

The Update

Newsletter of *The York Pioneer and Historical Society*



Above: John McKenzie House, north of Sheppard Avenue, just east of Yonge Street, has a long and rich history. More, p.3 Credit: Ontario Historical Society

Book & Magazine Launch

April 26: 2 pm

John McKenzie House

34 Parkview Avenue, Willowdale

Join us for the launch of the 2009 issue of *The York Pioneer* and the launch of a special book we are publishing to commemorate Toronto's 175th anniversary - Chris Raible's *From Hands Now Striving to be Free: an inventory of boxes crafted by 1837 Rebellion prisoners*.

Meet several authors; enjoy the beauty of John McKenzie House; connect with your fellow York Pioneers and friends; enjoy tea and cookies -- and best of all, pick up your copies of the book and magazine.

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YPHS ANNUAL DINNER

May 19'09 Tuesday 6 pm

Arts & Letters Club, 14 Elm Street

RSVP to Diane Reid at (416) 483-0907

Join us for fun, food, fellowship -- and a wonderful guest speaker. Award-winning author (and York Pioneer!) Karolyn Smardz-Frost, will speak about her research for

I've Got a Home in Glory

Land! Karolyn's book

won the 2008

Governor-General's

award for non-fiction.

A great dinner, a glass (or two) of wine, an entertaining speaker, a beautiful venue & a silent auction - please join us for our annual dinner.

Cost is \$59 for members; guests (non-members) are \$65.



See p.2 for more about the Arts and Letters Club and where to mail cheques.

Improved Website Unveiled March 6'09

An improved YPHS website was uploaded (made available for public viewing) by webmaster Owen Robinson on Toronto's 175th anniversary.

Thank you to all the YP board members who contributed time, ideas and content to the site. Check out Owen's creation at:

www.yorkpioneers.org

About the Arts and Letters Club from the club's website: www.artsandlettersclub.ca

14 Elm Street is a Toronto landmark — a designated building with a lively history in a convenient downtown location of remarkable colour and vivacity. The focus of Club life and activity is The Great Hall, a splendid room with a cathedral ceiling, a large fireplace, a choir gallery, a well-equipped stage and a pair of Steinway grand pianos. The Great Hall (*at right*) affords wall space for major exhibitions of paintings, drawings and photography; it also serves as an intimate concert hall and theatre. Its principal function, however, is as a dining room, where weekday luncheons and special dinners are served to members and their guests at refectory tables designed to promote conversation. It is at these oak tables, day in and day out, that members of the artistic, literary, professional and business communities meet to share opinions and perspectives, demonstrating that the art of good conversation is alive and flourishing. Adjoining the Great Hall is a well-stocked bar and a comfortable lounge/reading room; The LAMPS room across the hall is used for luncheons and meetings; The Boardroom, Library and Administrative offices are on the second floor; the third floor is the site of the Artists' Studio. **Book your dinner tickets** by phoning Diane Reid at (416) 483-0907. Members, \$59; non-members, \$65. **Cheques payable** to The York Pioneer and Historical Society; mail to P.O. Box 45026, 2482 Yonge Street, Toronto, ON M4P 3E3



SAVING OUR CEMETERIES *Bill 149 prohibits the relocation of inactive cemeteries despite anything to the contrary in another Act or regulation dealing with cemeteries. It passed first and second readings on Feb 19 and March 12, thanks in large part to heritage activists who contacted their MPPs urging them to vote for the bill. The Bill was introduced by Mr. Jim Brownell, MPP for Stormont, Dundas and South Glengarry, jbrownell.mpp@liberal.ola.org. We encourage YPHS members to contact their MPPs in person, by telephone or by electronic means. Tell them that this legislation is important to the heritage of Ontario and it is essential that it be passed so that our cemeteries are properly protected. For more information, Your board signed a petition in support of Bill 149 at our March 21 meeting. **Contact Rob Leverty, Executive Director of the Ontario Historical Society for more info. (416) 226-9011 or, toll-free, 1-866-955-2755***

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL Last chance to get your wonderful publications, **free** with membership! Bring your fees to the book and magazine launch on April 26 (*see front page*); renew, or join if you are not yet a member. You will receive one copy of each publication with your paid membership - a great deal for you while you support Ontario's oldest historical association.

WANTED: NEWSLETTER EDITOR This is your newsletter - photos and submissions welcomed! Contact: audrey.fox@mac.com or tel. (416) 656-0812 *Thank you to Dorothy Duncan for proof-reading this issue.*

THE YPHS GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO THROUGH THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE.

JOHN MCKENZIE HOUSE - VENUE FOR APRIL 26 MAGAZINE & BOOK LAUNCH

It was constructed in 1913 as the second Willowdale home of a pioneer family. The house is located on lot 18, concession 1, East Yonge Street, on property deeded to Jacob Cummer in 1801. In 1884, a portion of the original property was sold to Philip McKenzie (John's father) who was an English immigrant trained as a carpenter and casket maker. Philip and his wife, Sarah Thompson, of Whitchurch Township, moved originally into the old Cummer farmhouse, a one and one-half storey brick Georgian-style dwelling. This house, circa 1840, was located between Parkview and Norton Avenues and faced west to Yonge Street. When Philip McKenzie died, John ran the farm and specialized in Holstein cattle until the local economy for farmers began to deteriorate. John then decided to subdivide the farm, and in 1912, registered the "Empress Subdivision" that was to become the heart of modern east Willowdale as the area was transformed from a rural village to a suburban community.

