

Waterloo Historical Society Newsletter



Spring 2025

Sophia Grande-Lawlor, Editor

Public Meeting

All are welcome. No admission charge.

Saturday, 15 March 2025

Doors open at 12:30; 1:15 presentation

Members and guests will gather in the Community Hall of St Matthews Lutheran Church, 54 Benton St, Kitchener, at the corner of Benton and Charles. The Community Hall can be entered via a beige door off the St Matthews parking lot. There will be WHS signs at the door. Parking is free in the church lot which is entered from Benton Street. There is free parking on Saturdays in the city lot behind the LRT ION station on Charles. There is also street parking.

Marsland Engineering, Exterior Pix of Plant, April 1961 Kitchener-Waterloo Record Photographic Negative Collection 1938-2001, University of Waterloo Special Collections and Archives



At the meeting, we'll discover how an iconic Twin Cities engineering firm began and flourished. Sixteen-year-old Stanley had an argument with his high school teacher in 1926. He left school and opened a small repair shop for those new-fangled wireless radios. Stanley's last name was Marsland and from that beginning came the ground-breaking and inventive high tech company, Marsland Engineering.

John Roe has written a detailed history of Marsland's and will join WHS on Saturday afternoon for a presentation. The book will be on sale and John will happily sign copies.

For more information contact rychmills@golden.net or 519 742 49 90

whs.ca

Have news to share?

Send the newsletter committee updates to

whs1912newsletter@gmail.com

Deadline for Summer 2025 newsletter

Friday, May 23, 2025.



Mark your calendar

More 2025 Public Meetings

This year's public meetings will be held on two Tuesday evenings and two Saturday afternoons.

All WHS meetings are free; members and non-members are invited. The WHS Book Table will be open at all meetings. Keep an eye on www.whs.ca for further details. As well, reminder e-mails will be sent out.

Tuesday, June 24, 2025: Nancy Maitland, retired head of the Wellesley Township Heritage and Historical Society will bring us stories and details from that northwest township. Doors open at 6:30 for a 7:15 program.

Tuesday, September 9, 2025: Attendees will gather at the Maryhill Community Centre. Elysia DeLaurentis has put together a dynamic feature called "Rough Justice in 19th Century Ontario." Members may renew their WHS annual dues with the membership committee as well. Doors open 6:30, program at 7:15.

Saturday, November 15, 2025: To wrap up the meetings for 2025, November 15 will be the WHS annual general meeting.

Full details will be sent by email to all members a few days before the meeting.

For more information on these WHS meetings, check www.whs.ca or contact rychmills@golden.net

We acknowledge that the land on which we meet are the lands traditionally used by the Haudenosaunee, Anishnaabeg, and Neutral peoples. We also acknowledge the enduring presence and deep traditional knowledge, laws, and philosophies of the Indigenous people with whom we share this land today. We are all treaty people with a responsibility to honour all our relations.

It's that time of year again!

Renewing your membership comes with many great benefits!

- voting rights at the Annual General Meeting;
- advance notification and special invitation to all society events;
- discounted price for volume slip cases;
- 10% off used books from the book table at meetings;
- 25% off admission to Waterloo Region Museums;
- special events perks (e.g., centennial supplement, 100th anniversary postcards, prize draws); and
- access to five meetings each year featuring guest speakers. Our meetings are free to the public as well as to our members.

You will also receive:

- a copy of the society's award-winning annual volume containing articles of local historical significance and interest written by local researchers; and
- a subscription to the society newsletter which carries news items, reports of activities, upcoming events, historical notes and achievements of the society and its members. It is published four times a year and is available to members in hard or electronic copy. The newsletter is also available to the public as a downloadable pdf.

Renew your membership online [here](#). If you prefer to pay by cheque, please print this form and mail it along with your cheque to:

Waterloo Historical Society
c/o Kitchener Public Library, Grace Schmidt Room
85 Queen St N
Kitchener, ON N2H 2H1

WATERLOO HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2025 Membership and Donation Form

October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2025

See whs.ca/membership for member benefits.

Name(s):

Address:

Province/State:

E-mail address:

City:

Postal/Zip Code:

Phone:

Would you like your newsletter e-mailed (PDF)? Yes No

New Member? Yes No

Student memberships are available for full-time students. Please contact whsmemberships1912@gmail.com for information

Membership October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2025

\$30 Canadian addresses / \$35 US addresses

\$

Note: Your 2025 membership (Oct 1, 2024 – Sept 30, 2025) incl the 2024 Annual Volume #112 to be released in late spring 2025.

Annual Volume Patron donation

\$

(The annual volume donation does not include your membership cost)

Friend	\$100-\$199
Partner	\$200-\$499
Benefactor	\$500+

Please indicate how you would like your name(s) to appear in the annual volume and website acknowledgement.

General Donation

\$ _____

TOTAL of membership and donation(s)

\$ _____

WHS appreciates your support. **Thank you!**

Charitable tax receipts will be issued at the end of February.

Please email this form to the Treasurer at jeff420shank@gmail.com. ETransfer your payment to whs@whs.ca.

If you prefer to pay by cheque, please print this form and mail it along with your cheque to:

Waterloo Historical Society
c/o Kitchener Public Library, Grace Schmidt Room
85 Queen St N,
Kitchener ON N2H 2H1

Please contact whsmemberships1912@gmail.com with any membership questions.

The collection of personal information by the Waterloo Historical Society is necessary to administer memberships. The information will be used only by the WHS for postal and electronic mailings to members. Such mailings shall be restricted to information, events and notices of either specific WHS interest or more general historic interest. Group mailing addresses will be hidden. The WHS does not share its mailing list.

WHS Plaques Committee

celebrates 100th anniversary

Submitted by Sandra Parks

With the birth in 1912 of the Waterloo Historical Society, their first task was the collection and safe storage of documents and artifacts telling the story of Waterloo County.

In his 1922 Annual Volume President's Address, William Henry Breithaupt noted, "The marking of historic sites deserves attention from our society." Since 1919, he had worked with the Historic Sites & Monuments Board to commemorate important places in the county. Breithaupt continued his address by adding, "In our County Town [Kitchener] there are several sites that should be marked: The Mennonite Church on East King Street, the oldest church in the county." In 1925, that initial bronze plaque was installed at First Mennonite Church, 800 King St E. Two more plaques soon followed. The unveiling of a 50th anniversary WHS plaque in 1962 kicked started a new program of plaque development with 19 unveiled in the following years.

100 years later, the WHS will soon be unveiling its first full-colour illustrated storyboard or interpretive plaque recalling the history of the former Idylwild Park on Cambridge's Mill Run Trail.

1925 to 2025 – 100 years and 24 plaques!! That sounds like something to celebrate. Throughout this anniversary year, the Plaques Committee has a slate of activities planned to do just that - plaque unveilings, reinstallations and maintenance; newsletter articles and displays at WHS public meetings and other events; recruiting new members; discussing ways to counter vandalism and theft of plaques; and more.

For most of those 100 years, the Special Projects Committee was responsible for installing "Plaques or markers at historic sites in Waterloo County where the Ontario Archaeological and Historic Sites Board [Ontario Heritage Trust] will not erect such markers," [*WHS Constitution and By-laws, 1971*]. In 2011, the Plaques Committee became its own group. Today's team is comprised of chair Warren Stauch and members Debbie Kroetsch, Sandra Parks, Ray Ruddy and Harold Russell.

That first bronze plaque in 1925 simply stated:



Chart of Waterloo Historical Society Plaques

Date	Name	Location
1925	Site of the First Church in Waterloo County	Kitchener
1928	Oldest Place of Continuous Business	Cambridge (Preston)
1929	Community meeting house, school and burying ground	Cambridge (Hespeler)
1962	WHS 50th anniversary	Kitchener
1963	First Mennonite Sunday School	Cambridge (Preston)
1970	Hagey Mennonite Church	Cambridge (Preston)
1972	Free Church and Cemetery	Kitchener (Bridgeport)
1974	Crosshill Township Hall	Crosshill, Wellesley Twp
1974	John Watson Manufacturing Company	Ayr, North Dumfries Twp
1978	Trinity Anglican Church - missing	Cambridge (Galt)
1979	Founding of Bridgeport	Kitchener (Bridgeport)
1982	Doon Presbyterian Church	Kitchener (Doon)
1983	St. James Anglican Church	Wilmot Township
1983	Maple Grove Public School - missing	Cambridge (Hespeler)
1989	Rev. Frederick William Bindemann	New Hamburg, Wilmot Twp
1992	Captain Thomas Smith	Conestogo, Woolwich Twp
1994	Otto Klotz & the Free School - missing	Cambridge (Preston)
1997	Kuntz/Carling/Labatt breweries	Waterloo
2000	Kitchener-Waterloo Municipal Airport	Waterloo
2005	Founding of New Dundee	New Dundee, Wilmot Twp
2006	150 Years of Railway Service	Kitchener
2012	WHS 100th anniversary	Kitchener
2018	Westmount neighbourhood	Kitchener
2025	Idylwild Park	Cambridge (Preston)

Watch the next newsletter for details of the unveiling of the Idylwild Park plaque.

Annual Volume 112

The WHS publication committee is aiming at a Tuesday, June 24 launch date. Committee members Rosanne Atwater-Hallatt, Marj Kohli, Susan Mavor and Jon Fear with editor rych mills have been working through the winter and spring to produce Volume 112 which will bear the date 2024. We were pleased to receive a number of exceptional articles, short, lengthy and middle-sized! Stories about floods and fires and the centenary of the Pioneer Tower are mixed with in-depth biographies and businesses and other shorter items. All members paid up for 2024-2025 will receive a free copy.

