



Fall 2000

Some Figures and Facts:

2000 has started well at the schoolhouse:

4013 students spent a day at the schoolhouse during the 1999-2000 school year.

Over **400** people attended the Queen Victoria Fête in May.

209 people partook at the Strawberry social in June.

Volunteers answered questions, demonstrated toys and helped to reminisce for **3** days at the Brampton Fall Fair.



This newsletter is published by the *Friends of the Schoolhouse* every Fall, Winter and Spring, 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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Farewell, Schoolmaster Veenstra, and Welcome, Schoolmistress Curtis!

In the spring of this year, the Friends of The Old Britannia Schoolhouse learned that our schoolmaster, Tom Veenstra, would not be returning in the fall, as he was successful in his application to attend Teachers' College in 2000-2001.

The tall, imposing figure of Schoolmaster Veenstra who stood at the front of the classroom for the last two years will be missed by those who visit the schoolhouse.

A search was immediately undertaken and several interviews were conducted. In the end, Kevin Doran and Eva Ardiel were successful in obtaining the services of Megan Curtis.

Megan comes by her job as schoolmistress quite honestly, as three of her four grandparents had taught in one-room schools.

Megan has followed her Honours degree in drama from Queen's University with her Masters of Arts degree in Educational Theatre at the New York University.

Her love for drama becomes obvious when one hears of Megan's experiences to date, which include working in varying capacities in theatres in Toronto, Kingston, New York, Cork, Ireland and London. Much of this work has involved devising and implementing Educational Theatre curricula for a variety of subjects and grade levels.

Community programmes have also benefited from Megan's efforts, being involved in diverse groups ranging from Campaign Assistant for the United Way in Peterbor-



Schoolmistress Megan Curtis at The Old Britannia Schoolhouse.



ough and Administrative Assistant to the Alzheimer Society in Kingston to being Camp Administrator at an Easter Seals Camp.

Our new schoolmistress talks of her passion to provide young people with the opportunity to learn through drama. Her excitement of combining this passion with her interest in Canadian history will be an asset to her position as Schoolmistress Curtis at The Old Britannia Schoolhouse.

HALLOWE'EN FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY.

On Saturday, October 28, the Friends of The Old Britannia Schoolhouse are holding an evening of Halloween fun for young and old alike. The fun will begin at 6:00 p.m. and continue until 9:00 p.m.

In keeping with the historic nature of the schoolhouse (it was built in 1852) the activities are old-fashioned and include toasting marshmallows, carving pumpkins, candy Tic Tac Toe, hayrides, costume contest, bobbing for apples and visiting the haunted woods and outhouse.

A highlight of the evening will be the Ghost Walks, during which the participants will meet figures from Peel's past. Also expected to be an attraction is the new activity - the Frankenstein Piñata.

Bash. There will be lucky door prizes for adults and children.

Snacks and drinks will be available at a low cost.

While The Old Britannia Schoolhouse is on Hurontario Street, visitors should make use of the free parking at the H.J.A. Brown Education Centre which has access from Matheson Blvd.

Admission is free, but donations towards expenses are appreciated.

In case of rain or snow, the event will be simply postponed until October, 2001.

A Millennium Project: What Does 2000 Look Like?

With the year 2000 being the focus of teaching for many in the last school year, the staff of Briarwood Junior Public School came up with a novel idea to show their students what this "Magic Number" would look like. Each student in the class was asked to bring in a few pennies and together each class would amass 2000 cents or \$20.00. As with many things that the staff of Briarwood tackles, their expectations were soon exceeded by their students' enthusiasm. By year's end the penny collection for the whole school had grown to 45,150.

Now came the problem of what to do with the money! As every Briarwood staff member is a Friend of the Schoolhouse, Wayne Freeman, a staff member and on the Schoolhouse core committee, suggested that this would be a suitable place for the money to be donated. At our Annual Meeting in July, Wayne presented a cheque to the Friends in the amount of \$451.50.

Thank you, students and staff of Briarwood School. You have been generous to us in the past with your donation of the double desk and a large wooden toy box, and now we will make good use of your millennium pennies to keep the programme in the Old Britannia Schoolhouse alive.



Kevin Doran is deeply involved in quality control at the Strawberry Social in June. Kevin had recently announced his retirement as Co-ordinator at the centre for Education and Training.



