

The Old Britannia Schoolhouse

1852-1959 restored 1982

Winter 2019



Coming Events

Open Sundays:
 March 10 Maple Sugar
 April 14 Bees and Their Honey
 May 12 Our Spring Garden

School Visits

November 2018 292
 December 2018 205
 January 2019 236

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

Influenza Pandemic 1918-19

Karen Simmons

Do you get your flu shot every year, or are you just hoping to escape the next serious outbreak? We are lucky that we can be protected as much as modern science currently allows. A hundred years ago, it was a very different story.

The Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918 – 1919, is said to have been as bad or worse than the plagues of the Middle Ages. The name came about, not because the infection came from Spain, but because news of the outbreak came from the Spanish media. As Spain was not involved in the Great War, it was not restricted by the censorship rules of the countries that were. It was deemed important that news of a serious disease outbreak might affect the morale of the troops and be of benefit to the enemy.

Troop movements did help to spread the infection. Soldiers arriving home from Europe often arrived with more than their wounds that needed care. It didn't take long for communities across the country to be overwhelmed by sickness and death.

The people had little or no warning. In those days of no television or internet, most families did not even have radio, telephone or newspapers. The symptoms of the disease were horrendous, and death came quickly. World wide, deaths were about 50 million. In Canada, 50 000 died, almost as many as those Canadians who died in the war.

The government paid little attention. Flu was not a reportable disease, and there was no treatment available, nor of course, were there any antibiotics or vaccines. Canada did not even have a Department of Health. Desperate families tried folk remedies, which were of no use. Sometimes whole families died. Many schools were closed, including some of our Peel schoolhouses.

So, please keep your immunizations up to date. Flu viruses mutate quite easily. The world health community is constantly preparing for another serious pandemic, which could be proportionately worse than that of a hundred years ago. Don't be a victim.

Preventing Spanish Influenza Is Better than Curing It



Keep your nasal passages, throat, and lungs in a perfectly antiseptic condition by the use of the Branston Violet Ray Ozone Generator. No germs can exist where this is used.

Use it in your home. Install it in your office and factory. Keep your employees healthy and efficient. Call or phone for a Free Demonstration.

Showing Model 29 in use. Several other models to choose from.

Manufactured by
THE CHAS. A. BRANSTON CO.
 355 Yonge Street, Toronto
 Phones Main 1211 and 1212

Winter 2019

From the Chair

Ruth Taylor

The classes who visited in December enjoyed the schoolhouse decorated in all its old-fashioned finery, which included a real tree, crepe paper decorations and evergreen swags. Sadly, just before the holidays, the decorations must be taken down. Many of them are packed up and stored, to be used another year. We had two very successful Christmas sales, one at the board office and one at the schoolhouse. We had some returning vendors as well as a new one specializing in metal jewellery and ornaments, in addition to our own sales items.

Perhaps, like me, when the New Year arrives, you reflect on past New Years. My parents were married on New Year's Eve, and we often had a party at the house. It was not like the parties of recent times. It was a quite refined card party. The men dressed in their suits and of course the ladies wore their best dresses. The strongest beverage served was coffee. However, my mother did liven things up a bit. She usually made cream puffs. Sometimes she added some flour along with the filling or a piece of waxed paper. People certainly got a surprise when they bit into the cream puff. My mother was Scottish and one of the traditions of the Scots at Hogmanay (the last day of the year) is "first footing." If the first person to enter your house after midnight is dark haired, it is supposed to bring you good luck. Since my father had dark hair, my mother's relatives grabbed him to be the one to enter houses first. You are supposed to give something to that person. This was during the depression. My father came home with his suit pockets stuffed with crackers.

This year we will be breaking one of the traditions of Friends of the Schoolhouse. Due to the physical demands of preparing for and running the Strawberry Social, we do not feel that we can continue. We thank the many people who attended over the years. We have just participated in Heritage Brampton at Bramalea City Centre. There is a separate report in the newsletter.

This has certainly been a challenging winter. But we can take heart, as Wiarton Willie has promised us an early spring!