Patrons are still welcome to donate to the annual volume! For more information on donating, please reach out to rych (rychmills@golden.net) or Jeff (jeff420shank@gmail.com)

News

You know them: caring, involved seniors who go out of their way to make a difference in our community.

Maybe they're a helpful neighbour or dedicated volunteer who supports you or your organization?

Consider nominating that special person aged 65+ for a Kitchener or Waterloo Senior of the Year Award!

For details including how to nominate, visit:

[Kitchener Resident Senior of the Year](#)

[Waterloo Resident Senior of the Year](#)

Nominations for both awards close Monday March 31, 2025

We look forward to your nominations!

The Mayor's Advisory Council for Kitchener Seniors (MACKS)

Age-Friendly Waterloo Advisory Committee

Congratulations

Congratulations to Waterloo Historical Society members and King Charles III Coronation Medal recipients Warren Stauch and Jamie Martin.

Retirements

Last year, Marion Roes notified the Nominating Committee that she will not be standing for another director term or as Newsletter Editor. Marion has been a board member for 20 years, holding a number of positions including member of the Publication and Programs Committees, President and acting Membership Chair. With all this experience, we are grateful that Marion will stay connected by serving as a councillor for Woolwich Township and will continue to administer the WHS Facebook page. www.facebook.com/waterloohs/.

Rosanne Atwater-Hallatt began her journey with the WHS as a councillor representing Wellesley Township from 1986-1992. She then continued to serve on the Waterloo Historical Society board from 1992-2022, working on several projects over the years including the revision of Bylaw #1, spearheading the patron program for the volume, editing the newsletter, and working on the publications committee. Since 2022, she has transitioned from board member to a councillor position representing Wellesley once more.

Karen Ball-Pyatt has retired from her position as Librarian in the Kitchener Public Library's Grace Schmidt Room after twenty years at the KPL. Karen's legacy is one of a kind, and the Waterloo Historical Society Board congratulates her on all her hard work that has benefited not only the Society, but the Waterloo Region community.

Victoria Street North

Submitted by Jon Fear

Change is a constant in the retail world and in recent months that has been very apparent along a 500-metre stretch of busy Victoria Street North in Kitchener. In recent weeks the large Kitchener Home Hardware store has closed and a neighbouring Canadian Tire store has relocated to the Stanley Park Mall. Another large retail building nearby remains empty since Lastman's Bad Boy vacated early last year.

Together they pose a challenge that will test the memory of local history buffs. What used to be on those three store sites?

Let's start with the Home Hardware site at 1018 Victoria St. N.

From 1961 to 1994 the same building was the home of Arnold Bros. Ltd., a wholesaler of products sold at "rock bottom prices" to everyone from restaurants and grocery stores to tobacco shops and service stations.

"The site was vacant land before that," recalls John Arnold, whose father Paul had the building constructed in 1960. The previous Arnold Bros. location was on the northwest corner of King and Borden streets. John and two partners later ran the business from 1973 to 1994, when it closed. The building was then used for a time by Onward Cluthe Manufacturing Ltd. In 2004, a Home Furniture outlet opened, owned by Mark and Elizabeth Coyles. Their store was part of the St. Jacobs-based Home Hardware Stores Ltd. chain of dealer-owned outlets. A regular Home Hardware store was later added after they purchased the Wilkinson Home Hardware business at nearby Frederick Mall and moved it to their Victoria Street location. The Home Furniture section of the store ceased to operate in 2021.



The Canadian Tire building at 1080 Victoria St. N. was constructed by Ball Brothers Ltd. of Kitchener and the store, initially owned by Royden D. Whitney, opened in November of 1973. The site had been assembled with the acquisition of properties that previously held at least three businesses, including Northern Veneer and Lumber Co. Ltd., owned by L.E. "Red" Miller, and Curly's Towing, owned by Walter "Curley" Piper. A third business was The Light-House Drive-In, owned by J. Roland St. Louis and his wife, Ida.

It sold three kinds of burgers plus tenderloin on-a-bun and home-made pies. "Served at your car by snappy, smiling car hops," a 1961 Kitchener-Waterloo Record advertisement promised. Suzanne St. Louis, daughter of the owners, was a car hop for eight years and sometimes wore roller skates to serve her customers. The drive-in site was later used by Lighthouse Trailer Sales and by K-N Motors, a used car lot.



The Bad Boy store at 1138 Victoria St. N. opened in 2007 on a site that previously held the southwest Ontario division of Toronto-based Teperman Demolition. From 1961 to 1983 it salvaged lumber and other items from wrecking projects and sold them on the Kitchener property. For many years a laneway on or near the Teperman site led back across the Canadian National Railway tracks to the 70-acre Kitchener Stockyards property where animal auctions and a farmers' market regularly attracted hundreds of people. The stockyards merged with the Waterloo County Stockyards in the mid-1970s and relocated to King Street North in Waterloo, next to the St. Jacobs Farmers Market. Teperman got the job of clearing the site and had local Mennonite farmers do the work.

Who we are and how to reach us

Website www.whs.ca

Email whs@whs.ca

Mail to Waterloo Historical Society
c/o Grace Schmidt Room, 85 Queen Street North, Kitchener ON N2H 2H1

Facebook

www.facebook.com/waterloohs

Instagram

[@waterloohistoricalsociety](https://www.instagram.com/waterloohistoricalsociety)

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jcglass@rogers.com

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jeff420shank@gmail.com

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Wellesley Township: Rosanne Atwater-Hallatt, Nancy Maitland
Wilmot Township: Patty Clarke
Woolwich Township: Marion Roes, Diane Strickler

Archives

gsr@kpl.org for questions about the WHS archives and if you have items to donate. Please note, donations are currently paused.

Book Table

To donate or to buy books, come to our meetings and / or see www.whs.ca/booktable/

Membership

Membership take place from October 1 to September 30. See membership forms and benefits at whs.ca/membership.

Thank you for supporting WHS with your memberships, patronages and donations.

Newsletter Comments, questions and submissions may be sent to the editor, Sophia Grande-Lawlor.

Thank you for help with and distribution of this issue to Sandra Parks, Jon Fear, Rosanne Atwater-Hallatt, Mary Anne Banks, and rych mills.

Grace Schmidt Room celebrates 40th Anniversary

*Submitted by Sandra Parks
Photographs by Harold Russell*

On October 16 last year, the Grace Schmidt Room at Kitchener Public Library's Central Branch celebrated its 40th anniversary with old friends and new, shared memories and cake. The GSR is a treasure house of local history and genealogy resources, programs, and services.

Opened on October 14, 1984, it is named in honour of Grace Schmidt, a librarian at KPL for 35 years and a long-time member of the Waterloo Historical Society. Ms Schmidt was a well-known authority on the history of Waterloo County and was the driving force behind the development of the GSR collection.



Karen Ball-Pyatt (left) and Susan Hoffman, current and previous local history librarians in the GSR, enjoyed a visit at the 40th anniversary celebration.

The Waterloo Historical Society, of course, has had a very close relationship with the library since its inception – it was chief librarian Mabel Dunham who first identified the need for a local historical society in a 1912 report to the Berlin Library Board. The WHS archives are still stored at the GSR.

In a heartfelt presentation at the anniversary evening, WHS President John Glass highlighted that, “KPL is our longest standing and most important partner, with GSR acting as an archive for us while they facilitate public access.” John added, “I’m sure that many, if not most, of our Annual Volume article authors do at least some research in the GSR - either in person or online.”

Karen Ball-Pyatt, Local History Librarian and GSR Manager

[now retired], thanked the WHS, Ontario Genealogical

Society, and KPL “for their support and vision in helping to create the GSR, honouring Grace Schmidt, former Assistant Chief Librarian at KPL, who was a walking encyclopedia of Waterloo County history.”



Karen stated, "Susan Hoffman, as first GSR Librarian, built and developed the collection, services, and programs, that we enjoy today. I am honoured to have her as a dear friend and mentor." Karen also thanked GSR staff, present and past, heritage colleagues, and customers/researchers "who keep us striving to provide better service and research. Our goal is to continue to make accessible and share the stories of our diverse communities and people."



Here's wishing the GSR another 40 successful years!

Waterloo Historical Society Newsletter



Summer 2025

Sophia Grande-Lawlor, Editor



Public Meeting

All are welcome. No admission charge.

Tuesday, 24 June 2025

Doors open at 6:30; 7:15 presentation

Nancy Saunders Maitland will be the speaker at our next public meeting on June 24, 2025 at the Linwood Community Centre, 5279 Ament Road, Linwood, ON. Nancy was the curator of the Wellesley Township Heritage and Historical Society from 2010-2023.

She will speak about the history of Wellesley Township and how it is reflected in records and objects the WTHHS collection.

For more information contact rychmills@golden.net or 519.742.4990

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Have news to share?

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Deadline for Fall 2025 newsletter Friday, August 29, 2025.



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More 2025 Public Meetings

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WHS Plaques Committee

Plans Unveiling of 24th Plaque

Submitted by Sandra Parks

With its first plaque unveiling in 1925, the Waterloo Historical Society Plaques Committee is now planning the début of its 24th plaque - the Idylwild Park Interpretive Plaque.