Executive Committee News

Autumn has arrived bringing a change of colour to the old maples at The Old Britannia Schoolhouse and a change within The Schoolhouse, as well. We welcome the new Schoolmistress, Megan Curtis. With Megan's interest in history, she is a great asset to the programme. Three of Megan's grandparents taught in a one-room schoolhouse and she now has the opportunity to follow in their footsteps. Our former Schoolmaster, Tom Veenstra is pursuing his studies at the University of Toronto, Faculty of Education and we wish him every success in his new endeavour. Daryl Cook, who has so ably guided the Executive Committee for the past two years, has handed the gavel on to Jean Robinson. Thank you, Daryl for all your work on behalf of Friends of The Schoolhouse. Daryl is still very active in her roles as Past Chair, Museum and Archives Convener, and Convener for a new Committee, Student Volunteers.

This year promises to be a very active and exciting one. A list of the year's events was sent with the Photo Newsletter. (Great Photos!) Friends and Volunteers mounted an informational display at The Brampton Fair in early September. It was a good opportunity to talk about the Schoolhouse, display some of the Sales Committee's wares and enjoy the fun watching the children milk our special cow. Rumour has it that some "Friends" were treated to breakfast along with the exhibitors of cattle the first morning of the fair. In late September, Joan Moon and her caterers were busy delighting the New Retirees at a Tea sponsored by the RWTO (Retired Women Teachers of Ontario) at St. Patrick's Church in Mississauga. The Britannia Fall Fair was another time when the public were able to visit the Old Britannia Schoolhouse to experience some Role Playing and Old Fashioned Spelling Bees. Many thanks to all the volunteers who make these events possible.

Perhaps you would like to volunteer to help with an event such as catering, Hallowe'en Ghost Walk, Queen Victoria Fête? There are jobs for all interests and abilities. "Many hands make light work". Please call (905)826-3475 or anyone on the Executive Committee. You will enjoy working with such interesting, delightful and caring people who really appreciate the support.

I am certainly looking forward to my term as Chair of the Friends and I welcome any suggestions, comments or ideas you have about our activities.

Hope to see you soon.

Jean Robinson.



Eva Ardiel announcing the winner of a lucky draw at the Friends of the Schoolhouse Strawberry Social, held in the Atrium of U.J.A. Brown Education Centre in June.



Sales Committee Report.

Once again the Sales committee offered their wares for sale at the Queen Victoria Fête, the Strawberry Social and the Brampton Fall Fair. Our old-fashioned reproduction toys, to which we've added some new items, attracted lots of attention, both from purchasers and from children enjoying them.



The new 2000-2001 Illustrated catalogue is now available. A copy will be sent to each school at the beginning of November. If you would like a personal copy, please phone Eva Ardiel at (905) 459-9158.

All of our merchandise, plus some special items, will be offered for sale at our annual Christmas Open House on Sunday, December 3, 2000, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., and,

in the Atrium of H.J.A. Brown Education Centre on Thursday, November 30, 2000 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

"Hey, this one just 'wooden' give any milk!"

A young would-be farmer (right) attempts to milk our "cow" - a part of The Old Britannia Schoolhouse display at the Brampton Fall Fair in September.



For Your Diary:

October 7-9 - Britannia Fall Fair - The schoolhouse will be open.

October 10 (Tuesday) at 4 p.m. - Friends of the Schoolhouse Meeting

October 28, 2000 (Saturday) - Ghost Walk at The Old Britannia Schoolhouse. 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

November 14, 2000 (Tuesday) at 4 p.m. - Friends of the Schoolhouse Meeting

November 19, 2000 (Sunday) - Allan Case, expert toy maker will be at the schoolhouse from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

November 30, 2000 (Thursday) - Christmas Sale in the Atrium of the H.J.A. Brown Education Centre, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

December 8, 2000 (Sunday) - Christmas Open House at The Old Britannia Schoolhouse. 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

December 10, 2000 (Sunday) - The Old Britannia Schoolhouse is open from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

December 12, 2000 (Tuesday) at 4 p.m. - Friends of the Schoolhouse Meeting

January 9, 2001 (Tuesday) at 4 p.m. - Friends of the Schoolhouse Meeting

January 14, 2001 (Sunday) - The Old Britannia Schoolhouse is open from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Friends of the Schoolhouse – A Frenzy of Activities and Changes.

The Friends of the Schoolhouse have been very busy since our last regular newsletter in the spring. Many of our functions have required the assistance of volunteers, to whom we are very grateful for the many hours they provided us.

A special thanks goes to Kay Robbins for organizing the Strawberry Social, as well as John Emerson and Ray Hosty who provided entertainment for this event with "golden oldies" on piano and violin.

