



# BHS Quarterly

Volume XIV, No. 1

Brant Historical Society 2007 ISSN 1201-4028

Spring 2007

## Brant Historical Society's early growing pains

Compiled by Robert L. Deboer from the minutes of the Brant Historical Society

Acquiring suitable accommodations for the operation of the Brant Historical Society and for use as a repository of artifacts and documents has been a longstanding problem and continues, even up to the present day. When the society was established on Oct. 11, 1908, there were no facilities available to accommodate the storage of artifacts and like items, which the organization had received from interested citizens of Brantford and Brant County and occasionally from outside the community. In the absence of appropriate storage for items donated to the society, many of which are recorded in the minute book, it is probable that society members stored these items in their homes until a museum could be established.

The lack of accommodation and quarters for the Brant Historical Society was a mat-

ter of considerable discussion at a meeting of the society held on Feb. 8, 1912. The society had been in existence for just over three years and, judging from the minutes, was accumulating a significant number of artifacts — as members described them, “relics” — and documents in its collection without a “home” to accommodate them or from which to conduct its activities.

The historical society had been established in 1908 at a meeting held in the Conservatory of Music at Queen and Nelson streets, the current location of the Hill and Robinson Funeral Home, and its regular meetings were held at this location for about two years. In 1910, the society changed its meeting location to the lecture room of the Carnegie Library building on George Street, but still did not have a location from which to

conduct its operation or store its collection. On Oct. 11, 1908, Herbert Gardiner, who chaired the inaugural meeting, had suggested a museum be started in connection with the historical society. The society's lack of financing likely entered the picture, prohibiting such an endeavour until January 1915 when a room was acquired in the basement of the Carnegie Library building for use as a museum at a cost of one dollar a year.

Continued on page 6

### Inside this issue

President's Reflections/2  
Executive Director's  
Report/3  
Treasurer's Report/4  
Do You Remember?/7  
General meeting info/8  
Happenings/8

**Celebrating 99 years of preserving local history**



# President's Reflections

No doubt you read in the Expositor that Brantford city council responded positively to a funding emergency at Myrtleville. A positive reaction, and I hope all members of the society will contact their councillors and thank them. This action acknowledges that community heritage assets must be protected.

Every museum faces funding shortages and the Brant Museum and Archives is in style. At the Annual General Meeting you will learn of deficits in 2006 and forecasted deficits for 2007. We are travelling in good company, but good companions will not provide us with funding. Also, staying the course may prevent us from responding to new and exciting future possibilities.

Our new executive director is an enthusiastic person who only looks forward in the positive. A problem is only an opportunity waiting for a solu-

tion. In a few months Joan has shifted the board of directors into high gear, managed to find more volunteers and reminded us of our stewardship. I hope every member will be inspired to join in facing our challenges. We do have very serious financial problems.

We still wrestle with the settlement of the Scheak estate and have not successfully arrived at mutually agreed terms of lease for our location with the County. Both of these questions have consumed a great deal of energy and countless hours of volunteer time. Hopefully we will soon round the corner.

At the annual meeting you will receive the Brant Heritage Partners consultants' report. Please remember, anything you hear, anything you see written in the press is not the response of the Brant Historical Society. We will make our response together as was

promised before this joint museum partnership began. In a few days the consultants' report should be available at the museum. If you wish, stop by and read it. Remember: it is no blueprint for action, as I see it. Rather, it brings us, if we agree to go forward, to the point of beginning. I know that will disappoint those who have dreamed and hoped for a new museum; however, let's patiently take our steps together and the end result will be what our community needs and what we have wanted.

In the meantime, consider joining one of the museum's committees. You have a solid hard-working board of directors, but they cannot possibly respond to the many and various tasks that need to be completed. Financial realities have made us short-staffed and have cut many of our programs. We must take back the reality that many hands make light work. —Calvin Diegel

## Brant Historical Society Board of Directors

**President** Calvin Diegel

**Vice-president** Laurie Dunn **2nd Vice-president** Robert Michalchuk

**Secretary** Heather Russell **Treasurer** Brian Moore **Past president** Robert Glass

**Directors** Calvin Clark, Margaret Glass, C. St. John Ludlow, Gloria Neamtu, Michael Schoenborn, Jonathan Shrubsole, Judy Stoklosa



# Executive Director's Report

*Dear Members,*

The past few months have been exceptionally busy at the museum and you can see this in the changes in the gift shop and program room. The staff has been working very hard behind the scenes to address the backlog in cataloguing, develop new exhibits and programs, and ensure that the museum is inviting and welcoming for visitors. Our newest exhibit, "Click! The Evolution of Photography," opens May 11 and plans are underway for an art exhibition in the program room.

