

Waterloo Historical Society
Annual General Meeting Reports
November 3, 2018

President – Lesley Webb

I have enjoyed chairing the five board and council meetings held this year where we discussed and debated continued and new opportunities for the Waterloo Historical Society. The proceedings of board meetings can be reviewed by members in the approved minutes held by the secretary through a request made to the president.

Board and council members represented WHS with a display and in some cases a book table at a number of annual local heritage events including the 6th annual KPL Genealogy Fair, Wilmot Township Heritage Day, Preston Summer Sidewalk Sale & Funfest, and Doors Open Waterloo Region. Thanks to Sun Life Financial for inviting WHS to participate at their site for Doors Open. These events give us an opportunity to promote our meetings, archival collection, and publications.

This year the board supported a number of local history related projects. On behalf of the board I wrote a letter of support for the Central Presbyterian Church in Cambridge to receive a Veterans Affairs Canada grant under the Community War Memorial program to help fund the restoration of the World War I and II stained glass window memorial. Support was also given for TheMuseum to receive a Waterloo Regional Heritage Foundation grant for an interactive local history storytelling board exhibit and to the Kitchener Public Library to receive a National Heritage Digitization Strategy Grant to digitize The Record. The board continued to support the Waterloo Public Library project to digitize the Waterloo Chronical by loaning microfilm and paper editions from January 1868 to December 1915.

This marks the end of my third and final term as president. I would like to thank the board for supporting me in this role and for the time they put into ensuring WHS meets its mandate. Highlights from the past 6 years include launching a new website; updating membership benefits and moving to electronic membership records; consolidating our storage units; initiating a three tiered annual volume patronage program; and completing phase one of the online indexing project. I look forward to continuing to serve you as past president and introducing your new president at the end of the meeting.

Treasurer Report for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018 – Jeff Shank

The financial statements have been prepared for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, and they have been reviewed by BDO.

I would like to quickly review some of the major financial activities during the past year.

- WHS had \$50,000 in revenues, which was about \$15,000 more than the previous year. The increase was mainly due to an \$18,000 Waterloo Regional Heritage Foundation grant towards the online indexing project, partially offset by a reduction in donation revenues towards the project. Also, we split the annual volume patron donations into 3 categories of Friend, Partner and Benefactor and we thank our members who increased their patron donations.

- We received grants totaling approximately \$6,000 from the Waterloo Regional Heritage Foundation and the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport towards publishing the annual volume.
- Our largest expenses were approximately \$26,000 for the online indexing project and \$15,000 for publishing the annual volume.
- WHS reached a major milestone in the 2½ year long Online Indexing Project, which has resulted in completion of an index for each year of key words in the articles in the annual volumes from 1913 to 2015. The finished indexes will be available on the internet to aid researchers of local history of Waterloo Region. The total project payments of approximately \$46,000 were about \$600 under budget, which is an excellent financial result from the committee who managed the project. Phase 2 of the project is aiming to refine the key words in the indexes and to merge the 102 annual indexes into one comprehensive index.
- WHS had a profit in the year of \$340, compared to a loss of \$427 in the previous year.
- WHS ended the year with approximately \$61,000 in assets and \$58,000 in equity.

Many of our members generously make a donation to WHS. We accept cash or cheques, but if any of you prefer to make an online donation I wanted to let you know that WHS has registered with CanadaHelps.org, or at mytributegift.org for use at funeral homes. These organizations take a small administration fee so we still prefer receiving donations by cash or cheque, but there is some choice for you. Memberships must still be paid by cash or cheque but I will be looking into online possibilities.

I would like to make two motions at this AGM:

- for the members to approve the financial statements, and
- to re-appoint BDO to review the financial statements for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2019.

Archives Report – Karen Ball-Pyatt, Archivist

As we conclude the Waterloo Historical Society activities for 2018, I am happy to report that the archives of the Society continue to inform, educate and preserve the unique history of Waterloo Region. In addition, we have continued the tradition of collaboration with other archives and libraries to further the preservation, access and discovery of the Region's heritage across our urban and rural communities.

