



COLDWATER CANADIANA HERITAGE MUSEUM

2020 Spring Newsletter

2019 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**Outdoor Bread Oven
constructed in memory of
Kelly Jolliffe**

Children's Play House Completed

**Continued renovations and
redesign of Display Barn,
Carriage Barn, Village Shop,
School House, Fordson
Tractor (multi-year projects)**

Curated 3 Seasonal Exhibits:
Bees, Goats and Gossip;
The Community of Coldwater;
Vintage Hat Pins and Glass Hats

**Partnership established with
Coldwater Lions for our
signature events**

Completed building signs, new
wood & garbage sheds, outhouse,
woodworking & wash area
displays, motor for dog walker

**Developed new newsletter
format and partnership with
The Cory Team of Coldwater
for donation of printing**

Continued partnerships with:
Coldwater & Area Studio Tour,
Coldwater Steampunk Festival,
PRNT Collective (Barrie)

**New demonstrators and
dynamic displays at annual
Heritage Day**

Greetings and Happy 55th Birthday to our Museum!

How will museums interpret the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic in future exhibitions? Stories and images of interesting ways people coped with social and physical distancing might be included. Remember that wonderful Italian opera singer serenading her fellow apartment dwellers? 'And that bright red lipstick! As for artifacts, perhaps some toilet paper to represent the early panic, or the personal protective equipment (PPE) made right here in Oro-Medonte/Simcoe County by companies who retooled their production lines. We really hope you are all well! We also **hope** the events scheduled for our 2020 season can still happen! See page 4.

Hard copies of this newsletter will be available at some point. Before the virus hit, we were in conversation with the **Cory Team of Coldwater** to have them printed.

Please take a moment to gaze at the attached **"Supporter"** form and consider renewing your support and/or making a donation. It all helps so much!

2019 in Review – What an incredible season!

Once again, many volunteers, supporters and summer student staff contributed to the list of 2019 accomplishments. Our **talented A-Team** managed to attract several new participants which in turn led to an increase in the number of completed projects. The grounds and buildings never looked better!



**New in
2020
Save the
Dates**

Crafty Tuesdays – Every Tuesday from 11 a.m. – 3:30 pm in July & August

A. Woodrow Farm Day (formerly Heritage Day) - Sunday, July 19

Vintage Crafts and Trades Festival - Saturday, August 22 & Sunday, August 23

Devon Teas continued to be popular and an important source of revenue. We are grateful to all who were involved in making them such a special visitor experience. In 2018 and 2019, a series of ½-hour *Tea Time Talks* helped raise attendance during the slower month of June. Although the series will **no** longer be offered, one talk is scheduled for June 24, 2020. See page 4.



2019 *Tea Time Talks* guest speakers: Former Blue Mountain Pottery employee, Jim Shropshire on the left. opalescent glass collector, Helen Gourlay on the right

The second annual **Heritage Craft Festival** held on August 22, 2019 was a great success and we thank Linda Wilson for organizing this unique event. New additions to the day's program included hands-on weaving opportunities, a craft-themed silent auction, a wonderful homemade box lunch, and a vintage hats theme. Curator Patti Turnour coordinated a terrific display of hat pins and glass hats in the Front Room of Woodrow cabin; she also turned the School House into a millinery. Vintage hats and clothing from the museum and her personal collection provided a great backdrop for her special talk on this subject.



Planning is currently in progress to incorporate other crafts and trades into a two-day event for August 22 & 23 this year. Stay tuned for more details.

Thanks to the efforts of **Gift Shop** coordinator Dianne Knecht, sales in our wonderfully eclectic

shop were very good last year. Dianne works hard to find new local consignors and entices others to continue consigning with us. We are now able to accept debit card payments, and this should help increase sales over time.

Dianne also coordinated the participation of **local author Peter Davis** at one of our June Devon Teas, and at the Coldwater Steampunk Festival. Peter is a prolific writer of local history. He also incorporates his research into various works of historical fiction. With more than 12 titles to his credit, visitors to the museum were pleased to attend his book signings. Your newsletter editor really enjoyed *The Fesserton Vampire* this past winter. The intriguing title did not disappoint!



