



BHS Quarterly

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Winter, 2003

Two Brantfordians join Wall of Honour

On Nov. 19, 2003, two additional photographs of individuals who have made outstanding contributions to Brantford and Brant County were added to the Brant Museum & Archives' Wall of Honour at the general membership meeting of the Brant Historical Society. The two individuals recognized were

Augusta Isabella Grant Gilkison

Augusta Isabella Grant Gilkison was the driving force behind the formation of the Brant Historical Society on May 11, 1908. Gilkison is credited with drawing up the plans for the society's formation, which were adopted by its membership. She was the daughter of Col. Jasper T. Gilkison and Mary Ellen MacCormack and was born on Dec. 12, 1848 in Hamilton, Ontario.

Her grandfather was Capt. William Gilkison, who founded the Town of Elora. During World War I Gilkison was a very active worker for overseas soldiers. She personally knitted many pairs of socks and some 10,000 pairs of socks passed through her hands when she was in charge of what would become the Red Cross rooms in Brantford. Gilkison died in Toronto at the age of 94 years on Feb. 9, 1943. She was a dedicated and hard-working individual who devoted her energies to ensuring the formation and continued existence of the Brant Historical Society.

James E. Wilkes

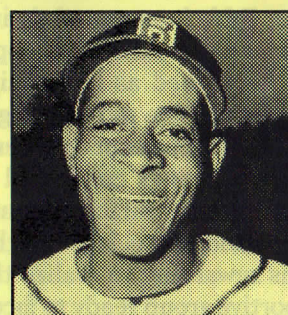
Jimmy Wilkes played with the Brantford Red Sox baseball team from 1954 until 1964, at which time he traded his bat and mitt for an umpire's mask, travelling the intercity circuit and officiating at games for the next 27 years.

The native of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, broke into the Negro Leagues in the United States in 1945 and came to Brantford through the efforts of the then-owner of the Red Sox, Larry Pennell.

Jimmy became a popular and well-respected citizen of Canada and, more importantly, the city of Brantford, and a goodwill ambassador for the sport of baseball with the youth of the community.

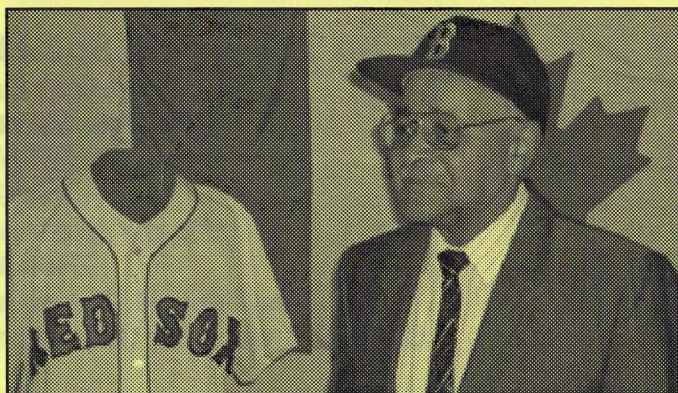


Augusta Gilkison



James E. Wilkes

Photos courtesy of the Brant Museum & Archives



Brantford Red Sox great Jimmy Wilkes donates his baseball shirt to the Brant Historical Society at its November meeting.

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Celebrating 95 years of preserving local history

President's Reflections

An air of excitement greeted members and friends as together we celebrated the 95th birthday of the Brant Historical Society. David Partridge, staff, and a host of volunteers promised surprises, and their organizing skills and determination made it happen. Certainly, they hoped that more members would attend. Those who did went home happy, with warm feelings on a cool, dark afternoon. We had celebrated! Both Mayor Friel and Mayor Eddy interrupted their election campaigning to be present and this was deeply appreciated. The smile of the treasurer broadened as he anticipated a reduction in our projected deficit. The red print lightened slightly.

The same enthusiasm was demonstrated at the several information meetings conducted by the building committee. More members might have attended; however, we are encouraged and appreciative of the comments and suggestions. It is rewarding to realize that we have a committed and supportive group ready to face this challenging task. All suggestions have been reviewed and some incorporated

into our report.

February's annual meeting will be decision time. As one of our senior members summarized, "We have the opportunity not only to give our museum a life of its own, but, freed from the responsibility, the historical society has the opportunity to grow in so many ways." Her assessment is appreciated and reflects her many years of involvement. We cannot pretend that there is not much work to be done, difficult decisions to be made and risks to be taken. The possibilities are exciting as together we are determined to "grow the museum" so that our heritage may be preserved.