Those first 23 were bronze plaques, a very durable material with a few drawbacks: text is limited to no more than 100 words, which makes them more commemorative memorials than educational tools, and they are prone to vandalism and theft for the value of the metal to an unscrupulous foundry.

The Idylwild Park panel is the first full-colour illustrated storyboard or interpretive plaque unveiled by the WHS, perhaps a sign of things to come. It recalls the history of the former Idylwild Park on Cambridge's Mill Run Trail, complete with colour images supplied by our own Ray Ruddy.

Idylwild Park: poem in the wilds

Idylwild Park, on the Speed River in what is now Cambridge, attracted people from across Southwestern Ontario via the Grand Trunk Railway and the Galt, Preston & Hespeler (GP&H) electric railway. It was located in what was then Waterloo Township, just north of where the MacDonald-Cartier Freeway (Hwy 401) crosses the river today.

The GP&H "followed a course very close to the banks of the Speed River, entering a wooded area with tall elms, maples and evergreens — a perfect setting for one of the most popular playground, picnic and recreational areas in the district," wrote Oliver Kummer in the 1970 Waterloo Historical Society annual volume. He concluded the meaning of the park's name was a "poem in the wilds."

The 10-acre Idylwild lasted for just 20 years and then it was gone, a victim of the First World War and the rise in popularity of the automobile and other more urban parks.

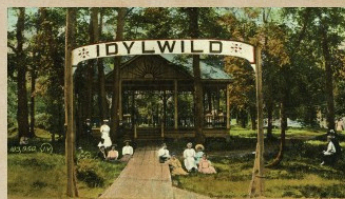
HISTORY

By 1896, the GP&H carried up to 35,000 passengers and 1,000 tons of freight each month, more than enough to pay operating costs. Like every other electric interurban railway, it had a park along its lines that could only be reached by its passengers, a way to stimulate weekend rail travel.

Idylwild Park opened in 1895, accessed every 15 to 30 minutes during operating hours. Park goers were given ribbons that identified them as patrons, just 5¢ from Preston and 10¢ from Galt. The park catered to families, private parties and annual group picnics. "It was not at all uncommon for the railway to shunt in from Preston Junction a train load of picnickers from as far away as Hamilton bringing hundreds to enjoy the great out-of-doors in the wilds of Idylwild," explained Kummer.



1896 plan of Idylwild Park by land surveyor A.L. McCulloch.



Entry gate to Idylwild Park.

AMENITIES

Idylwild encompassed lands on both banks of the Speed, as well as a large island in between. Two wooden footbridges crossed the island, plus one across the river.

The larger of the two pavilions, 50 by 50', could hold 100 dancers or more. As evening approached, "myriads of colored electric lights burst here and there through the deep shadows of the trees and frame the pavilion."

A refreshment booth and store provided soft drinks, ice cream and "free hot water," recalled Kummer. "No doubt some did bring along something stronger than pop."

Natural pathways allowed strolls through the woods. Boardwalks, horsehoop pits, tree swings, a dock and boats were among the amenities. East of the picnic grounds was a five-acre athletic field for ball games, tennis, races and other sports.

"The Speed River at that period was still clean and offered wading for the kiddies," noted Kummer, "and [opportunities for] those who cared to try their luck at fishing."

Though parents didn't have to worry about poison ivy, Idylwild was nicknamed "Mosquito Park" as that insect thrived in the surrounding wetlands.



Cover art of the "Along the Line of the Galt, Preston & Hespeler Electric Ry." brochure, c1897. All images are from Ray Ruddy's extensive collection of Preston and area memorabilia.



Electric rail car at entry gate to Idylwild Park.

ELECTRIC RAILWAY

Electric power made street railways viable from 1885. One of the earliest interurban electric trains in Canada, the Galt & Preston Street Railway, became operational July 26, 1894, with Hespeler added in 1896.

As demand for holiday excursions grew, the electric railway was instrumental in the growth of the tourist trade in Preston. There, mineral springs offered purported health benefits and resort hotels such as the Kress and Del Monte provided luxurious accommodation. The streetscapes themselves were described by a local newspaper, "after the most modern style... The seats are finely upholstered, beveled glass windows decorate the ends and the car contains four electric heaters... Incandescent electric lights, with very pretty globes, hang from the ceiling, and the car has a seating capacity for about 30 passengers."

The GP&H merged with the Preston & Berlin Street Railway in 1908 and in 1914 was incorporated as the Grand River Railway.

DEMISE OF THE PARK

In 1917, Idylwild Park was closed permanently, several factors leading to its demise: spring flooding, growing popularity of the automobile, the First World War took staff for more important duties, and the establishment of Riverside Park in nearby Preston.

Most of the Hespeler branch tracks were moved away from the river in 1918 due to flooding. The land continued to be used unofficially for picnics into the 1940s, just a short hike from Speedville Road.

PRESENT DAY

Today, much of what was once provided by the private sector is now part of municipal infrastructure. Part of the site, along the southern bank of the Speed River, is now Grand River Conservation Authority lands. The City of Cambridge's Mill Run Trail passes through, making use of the dismantled railbed.

The landscape of the site has grown over, eroded or been developed. Gates, pavilions, bridges and other structures are no longer present. The mosquitoes, however, remain.



Picnic goes enjoy Idylwild Park, c1910, photo taken by Wilson of Galt.

Erected by the Waterloo Historical Society (www.whs.ca) in 2024 with the co-operation of the City of Cambridge and the Grand River Conservation Authority.



We acknowledge that these lands are the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabeg and Neutral peoples. We also acknowledge the enduring presence and deep traditional knowledge, laws and philosophies of the Indigenous people with whom we share this land today. We are all treaty people with a responsibility to honour all our relations.

Idylwild Park, on the Speed River in what is now Cambridge, attracted people from across Southwestern Ontario, via the Grand Trunk Railway and the Galt, Preston & Hespeler (GP&H) electric railway, which became operational in 1894 with the park opening the next year. Like every other electric interurban railway, it had a park along its lines that could only be reached by its passengers, a way to stimulate weekend rail travel. The 10-acre park lasted just over 20 years, and then it was gone, a victim of the First World War, and the rise in popularity of the automobile and other more urban parks.

As the plaque location is along the Mill Run Trail, one kilometre in from the trailhead at Beaverville Road, the Plaques Committee feel the site is not very accessible to many of our WHS members. They have chosen a limited unveiling on July 8 with WHS Board members and representatives from the City of Cambridge and the Grand River Conservation Authority. If you would still like to attend the unveiling, please contact Sandra Parks at sparksresearch7@gmail.com and I will send you an invitation and directions.

Watch for details of the unveiling of the Idylwild Park plaque in the next newsletter.

Hole in the Ground

Submitted by Jon Fear

Sometimes even a hole in the ground can offer us both some local history and a good story.

That's the case for the site of an 18-storey residential project currently under construction along Weber Street East in Kitchener, directly opposite Sunnyside Public School at 1042 Weber St. E.

For more than 60 years the site at Weber and Dellroy Avenue has included a gaping hole, dug in the early 1960s when concrete footings for a proposed Lord Kitchener motor hotel were put in place. The project was later abandoned and subsequent attempts to develop the site, which had earlier held St. Luke's Evangelical Lutheran Church, also fell through. Decades passed, but the hole remained.



Savic Homes of Kitchener is now in the process of building the tower plus an attached four-storey podium along Weber Street. Together they will hold 238 rental suites. Also on the site is an existing six-storey apartment building at 15 Dellroy, the one part of the 1960s proposal that did get built.

The Lord Kitchener hotel was a project spearheaded by a local developer, Gustav Ruder of Ruder Construction, who in 1964 told the Kitchener-Waterloo Record (today's Waterloo Region Record) his three-storey hotel would include a swimming pool, health centre, dining room, ballroom and Japanese garden. A statue of Lord Kitchener, the British military hero for whom the City of Kitchener is named, was to stand near the entrance. For several years the abandoned hotel plan was a news story regularly updated in the pages of the Record, where the property was described in the early 1970s as a “glaring eyesore” and a “grossly deteriorated” development site. Eventually the concrete footings were removed or buried for safety reasons.

To be fair to Ruder, the geography of the Sunnyside area began to change dramatically not long after he acquired the corner site in 1962. At the time, Weber Street was only starting to be extended east into that section of the city. The hotel project was intended to front on King Street East. But when plans for a new Highway 8 entrance leading to the downtown were announced -- a sunken controlled-access expressway to be built in a



concrete channel far below the level of King Street East -- the hotel idea no longer made sense. Motorists speeding along the lower Highway 8 might look up and spot a hotel, but in those days there was no GPS to help them actually get there.

Since then, of course, most of the King Street East roadway in this area has disappeared and Weber Street East has been extended through the Sunnyside neighbourhood and beyond to become the major four-lane arterial road it is today. Also long gone are many former King Street East businesses in the area, including a Dairy Queen outlet that was just west of the Ruder



This is all there is to the Lord Kitchener Hotel project at Weber and Dellroy Streets. Money troubles killed it several years ago. Record Photo

Hole-in-ground eyesore may soon be a high-rise

One of the most noticeable residential eyesores in Kitchener's east end could be removed if a rezoning application is approved by Kitchener planning committee and council.

Granite Investment and Developments Ltd. is proposing to upgrade its existing six-storey, 46-unit apartment on property bounded by Dellroy, Weber and King Streets and erect a 14-storey 106-unit building adjacent to it.

For several years the part of the property which fronts on Weber Street has been a large gaping hole containing concrete footings for what was supposed to have been the Lord Kitchener Hotel.