Thanks to numerous hands on deck and Bill Wilson's green thumb, our annual **Lawn and Plant Sale** on June 1st was a great success. Changing the date a few years back, to coincide with Coldwater's village-wide sale has helped attract many more bargain-hunters to our site.



The first of our **2019 seasonal exhibits** was a lighthearted look at rural life in *The Owl Pen*, an iconic book (originally published in 1947) about a Medonte Township couple who lived on the 10th concession not far from the museum. Lucillie Oille, the book's illustrator once volunteered at the museum. A talented artist, she also designed the honey pots and honey label on display. Several museum volunteers, along with the Huronia Museum in Midland supplemented our exhibit with objects and information from their collections.



A second seasonal exhibit focused on Coldwater and featured an interesting selection of photographs, maps and artifacts related to local schools, churches, businesses, and community life over the last two centuries. We all enjoyed the Coldwater "Fabergé" egg!

A third exhibit was added in August to compliment the Heritage Craft Festival. Vintage hat pins and glass hats from the museum and some private collections were complimented by interesting research conducted by some of our summer student staff.

It is always nice to look in our visitor's log and read the comments about our exhibits. They seem to resonate with many and inspire us to plan and curate others which incorporate some of the wonderful objects and stories in our collection.

Thank you and best wishes, Wayne & Elaine!

Long-time museum volunteers **Wayne and Elaine Scott** stepped down from the Board of Directors in June and their other volunteer activities at the end of the season. The museum is a better place because of their incredible efforts, ingenuity, leadership and dedication over more than a dozen years. We are extremely grateful for everything they did to move us forward and we hope they take much pride in that fact. We wish them well in all future endeavours! Thank you, WE!



Elaine (on the left) at 2019 Coldwater Steampunk Festival, with Lorraine and Larisa



Wayne and Peggy "flipping" for the 2019 Micro North Pancake Breakfast

2020 EVENTS AT THE COLDWATER CANADIANA MUSEUM – Some may be postponed or cancelled

Date(s)	Event	Time	Details
Monday, May 11	Annual General Meeting	9:30 am	At the museum; election of board members. All welcome.
Every Wednesday in June, July, August	Devon Teas	1-4 pm	Enjoy an authentic Devon Tea served on fine vintage china in the 1830s Woodrow cabin. Tea is also available on other days during museum hours. Air conditioned. \$10 pp. Closed on Canada Day.
Saturday, June 6	Annual Yard & Plant Sale	9 am - noon	Find a treasure among a great selection of donated items. All proceeds support museum operations and programs.
Wednesday, June 24	Tea Time Talk <i>May I Take your Order? A Brief Look at Restaurant Ware</i>	1:30 - 2 pm	Join museum volunteer and ceramic enthusiast, Ellen Blaubergs in a brief exploration of restaurant ceramics; supplemented by examples from the museum and personal collections; followed by Devon Tea at 2 pm; \$10 pp. CANCELLED
Every Tuesday in July & August	Crafty Tuesdays	11 am – 3:30 pm	Learn a new fibre craft or bring your own & enjoy a pleasant and supportive atmosphere. No experience needed as our volunteer instructors will guide your efforts. All ages welcome. BYO lawn chair & bag lunch. Refreshments provided. Admission by donation.
Sunday, July 19	A. Woodrow Farm Day formerly Heritage Day	10:30 am - 4 pm	Music, crafts and trades demonstrations, working machinery, book signing, church service, BIG silent auction, bbq lunch, kids' activities; birthday cake , vendors, lots of family fun. Admission by donation.
Saturday, August 8	Coldwater Steampunk Festival	10 am - 5 pm	The largest Steampunk festival in Canada. This year's theme: <i>Gaslamp Fantasy - Where Steampunk Meets Magic</i> . Dress up and don't miss the 10 th anniversary of this amazing event! Admission by donation. "Transfigured Friday" at the Museum Friday, Aug. 7, late aft/evening.
Saturday, August 22 & Sun. Aug. 23	Vintage Crafts & Trades Festival	10 am - 3 pm on both days	Join fibre crafters, bakers, blacksmiths, printers, chair caners, and other crafts & trades people. Demonstrations, working steam engines, hands-on opportunities, displays & prizes. Cost: tba

