

The Old Britannia Schoolhouse

1852-1959
restored 1982

Summer/Early Fall 2020



2020—2021 Schedule of Events

Due to COVID 19 no events are planned at this time.

This newsletter

is published by *The Friends of the Schoolhouse* every Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer to inform members and the teachers of the Peel District School Board of activities and events organized by The Friends.

Co-editors:

Daryl Cook

dlcook@rogers.com

Katharine Moon-Craney

kmooncraney@rogers.com

Need more information?

The Old Britannia Schoolhouse

phone 905-890-1010 ext.2911

Website

www.britanniaschoolhousefriends.org

Twitter: @PDSBBritanniaSH



It's Early Fall at the Schoolhouse

In a normal year we would be welcoming the children to a schoolhouse decorated for the autumn with pumpkins grown in the school garden. This year with the coronavirus pandemic the building sits empty and lonely. In time it will be alive again with laughing children experiencing what school days were like long ago.

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From the Chair

Margaret Storey

Hello! Even though we are now into months of this pandemic, I hope you are all well and safe in your own bubble! We all have had our own way of coping but we have to think positively going forward. This situation is going to be around for a long time yet! I would like to say thank you to our past chair, Ruth Taylor, for her guidance and leadership the past two years. Our last Friends meeting was in March but we have all kept in touch with each other by phone or by a chain e-mail! We even had two Zoom calls when we discussed the coming year and our various events. At the present time we are just not sure what schools will look like in the fall. Likely there will be no field trips to the schoolhouse for our Peel schoolchildren. Our schoolmistresses have been busy, though, doing further research of the area, refining some of their schoolhouse activities and designing new activities for when the students do return. We thank them for their ongoing dedication to the schoolhouse and to the children who visit this amazing historical space.

Together with the other staff at the Field Centers they have also created many activities for learning outside. Check out PDSB Learning Naturally for many activities for all grades! Don't we all wish we had more Field Centers where more students could learn outside. I know my students were always excited before, during and after a field trip to the Field Centers. Whether it was orienteering, snowshoeing or building their own survival shelters, they had a blast! They likely didn't think about how much they were learning; in their eyes they were just outside having fun!!!

We likely will not be having Open Sundays for a while yet either but we will keep the website up to date regarding when they will begin again. So, who knows what the schoolyear 2020-2021 will look like but we will keep you informed with the newsletter as well as updates on our website. For now, stay safe, stay healthy and wear your masks.



Remember this!
It will all be back and there will
be another exciting time to
enjoy the fall colours in the
schoolyard and
experience a school day of
long ago.

From the Schoolmistress

Christine Chapel

Here we are. It's my favourite time of year again. It's the time of beautiful colours, frosty mornings, pumpkins and apples and...back to school. However, this is a fall like no other that we've experienced. The Schoolhouse is very quiet. But, it is still standing as a reminder of school days gone by and those still to come.

Lisa and I were at the Schoolhouse last week doing some housekeeping and planning. Although classes are not coming right now, as you know, we continue to support teachers and students, both in school and online. We are corresponding with educators, helping them to take their learning outside. New activities are being added to the Field Centre website, we meet with teachers virtually to plan and are presenting lessons and meeting with classes online. The Schoolhouse is not forgotten in this. Lisa and I are planning ways to engage groups, especially those who may be missing out on their field trip this year. This is an opportunity for us to create some new program additions and displays in the Schoolhouse as well.

The day we were in was Orange Shirt Day. It is a day meant to honour the Indigenous children who were taken from their families and sent away to residential schools. It is a day to learn about and reflect on the history of these schools in Canada and the devastating impact this system had, and still has, on generations of Indigenous families. This is a part of our shared history and therefore part of the story of the Schoolhouse too. As I've said before, the Schoolhouse offers many opportunities to bring history to life and that history must be told from multiple perspectives to truly be rich and inclusive.

Mental health has come to the forefront as many people struggle during these tumultuous times. A section of our Learning Naturally website is called Fresh Air Perspectives which offers mindfulness and wellness activities. One of these is called Sit Spot.