Fundraising continues to be a major priority for the Brant Historical Society. The gift shop sale in March was very successful and has created an opportunity to begin bringing in new products. However, we still have a long way to go if we are to reach our target of a balanced budget in 2007. The fundraising committee is focusing on raising corporate memberships, but we also need

the support of all our members if our fund-raising efforts are going to be successful. Consider purchasing a gift certificate from the gift shop for that hard-to-buy-for person, or making a donation to your favourite museum or historical society activity. Your support is critical to our long term success and sustainability.

As well, the board of directors has begun to develop a new strategic plan for the Association. Your input into the planning process is important and you will be kept informed of opportunities to participate as the strategic planning process moves forward. In addition, we are excited about city council's decision to develop a Museum Sustainability Plan for the City of Brantford. This is a great opportunity to address the long-term sustainability issues facing many museums in the city and we are pleased to be involved in this process.

I would also like to remind our members that May is

Museum Month. Once again, the museums in the community are participating in the May is Museum Month passport program. Between May 1 and June 4, please take advantage of this program to visit museums in Brantford and Brant County. Passports can be picked up at the museum and if you collect at least five stamps from participating museums, you can enter your passport for a chance to win a great museum gift basket.

As always, I encourage members to visit the museum often and to take advantage of the many programs and services provided by the Brant Historical Society. In addition, your ideas and suggestions for future programs and exhibits are welcome. If you have any comments or suggestions, please don't hesitate to contact me at 519-752-2483 or by e-mail at [jkaniganfairen@brant-museum.ca](mailto:jkaniganfairen@brant-museum.ca).

*Sincerely,*

*Joan Kanigan-Fairen*

## **Brant Museum & Archives**

57 Charlotte St., Brantford, Ont. N3T 2W6

Phone 519-752-2483 Fax 519-752-1931

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. July and August: Sunday 1 to 4 p.m.

## **The Museum in the Square**

### **A Satellite of the Brant Museum & Archives**

Main Level, Market Square Mall

1 Market St., Brantford, Ont. 519-752-8578

Admission by voluntary donation

Hours: Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.



## BHS treasurer's budget presentation

At the recent Annual General Meeting there was a detailed presentation of the 2007 budget and its implications. Budget information was presented separately for the Historical Society's operations and for the Museum's operations. In an effort to achieve a balanced budget for the Museum's operation, admission fees and fees for licensing images will rise. However, additional funding will be needed if certain grant applications are successful as these will require matching dollars. Revenue from the Gift Shop and Endowment Fund continues to be provided to the Museum's budget but in the future should be provided to the Brant Historical Society budget.

The Historical Society budget unfortunately shows a \$27,000 shortfall despite raising membership fees, reducing the newsletter by one issue annually, and having Board members pick up the costs of providing refreshments for monthly meetings. The Board also established a Fund-Raising Committee in the autumn of 2006, which will need to raise \$2,500 each month to help cover the costs of the Society and support the work of the Publications Committee.

In developing the 2007 budget, the Board reviewed all expenses for the coming year

very thoroughly and concluded that all non-essential expenses have been eliminated. Both the Historical Society and the Museum already offer a "bare bones" operation and any further cuts would only result in very modest savings. Staff hours could be reduced further, especially since staff expenses are the biggest budget item, but there have already been significant reductions in staff and staff hours, and any further reduction could hurt our community image and support.

To ensure the future of the Society and Museum, Board have committed to increasing their personal efforts. In just a few short months the Board has undertaken the following actions to address the revenue shortfall:

- ❑ Established a Fund-Raising Committee which has begun to implement a number of initiatives,
- ❑ Made a personal commitment to contribution to the Society,
- ❑ Made revenue generation a significant issue for each committee of the Board,
- ❑ Sent a letter to City Council members about using casino revenues to ensure sustainable funding now that there is no bingo funding available, and
- ❑ Reviewed and altered the various fees.

The only other alternative

remaining is to call on the support of our members in order to increase our revenue generation. Efforts by our Members can take several forms:

### Memberships

While the Brant Historical Society has 235 individual and family members, this represents only about 0.25% of the population of Brantford/Brant County. It is not unreasonable to expect that we could double or even triple our Membership. We need you to invite your friends and neighbours, at every opportunity, to join us.

### Annual contribution programs

These programs consist of contributions from many sources. As members, we each need to review our household budget with an eye to determining what it can bear, and then contribute to the greatest level of our ability. Further, if you have links to potential funding from corporations, service clubs, fraternal orders, foundations, and other granting agencies, your help in reaching into those sources is needed.