Several concrete piers, with extended reinforcing rods, indicate the location of what was to be the underground parking garage in the hotel complex.

A letter asking residents to comment on the rezoning application says that through a long chain of financial and other events, the project was abandoned and the site has remained a glaring eyesore ever since.

The KW Record April 6, 1973

Construction site.

When St. Luke's opened in 1941, it stood at King Street East and Delmonte Avenue in the former Waterloo Township. But in 1952 Kitchener expanded to bring that part of the township within its boundaries. It also changed the name of Delmonte Avenue to Dellroy Avenue.

After selling its property to Ruder, St. Luke's built a larger church building at 317 Franklin St. N., near Sunnyside Home. It opened in 1963. The history section of the church's website has a wonderful photo showing its former church building at King and Delmonte.

The story doesn't end there. A Record story in December of 1962 described how the old St. Luke's was taken apart "beam by beam and pew by pew" by Ruder Construction and carried across the city to be rebuilt on Fischer Drive as St. George's Anglican Church, now St. George's of Forest Hill Anglican Church at 321 Fischer-Hallman Rd., Kitchener. The St. George's website notes that the St. Luke's parts, including some memorial windows, are preserved in the chapel, narthex and church offices, all found in the older section of today's church.

News

Wilmot Heritage Day

Submitted by Sophia Grande-Lawlor, photographs by Harold Russell

Another successful Heritage Day was carried out on April 26th in New Dundee. Rescheduled due to weather, the event had a great turnout. Kristen Hahn delivered a great talk on the upcoming five volume series *The Historic Buildings of New Hamburg: Writing the Genealogy of a Town*, and exhibitors impressed attendees and each other with excellent displays and information. Thank you to Harold Russell for great photographs of the day!



Wellesley Township Heritage and Historical Society

Submitted by Nancy Maitland

I am thrilled to introduce our new curator to you! Sophia Grande-Lawlor comes to us with a Masters degree in Library and Information Science from Western University. She has worked as Assistant Archivist at the Wellington County Museum and Archives. Since being hired as our curator she has accepted a new role as Archives Associate in the Wilfrid Laurier Archives and Special Collections. Sophia is already active in her role with us and attended the Council meeting on March 25. I know she will be helpful with Historical Room activities and outreach as well as our built heritage endeavours.



Newsletter

Consider switching to email for faster, eco-friendly news updates! Send an email to **whs1912newsletter@gmail.com** if you are interested in switching to the e-newsletter.



North Dumfries Historical Preservation Society holds inaugural Annual General Meeting

Submitted by Irene Schmidt-Adeney

The North Dumfries Historical Preservation Society (NDHPS) held its first Annual General Meeting since becoming incorporated under the Ontario Historical Society last year. The meeting was held on Tuesday, May 6th at Abe Erb in Ayr and led by Chair David Pyper who welcomed about 20 members and guests.

Pyper gave a report on the activities of the past year that included publishing a historical calendar for the Ayr200 celebrations. The calendar raised over \$5,000 for the NDHPS. A quarterly newsletter was launched with two issues be published to date. The office was open and the collection available to the public on the second and fourth Wednesday mornings of the month.



Lifetime Members, from left Pat Radke and Irene Schmidt Adeney receive certificates from Chair David Pyper.

“One major hurdle completed this year was the renewal of our Memorandum of Understanding with the Township of North Dumfries, which will guide and direct our mutual responsibilities and commitments over the next three years,” said Pyper. Pyper said that steps have been taken to consider moving the archives and the NDHPS collection into the Ayr Library. He said one of this year’s goals is to increase engagement with the members and the public.

This year’s major fundraiser will be a reprinting *Our Today’s and Yesterdays* written by Andrew Taylor. It is a history book of Ayr and North Dumfries that was last published in the 1970s.

Treasurer Kim Bonney-Hopps reported a bank balance of \$20,582.04 as of March 31, 2025, which is the year end for the NDHPS.

Nominations for the Board of Directors were accepted by the membership with the following members: Chair David Pyper, Vice-Chair Irene Schmidt-Adeney, Treasurer Kim Bonney-Hopps, Directors John Gillespie, Pat Radke, Ron Sage, Jeff Stager, and Gord Taylor. The position of secretary has not been filled, and there is room on the board for an additional director.



David Pyper (left) and guest speaker Rych Mills (right) holding a section of a Tremaine Map, dating back to the 1800s.

Pyper circulated a list of volunteer positions currently available. The jobs range from digitizing archives, special events committee, audio transcribing, written transcribing, webmaster, and cover design for the reprinting of *Our Today's and Yesterdays*. The list is also available by emailing ndhistoricalsociety@gmail.com.

Pat Radke and Irene Schmidt-Adeney were presented with certificates to mark a NDHPS lifetime membership. Lifetime memberships are available for a one-time payment of \$200.

Vice-chair Irene Schmidt-Adeney introduced guest speaker Rych Mills. Mills has written several local history books, including *Flash from the Past*, which is a compilation of articles from

his feature of the same name published most Saturdays in *The Record*. Mills is on the Waterloo Historical Society Board of Directors, Kitchener's Victoria Park Historical Committee, and has lectured and made presentations on a wide variety of local topics at the University of Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University, and numerous public venues.

Mills spoke about his connections to North Dumfries through his ancestors, the Gress family.

The NDHPS meets on the fourth Monday of the month, between September and June, at 12:30 p.m. The meetings are held in the portable located at the North Dumfries Community Complex west parking lot.

For more information email ndhistoricalsociety@gmail.com.

Who we are and how to reach us

Website www.whs.ca

Email whs@whs.ca

Mail to Waterloo Historical Society
c/o Grace Schmidt Room, 85 Queen Street North, Kitchener ON N2H 2H1

Facebook

www.facebook.com/waterloohs

Instagram

[@waterloohistoricalociety](https://www.instagram.com/waterloohistoricalociety)

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Glenn Thorpe

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Kitchener: Erin Applebee, Jon Fear, Sandra Parks, Harold Russell
Waterloo: Jane Britton
North Dumfries Township: Kim Hopps, Irene Schmidt-Adeny
Wellesley Township: Rosanne Atwater-Hallatt, Nancy Maitland
Wilmot Township: Patty Clarke
Woolwich Township: Marion Roes, Diane Strickler

Archives

gsr@kpl.org for questions about the WHS archives and if you have items to donate. Please note, donations are currently paused.

Book Table

To donate or to buy books, come to our meetings and / or see www.whs.ca/booktable/

Membership

Membership take place from October 1 to September 30. See membership forms and benefits at whs.ca/membership.

Thank you for supporting WHS with your memberships, patronages and donations.

Newsletter Comments, questions and submissions may be sent to the editor, Sophia Grande-Lawlor.

Thank you for help with and distribution of this issue to Sandra Parks, Jon Fear, Mary Anne Banks, and rych mills.

Waterloo Historical Society Newsletter



Fall 2025

Sophia Grande-Lawlor, Editor



Public Meeting

All are welcome. No admission charge.

Tuesday, 9 September 2025

Doors open at 6:30; 7:15 presentation

In the 1860s, a group of disguised men ambushed a Wellesley woman one night, leaving her with lasting injuries. Thirty years later, similarly disguised men lured a woman from her Wilmot Township home before enacting such violence that she almost died. In both cases, the perpetrators were neighbours seeking redress for moral failings the women had displayed.

How common were incidents like these? Find out at the Waterloo Historical Society meeting on September 9th when Elysia DeLaurentis presents "Tarred & Feathered: Rough Justice in 19th-Century Ontario" at the Maryhill Community Centre. Doors open 6:30; all welcome.

For more information contact rychmills@golden.net or 519.742.4990

whs.ca

Have news to share?

Send updates you would like to see
in the newsletter to:

whs1912newsletter@gmail.com

Deadline for Winter 2026 newsletter
Friday, January 9, 2026.



Mark your calendar

2025 Public Meetings

This year's remaining public meetings will be held on a Tuesday evening and a Saturday afternoon.

All WHS meetings are free; members and non-members are invited. The WHS Book Table will be open at all meetings. Keep an eye on www.whs.ca for further details. As well, reminder e-mails will be sent out.

Tuesday, September 9, 2025: Don't miss a "tri-historical society" meeting on September 9. Yes, it is a Waterloo Historical Society meeting, however we are being hosted by the Maryhill Historical Society. After WHS president John Glass opens the evening's activities, Frank Rider, president of MHS, will outline their work in and around Maryhill. The main speaker is Elysia Delaurentis, editor of the Wellington County Historical Society's annual publication. WHS has invited Kathy Bouma, the WCHS treasurer, to update us on some their activities.

All three groups will have books for sale and refreshments will be served, courtesy of Maryhill Historical Society. Mary Ann Banks will be accepting 2025-2026 WHS membership renewals.

Elysia's presentation promises to be intriguing and informative!

Saturday, November 15, 2025: Waterloo Historical Society's Annual General Meeting will be held at St. Matthews Lutheran Church at 54 Benton Street in Kitchener. The meeting will be held in the Community Room. Doors will open at 12:30 with the meeting beginning at 1:15.

For more information on these WHS meetings, check www.whs.ca or contact rychmills@golden.net

We acknowledge that the land on which we meet are the lands traditionally used by the Haudenosaunee, Anishnaabeg, and Neutral peoples. We also acknowledge the enduring presence and deep traditional knowledge, laws, and philosophies of the Indigenous people with whom we share this land today. We are all treaty people with a responsibility to honour all our relations.