As I review the history of our society, I see that difficult decisions have been made in the past. In every instance, those ready to see the possibilities made them happen. With that spirit alive and well today, the next chapter is ours to write. I have *my* dreams — do you have yours? Working together, we will be surprised at what will be realized.

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:

<http://comdir.bfree.on.ca/bcma/>

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:

Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

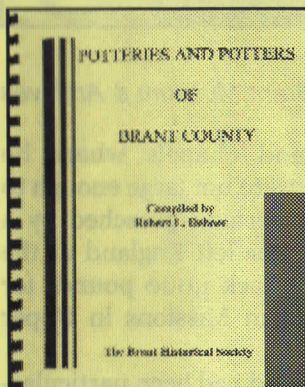
Curator's Corner

It's that time of year again. The halls have been decked and we are anticipating the patter of at least 360 pairs of feet over the coming weeks. Debbie has been preparing our annual "Seasonal Celebrations" program and, with the help of our volunteers, we will be telling the children about Victorian Christmas, Ukranian Christmas, Diwali, Ramadan, Hannukah, Chinese New Year and many other winter celebrations from around the world. If you can't make the open house then why not come to the general meeting on Dec. 17 for David Judd's talk on Christmas 1903? If it is half as good as last year's, then it promises to be a very entertaining evening. Another thing we've been busy put-

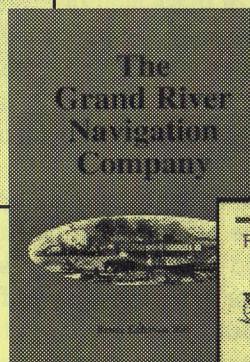
ting together is our next exhibit. Entitled "Ups and Downs of a Boomtown: Images of Brantford's Downtown Past," this timely exhibit features photographs of Colborne Street, Dalhousie Street, Market Square and a few streets in between. These photos are accompanied by artifacts from our collection that represent the various shops depicted in the photos. The official exhibit opening is Dec. 3, but the show runs until the end of February, so please come down to the Museum in the Square and check it out. I must go and bake some cookies for the program now, but I'm looking forward to visiting with you at one of our upcoming events.

Stacey McKellar

B.H.S. Christmas savings during December



On sale
now until
Dec. 24!



Choose from over 20 Brant Historical Society publications:

Buy 1 book, save 10%

Buy 2 books, save 20%

Buy 3 books, save 30%

* This offer is not to be combined with other discounts.

Brant Museum & Archives
57 Charlotte St.
752-2483

Wednesday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
and Saturday, 1 to 4 p.m.

The Museum in the Square
Market Square Mall
752-8578

Monday to Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Special hours: Wednesday, Dec. 24, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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

Peter and Eliza Jones' Transatlantic courtship

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.

The Reverend Peter Jones was born on Jan. 1, 1802, in a teepee at Burlington Heights near Hamilton, the son of an Ojibway woman and Augustus Jones, a pioneer land surveyor of Welsh descent. He was named Kahkewaquonaby, or Sacred Feathers by his grandfather. His life ended in 1856 at his residence known as Echo Villa on what is now Colborne Street East in Brantford, and he was buried in Brantford's Greenwood Cemetery.

Peter Jones became an ordained minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church. He spent his life and ruined his health in his many years' service among the Ojibway Indians, accomplishing much on their behalf and actually saving them from extinction.

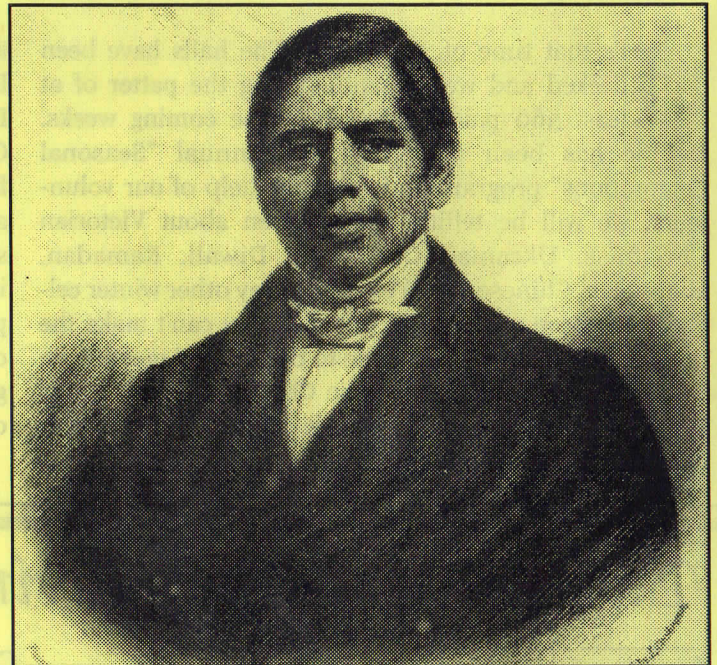
Peter Jones traveled to England in the interest of his people on three occasions and made his influence felt there. On his first trip to England, and while living in the old land in quest of funds to carry on his work, he met a pretty English girl, Eliza Field, who was prominent in society and who fell in love with the handsome visitor from Canada. She subsequently followed him to the New World where they were married.