Heritage Brampton 2019

Ruth Taylor



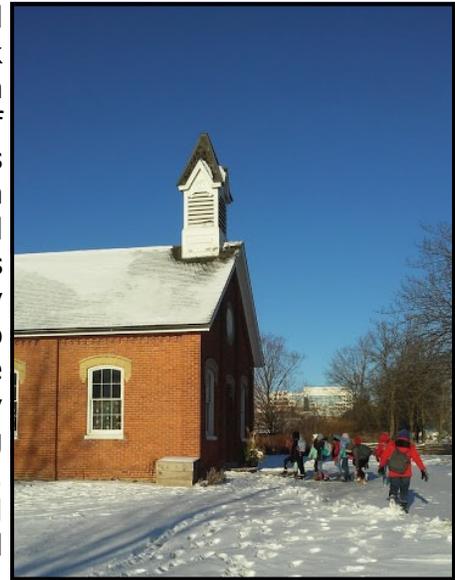
On a crisp cold February Day Friends of the Schoolhouse gathered at Bramalea City Centre to promote Old Britannia Schoolhouse. Our displays highlighted the architecture of the schoolhouse and our Open Sundays. Some visitors remembered using slates growing up or playing with similar toys. One young man said the display brought back memories of when he visited the schoolhouse in Grade 3 a long time ago. He was sixteen! One father explained to his son that the game where you have to roll the metal balls into the holes was an early video game. He also said that the flipbook was

like early television and pointed out that they both used moving pictures. It is always a positive experience when we get the chance to interact with so many interested people. We also have a chance to meet with other heritage groups.

From the Schoolmistress

Christine Chapel

Well, we've been busy at the Schoolhouse – fully booked with classes every day. In early January we had a fun week and a half with grade six students from Fairwind, in for a day of role play and inquiry. Julie Dippelhofer (the Friends of the Britannia Schoolhouse sales convener) brought her class in mid-December to get the ball rolling. Fairwind is a neighbourhood school so all classes walked. Students braved temperatures well below zero with some serious wind chills on several of the days they visited, which was a great way to literally walk in the footsteps of the students who came to the Schoolhouse long ago. There is a big difference role playing with grade sixes compared to grade threes. They have a better understanding of being in character and acting according to the traits of that character and the time period. It was great fun acting with them, having been reassured that we would not "hurt their feelings" if we were strict and stern.



The inquiry part of the day was fabulous. Students followed guided inquiries using artifacts in the Schoolhouse. Learning about Ben Madill and finding the clues in the room that put together a picture of his life in Britannia and at the Schoolhouse was a great hit. The desk Ben restored with the footprints of his cat, left when the curious feline hopped up on the still wet, newly varnished desk top, is always a source of excitement. We'd like to see more schools participate in this grade six program. Many thanks to the Fairwind staff and students for trying something a little different.

The snow days we've had this winter, although always a welcome break, have also been the cause of some frustration. Because we are fully booked, we have no space left to reschedule classes that missed out on their field trip to the Schoolhouse. We've tried doubling up classes where possible but with 34 desks we're limited in the number of students we can have on any day. And to think that we have a school Registry posted in the Schoolhouse dating from the late 1800's with 64 names on the list! Unfortunately there will be some disappointed teachers and students who will just not be able to come to the Schoolhouse this year. I wonder if students stayed home because of weather in the good old days. I'm guessing that not many did.

As the snow flies our thoughts are turning to preparing for spring. It's almost maple syrup season and it will soon be time to start our seedlings on the window sills. I for one am enjoying this taste of real winter weather. The earth needs time to rest and rejuvenate before the frenzy of the spring growing season which will be here soon enough – in fact, an early spring according to the predictions of most of the ground hogs this year!

Rules For Students

1. Respect your schoolmaster. Obey him and accept his punishments.
2. Do not call your classmates names or fight with them. Love and help each other.
3. Never make noises or disturb your neighbours as they work.
4. Be silent during classes. Do not talk unless it is absolutely necessary.
5. Do not leave your seat without permission.
6. No more than one student at a time may go to the washroom.
7. At the end of class, wash your hands and face. Wash your feet if they are bare.
8. Bring firewood into the classroom for the stove whenever the teacher tells you.
9. Go quietly in and out of the classroom.
10. If the master calls your name after class, straighten the benches and tables. Sweep the room, dust, and leave everything tidy.

Rules for Teachers

~ 1872 ~

1. Teachers each day will fill lamps, clean chimneys.
2. Each teacher will bring a bucket of water and a scuttle of coal for the days session.
3. Make your pens carefully. You may whittle nibs to the individual taste of the pupil.
4. Men teachers may take one evening for courting purposes, or two evenings a week if they go to church regularly.
5. After ten hours in school, the teacher may spend the remaining time reading the Bible or other good books.
6. Women teachers who marry or engage in unseemly conduct will be dismissed.
7. Every teacher should lay aside a goodly sum of his earnings from each pay for his benefit during his declining years so that he will not become a burden on society.
8. Any teacher who smokes, uses liquor in any form, frequents pool halls or gets shaved in a barber shop will give good reason to suspect his worth, intention and honesty.

