

Waterloo Historical Society Newsletter



Spring 2026

Sophia Grande-Lawlor, Editor

Mark Your Calendar

2026 Events

Submitted by rych mills

Two Tuesday evening meetings have been arranged for Waterloo Historical Society members.

On June 23 at Kitchener's Victoria Park pavilion the doors open at 6:30 for a look at a long-neglected member of one of Berlin's most famous families. The title is "Sick Man: The Forgotten Brother of Mackenzie King." Mackenzie King is the most studied Canadian in history: researchers have pored over his diaries, plumbed his correspondence and debated endlessly about his domestic and foreign policies.

However, almost forgotten in his personal story is his younger brother. Most people cannot even name him — Dougall Macdougall King (born 1878). Better known as Max, he became a well-respected physician and author in his own right. This presentation pulls Max out from the shadows of his older brother. It's the story of a healer ... and a patient ... born and raised here in the days of Olde Berlin.



Dougall King,
*Photo Courtesy of
Library and Archives Canada*

Eric Story has uncovered numerous fascinating details of Max King's life and beginning at 7:15 on June 23 relates a story of both great success and human tragedy.

Eric Story is Historian-in-Residence at Western's Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry and Adjunct Professor in the Department of History at Wilfrid Laurier University. He is familiar to many WHS members for his years hosting events for the Laurier Center for Military Strategic and Disarmament Studies now known as the Laurier Centre for the Study of Canada.

The presentations begin at 7:15. Admission, as always, is free. There is lots of room so bring a guest or two. Light refreshments will be available and the WHS Book Table will be set up. The Victoria Park pavilion is at 80 Schneider Avenue beside the playground.

The second Tuesday evening meeting is set for September 29, 2026 at the Detweiler Meetinghouse, 3445 Roseville Road, just west of the Fischer-Hallman / Roseville Road intersection. The meetinghouse is a sprightly 170+ years old. Doors open at 6:30 with the presentation at 7:15.

Marion Roes, a past-president of WHS, will first outline some of the story of this restored 1855 stone Mennonite meetinghouse. Then, in cooperation with members of the North Dumfries Historical Preservation Society, we'll tour the township via old photos and stories. Although there are few official towns and villages within North Dumfries, the township has had a vibrant history. It also has some intriguing geographical features to be explored.



Photos courtesy of Marion Roes



Because of limited space, WHS will not be providing snacks and refreshments so please bring your own water bottle. Also, the WHS Book Table will not be set up.

Come early: bring a pillow! old meetinghouses were not built for bottom comfort.

Come early: there is a parking area but, if filled, parking is allowed along Roseville Road.

Come early: spend time exploring the building's architecture and construction.

Come early: explore the adjacent Roseville Mennonite Cemetery.

Come early: enjoy an early autumn North Dumfries evening.

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

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.

Do you remember the Grand River Golf Club?

Submitted by Jon Fear

In the early years of the 20th Century, the Grand River Country Club was one of the few places to golf in Waterloo County. The nine-hole course was situated off Lancaster Street West, just above the Grand River, in the Bridgeport area of today's Kitchener. It later was called Grand River Golf Club, but ceased to operate in the late 1960s after the Conestoga Parkway was built through much of the property.

If you played golf at this course, or perhaps attended a wedding reception, dance or some other event in the dining hall, WHS member Jon Fear would like to hear from you. He's writing a short story about the club for the next newsletter in June. You can reach him by email at flashfrompast@gmail.com or by phone at 519-576-9453 (please leave a message with your number if I miss your call).

- Jon Fear

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Have news to share?