Our story commences with the early life and courtship of Peter Jones and Eliza Field.

In the first 14 years of Peter's life he lived with his mother's people, the Mississaugas (as the white settlers termed the Ojibway on the north shore of Lake Ontario.) When his father finally took him from his mother's band in 1816 he could only understand a few simple words in English.

In 1816, fearing that the demoralized and rapidly declining Mississaugas would soon be extinct, Peter's father took the boy to live with him and his second family on the Grand River. It was on his father's farm that Peter learned English and the ways of the white man. Then in 1823, the second major transformation in Peter's life took place — he was converted to Christianity. At the age of 18 his father had him baptized by the Reverend Robert Leeming, Episcopal Minister at the Mohawk Chapel. At the age of 23, the young mixed-blood felt called to the Methodist ministry. Knowing both Indian and white culture, he felt he might serve as a bridge between the two. By the late 1820s Peter had converted almost all of the Mississaugas to Christianity and became known as the leading Methodist preacher in Upper Canada. In 1831, the Methodist Episcopal Church of Upper Canada, recognizing his talents, sent him to England to raise money for the support of the Canadian mission.

The English tour was a complete success. Over the course of his year-long visit thousands of people were



Rev. Peter Jones

Image courtesy of the Brant Museum & Archives

turned away from churches and chapels where he preached. Many of these facilities were not large enough to admit all who wanted to hear a sermon preached by a North American Indian. When Peter left England at the conclusion of his tour he brought back 1,000 pounds for the support of the Methodist Indian Missions in Upper Canada.

The first week he spent in England had been particularly difficult, as he could not adjust to the dampness and humidity. In mid-May, he became seriously ill in Bristol and under doctor's orders was confined to his room for seven weeks. But calamities sometimes bring good fortune, which happily was Peter's experience. During his confinement a young lady of privileged background, who was then visiting her sister in neighbouring Gloucester, called upon his hosts. The young woman, Eliza Field, of London, gave Peter an invitation to visit her mother at Norwood. When Peter had recovered and lectured throughout northern England, they met again at Norwood and at Lambeth. Although Eliza Field's diary for 1831 has not survived, there is every indication that her first impression of Peter was favourable as Peter became a welcome guest at both residences of Eliza's father at Lambeth Marsh and near Norwood.

Peter and Eliza toured London and visited Westminster Abbey, a short walk from the Field's home in Lambeth Marsh. Events moved quickly in their relationship and by

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Feb. 1, Eliza began thinking of the contribution she could make to the Canadian mission work. On Feb. 2 she confided in her diary, "I feel as tho' I could lay open all my heart to the friend I love." As his work in England would soon be over and he would have to leave shortly for Canada, Peter wanted to decide the question of marriage and on Valentine's Day he proposed. Eliza's joy was complete but her father's was not.

Charles Field, a wealthy businessman, had an overly protective attitude toward his eldest daughter. Although he admired Peter's religious zeal and spirit of sacrifice for his people, his anxiety about his daughter's relationship with Peter stemmed from Peter's income. Could the missionary, who earned less in a year than Charles Field did in a day, properly support his beloved daughter? It would take Peter and Eliza a month to win her father over to their side. In mid-March Charles Field yielded and reluctantly gave them his blessing.

All that spring, Eliza trembled at the thought of what awaited her in Canada. The talents on demand on an Indian mission were domestic and Eliza, who had been surrounded by servants from childhood, had precious few of them. But she was eager to learn. To prepare herself for life in an Indian mission, Eliza began to read widely and read Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*. She consulted church histories and travel accounts of North America.

During his last weeks in England Peter attended missionary society meetings in London and preached sermons in various chapels on Sundays. Then he received an unexpected honour – an invitation arrived requesting his presence at Windsor Castle on April 5. The private audience with King William IV and Queen Adelaide was the high point of Peter's last month in England. After the interview, Peter was taken by several of the King's Lords to a banquet hall where they dined on a sumptuous feast. Peter reported to Charles Field on his private audience with the king, which must have created a significant impression.

