



Gravenhurst embraces heritage, fun for 20th conference

Ontario Heritage Conferences

20 years: 2004-2024

By Paul King

This year, Gravenhurst hosted, and warmly welcomed, delegates to the 2024 Ontario Heritage Conference (OHC), being the 20th anniversary of these successful conferences.

The first OHC in 2004 was hosted by an enthusiastic local planning committee in Hamilton. That committee set a high bar for all subsequent OHCs. The list of the host locations and the years are:

Hamilton: 2004; Windsor: 2005; Rideau Lakes: 2006; Guelph: 2007; Collingwood: 2008; Peterborough: 2009; Chatham Kent: 2010; Cobourg: 2011; Kingston: 2012; Midland/Penetang/Tay: 2013; Cornwall: 2014; Niagara-On-The-Lake: 2015; Stratford/St. Marys: 2016; Ottawa: 2017; Sault Ste Marie: 2018; Goderich/Bluewater: 2019; COVID: no conference: 2020; COVID: no conference: 2021; Brockville/Elizabethtown-Kitley 2022; London: 2023 and Gravenhurst: 2024.

Community Heritage Ontario (CHO) is particularly proud of these conferences because it was largely due to CHO's efforts that these conferences have continued. Municipalities and other organizations such as the



Gravenhurst OHC 2024 delegates Carole and Wes Libbey of Cornwall enjoyed a cruise on the *Wenonah II* steamship. (Photo by Wes Libbey, Municipal Heritage Committee)



The Gravenhurst organizing committee hosted events in the town's historical buildings including the Opera House. (Photo by James Forrester, Twp. of Selwyn Heritage Committee)

Architectural Conservancy Ontario (ACO), the Ontario Association of Heritage Professionals (OAHP), the Ontario Heritage Trust, the Frontenac Heritage Foundation, and others, have been involved to a greater or lesser extent from time to time. For some OHCs, the Ontario Government and municipalities have been supportive, but for 20 years, CHO has been the only organization that has consistently supported, helped plan and organize these conferences. Over the years, starting with Bob Saunders (former CHO President), it has been CHO Board members who have supported local conference organizing committees and done heavy lifting to ensure the continued success of these conferences. There has been a lot of dedicated hard work and there have been trials and tribulations to overcome on the road to having these successful conferences.

There were separate CHO and ACO conferences prior to 2004, but the first joint OHC took place in 2004. Due to the Covid pandemic, there were no conferences for two years (2020 & 2021). A very well-planned conference with excellent sessions was all set for Markham in 2020 but, unfortunately, it had to be cancelled due to the pandemic. The conferences started up again in Brockville / Elizabethtown-Kitley in 2022.

Community Heritage Ontario is proud of these

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Adaptability: important factor in heritage conservation



**By Matthew Gregor, Chair,
Community Heritage Ontario**

Hello again! It feels like it was just a week ago that I had the chance to meet many of you at the annual conference. And what a conference it was! Aside from that pesky tornado warning on Thursday the weather

held up, we were able to enjoy a lovely weekend. I hope everyone found the sessions engaging. A big thank you to Amy and her team in Gravenhurst for all the hard work they put into making the conference a success.

Planning is underway for next year's conference in Prince Edward County from June 19 to 21, 2025.



We will keep you informed about future updates. Early plans are a theme that celebrates how adaptive reuse of heritage locations can contribute not only to tourism but also to economic development.

One interesting conversation I had at the conference was with someone unrelated to the conference who happened to be in Gravenhurst and who used to own a heritage home. Putting specific details about this individual's experience aside, the important message conveyed was that "a heritage home needs to be livable". It serves as a helpful reminder that adaptability is an important factor in heritage conservation. A vacant building is a building that has a higher chance of falling

into disrepair.

In CHO news, at our AGM in Gravenhurst, we welcomed three new directors to the board. Pamela, Hale, and James will be excellent additions to our team. We are also in the process of updating our website. I would like to apologize because it has not been accessible for a few weeks.