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

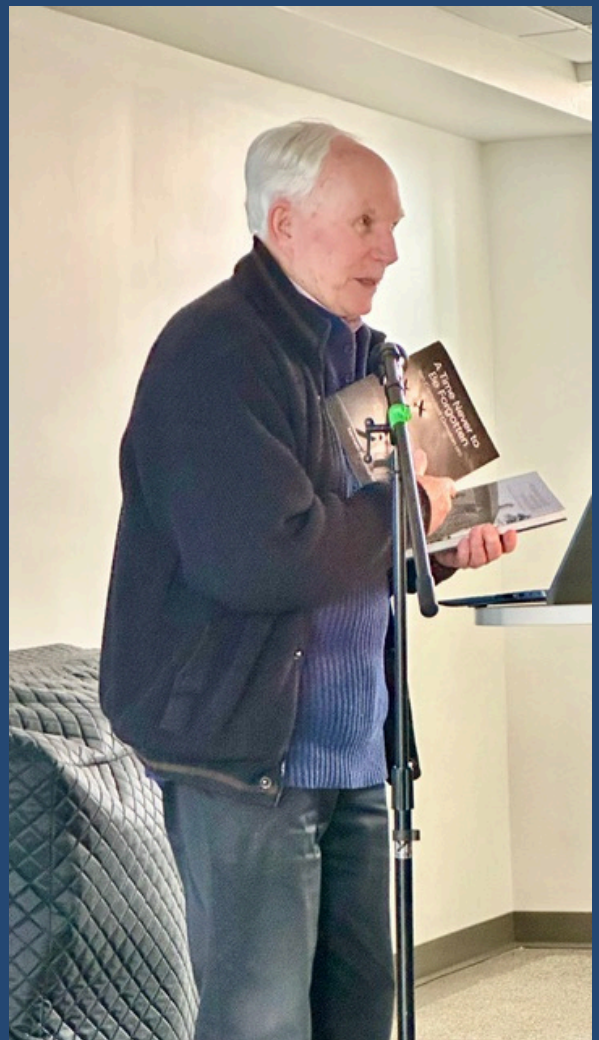
whs1912newsletter@gmail.com

Deadline for Summer 2026 newsletter
Friday, June 12, 2026.



WHS Spring Meeting

The spring WHS meeting that took place on March 21, 2026 was well attended! Thank you to everyone who was present, and to speaker Philip Augustine, who detailed some of his family's background in Berlin / Kitchener.



Photos courtesy of Harold Russell

Annual Volume

Submitted by rych mills

The 2024 annual volume, #112, will be available to members in early May. It is almost a year late for which I again offer my apologies. It will be given to those who were members in the 2024-2025 year. (i.e. October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2025.) President John Glass will send out an e-mail with details on distribution.

The 2025 annual volume, #113, has a forecasted release date of November 2026 and will be given to those who were members in 2025-2026.

The 2026 annual volume, #114, has a forecasted release date of June 2027 and will be given to people who were members in 2026-2027.

We are always looking for more submissions to upcoming annual volumes #113 and #114. If you have a researched article or story to tell please contact me:

rychmills@golden.net or 519 742 49 90.

Condolences

To the family of Richard Woeller, who passed away on January 13, 2026. A longtime Waterloo Historical Society member, Richard first joined in 1968. Richard's contributions to the community are acknowledged in his obituary which can be found [here](#).

Remembering Grant Hoffman, the Music Man of K-W

Submitted by John C. Carter



Photo courtesy of CK-CO History

Many of you will now know about Grant Hoffman passing away on January 24, 2026. Some of you may not know his long association with music in K-W, so I have decided to write a remembrance piece to fill in the blanks. Grant had an interest in music, early on in his life. His parents operated La Hacienda, a restaurant/banquet hall on King Street North in Waterloo. There he played records for weddings and other functions, thus being the beginning of his long dee jay career.



Promotional poster for the Kitchener-Waterloo group the Town Choir from 1969.

