

Wolfville Historical Society

Newsletter

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

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Wednesday, February 20, 2008 at 2 p.m. in the Wolfville Fire Hall John Vaillancourt will speak on the topic: *Five Hundred Years of Education in Nova Scotia (1350-1850) – the years before the advent of John William Dawson as Nova Scotia's first Superintendent of Education*. John has spent his career in the field of education and in his retirement has a multitude of interests including sitting on our Board of Directors (and fishing).

Wednesday, March 19, 2008 at 2 p.m. in the Wolfville Fire Hall. Dr. Gordon M. Haliburton will speak on the topic: *The Black Loyalists of Nova Scotia and the Founding of Freetown*. Having begun his career in the field of African education in Sierra Leone, Gordon is very familiar with the subject. He has written a novel – still awaiting publication – which tells the story of one of these Loyalists. He may be prevailed upon to read a few passages from it.

Wednesday, May 21, 2008 at 2 p.m. in the Wolfville Fire Hall. The speaker and topic have not yet been confirmed.

APRIL MEMBERS' DINNER

Our annual **Members' & Friends' Dinner** will take place in the new Fountain Commons (formerly known as MacConnell Hall) at Acadia University on **Saturday, April 26th, at 6:30 for 7:00 p.m.** The meal will include an entrée (choice of two: pork or sole), dessert and coffee, with a ticket price of \$26. There will be a cash bar, free parking for guests and the University gates off Highland Avenue will be opened so that you can drive right in. An elevator will take you from entry level up to the dining room.

Tickets available from John Vaillancourt at 542-9766 and Gordon Haliburton at 542-7467

The guest speaker is Margaret Campbell, of Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management in Halifax. Margaret has made a study of the lives and work of the Prat sisters of Wolfville, and her talk is entitled *The Prat Sisters: Free Spirits of the 1890s*.

The Prat family are of particular interest and relevance to the Wolfville Historical Society: the paterfamilias, Samuel Prat, was Wolfville's first station master, son Rupert ran a general store on the corner of Main and Gaspereau in a building which still stands today, and the Prats had a large and hospitable home Acadia

Villa very close to where we will be gathered for the dinner, where they entertained such literary luminaries as Charles G.D. Roberts and Bliss Carmen. The three beautiful sisters Annie, Minnie and May Rosina Prat, became talented and independent artists, who operated the Primrose Bindery in New York City for several years. And, of course, May Rosina Prat Starr became the first Curator of the Wolfville Historical Society's museum. Her daughter, Sally Starr, followed her as Curator. So we almost owe our existence to this family. Margaret Campbell's beautifully illustrated talk will give you a fascinating glimpse into the lives of three of Wolfville's most interesting women.

TREASURER'S NOTES

The full breakdown and details of the incomes and disbursements from which the summary of the 2007 Annual Financial Report was prepared, will be available for inspection by members at the meeting on Wednesday 20 February 2008.

A Society Budget for 2008, approved by the Board of Directors, will also be offered to the members for adoption at the meeting.

With this Newsletter is a separate letter from the President concerning this year's fund raising effort, together with a membership application form. We have as a target a total of \$12,200.00, to be raised from members and supporters and from local businesses. For the few members who have already renewed their membership for 2008, a receipt is enclosed.

SOCIETY NEWS & NOTES

A new standing committee on communications is now up and running under chair Nancy Brister. Set up to oversee both internal and external communication, it will co-ordinate the work of the Publicity, Membership and Newsletter sub-committees, and provide information to the webmaster and Newsletter editor.

BOOK NOTICES

Looking around Chisholm's in Kentville a few days ago Gordon Haliburton noticed a sales table of books, many of which are of local interest. They are reduced to a fraction of their original price and I was able to add Thomas H. Raddall's *Roger Sudden* and Heather A. Davidson's book on Norman Creighton to his shelf of Nova Scotiana.

THE KINGS HANTS HERITAGE CONNECTION

For some years representatives of nine heritage-related groups in Kings and West Hants counties have met monthly to discuss and act upon matters of common interest. For example the Connection took an active interest in the observance of the 250th anniversary of the Expulsion of the Acadians in 2005, and this year they are actively encouraging a proper observance of the **1760 Coming of the New England Planters** for that anniversary in 2010.

The Nova Scotia Museum and the Federation of Nova Scotia Heritage have noted the success of this group and are encouraging similar regional meetings elsewhere in the province. Individuals are welcome to attend. Contact John Whidden at 542-5061.

CHANGE AT FEDERATION OF NOVA SCOTIAN HERITAGE FNSH, to which the Wolfville Historical Society belongs, provides valuable, cost effective services to its members, particularly in the areas of training and resources. *FNSH* can also "leverage" funds to carry out programs of benefit to members. In

order to become more effective, the Federation is currently undergoing a self-started organizational overhaul. Members like ourselves, attending the Annual Meeting in Shelburne in May, will have a chance to vote on a new name, and various proposals to strengthen the fellowship of museums in Nova Scotia. Do we want to organize regionally, and have a regional representative on the Board?

The WHS has benefited greatly from the Federation's programs, particularly the on-site consultations and most especially the Passage Project. We await with interest the recommendations of the organizing committee.

COMMENTS WELCOME

The *Newsletter* committee will be pleased to receive questions or comments from members. Send an e-mail message to nan.brister@hotmail.com and let us know what you think about the activities of the Society (bouquets or brickbats!) or your suggestions. In particular, please send items of interest for inclusion in the *Newsletter*.

President's Message

As we go into 2008 with one of the final parts of our governance model in place, the establishment of a Communications Committee to co-ordinate our publicity, advertising and newsletter. The chair will be Nancy Brister, and we welcome her to that position.

Further improvements at Randall House can be expected as Bonnie Elliott soon begins her second year as our Curator. This is, of course, associated with a continued fund raising process. You will each be hearing from me on this separately.

Bonnie will again be seconded by the RHMC, by the Collections and Exhibits Committees and also by our special Evaluation Committee, headed by Tom Haliburton, which has responsibility for preparing us for the triennial NS Museum evaluation process that we face next year. Our goal is to come in at the top of museums of our type in the Province, and we are confident of meeting it.

If you have not yet looked at the posters on the "Local History" sides of the town information kiosks in front of Shoppers Drug Mart, at Main and Gaspereau, and at Robie Tufts park, I urge you to do so. They were produced co-operatively by the Town and the Society; further examples of this co-operation will soon appear as interpretive panels are erected on Main Street at the Old Burying Ground and at Willow Park. We are currently assisting in preparing information on the Town Hall for the Town's information package and a walking tour of Wolfville brochure for the Tourist Bureau.

In closing, may I thank you for your participation in the Society, and urge you this year to attend our monthly meetings for interesting and thoughtful presentations, the two annual dinners for good food and socializing and Randall House in the summer to catch up on what's new in our world of the antique.