

Wolfville Historical Society

Newsletter

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May 2005

<http://wolfvillehs.ednet.ns.ca>

Randall House Management, 2005

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Newsletter

Christopher Olsen

(Editor and design/production)

The retirement of Heather Davidson as Curator has required us to consider anew how the operation of Randall House Museum should be supervised in the summer. In view of the fact that we likely will be employing persons without Heather's valuable experience, we now call the summer supervisory positions "Manager" and "Assistant Manager". We are pleased to announce that these positions will be filled this summer by Anna Chisling and Andre French, who are both Acadia students. Anna, who has worked with us as Assistant Curator, will be the Manager, and Andre the Assistant Manager.

Heather Davidson's retirement has also required the various committees involved in the operation of Randall House to take a more active role. The Collections Management and Exhibits Committee now consists of David Burton, Dorothy Cavanagh, Rose Corbett, Gordon Haliburton, Christine Lynch, Ian and Myra Tuton, and Phyllis Westbury. Heather Watts chairs the committee. This committee has a long list of projects connected with preparing Randall House for the summer season. These will be done with the aid of volunteers and our new Manager and Assistant Manager, who will begin working in May for this purpose. David Burton and Ian Tuton are investigating upgrading the basement of Randall House, with a view to utilizing it better for storage and display purposes. Efforts have been made in recent years to reduce the leakage of water into the basement, and that work will continue.

Myra Tuton and Dorothy Cavanagh are co-chairs of our new Social Committee. They are now planning the social events for 2005. They will also be overseeing temporary exhibits, with the aid of the Manager, Assistant Manager and volunteers. In the past, volunteers, including non-members of the Historical Society, have set up several exhibits or provided material. This type of assistance, or simply ideas for exhibits, are always welcome.

Henry Bradford

Chair, Management Committee

Marketing Our Knowledge

by John Vaillancourt

We are housed in former barracks. The rooms are neat, clean and reflect a military Spartan décor.

The presenters are exceptionally knowledgeable and deliver their material with an energetic and skillful ease. The three computer specialists dealing with webpage design never once lapse into techno-speak; the presenter dealing with "Marketing our Product" is both humorous and engaging; the leader of the session on "Understanding Audiences" speaks with such an infectious enthusiasm that everyone is smiling; and the workshop presenter dealing with how to obtain grants convinces us that getting money is not all that difficult - if you follow the steps she outlines for us. All the sessions I attend are worthy of the time.

Every event starts and ends *exactly* on schedule. As a true aficionado of punctuality I find this to be pleasantly satisfying.

Within a matter of weeks all Atlantic historical societies will be able to sell any of their products via the Internet. Check out www.museumstoresatlantic.ca

A former Wolfville High School student of mine, Dorothy Outhouse (nee Pugh), is given the award for Outstanding Volunteer of the

Year. I join the spirited applause which greets this accomplishment.

Approximately 70% of the delegates are female. Perhaps women really are the major keepers of the flame.

Annapolis Royal Historic Gardens Tour factoid: a herd of approximately twenty-five local deer is eating all the flowers and shrubs. A fence will be erected to keep them out.

At the venison dinner hosted by the Bear River First Nations band we are treated to a number of interesting displays, a fine meal, an original play, and some First Nations music. I mention the Historic Gardens deer problem to one of our hosts.

We visit the Mayor of Annapolis Royal and his historically-costumed entourage. Afterwards, at 9:30 pm, a lantern-lit tour of the Annapolis Royal Historic Graveyard is on the schedule. As high winds are driving a heavy rain almost parallel to the ground and, because I have no rain gear, I retreat to my barracks room. Others, obviously hardier than I, say the graveyard tour was a highlight of the conference.

I leave convinced that this conference was one of the most carefully executed and consistently excellent I have ever attended.

Wolfville Historical Society Board Member John Vaillancourt recently attended the Spring Heritage Conference for archivists and delegates from provincial and independent museums. Held at the former CFB Cornwallis training base the three days of workshops, presentations, and entertainment comprised a coherent whole on the theme *Marketing Our Knowledge*.

Randall House Notes

ODD JOBS

There are a number of odd jobs that need to be done before the museum opens. These are mostly small painting and carpentry jobs. If you are a bit of a handyman/woman, or can even hold a paintbrush, and can spare part of a day, please let Heather Watts or Henry Bradford know. These jobs will be done in May.

PAINTING RANDALL HOUSE

That lustrous coat of white paint on Randall House is just the primer. The priming and preparation job has been spread over the last two summers, and the work was done by Curtis Thomson. While this was being done, the question of appropriate paint colours was researched by Heather Watts and Heather Davidson. The aim was to choose colours that were used in this locale in the first half of the nineteenth century, the period that has been adopted for the theme of Randall House decor. Factors considered were



period authenticity, attractiveness, and making the museum stand out in its surroundings. The choice made by the Management Committee and The Board of Directors was dark yellow ochre with white trim. This choice was presented to the membership at the April 20 meeting of the Society, and was unanimously accepted. A similar colour combination is used on the Ross Thomson House And Store Museum in Shelburne, and colour pictures of this museum were passed around at the meeting. The painting of Randall House will be completed this summer.

NEW COMPUTER AND COLLECTIONS DATABASE PROGRAM

In order to standardize the documentation of collections in museums in the province and to facilitate the exchange of information, Nova Scotia Museums is sponsoring a collections database computer program called the "Passage" program. To encourage its adoption, they are providing a laptop Toshiba computer at the bargain price of \$500 to museums that sign up, together with the Passage program and other standard Microsoft programs, and free training and assistance. There is a charge of \$250 per year for continuing participation in the program. Wolfville Historical Society has applied. Thanks go to Christine Lynch, Caroline Power, and Phyllis Westbury for investigating and recommending the offer by Nova Scotia Museums, and meeting with personnel at two museums using the Passage system.

Spring Events, 2005

**WEDNESDAY, 18 MAY 2005, AT 2:00 P.M.,
ST. JOHN'S PARISH HALL (NOTE CHANGED VENUE)**

St. Clair Patterson, President of Hantsport Historical Society,
will give an illustrated lecture on
"The Era of Wooden Ship Building in the Minas Basin"

**WEDNESDAY, 15 JUNE 2005, AT 2:00 P.M.
WOLFVILLE FIRE HALL**

Susan Haley, noted local author and philosopher, will give a talk on
"The Literature of the Valley"

Summer Events at Randall House

SATURDAY, 18 JUNE 2005

Opening Tea

Celebrate the opening of our museum season over tea with your friends

SUNDAY, 31 JULY 2005

Ice Cream Social

Enjoy our lovely garden setting with your whole family.
Children can learn how "real" ice cream used to be made.

SATURDAY, 27 AUGUST 2005

Picnic Day at Randall House

for the young or the young at heart
Picnic lunches available. An exhibit of historic dolls inside.