Note: the teacher who performs his labour faithfully and without fault for five years will be given an increase of twenty-five cents per week in his pay providing the Board of Education approves.

Behaviour for both students and teachers was strictly defined in 1872 as these lists suggest. Some would think many of the student rules are ones that should still apply today. However, it's likely that today's parents would complain about using child labour to clean the classroom every day.

The rules for teachers say nothing about expectations for good teaching methods, classroom discipline or student evaluation. A teacher's personal life was a greater concern. It seems that marriage for women was equated with "unseemly conduct" and was grounds for dismissal.

What would a set of rules for students and teachers look like today? Writing these rules might be an interesting workshop activity on a professional development day!

SLATE

SLATE 2019 will take place this year in Eastern Ontario in the Long Sault region on the outskirts of Cornwall on Monday, June 10. The Lost Villages Historical Society (www.lostvillages.ca) will be hosting what promises to be a fun and informative day touring their various sites. Jim Brownell and Gardner Sage, past and current Presidents of the Lost Villages Historical Society are organizing the conference.

As usual, representatives working and volunteering at historic one room schoolhouses in Ontario will gather for a day and a half of sharing experiences and ideas for programming for students. The Friends of the Schoolhouse members attend along with the schoolhouse staff.

Starting seeds

Christine Chapel

It's always fun to start seeds indoors when the snow is still flying outside. Germinating flower or vegetable seedlings is a great activity to do with students in the classroom that can easily extend the learning outdoors when you plant in schoolyard gardens and planter boxes.

To start seeds inside you'll need:

- plastic plant trays (the ones you get when you buy plants at a nursery are ideal)
- small plastic or biodegradable pots or peat pellets
- a cover of some sort to keep moisture and heat in until seeds have germinated (plastic wrap will work)
- planting medium – not potting soil but a lighter mix specifically for seed germination
- seeds of choice
- a bright, warm location – a south facing window; simple grow lights are usually recommended



Once you've collected your supplies read seed labels for planting instructions detailing when to plant indoors and how to plant the seeds (depth etc.). Set pots into trays and plant your seeds. Be sure to label them. Water. Initially it may be best to water using a spritz bottle to gently wet the soil. Once seeds have begun to germinate water from the bottom to prevent over watering which can cause plants to "dampen off" or rot at the soil level and die. Cover your plants until germination has begun – this will keep heat and moisture in. Without grow lights, plants do tend to get

"leggy" as they reach for the sun. This is our greatest challenge when we've done this at the Schoolhouse. Even though we have a full southern exposure, it doesn't really offer the 12 – 16 hours of light and heat that are needed to grow really robust plants. It's important that you also "harden off" your plants before setting them in the garden. You must gradually expose young plants to the elements bringing them outside to a sheltered spot out of the wind and direct sun for a few hours every day for a week or more.

This year we're going to try germinating milkweed seeds to add to our pollinator garden and to give to visiting classes for their schoolyards. They can be a little tricky so we'll try starting them in clear plastic bags and potting the tiny seedlings.

No matter what level of success you achieve starting plants inside, it can be fun to try and extremely satisfying to see them growing in your garden. For students, it is a great learning experience and an excellent way to introduce them to gardening. For more information about starting your own flowers and vegetables inside go online where you'll find many excellent resources.



Winter 2019

November 22nd at CBO

Eva Ardiel



After a hiatus of a few years, on a frigid fall day in November, the Friends again set up their sales tables in the Atrium of the Board Office. It was certainly a worthwhile day for us. We appreciate all of the staff there who supported the Schoolhouse by purchasing our merchandise.

As well as the usual toys, games, note cards, etc. that we sell, Karen Simmons and Shirley Hoad made tote bags, place mats and other fabric items which sold really well. Also popular were the huge selection of Mrs. V's jams, jellies and relishes (thanks to Margaret Story) and the Osprey Bluffs' honey, soaps and candles (thanks to Glenna Zdebiak). Thanks to Cathy Harper everyone enjoyed choosing a favourite or two from the wonderful assortment of enamelled metal ornaments made by Pass the Torch, who also supplied some unique knitted items. We thank Margit Berger too who again donated lovely knitted items she had made for the Friends to sell.

