

# INTELLECTUAL PROFITS

THE IRREGULAR NEWSLETTER OF THE COMMUNITY HISTORY PROJECT  
Mail: c/o Spadina Road Library, 10 Spadina Road, Toronto, Ontario M5R 2S7  
Membership: \$20 annually for the period 31 May to 1 June of the following year  
Meetings: 7:30 pm on the fourth Thursday of each month except June, July, August



Fall Issue

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## ANOTHER MEMBER LEAVES US

Marjorie and Antony Darling spent some years in Toronto with us but kept up their membership and involvement after moving to Prince Edward County. If you do not remember Marjorie from meetings you may remember her as the white-haired laughing lady in the larger-than-life size wall mural at the old Riverdale Hospital where she worked as a volunteer. Now she will volunteer no longer, having suffered from a protracted illness and passed away on 5 June, leaving Tony without his best buddy and CHP without her humour and cheerfulness. We miss her and know she has earned her reward.

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## PROGRAMMES

**Monthly Meeting:** 7:30 pm on Thursday 27 September at 719 Yonge Street

**Tollkeeper's Walking Tours** by Bruce Ferreira-Wells – beginning and ending at the Tollkeeper's Cottage, and touring in sequence each of the four very different areas around the intersection of Davenport and Bathurst. These tours go rain or shine except in a torrential downpour, so bring an umbrella in case (then it won't rain!). The tours are \$5 (each tour) fundraisers for the Cottage, and each person receives a brochure with more history, and once the Cottage is open, people get to tour it (all for the same price) and examine some maps. Each tour gives information which lays groundwork for succeeding tours so these are like miniature courses, with new information added each year. Tours are on Sundays beginning at 2 pm, on 23 and 30 September and 7 and 14 October.

**Apples and Pumpkins:** a sale of heritage apples and pumpkins, plus baked goods and historic recipes from 11 am to 4 pm inside the Tollkeeper's Cottage, with possible bobbing for apples outside if the weather permits (for children only – towels supplied).

**Remembrance Day:** Sunrise Service on 11 November at Prospect Cemetery Veterans' Plot

**United Nations World Diabetes Day:** 14 November, Sir Frederick Banting's birthday, display at the Tollkeeper's Cottage about the man who lived in our study area

**Christmas Cookie Sale:** 11 am to 6 pm at the Tollkeeper's Cottage – home baking!

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*We have been unable thus far to find a new home for our office and are frantically searching! We require 2700 to 3000 square feet, heated, with electricity, on a TTC route, free of charge as we have had for the last 25 years! This is a tall order which can be filled only by a public-spirited person or business for nothing more than appreciation. Hammerson Canada and Nastapoka Holdings were our benefactors in those years . . . is there anyone else willing to join their ranks?*



On Saturday 23 June, **Gabrielle Robert-Klein** was given the “Francophone of the Year” Award during the ceremonies opening “Franco-Fete” this year at Toronto City Hall. Members will recall that Gabrielle, now in her eighties, is a long-time member of the heritage community and is part of the Tollkeeper’s Cottage Stitchery Team. Gabrielle has participated in other programmes at the Tollkeeper’s Cottage and will conduct a weekend workshop on quilting when we are ready. Her recipe for authentic French-Canadian pea soup is superb and is now part of our recipe collection, but she has not yet given us the recipe for her potato candies which she brings to many events. With her in the picture is Dan Brignoli of the Comité français de la Ville de Toronto and Therese Gaudry of the Ontario Office des affaires francophones. Gabrielle is one of the founding members of La Société d’histoire de Toronto; this group works closely with us and recently lost its founding president, Pierre Fortier – a great loss to Toronto’s heritage community. LSHT’s current president, Rolande Smith, is one of the Tollkeeper’s Cottage’s hard-working volunteers.