In the spring of this year, the Society loaned original Waterloo Chronicle bound editions and microfilm to the Waterloo Public Library for their digitization project. We look forward to the launch of the project and online access to this newspaper.

As the collection grows, I continue to work towards finding more efficient ways of storing records, maps and photographs in the GSR. I'd like to acknowledge the assistance of Information Services staff, particularly Ingrid and Valerie, who are always willing to take on a challenge in the GSR.

In terms of staffing, I wanted to acknowledge the June retirement of Karen Thomas, Senior Library Assistant, who had worked with me since 2014. Karen's dedication to the GSR, joy of

discovery, sense of humour and professionalism, are missed daily. The GSR is a different place without her.

In order to provide better access and visibility of the Society's book collection, staff continue the transfer WHS books into the Library's rare book collection and the KPL online catalogue. All book donations for the WHS are also being directed to the Library's collection to avoid duplication of holdings.

In an effort to reduce our unprocessed photograph backlog, volunteers are scanning and cataloguing single incoming photograph donations to the online Grace Schmidt Room digital collection on Our Digital World.

Among the many highlights of our donations this year, there are the following:

- Mary Johnston Collection – a small collection of school exams and textbooks and records, including a Denton class photograph of S.S. 25 Bearinger, 1951 showing Mary Johnston as teacher, records relating to the WHS' Waterloo County History Project Committee and WHS tour guides.
- 15 black and white photographs from the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Thrift Shop in New Hamburg, showing scenes dating from Second World War or post WWII era, possibly 1939-1947, that include soldiers, returning soldiers, training camp, parade and a machine gun and a Stroh's store front (location unidentified)
- Centurians Car Club Collection – collection includes membership lists and obituaries, 2012 Reunion planning, photographs and history scrapbook, dated 1964 to 2012.

The annual call for inactive corporate records was made at the Waterloo Historical Society Board's first meeting on Tuesday 21 November 2017, following the 2017 Annual General Meeting. To date, I have received the inactive records of Board members and other miscellaneous documents.

Book Table Report – Sherwood Hagey, Coodinator

The Book Table has taken in over \$1000 since, and including, the 2017 AGM.

This year has seen the largest display of gently used books for sale along with Annual Volumes.

We had some Peter Etril Snyder plates that sold out quickly.

From Mary Johnston's collection and others we have posters and pamphlets as well as her unique books.

We gratefully accept donations of local history books from members who are downsizing.

A shout out to rych and Jeff for their assistance.

It has been a very successful year at the Book Table that adds extra cash to the WHS bank account so that we can have interesting speakers and meetings.

Communications Committee Report – Lesley Webb, Chair

Waterloo Historical Society public meeting details were posted on community calendars maintained by The Record, SWO CTV, and Snap KW. News releases were also sent out to local newspapers. Our joint meeting with the Waterloo Regional Heritage Foundation in May got some attention in The Record, announcing the launch of our 105th annual volume. WHS

councillor for Woolwich, Diane Strickler also reported before and after the event in the Maryhill Community News BLOG published online through the Woolwich Observer. Special thanks to rych mills for including our meeting details in his Flash from the Past columns appearing in The Record the Saturday prior to our meetings. It is often heard that new attendees find out about WHS meetings through this column.

The WHS facebook page currently has 855 “likes,” that is up 97 since this time last year. Much of the content is different than what’s in the newsletter or on the website. Like us at www.facebook.com/waterloohs.

Membership Committee – Lesley Webb, Acting Chair & Erin Applebee

The Waterloo Historical Society ended the 2018 year with a total of 209 members, which is up 3 from 2017’s 206 members. This number includes 2 life members, 3 student members, and 24 new members. We welcome our new members, and thank all of our returning members for their patronage and continued interest in local history.

The annual volume was released at the May meeting and over half of the volumes were picked up. Thank you to all of the members who picked up their volumes at that meeting, or offered to deliver volumes to friends who could not make it. Doing so makes the delivery process much easier and saves on postage. Volumes were also delivered to the Waterloo Region District School Board and Waterloo Catholic District School Board for local high school libraries. Local archives and libraries also received a copy.