A Sit Spot is a special place that you can visit on a regular basis in order to enjoy some quiet time and to make observations about the world around you. To begin, go outside and choose a quiet spot that you like or sit inside by your favourite window.

Try doing this activity for 5 minutes

- *Start off by taking five deep breaths, inhale and exhale slowly*
 - *Inhale your breath down into your belly to the count of 5 (breathe as if you are smelling flowers) and exhale out for 5 (as if you are blowing out a candle)*
 - *Try to relax your mind and your body*
 - *Continue to breathe in and out slowly*
- Listen to the sounds around you*

This is a practice we are encouraging students and teachers to adopt. I myself plan on doing this at the Schoolhouse every time I'm there. I will head out to Ben Madill's Conversation Area, perch on a rock and enjoy some quiet time taking in the sights and sounds around me. Visiting the same spot regularly connects us to that place. We feel a sense of belonging. Our awareness increases as we notice changes daily and seasonally. We feel like we are a part of that place; like an old friend, not a visitor.

Although the Schoolhouse may not see as many visitors this year, it remains deeply rooted in this community and connected to the people who have played a role in its history. It will be a happy day when we can meet at the Schoolhouse again. Until then we wish you all good health and peaceful moments in your favourite Sit Spot.

The Pie Plant

Katharine Moon Craney

Rhubarb was originally an herbal remedy dating from 2700 B.C. and was first appreciated for its curative properties. It was not until 1777 that it was recorded in an herbal garden in Oxfordshire, Britain. In the 19th century rhubarb started to gain more interest in the culinary world as it slowly began to appear in vegetable markets in London. 'Rhubarb Pie' did not appear in print until 1855 as it gained popularity in North America. Rhubarb soon became known as "pie plant". Although rhubarb is a vegetable it is most often dressed up as a dessert.

An easy plant to cultivate it was appealing to our ancestors who, without the resources of freezers and methods of preservation, enjoyed it for its medicinal properties as well as its tart flavour.

Here is a recipe for Rhubarb Conserve:

14 cups rhubarb stems (cut in ½ inch pieces)
3 cups raisins
7 cups sugar
Juice of two oranges
Rind of two oranges, thickly sliced
1½ to 1 cup walnuts (if desired)

Combine all ingredients, except walnuts, and let stand one hour. Bring to a boil uncovered for 40 minutes stirring frequently. Add walnuts and boil five more minutes. Put in sterilized jars and seal.

If you don't have as much rhubarb on-hand, perhaps this Rhubarb Marmalade would suit you:

4 cups rhubarb stems
2 cups white sugar
1 cup chopped walnuts

Boil rhubarb and sugar until thickened. **Do not add water.** Add nuts and stir well. Place in sterilized jars and, when cold, seal. Store in a cool place.

Nothing More Comforting: Canada's Heritage Food, Dorothy Duncan,
The Dundurn Group



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Fall Fairs

Starting in September and continuing until November, rural communities follow a long tradition of having fall fairs. The Friends of the Schoolhouse have held fall fairs at the schoolhouse and participated each year at the Brampton Fall Fair. One year Cooksville held a fall fair and we had a booth there too. This year for the first time in many years we didn't organize our displays and toys to set up our booth beside the show ring at the Brampton Fair Grounds. Here is a look back at some of the fun we've had in past years.

2004



Marjorie Madill always enjoyed talking to visitors at the fair.



Eva with the cow the children can "milk".



At our schoolhouse Fair in 2004 we had a Carousel.

2006



The schoolhouse fair in 2006 felt like a real farm fair with a variety of animals for children to enjoy.



2019



Wearing Masks, An Ancient Tradition

Daryl Cook

As we try to keep at bay the COVID 19 pandemic, we are experiencing many things that are totally new and unfamiliar. Isolating from family and friends, food shopping only when necessary (or ordering groceries online), doing without a haircut for weeks, working from home or, worse still, not working at all are only some of the sacrifices we've had to make. Now we need to get used to wearing a mask when we are in public places. Unless you have lived in China or Japan where face coverings are common, this is a whole new experience. However, there is a long history of mask wearing even though it may be new to 21st century North Americans.

