recommendations were the result of such investigation, I interpret it to mean it is the desire of the membership that we continue our work, but return with more detailed answers to questions raised. Among these issues were relationships, ownership, funding and endowment. The committee has yet to meet, so my interpretation may not reflect their understanding.

We did not address our financial situation. Bob Glass and Glenn Gillis detailed visually our challenge and their information is available to members. Are we victims of our own success? As the museum grows, increasingly, the percentage of our resources directed to that aspect of the society must increase. This means that the amount directed to what some may see as purely matters of the historical society decreases. In addition, the Scheak collection and our

need for a second site require increasing amounts of money. The problem is compounded by costs over which we have no control — level grants and other decreasing sources of income. But problems are really opportunities in disguise.

There are brighter possibilities. The Market Square redevelopment is exciting. Whatever the solution will be, we are directly affected. The developers have recognized the importance of heritage and have included the museum in their proposals. They have been most generous in their description of the museum, but . . . can we accept the offer? Our task is now to review the possibility and in due time ask the membership for their response. Until that has been done, the historical society has no official response to make. The process has begun.

Should it be impossible for the board or the membership to accept this route, then we are faced with solving the problems of providing a museum within the existing space at Charlotte Street or building a new museum. Not new questions, but perhaps demanding that decisions be made.

Meanwhile, the museum expression of the historical society continues to grow and to be faced with opportunities. We have been called "an undiscovered jewel" and we are faced with revealing that jewel to the Brant community.

For that reason, I see the growth of our education program as well demonstrated by Debbie Olsen and the children's video, and the announcement of the historical essay contest, as marketing tools. Both can grow as expressions of the historical society if each of us promotes them within our own circle of influence.

*Calvin G. Diegel*

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## Brant Museum & Archives

57 Charlotte St., Brantford, Ontario N3T 2W6  
519-752-2483

Admission: Adults \$2.00 Seniors/Students \$1.50  
Children \$1.25 Under 6 free B.H.S. members free

Hours: Wednesday to Friday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Saturday 1 to 4 p.m.

For July and August: Sunday 1 to 4 p.m.  
Web site: [www.brantmuseum.ca](http://www.brantmuseum.ca)

## The Museum in the Square A Satellite of the Brant Museum & Archives

Main Level, Market Square Mall, 1 Market St.,  
Brantford, Ontario 519-752-8578

Admission by voluntary donation  
Hours: Monday to Friday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
For July, August and December: Open Saturday

# Curator's Corner

We have recovered from our programming blitz at Christmas and are getting ready for our March Break camp. Debbie is busy putting together "Art Attack" with the help of local artist Nico Kuilboer. You may remember his exhibit of water-colours last summer. If you have children, grandchildren, nieces or nephews between the ages of eight and 13, register them for some creative fun starting March 15!

I would like to welcome our newest staff member, Carrie Sorensen. Carrie is the new Assistant Curator. We are sharing this position with Myrtleville House Museum and strengthening our community partnerships. Carrie is a recent graduate from the Sir Sandford Fleming Museum Management and Curatorship program.

We have partnered with local organizations to create

special displays in the past couple of months. We were at the Brant Visual Heritage Project Expo and presentation, Grand River Heritage Day in Paris, and the Grand River Chorus wine-tasting evening and auction. We have also recently changed our display at the County of Brant council chambers.

As always, we are looking for help at the museum. If you have a little spare time, why not volunteer to help answer some of our research requests, catalogue an artifact or two, or help with our fundraising events, like the Film Group or bingo? We will soon need help with our gardens too. Contact me at the museum if you are interested in helping out.

*Stacey McKellar*

## The Ups and Downs of a Boomtown: Images of Brantford's Downtown Past



### Coming soon!

A catalogue of vintage photographs featured in the current photographic exhibit at the Museum in the Square will be available for sale at both Brant Museum sites in March 2004.

The exhibit, entitled "The Ups and Downs of a Boomtown: Images of Brantford's Downtown Past," showcases over 60 photos of downtown Brantford until April 2. Please check with the Museum in the Square at 752-8578 for details or to reserve your copy of this very special memento.

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The County of Brant  
The City of Brantford  
The Ontario Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation



# Peter and Eliza Jones at Credit River Mission

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schoolhouse and chapel. Three years later they had approximately five hundred acres under cultivation. Pressure from local white settlement and a decline in the Indian population led to the closing of the mission and the movement of the major portion of the Mississauga to the Grand River Reserve in 1847.