As we start into a new term, on behalf of the CHO board, I invite all municipal heritage committees to please contact us if we can help you deal with any heritage issues. And as always, we look forward to reading any and all newsletter submissions that inform us of what's happening in your heritage sector.

Our friends at Architectural Conservancy Ontario are continuing their advocacy regarding the changes to listed properties. The recently passed Bill 200 (*Homeowner Protection Act, 2024*) extended the deadline for listed properties for an additional two years (now expiring at the beginning of 2027), which is absolutely a step in the right direction. However, the



previous policy of no deadline worked well and suited the needs of both homeowners and municipalities. Increasing the housing supply is absolutely good policy but it needs to part of a well-rounded planning framework that includes a respect towards heritage. I encourage committees who have not yet written to the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism in support of ACO's initiative to do so. **EDITOR'S NOTE:** In the last issue of CHO news, ACO provided a short video on its YouTube channel explaining the steps to submit a petition to your Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP). Copy this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BfqyJdi112Y>

The sample petition can be found at this link below:

<https://aontario.ca/files/res/127/Draft%20petition.pdf>

Meet us at the next AGM on June 20, 2025, in Prince Edward County



CHOnews

CHOnews is published quarterly by Community Heritage Ontario.

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A thank you to our supporter

The financial support of the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism is gratefully acknowledged.

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January 10, March 30, June 30, September 30
Editor: Nellie Evans

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Members of the Norfolk Heritage Committee, Heritage Haldimand, Brant Heritage Committee and Brantford Heritage Committee attended the 2024 Joint Municipal Heritage Committee Gathering at the Port Dover Harbour Museum. (Photo by Melissa Collver)

Norfolk demonstrates value of personal collaboration

By Melissa Collver, Director, Heritage and Culture, Norfolk County

In 2018, the Norfolk Heritage Committee tossed around the idea that there might be value in connecting with our colleagues who serve on municipal heritage committees in neighbouring communities. We decided to test the waters and issued an invitation to Heritage Haldimand, the Brant Heritage Committee and the Brantford Heritage Committee to attend a Joint Municipal Heritage Gathering. The first event was held at the Waterford Heritage and Agricultural Museum and was well attended. At the end, everyone in attendance agreed there was value in an annual get together. The following year, the Brantford Heritage Committee hosted and then COVID forced us to take a break. Last year, we started back up with Heritage

Haldimand hosting. On June 5, 2024, the Norfolk Heritage Committee again hosted members of the four municipal heritage committees along with their staff liaisons at the Port Dover Harbour Museum. The evening consisted of informative presentations and in-depth discussion about the issues that we all encounter through our work as community heritage advocates. Attendees shared their current projects, challenges, and many successes. It was a great evening of information exchange and sharing of best practices. From a staff perspective, the passion and care that the heritage committee volunteers possess is inspiring.

We have discovered that by working collectively and collaboratively, we can provide improved and effective advocacy for our municipal cultural heritage resources.

CHO full speed ahead with three new directors

Here are a few highlights of the Annual General Meeting of Community Heritage Ontario which occurred on June 14, 2024, at the Ontario Heritage Conference in Gravenhurst. These municipalities were represented: Toronto-Scarborough; Grey Highlands; Tay Township (Midland); Caledon, Cornwall, Hamilton, Oshawa, Springwater, Trent Hills and a guest from Port Carling/Muskoka Lakes.

The board appointed three new members to bring membership back to full strength. They were Pamela Vega, Richmond Hill; James Bountrogiannis, Oshawa and Hale Mahon, Springwater. The Board met in Scarborough on June 23, 2024, to elect executive positions, committee members and set an agenda for the upcoming year. Across the province, 70 municipal heritage committees have renewed their CHO memberships, representing slightly more than 500 individual members. The Communications Committee Chair reported at the midway point of the Gravenhurst event, there was positive feedback about the quality of session content and speakers.