WHS Unveils 24th Plaque

Submitted by Sandra Parks

Along with innumerable mosquitos, more than a dozen members of the Waterloo Historical Society Board & Council attended the unveiling of the Idylwild Park Interpretive Plaque on the evening of July 8, a stone's throw from the Speed River along Cambridge's Mill Run Trail.

The 24th plaque produced by the WHS Plaques Committee in its 100 years, the Idylwild Park panel is the committee's first full-colour illustrated storyboard or interpretive plaque; previous plaques were bronze. It recalls the history of the former Idylwild Park on the route of the Galt, Preston & Hespeler (GP&H) electric railway.



The final reveal - with Plaques Committee chair Warren Stauch watching at left, WHS President John Glass (and Rudy), Plaques Committee members Ray Ruddy, Harold Russell and Sandra Parks, and Nick Borcescu, City of Cambridge Supervisor of Planning - Heritage and Housing, officially unveiled the plaque on the evening of July 8. (photo courtesy Lesley Webb)



Plaques Committee member Ray Ruddy gave a brief history of the Park and GP&H, and invited all to read the plaque.



Plaques Committee chair Warren Stauch was master of ceremonies of the unveiling event, and read an Indigenous Land Acknowledgement from Paul Whitlow, Region of Waterloo Truth and Reconciliation Director; and greetings from Samantha Lawson, CAO of the Grand River Conservation Authority, on whose land the plaque is located. (photo courtesy Lesley Webb)

Plaques Committee chair Warren Stauch read an Indigenous Land Acknowledgement from Paula Whitlow, Region of Waterloo Truth and Reconciliation Director; and greetings from Samantha Lawson, CAO of the Grand River Conservation Authority, on whose land the plaque is located. WHS President John Glass welcomed those who made the 15-minute trek in from Beaverdale Rd, and thanked the Plaques Committee (Warren, Harold Russell, Debbie Kroetsch, Ray Ruddy and Sandra Parks) for all their hard work. Representing the City of Cambridge, Nick Borcescu, Supervisor of Planning - Heritage and Housing, brought greetings from the Mayor and Council, stating how important it is for us to tell the stories of the past, making them accessible to the public. The actual unveiling was shared by members of the committee, John and Nick. Ray gave a brief history of the Park and GP&H, and invited all to read the plaque.

The year isn't over yet - throughout the 100th anniversary, the Plaques Committee has plans for a reinstallation and maintenance; displays at WHS events; recruiting new members; discussing ways to counter vandalism and theft of plaques; and more.

And we are always looking for new plaque ideas, so please send them our way.

A Special Book, A Special Author

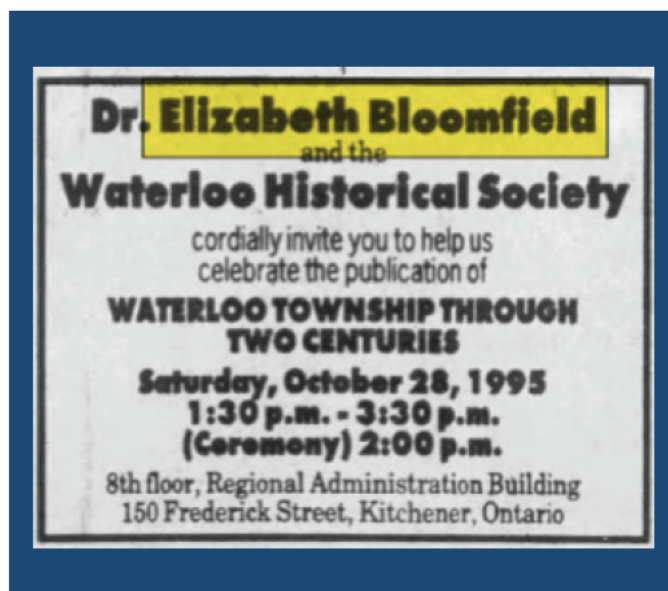
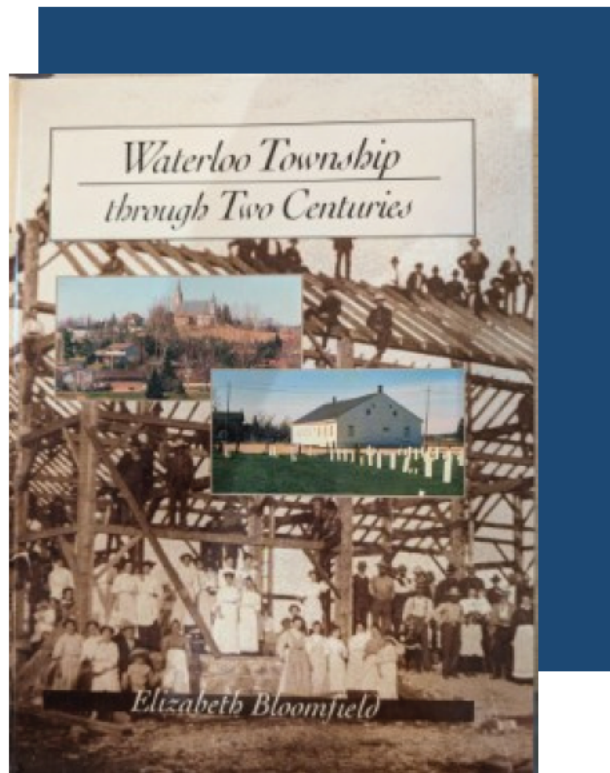
Submitted by Jon Fear

If you belong to the Waterloo Historical Society there's a good chance your personal library includes titles about our local past – books about people and events that have shaped and changed our lives in this part of southwestern Ontario.

Next month will mark the 30th anniversary of a WHS publication that is quite possibly our best local history book. And oddly enough, it tells the story of Waterloo Township, a municipality that ceased to exist just over 50 years ago.

Waterloo Township through Two Centuries, by Elizabeth Bloomfield, was launched Oct. 28, 1995 at the Region of Waterloo administration building on Frederick Street in Kitchener. Today the book remains a key information source for anyone wanting to study not just the history of the township, but of Waterloo Region. It's a 466-page, two-kilogram treasure chest of perceptive analysis, wonderful stories, photos, maps and lists. Now is a good time to salute the book and its remarkable author.

Not familiar with Waterloo Township? It was in the central part of the former Waterloo County, which also ceased to exist when the Regional Municipality of Waterloo was created on Jan. 1, 1973. Within the township boundaries were Kitchener and Waterloo, the towns of Preston and Hespeler and smaller communities including Breslau, Bridgeport, Blair, Doon, Freeport, Bloomingdale, Maryhill and Erbsville. Mostly a rural municipality, the township's population was 8,733 in 1971. Its municipal hall was in the geographic centre of the township at Centreville, once a hamlet, but now a busy part of Kitchener near King Street East and Fairway Road.



The WHS began looking in the late 1970s for someone to write a book about the former township, remembers Harold Russell of Kitchener, a longtime WHS board member. This proved to be a challenge.

And then it gradually became evident that the obvious choice was Bloomfield, a Guelph historian who in the early 1990s, along with researchers Linda Foster and Jane Forgay, was completing the Waterloo Regional Project, a digital



bibliography of books, articles and countless other printed records to assist people studying the region's past. In 1993 the database was reproduced in book form (734 pages) as *Waterloo County to 1972: an annotated bibliography of regional history*.

Born in Fiji, Bloomfield moved to Canada in 1969 from New Zealand and became familiar with Waterloo Region while completing her 1981 doctoral dissertation in urban history – City-Building Processes in Berlin/Kitchener-Waterloo, 1870 - 1930 – at the University of Guelph. In the years that followed she used computer software in innovative ways to produce many historical studies relating to Waterloo Region, Wellington County and other communities across Ontario and Canada.

In a recent email exchange, Bloomfield, now 86, recalled that at one point in 1991 she made a presentation to a WHS gathering (see WHS Volume 80 – 1992) about the regional history bibliography that she was creating.

“Afterwards I was asked to meet with several WHS leaders who urged me to accept the commission to write the history of Waterloo Township. I later learned that several potential researcher-authors over the previous 10 years had been unable to take up the challenge.” For a time, Bloomfield said, she was working on the bibliography and the township book at the same time. She remembers with gratitude the efforts made by dozens of WHS members to connect her with former township councillors and residents who had information to share. Her husband, Gerald, a geography professor at the University of Guelph, took photos of historic township buildings for the book and helped produce many of the maps.

“I did all word processing and tabulations on my home computers and printers. Family members and I made the many trips to the St Jacobs Printery,” Bloomfield said.

The late Ernie Ritz of New Hamburg was WHS president when Bloomfield began working on the book. Bertha Thompson succeeded him and Russell was president in 1995 when it was published.

Did the WHS have any idea how large the book would turn out to be?

"I don't think so," Russell said. "Others may disagree, but I think most of us had no idea how big it would be and how thorough . . . I know everyone was very impressed, even thrilled with her work. The depth of research and the amount of detail is outstanding."

When the initial 500 copies sold out, a second printing was ordered in 1997 and a revised edition followed in 2007. In 2016 the University of Waterloo library's Special Collections and Archives division announced that 61 titles by Elizabeth and Gerald Bloomfield had been digitized and were available to read online at no charge through the Internet Archive (archive.org), including the Waterloo Township book.

