The End of An Era
Bill Yeager Retires After Nearly Four Decades of Dedicated Service

The overflow crowd at Bill Yeager’s retirement party in late October was glowing testimony to the high regard in which our former curator is held throughout Norfolk County and Ontario.

Joining dozens of grateful members of the Norfolk Historical Society, friends and colleagues were Haldimand-Norfolk MP Diane Finley, MPP Toby Barrett and Norfolk Mayor Dennis Travale.

A common theme of the tributes paid to Bill was his encyclopedic knowledge of Norfolk County and his unabashed enthusiasm for the history of this area.

Fittingly, Bill was presented with an Ontario Museum Association Lifetime Achievement Award by current Curator/Manager Scott Gillies and a lifetime membership in the NHS by Dr. James Cruise.

For much of the last four decades, the dedicated, unassuming Norfolk County native was at the helm of the Eva Brook Donly Museum and helped catapult the facility and its services into international prominence for its artifacts, archives and programming.

Born on a dairy farm north of Simcoe, Bill attended school in the historic Cherry Valley School and in Waterford. His love of history was sparked in elementary school with his study of the early explorers.

Upon graduation, he went off to McMaster University in Hamilton and Queen’s University in Kingston. His career path appeared to be in education after he obtained his certificate from Hamilton Teachers’ College.

But after only one year at an elementary school in the Niagara Peninsula he was drawn back home.

Job opportunities were plentiful in the early 1970s thanks to a plethora of government

Shedding Light on Old Norfolk
November 27, 2008 to January 10, 2009
has been generously sponsored by
work projects. Among them was work at the museum where he was hired full time by the late Bill Godfrey who was NHS president at the time.

Initially, Bill was hired to catalogue papers. He recalled being unceremoniously presented with 25 boxes of legal papers to be sorted and filed.

Bill said his first winter at the museum was somewhat temperature challenged. At the time, the old Donly house was being renovated into a modern, first class museum.

“I could look up and see the beams in the ceilings of the second floor,” he said. “The work areas were drafty and cold and I had to wear gloves while typing.”

For Bill, the fascination of history was not the exploits of prime ministers, presidents or generals. He found the day-to-day lives of everyday people more “real and immediate.”

“I always like social history, rather than the political,” he said.

What people did for entertainment or paid for a pound of cheese gave him an intimate insight into their lives and time.

Bill never gave a thought to moving anywhere else. As a result, he became known in many quarters as “Mr. Norfolk.”

“I’ve been involved in heritage all my life,” he said. “It’s what I do.”

While there are several other museums in Norfolk County, Bill said his fellow curators were always friendly and supportive. Indeed, that cooperation continues to exist as they support one another in a common cause.

The biggest changes Bill has seen in recent years is the need to promote the museum and, of course, fundraising.

“Promotion is a huge part of the budget,” he said, citing the wide range of choices the public has today and the need to attract people through the doors.

Bill takes particular pride in the “partnering” with other groups, organizations and businesses in order to attract donors and sponsors.

“Partnering has worked wonders,” he said.

Written by Chris Thomas

Over the years Bill worked diligently to create and maintain the wonderful archival holdings of the Norfolk Historical Society. As a lasting tribute, the area of the Norfolk Heritage Centre which encompasses the archival collection and Reading Room has been appropriately named the William Yeager Research Facility.

Pictured at left are a few of the friends who crowded in to say farewell to Bill.
Will that be cash, credit or Debit?

As of December 1, 2008 shoppers at the Norfolk Heritage Centre have been able to pay for their purchases by Debit, VISA or MasterCard.

Thanks to upgrades to our website ‘norfolklore.com’ purchases, research requests, donations and membership renewals can all be made online as well.

WANTED!

Volunteers are wanted; volunteers are needed! Volunteers are most welcome at the Norfolk Heritage Centre.

Are you looking for a fulfilling task to perform in your spare time? Are you new to the community and looking to meet people? Are you a recent graduate looking for work experience? Why not consider becoming a volunteer?

We are looking for people to assist with administrative work, staffing the reception area, working behind the scenes with the display committee or helping out with carpentry and handyman tasks.