Corporate Secretary Rick Schofield was recognized for his decades of service and commitment. He has retired from the roles of treasurer and recording secretary and will continue as corporate secretary. Long-time board member Wayne Morgan was also recognized for his service.

In compliance with the Ontario Not-for-profit Corporations Act (ONCA), it was necessary for CHO to update its by-laws to ministry requirements and standardization of wording. This was completed at the AGM. There were no substantial changes in the way CHO has operated for the past 30 years, however, the president will now be referred to as chair. The board also authorized a review engagement for an auditor for 2024.

Acquiring an expert adds value to provincial conference

(Continued from page 1)

conferences which have showcased heritage issues in diverse Ontario locations from Windsor to Gravenhurst, from Cornwall to Sault Ste Marie, in rural areas like Rideau Lakes and Tay Township, in various towns like St. Marys and Ridgetown, and in cities like Ottawa and London. These OHCs had numerous highlights, a brief sample of which is listed below.

Some of the memorable speakers included:

2004 OHC in Hamilton: **Anthony Tung** visited and analyzed 22 of the world's great cities to uncover how architectural preservation worked and failed in some of the most artistically and historically significant places. He learned that during the twentieth century on every continent we adopted a culture of destruction. I highly recommend his book titled *Preserving The World's Great Cities: The Destruction and Renewal of the Historic Metropolis*.

Caroline Di Cocco, former Minister of Culture, was a strong supporter of Ontario's heritage and she attended the 2007 OHC in Guelph. Since the 2008 OHC in Collingwood, no minister with the heritage portfolio has attended any conference.

2007 OHC in Guelph: **Jane Urquhart**, Canadian writer, spoke brilliantly about the importance of place.

2009 OHC in Peterborough: **James Howard Kunstler**, the author of *The Geography of Nowhere: The Rise and Decline of America's Man-Made Landscape* participated on an excellent panel. Another panelist was **Adam Vaughan**, former councillor in Toronto, who commented that he never expected to learn about the future by attending a heritage conference.



Gravenhurst hosted a tour of wooden boats that have been lovingly maintained and restored, including the *Wanda III*, dating from 1915 and commissioned by Margaret Eaton (wife of Timothy Eaton). (Photo by Paul King)

Ontario Heritage Conferences 20 years: 2004-2024

2016 OHC in Stratford/St. Marys: **Marianne McKenna** spoke about integrating new structural features with heritage buildings. Marianne McKenna is an architect and a founding partner of KPMB Architects. Her projects have included the renovation and expansion of The Royal Conservancy including Koerner Hall and the renovation and expansion of Massey Hall in Toronto.

There were many informative and educational sessions on a variety of heritage issues: such as amendments to heritage legislation, designated property insurance, the process of designating heritage properties and establishing heritage conservation districts, local heritage issues as a teaching opportunity for other Ontario municipalities, and municipal planning implications for heritage properties.

It is a place to have an experience with local history:

2013 OHC in Midland/Penatang/Tay: We had a tour of *S.S. Keewatin* when it was docked in Port McNicoll.

This Great Lakes cruise ship, which dates from 1907 (the same era as the *Titanic*), is now berthed in the dry-dock at the Great Lakes Museum in Kingston.

2024 OHC in Gravenhurst: We enjoyed a tour of wooden boats that have been lovingly maintained and restored, including the *Wanda III*, dating from 1915 and commissioned by Margaret Eaton (wife of Timothy Eaton). Heritage preservation is not just about heritage buildings and landscapes (although *Ontario Heritage Act* designations are restricted to real properties).