But Eliza's problems were still not over. Even before Peter left England on April 27, her friends voiced their opposition to her marriage to a North American Indian. Her brother-in-law, the Reverend John Dowling of Gloucester, was violently opposed to the union, apparently upset by the racial aspect of the marriage. Even her father was not truly reconciled to the idea. On Oct. 31 he told her, "You do not mean to go, if you go you will break my heart." A week later he openly forbade the match.

It was probably at this point that Charles Field learned more about Peter's father, Augustus Jones. It proved quite a shock, for while Peter had never disguised the fact that his father was a white surveyor of Welsh descent, it is unlikely that he ever made it clear that his father had two living wives – one Peter's mother and the second legal wife. On learning this, Charles Field began to suspect the character of Augustus' only son. Only through the intervention of Robert Alder, the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary

Superintendent, and Peter's friend Egerton Ryerson (the future founder of the modern Ontario school system and the first white missionary at the Credit Mission) – both of whom were in England – were his fears allayed. Finally, he again relented and no longer opposed the wedding.

Before Eliza Field left England for Canada, her fiancé had to warn her of the white settlers' opposition. "The fact is my beloved Eliza," his letter painfully began, "they think it is not right for the whites to intermarry with Indians." The hostile comments of some colonials in Upper Canada did not alter her decision. In early September 1833 – the week her ship from England landed in New York City – Eliza Field was married to Kahkewaquaonaby – Rev. Peter Jones. Peter's friend, Egerton Ryerson, also traveled with Eliza on her return voyage to the New World. Her father sent her off to Peter's log cabin with fine bone china and rich Persian rugs.

Today interracial marriages, particularly between North American Indians and whites, are a relatively common occurrence. This was not the case 175 years ago. In 1843, Peter Jones estimated that in all of Upper Canada there were only three or four Indian men married to white women and no more than three or four Indian women married to white men. When Peter and Eliza married in 1833, the event was noted in newspapers from London, England to New York City. In 1837 when Eliza passed through New York to return to England to visit her family, the New York Sun recalled her first visit when the romantic lady created quite a sensation in the city by giving her hand in matrimony to Peter Jones, a converted Indian.

Eliza's adjustment was extremely hard and the transition of the refined Englishwoman to frontier Canada was not easily made. She persevered, however, and loyally supported her husband. At his mission postings on the Credit River and later Muncey Town (near London, Ontario), she cheerfully taught the Indian girls sewing, instructed them in religion and assisted in copying out in her fine hand her husband's translation of the Bible. With determination, she strove to adjust to the new land and came to love it. Her union with Peter was total and after his death their mutual friend, Egerton Ryerson, would write, "I question whether a happier marriage than theirs, on both sides, was ever experienced – truly in life they were of one heart."

Many friends and relatives in England and Canada had been skeptical about the success of the marriage. But Eliza, at the time of her marriage and after, paid them no heed. After Peter died in 1856, she would recall "the fearful forebodings, and the cruel things that were written or said." Then and now, she added, she "looked with pity on those who from ignorance and prejudice viewed the alliance with contempt; deeming them not worthy to tread in the shadow of her beloved husband."

In an age when racial prejudices are still very much alive, Eliza's courage in making "character alone the distinguishing mark" deserves to be remembered.

In the March newsletter: Peter and Eliza arrive at the Credit River Mission.



Hailey Kajtar poses with professional face painter Sunshine the Clown.

*Thank-you to those who
donated their time, talent
or silent auction items:*

*John Bonfield
Brantford Film Group
Colleen Cross
Bob Deboer
Glenn Gillis
Janice Cockshutt Kneale
Ellen Macdonald
David Partridge
Genevieve Rochette
Russell Woodley*

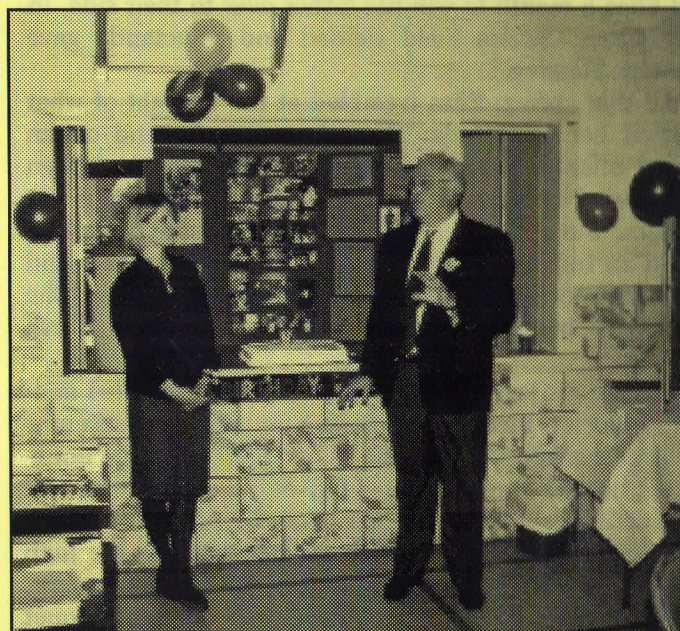
Thank-you, volunteers!

