

ACO Matters

Architectural Conservancy of Ontario – Port Hope Branch

Newsletter – November 2009

The Bluestone and the Town! Special Issue celebrating Twin 175th Birthdays. See page 4

From the President:

Of birthdays and parties and everything in between—

Has anyone realised what an important year this is in the annals of our town? Important on two counts: first, it's the 175th birthday of the most historic house in town, the Bluestone, and second, it's 175 years since the incorporation of the town of Port Hope. True reasons to celebrate!

So we invited Ian Montagnes, author of *Port Hope: a History* to write a special semidemiseptcentennial (175th anniversary—Ian's word) feature on this exciting dual event which he has done in his usual elegant and well-informed way.

Meantime, the Port Hope ACO is its customary extremely busy self. In these pages you'll find news hot off the press on our biggest fundraiser, the House Tour, just over, steered brilliantly to success yet again by Susan Carmichael and her heroic team; Philip Carter, Projects Chair, brings us the low-down on the Walton Hotel's progress; Chris Wallace has very upbeat news about Pier developments, while our VP, Jackie Tinson, keeps an eagle eye on the structural wellbeing of the Town Hall building—what's happening and what should be happening.

In addition, Mary Trevor, Scholarship Chair, reports with pride on the awarding of two A.K. Sculthorpe Heritage Trades scholarships for two students to study at Algonquin College; and Sue Stickley describes the activities of the Friends of Wesleyville, dedicated to saving buildings in the village of Wesleyville and ACO-supported.

Tie a knot round your finger to remember our Christmas Cocktail Supper! —always a lively and well-attended event when members can meet each other. It's on November 26th, at Dunain, another of the town's most historic and handsome homes. Mark it down in your calendar, then—immediately—get on the phone and let us know you're coming! Numbers are limited to 100, by reservation only. Judith Copeland, the Social Convenor, tells you more about this very special event in the article on the right.

Looking ahead, our Annual General Meeting will be held on February 18th, 2010, at the Capitol Theatre. Also the 6th Annual Antiques and Artifacts Auction will take place on April 11th, 2010, and we're already receiving material for it. If you're downsizing, think of us. We now have a truck to pick things up, and we're an excellent cause!

And on Wednesday, 28th April, the always-popular Bus Tour will visit Brockville, another little architectural gem. We would warn that it fills up quickly. So that gives you an idea of just some of our activities.

Will Ryan, President, ACO Port Hope Branch

The Fabulous Christmas Cocktail Supper! Thursday, November 26th.

Bonnie and Ken Garrett are hosting the Fabulous Christmas Cocktail supper at their home "Dunain" one of Port Hope's most significant and beautiful residences, built in 1857 for the marriage of Augusta Williams to William Fraser, Port Hope's first elected Mayor. The home has undergone major renovations by the new owners with the assistance of our community's outstanding designers and tradespeople.

The Party begins at 5.30 pm at 345 Lakeshore Road. There will be 100 reservations held. Tickets are \$23, and a reservation is made on receipt of your cheque which must be received before Nov 20.

Send cheque made out to ACO Port Hope, to:

*Judith Copeland,
72 Pine Street North,
Port Hope, ON L1A 3G8*

Judith Copeland, Social

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**ACO Board of Directors 2009
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The ACO was incorporated in 1933 for the preservation of the best examples of architecture in the province and for the preservation of its places of natural beauty.

The 44th Annual ACO Port Hope House Tour—Report

The House Tour was a resounding success, enjoyed by 1200 people, and while rain threatened all week, it held off until after the tour. Featured were eight distinctive Port Hope homes, plus Penryn Mansion and Billiards house and the Cameco Capitol Arts Theatre. Most had not been shown before. All were in town, and most built between 1840-95. Tour stops included:

- 267 Ridout St. – circa 1856, a totally restored Georgian with classic revival detailing.
- 77 Augusta St. – circa 1850, once an apartment building, this classic Greek revival structure has been returned to a single family home.
- 78 Pine St. S. – circa 1850, newly restored brickwork on this Georgian style architecture with hints of Gothic revival.
- 67 Dorset St. W. – circa 1865, a symmetrical cottage.
- 79 Dorset St. W. – circa 1860, Georgian style town house.
- 68 Cavan St. – circa 1840, restored Neo-Classic house.
- 26 Barrett Terrace – circa 1860, terrace house.
- 72 Pine St. N. Suite 401 – circa 1895, previously Dr. Hawkins School now converted into condos.
- 82 Victoria St. S. - circa 1859, Penryn Park Mansion, a fine display of Cottage Gothic. This was once a summer home and is now used for special events.
- 20 Queen St. – circa 1929, Cameco Capitol Arts Centre, one of the first movie theatres.