More 2020 Happenings – Some may be postponed or cancelled

We are proud to announce that the Coldwater Canadiana Heritage Museum is an official "quilt host" on the **Simcoe County Barn Quilt Trail**.

Our painted barn quilt will incorporate the traditional green and white colours associated with the Canadiana. A special unveiling event will occur on a date to be announced. Many thanks to Patti

Turnour for staying the course on this project. For more information about the trail, its unique origins and goals, go to:
<https://experience.simcoe.ca/barn-quilt-trail>

Look for some great new seasonal displays in the Woodrow home and in several outbuildings:

Vintage Hats, Hatpins and Accessories
The Humble Handkerchief
All Around the Cobbler's Bench:
Our Footwear Collection
The Borland Toolbox Rediscovered and Refurbished

Visit us and check out our booth at the **Ramara Historical Society's Yesteryears Celebration 2020**

at St. Columbkille Church in Ramara on **Saturday, July 25**. This is one of the premier heritage events in our region.

We will also be hosting a booth at the **Coldwater Fall Fair** from **Friday, Sept 25 through Sunday, September 27**.

Many thanks to the Coldwater and Area Agricultural Society for supporting our participation at the Fall Fair.

Contact us:

**COLDWATER CANADIANA
HERITAGE MUSEUM**

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Unless otherwise noted, all 2020 Newsletter photos are credited to E. Blaubergs. Images of 2020 events and happenings would be appreciated for future newsletters.

**Coldwater Canadiana Heritage Museum
Board of Directors
May 2019 – May 2020**

Wanda Frost, Wendy Hough, Richard Jolliffe (Chair), Dianne Knegt, Linda McDowell (Secretary), Bill Prentice, Gord Smith, Bob Turnour, Patti Turnour (Curator), Margo Van Muyen (Treasurer), Lynda Whiston (Curatorial Advisor), Bill Wilson, Linda Wilson.
Newsletter Editor: Ellen Blaubergs

Note: Wayne & Elaine Scott resigned from the Board in July 2019; Ralph Hough resigned from the Board in February 2020, shortly after his appointment as Deputy Mayor of Oro-Medonte. All the best, Ralph!

Last October, museum volunteers Wendy, Judy, Dianne, Ellen, Linda, Margo, Pat, Wanda, Grace and Lorraine visited the Lucy Maude Montgomery home in Leaksdale.
Photo credit: Gerarda Gale



2019 Silent Auction items on display in the Carriage Barn, including a beautiful rug hooked by Linda Wilson.

Can you help?

We hope to have **55 donated items for this year's A. Woodrow Day Silent Auction**, in recognition of our 55th anniversary of incorporation. Auction proceeds will go into a legacy fund for the restoration of the Woodrow cabin. If you would like to donate something to the auction, please leave a message with a museum volunteer. Your donation will be received with much gratitude and although we cannot put your name in lights, it will be prominently displayed on A. Woodrow Farm Day.

Thank you again to our **2019 silent auction and lucky draw prize donors**. Your items were inspired and much appreciated: Karen Bates, Pat Bromley, Marian Clark, Dorothy Duncan, Friends of The OPP Museum, Wendy Hough, Kelsey's Orillia, Linda McDowell, OPP Off Duty ShOPP, Orillia Museum of Art and History, Wayne & Elaine Scott, Susan Storie, Township of Oro-Medonte, The Whitten-Sotirakos-Blaubergs Families, Grace Willmott, and Linda Wilson.