*David Partridge
Paul Bergasse
Margaret Chandler
Anne Deboer
Bob Deboer
Cal Diegel
Elizabeth Hartmann-Diegel
Glenn Gillis
Julie Gillis
Margaret Glass
Robert Glass
Heather Macdonald*

HAPPY 95TH BIRTHDAY, BRANT HISTORICAL SOCIETY!



October 1908 to October 2003



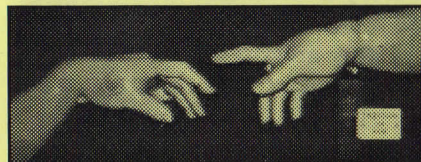
Director/Curator Stacey McKellar and B.H.S. President Cal Diegel prepare to cut the birthday cake.



Watercolour artist John Bonfield paints a picture in about two hours.



Left:
Charlotte
Clark and
Abigail
Krueger
put on
their best
faces for
Stacey.



Left: The St.
George Carvers
display their
handiwork.

MEMBERSHIPS

Welcome to our new members

Dr. William J. Couch
 William and Mary Derbyshire
 David Esbaugh
 John R. Harwood
 John and Robin McInnes
 Donald and Julia O'Rourke

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Donors (2003)

Winston C. Ferguson
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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 Mr. and Mrs. Jack Frost
 Jeanne Edge

In Memory of Rev. Cannon Tompkins
 Jeanne Edge

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



Happenings



Brant Museum & Archives

Exhibits

"The Ups and Downs of a Boomtown: Images of Brantford's Downtown Past." Dec. 3, 2003, to Feb. 27, 2004. Opening gala: Museum in the Square, Wednesday, Dec. 3., 2003, 5 to 7 p.m.

Christmas at the museum

Come and check out our museum. We're all decorated for the holidays and would love a visit from you. Experience a taste of Victorian Christmas in the parlour, or maybe Ukranian Christmas or Chinese New Year. Self-guided tours are available.

New at the gift shop

Canada: A Portrait in Letters, 1800-2000, by Charlotte Gray. The award-winning biographer has followed up her successful biography of Pauline Johnson with an oblique look at Canada's history through correspondence both personal and official.

Stories Short and Tales Tall, by Bruce Allan McBlain, \$20.00. This engaging family history serves as a sampler of Onondaga's history.

The Grand River: An Aerial Journey, by Carl Hiebert, \$60.00. This photographic essay includes several stunning views of Brantford and Brant County.

Zehrs tapes

Keep bringing in those Zehrs tapes!

Get well wishes

Gary Muir



Brant Historical Society

General meeting speakers

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

Dec. 17 David Judd will present Christmas 1903. Last year's was an outstanding presentation and we look forward to this year's with great anticipation. Bruce McBlain will sign copies of his book, *Stories Short and Tales Tall*.

Jan. 21, 2004 Everyone has heard about Benedict Arnold, but what about Joseph Willcocks? John B. Lee, a local poet and author, will tell us the intriguing story of Willcocks, a member of the legislature of Upper Canada who went over to the American side during the War of 1812-1814. The author's book will be available for purchase for \$20.00.

Feb. 18, 2004 Annual meeting of the society.

March 17, 2004 To be announced.

April 21, 2004 The Grand River Navigation Company canal is a fascinating part of Brantford's history. Bruce Hill, a society member, will talk about canal's history and the boats that used it.

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.

Dec. 11 Manna From Heaven, U.S., PG.

Jan. 8, 2004 Casa de los babys

Feb. 12, 2004 To be announced

Feb. 26, 2004 To be announced

March 11, 2004 To be announced

March 25, 2004 La Grande Seduction

Dinner and a movie, anyone?

The Brantford Film Group is offering a special gift package that includes two tickets good for any of our films and a voucher worth five dollars off a second entree at Al Dente restaurant.

Available now at the two museum locations only. \$15.00

A unique gift suitable for any occasion.