We need people with typing/keyboarding skills who can transcribe archival documents into digital format that will be added to our new website.

If this sounds like you or someone you know, please contact us at the museum. Call 519-426-1583 to arrange an interview.

Bus Trip to Toronto!

One of the world’s most beloved musicals is now playing in Toronto at the Princess of Wales Theatre. The Sound of Music by Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber features some wonderful home-grown talent including Norfolk’s own Libby Adams as a member of the cast!

Don’t like to drive to Toronto? Let us help.

On May 20, 2009 a bus will depart from Simcoe for a day at the theatre and you can be on it! Tickets for the bus tour can be ordered NOW. The price is $120.00 per person They include front row seating at a matinee performance of The Sound of Music, a delicious box lunch from Serafina’s, luxury motor coach transportation, all taxes and gratuities.

A perfect gift for Christmas, anniversary or birthday!

Looking for a gift for that hard to buy for person? Why not purchase a pair of tickets to this musical extravaganza? They’ll thank you now, and again after the show.

Photo Credit: Cylla von Tiedemann
THE BATTLE OF LONG POINT
by Bernard Epps

(Editor’s Note: the following abbreviated story is taken from a March 1982 article that appeared in “The Townships Sun”, Leamsville, Quebec.)

Around eleven p.m. on the night of October 20th, 1858, three lake steamers at Buffalo were loading for an overnight trip to Canada amidst enormous excitement. A thousand boarded the excursion boats and hundreds more came down to the docks to see them off — and most had been celebrating freely for days.

“Indeed,” wrote the New York Times’ reporter, “did his Satanic Majesty desire to raise a special bodyguard for state occasions, he could not have sent his recruiting sergeant to more admirable ground than Buffalo has presented the past few days. It would be difficult to find a more blackguard breed than the cross of the Irish and American rowdy offers, and of such were the groups that gave beauty to Buffalo.”

They were the cream of the demi-monde, America’s aristocracy, out to be a part of the biggest bare-knuckle fight in all history. They were rowdymen and gamblers, pugilists and sports, roughs and toughs, society dudes and fancymen. There was for example, ‘The Mulligan’ from New York, conspicuous in pea-green kid gloves, Russian leather long boots and pistol strapped to his hip. ‘The Mulligan’ was presently under indictment for assault and battery.

There was ‘Dad’ Cunningham, Morrissey’s side-kick, who’d shot and killed Patrick McLauglin aka ‘Padeen’, on the streets of New York and went to prison for it. There was Barney Aaron, a British prize-fighter of average talent who’d later make a name for himself as a promoter and manager. There was a bruiser affectionately called ‘Dublin Tricks’, more formally known as Hughes. There was Joe Coburn, a Heenan supporter and a New York saloon fighter always in trouble with the police. He’d later go to jail for stabbing a policeman, become heavyweight champion, murder his wife, and draw ten years for shooting at other policemen.

There was a party of British officers stationed in Canada who’d come over to see the fun and there was Aaron Jones, an Englishman who taught ‘the manly art’ at Christ’s College, Oxford….

There was ‘Australian’ Kelly who held then (and holds today) the record for the longest prize-fight in the history of the world — six hours and fifteen minutes. There were pickpockets and ruffians, gamblers and hangers-on of every description and, of course, the combatants. John Morrissey and John C. Heenan.

“There was scarcely a sporting man of any note who was not present”, noted the New York Times….

…it was a beautiful Indian summer night with a bright moon and a soft breeze as the steamers churned steadily through the water. Most of the principals retired to their cabins for a few hours rest but their supporters sat up drinking and gambling and making last minute bets. The lighthouse on the tip of Long Point came into view and drew steadily closer, until, as the day dawned, the steamers cast anchor just below it.

The principals went ashore in rowboats to find a suitable site on which to set up the ring. The supporters, too impatient to wait for the return of the boats, waded ashore in water up to their armpits while the fancy dudes paid exorbitant sums to be carried ashore on some stalwart’s shoulders….