All of the Friends committee plus Mary Corrigan turned out to help that day, as well as to do a bit of their own Christmas shopping. Special thanks to Julie Dipplehoffer for getting all the boxes of our sales stuff to the schoolhouse. We can't thank the custodial staff at the Board Office enough for hauling the boxes from the schoolhouse to the atrium and back again, carrying more boxes up from the loading dock and for setting up the tables etc. for us. We could not have this event without the cooperation of the Board personnel. Their help was certainly appreciated.

Where Did All the Textbooks Go?

The school textbook was an important tool in the classroom. In the early days of the 19th century most textbooks used in Ontario schools were published in the United States. Teachers chose the ones they wanted to use. A provincial education act, passed in 1846, among other things, mandated that texts must be published in Canada and approved by the Department of Education. No matter where in Ontario children went to school they could be sure they would use the same texts. In theory, this system still exists today, but in practice it seems almost abandoned. A recent check of the Ministry of Education website has an approved textbook section. However, the list of books is short or non-existent. In grades 1 to 8 there are no approved texts for Language or Science, 1 approved for Math and the Nelson series approved for grade 1 to 4 and 6 to 8 but none for grade 5.

In the Age of the Internet with information readily available and less expensive than a printed textbook, teachers are again choosing their own resources much as they did 150 years ago

From our January Current News website page

Winter 2019

Christmas at the Schoolhouse

Julie Dippelhofer



On Sunday, December 2nd, we held our annual Victorian Open House and Sale. The mild weather was a repeat from 2017, and we loved seeing families browsing throughout the schoolhouse for hand-made gifts, honey, cards, soap, toys and so much more.

High above Georgian Bay, in the Grey Highlands, is Osprey Bluff's Honey Company. The honey is collected by hand at the Osprey Bluff's honey house. Honey, along with lip balm, soaps and candles are sold each year at our sale. Jean and Aldo Marascio of the Grand Valley Fibre/Alpaca Central booth had a beautiful selection of colours and felted products. Grand Valley Fibre have created spectacular yarn that is produced from fabulous fibre all sheared from their Alpaca farm. Jean and Aldo are former Mississauga residents who gave up city life and love their new venture into Alpaca farming and fibre creations. Barb Vivian is the creative behind Mrs. V's Preserves. She continues to make real fruit and vegetable preserves, using fresh whole ingredients, that are locally sourced. The preserves are simple and uncomplicated but have unique flavours that have been a big hit with our schoolhouse shoppers. We also had a vendor that is a metal artist who showcased some handmade metal ornaments. Our vintage toy replicas, cards, books, and homemade hand-crafts continue to delight our customers.

We were very pleased with the attendance for 2018 and all profits from the sale of the items went 100% to the Friends of the Schoolhouse. We look forward to seeing everyone at our next Open House and Sale on Sunday, December 1, 2019.



Winter 2019

Echoes of the Past

The Rural One Room Schools of Peel County

This book documents the history of all the one room schools that existed in Peel. It covers the period from the early 1800's until the mid-1960's. There are old photos of most of the schools and photos of what the sites look like today. Timelines trace the history of the schools and an interesting – sometimes humorous – “historical gem” is included for each one.

This book is a great gift for a teacher or anyone interested in the history of education.

Written and published by Friends of the Schoolhouse.

Soft cover, full colour, 208 pages.

\$30 plus \$10 shipping

Available at all schoolhouse events and from any member of Friends of the Schoolhouse.

Book Talks

Illustrated talks are available to historical societies and other interested groups. We tailor each presentation to suit the audience and the one room schools that were in their local area.

If your group would be interested in having a presentation, please contact Jean (905 826 3475) jkrob@rogers.com for further information.

**Have you renewed your membership for 2019
Renewal forms are on our website.
Membership forms can be downloaded from our website:**

www.britanniaschoolhousefriends.org

An Invitation

This is a special invitation for members to join the Friends of the Schoolhouse committee. We are always looking for new volunteers with new ideas to help us plan activities that will support and maintain the schoolhouse and its program. We meet on the second Tuesday of every month from 4 to 6 pm. We can offer you an interesting and rewarding experience along with great light refreshments at each meeting. **Please contact Shirley Hoad, shoad@bell.net,**

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**