About 100 yards to the north of the plaque is the entrance driveway to the golf club and beyond it, the original site of Peter Jones' Indian village. At the end of the driveway — on the edge of the hill overlooking the Credit River Valley — stands the club house, an impressive Tudor-style mansion. It recalled the fact that Eliza had rejected the comfort and privileges of her English family's wealth when she left to live in the poor Indian village to work for the salvation of her husband's people.

All the Indian log-hewn cabins are gone, although the golf club's prospectus states that the chief's hut formed a base for the 16th tee. Today few people have heard of Peter and Eliza Jones, or know that more than a century and a half ago their marriage was one of the most talked about events in Upper Canada.

Eliza Field's marriage to an Indian caused a sensation at the time. While some white men had lived with Indian women in the early days of the colony, few were legally united. And white women did not marry Indians, even "civilized" men like Peter Jones. As late as 1852, Susanna Moodie, a leading Upper Canadian author, had one of her characters in *Roughing it in the Bush* indignantly exclaim, "I cannot think how any lady of property and education could marry such a man as Jones."

The opposition of white settlers was the least of Eliza's problems. She came from a sheltered and privileged background; nurtured in ease, she had never lived in straitened circumstances. She also did not know the rigours of a Canadian winter, the cold and the snow. How would she fare in a log cabin on the Credit River?

Eliza faced the difficult task of adjusting to the culture and society of her husband's people. The Credit Indians had only accepted Christianity a decade before and it still remained not much more than a veneer over their old beliefs. Well after their acceptance of Christianity, many continued to believe in the supernatural.

It was a difficult task, but Eliza was stronger than one would at first expect. She had two unassailable inner strengths: first, she deeply loved and admired her Indian husband, and secondly, she strongly believed in her mission. She came to Canada to make her own contributions to the expansion of Christianity throughout the world. Her belief in the importance of helping to convert the "heathen" had already given her the strength to marry her husband over the opposition of her family and many of her friends.

Eliza had married a remarkable man, Kahkewaquonaby

or Peter Jones — his two names, Mississauga and European, indicate his two cultures — was the son of a white surveyor, Augustus Jones and a Mississauga woman. He spent his first 14 years with his mother's people, and seven with his father and his legal wife (an Iroquois woman) on their farm on the Grand River. Before his conversion to Christianity in 1823, and his return to his people a year later as a Methodist missionary, the young Mississauga had learned the "white man's way and how to compete with him on his own terms." He came back full of hope, believing that if the Indians could successfully adjust to a settled agricultural way of life, it would be difficult for anyone to discriminate against them. At the Credit Mission he was determined to teach the Mississauga the skills of the white man that were necessary to make them self-sufficient competitors in the white man's world.

Peter's abilities, and his ease in both Indian and European worlds, quickly attracted the attention of his church, the Methodist Episcopal of Upper Canada. In 1831, they sent him to England to raise money for the Canadian Indian missionary work. It was here he met and fell in love with his wife Eliza, the daughter of a wealthy soap and candle maker.

The village on the Credit when Eliza arrived was described as being on an elevated plateau, cleared of wood and with three rows of detached cottages, among fields surrounded with rail fences with a clear stream abounding in fish rushing over its rocky bed to join the waters of Lake Ontario.

The ride from York (in 1834 the name of the town would become Toronto) took Peter and Eliza five hours on horseback. Eliza noted enthusiastically in her diary: "My heart was full, too big for utterances, I felt that now I had entered the scene of my future labor." They went first to the home of Peter's brother John, where his wife Christine received Eliza kindly. Christine was the granddaughter of Joseph Brant.

Eliza described her new home at Credit River as having one room which her dear husband called his study, with a bedstead, a writing desk, a table and a few chairs, Indian mats on the floor, and around the bedstead, an open fireplace. Its modest appearance had no dampening effect on Eliza's high spirits. The next week, Eliza sketched her first Canadian home and the school and the church which stood

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*Land registry records are now available for searching at the Museum in the Square, between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Please call 752-8578 for details.*

# Peter and Eliza Jones at Credit River Mission

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beside it, and sent the drawing to her friends in England. On her fourth day, Eliza visited the Indian school where 40 Mississauga children were in attendance and saw the impressive results of the first decade of work with the Indian children. Eliza was impressed with the students' ability to sing, write and read but was appalled by the want of neatness in the school and the uncleanness of the children. She subsequently spoke to the white teacher about the children presenting a cleaner and neater appearance at school.