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## PARKS NEWS

When the volunteers assembled with tools and energy in the spring, the area to the south of that odd bit of fence parallel with Davenport Road got cleaned up (although there is still work to do there), and although the indigenous wild plants we want to keep were left in place. Then Catherine Watts, in pouring rain, took a selection of our heritage seeds and planted that entire area, the results of which will probably not be fully developed for another year or so. The Parks people have moved the garbage bins over to the east end of the park at the upper level (the TTC moved them away from the bus shelter where most of the garbage originates), although a dead rat found down in our area where the bins used to be and demonstrates the need for constant cleanup and vigilance. We had a flurry of visits from staff in the Transportation Department who said they are ready to install a protective railing along the upper stretch of the Bathurst Street end of the park, but they have not reappeared since. A railing should help to keep cars from charging into the park . . . we hope. And we have been assured that our park is “on the list” at position No. 62 for pruning of trees and removal of dead trees. In August, the Parks men finally got a truck to remove the brush we had piled up in the spring.

## LANGUAGE

You may remember the comic strip *Pogo* and one of its characters *L'il Grundoon* – a baby who spoke only in consonants. . . which often made editorial sense to the reader. In an idle moment you may also have wondered how *L'il Grundoon* would turn out when he grew up. This has been discovered! Grundoon works for the classified ad section of the *Globe and Mail*. Some examples of his special talent are: *spkr* meaning speaker; *pkng* meaning parking; *hrdwd* meaning hardwood; or *smkg* meaning smoking. This talent is far superior to the more common practice of using mere abbreviations such as *4WD* for four-wheel drive. Other old comic strip characters have faded away, but Grundoon lives on to make history with language!

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## ACCESSIBILITY

All of us should deplore the treatment of elderly or handicapped persons as second-class citizens. And we should support the alteration of standards in construction and public services to ensure that those with special needs are as adequately served as the rest of society. No permits for new buildings should ever be issued unless the plans for accessibility have met standards set by the handicapped community functioning in a committee with authority to alter the Building Code and approve or reject plans submitted to municipal authorities. But there is a serious problem to be dealt with when it comes to historic buildings – designated or otherwise. In our study area, we are familiar with the damage done to the beautiful façade of the Lillian Massey building at Avenue Road and Bloor in order to provide access. The problem of providing wheelchair access to old buildings which were not designed for wheelchair access but which meet classical design canons or where architectural elegance and beauty would be compromised or even destroyed if alterations are made, is going to become an increasing problem. We hear that Osgoode Hall is under discussion for accessibility, and we all know the sad sequence of events which this issue precipitated at Loew's Uptown Theatre. Now that we have a new Lieutenant-Governor who is handicapped, should we not be asking him to pull together a committee to resolve these issues with sensitivity and taste?

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## SPADINA ROAD LIBRARY

Our corporate address is at this library branch and will remain so – forever – regardless of where our office might be located. We have a debt to pay to this library branch which is celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in September. Positioned as it is next to the Native Canadian Centre, the library is responsible for maintaining the primary and important Native Studies Collection for the system and, through the special attentions of librarian Gloria Reinbergs, that Centre and its affiliated services have received special attention to its needs and some de-accessioned items, as have the Mississaugas of New Credit First Nation through CHP. CHP also received some volumes of the DCB when the system decided to stop carrying the series, and from the very beginning the branch has been looking after our mail. Such service! Grassroots Albany donated some plants for the front of the library. We are creating a special display about the history of the area before the library was built which will be on show at the branch through September etc. But we would like to hear from members of what else we should do to honour this branch, and what else the neighbourhood should do to thank the librarians for their service over thirty years.

## HERITAGE TREES

The picture here is of an elm tree some 200 years old. It is located just north of St. Clair Avenue on Humewood and was certainly standing when the great Blake family estate was begun there. The City recognizes this tree as a Heritage Tree and states that it is one of only 30 old elms remaining in the city. As the environment deteriorates, it is essential now that heritage trees of all varieties be identified and ways found to protect them in order to preserve the gene pool. And in order to clean the air all of us breathe, it is essential to plant more trees and give them a healthy start, and demand that the City not plant trees where their root systems are encased in concrete or their crowns mutilated by hydro. We should also pressure the Province to ban any cutting at all in old-growth forests, and reinstate the tree nurseries they once ran. It's a matter of life and death.