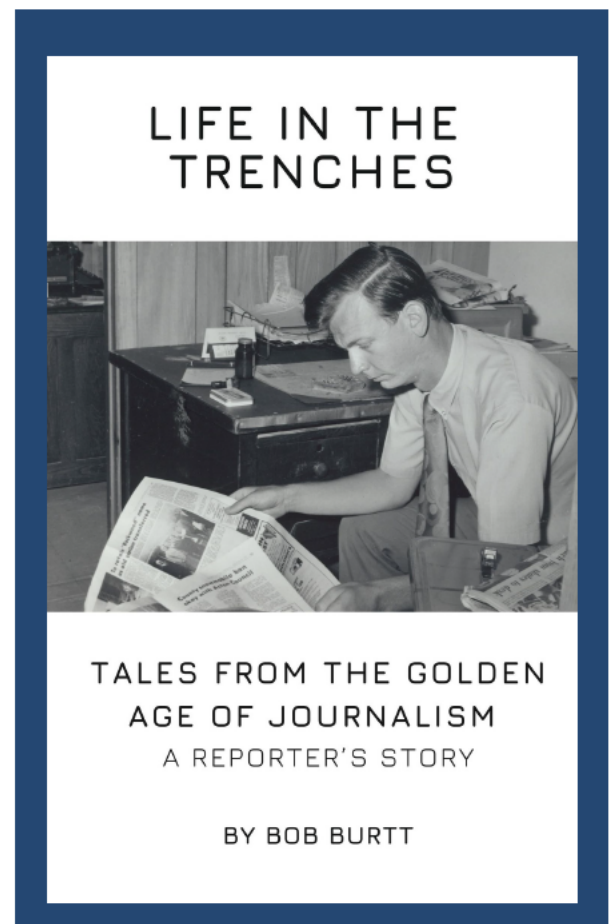
In addition to her work as a historian, Elizabeth Bloomfield has for decades been a tireless advocate for people with autism. In 2014, UW paid tribute to her work in that regard by presenting her with an honorary Doctor of Laws degree.

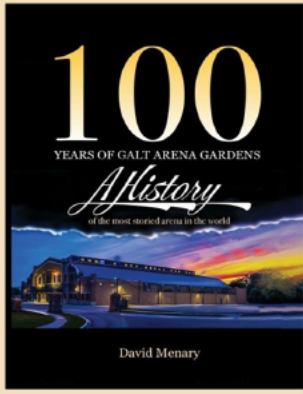
New Books by WHS Members

LIFE IN THE TRENCHES: TALES FROM THE GOLDEN AGE OF JOURNALISM by *Bob Burtt*

Burtt's most recent book, *Life In The Trenches/ Tales From The Golden Age of Journalism*, was released last December and is a story based on his 40-year-career that began in Milton, Ontario in the mid-1960s and ended with retirement from the Waterloo Region Record in 2006.




Life in the Trenches is available at Wordsworth Books in Waterloo, Indigo in Cambridge, and The Bookshelf in Guelph.





Please join us in celebrating the publication of
100 Years of Galt Arena Gardens:
The Most Storied Arena in the World
 by **DAVID MENARY**

Saturday, September 20, 2025 12:30-2:30 p.m.
 at the **Cambridge Centre for the Arts**
 60 Dickson Street
 RSVP to Sarah 519-277-3341 or David 519-589-1279

Cash or   

\$59.95

100 YEARS OF GALT ARENA GARDENS: THE MOST STORIED ARENA IN THE WORLD by *David Menary*

Author and former sportswriter David Menary has written and researched a 650-page coffee table book full of photographs and research on the Galt Arena Gardens. It covers the arena’s history from its opening in 1922 to its role today as Canada’s oldest continuously operating hockey rink.

STROLL in your own backyard this fall with Stroll Walking Tours

This fall, your WHS membership gets you a nice discount on all public, local history walking tours offered by Stroll Walking Tours. This local business is owned and operated by WHS member, Juanita Metzger.

Use promo code XXXXXXXXXX to get 10% off when purchasing your tickets. Please don’t share this promo code with non-WHS members. Valid September 27 – November 8 on the following walking tours:



Historic Galt – Saturday September 27 | 2 – 3:30 pm
 Led by Michael Krupp

<https://strollwalkingtours.com/historic-galt-cambridge-walking-tour/>

What's in a Name? Berlin to Kitchener in 1916 – Saturday September 27 | 2 – 3:30 pm

Led by Todd Bowman

<https://strollwalkingtours.com/berlin-kitchener-name-change/>

Mount Hope Cemetery Tour – Saturday October 18 | 2 – 3:30 pm

Led by Wayne Miedema

<https://strollwalkingtours.com/mount-hope-cemetery-walking-tour-kitchener/>

Historic Waterloo – Sunday October 19 | 2 – 3:30 pm

Led by Kae Elgie & Phil Elsworthy

<https://strollwalkingtours.com/historic-waterloo-walking-tour/>

Cambridge Mural Tour – Saturday November 1 | 10:30 am – 12:00pm

Led by Juanita Metzger

<https://strollwalkingtours.com/mural-walking-tour-cambridge/>

From Busy Berlin to Tech Corridor – Saturday November 1 | 2 – 3:30 pm

Led by Mary Sehl

<https://strollwalkingtours.com/industry-tech-corridor-kitchener-walking-tour/>

Waterloo Architecture Tour – Saturday November 8 | 3:00 – 5:00 pm

Led by Karl Kessler

<https://strollwalkingtours.com/waterloo-architecture-walking-tour/>

Historic St. Jacobs - Every Thursday & Sunday until the end of October

Led by Juanita Metzger

<https://strollwalkingtours.com/st-jacobs-walking-tour/>

For more information, visit: <https://strollwalkingtours.com/public-walking-tours/> or contact Juanita Metzger with questions or to book over the phone 519-242-9255.

In October, we're adding THREE Women's 'herstory' walking tours featuring women who shaped Waterloo Region. October is Women's History month in Canada and we want to celebrate by introducing our community to women from Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo that everyone should know about! Your promo code is valid for these tours also and you can find them on the Public Walking Tours page:

<https://strollwalkingtours.com/public-walking-tours/>

We look forward to strolling with you this fall!

Who we are and how to reach us

Website www.whs.ca

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Mail to Waterloo Historical Society
c/o Grace Schmidt Room, 85 Queen Street North, Kitchener ON N2H 2H1

Facebook

www.facebook.com/waterloohs

Instagram

[@waterloohistoricalociety](https://www.instagram.com/waterloohistoricalociety)

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Jon Fear, Sandra Parks,
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Kim Hopps, Irene Schmidt-
Adeny Wellesley Township:
Rosanne Atwater-Hallatt,
Nancy Maitland
Wilmot Township: Patty
Clarke
Woolwich Township:
Marion Roes, Diane
Strickler

Archives gsr@kpl.org for questions about the WHS archives and if you have items to donate. Please note, donations are currently paused.

Book Table

To donate or to buy books, come to our meetings and / or see www.whs.ca/booktable/

Membership

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Thank you for supporting WHS with your memberships, patronages and donations.

Newsletter Comments, questions and submissions may be sent to the editor, Sophia Grande-Lawlor.

Thank you for help with and distribution of this issue to Sandra Parks, Jon Fear, rych mills, and Mary Anne Banks.

Waterloo Historical Society Newsletter



Winter 2026

Sophia Grande-Lawlor, Editor

WHS Membership Demographics

Submitted by Mary Anne Banks

Location

Residence	Number	Percent
Kitchener	62	38%
Waterloo	32	20%
Cambridge	16	10%
Wilmot	11	7%
Wellesley	3	2%
Woolwich	13	8%
North Dumfries	4	2%
Outside Waterloo Region	17	10%
Outside Ontario	3	2%
Outside Canada	3	2%
Total:	164	100%

Length of time as a member of WHS

60+ years	2
50-60 years	7
40-50 years	9
30-40 years	12
20-30 years	21
10-12 years	41
0-10 years	72
Total:	164

whs.ca

Have news to share?

Send updates you would like to see
in the newsletter to:

whs1912newsletter@gmail.com

Deadline for Spring 2026 newsletter
Friday, March 13, 2026.



Mark your calendar

2026 Events

Submitted by rych mills

Saturday, March 21 2026

Doors open at 12:30; 1:15 presentation

All are welcome. No admission charge.

The spring meeting of Waterloo Historical Society takes place on the first full spring day of 2026 ... Saturday, March 21. Once again, the venue is St Matthews Lutheran Church at 54 Benton Street in Kitchener. Doors open at 12:30 and proceedings begin at 1:15. Enter the meeting hall via the parking lot door.

WHS welcomes Philip Augustine to detail some of his family's background in Berlin / Kitchener. In the first half of the 20th century, the Augustine name was well-known in social, civic and business circles. Through marriage, the Augustines were also connected to the Breithaupt and Kaufman families, many of whom lived close to the Augustine home at 22 Margaret Avenue.

Philip's father, John, was born in Kitchener then attended medical school in London, Ontario before setting up practice in Fort William. There he and his wife Annette helped create a wide range of medical, cultural and social institutions in the (re-named) Thunder Bay area.

Philip was raised in Thunder Bay and following a four-decade career as a lawyer, discovered a second career as an author, historian and film maker.

Philip Augustine has just published a book about his father's life and it will be available at a discount at the meeting. Attend the presentation and you'll discover how much impact a couple of people can make to the betterment of their community ... in this case Thunder Bay ... and how that contribution had roots in K-W.