Under the London Prize Ring Rules, generally agreed upon in those days, the ring was to be twenty-four feet square and made up of two ropes, one four feet high and another two feet….

Each fighter had an umpire to watch the battle and make sure all rules were enforced. One of these served as the official timekeeper timing, not the length of these rounds because they lasted until one man went down whether it be a few seconds or half an hour, but the thirty seconds interval between the knock-down and the call to scratch for the next round….

“Morrissey looked a magnificent animal,” wrote the New York Times reporter, “-red, sinewy and lean, and there was a look of wear and tear about him which spoke volumes…Heenan, on the other hand looked pale and dull of the eye…”

They came up to scratch and squared away, probing, parrying, feeling each other out to the advice and encouragement of the onlookers…The referee awarded first blood and first fall to Heenan.

In the third round, the pace began to tell on Heenan and Morrissey began landing some of his haymakers….

In the sixth, Heenan’s legs were rubber…When time was called in the eleventh, both men were staggering, half blind with sweat and blood. Heenan missed a wild swing and took a straight left to the throat which felled him like a tree….it was all over.

The crowd exploded. Hats were flung in the air and frightened seagulls veered away…. The match had lasted just 21 minutes.

Carrier pigeons were released with the result strapped to their legs… and flew off in the direction of Buffalo…

Morrissey retired from prize-fighting….ran for Congress…and won.

Commodore Vanderbilt led him through the intricacies of the stock market where Morrissey won (and lost) several fortunes. He became the primary owner of the Saratoga race track….The street kid from Troy, the gang leader who’d only attended one year of school in his life and taught himself to read at eighteen, went about in swallow-tail coat, kid gloves and patent leather boots, served two terms as state senator, hobnobbed with millionaires and virtually controlled the Democratic Party of New York. When he died at the age of 47, fifteen thousand people followed his coffin in the rain.

From the Files of the Norfolk Archives
New Curator Brings Wealth of Experience and Commitment

The new Curator/Manager of the Norfolk Heritage Centre officially began his duties on November 1, 2008. Scott Gillies however is no stranger to the facility. He was hired by the Board as the Manager of Marketing & Development in February of 2007. That contract was extended in early 2008 and then evolved into the current position.

Scott has been working in museums since he graduated from Huron College at the University of Western Ontario in 1979, firstly as a labourer and historic interpreter at the Ontario Agricultural Museum. This was followed by a short stint at Wentworth Heritage Village and the Halton Conservation Authority.

Hired as Curator of the Norwich Museum & Archives in the early 1980s, he directed the capital expansion of that facility, and was later selected as one of three people in Canada to take a year-long mid-career development program at the Manitoba Museum of Man & Nature in Winnipeg.

Following that he has worked as Assistant Curator of the Bruce County Museum; as Managing Curator of the Bradley Museum and as Marketing & Fundraising Coordinator of the Museums of Mississauga.

In 2002 he chaired the Local Arrangements Committee and hosted the Ontario Museum Association 30th Anniversary Conference.

A native of Oxford County (he grew up just outside of Zenda), Scott currently lives in Ingersoll with his wife and family and in his spare time writes a weekly column for the Ingersoll Times and the Norwich Gazette.

New Website Enhancements!

Thanks to funding from the New Horizons for Seniors Program, the website of the Norfolk Heritage Centre (www.norfolklore.com) is being completely revamped and updated with megabytes of information! Led by Marilyn Haslinger and our new webmaster Bob Whitside, and fueled by a large group of volunteers who can easily add content, the site now includes up-to-date indexes of family records, a growing list of archival holdings, and much more that will benefit budding or professional genealogists, researchers and authors.

Funds received through this Federal government program enabled the Society to purchase new equipment, and pay for professional design assistance from the Simcoe-based company Picasso Fish.

Other exciting features of the site include a Virtual Gift Shop where you can purchase items from us. The safe and secure PayPal software allows you to renew your membership online, or place an order for research, or make a donation to the Norfolk Historical Society.

You can also check the site for information on coming events, current and future exhibits and much much more. Go on line and take your mouse to the Museum!