### Admissions and services

These fees can increase our revenue stream but only if our number of users increase. While those of us who are Members know what the BHS and Museum have to offer, do our friends and neighbours



know? We need to invite others to visit our museum, to bring them to hear our guest speakers, to encourage them to use our research resources. Any or all of these will increase our customer base and our revenue.

#### *Sales of goods*

Our Gift Shop has many items suitable for special occasion gifts, and we need to remember to use it, and encourage others to do the same.

#### *Planned giving programs*

These programs are where individuals plan a bequest as part of their will, or alternatively where one arranges a life insurance policy where the return is gifted to the Society or Museum. Please consider these forms of contributing in your future.

#### *Tribute and memorial gifts*

Tribute gifts are when you ask others to make a donation to us rather than provide a gift on those special occasions, like anniversaries or birthdays, when one really doesn't need one more gift around the home. And then of course memorials are one more way we each can encourage others to provide a gift. The Fund-Raising Committee is also considering other ways to increasing revenue, but these efforts will rely heavily on the participation of our Members to be successful.

#### *Major gift campaign*

A Centennial Campaign is an example of such a campaign

and is usually used to support a one-time campaign such as helping the Endowment Fund to grow.

#### *Capital project campaign*

A Museum Building Fund is just such a campaign in order to build new, or improve the existing, museum structure.

#### *Special events and fund-raisers*

The committee is looking at some ideas which could include: reunions, galas (e.g. recognition ceremony), special dinners, special shows (dramatizations), dances, or sports tournaments (e.g. golf tournament).

#### *Other revenue generation*

The committee is giving special attention to initiatives such as: sponsorships, partnerships, and special advertising. Since these efforts rely on Member participation, each person can have a role in the revenue generation efforts through personal actions, and planning to participate in the Strategic Planning process the Board is initiating, where Members can provide special guidance to the Fund-Raising Committee. Many people have contributed to the Historical Society Endowment Fund. While that is an important contribution to the future sustainability of the Society and Museum, it is also important to realize that an Endowment Fund generates only 4-5% interest annually. Given the current principal in the fund, it

generates about \$7,000 annually for the operations. For the fund to be able to support the demands of the Society's and Museum's annual budgets, the Endowment Fund needs to grow to \$3 million. Only then will it provide the security needed — now and into the future. It may seem overly ambitious, but when the Endowment Fund has grown through major contributions, then attention needs to turn to increasing the Museum Building Development Fund so that it grows to an additional \$3 million reserve. This will help the Society more effectively fulfil its Mission, by either improving existing facilities or finding the Museum a new home.

Finally, the Society and Museum can benefit from gifts-in-kind. There are often many needs but the ones that are the most current are: a need for five four-drawer vertical filing cabinets; a new digital camera; and two point-of-sale cash registers for the Gift Shops. If you have any leads on potential gifts-in-kind, please bring them to the attention of our Executive Director.

This message should be a challenge that the future success of the Brant Historical Society and Museum is in the hands of its Members. Now more than ever the Society and Museum needs its Members to make a personal commitment.

—*Brian Moore, Treasurer*



## Brant Historical Society's early growing pains

Continued from front page

At a society meeting on Feb. 8, 1912, it was suggested that the work of the society was of much local and personal interest and that this locality was rich with historical matter that should be collected and preserved for both present and future generations and that such work was hampered by the lack of any proper accommodation for the transactions of the society. Much valuable material was not available and ultimately was lost because there was no permanent adequate headquarters for the preservation of historical material that would otherwise be entrusted to the society. It had been brought to the attention of the society that the federal government would be constructing a new post office (the current Federal Building) at Dalhousie and Queen streets. Out of concern for the lack of suitable accommodations to permit the society to collect and preserve relevant historical matter and in anticipation of the possibility that some space might be available to the society in the new Federal Building

and after some considerable discussion, the members came up with a resolution:

"That in view of the Post Office and Government Building to be erected in Brantford by the Federal Government, that a delegation from this Society wait upon Mr. W.F. Cockshutt, M.P., at the first opportunity to request through him of the Government that a suitable room for the purpose of the Society be provided in the Said Building."

It was suggested to those members present at this meeting, that they carry on the work of the society gratuitously, and that the allowing of a room, presumably in the new Federal Building, for society purposes would afford a great stimulus to the work being done. The society appears to have been anticipating success in its proposed overtures to the MP and through him to the federal government, in seeking accommodations in the new Federal Building.

