

The Update

Newsletter of the York Pioneer & Historical Society



© Carol Moore-Ede photo of Mackenzie House

Launch: *The York Pioneer* 2008

Join us at Mackenzie House for the launch of the 2008 issue of *The York Pioneer*. Meet some of the authors, editor Jeanine Avigdor and your fellow Pioneers.

Sunday April 20

Walking Tour ~ 1 p.m.

Launch & refreshments ~ 2 p.m.

Place: 82 Bond Street

This year's issue is bigger and better than ever; the magazine has been redesigned with a fresh new look for the 21st century and its pages are jam-packed with interesting historical articles. Members in good standing, and authors of this issue, are encouraged to pick up their copies today.

The gentle walking tour, led by Muddy York Walking Tours founder Richard Fiennes-Clinton, starts at the St. Lawrence Market Gallery. It is free for members and guests - but we do need to know numbers.

For more about where to meet and to RSVP, contact Richard at (416) 487-9017 or richard@muddyyorktours.com

NOTICE: YPHS ANNUAL DINNER May 28 ~ see p.6 for details

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SCADDING CABIN

Every spring the Scadding Cabin museum on the CNE grounds must be opened for the season; the cobwebs are swept away, decorative items put on display, carpets laid down, windows flung open and



booklets arranged for sale. Each fall this process is reversed when the cabin's contents are put to bed for the winter.

Thank you to all the Pioneers and friends who help

with these yearly chores -- and if you have never come along in May for the re-opening, plan to do so this year. We always have fun while we work!

Call Edna Rigby (416) 494-0503 or Melanie Milanich at (416) 690-5925 to volunteer for an hour or two.

Left, Diane Reid and Edna Rigby and, below, John Marshall, packing up Scadding Cabin artefacts last fall.



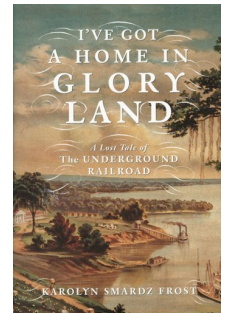
See p. 5 for info. about Doors Open at the cabin

YORK PIONEER WINS NON-FICTION GG AWARD: CONGRATULATIONS!

Karolyn Smardz Frost is a Toronto-born archaeologist and historian whose 1985 excavation of the Thornton and Lucie Blackburn site made history. *I've Got a Home in Glory Land* is the fruit of more than 20 years of historical detective work into the fugitive slave couple's dramatic escape to Canada via the Underground Railroad. Smardz Frost, divides her time between her Collingwood home and an oceanfront cottage in Nova Scotia.

Jury's comment: *I've Got a Home in Glory Land* is a triumphant blend of archaeological and historical research with literary story-telling.

Credit: information and photos from <http://www.canadacouncil.ca/prizes>



MEMBERSHIP NEWS

We are pleased that our membership numbers continue to rise. If you have not yet renewed for 2008, this is your last chance if you wish to continue receiving *The Update* and to get your very own copy of our wonderful magazine, *The York Pioneer*.

We welcome new Life Members Catherine Seymour, Jean Kell and Leo Fox, as well as new annual member Heather Davis of Oakville.

TIME FOR A CHANGE!

Approximately once a decade, *The York Pioneer* has put on a new face. A glance through the pictures in the Index will remind you of past cover designs, from Parlane drawings to photographs on coloured paper. Our current formal cover was introduced in

1988. Twenty years later, we are introducing a new design, inside and out. We're excited about the new look for 2008. Prepare for a surprise!

- Jeanine Avigdor, Editor

MILLER TAVERN ANNIVERSARY PARTY A GREAT SUCCESS

Several YPHS members joined the throngs who turned out at the Miller Tavern to celebrate the inn's 100th anniversary, October 16 2007; the Miller's management very generously turned the event into a fund-raiser for the North York Historical Society. A cheque for \$8,000 was presented to the

NYHS - a princely sum that is greatly appreciated.

Clockwise from top right: Glenn Bonnetta & Dorothy Duncan, members of both the NYHS & YPHS, share a laugh; Miller Tavern servers in flapper costumes; Margit Nocent & Jean Hill (Gibson House volunteers in costume); YPHS member Marika Toda looking elegant; Brooke Jarvis, YPHS board member.



“Aggie’s Wildflowers” - Spring Wildflower Walk, Sunday 11 May’08 - 1:00 p.m.

This walk lasts about two hours, beginning and ending at historic Lambton House, 4066 Old Dundas Street. It will focus on artist Agnes Dunbar Moodie Fitzgibbon, the daughter of Susanna Moodie (author of *Roughing It In the Bush*).

Agnes lived on Dundas Street in Lambton Mills in the 1860s; during this time she illustrated *Canadian Wildflowers*, written by her aunt Catharine Parr Traill. The specimens she used for her paintings were all from the Baby Point and Humber Valley areas near her home; many still thrive here, especially in the Magwood Sanctuary.

Contact Madeleine McDowell, Chair, Humber Heritage Committee, and your guide for this walk, for more details: (416) 767-7633. If you can't go on the walk, you can view laser copies of Aggie's paintings on the walls of Lambton House; the original 1867 book is in the Baldwin Room of the Metro Toronto Reference Library.

The walk and tea are free, but donations are gratefully accepted!

ARTEFACTS MOVED FROM CITY STORAGE MONDAY, JANUARY 7, 2008

On an overcast, damp but very warm (for January) Monday YPHS archivist John Marshall, President George Duncan and Audrey Fox met at a nondescript brick building to remove, from a City of Toronto storage facility, artefacts belonging to our society .