Mask wearing has a long, worldwide history. Historical evidence of masks goes back as far as 7000 BC. In the earliest records of African civilization they were used for rituals and communication with spirits. The Egyptians made death masks, exact likenesses of the deceased, to ensure safe passage to the afterworld. Wealthy and important people had masks made of precious metals, but even the poorest had masks fashioned from wood or a mixture of papyrus or linen soaked in plaster. The most famous royal death mask is that of King Tut. The Greeks used masks in their theatre. The wearing of a mask allowed the actor to transform into a different character. Indigenous peoples in North America used masks as part of rituals and still do.

Mask use in Europe became less common until the Renaissance when masks became an important part of the Venice Carnival. One thousand years later the tradition still continues.

Use of masks for medical reasons appeared in Europe during the various plagues of the Middle Ages. Doctors devised a peculiar looking leather headdress with a beak. The purpose of the beak was to contain perfume and various substances that would mask the foul odor of the plague and perhaps provide protection from the disease. The first recommendation to use cotton masks similar to what we know today was in an 1878 article written by Dr. A.J. Jessup, a Westtown, New York, physician and published in Scientific American. It read:

Thus we see that as quarantine and disinfection will certainly spread of contagion from patient to patient, may we not confidently hope, by preventing the entrance of germs into the lungs and blood, by a properly constructed filtering mask to yet witness the spectacle of a population walking about the streets of a cholera infested city, without fear of its infection however deadly. As a properly made cotton filter worn over the mouth and nose must shut out all atmospheric germs of the ordinary putrefactive kind. We may confidently assured that those of disease will be equally excluded.

Medical mask use by doctors became more common and by 1920 after the Spanish flu epidemic, they were universally used in surgery.

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During the Spanish flu epidemic the wearing of masks was encouraged and there are photographs from the era showing people on the streets of North American cities wearing masks. Although today we are seeing some resistance to wearing masks for protection of others and ourselves, several years ago they were seen as a fashion statement. In 2010, fashion designer Alexander McQueen featured face masks in his winter menswear collection. In 2018 Ariana Grande included face masks in her merchandise collection promoting her album and continues to include them. It seems that after being part of human culture since at least 7000 BC masks are here to stay.



Plague Mask



Venetian mask



King Tut Mask



1919 telephone operator

Tweet Tweet!

Follow us on Twitter, @PDSBBritanniaSH. Get the latest on Open Sundays, events and other news. We also post pictures of the school, grounds and gardens. If you visit the schoolhouse be sure to tweet a picture or message so we know you were there. Tweet you later!



E-mailed Newsletters

If you are not already doing so, why not consider receiving your newsletters by email. This helps us save the cost of paper, printing and postage and also is kinder to the environment. Contact dlcook@rogers.com and put "Emailed Newsletter" in the subject box to make this arrangement.

Thank You

Friends of the Schoolhouse is a non-profit organization of concerned citizens dedicated to assisting the Peel District School Board in the support of the Old Britannia Schoolhouse and its programs. Your donations are much appreciated.

Check our website often for the latest information.
www.britanniaschoolhousefriends.org

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Our Open Sundays

Our Open Sundays have been cancelled until further notice because of COVID19. Here are some activities you can do at home instead. They are all on our website.

DATE	For activities go to www.britanniaschoolhousefriends.org and look at Fun and Games.
Sept	Back to School Activity Read a Story, Write a Story
Oct	Autumn Leaves Activity: How to press Leaves
Nov	Do Some Cooking Activity: Family Recipes
Dec	Make a Christmas Tree Ornament Activity; Victorian Fan ornament
Jan	Indoor Fun Activity: Make Your Own Button Buzzer ..
Feb	Valentine's Day Activity; Make a Valentine for a Special Person
Mar	Be Creative Activity: Draw What You See
April	Get Ready to Garden Activity: Think Gardening
May	Mothers Day Activity: Decorate a Pot and Fill It With a Plant for Mother
June	Family Games Day Activity: Victorian Summer Games for Children