Some final 2019 Memories



New Curator Patti Turnour redesigned the Village Shop



2019 Summer Staff: Larisa, Eli, Caleb, Sarah M., Sarah T.



Young weavers at the 2019 Heritage Craft Festival

The Coldwater Canadiana Heritage Museum is a legally incorporated not-for-profit organization and registered charity. Support from Young Canada Works, Canada Summer Jobs, the County of Simcoe, and our Friends, Patrons and Benefactors is gratefully acknowledged for the 2019 season.

Editor's Note: *Last summer, Richard Jolliffe submitted a two-part article about an artifact near and dear to him, to Talk of the Town, Coldwater's community newsletter. For those who missed it, a slightly edited version follows below. Enjoy!*

Vic Connor and the MB

by Richard Jolliffe, Chair, Coldwater Canadiana Heritage Museum

The Coldwater Canadiana Heritage Museum would like to share a story about a man named Vic Connor, a place called the Big Chute, and a boat known as the *MB*. Vic Connor is one of those people who lived a full life. He worked for Ontario Hydro at the Big Chute when it was a colony back in the 1930s. At this colony, there was an ice house, post office, smithy, horse stables, two boarding houses, a large storage barn, marine railway, and a log school house. Presently, the log schoolhouse is the only surviving structure from the colony. It is located on my cottage property just up the Severn River. The first teacher at the school house back in the 1930s was my Aunt Betty (Elizabeth Cowan).

Vic was a very clever man and realized that a working boat of some kind was needed to support the community. He purchased a lifeboat from the *C.P.R. Assiniboia* which was the sister ship of the *Keewatin*. He built a superstructure onto the lifeboat and installed a 22 H.P. Buchanan Red Star Continental engine. Now the people at the Big Chute colony had a connection to the outside world as there was only a winter road to Severn Falls.

Vic and the *MB* would make trips to Severn Falls several times a day, picking up the mail and supplies. On one occasion, the body of a young boy was carried out due to a drowning accident and on another, it was a hydro worker who was the victim of an industrial accident at work. The *MB* was integral to the community as was the innovation and energy of Vic Connors. As a young boy I met Vic Connor many times when my father did business with him and his brother Carl Connor.

When the road was built from the Big Chute to Severn Falls, the *MB's* duties changed. You could still see it going up and down the Severn River in the late 1960s as a family pleasure craft.

The *MB* at the Canadiana becomes the *OB* (Our Boat)

By now you are probably wondering about the name of the boat and how it came to have pride of place at our museum. It's really quite simple. Vic Connor's young son decided that it was his boat and called it My Boat (*MB*) and the name stuck.



As the years passed, I forgot about the *MB* until we received information that it was at Mount St. Louis and the owner, Ron Russell wanted to donate it to the Coldwater Canadiana Heritage Museum. It arrived in 2009 and is currently on display in its own boathouse. Museum volunteers reconstructed the superstructure, and repaired and repainted the original portions. A generous donation from a private family foundation helped fund these undertakings.

A visit to the marine railway at the Big Chute today provides no clues about the people who lived and worked at the colony there decades ago. It is all gone. The marine railway still stands along with a few information boards, and there is my log school house down the river. This is a perfect

example of how easily our history is lost and forgotten. When my father and I dismantled the log schoolhouse, Ontario Hydro indicated that their plan was to clear the Hydro property of all structures - all with the stroke of a pen!



Rob Root, Ellen Blauergs & Ralph Hough painted the hull in 2014
Photo credit: W. Hough

We have these stories because Vic Connor documented his experiences at the Big Chute. They help us appreciate what an adventure it must have been back then. Yes, stories which are wonderful to tell!

One of the Museum's mandates is to preserve the history of our area. We do this with many hands working and many pen strokes (or computer keyboard strokes). We do not want to have a few information boards on an empty piece of land. This would be disrespectful to people like Vic Connor and others who lived and worked before us. I am confident the community of Coldwater feels the same about the CCHM and our history. As directors, it is our responsibility to do our best to preserve both.