Membership in the Waterloo Historical Society entitles you to participate in all the activities of the society and runs from October 1 to September 30 each year. Benefits include voting rights at the annual general meeting; 10% off used books from the book table at meetings; 25% off admission to the Waterloo Region Museums; access to five meetings each year featuring guest speakers; a subscription to the society newsletter; and a copy of the society’s award-winning annual volume. An adult membership is \$30 and a student membership is \$15.

Newsletter – Marion Roes, Editor

The newsletter is one of our communication tools, along with the web site, Facebook and Twitter – *and* our members who talk about WHS.

The newsletter is quarterly and is distributed in January, March, June and September by postal mail, email and on the WHS web site. It goes to members, related organizations and some media. This year I made a change to not include events from other organizations – which has been a considerable time-saver for me. Erin Applebee is taking over from Lesley to help with distribution by email and postal mail. I’d like to thank Pat Bailey for her help with mailing two issues each year for almost 10 years.

You may have noticed that there are now more photos in the newsletter, along with a variety of short articles. Thanks to all who submit them or give suggestions. Thank you to regular contributor Karen Ball-Pyatt for her Happenings in the Grace Schmidt Room column. If you have questions about or ideas for the newsletter, please contact me by email or phone.

Online Indexing Committee – Lesley Webb, Chair

Anna-Marie Larsen was hired in May of 2016 to index annual volumes 1 to 103. I am happy to announce that the initial indexing was completed by September 30th to meet the requirements

of the Waterloo Regional Heritage Foundation grant. Special thanks to Jon Fear, Todd Bowman, John Glass, and rych mills who along with me proof read the indexes to verify that the references are correct. The text and image indexes for each volume are available in searchable PDFs on the WHS website. Find them under Publications > Annual Volume > Online Index.

The goal of the Online Indexing project is to enable local history researchers to quickly locate articles and subject matter in the annual volumes and ensure that the volume remains relevant in the digital age. We are now on to stage two of the project which involves merging all of the text indexes together and doing the same with the image indexes. It is at this time that subject headings and sub-headings will be determined and used to better organize the index and ensure that the same person or business with different name variations will be matched up in either one listing or cross-referenced. When finished, the merged text and image indexes will replace the individual indexes currently available on the WHS website.

Many of you have generously donated to this project. We also received grants of \$10,000 from the Good Foundation Inc. and \$18,000 from the Waterloo Regional Heritage Foundation. Thank you for your support as we create the annual volume online index.

Programs Committee – Marion Roes, Chair

The Programs Committee is Maddy Dale, Eric Uhlmann and me, Marion Roes, Chair. This year Eric Uhlmann replaced Lesley and joined Maddy and I on the committee. Much appreciation goes to Lesley for her work on this committee for the last two-and-a-half years. Eric, Maddie and I organized meetings this year for March, May, September and this Annual General Meeting. History Under the Trees in July is organized by rych mills. Our duties are: arranging speakers and venues, leading the meetings, coordinating audio / visual facilities. We give details to the Communication Committee for media publicity, for our website, social media and the newsletter. We coordinate with other WHS volunteers for the book table, refreshments, set up when needed, and the membership table. Thank you to the regulars, Sherwood Hagey, rych mills, Lesley Webb, Erin Applebee, Helen and Ken Lippert, Debbie Krotesch. And thanks to John Glass and Jeff Shank for being on call when needed.

Thanks go to the Victoria Park Historical Committee and the City of Kitchener for facilitating our use of the Victoria Park pavilion this year and for tonight, to staff here at the Ken Seiling Waterloo Region Museum for working with us. Both are excellent facilities for our meetings.

We will continue to use the Victoria Park Pavilion and the Ken Seiling Waterloo Region Museum. If you would like to recommend a speaker, including yourself, please contact the committee through the WHS web site and email.

Thank *you* for supporting Waterloo Historical Society by attending our meetings!

Publications Committee - rych mills, Editor

Chalk up another addition ... another chubby chapter ... to the Waterloo Historical Society's bookcase!