Many thanks to all who helped make this day happen: the volunteers, florists, retailers, sponsors and individuals with special expertise. And special thanks to the House Tour Committee of Daphne Svennington, Diana Joynt, Jacque Currelly, Janet Harvey, Joan Moss, and MaryJane Preston who worked all year long to ensure the day was a success.

Susan Carmichael, House Tour Chair

Friends of Wesleyville: Move Towards Community Use in Wesleyville

It's taken a long time, but the "Friends of Wesleyville Village" now have a lease from the United Church for the closed Church building on Lakeshore Road. That means the first step in the restoration (clearing out the bat droppings and repairing the ceiling) can proceed as soon as the "Friends" can raise the necessary funds. To join this energetic group of volunteers, contact Roz Farber at 905-885-1575.

Our old-fashioned barn dance at Batterwood Estate on October 24th is part of our enthusiastic action plan.

Mary Trevor has been arranging a charitable foundation designation and the "Friends" will meet with Ontario Power Generation (OPG) to solicit support for the restoration of the village as a community facility. OPG owns all the remaining buildings and property in the village except for the Church and the cemetery.

Sue Stickley

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15th Annual Writers & Friends

Sunday November 15, 2009
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ACO Matters November 2009

A Double Anniversary

Our town and its landmark house share a birth year
by Ian Montagnes

1834 was quite a year for Port Hope. That March the town was established as a municipality with its own elected local government.

In the same year there rose a house that epitomized the young town's growing wealth, one that stands today as an outstanding landmark of domestic architecture. In short, locally we celebrate not one but two demisemiseptcentennials, 175th anniversaries.

Port Hope was a generation old in 1834. From four families that had landed in 1793 it had grown to a thriving community of some 1500 persons—millers and distillers (its major industries), merchants and innkeepers, blacksmiths and carpenters, ship owners and carriage-makers, doctors and lawyers, housewives, children, servants. It was by far the most important town in Hope Township and that year was deemed large enough to be hived off from the larger jurisdiction. It was the only Lake Ontario town to hold independent status between Kingston and Toronto.

The new local government quickly passed a set of by-laws governing conduct within its borders, from observance of the Sabbath to the cleaning of pigpens. It paid special attention to the ever-present threat of fire in a town of wooden buildings. Homeowners had always to have fire buckets on hand and ladders long enough to reach rooftop and chimney. Leading citizens were appointed as fire wardens to inspect homes and yards for possible danger and to enforce improvements. Thanks to that early foresight we still have a few frame buildings from the early period, among them Upper Canada House and 27 John Street (the latter, twice relocated, now the Beamish House).

The leading citizen at that time was John David Smith, youngest son of Elias Smith, one of the town's founders.

He was forty-seven years old, and newly married. His first wife, Susan, had died in 1832, leaving him to care for their ten children. In the following year he had married Augusta Louise Woodworth, who was then twenty years old. For her he built, at the corner of King Street and Dorset Street East, the grandest, most fashionable house in town.

Smith owned thousands of hectares of land, a fleet of ships, and several mills and factories along the river. His new house was large and solid, on a rise overlooking the



lake and valley from which the family wealth arose. It was basically Georgian, symmetrical, with large windows and fanlights in the Smiths' Loyalist tradition; but Augusta Louise had come to Upper Canada from New York State and, perhaps in deference to her, many of the details were in the Greek Revival style then popular to the south. The outside walls were of rough rubble stone, covered with plaster that had been scored to resemble cut stone. Because of the plaster's colour, people began calling the house the Bluestone.

John David died in 1849 but Augusta Louise lived in the Bluestone until she died in 1907. The house remained in the family until about 1950. Thereafter it was divided into apartments and at one point sheltered a ballet school.

Some twenty years later Joan and Donald Rumgay decided to take early retirement from active careers in Toronto, to build a forty-foot boat, and to sail around the world. As a base they bought a house in Prince Edward County and, to furnish it, they began buying Canadian antiques. Before long they forgot about sailing and became serious antique collectors.

Next they decided they needed a house historic enough to match their furniture. Joan saw an advertisement for the Bluestone, knew Don had always wanted a Georgian house, looked it over, took Don to see it. It was immediate love.