Use of and/or tours of special local buildings has been a critically important component of the conferences. Examples include the Hamilton Masonic Centre, the Ron Thom designed Trent University buildings, the Rideau Canal, Victoria Hall in Cobourg, and the Shingwauk Indian Residential School in Sault Ste Marie, the latter being a never-to-forget emotional eye-opener. Several OHCs such as those in 2013, 2016 and 2022 had road rallies which provided a fun way for conference participants to discover local

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Caught up with friends, learned from some great people

A report by J. A. Forrester to Selwyn Township Municipal Heritage Committee

I was invited to participate, as an observer, in an organizational meeting of the Muskoka Chautauqua at Windermere House on the shores of Lake Rosseau (Gravenhurst) Thursday afternoon, before the Ontario Heritage Conference (OHC) began. The restored hotel was the site of the first Canadian literary festival over a hundred years ago. The building represents the type of

accommodation available to visitors during the steamboat era, with several modern amenities added. The Chautauqua is a commemoration of the original festival, now held in Windermere Village in August. It has become a popular arts and cultural festival, which celebrates both music and literature.

The OHC welcome reception was held at Sawdust City Brewing Company located on the main street. It was a good opportunity to renew acquaintances and meet new delegates from Ontario municipal heritage committees.

The Opening Ceremonies and Friday morning sessions were held in the Opera House, beside the original Gravenhurst Carnegie Public Library, and a bronze statue of Norman Bethune. The Opera House was built in 1901 as a Town Hall and community gathering place. The building combines fine architecture, original theatre seats, classic chandeliers from France and stained-glass windows.

The keynote speaker was Lynn Holden, educator and photographer, who provided an overview of UNESCO World Heritage sites across Canada, based on her illustrated publication, *Canadian World Heritage Sites*. This unique keynote session is the result of Lynn spending many years visiting all 20 Canadian sites and photographing them in all seasons.

LAMP (Lost Airmen of Muskoka Project) is a documentary which outlines the tragic story of two

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OHCs provide the network

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heritage sites in the surrounding countryside. A key aspect of each OHC has been the opportunity to network with delegates from across the province and find out about their heritage preservation experiences. Ontario is a large province with varying heritage issues. All those who have dedicated many hours to planning and hosting these conferences, those who have attended these conferences, and presenters, should be proud of their achievements. They should celebrate 20 years of success. We all look forward to the 2025 OHC being held in Prince Edward County.

Paul R. King is a former President of CHO, a former long-time member of the CHO Board, a former long-time heritage committee member, and a current member of CHO and ACO.



Keynote speaker Lynn Holden was animated while talking about Canadian World Heritage sites at the 2024 OHC. (Photo by Wes Libbey, Cornwall Municipal Heritage Committee)



LAMP President Matt Fairbrass (left) posed with conference volunteers including session host Carole Anne Simpson (right). (Photo by James Forrester, Selwyn Twp. Heritage Committee)

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Community challenge: what stories do we want to tell?

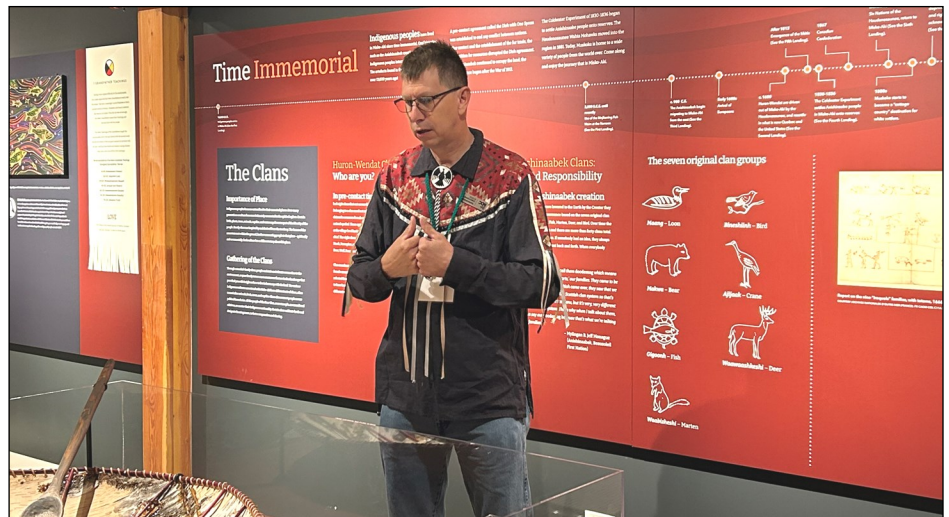
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Norfolk Nomad A-17A aircraft which collided over Lake Muskoka during a winter rescue mission in December 1940. Ten years ago, the wreckage of one plane was located underwater. It was removed and sent to the National Airforce Museum in Trenton. Matt Fairbrass, President of LAMP, answered questions from the audience about the film production, and the results of the long search for the aircraft and the recovery of the two pilots remains.