At the meeting, Debbie Kroetsch will set up a juice and nibbles table as usual. We know from past experience that she hates dealing with leftovers so visit her snack table more than once.

The WHS Book Table will also bring along a selection of inexpensively priced history books. These have been donated to WHS for resale to members and others attending the meeting.

Speaking of books, WHS member Ken McLaughlin has added another tome to his lengthy list of publications. Ian Ormston enlisted in the RCAF as a teenager and rose in the ranks during the Second World War. Ken's book, *A Time to be Forgotten*, traces Ian's wartime experiences following which he moved to Kitchener and developed successful businesses. Ken will give us a brief overview of Ian Ormston's story at the start of the meeting. This book will also be on sale that afternoon.

Park in the St Matthew's lot at 54 Benton St. There is also free parking on Church Street and along Benton Street across from Arrow Lofts. Right beside the church are city parking lots and a parking garage. As always there is no admission charge to WHS meetings and everyone is welcome.

For information, contact rychmills@golden.net or 519-742-4990.

Saturday March 7, 2026

WHS Members Only, Registration Required

On Saturday March 7, it's the Book Table Open House at the WHS storage room site in Kitchener. Because of limited space, we ask people to register for one of 4 time slots: 9:30 to 10:00; 10:00-1030; 11 to 11:45 or 1145 until 12:30.

Register by sending an e-mail to rychmills@golden.net ... or (only for those without e-mail) by calling 519-742-4990.

Payment is by cash or direct deposit. Paid-up members receive a 10% discount on the marked prices of used books and back issues of annual volumes. Please register to avoid overcrowding. Details will be provided when you register.

Note: at the site, there are 4 flights of 8 steps each to climb to our floor.

We acknowledge that the land on which we meet are the lands traditionally used by the Haudenosaunee, Anishnaabeg, and Neutral peoples. We also acknowledge the enduring presence and deep traditional knowledge, laws, and philosophies of the Indigenous people with whom we share this land today. We are all treaty people with a responsibility to honour all our relations.

Ontario Volunteer Service Awards

Submitted by Sandra Parks

The Waterloo Historical Society nominated six of its members for the annual Ontario Volunteer Service Awards in 2025. This award recognizes volunteers for providing committed and dedicated service to an organization, with nominees recognized by the length of time they've volunteered, ranging from five to 65 years of continuous service.

The 2025 nominees were:

- Harold Russell - 45 years' service
- Debbie Kroetsch - 40 years' service
- Marjorie Kohli - 35 years' service
- John Glass - 20 years' service
- Nancy Maitland - 10 years' service
- Sandra Parks - 5 years' service



Three members of the Waterloo Historical Society received years of service pins at the 2025 Ontario Volunteer Service Awards ceremony at Bingemans on October 1 last year - Harold Russell - 45 years; Debbie Kroetsch - 40 years; and Sandra Parks - 5 years. Members unable to attend the ceremony include Marjorie Kohli - 35 years; John Glass - 20 years; and Nancy Maitland - 10 years. (Harold Russell photo)



WHS member Warren Stauch received a standing ovation at the 2025 Ontario Volunteer Service Awards ceremony at Bingemans on October 1 last year when he was presented with a pin for 65 years of service to the Ken Seiling Waterloo Region Museum. He's pictured with his MPP for Kitchener Centre, Aislinn Clancy, and Perth Wellington MPP Matthew Rae. (Harold Russell photo)

Several WHS members attend the OVSA ceremony at Bingemans on October 1 last year.

Recipients received a personalized certificate and lapel pin acknowledging their years of service. In total, the Ontario government recognized over 6,000 community leaders in 2025, from organizations such as non-profits, schools, community centres, hospitals, libraries and community associations.

Congratulations and thank you to the recipients.



WHS Councillor for Wellesley Township Nancy Maitland (at left) and WHS President John Glass proudly display their 2025 Ontario Volunteer Service Award pins and certificates. (Sandra Parks photo)

Eaton's catalogue ended 50 years ago

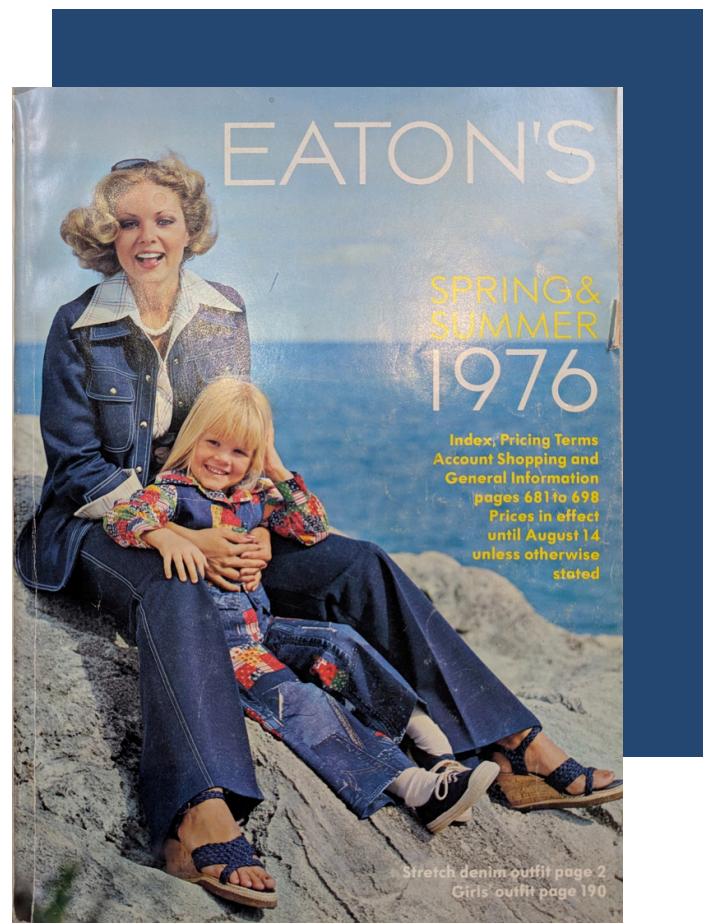
Submitted by Jon Fear

They were never on the best-seller lists for books, but for decades the catalogues of the T. Eaton Co. were among Canada's best read publications. Several times a year more than a million copies were dropped with a thump on doorsteps coast to coast. The pre-Christmas catalogues, filled with images of toys, were magical page-turners for children. Their arrival marked the start of the holiday season.

Today, it's hard to explain to young people how significant those catalogues were in the lives of Canadians. Reading them was a bit like going on Amazon today to check out things you might need – from clothing and sports equipment to home appliances, furniture, tools, cameras, garden supplies, toys and so much more, even build-it-yourself homes. Had there never been any Eaton's stores, the company's success with catalogue sales was by itself an amazing business story.

And then, 50 years ago on Jan. 14, 1976, the Toronto-based retail giant announced the unthinkable. It was shutting down its catalogue division, which employed 8,500 full- and part-time workers at 250 sites. Many people were surprised to learn the venerable Eaton's catalogue, first published in 1884 and especially popular in rural areas, was now a big money-loser.

Times had changed. More Canadians now lived in urban areas, much closer to stores. And that was only part of it. Business analysts said the catalogue division was now badly run -- lax about tardy payments and too generous in accepting returned goods. In his 1998 book, *The Eatons: The Rise and Fall of Canada's Royal Family*, journalist Rod McQueen wrote that in 1976 the catalogue division was a "festering sore" on the balance sheet, one the company ignored until it was too late. To make it worse, dropping the catalogue immediately allowed rival Sears Canada Inc. to boost its own catalogue sales.



Waterloo Region's only Eaton's site in 1976 was a big four-level store in the new Market Square shopping mall at King and Frederick streets in Kitchener. Its mail-order office had 12 employees whose positions were eliminated following the announcement. (Two retired and Eaton's found jobs for the others.) In May that year area catalogue shoppers were invited to visit the store for an evening with special shopping privileges. About 4,000 lined up outside along King Street to get in, the Kitchener-Waterloo Record reported.



By then the final Eaton's catalogue, a 700-page Spring & Summer edition, had been out for several months. Reflecting the times, its front and back covers featured blue denim "patch" jackets and "wide-leg" blue jeans. On inside pages, representing the latest in home technology, were pictures of calculators, telephone answering machines and "Viking Automatic 12" electric typewriters that featured automatic carriage return and "quick-switch" ink-ribbon cartridges.

The Market Square location was the T. Eaton Co.'s third store site in Kitchener. The first opened in 1928 at 57-63 King Street West, near Ontario Street. It was initially a Teco Store (short for T. Eaton Co.) but two years later was renamed and became part of Canadian Department Stores Ltd., a mostly-Ontario chain the Eaton company had purchased. For several years in this period the company also operated an Eaton's Groceteria food store and a mail-order outlet for catalogue shoppers, both at 165 King St. W. In 1949 the first local "Eaton's" store opened at King and Water streets, housed in a three-storey structure still standing today. This store moved to Market Square when the downtown mall opened in 1973.

Elsewhere in today's Waterloo Region, Eaton's had mail-order offices for many years in Galt and Preston, both now part of Cambridge. The Galt location was open from roughly 1930 to 1962 at 59 Main St. It then moved to 103 Main St. for a few years and for much of the 1970s was at 47 Dickson St. In the early 1930s there was also briefly an Eaton's Groceteria at 24 Main St., in Galt. The rival Simpsons-Sears department store chain (later Sears Canada) had Galt mail order offices during the 1960s and early 1970s at 9 Mill St and later at 118 Main St. It also had a Kitchener mail-order office at 200 Fairway Rd. S., near Manitou Drive.