An Index of Family Bible Records

The following surnames are a sampling of records taken from family bibles in our archival holdings:

- Foster
- Fuller
- Gilbert
- Gillaspy
- Granger
- Green
- Hallam
- Hamner
- Haviland-McCall
- Heath-Culver
- Hewitt
- Hicks
- Hillker
- Holby
- Hubbard
- Hurd-Anderson
- Jackson-McKee
- Jackson
- Johnson
- Jull
- Kellam
- Kindree
- Landon
- Laning
- Liscum
- Lea-Pick
- Lemon
- Marr
- Martin
- Mather
- McCall
- McCool
- McInnes
- McKnight
- McMan-McMahon
- McMichael
- McQueen
- Mead
- Misener
- Misner
- Mitchell-Welch
- Moore
- Murphy
- Nelles
- Nixon
- Olds
- Peake
- Pegg
- Prier
- Reichelt
- Reid
- Renner
- Renton
- Rockefeller
- Rohrer
- Ryerse
- Salmon
- Schofield-Webb
- Shearer
- Sidway
- Sinden
Simcoe and vicinity contributed a contingent of volunteers for the defence of the Empire this morning when thirty-one out of a large number who volunteered were finally accepted and entrained at the Port Dover station for their mobilization camp at Valcartier. The contingent was escorted to the depot by the Boy Scouts and the 39th Regimental Band. Although a wet morning and the hour early a huge crowd gathered to say good-bye and with the volunteers God speed. The boys made their leave-taking quietly and resolutely and once on the train answered the cheering of the great crowd with lusty hurrahs.

**SIGN UP!**

Go! it’s your duty, lad!
On a poster you can see,
And a mother’s thoughts turn to the time
When she held him on her knee.
She thinks of his childish prattle
But now he has grown so
That his King and Country need him,
And she urges him to go.
He leaves his occupation
Which some weaker one can take,
Goes and dons the Khaki
To fight for his country’s sake.
Many a Canadian like him,
Fell fighting at Ypres,
And thousands now are training
To avenge the awful slaughter,
To crush the tyranny down,
To kill the treacherous German
And save the British Crown.
Hurrah for the Delhi detachment!
Sign up, boys! that’s the word;
Just get the fighting spirit
With the 133rd.

*Written by Private Will Buckberrogh*  
*Published in The Delhi Reporter, 1916*

Having a Spot of Trouble Deciphering a Letter from the Front?

Do you have a letter by a loved one who wrote home from the Front lines of World War One, and you can’t quite understand some of the terms and jargon? Here are some tips to help with the “translations”, taken from *The British Canadian, Jan 9, 1918*.

If he and some Blue Devils were trapped in a bughouse with a couple of brass hats waiting for the Evening Hate of Busy Bertha and Black Maria to be over, it meant that he and some French mountain troops were in a dugout along with staff officers, waiting for the methodical evening shelling by Germans to be over.

If he plans on bringing home a Dolly Varden he has a souvenir German helmet to show you.

Eggs were not always what the hen laid, but rather German bombs the size and shape of an ostrich egg. An Emma Gee was a machine gun. If Fritz had gone west it meant that a German soldier had been killed, perhaps the victim of a Green Cross Shelling or gas attack.

Little Willie was the name for the German Crown Prince whom they hoped would be M.B.K. — Missing, Believed Killed — or at least pipped (wounded).

His One Star Wonder was the Second Lieutenant or “half loot”, also known as a One Star Artist and a One-lunger. His tin hat was his steel helmet

If he says that he ‘got my blighty” it means he was wounded and will be sent back to England to convalesce, which was better than tootfinny which was derived from the French for “it’s all over”.
Shedding Light on the Past and the Future

Thanks to the generosity of Ontario Power Generation, we were able to install a major exhibition. Examples of fat lamps to floor lamps from our collection showed the development of lighting through time. A rare rush light was featured, along with kerosene lamps and even a carbide bicycle light.

Special thanks to Frank Chiarotto, and Kim McLennan of OPG Nanticoke, and staff from the corporate offices in Toronto for their assistance in making this happen.