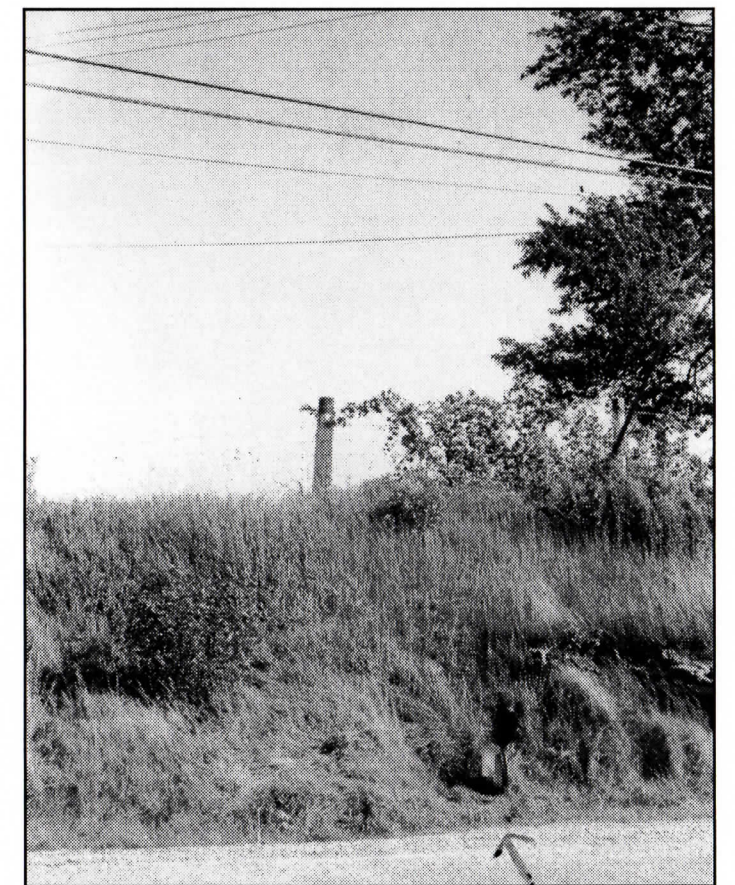
Eliza spent her days visiting, helping Peter copy out his translations and making clothes for needy Indian children. Peter's devoted mother accepted her son's English bride. Eliza drew very close to her sister-in-law Christine. In early October she even hired at York (probably with the help of a stipend from her father) a servant girl to help her with her work at the Indian village.

In the second month Eliza's spirits began to change when she realized the vast cultural gap separating her from her husband's people and she became more serious and profound. The Indian people never knocked on the door, they simply entered without warning. One morning, before she was dressed, she suddenly felt a presence and saw a shadow fall across the floor and discovered an Indian man had entered her home. Her biggest frustration, however, was not the lack of privacy or her concern with cleanliness but her inability to understand the Ojibway language.

Eliza's resources of strength — physical and spiritual — were tested in her sixth week in the village. Peter was absent on a missionary tour to the Grand River, nearly 100 miles away. All that spring, summer and fall, the village of slightly over 100 Indians had been stricken with ague, an intermittent fever and malaria carried by mosquitos. Then more serious illnesses developed. Four Indians subsequently died. Then, a day after giving birth to a baby boy, her sister-in-law Christine fell ill. In order to help her brother-in-law John with the baby and to comfort Christine, Eliza proposed sitting up with her sister.

On Nov. 3, 1833, Christine was in great agony with a high fever and inflammation and John was writhing from the pain of a finger festering with blood poisoning. Eliza had never experienced this aspect of life before — a dear friend dying, a brother-in-law tortured by pain and a four-day-old child crying constantly. When she left her brother-in-law's that night she felt that she was in circumstances different to any she had ever experienced before and that her trials were beginning.

Christine died later that day. Eliza offered to keep house for John, although she wrote in her dairy, "I felt my great insufficiency for everything of the kind but with a desire to do my best I hope and look for divine assistance." No longer was there time for reading; she wrote on Nov. 13, "every hour brings its full employment." Then another



**Smith's Spring, Fiddler's Green Road, Ancaster. This is the site of Peter Jones's conversion to Christianity.**

*Photo courtesy of the Brant Museum & Archives*

blow fell on the 15th — Christine's infant child died and was buried. Eliza called upon her reserves of strength. By November 18 she had conquered her depression. She wrote in her diary: "I am where God hath led me and altho' very far from so many loved ones I have a kind husband and many undeserved comforts and if I have but the love of God in my heart all must be well." In two months, life on the Mississauga Indian Reserve had transformed Eliza from the girl-woman she was when she arrived into a stronger, a more impressive and mature woman.