There is a special thanks to Hawley Johnston for again so masterfully playing the role of Queen Victoria at the Fête. A highlight of the fête in May was the participation of students from William G. Davis Senior Public School, under the leadership of Catharine Marchand and Janet Antcliffe. They performed and assisted with poise and polish! Thanks are also extended to Robert J. Lee Public School for lending us their popcorn machine, and to John Zwicker for travelling all the way from Flesherton with his antique tractor to provide rides around the schoolyard.

Daryl Cook graciously hosted our annual meeting at her home in July. The new executive was able to review plans for the year's events and to assess work that needs to be carried out to and at the schoolhouse. The annual meeting usually becomes an all-day function, providing the Friends the opportunity for lengthy discussions not possible at our regular meetings.

Already this year we have set up displays and activities at the Brampton fall Fair. We were again located near the farm animals and petting zoo, making us subject to a lot of traffic and exposure. Our location also provided us with lots of flying sawdust, straw and farm odours! It was a great opportunity to chat with the community about the schoolhouse and its programmes, while children experimented with our many toys, practised their writing skills



with pen and ink at an old school desk, and tried their skills at milking our very own (albeit wooden) Holstein cow

On Thanksgiving weekend we opened the schoolhouse each day to give the Britannia Fall Fair visitors a chance to learn about the schoolhouse and to be involved in mini role playing activities.

Apart from our bidding farewell to Tom Veenstra and welcoming Megan Curtis to the role of schoolmistress, several other positions changed personnel.

Kevin Doran, the Co-ordinator at the Centre for Education and Training responsible for The Old Britannia Schoolhouse retired from his position during the summer. Friends of the Schoolhouse truly appreciate the advice, assistance, encouragement and caring Kevin has given over the years. We look forward now to working with Henry Vander Griendt, who has replaced Kevin.

Daryl Cook, our chair for the past two years, has completed her term. We appreciate her hard work, organization, direction and generosity. She continues to be an active and enthusiastic member of the executive. Our new chairperson is Jean Robinson, and George Christian has accepted the position of Assistant Chair.

Jean's involvement with the schoolhouse pre-dates Friends' days, being one of several teachers who spent many after-school hours assisting in developing resource material for the school programme, such as our series of mini readers.

Teresa Gonzalez, Superintendent of Programme Services, is yet another person who was welcomed to our September meeting. Friends also look forward to a productive working relationship with Teresa.



A Sign of Success!

Your editor, on visiting William G. Davis Senior Public School recently, spoke to several of the pupils who assisted at the Queen Victoria Fête, either on stage or on the grounds. I asked them whether they would be willing to participate again.

Although one of their teachers, Madam Marchand, is now teaching in Cambridge, Ontario, the pupils' response was unanimous:

"In a moment!", they all agreed. They found the experience to be fun, different and just enjoyable.

Need to speak to the Schoolmistress?



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

It's Almost that Time Again!

Christmas is coming! The drop in temperatures, Thanksgiving, Hallowe'en all herald the season that will arrive in just a few months!

If you are looking for "something different" for a child (or perhaps a grandparent), then take the time to look in 2000-2001 Illustrated Catalogue for reproduction toys and merchandise from by-gone days.

Young and old alike stop by our public displays to marvel at the toys, and to remember long past childhoods in which these items played their part.

Batteries are not included – they're simply not needed!

Browse through our catalogue, (available from Eva Ardiel at 905 459-9158), or visit us in the Atrium of the H.J.A. Brown Education Centre on **Thursday, November 30, 2000** from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. or at our Christmas Open House at The Old Britannia Schoolhouse on **Sunday, December 3, 2000** from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.



We are on the web!

Bookmark our webpage:

www.britanniaschoolhouse.org

Friends of the Schoolhouse gratefully acknowledge the generous donations of the following people and organizations:

The following have made donations to the Friends of the Schoolhouse since the last Newsletter was published:

Briarwood Public School (re: millennium pennies)
Opami Mudalige
The Jasinski Family

Robert Marshall
Judith Harris
Rose Foster
Valerie Conner

Hazel Salman
Karen Simmoes
Streetsville Historical Society
Streetsville Senior Citizens

We extend a special thanks to Willa and Ross Murray for donating a most interesting "Chautauqua Industrial Art Desk – A plan to promote the culture of work and play in the home." The desk was patented in 1885 and copyrighted in 1913. It was produced and distributed by Lewis E. Myers and Co., Toronto.

Special thanks are also extended to David and Norma Collis of Woodford, Ontario, for their donation of a very large tent. This tent was put to immediate good use as our sales pavilion at the Queen Victoria Fête.