Session 1C – Building for the future ... what are we thinking?

A trio of professional planners and architects examined urban design guidelines and the fine art of balancing heritage preservation with zoning bylaws and modern design. The issue of climate change as a factor was also addressed.

Jeff Lehman, former Mayor of Barrie, spoke on the serious need for more social spaces for human interaction, especially following the Pandemic, which established a



Christopher Stock of the Wáhta Mohawk Territory near Bali shared his own people's history and used display items to illustrate differences in crafts like basket weaving and moccasin embroidery. (Photo by Nancy Matthews, Grey Highlands)

pattern of isolation. The establishment of sidewalk patios in Barrie on Dunlop Street was a practical response to providing badly needed public space for restaurants to continue serving customers. Parking spaces had to be sacrificed to create the necessary zone. This was a controversial decision on the part of the council.

Antonio Gomez-Palacio, is an architect and urban planner who challenged the audience with two questions: What story do we want to tell the next generation? And why are we preserving heritage? Antonio provided a series of examples of his work in Edmonton in the brewery district and Vancouver where a shipyard became the Granville Island cultural hub. He pointed out that a Toronto heritage district along Queen Street included 10 meter wide sidewalks.

Henry Krans, co-founder and VP of Timmerman Timberworks near Barrie, gave an overview of historical usage of timber frame structures. He outlined the range of sites across Ontario which his company has worked on including the Bracebridge Administration building, Laurentian University Architecture School, and Waterloo City Hall. All these projects have incorporated engineered structural wood products, which are very flexible and strong. The technical distinctions among the array of products were explained, Cross Laminated Timber vs Glue Laminated Timber vs Nail Laminated Timber.



Catherine McCarroll and Lori Hutcherson conducted a joint presentation focused on Oro-Medonte Township's interactive Heritage Story Map, which displays where all the significant listed and designated buildings are located. (Photo by James Forrester, Selwyn Township Municipal Heritage Committee)

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Municipal strategies hinge on relationships, messaging

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Session 2A – CHO: Municipal Strategies for Designations

These mini-sessions described how to cope with Bill 23's requirement to designate listed properties, what worked, what didn't, and how to foster positive interaction with heritage property owners through education on policies, programs, bylaws, permit applications and also by instilling a sense of control.

Carolyn Van Sligtenhorst, a Heritage Planner at the Town of Oakville, spoke first. She recommended starting early and prioritizing the list of properties. Extra staff were needed, and contractors hired for two years to take on the extra work. Colour coded lists were created, with plans to designate 80 properties before the original deadline of January 2025, which has now been extended to 2027.

Bronze plaques are offered to owners of the property designated, as a method of selling the program to them. There is a lot of "hand holding" to accomplish the goals of the municipality. Oakville already has a strong tradition of heritage conservation and restoration, so there is a positive community attitude which certainly helps the municipal staff and volunteers. The Council is also "on side," with two council members on the MHC.

Evan Manning is an urban planner who attended Toronto Metro University (formerly Ryerson University), as well as York and Guelph universities. He has created a number of Cultural Heritage Evaluation Reports (CHERs) for municipal, provincial and federal heritage organizations. Evan has participated in the development of Heritage Conservation Districts. His presentation focused on working with developers who own designated heritage properties.