Peter and Eliza moved into the larger house he had built for her in early December 1833. There Eliza cheerfully taught the Indian girls to sew, instructed them in religion and assisted Peter in copying out in her fine hand his translation of the Bible.

The villagers most eager to adopt Christianity and civilization — those who unconditionally supported Peter Jones — came to like Eliza. They slowly warmed to the white woman who had come to live among them. They

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## Fall genealogical workshop

The Ontario Genealogical Society, Brant County Branch, is presenting a fall workshop on Saturday, Oct. 23, 2004, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Smokey Hollow Estates Country Club, 114 Powerline Rd, Brantford, ON.

The workshop is open to the public and local history-related organizations.

Setup begins at 9 a.m.; registration begins at 9:30.

### Organizations in Brantford and Brant County

You are invited to help with this workshop by sending one or two representatives with a display of materials that may be of interest to family history researchers. Your representative(s) will be asked to give a short talk, about eight to 10 minutes, telling about your organization, its resources, and what it has to offer to family history researchers. Handouts would be appreciated. You are welcome to sell any of your publications.

The workshop is free for up to two participants per organization and includes lunch. Anyone else wishing to attend will be asked to pay the registration fee of \$15. For those who pre-register, lunch is included.

We would appreciate confirmation as soon as possible. Please contact Marilyn Cross at 753-6914 for more information or to confirm participation.

## Peter and Eliza Jones

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called her Kecheahgahmequa — “the lady from beyond the blue water.” Perhaps it was her own suffering that helped endear her to them. At the Credit River Eliza had two mis-carriages and two stillborn children between 1834 and 1836.

Throughout their first years of married life Peter and Eliza knew that many white settlers were watching them closely. Eliza had no sympathy for those with such a perverse curiosity. She came to appreciate the Indian people more. After a year or so at the Credit River, Eliza recorded “how superior was the refinement” of the Indian women to that of the white settlers.

On May 17, 1837, Eliza left for England, fulfilling a promise made to her father when she was married that she would visit England in four years. Peter, who would follow after a missionary tour of Manitoulin Island, saw his wife off at New York. Scarcely a week after her departure, the *New York Sun* on May 26 carried the following article on its editorial page. Under the caption, “Mrs. Peter Jones,” it began:

The romantic lady who some three or four years since created quite a “sensation” in this city by giving her hand to Peter Jones, a converted Indian, has returned to England, as we understand, for her health. It will be recollected that she became enamoured of Peter during his missionary tour in Europe, and despite the remonstrances and intercessions of relatives, collected her worldly gear, which was very considerable, and embarked for this city, where for some time she awaited the arrival of her swarthy adorer, with a constancy not to be shaken by the tremendous battery of entreaty, argument and ridicule, where with from all sides she was assailed.

In Upper Canada many believed that Eliza had abandoned Peter. The English traveler, Anna Jameson, reported in a publication in 1838, that Mrs. Jones, whom she described as a “young enthusiastic English woman,” had permanently separated from him. But, of course, Eliza had not. Eliza had adjusted to the white settlers’ hostile opinion of her marriage, to the rigorous climate of her new land and to life on an Indian mission. After Peter’s second missionary tour of Britain and his audience with Queen Victoria, the couple returned together to Canada. The best years of their marriage lay before them. In 1839 Eliza gave birth to her son, the first of five, one of whom died. Together in the 1840s, Peter and Eliza found their greatest challenge — the revolt of roughly half of the reserve against the Methodists’ attempts to transform the Credit Indians into what 20th-century native leaders would term “brown white men.”

In the June newsletter: Peter and Eliza’s last years.

## MEMBERSHIPS

### Welcome to our new members

Susan K. Blackett  
Heather Ibbotson  
Geoffrey Moyer

### Corporate sponsors

EXTEND Communications Inc.  
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Michael J. Carbone, Margaret Carrow, Douglas and Marilyn Cross, Gayle Cunningham, Holstein Association of Canada, Stacey McKellar, David and Elfrieda Neumann, Shirley Sills, Ruth K. Stedman, Ben VanVeldhuizen, Pamela J. Young

### Renewing members

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## DONATION OPPORTUNITIES

*Endowment Fund:* The interest from this fund goes to the operation of the museum.

*Acquisition Fund:* This fund is used to acquire and conserve artifacts.