When the Rumgays took possession in 1975, the conservation movement in Port Hope had scarcely begun. Peter Schultz had saved the St. Lawrence Hotel; Clay Benson was restoring the Mill House; work was under way in a few other houses; but no one had tackled so substantial a domestic project. Fortunately, all the important elements of the Bluestone were intact: the basic outline, the original pine floors, mouldings, plasterwork, shutters, fireplace mantels, hardware, and some glass—although much was hidden behind outdoor carpeting, asbestos tiles, and plywood. It took twelve years to strip the modern veneer and outfit the house with new plumbing, wiring, ventilation, insulation, and re-decoration, but by 1988 the Bluestone had been returned to its original grandeur.

That would be enough for most people, but not for the Rumgays. While work was still under way in 1983 they founded, with Joan as editor, *Century Home*, a magazine devoted to the romance of old houses nation-wide. The magazine's editorial headquarters at first occupied the second-floor ballroom. From the beginning *Century Home* had columns devoted to restoration; in 1987 it introduced a pull-out magazine-within-a-magazine called *Re•New* "to provide useful information and a forum for those involved

in makeover projects." During the same year Bluestone House published *Port Hope: A Treasury of Early Homes*, a magnificent large-format book with photographs by John de Visser and text by Tom Cruickshank. It has since become a collector's item in its own right.

Subsequently, Don spearheaded the campaign to restore the Capitol Theatre, and the pair refurbished the old Customs House and its neighbour, the Waddell Block, as the Lantern Inn and Suites. Their son Peter has continued the family interest, restoring houses on Little Hope, Ridout, and William Streets.

What there is to celebrate, therefore, is not just two anniversaries from the past but also a community that has managed to save so many of its early buildings and a family that has encouraged architectural preservation by example and personal investment.

What drives the Rumgays' blend of entrepreneurship and devotion? Their simple answer, when I asked, could be a motto for the ACO. It was: "We have the passion."

Ian Montagnes is the author of the recently published and highly successful book, *Port Hope, a History*.
Photo by Alan L Brown - May, 2004

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Two Heritage Trade Scholarship Awards

There were two recipients of this year's A.K. Sculthorpe Heritage Trades Scholarship, both of whom will study Heritage Masonry at Algonquin College in Perth. Sean Donnelly, a member of the Dry Stone Wall Association of Ontario, has been working in Kingston with renowned stone mason Aaron McOnie on a number of dry stone wall structures. Recently he worked as a volunteer in Scotland, at Balmoral Castle. He was "really excited to receive this award and looking forward to starting the Heritage Masonry Program at Algonquin." He loves to work on restoring life to old buildings.

Zachary Carrie is from Port Hope. One of his references was from John Doherty, of Pine Street South, whose house was on the recent House Tour. Zach worked with local mason, Carl Ross, to restore brickwork on that house. He intends to return to Port Hope after he graduates.

"[Zachary] already shows a great deal of skill as a mason," said Mary Trevor, Scholarship Chair. "It's important to the area to have people learn these heritage trades—their



Above: Mary Trevor, ACO Scholarship Chair, presents a tuition cheque for \$1,200 to Sean Donnelly.

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future is assured and the area benefits from having highly-skilled heritage trades craftspeople available."

6th Annual Antiques and Artifacts Auction to be Held Sunday, April 11, 2010

Now is the time to look about your home to select your donations to the auction and tag sale at Antiques and Artifacts 2010. Articles can be stored until next April, and, should you so desire, a 2009 tax receipt can be issued.

The committee is looking for interesting items from dishes and furniture to art and architectural artifacts. Vintage toys and books are always popular. Any information known about your pieces is a welcome addition. Electronics and non-vintage appliances are best donated elsewhere.

Anything donated to Antiques and Artifacts should be in good condition or easily repairable. We can arrange to have larger items picked up. We are unable to accept mattresses.

Donation forms are available from Joan Tooke (get-jet@sympatico.ca) and arrangements for receipt or pickup can be made by contacting Ed Pamenter at 905-885-2737.

ACO Port Hope Board Nominations

Nominations for the ACO Port Hope Branch, Board of Directors are currently being sought. Please forward your nominations via email to ACO Chair, Will Ryan at: wryandes@gmail.com. New board members will be ratified at the A.G.N. in February.

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Report of the Projects Committee September 15, 2009

Walton Hotel Project—I visited the site on September 11, 2009 and reviewed the progress of construction. In terms of the ACO donation for windows and cornice restoration, work is well advanced. There are some 35 windows on the west and north façades that are being restored; 22 of these windows are now installed. The two Walton Street central windows have frames installed but are left open to allow delivery of materials. Only 13 windows remain to be installed and all but five are on site.