Carolyn Van Sligtenhorst, Heritage Planner, from Oakville, gave advice on how to approach designation of currently-listed properties in a short time. (Photo by James Forrester)

Nancy Matthews is CHO Vice President and manages all CHO communications including the newsletter. She has been heritage chair of Grey Highlands MHC since 2012. Nancy related her experience working with a rural municipality, Grey Highlands, which had to develop a variety of strategies to communicate, educate and interact with heritage property owners, as the council requires the owner's permission to designate, a common policy in smaller municipalities. The MHC needs to give practical help to owners who express interest in designation, such as providing lists of local craftsmen to do the heritage restoration properly. The MHC website can provide useful information and resources for the

owner. Several community websites were featured, including Rideau Lakes Township in Eastern Ontario, plus the cities of Kingston, Barrie, Oakville, Collingwood and Uxbridge. Interactive maps online can be effective in getting the message out. There was a great deal of interest in the topic and questions were generated by the discussion which focused on the content for new listings to a Heritage Register, dealing with listing notification requirements, addressing appeals for new listings, preparing new designation by-laws, dealing with appeals, dealing with new designations, planning applications and



Nancy Matthews spoke from experience when she described a variety of strategies to communicate and educate with heritage property owners. (Photo by James Forrester)

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The Muskoka Discovery Centre hosted speaker sessions at the Gravenhurst conference. (Photo by James Forrester, Selwyn MHC)

Professional insights are valued by heritage volunteers

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the shift to the Ontario Land Tribunal for appeals. In addition, the requirements of Bill 23 and subsequent Ontario Regulation 9/06 both challenged MHCs to prioritize designation of listed properties and develop strategies for Part IV designation.

The OLT can order a council to repeal their designation By-law if the tribunal sides with the property owner initiating the appeal.

Participants admitted that it was a difficult task to protect so many properties via designation, in such a short timeframe, even if the deadline has been extended by two years to 2027. The option of using a Heritage Conservation District designation to protect heritage landscapes was discussed and promoted as the “most bang for the buck.”

An excellent dinner was served at the Gala Dinner on Friday which

provided an opportunity to network with heritage professionals and volunteers about their projects and concerns. Amy Taylor, a key organizer of the conference, hosted the banquet. Indigenous knowledge keepers Jack Payette and Christopher Stock related stories which expanded on the displays available in the exhibits area of the Muskoka Discovery Centre.

Session 3C – Telling our Stories Through Technology

Greg Poole is a Gravenhurst based photographer who spent 40 years in the photography industry, mostly with Fujifilm Canada. Greg is the fourth generation professional photographer in his family. He provided suggestions for the best methods of storing and preserving photographic materials, with acid-free plastic sealed from interaction with air. It seems that young people have rediscovered the paper photographic print.

Catherine McCarroll and Lori Hutcheson conducted a joint presentation focused on Oro-Medonte Township’s Interactive Heritage Story Map, which displays where all the significant listed and designated buildings are located, particularly along the western shore of Lake Simcoe, between Barrie and Orillia. Catherine, who is the Senior Planner outlined how the map was created using ArcGIS Desktop and Story Maps application. On the map there are five photos/videos per site, with details on each building including a statement of cultural value. Lori is on the council and co-chair of the MHC. An example from the map is the Oro-African Methodist Church which is a National Heritage Site. It was constructed as a log building by black settlers and then abandoned in the 1920s when they dispersed. It has been restored.

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Sailing on steamship heightens lunch and learn activity

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Session 4A – OAHP: Municipal Heritage Registers – Working Session

Tamara Anson-Cartwright is the Program Manager in Heritage Planning/Urban Design for the City of Toronto. She leads the survey and evaluation of properties for inclusion in the Heritage Register. She hosted a one-hour workshop considering the next steps available under the revised Ontario Heritage Act. Tamara mentioned that the Ministry Toolkit should be revised and distributed to municipalities. There are currently 36,000 listed properties across Ontario, but no more than 3,000 will be designated. Additional staff who can produce accurate professional briefs on each property will be needed to address the issues created by Bill 23. The Ministry at the time the legislation was presented had no idea how many properties would be affected.