*Building Fund:* This fund will be used for the museum — to renovate the existing building, to buy a new building and to renovate it, or to build a brand new museum.

*Operations Fund:* This fund is used for the daily operations of the museum, including staffing and programming.

*Special Projects Fund:* This fund will be used to complete special projects — some current projects include the Settlement Gallery, a new reception desk, a new sign for the front lawn and repairs to the glass enclosure.

## DONATION ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

### Endowment Fund

*In Memory of Agnes Glass*  
Brant Historical Society

*In Memory of Roby Keene*  
Brant Historical Society

*In Memory of Daisy Krantz*  
Nelson Krantz

*In Memory of Alexander MacDonald*  
Brant Historical Society  
Brant Museum & Archives staff

### A Brant Historical Society membership offers ...

- free admission to the Brant Museum & Archives, Bell Homestead and Myrtleville House Museum (excluding special events)
- exemption from personal research fees in our archives
- bulletins about upcoming museum activities
- subscription to the “B.H.S. Quarterly”
- discounts on Heritage Bus Tours, Children’s Museum Club and other programs
- 10% discount on gift shop purchases over \$20

### Categories and fees

Benefactor	\$500.00+
Patron	\$200.00+
Friend	\$100.00+
Supporter	\$50.00
Family (2)	\$30.00
Individual	\$20.00
Student	\$15.00

Check out our new  
Web site!

www.brantmuseum.ca



# Happenings

## Brant Museum & Archives

### Exhibits

"The Ups and Downs of a Boomtown: Images of Brantford's Downtown Past." Dec. 3, 2003, to April 2, 2004. An exhibit catalogue will be available in March. See Page 3 for more information.

### Annual report/financial statement

Copies of the B.H.S. annual report and financial statement are available for pickup at the main museum.

### Strategic plan

A detailed strategic plan for the society and museum is available at the main museum or by e-mail upon request.

### New at the gift shop

*Canada: A Portrait in Letters, 1800-2000*, by Charlotte Gray, \$45.

*Stories Short and Tales Tall*, by Bruce Allan McBlain, \$20.

*Into the Silent Land: Historic Cemeteries & Graveyards in Ontario*, by Jennifer McKendry, \$53.

*Terrier Town: Summer of '49*, by David Menary, \$25.95.

### In sympathy

Agnes Glass — to Robert and Margaret Glass on the loss of his mother

Roby Keene — to her family

Alexander MacDonald — to Cindy MacDonald and family on the loss of her father

### Get well wishes

John Bonfield

Ruth Lefler

### Thank-you

To Dave Neumann for including us in his Grand River Chorus wine-tasting evening and auction fundraiser.

### Belated thank-you

To Frank Balazs and Ken Strachan for their help during last October's B.H.S. Birthday Bash.

### Zehrs tapes

Keep bringing in those Zehrs tapes!



## Brant Historical Society

### General meeting speakers

Brant Museum & Archives, 7:30 p.m.

**March 17, 2004** David Beasley's recent novel involves a runaway slave. He will tell the real-life story of Sarah Lewis, who escaped from West Virginia in 1820 and made her way to Simcoe in 1822, touching upon the Rebellion of 1837 during his talk.

**April 21, 2004** Bruce Hill will talk about the Brantford cut of the Grand River Navigation Company and the boats that used it.

**May 19, 2004** A representative of the Grand River Heritage Mines Society will talk about the history of mining in Brant County.

**June 16, 2004** Volunteer Appreciation Night. Location to be announced.

### Brantford Film Group

The Brantford Film Group is a fundraiser for the Brant Historical Society. Films are screened on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month at the Cineplex Odeon Brantford Mall Cinemas at 7 p.m. Advance tickets are \$7 and can be purchased at the museum. Box office tickets are \$8 and are purchased at the door.

**March 11, 2004** Pieces of April (United States), rated PG-13.

**March 25, 2004** La Grande Seduction (Canada), not rated, subtitled.

**April 8, 2004** The Girl With the Pearl Earring (United Kingdom/Luxembourg), rated PG-13.

**April 22, 2004** The Barbarian Invasions (Canada/France), rated PG-13.

**May 13, 2004** The Snow Walker (Canada/United States), rated PG.

**May 27, 2004** Luck (Canada), not rated.

**June 10, 2004** To be announced.

### Volunteers

We need volunteers to help with our education programs, to work with the collection and especially to participate in our fundraising bingos. Please give us a call: we can find tasks to match your interests and talents. Any spare time you have to offer us will be appreciated.