The north façade of the building is largely restored and repainted and looks terrific. Work progresses on John St.

In terms of the overall construction, the building has been totally secured structurally with new steel structures and new wood floor joists. A new elevator shaft has been constructed awaiting elevator installation. A new masonry fire stair has been constructed on the south end. New construction in the southeast corner is framed.

It is the intent of the owner to have a hotel with rooms on the second and third floor. The front lobby is to have the restored stair and restored metal ceiling. The lobby is to have a bar and outdoor seating on the porch on Walton Street. There is to be a dining room in the south room on Walton Street and a pub in the rear section of the main floor. There are to be two or three retail outlets on John Street. This will make the previously "blank wall" of John Street a more inviting and animated street.

This is a very exciting project and promises to be a great addition to the downtown. We of ACO can be proud to be part of this project. A cheque for \$20,000 was issued to Ron Christopher of 1713515 Ontario Ltd., the owner. The additional \$20,000 will be issued upon completion of the restoration work on the windows and cornice as per our agreement.

Phillip H. Carter, Chairman, Projects Committee

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Time to Renew Your ACO Membership

It's almost time to renew your membership. Take the opportunity at the Christmas Cocktail Supper to do so! Your annual dues go towards our projects to preserve our architectural heritage and you'll receive a tax receipt.

Trish Doney, Membership Chair.

Report from the Pier Group – Chris Wallace

The Pier Group appear to have won a significant battle, if not the war, to save the Centre Pier Buildings. At the recent CNSC hearings on Port Hope clean-up, the verbal ruling was that the buildings could not be demolished until a proper Environmental Assessment had been completed—a very time consuming process. It appears that none of the major players had bothered with the Pier Buildings, in their years of E.A. work to date. So the buildings are safe for at least the duration of this Council.

The Pier Group recently held a successful BBQ as a get together so that like-minded individuals in the group could get to know one another, and to celebrate our victory to date.

Two future events will generate even more momentum for the cause. On Nov. 19, a speakers night at the Cameco Capitol Theatre at 7:30pm, with expert speakers, including Tim Jones and Gord Hume, on the subject of heritage restoration as a major community stimulus. On Nov. 21, a day-long ideas workshop / charette at the Knights of Columbus Hall from 8:30 to 4:00, to engage the community in the dialogue on the future of our waterfront and the Pier. The guest panelists will include the authors of both the ACO funded reports, Chris Andreae of Historica Research, the author of *Heritage Assessment of the Port Hope Centre Pier* and Doug Simpson of Netgain Partners, author of *Revitalization of Port Hope's Centre Pier*. Further details will be made

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Port Hope ACO Major Events

ACO CHRISTMAS COCKTAIL SUPPER
Thursday, November 26th, 2009.

2010 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING,
Capitol Theatre, February 18th, 2010.

ANTIQUES AND ARTIFACTS AUCTION,
Saturday, April 11th, 2010.

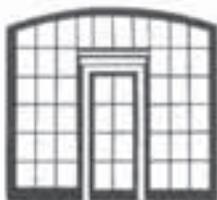
BUS TRIP TO BROCKVILLE,
Wednesday, April 28th, 2010.

Watch *ACO Matters* and www.ACOPortHope.ca
for updates and/or changes

**Book Launch Invitation:
Letters to a Small Town by Paul Bennett
illustrations by Eric Beddowes**

All are invited to a book launch party to celebrate
the publishing of Paul Bennett's book:
Letters to a Small Town.

Launch Party to be held at Furby House Books,
65 Walton Street, Port Hope
on Saturday, November 14th, at 2pm.
(905-885-7296)



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**Architectural Conservancy of Ontario
Port Hope Branch
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Name(s): _____

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Annual memberships in the ACO, Port Hope Branch are due each January 1st. Membership cut-off is July each year. The Port Hope Branch of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario is financed through membership fees and voluntary contributions which are tax deductible. Additional funds are raised through the annual House Tour, Biennial Garden Tour, Antiques & Artifacts Auction and other fund raising initiatives. Educational programs, including bus/walking tours of Port Hope and other learning forums are part of our yearly program. Each member is invited to participate in branch and provincial activities. Membership also includes a subscription to *Acorn*, the provincial ACO publication, and *ACO Matters*, our Port Hope Chapter publication.

Please send your cheque to address below:

- Individual Membership:\$30.00
- Family Membership:\$35.00
- Organization Membership:\$40.00
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