Photo courtesy of Ralph Hetke

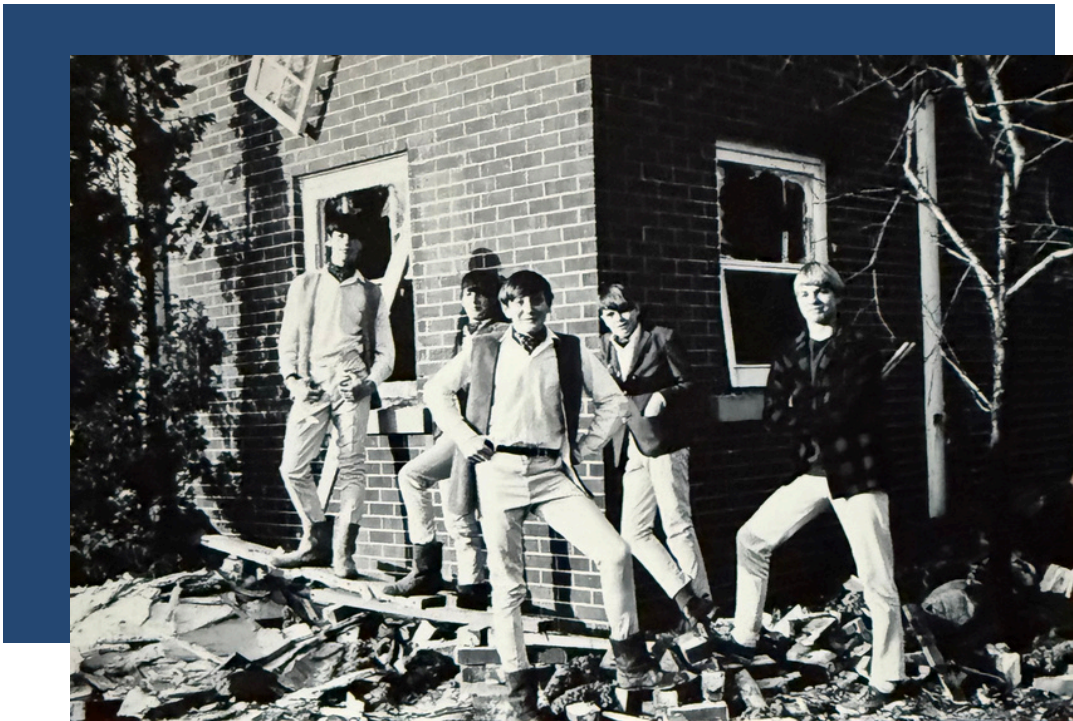
My first contact with Grant was at the Colonial Record Shop, on King Street in downtown Kitchener (no it was not in Waterloo as claimed in his obit). It was operated with the able assistance of Kandi Heisz and Nancy Scott. I would go there most Saturday mornings to pick up a CHUM chart, and to discuss with Grant musical happenings of the week. The store was small and usually crowded, but Grant always found time to talk with me. Many of my Edna Street gang including my twin brother James, as well as close friends Graeme Ross, Peter Starr and Randy Rollo, would often do the same.

The Colonial Record Shop became an unofficial community centre for us and many others in Kitchener-Waterloo. It was handy for Grant, as he also had a radio show on CKCR, which was situated on an upper floor in the same building.

Soon after, Grant began to play new roles. He was appointed as the music librarian for CKKW/CFCA, and commenced his popular Saturday night radio show on CKKW. There he often promoted the various dances that Theta Hi-Y (one of several K-W high school fraternities), sponsored and ran at K.C.I. I am sure that these helpful promotions, always resulted in those events to sell out. Money raised was donated by Theta to various K-W charities. We also had fun running them. In addition, when I was working summers at Sauble Beach, I would send live telephone reports to the radio station on each long weekend to the Grantly show. They provided an instant update to listeners about what was happening there, and seemed to be appreciated by his loyal listeners.

The next significant community connection, was when Grant became the host of Canadian Bandstand on CKCO television in 1966. He always needed a crowd there to film the show, and after some discussions at Theta meetings, it was decided that the club would assist in this endeavour. This co-operation along with audiences from local high schools, continued for a number of years. It was not well known that the Betty Thompson Show, Romper Room, and Canadian Bandstand, were the only three CKCO produced shows which were broadcast nationally. Plaudits to Grant and director Jack Alexander for this major achievement with Bandstand! Weekly shows were taped and circulated to various television stations. During this period, specials were also produced with Edward Bear, the Stampeders, Fludd, April Wine and Rush being featured. After eight years of on air programming, Canadian Bandstand ended in 1974.