In Preston, the Eaton's mail order office was at 719 King St. E., near Westminster Drive. In some smaller communities, such as Elmira, the T. Eaton Co. for a time had "commission agents" who handled orders for catalogue shoppers.

The end of the catalogue didn't stop the T. Eaton Co. from adding stores. In 1977 it opened a store in Toronto's new downtown Eaton Centre. In 1978 it opened a Waterloo store at Westmount Place and in 1984 a store in downtown Guelph. These were not to last. The Kitchener store closed in 1997 and the Guelph store in 1998. The Waterloo store closed in 1999, the same year in which Toronto's Eaton Centre store closed and the entire T. Eaton Co. ceased operations.

Save the Date

WHS will be in attendance at Heritage Wilmot's Heritage Day 2026! Come visit our booth. Keep an eye on social media channels for more information and updates.



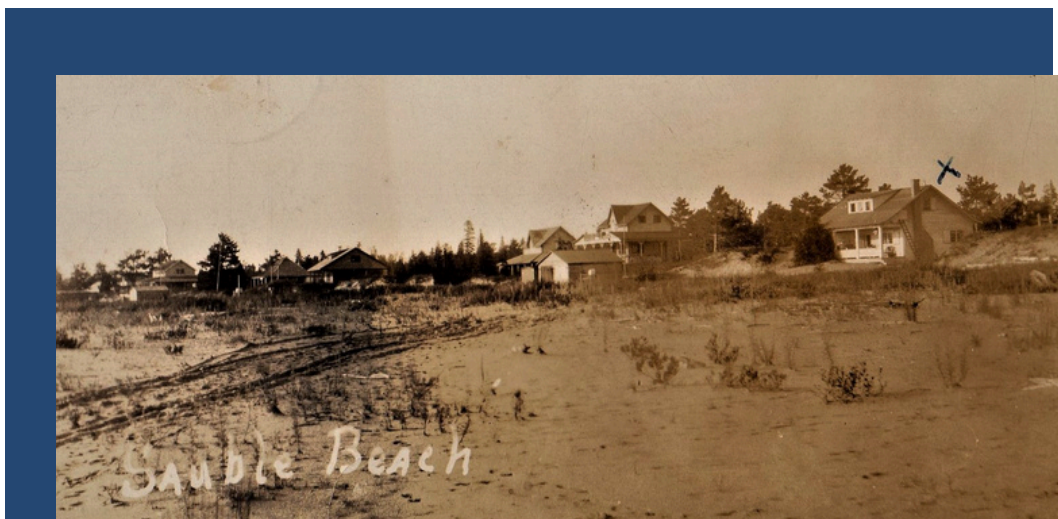
What WJHS Members Can Learn About the History of Sauble Beach!

Submitted by John C. Carter

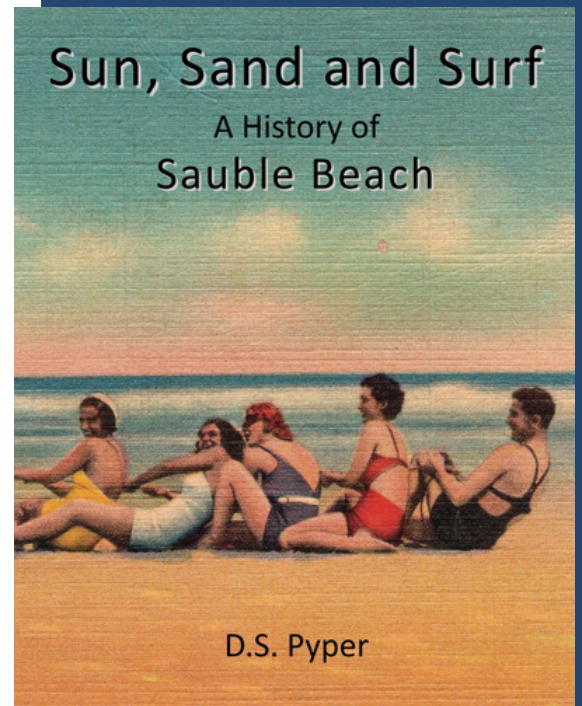
Sauble Beach has recently received much media coverage about current issues, including land claims and the entrance sign change. However, precious little has been mentioned about its past. How can we ameliorate this shortfall? Here's a solution. I'd recommend that you acquire and read David Pyper's book **Sun, Sand and Surf. A History of Sauble Beach.**

David and his family have been long time seasonal residents at South Sauble Beach. His family have vacationed there beginning in 1940, and David since 1955. He is currently a director for the Bruce County Historical Society. David is also a long time member of the Waterloo Historical Society, and was its board member for North Dumfries Township for many years.

His "labour of love" in researching and writing this book, began in 2016. The first and revised second editions were both published in 2024. David's thesis is that Sauble Beach is made up of several important components, all critical to the development and evolution of Sauble Beach as a whole entity. In early chapters, he includes information about First Nations, South Sauble, North Sauble, Chief's Point and Sauble Falls. Chapter 3 discusses the Ojibway community, the first residents at Sauble. This section was reviewed and authenticated by award-winning Ojibway poet and author David Plain, whose grandparents lived at the Saugeen Reserve. Plaudits must go to author Pyper, for including this informative material at the beginning of his publication, something that all earlier publications about the history of Sauble Beach have neglected.



Much information for other chapters has come from various sources. These include issues of the Sauble Signpost and the Sauble Bulletin. In chronological order, chapters dealing with the birth of the Sauble Community, the growth of both North and South Sauble, getting to the beach by roads, early cottage life, and Sauble's seasonal activities are presented. This is followed by overviews of beach life, growth and activities by decades, dating from 1910 to the 1990s. This chronology ends with a chapter about Sauble Beach in the new millennium, including material from 2000 to 2020. The book concludes with a postscript written by David Pyper. I feel that a more substantive conclusion should have been included, which would sum up positions taken, information provided, and the thesis the author proposes for writing the book. Maybe included in the third edition?



However, this publication is chock-full of useful facts and informative research. To help navigate the over 250 pages, three appendices with chapter notations (end notes), photo credits and a bibliography are included at the conclusion of text. One serious short fall is the lack of an index, which makes it nearly impossible to locate items of interest throughout*. Hopefully, this would be added to future editions. On a positive note, the text is augmented by nearly 200 images and photographs from the author's and other private collections, as well as from archival sources. Many of these have never been seen publically nor previously published, which adds another great bonus to this book. Finally, any proceeds realized from book sales will be donated by the author to the Bruce County Historical Society and to the Bruce County Archives in Southampton. Both these are worthy causes which require your support. Sun, Sand and Surf.



A History of Sauble Beach, can be purchased at various outlets in Bruce and Grey County. In the Waterloo Region, it can be obtained directly from the author, or purchased at Wordsworth Books, Waterloo, Rook Book Store, Cambridge, and Music and Books, Ayr. As well, it can be ordered from Amazon-Sun Sand and Surf-D.S. Pyper. Do get a copy, read, learn and enjoy this literary treasure. Also be sure to make your friends and neighbors aware of the book's availability, so that they can also experience it, and add it to their own libraries! Sauble Beach is truly an important part of the history of the Waterloo Region!** Get David's book and be a part of this connection.

*Breaking news. Author Pyper has recently informed me that a full index prepared by Bill Stewart, will be included in the forthcoming 3rd edition of his book. This is indeed a great addition to the volume!

**See my article "K-W and Sauble Beach: The Nairn and Carter Families, a Connection of More Than 86 Years!," Waterloo Historical Society Journal (2017), v. 105.

Dr. John C. Carter is a long time member of the Waterloo Historical Society. He is the, son of former W.H.S President, the late Eric M. Carter, and a seasonal resident of Sauble Beach and East York. He is currently the Peninsula Director for the Bruce County Historical Society, and the Vice-Chair and Secretary of the East York Foundation. He can be contacted at drjohncarter@bell.net.

For Sale

Submitted by Marion Roes

A WHS member's family has donated these paintings and photo with permission to sell them with proceeds to the WHS. If you would like to see and/or buy, please contact Marion Roes at mlroes@sympatico.ca.

Decorated Elmira Bandstand in Gore Park: wood framed and matted colour photo of the bandstand decorated for Elmira's 100th anniversary in 1986; 15" x 13"; photographer unknown; \$100.

Elmira Bandstand in Gore Park in front of the Elmira Medical Clinic: metal framed and matted watercolour painting by Marie Kloiber (1928-2015); 15 ½" x 17 ½"; no date; \$100.

Blair Sheave Tower: metal framed and matted watercolour painting; winter 1982 by Marie Kloiber; 14 ½" x 17 ½"; \$100.

Blair Sheave Tower: unframed watercolour painting; winter 1978 by Marie Kloiber; 9" x 12"; \$50.

Pictures below.



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Archives gsr@kpl.org for questions about the WHS archives and if you have items to donate. Please note, donations are currently paused.

Book Table

To donate or to buy books, come to our meetings and / or see www.whs.ca/booktable/

Membership

Membership take place from October 1 to September 30. See membership forms and benefits at whs.ca/membership.

Thank you for supporting WHS with your memberships, patronages and donations.

Newsletter Comments, questions and submissions may be sent to the editor, Sophia Grande-Lawlor.

Thank you for help with and distribution of this issue to Sandra Parks, Jon Fear, rych mills, and Mary Anne Banks.