Into a cube van rented by John, we loaded sawhorses, a quilt and a coverlet, two grain cradles, a picture made of feathers, a large rocking chair, three framed pictures, and several other odds and sods such as an iron chain -- as well as boxes of paperwork.

A few items were destined for the garbage (an extremely dangerous-looking electric heater and a totally ruined floral picture). Several items were taken to Scadding Cabin but the fragile items (the textiles, feather picture, photos and paper) are stored in members' homes for the time being.

As John sorted through the paperwork at Audrey's, one of the very first items he found was an election card (*above right*) dated exactly 101 years earlier -- even the day (Monday) was the same . Alas, our archivist did not find any treasures that we didn't already know about.

We opened the framed pictures: there is a sketch of Rev. John Wild, a pencil sketch of the blockhouse that once stood at Bloor and Sherbourne, and a large



composite photo of YPHS members in 1893. An internet search told me that our blockhouse sketch appears to be identical to one portrayed on The Friends of Fort York website in an article written in 2001 by Stephen A. Otto.

The blue and cream coverlet appears to be in fine condition (*below right*) but the finely-worked brown quilt with white backing (*below left*) has sustained damage.



The YPHS gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Culture.

DOORS OPEN TORONTO, MAY 24 & 25 2008

Scadding Cabin will open for the Doors Open weekend; please contact Edna Rigby at (416) 494-0503 or Melanie Milanich at (416) 690-5925 if you can volunteer some time to greet visitors.

The cabin will have a very special guest all day Sunday: Lt-Gov. John Graves Simcoe (interpreted by John Rutherford, *photo at right*) will chat with visitors about Upper Canada's early days.

The Doors Open concept originated in Glasgow, Scotland, in 1990; the event came to Canada in 2000 when the City of Toronto's Culture Division working with Heritage Toronto launched Doors Open Toronto.



For more information: www.toronto.ca/doorsopen

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING , GIBSON HOUSE, 20 JAN 2008

Several members turned out on a cold but sunny Sunday to attend the AGM, to indulge in many "goodies" provided by board members and our guest speaker, Dorothy Duncan. and to take a tour of Gibson House.

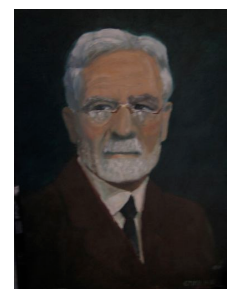
At right, outgoing President George Duncan pins incoming President Elaine Robertson with the YPHS President's medal.

In February, Elaine was presented with a Certificate of Achievement (built heritage category) by Mayor Margaret Black of King Township. Congratulations to our new president on receiving this honour from the Ontario Heritage Trust.



UPLAND COTTAGE CELEBRATES 100 YEARS

Several Pioneers were privileged to visit Upland Cottage in Wychwood Park. The former home of artist George Reid recently turned 100; we thank the owners for inviting us into their lovely home last December.



PHOTOS, LEFT TO RIGHT: THE EXTERIOR OF THE 'COTTAGE', ONE OF THE LARGE STUDIOS WITH ITS TALL NORTH-FACING WINDOWS AND A PAINTING OF ARTIST GEORGE REID



ANNUAL DINNER

MAY 28

Our annual dinner will be held on Wednesday, May 28, at the Royal Canadian Military Institute, 426 University Ave. (just a half block south of the St. Patrick subway station).

5:30 - 6:30 social hour, cash bar
6:45 - 8:30 dinner and speaker

Heritage Building: The Institute's building is an historic Toronto landmark. Except for Osgoode Hall (the Supreme Court of Ontario), it is the oldest building on University Avenue – Toronto's grand avenue – and one of only three or four that are over fifty years old.

Founding of Institute: In 1890, the Officers of the Toronto Garrison founded the Royal Canadian Military Institute with the then Governor General of Canada, Earl Grey, as its patron. Earl Grey laid the cornerstone of the existing premises in 1907.

Credit: RCMi photo & info. from <http://www.rcmi.org/about-us/about-rcmi.html>

Speaker: Capt. Charles Scott-Brown, President of the RCMi, will be our guest speaker. He will tell us about the history of the Institute and the heritage building it inhabits.

Cost of Dinner:

\$59/person includes dinner, rental of the historic venue and our speaker. Wine may be purchased by the glass or bottle at a cash bar.

Reserve a seat: Call Diane Reid at (416) 483-0907. Tell her if you prefer a roast chicken or salmon dinner.

After you have reserved your space, mail a cheque made out to the York Pioneer and Historical Society, to: The YPHS Box 45026 2482 Yonge Street, Toronto, ON M4P 3E3

The room holds a maximum of 60 people - book early so you don't miss a wonderful evening!

LATE -BREAKING NEWS:

Calendar

20 April Launch of *York Pioneer* (see front page)

11 May Heritage Walk (p. 3)

24-25 May Doors Open (p. 5)

28 May YPHS Annual Dinner ~ book early!

October '08: Fall Bus Tour ~ planning is underway

I am extremely happy to announce that John McIntyre received a Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for Lifetime Achievement on February 21 at Queen's Park. This is a considerable honour and achievement. --- from Brooke Jarvis, YPHS rep. on the Sharon Temple Board; John is the Executive Director of The Sharon Temple Museum Society.

HELP! Is anyone willing to take over *The Update* newsletter? We publish three times/year; the current editor will help you learn this program (Pages) if you have a Macintosh -- or you can decide upon your own format and style. Contact audrey.fox@mac.com if you can take on this fun job!