In 1913, John and his wife, Eva, chose a large lot on the rise of land just east of Yonge Street on Parkview Avenue as the site for their new home. From their farm, they retained the 1907 brick milk house, and built a stable in 1915 and a coach house in 1918. The OHS has restored all four buildings and the interior of the coach house has been renovated for adaptive use as a community program and exhibit area.

Built in a style which has been described as Queen Anne Revival, Arts and Crafts, and Edwardian, this red brick house contains 12 rooms and 3 bathrooms. The front of the house is profiled by a grand L-shaped, wrap-around verandah with stylized Doric columns. A large attached coach house was converted to accommodate automobiles and has a recreation room above. Significant interior features include the centre hall plan, a vestibule door and sidelights with bevelled leaded glass, a large leaded art glass window which lights the landing of the main staircase, two sunrooms, panelled doors and wainscoting, strip hardwood flooring and radiators.



Because The Ontario Historical Society is committed to restoring and maintaining this property, and has a long term partnership with the City of Toronto, the house, milk house, stable and coach house have been designated under the Ontario Heritage Act for their provincially significant historical and architectural features.

Credit, text & photo: www.ontariohistoricalsociety.ca

WALTER ROLLING SITE: NEW!

King Township Historical Society (a YPHS member) is celebrating with the King Township Public Library the launch of the new site about Walter Rolling (*right*), a respected and admired black principal and teacher who presided over the education of students at the Kinghorn Pubic School for forty-some years. It is estimated that about 2000 people attended his retirement ceremony on the grounds of the school on King Road, King City in 1937.



Go to www.king-library.on.ca

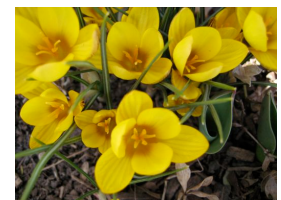
DOORS OPEN TORONTO May 23/24

Scadding Cabin will be open to the public. Phone Edna Rigby at (416) 494-0503 if you can help open the cabin on Saturday May 2 at 10:30 a.m. or if you can volunteer during Doors Open.

The 10th anniversary of Doors Open Toronto takes place Saturday and Sunday, May 23 & 24, 2009 with a special focus on Literary Toronto. LIT CITY 2009, a new initiative engaging Toronto's authors and architecture, books and buildings and pages and places, celebrates Toronto's 175th anniversary in March and culminates on the Doors Open Toronto weekend.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

We warmly welcome Virginia Atkins and Andrew Marshall, both of King City.





YPHS PINS FOR SALE

Board Member David Raymont conceived and carried out a plan to replicate an old YPHS pin featuring Scadding Cabin; David generously donated the first run of 500. The pin was well-received at City Hall on March 6 when one was given to Mayor Miller. Buy a pin for just a dollar - available at the book launch April 26 and at Scadding Cabin during Doors Open.

Thank You, King Township!

The Township of King has contributed \$10,000 to the repair of Eversley Church.

Our President, Elaine Robertson, on behalf of the King Township Heritage Committee and the YPHS, made a deputation to the township's Council on November 17, 2008. She spoke about the emergency repairs and restoration work already completed, and the need for further repairs and painting. Past President George Duncan began this process more than a year ago.

The Township generously agreed to contribute \$10,000 to the Eversley Church project; \$4,700 came from the Community Grants Program and \$5,300 from the Heritage Preservation Reserve fund.

The YPHS thanks King Township for its donation.

Annual General Meeting

A new board was acclaimed at our AGM held at Zion Primitive Methodist Church (*right*), Jan 21, 2009.

We warmly welcome new board members Norie Jacobs, Kayoko Smith and Fred Cane - thank you for volunteering!

We still have vacancies and urge members to join us on the board.

Past Pres.: George Duncan

President Elaine Robertson

Vice-President Audrey Fox

Treasurer Patricia Robertson

Corresponding Sect'y: **Vacant**

Archivist John Marshall

Editorial co-chairs: Jeanine Avigdor & Audrey Fox

Eversley Church: Ralph Magel

Membership: Diane Reid

Programme Co-Chairs: Diane Reid & David Raymont

Publicity: Update **Vacant**

Scadding Cabin: Edna Rigby
& **co-chair: Vacant**

Sharon Temple Museum Board: Fred Cane

Members-at-Large:
Dorothy Duncan, Norie Jacobs & Kayoko Smith



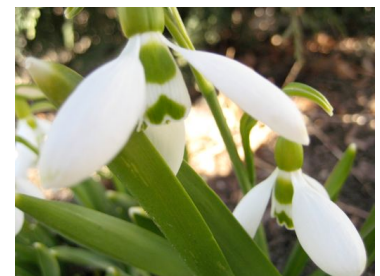
Above: Zion photo by YPHS member & architect, Alan Seymour. Alan was responsible for the church's 1997/98 addition which won a Heritage Toronto commendation.

Calendar 2009

April 26 YP magazine launch; see front

May 19 YPHS Dinner; see front

May 23-24 Doors Open Toronto; see p.3



In Memoriam

Our sympathies to former board member Brooke Jarvis on the death of her sister, Pamela Nora Jarvis, 12 Feb. 2009.

YPHS member Ernest Redelmeier passed away in January 2009 at the age of 90.