



Some Figures and Facts:

Students attended the schoolhouse:
September 153

This newsletter is published by the *Friends of the Schoolhouse* every Fall, Winter, Spring, and late Summer in an effort to inform its membership, and the teachers of the Peel District School Board of its activities and events.

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Our website is
www.britanniaschoolhousefriends.org

From the Chair: Joan Reid

Volunteers are at the heart of every activity carried out by the Friends of the Schoolhouse. Fall is particularly busy and volunteers are much in demand. Volunteers make it possible for Friends to staff our booth at the Brampton Fair and to open the Schoolhouse during the Britannia Fall Festival on Thanksgiving weekend. This fall the Friends also participated in Trafalgar 2000 in the one-room school at Palermo. The Friends are grateful to the volunteers who have given their time, enthusiasm, and energy to these activities.

The Friends wish our former schoolmistress, Melissa Jacobs, every success in her new career. They appreciate the willingness of Rob Ridley to step into the role of Schoolmaster until a replacement is found for Melissa. This allows the daily program of the Schoolhouse to continue during the months of September and October.

Fall is the time when volunteers prepare the school grounds for winter. Two steps have been taken this fall to maintain and develop the heritage environment around the Schoolhouse. King Alfred daffodils have been planted behind the Ardiel Sundial and the hedge planted in 1939 to commemorate the visit to Canada of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth has been "rejuvenated" thanks to the generosity of the friends and family of Stewart Scott who attended S.S. # 12 in the 1920's.

The Friends are delighted to report that the blinds have been repaired and the windows washed and coated with U.V. protective film.

As Christmas 2006 approaches the Friends are preparing for several customary activities: first, the Christmas sale in the Board Atrium all day on November 16; secondly, the tree decorating evening at the Schoolhouse on December 1 starting at 3 pm; and thirdly, the Christmas open house on Sunday, December 3. As always volunteers will come when called.

Good Wishes to Schoolmistress Jacobs

In January 2004 it was our pleasure to welcome Melissa Jacobs to the Old Britannia Schoolhouse when she replaced Megan McNally as the schoolmistress. For two and a half years Melissa led hundreds of Peel students through a stimulating and enjoyable rural school day of the past. We were, therefore, sorry to learn in September that she was moving on to other challenges.

Melissa's partner, Liam, has been given the assignment of setting up programs in other countries. In anticipation of this move, Melissa took courses this past summer in teaching English as a second language, thereby developing skills that would stand her in good stead for obtaining employment wherever they were stationed.

We thank Melissa for her friendship, for her support and her cooperation with the Friends and for her commitment to a high quality of excellence in the schoolhouse programme over her time here.

We wish both Melissa and Liam the very best in all of their new ventures.

Our sincere appreciation is extended to Rob Ridley, Field Centre Coordinator, who is so ably taking on the schoolmaster role (as well as many of his other duties) until a replacement for Melissa can be hired. No classes, therefore, have had to be cancelled. Bravo Rob and thank you!

Ho! Ho! Ho!

The holiday season is approaching quickly! The Sales Committee is busy preparing for our annual Open House on Sunday December 3 from 1:00 to 4:00 and for the sale of our merchandise in the H.J.A. Brown Education Centre atrium on Thursday November 16 from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Again this year we have added a number of interesting new items to our already extensive selection of items reminis-

cent of past times, including several beautifully reproduced games from the early 1900's, sachets containing schoolhouse garden lavender and lots more.

We hope you will take advantage of these opportunities to pick up some unusual little gifts and stocking stuffers, while supporting the schoolhouse at the same time.

Congratulations Trafalgar 200

Friends of the Schoolhouse were invited by the Trafalgar 200 Committee to participate in Family Day at the one room schoolhouse at Palermo Corner (Bronte and Dundas). This event was to celebrate the 200th Anniversary of Trafalgar Township in the older community of North Oakville where urban development is about to take place in the formerly agricultural land north of Highway 5.

While the one room schoolhouse was built in 1942, it has stood empty for a number of years. As all buildings that are left empty for any length of time, this one is badly in need of some tender love and care. One of the first goals of the Committee is to preserve this school so that it may be enjoyed by the children of Oakville. A heritage walk in the pioneer cemetery, historical displays by the various historical societies, our schoolhouse display, a farmers' market and milking demonstration were some of the activities that took place in and

outside the schoolhouse while a variety of activities were also held in the nearby Palermo United Church.