A letter was read at the annual meeting of the Brant Historical Society on March

13, 1912, from W.F. Cockshutt, with an enclosed letter from the Hon. F.D. Monk, minister of public works, in reference to accommodations for the society in the new government building and post office. Unfortunately, the minutes of the meeting do not reveal the content of the enclosed letter. Judge A.D. Hardy reported to the annual meeting that the delegation so appointed had waited upon the MP, as directed by the February meeting resolution, in an effort to secure a room in the proposed new government building for the purposes of the society, and that he had promised to lay the matter before the minister of public works. The previously noted letters were likely in response to the overtures made by the by the society delegation that met with Cockshutt. However, without knowing the content of the letter from the minister of public works, it might be assumed, since there is no evidence to the contrary, that his letter was not in the affirmative. Doubtless, it would have come as a terrible disappointment.

Continued on page 7

Copyright on all articles and submissions contained in the "B.H.S. Quarterly" is vested with the authors. Permission to use any article or submission in whole or in part must be obtained from the authors. Authors can be contacted through the Brant Historical Society.



### Bark-cloth book making workshop at Woodland Cultural Centre

Sunday, April 29, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. register early, limited seating  
\$20 (membership)  
\$25 (no membership)  
Pre-registration required  
519-759-2650, ext. 242  
1-866-412-2202

## Brant Historical Society's early growing pains

Continued from page 6

ment to the aspirations of the society in its efforts to find a home.

Although the efforts of the society to obtain quarters in the new Federal Building at Dalhousie and Queen streets, probably met with rejection on the part of the minister of public works, it appears that the society may have continued its efforts to convince those in authority of their desperate need for accommodation to further their work and ambi-

# Do You Remember?



*Photo courtesy of Brant Museum and Archives, Image 7925*

18 King Street, c. 1890 to 1900. This is the present sight of the Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant. We are looking down Dalhousie toward the Armouries. The side doors are 39 and 35 Dalhousie St. Joseph Stratford and Company, Insurance and Steamship Agency, is listed at 18 King St. in the city directory and the Masonic Temple, which shared the same address, was above it. The stables in the background might be 9 Dalhousie St., but the city directories do not say who owned them or their address.

tions. At the society meeting held on April 19, 1912, the past president, Maj. Gordon J. Smith, again spoke on the probability of securing a vacant room in the post office building to be used for historical purposes. The minutes shed no light on what may have led Maj. Smith to hold out this hope. However, there is nothing further recorded regarding this matter and the society did not acquire space in the Federal Building.

The society would later acquire a room to be used as a museum in the basement of the Carnegie Library building, effective Jan. 1, 1915, upon entering a lease agreement with the library board, at a cost of a dollar a year.

It is believed that Judge A.D. Hardy, a member of the Brant Historical Society and also a member of the library board may have had some influence in brokering the deal.



# Happenings

## Brant Museum & Archives

### Dates to remember

May 11 Click! The Evolution of Photography.  
Exhibit Opening, 7 p.m.

May 18 International Museums Day

May 25 Tea and Tunes at the Museum, 7 to  
10 p.m. Tickets, \$5.

### At the gift shop

*Brantford . . . A Passage Through Time*, \$29.95.  
*Brantford's Link to Greatness: A Portrait of the  
Amazing Alexander Graham Bell*, by Albert Van-  
derMey, \$49.95.

*Reluctant Genius: the passionate life and  
inventive mind of Alexander Graham Bell*, by  
Charlotte Gray, \$36.95.

### Recent passings

Robert C. Gillin  
Bruce McBlain  
George Smeaton



## Brant Historical Society

### General meetings

Brant Museum & Archives, 57 Charlotte St.,  
7:30 p.m.

May 16, 2007 Syd Bolton from the Personal  
Computer Museum

June 20, 2007 To be announced

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



## Brant Historical Society

### Brantford Film Group

*Special event!!!*

May 10 *Away From Her* (rated PG, 110 min-  
utes, Canada/U.K.) Gordon Pinsent is Grant,  
happily married for 50 years to Fiona (Julie  
Christie) when she begins to exhibit signs of  
memory loss, the agonizing decision is made to  
move her into a nursing home where she can  
get the care she needs. Watch for the scenes  
filmed in Paris and Brant County.

*Away From Her* is being presented as a joint  
fundraising venture with the Alzheimer Society  
of Brant and will include special guests, a wine  
and cheese reception after the screening and  
door prizes. The film will start at 7:30 pm and  
tickets are \$30 each.

Tickets will be available only in advance at  
the museum locations, the Alzheimer Society at  
101 Brant Ave., and Green Heron Books at 47  
Grand River Ave. N., Paris. There will be no  
special pricing for members for this event.

## Acknowledgments

The Brant Historical Society gratefully  
acknowledges support from the County of  
Brant, the City of Brantford and the Ontario  
Ministry of Culture.

SEPTEMBER NEWLETTER: Author and  
member Mike Hand explores the lives of four  
southern Ontario pioneers — Hiram Capron,  
George Tillson, Elijah Leonard and Philip Van  
Brocklin.