Session 5 – Lunch Cruise: Navigating Heritage Waters

The *Segwun* steamship is the only steam-powered vessel still operating in North America. We cruised on its sister ship, the *Wenonah II* which can accommodate a larger number of passengers on the waters of Lake Muskoka. It is a detailed replica of the ships which plied the waters during the steamboat era. It will be joined by Lady Eaton's *Wanda III* steam yacht later this summer after the Discovery Centre has converted the yacht to battery power. Speakers on board were Richard Tatley, David Gillett and Judy Humphries.

Richard Tatley is the author of several local history publications about steamboats in the Muskoka Lakes and the Trent-Severn waterway. His most recent publication is *The Life and Times of A. P. Cockburn*, who is credited with



Richard Tatley, left, author of *The Steamboat Era in the Muskokas*, volumes one and two; and David Gillett, designer of premier cottages in the Georgian Bay region, gave some of their extensive knowledge during the lunch and learn session aboard the *Wenonah II*. (Photo by Nancy Matthews, Grey Highlands Heritage Committee)

opening the way for tourists to reach the area via steamboats, canals and railways. David Gillett is an architect who restored and renovated Windermere House on Lake Rosseau. He described various cases of renovating older Muskoka shoreline properties.

Judy Humphries, head of the Gravenhurst Archives following a career as a high school teacher and

research librarian for the Ontario Fire Marshall's Office, shared descriptions of two large waterfront properties variously used by the government for a tuberculosis sanatorium, a prisoner of war camp and a firefighter training centre.

That both these very valuable properties are abandoned and falling into disrepair is a story for another day.



Windermere House on Lake Rosseau was restored and renovated by architect and designer David Gillett. (Photo by James Forrester, Selwyn Twp. Heritage Committee)



Topics have more meaning when delegates can sit among historical displays, and see natural vistas (below). (Photos by N. Matthews)

Well-planned conferences inject a little rest & relaxation

**By Nancy Matthews,
Community Heritage Ontario**

First and foremost MANY, MANY THANKS to Amy Taylor, Economic Development Officer, for Gravenhurst. Kudos to her hardworking municipal staff who managed everything from conference registration to bookings, and to all the community volunteers so enthusiastically supporting local culture and heritage. Throughout the three days, there were constant positive comments about the wide variety of interesting heritage sessions. Venues were convenient, particularly the Discovery Centre, which hosted the gala dinner and numerous sessions including Muskoka Boats. The shuttle service that helped us reach more distant facilities was appreciated.

The Misko-Aki Indigenous Exhibit on the third floor of the Discovery Centre is a permanent feature that highlights the



Leaders behind the scenes for the 2024 OHC in Gravenhurst: Ellen Selby and Amy Taylor. (Photo: Wes Libbey)

histories and culture of all the Muskoka First Nations, both prior to and in the aftermath of colonialism. For many of us, including myself, the Saturday morning tours conducted by Jack Payette and Christopher Stock were a fascinating glimpse of how agriculture, crafts, language and cultural traditions differed among the

nations; and how they managed to work together on the common goal of survival.

The Sawdust City Brewery is an interesting and very imaginative example of successful heritage repurposing. The front of the old Canadian Tire store is an addition that serves as a welcome centre, with a large wall fridge full of craft beers made on site and having two tap rooms offering food and brew. Thursday evening, a welcome night Trivia Session was held in the smaller tap room. The brewery, efficiently laid out in the former main floor of the store, makes one batch at a time. They can age then can some 13 different batches prior to shipping. Where possible, waste products, such as the yeast used for fermentation, is recycled as food or fertilizer to local farms.

A final big thank you is owed to the Gravenhurst team for ensuring that we all had many opportunities

to enjoy local Lake Muskoka tourist attractions, from its heritage buildings, to the lake and its scenic shores.