This was a busy weekend for the Friends as we required volunteers for the Brampton Fall Fair and this celebration. Eva did double duty as usual and Joan Reid and Cathy assisted her on Saturday, September 16 from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Our display of school texts, writing equipment, and other items which were reminiscent of bygone school days were well received by the many visitors who visited the schoolhouse.

We congratulate Trafalgar 200 on the work that they put into this one day event. Everyone had a good day and we had an excellent opportunity to show our neighbours that their project to renovate this schoolhouse is certainly a worthwhile endeavour.



Eva Ardiel and Cathy Harper visit the Schoolhouse at Trafalgar 200.

CHRISTMAS AT THE OLD BRITANNIA **SCHOOLHOUSE**

Christmas is always a special time for the Friends of the Schoolhouse and this year the festivities start early in November.

On Thursday, November 17, 2006, the Sales Committee of the Friends of the Schoolhouse will hold their annual Christmas Sale in the Atrium of the H.J.A. Brown Education Centre from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm. Last year we operated the sale until 6:00 pm and had a good turn out so we are extending the hours of sale again this year to give people other than those who work at the Board Office the opportunity to browse and purchase the unique gift items we have in stock. You will have a chance to attend the Sale "after working hours." We hope that you will take advantage of the longer hours.

In preparation for our annual Christmas Open House and Sale at the Schoolhouse, a group of "Friends" will meet on Friday, December 1 to decorate the Schoolhouse for the season. This is always a fun time as we string wooden cranberries and plastic popcorn to festoon the fragrant smelling live fir tree. In previous years, Marjorie Madill has made copious amounts of real popcorn to string on the tree which gave a great feast for the mice that inhabit the schoolhouse. Some years the mice were considerate enough not to eat all the popcorn until the very last day of school. At other times, the popcorn was devoured before the sale on the following Sunday. Hopefully, this year, the mice will find the plastic popcorn indigestible and the children will be able to enjoy the Christmas decorations!

Ken and Jean Robinson haul, usually from Springridge Farm in Milton, and set up in the front corner of the Schoolhouse the huge fir tree. Red and green paper chains are de rigueur and Ben Madill makes sure that we make them to his exacting standards. Cedar swags with cheery red ribbons decorate the blackboards and Daryl Cook designs and decorates a wreath for the door. After the Victorian decorations are hung on the tree to Eva's artistic eye, and everything smells of Christmas we are ready for supper. Joan Moon, Jean Robinson and Linda Kenny make sure that we are well fed.

We sit down to a chili supper with lots of home made Christmas goodies and toast the successes of the year 2006. Many Friends help with this event. If you would like to help call Jean (905 826 3475) before November 27. Bring along your energy and your appetite as we always do a winter cleaning and dusting before we decorate.

The culmination of the Christmas season for "Friends" at the Schoolhouse comes on Sunday, December 3 when we open the doors at 1:00pm and welcome lots of new friends and neighbors for the Christmas Sale at OBS. There are wooden toys, antique tin

CHRISTMAS AT THE OLD BRITANNIA SCHOOLHOUSE (continued)

icicles, puzzles, optical toys, beeswax candles, some new tin ware toys and many, many small stocking stuffers and other items for sale including lavender sachets made of lavender from the schoolhouse garden.

We always feed our guests at the Schoolhouse and Christmas is no exception. There will be hot mulled cider and Christmas cookies to keep up the strength of our intrepid shoppers. It is a wonderful opportunity to visit the Schoolhouse and shop for unique items for gift giving or to keep as mementos. The smells of pungent fir, cedar and mulled cider mingle to remind us of Christmases past, or what we imagine Christmas to be.

For all these events you must enter the H.J.A. Brown parking lot off Matheson Blvd. W. and park near the Schoolhouse. On Sundays, it is easier to get quite near the Schoolhouse, but on Thursday during the Sale at the Board Office it is necessary to park in the lot to the west of the building as most of the rest of the area is assigned parking.

Friends hope that you will visit the Schoolhouse during this special time and enjoy our wares and our hospitality.

Britannia Fall Festival

For the last few years the Britannia Fall Festival has been an interesting addition to the Thanksgiving Weekend at the Britannia Schoolhouse. Although the festival and the midway are run by an outside company the schoolhouse is open to visitors. This year the Schoolhouse welcomed approximately 260 visitors to the classroom.