Last May, right here at Waterloo Region Museum, we released Volume 105 and now the lineup counts backwards: 105, 104, 103, all the way to the first slim report in 1913. The publication committee (Rosanne Atwater-Hallatt, Marj Kohli, Susan Mavor and Stephanie Walker with editor rych mills) had worked on the various articles over the previous fall winter and spring of 2017 /

2018. The pub committee's goal is always to ensure that all the historical facts and information are presented correctly in an easily understandable manner.

That volume had a good mixture of heavily-researched articles, several of which were on topics that had never been properly written about previously (such as Waterloo County's militia in the Fenian era; Mennonite mystic beliefs; a WW1 German veterans' group in Kitchener; and the four women who tried, vainly, to get a proper art gallery for K-W in the 1920s and 30s). Plus, there were some lighter personal memoir-style pieces (such as recollections of beach time at Sauble; and a profile of Tom Reitz upon his retirement. Today's speaker, Sara Karn, examined how students at Kitchener Collegiate Institute helped win World War Two.

You've all had a chance to read through the volume so I won't detail the articles here ... but perhaps as a new member you don't have the volume! Well, we have a number of copies for sale at the Book Table afterwards.

As is usual with the WHS annual volume, all articles have a common theme of history and life in Waterloo County / Region. All were submitted rather than commissioned. As on previous years, the annual volume has been distributed to many area schools, libraries and archives.

Work on volume 106 is already well underway with the committee either currently reading or having already read numerous articles of which the editor had worked with the authors over the summer. Half of these are now at Cober printers being put into publishing layout. We will continue to read and re-read each article until early spring when it goes through final proofing. That volume, 106, will be released in May 2019. I would like to reiterate that all the work on the WHS annual volume by the publication committee is volunteer — there is no money in the form of wages, honorariums, etc changing hands.

We encourage members to consider contributing shorter or longer articles for future issues because we are already accepting articles for the *next next*, volume #107, which will be issued in May 2020!

Sad to say we had no entries for the local history award from WLU and UW.

Happy to say that our patrons' support was again evident in full measure. Last year's Volume 105 had 70 patrons and with the new tiered-giving-scheme the amount of money raised was significantly higher over previous years. The patrons' program is now in its third decade and I can certainly speak for everyone on the publication committee, indeed for the entire executive, when I say we are grateful and appreciative every day of such resounding support.

Each year, WHS also receives great support from the Waterloo Regional Heritage Foundation in the form of a grant which helps the society alleviate the cost of the annual volume. The Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport assists WHS with a Heritage Organization Development Grant. We thank both organizations.

Just a reminder that physical copies of most years back to 1913 are available through the website: www.whs.ca and Volumes 1 thru 28 (1913 to 1940) are digitally available through the website. Hard copies from the past two decades are for sale during society meetings including today at the WHS Book Table.

Again, I will speak for the entire WHS publication committee (Marj, Rosanne, Susan and Stephanie) in thanking the WHS board for entrusting us with this annual project. We try our best to carry on the tradition begun and nourished by the likes of Mabel Dunham, WH Breithaupt, FWR Dickson, Ed Donohue, Andrew Taylor, Grace Schmidt, Susan Hoffman and Kathryn Lamb who set such high standards over the first century of annual volumes.

Storage Site – rych mills, Coordinator

The storage site on Guelph Street that WHS maintains is generally a very quiet and boring place.

It's the history kept within that provides potential excitement:

- hundreds of bound volumes of early and mid-20th century Waterloo County newspapers;
- several large collections are in temporary storage awaiting cataloguing into the WHS collection at GSR;
- back issues of WHS publications (annual volumes, township books, county books); as well as
- the Book Table stock, mostly donated used local history books.

All have the potential of unlocking historical secrets to a future researcher or reader.

Also, at the site are the display material such as photo panel boards, PA system, signs, exhibits, etc. The room is monitored for humidity and temperature and is visited regularly. We also store material for a small fee for two other local historical groups. If you are part of a small group that might need storage space please let me know and we can work out something.