Appreciation is also extended to Lance Robbins, Jim Cronkright, The Edison Museum at Vienna, David Avery, Pat Auger, Fran Brinker, and the Port Dover Harbour Museum for the loan of some wonderful lamps.

The supplementary display on the 50 years of Simcoe Panorama’s history was made possible thanks to Larry Dickey.

Lastly, thank you to all the volunteers who assisted with the installation.

New Gift Shop

Cheryl MacDonald’s latest book about Abigail Becker is just one of the new items for sale in our gift shop. Drop by to see gift baskets, local artwork and more for sale in the ‘new’ gift shop area.

STRIKE UP THE BAND!

Don’t miss the next temporary display in the Glorious Old Norfolk gallery. Strike Up The Band will look at music in and around Norfolk County, from the old Opera House to Rick Danko. Musical House Concerts are planned for February and March so if you play an instrument, or like to sing, or just enjoy music come join us for an evening or two of fun and good times!

A SIGN FOR THE TIMES

At the time this newsletter was being printed a new road sign was being constructed for the Norfolk Heritage Centre. This sign, paid for by a grant from the Norfolk Community Foundation, will allow us to more effectively promote current exhibitions, thank our sponsors, advertise coming events and more!

Co-op Placement

This past Fall we have enjoyed the valuable assistance of Ashley Tamblyn, a co-op student from Holy Trinity Separate School in Simecoe. Ashley has helped out with the exhibitions, the gift shop, school programming at Christmas time and a host of other activities.

PD Day Program

Thanks to the planning and efforts of Nathan Bruder we were able to offer a day of fun-filled activities while kids were off school for PD Day.
## CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 10</td>
<td>“Shedding Light on Old Norfolk” exhibit sponsored by Ontario Power Generation</td>
<td>Ends</td>
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<td>Jan 21-Mar 21</td>
<td>“The Art of Bruce Steinhoff” exhibition, with the artist in residence various weeks</td>
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<td>Jan 30</td>
<td>PD Day Program for kids. Call to pre-register</td>
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<td>Feb 10</td>
<td>‘Strike Up the Band!’ display opens. A melodious tribute to music in &amp; around the</td>
<td>County</td>
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<td>Feb 12</td>
<td>‘Our Favourite Love Songs’ house concert</td>
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<td>Feb 17-21</td>
<td>Heritage Week</td>
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<td>Feb 21</td>
<td>TRIVIA NIGHT fundraiser at the Museum</td>
<td>Call for tickets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 12</td>
<td>‘Wearin’ O’ The Green’ house concert</td>
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<td>Mar 15-20</td>
<td>March Break</td>
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<td>Apr 1-30</td>
<td>Our Agriculture Past –a display from the Ontario Archives</td>
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<td>Apr 6-11</td>
<td>Archives Awareness Week</td>
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<td>May 5-Aug 1</td>
<td>“Hats Off Norfolk” exhibit</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 20</td>
<td>The Sound of Music bus trip to Toronto. Book Your Tickets Early! Call the Museum to order.</td>
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N.B. Dates & details are subject to change. Check our website for up-to-date info

Clip out this calendar and stick it on your fridge!

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## Norfolk Historical Society, established 1900

**President:** Karen Culver  
**Past-President:** Virginia Birnie  
**Treasurer:** Marilyn Haslinger  
**Secretary:** Chris Thomas  
**Directors:** Joanne Barber, Mike Bonaccorso, Larry Bauglaugh, Diane Clark, Debbie Gair, Sheila Pidduck  

**Curator/Manager & Newsletter Editor:** Scott Gillies  
**Office:** Jerri Whiting  

Contact us for more information on exhibits & activities at the Museum & Archives.

*The Norfolklore Newsletter is published four times yearly by the Society as a member service*

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**Norfolk Historical Society**  
109 Norfolk St. S.  
Simcoe, Ontario  
Canada, N3Y 2W3  

**Telephone:** 519 426-1583  
**Fax:** 519 426-1584  
**E-mail:** office@norfolklore.com  
**Website:** www.norfolklore.com