The children enjoyed the opportunity to use the chalk and slates. The old fashioned toys were well used, especially the marble game.

A few parents were surprised and also amused, when they were told about different methods used in the "old days". Artifacts on display brought back many memories, even the strap for those few willing to admit to receiving it.

We wish to express our thanks to the many volunteers who helped on the very busy weekend.

The Brampton Fair September 15–17, 2006

Over the years The Friends have become comfortable with the sights and smells of the Angus and Holstein cattle housed and shown in the large animal barn on Old School Road. Our booth is always a popular attraction in this busy building. A popcorn machine, rope-making, rabbits and chickens also attract old and young.

This year our visit was an overwhelming success. The weather was most cooperative and the crowds constant during the three days Friends operated their booth. Our toys received vigorous workouts by youngsters eager to demonstrate their skill with marbles and the ball-and-cup game. Sales were unusually brisk and The Friends enjoyed visiting with many old friends as well as providing information for new visitors.

Thanks to the following volunteers: Eva Ardiel, Linda Bowman, Lis Braun, Marg Carson, George Christian, Linda Elgie, Wayne Freeman, Karin Henderson, Frances Kay, Mary Macdonald, Joan Moon, Steve Norman, Joan Reid, Jenny Roberts, Kay Robbins, Karen Simmons, Marg Storey, Dennis Taylor, and Ruth Taylor.

Schoolmaster's Report by Schoolmaster Ridley

The Old Britannia Schoolhouse has definitely come alive again. Just as they have for so many years in the past, the first classes lined up in September to walk through the doors and learn their lessons. The Schoolhouse, like all of the Peel Board's Field Centres is about the firsthand experience of living the life of a Victorian pupil and is memorable beyond belief. Whether it is a grade three student, tongue sticking out of his mouth in concentration practising his cursive writing, or a grade eight student standing at the front reciting Tennyson, it is wonderful for all.

The programs offered at the Schoolhouse go beyond pioneering studies and drama. As I stand at the front of the room I see students building confidence in themselves and gaining the ability to speak in front of a group of peers and the chance to act silly once in awhile whether it means wearing the dunce cap or falling when first trying a pair of stilts. After a few hours in the Schoolhouse, even the shyest amongst the group feels more sure of him or herself. A compliment from the Schoolmaster on their impres-

Schoolmaster's Report (continued)

sive cursive writing or their clean hands goes a long way to building that much needed self esteem. It most certainly is not the desks alone helping to keep proper posture, but rather that new found self esteem that results in the number of heads held high at the end of the day.

In these days of spell check on the computer I must admit I am impressed with the spelling capabilities of students today. More often than not they remember to add the "u" in colour or do not confuse the t and the w in "between". Once in awhile when they are given a word that they are not familiar with I hide a slight grin as I give the word in a sentence. It is those times that I feel like the walking version of the Reader's Digest column, "Building Your Word Power".

The social awareness also is interesting to watch. Although it does not happen every time it is interesting to watch as some boys allow the girls to go first or to hear the politeness in their answers, not just to myself as Schoolmaster but to the other students. Sharing, helping others: there are constant unconscious examples each day in the Schoolhouse.

As the pupils leave at the end of the day, the smiles on their faces tell me they have enjoyed themselves immensely, but their actions show that they learned a lot more than they thought they would.



More pictures from our file. Eva and George try on costumes at Joan Reid's home. A last look at our gardens for 2006 and Joan Reid with part of her display at the Schoolhouse at Trafalgar.



George and Eva try on 1920's costumes

One last look at the school-house before the old maples came down



For Your Calendar:

November 2006

12 The Old Britannia Schoolhouse is open to the public from 1:00 to 4:00 pm

16 Christmas Sales: Atrium of Board Offices 10:00 am to 6:00 pm

December 2006

03 Christmas Open House at the Schoolhouse 1:00 to 4:00 pm

10 The Old Britannia Schoolhouse is open to the public from 1:00 to 4:00 pm

January 2007

14 The Old Britannia Schoolhouse is open to the public from 1:00 to 4:00 pm

Need to contact the school?

The Old Britannia Schoolhouse can be contacted directly, by dialing **905 890 1010, ext. 2911**

Heritage Mississauga

can be accessed on the internet at:

www.heritagemississauga.com

Or by phoning 905 615 4415



We are on the web at www.britanniaschoolhousefriends.org