The Peterborough Historical Society (PHS) presented the 2021 Martha Kidd Award to the Friends of the Old Stone Mill House for saving the structure from demolition. From left, Valerie Kuch, Michael Chappell (Lakefield Historical Society President), Donald Willcock (PHS Vice-President), Lizzie Shanks and Tom McAllister. Absent were Jackie Ouellette and Ed Paleczny. (Photo by James Forrester)

1858 Old Stone Mill House rescued from wrecking ball

By James Forrester

In January 2021, the Selwyn Municipal Heritage Committee (MHC) became aware that an historic property in the Village of Lakefield was threatened with an active demolition permit, complicated by commercial zoning. A local group of concerned citizens formed The Friends of the Old Stone Mill House to save the building from being demolished. The group wrote letters to the editor of the weekly

newspaper, created a website, and demonstrated at the site to raise awareness of the situation. This forced the issue to be addressed by Selwyn Council, which funded a professional heritage brief to assist with determining whether to protect the building via a designation by-law. Selwyn Council designated the structure on the recommendation of the MHC, staff, community members and the author of the heritage brief. The building is currently for sale.

Designation Brief summary:

"The house, which was constructed in 1858 and is the only example of this type in the Village, demonstrates the key characteristics of the Georgian-style including symmetrical three-bay massing and centre hall plan ... This local landmark holds many key heritage attributes including, but not limited to, granite and limestone construction, gable roof, symmetrically placed chimneys, and central entrance."

Peterborough County Award

The Peterborough Historical Society presented the Martha Kidd Award for 2021 to the Friends of the Old Stone Mill House Lakefield. The award is one of seven granted annually for outstanding contributions to heritage preservation in the community, and it is named after Martha Kidd (1917–2012) who championed Peterborough County's architectural heritage. This award was given in recognition of the success of the group in actively saving the historic stone mill house at 44 Bridge Street, Lakefield from imminent demolition in January 2021.



In 2024, Peterborough County recognized the Lakefield Historical Society (LHS) in the "Heritage Preservation category, for an individual or group who has promoted heritage and preserves the history of Peterborough County." Recipients at the ceremony were (from left) Diane Chappell, Mike Chappell (LHS President), Jackie Ouellette, Ed Paleczny, Tom McAllister. (Photo courtesy: Ed Paleczny)

Springwater is represented on CHO board of directors

My name is Hale Mahon. I'm excited to be a new member of the board of directors of Community Heritage Ontario.

I'm currently the Chair of the Township of Springwater's Cultural and Heritage Advisory Committee. Springwater is located north of Barrie. I've always had a strong passion for local history and heritage preservation. I believe heritage preservation helps us maintain what we find beautiful and relevant about the past and helps us see what we should do in the present and future.



Hale Mahon of Springwater Township.

Some of my current heritage projects involve researching an early 20th-century jail and courthouse in Springwater and working on a photo series to document the residential/housing growth my area is currently seeing.

Plus, like everywhere else, Springwater is currently working to designate and otherwise commemorate the properties on our heritage register. This is very interesting policy work to which I'm lucky to be able to contribute.

Outside of heritage, I'm entering my fourth year studying public administration and psychology at York University. I am working as a caseworker in my MPP's constituency office. I help people navigate provincial-level government programs and social services. I'm interested in pursuing mental health and psychology as a career and am very interested in how this area relates to public policy and government.

One of my favourite memories from the 2024 Ontario Heritage Conference was running into other delegates from all over Ontario before the conference even officially started. It was so interesting to have an unstructured conversation about what each of our communities were experiencing heritage-wise, and to talk about what we hoped to learn at the conference. It showed me (or perhaps reminded me) of all the great people behind heritage work in every part of Ontario. It is a privilege to work with them and represent them on the CHO board!



CHO/PCO MISSION STATEMENT

To encourage the development of municipally appointed heritage advisory committees; and, To further the identification, preservation, interpretation and wise use of community heritage locally, provincially and nationally.

CHO/PCO board of directors meetings are open to any municipal heritage committee member. Meetings will be held virtually until further notice. If you wish to attend, please send a request to info@communityheritageontario.ca

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