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## AN INHERITED RESPONSIBILITY

As members know, Bertram Sturrup, one of the most loyal supporters of the Tollkeeper's Cottage has died, and CHP is included in his Will. We are inheriting some furniture and furnishings which belonged to the Gooderham family, to hold in trust until such time as a proper Gooderham museum has been developed. This will be a huge responsibility as the bequest is large: 11 diningroom chairs, an old pigeon-hole desk, William Gooderham's rocking chair, Col. Albert's officer's feathered cap and sword which he wore in the 1885 Rebellion, 11 banker's boxes of pictures and papers (including genealogical tables) plus some large framed photographs (by Notman) of William and his sons and his wife with her daughters. As well, we will consider the diningroom table, an upholstered settee and two matching chairs, 2 plant stands, a dressing table and a photograph of it with William Gooderham's daughter sitting in front of it, some pottery and large china figurines, woodcarvings (Col. Albert's House-cum-York Club, Flatiron Building, Gooderham coat-of-arms), and a cruet set. We will ask the Executor if we can take away an old blanket box and Union Jack so that there is something of Bertram's in the Tollkeeper's Cottage. As we have no space where we are located presently and are unlikely to increase the amount of space in a future location, we must rent a secure locker to house this material until we have been able to determine where all of these items should be permanently placed – certainly not in Toronto which does not give a hoot about any of its heritage assets. Members may wish to consider all of the places that have any Gooderham connections and museum facilities then recommend a contact with these with future placement in mind. We have been trusted to do the right thing.

## A WIN IN THE BATTLE FOR CEMETERIES

So many developers, with the sanction of the Registrar, simply bulldoze cemeteries or “close” (meaning move) them, and more history is lost forever – sometimes with serious consequences. In the settling of estates, a burial record or gravestone may be all left to the lawyers to debate, and genealogists regard cemetery records as essential sources in research. Churches seem to be abandoning their traditional roles in defending the dead as part of the human family, adding to the notion that cemeteries are simply waste space. Then there is the huge unstudied matter of the viability of communicable diseases if those who died of such diseases have their graves disturbed. Think of the more than 5000 people from Potter’s Field simply dumped as fill on the Leslie Street Spit – and some of these people died from tuberculosis (now on the rise in Toronto), cholera, and other diseases. For many years, Helen Wursta, a former municipal Councillor, fought developer Damiani, in order to protect the burials in Lakeshore Cemetery and prevent a crematorium from being built. Many local people fought with her, right up until the time she died – but without any success. Lakeshore Cemetery held burials from the former asylums and burials of people who had died in road accidents and seemed to have no kin; the Ontario Government which owns this cemetery behaved as if the people buried there did not matter – not today or ever. But the situation has changed for the better, due to the efforts of new member Ed Janiszewski and his group. Here is his own report:

*The burial grounds for 1511 people, the majority from the former Mimico Asylum and, later, Lakeshore Psychiatric Hospital, at Evans and Horner Avenues in New Toronto, may finally be properly memorialized. Spearheaded by the Psychiatric Survivors Archives of Toronto (PSAT), a group of volunteers, including psychiatric survivors, local community members, and history buffs, formed the Lakeshore Asylum Cemetery Project (L.CAP) over a year and a half ago.*

*Their goal is to memorialize those of our ancestors who had been all but forgotten in an unmarked meadow, south of the Gardiner Expressway in Etobicoke. The first burial occurred in March 1890, the last in March 1974. Closed to further interments in September 1979 when the hospital was closed and partially merged with the Queen Street Mental Health Centre, the Cemetery was all but abandoned, save a couple of attempts to bring it to the notice of the community and Provincial officials.*

*In about 1998, it became a part of the Harris government’s Ontario Realty Corporation (ORC) and determined to be “excess land” and available for sale. The new owner would need to maintain the historic southern section, and the prospective buyer intended to build a crematorium at the northern unused portion. The South Etobicoke Residents and Ratepayers Association fought its approval for over eight years. In all this time there was no maintenance being done on the property.*

*After months of complaints to the Registrar of Cemeteries, a property maintenance company was contracted to address the neglect. Meanwhile, members of LACP met monthly to strategize, fund raise, and arrange spring and fall visits to place artificial flowers, and help maintain the site. A Toronto Star article also garnered publicity <http://www.thestar.com/living/article/220616>*