Always Mr. Music Man of K-W, Grant would attend the yearly booking conference held at the Coronet Motor Inn. I was his guest on a number of occasions, and fondly remember Kenny Rogers and the First Edition being one of the acts performing there, before they became famous. Just Dropped in to See What Condition Your Condition Was In, anybody? Grant also supported many of the period local bands. These included the Primitives, Gemtones, Thanes, Copper Penny, Major Hooples Boarding House, Carnival, The Town Choir, and many other local groups. No doubt that he also promoted Canadian Bandstand and his radio show at these events, garnering live performances and current promotional videos, which he used on his shows. One stellar example which stands out for me, was America doing a live version of Horse With No Name, before that song became a number 1 hit, and an unbelievable video of Spirit doing, I Got a Line on You.



*A 1965 photograph of the Kitchener band the Primitives, taken on Edna Street.
Photo courtesy of James N. Carter*

It was with great sadness that Grant lost his wife of 43 years, Patsy. Turning back to music, I wonder if he kept listening then to Look Homeward Angel, by the Monarchs? After the Colonial shut down, and Bandstand and his radio show ended, Grant took on other responsibilities. Many will remember him as Manager of the Box Office, at the Kitchener Auditorium. As in previous jobs, he greeted the patrons there with his good cheer and usual excellent public service. I do not know if he became a wrestling fan, but he certainly saw some good hockey and experienced various great live rock shows there.

On Grant's passing, I now have to speculate on songs and artists which he may have turned to. How about Stairway to Heaven by Led Zeppelin, Wear Your Love Like Heaven by Donovan, and Knocking on Heavens Door by Bob Dylan? If there is life after death, I am sure when Grant strolled through the Pearly Gates, that he was singing Run Baby Run (Back Into my Arms) by Larry Henley and the Newbeats, to welcome back his beloved Patsy! Let us hope that Keep on Dancing by Jimmy Hart and the Gentrys, will now be the theme song for Grant and Patsy.

To close, do you remember the promotional jingle Grant used for his radio and television shows?

G-R-A-N-T-L-Y
Grantly, Grantly
He's our Guy

And he sure was for many in the K-W area and beyond. Thanks for the memories Grant and all you did for us and K-W. Rest in Peace, and condolences and and sympathy are extended to your family.

Dr. John C. Carter is a long time member of the W.H.S., and was a guitarist in the 1960s K-W group, the Primitives. He can be contacted at drjohncarter@bell.net.



*A 56 year old admission ticket to Canadian Bandstand.
Photo courtesy of Pat Forristal.*

2026 SPRING LECTURE

Laurier Archives and Special Collections

MAY 12, 2026 FREE FROM WEBINAR 2PM - 3:30PM



REFLECTING ON 100 YEARS OF THE CORD

"A TIE THAT BINDS"

'The College Cord' was founded in 1926 by students at Waterloo College (now Wilfrid Laurier University) as a means to share student news and experiences with residents of the Twin City area (Kitchener-Waterloo) and members of the Lutheran Church in Canada. The first issue, published on September 23, 1926, explains the meaning of the title: drawing interest to the school, drawing students to attend, and drawing students and faculty together with a love of Waterloo College. Over the past 100 years, the student newspaper has served as a common thread of student experiences and has strived to live up to its tagline as 'a tie that binds' on campus.



REGISTER NOW

Registration is required for this free online event.
Contact: libarch@wlu.ca



PANEL DISCUSSION WITH PAST EDITORS

This panel features past editors-in-chief and senior news editors of The Cord from the 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s. Panelists will reflect on the 100-year history of The Cord, their time working at the paper and the next chapter of this student publication. Panelists: Tony Burke, Wilbur McLean, Shelby Blackley and Kaitlyn Severin. Moderated by Clara Rose, current Lead Reporter and second-year English student at Laurier.

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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.