*Finally, in May 2007, the Cabinet disallowed the sale, and the ORC has now instructed the Del Management Solutions company to approach LACP members for our input into signage, erecting monuments, and landscape proposals. We are optimistically looking forward to a co-operative arrangement which respects the input and ideas of the psychiatric community that will, ultimately, honour those forgotten pioneers of Upper Canada and Ontario. In June 2007, three sets of relatives, including one from Michigan, visited the site for the first time. Please visit the LCAP website at <http://www.psychiatricurvivorarchives.com/cemetery/index.html> or the author at [edjaniszewski@ica.net](mailto:edjaniszewski@ica.net)*

## TOLLKEEPER'S COTTAGE PROGRESS AND REGRESS

With the infusion of funds from Al Maitland's estate, we were able to bring back the plasterer to complete his work. Although it dragged on longer than expected, it got done. During that month, the donated big triangular windows were delivered and put into place with final installation detail work to follow after soffit and fascia work has been done. The glass walls at each end of the joining section were also installed and some fussy finishing carpentry done to allow some fussy detailed painting to be done. A set of 35 folding chairs, at bargain basement prices, were purchased from Canadian Tire and moved into the Addition which is now so full it is difficult to move around. When the plasterer finished, the plastic sheeting (protecting the original and completed floor) was removed, only to reveal huge holes where the floor had collapsed totally. It was dryrot which had nearly two years in which to spread unnoticed under the plastic while we struggled to raise funds. The solution was to remove all affected wood – meaning all of the flooring and joists – and learn how to kill the fungus and treat what remained to save the building. Our architects were in Australia so Cathy Nasmith, Margie Zeidler (who had donated some flooring to match the original), and finally Katie Kurtin, gave advice on the problem and a solution. Katie provided some very informative sheets which told us the basics and Marilyn Spearin spent more than a week in tracking down suppliers of the chemicals we needed. David Hanna deserves special appreciation since he did the bulk of the heavy work in removing the flooring and joists, wearing a respirator and goggles. Jane drove to Minesing for a supply of the first round of chemicals, and she, Marilyn, and David carried out the two layers of treatment to kill the fungus. Chas figured out how much timber was needed for new joists and a supplier was found and the wood ordered. Jane then drove to Millbrook to purchase the next type of chemical required to seal the damaged wood which could not be removed.

A big weekend of work, starting in the afternoon of **Friday 14 September**, will undertake to clean the exteriors of both the Cottage and the Addition, using Roberta O'Brien's power washer and everybody's labour. Then the power washer will be joined inside the Cottage by Marilyn Spearin's shop vac (for removal of water) and the bare concrete floor, which still contains traces of the fungus, will be power washed and vacuumed. Everything must dry thoroughly before the next round of chemicals can be applied, and the chemicals will also have to be applied to the new joists when these are delivered. After all of this work, our supplier from Acton (Historic Lumber) will deliver old flooring (similar to what we had) and install it before continuing with all the rest of the woodwork in the Cottage. This woodwork still has to be scraped clear of all the old lead-based paint – another job for the volunteers! In the meantime, the little window in the bathroom has been installed and the remaining parts of the Cottage which have been waiting for the last of the clapboard to be installed are being finished. The developer who is to donate a total of \$35,000.00 will meet with us on Friday 14 September to deliver the first of his cheques. We can then order the installation of the sanitary sewer hookup – long, and desperately desired by our labourers! With that in place, we can then order the appliances and get the cabinet to house them and the cupboards overhead put in place, along with the final level of flooring in the Addition. The stone foundation wall for the front porch, then the porch itself with the tollgate will need to be built, and then the awful fencing can come down. The storage and display cabinets for the Addition must be built next, then painted, and filled with the displays and artifacts. Our antique furniture is all restored and was picked up and put into a locker by Ron Watts. If we can get the buildings finished and operational (including a wheelchair ramp), then we can open and have programmes and spend the winter planning how the grounds will be planted. After the grounds are rototilled and graded, Larry can install all of the exterior lighting, a trench for drainage and weeping tile can be installed, and the area fully sodded. With a big push from everyone, we could open late this fall and operate during the winter, triumphing over the setbacks!